Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu's Concept of "Maruṣya" or "Human Being" in Modern Age: A Critical Study

Ms. Phiyadee Prasertson

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Religious Studies

Graduate School of Philosophy and Religion
Assumption University of Thailand
2007
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ABSTRACT

In the modern world, most people completely lose touch with the purification of life and reality because of their unsatiable desire. They are trapped in the world of materialism, accumulations, and possession. To liberate humanity from the sense of continuous and endless desire and attachment to material wealth in modern culture, this study proposes the concept of “Manusya” or “Human Being” by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu as a means to overcome such defilement which is permeating the contemporary world.

As a consequence, this study will provide important documented guidance for a prosperous life by presenting an authentic path of self analysis, self development, and true self satisfaction. This paper offers a practical transformation of intellectual capacity and spirituality from ignorance to wisdom for humanity based on the realistic aspects of Buddhism and Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s reinterpretation of Buddhadhamma. The study aims to identify the real meaning of being “Manusya” or “Human” and to examine how to fulfill the mental quality of humanity. The different modes of life of both a householder and a recluse are able to purify the mind at every moment of life. This study uses the methodology of descriptive method to critically analyze the reinterpretation of the Buddhist concept of “Manusya” or “Human Being” by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu. The writing comprises both pros and cons in Eastern religious
viewpoint and directly touches both the aspect of phenomenology of religion in order to reflect the deeper meaning and the religious humanism aspect to scrutinize the nobility of human achievement and possibility.

It is hoped that this research paper may serve as a motivation for real understanding of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s concept of “Manusya” or “Human Being” in the modern age, and encourage intra-faith and inter-faith dialogues among religions.
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## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abstract</th>
<th>i</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contents</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter I. INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Background and Significance of Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Dissertation Statement</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Objectives of Dissertation</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Limitation of Dissertation</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Research Methodology</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Definitions of the Terms Used</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 Expectations</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter II. THE CONCEPT OF “MANUŞYA” OR “HUMAN BEING”</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN THE TRADITIONAL BUDDHISM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 The Founder of Buddhism, “The Buddha”</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 The Schools of Buddhism</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 The Scripture of Buddhism</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 The Meaning of “Manuṣya” or “Human Being” in the Early Pāli Text Sources</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 The Theory and Practice to Attain the Status of “Manuṣya” or “Human Being” in the Early Pāli Text Sources</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 The Selected Stories of Persons who Develop their Quality of Mind from their Ignorant Being to Holistic Being in the</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Dhammapada Early Text Source of the Path of Perfection

Chapter III. THE CONCEPT OF "MANUŞYA" OR "HUMAN BEING" IN BUDDHADĀSA BHIKKHU’S INTERPRETATION FOR MODERN AGE

3.1 The Development of Buddhism in Thailand 49
3.2 Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu and Buddhism in Thailand 52
3.3 The Meaning of "Manuṣya" or "Human Being" by Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu 60
3.4 The Theory and Practice to Attain the Concept of "Manuṣya" or "Human Being" by Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu 65
3.5 The Selected Opinions of the Modern Famous Persons who Studied or Practiced the Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu’s Spiritual Development in the Roi Kon Roi Dhamma, the 100th Year Anniversary of the Birth of Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu 82

Chapter IV. CRITICISM OF BUDDHADĀSA BHIKKHU’S CONCEPT OF "MANUŞYA" OR "HUMAN BEING" IN MODERN AGE 85

4.1 The Three Stages of Buddhist Social Development and the Concept of “Manuṣya” or “Human Being” by Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu 85
4.2 The Strengths of Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu’s Concept of “Manuṣya” or “Human Being” in Modern Age 91
4.3 The Weakness of Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu’s Concept of “Manusya” or “Human Being” in Modern Age

Chapter V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

REFERENCES

AUTOBIOGRAPHY
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Significance of Study

In the modern world, from the late nineteenth century up to the present time, people are always puzzled about their actions since they live under capitalism, consumerism, egoism, and materialism—the attitude that physical well being and worldly possessions constitute the greatest good and highest value of life. There are so many things that should be done and there are things that need immediate action. The world is changing rapidly in terms of values and morality. The complexity of rushing to achieve and to accumulate more and more frequently threatens to drown society. People create time but then they are ruled by time. They have to keep watching the clock because at a certain time they are obliged to do their duties. People today lose their meaning of lives because of the external force which leads them to the passion of possession. According to Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, he explains that the confusion and social disorder occur because of our undertaking development with an immoral attitude of craving for material gains. He describes that:

The world now aims for material development because of cowardice and the fear of not keeping up with ‘Them’, of not having the equipment to fight ‘Them’ or to live well.... Consequently, the whole world is in a state of disorganization and confusion. There are complicated problems without end which have arisen from moral degeneration. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1982a, p. 75-76)

In Thailand nowadays, Thai people face many materialistic problems. They develop a sense of accumulation of their own wealth such as big houses, fashionable clothing, multi-stylistic mobile-phones, and so on. They are trapped in a rat race, not just of acquiring money,
but also of meeting family and business obligations. They pant through the endless series of appointments, competing responsibilities, and duties. They feel strained, hurried, and breathless. The more they become attached to the material things, the more they see their unsatisfied selves. Thus, people are fighting for their own materialism. They become stuck in the happiness based on the satisfaction of hunger which is continuous and endless. They repeat their usual actions everyday within the shadow of ignorance making them lose touch with the meaning of life and reality. These are real problems which cause suffering in contemporary culture.

From the *Handbook for Mankind*, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu states that:

> What we are clinging to is the world itself. In Buddhism the word “world” has a broader connotation than it has in ordinary usage. It refers to all things, to the totality. It does not refer just to human beings, or celestial beings, or gods, or beasts, or the denizens of hell, or demons, or hungry ghosts, or titans, or any particular realm of existence at all. What the word “world” refers to here is the whole lot taken together. To know the world is difficult because certain levels of the world are concealed. Most of us are familiar with only the outermost layer or level, the level of relative truth, the level corresponding to the intellectual of the average man. For this reason Buddhism teaches us about the world at various levels. (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 79)

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu explains that in the modern world people seek for material pleasures and wealth; however, they ignore the needs of their communities. People live with the lack of essential knowledge in their ordinary lives which Buddhist teaching calls the Four Noble Truths. These truths involve the knowledge of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path leading to the cessation of suffering. People fail to realize the three core characteristics of life which are the state of impermanence, the state of suffering, and state of being not self. When they lose their direction of life they misinterpret the world and fall victims to delusion which is called ignorant living. This result leads them to clinging and becoming slaves to their own created world. In Buddhism there are four different kinds of
attachment, namely: the sense objects, the opinions, the rites and rituals, and the idea of selfhood. These attachments lead people to the ignorant and unsatisfied conditions. Thus Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu realizes these problems and tries to guide the right understanding to everyone by not clinging to all these attachments in order to become a holistic person. He remarks that:

These four forms of attachment are the only problem that Buddhist or people who wish to know about Buddhism have to understand. The objective of living a holy life (Brahmacariyā) in Buddhism is to enable the mind to give up unskillful grasping. You can find this teaching in every discourse in the texts which treat of the attainment of Arahantship. The expression used is “the mind freed from attachment.” That is the ultimate. (Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 66)

To liberate people from these oppressed lives, people need to decide and to change their beliefs and their lives from the attachment to modern culture to the non-attached sense of humanity. From the above mentioned issues, this study mainly proposes the concept of “Manuṣya” or human being by Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu as a solution for the contemporary world. The term “human being” is described under the Eastern religious viewpoint. This study applies both the phenomenology of religion approach in order to reflect as well as to reveal the deeper meaning, and the religious humanism that tends to concentrate on the dignity and nobility of human achievement and possibility. It is examined how to fulfill the quality of mind and meaning of life for humanity. However, this study does not base on the study of the secular humanism which reflects the rise of globalism, technology and the collapse of religious authority.

Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu (1906-1993), is from the Theravāda Buddhist School. He is considered the most influential Buddhist teacher, reformist monk, and a great philosopher of religion in Thailand. His intention to follow the actual path of the Buddha aroused him to study several Buddhist schools and other religions. He attempted to explain how to use
Buddhism and others religions in the modern world. Peter A. Jackson who wrote *Buddhadāsa: Theravada Buddhism and Modernist Reform in Thailand* remarked that:

Thais have come to share the modernist and reformist views of Buddhism that Buddhadāsa has been propounding for over fifty years. Buddhadāsa has been hailed as a progressive reformer and even a genius by his supporters and followers. (Jackson, 2003, p. 1)

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu was interested in practical study and tried to understand other religions and how to bring people out of materialism. He explained how to be totally human in the world with the view of rational and scientific basis. He encouraged people to look within by *Dhamma* moments observation, and experiment by living. Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu reinterpreted the *Theravāda* doctrine by describing the traditional cosmology as the mental scope of human beings alive on earth here and now. He shifted the focus of Thai Buddhists from the transcendent to this world and also to integrate with modern society. Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu states that:

Now Nirvana is not something occult and mysterious. It is not some sort of miracle, something supernatural. Furthermore, Nirvana is not something to be attained only after death. This is a point that must be understood. Nirvana is attained at any moment that the mind becomes free from compounding. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 177)

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu began to reinterpret the traditional Buddhist works by his own term, his own structural metaphor, and his own hermeneutic theory. He provided an Asian interpretation of science and religion to fit the social change taking place in Thailand. He made use of his reinterpreted Buddhist concept of human being and the modern social conditions in order to make it relevant to contemporary living. He believed Buddhism showed its relevance to human life and aspirations by providing a moral and ideological basis for action in the social world in order to promote the progressive development of society and the individual’s attainment of spiritual salvation. Therefore, his modern interpretation of human
being has encouraged all people including monks, laymen, and laywomen to attain Nirvana. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu presented his own hermeneutic theory by distinguishing language usage into two levels, calling Phasa Khon or everyday language and Phasa Tham or Dhamma language. The point is that people are mostly familiar with the everyday language and feel alienated with the language that transcends the physical aspect. In fact both meanings must be considered and not just one of them. He described that:

Everyday language is based on physical things and on experiences accessible to the ordinary person. Being based on the physical rather than the spiritual, it serves only for discussion of physical, worldly matters and situations. It serves only for the tangible things perceived under ordinary everyday circumstances. By contrast, Dhamma language has to do with the mental world, with the intangible, non-physical world. In order to be able to speak and understand this Dhamma language, one must have gained insight into the mental world. (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 1999, p. 16)

By harmonizing the traditional Buddhist teaching and his reinterpreting concept, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu proposes the possible reinterpretation in terms of language usage in order to teach the ordinary people. According to the term “Manuṣya” or human being, the Sanskrit word for human defines “Manuṣya” or “Mānasaya”, and Pāli word “Manusa” or “Manussā” which means lofty-minded one. It refers to the higher spiritual qualities or the possessing of the high mindedness. This study will use the term “Manuṣya” which is more familiar among Thai people who use the word “Manuṣya” in their daily life. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu explained the term “Human Being” in terms of the two different language usages:

Everyone is a person. But we ought to be careful here, because the word ‘person’ has two different meanings. In everyday language, ‘person’ refers to a creature with a body shaped like what they call a ‘person’ or human being. But in Dhamma language, the word ‘person’ refers to certain special qualities implied in the word ‘human’ which means ‘possessing a lofty mind’ or ‘high minded’ certain high mental qualities. This is not so difficult to understand. If someone criticizes a friend saying, ‘You’re not a person!’ what does he mean? The one criticized has a human body just as does the one criticizing. Why, then, is the first accused of not being a
person? The point is that he lacks the special qualities implied in the word ‘human.’ Lacking these, he is accused of not being a person. Thus, the word ‘person’ has two different meanings. In everyday language, it refers to a creature of human form; in Dhamma language, it refers to the higher mental or spiritual qualities implied in the word ‘human’. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1999, p. 31-32)

Concentrating on the concept of “Manusya” or human being, the concept of human being can be looked through various categories in Buddha teaching, but this study is specifically observed through the path of ignorant living in the world and how to progress along the path of the intellectual living in the world. The sources are based on the reinterpretation of Theravāda doctrine by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu. The term human being is defined by the quality of person which is a blend of both everyday language and Dhamma language. The Buddha’s discourse also provides the distinction between two paths of life which man can make his own choice for action. Man who clings to the worldly life without awareness of truth will strive for all external things, and man who develops and realizes the path of truth will become free from the bondage. The Buddha said that:

But one is the path of earthly wealth, and another is the path of Nirvana. Let the follower of Buddha think of this and, without striving for reputation, let him ever strive after freedom. (Trans. By Juan Mascarfo, The Dhammapada: The Path of Perfection, 1973, p. 45)

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu similarly stated that:

A correct method is needed. Don’t become foolish. Don’t sink into stupidity, but become more genuinely intelligent.... All of the luxuries and conveniences with which we fill the world answer only to our defilements (Kilesa, e.g., greed, hatred, fear, worry, ignorance). They support people’s defilements and make people selfish.... They lead people to infatuation with things that bind and attach the mind. Thus, there is no dawning of wisdom, no abating of the ignorance. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1999, p. 141)

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu explains what it means to be human, and how to develop a life to become a holistic one by using the two distinct modes of language describing the shift from the attached status to the non-attached status. His teaching focuses on how to transform an
ordinary person into a meaningful person who lives serenely in the modern world without feeling alienated. He proposes Buddhism as a means to reach such goal since Buddhism is an organized practical system designed to reveal thing as it is. He says that:

Everyone ought to consider Buddhism as Art, as the Art of Living – in other words, as skill and competence in being a human being, living in a way that is exemplary and praiseworthy, which so impresses others that they automatically wish to emulate it. What we have to do is to cultivate the ‘Three Lustres,’ firstly developing moral purity, then training the mind to be tranquil and steady and fit to do its job, and finally developing such an abundance of wisdom and clear insight into the nature of all things that those things are no longer able to give rise to suffering. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 22-23)

People can learn religious theory and practice, gain the proper direction of life, reform the higher mental qualities, and become “Manusya” or human being. They can see the reality of world by understanding the Four Noble Truths, progressing along the Ariya Path, and finally attaining the path of the worthy one. Their accurate realization can eliminate the defilements and give up inappropriate action. They can achieve the best thing possible for a human being, or Nirvana. From the Handbook for Mankind, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu shows the degree of right knowledge of individuals following the Four Noble Truths. He describes that man can progress his or her spiritual and intellectual aspects from an average man to become a highminded person, an Ariyan or a noble one, and an Arahant or worthy one. His training additionally applies to the study and practice of Sila (precepts), Samādhi (meditation) and Pañña (insight) to attain Adhipañña for knowing “what is what”. This knowledge can improve one’s intellect and spirituality to become totally human being. According to his teaching, Pañña is directly the most significance to accomplish on liberating one’s self through detachment from Lokiya or worldly matters as nothingness in order to reach Sunnañata or emptiness. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu suggests that the notion of "I" and "my" must be completely purged by looking within, then people can come to understand their real spiritual nature and
become absolutely empty of the "I" and "my". This approach is the cultivation and practice of non-attachment in the middle way of Buddhist teaching, neither a practice of extreme detachment or egoistic clinging. It is the practice of correctness of being in the way we live. People stay balanced with the correct consciousness in their living. They can integrate all part of life with the external things, and achieve their freedom as well as transcendence of lives here and now. They will get the opportunities to join together in meritorious work for society. They are able to appreciate their selves, others, and surrounding environment in the valuable way. His teaching is for everyone, both religious persons and non-religious persons to develop the mind to be free from the desire and bondage in order to become a full human being.

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu says that:

The concepts of getting and being are purely relative; they are worldly ideas based on ignorance. Speaking in terms of pure reality, or absolute truth, we cannot get or be anything at all. And why? Simply because both the person who is to do the getting and the thing that is to be got are impermanent, unsatisfactory, and nobody's property. But an individual who doesn't perceive this will naturally think "I am getting..., I have..., I am..." We automatically think in these terms, and it is this very concept of getting and being that is the source of distress and misery. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 45-46)

Following his work, he focuses more on rational way to achieve the transcendence of human being. He presents the demythologization of Buddhist doctrine. His work is characterized by the systematic reduction of metaphysical aspects of Buddhist teaching such as rebirth in heaven or hell, to psychological condition. He motivates people to achieve the wisdom of man by the means of using rational faculty. For example, from the Buddhist scriptures, the Buddha and the disciples often refer to celestial beings and to demons and the various levels of heavens and hells inhabited by these beings. However Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu provides his own view from the metaphysical aspects of this human world. He interprets the nature of heaven and hell as:
Heaven is in one's breast, hell is in one's mind, Nibbāna exists in the human mind. Hence what is meant by the term 'world' exists in the human mind. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1982b, p. 111)

His work presents a distinctly analytical and philosophical development to the contemporary world. He emphasizes the intellectual dimension of man. In Buddhism the development of intellectual dimension can be considered as “Paññāvimutti”, referring to deliverance through insight or liberation through wisdom. He applies it together with the practice of mindfulness of breathing with sixteen bases meditation. Its method requires the process of thought, observation, experiment, and proof. It is considered as easier, directed, and shortcut path for fulfilling human beings in both the religious man and non-religious man. When people think and act properly they can live harmoniously with the world. They are free from all toxicants in the mind. People become stable and peaceful because their wisdom gradually progresses to liberation of the mind. However, in this case the deliverance of mind still remains only in its initial stages and needs to further develop until it achieves the completion of “Paññāvimutti”. The person who follows this method will only realize the extinction of mental intoxicants but not yet gain any special types of Abhinnā or knowledges. Its method is appropriate to the modern people since they believe in the present verification. They can accept and practice it simply in their daily life. Furthermore, in Buddhism there is another practice that can fulfill human being called “Cetovimutti” which means deliverance of mind or liberation by concentration. The results of “Cetovimutti” practice can be divided into two parts. The first is the result of Samatha called “Cetovimutti”. It refers to the liberation of the mind from the power of Kilesa or unwholesome tendencies due to the power of concentration. The second part is called “Paññāvimutti” that is similar to the first mentioned above. As soon as “Paññāvimutti” is attained, the previously achieved “Cetovimutti” which is
subject to deterioration does no regress. The person can obtain certain abilities in the process of practicing this absorption which involves the six Abhinna or superknowledges. There are mental powers, clairvoyance or divine ear, telepathy or mind-reading, clairvoyance or divine eye or the ability to know of the decease and rebirth of beings according to their Kamma, recollection of former existences, knowledge of the extinction of all mental intoxicants. Even though both techniques are related and can guide people to achieve the quality of “Manusya” and the attainment of Arahantship based on Buddhist teaching, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu is less interested in the traditional interpretation of the Buddhist theory and the various practical kinds of traditional meditation. His concept focuses on the present action and is not much concerned with the subjective matter of faith, experience, spirit, and soul in metaphysical subjects that are also the possible paths to transcend human being based on the traditional Buddhist teaching called “Cetovimutti”. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu describes that:

Freedom from compounding, at any moment, is Nirvana. Permanent cessation of compounding is full Nirvana; temporary cessation is just a momentary Nirvana, which is the kind we have been discussing. The experiencing of temporary Nirvana serves as an incentive to go further, to head for permanent Nirvana, the full Nirvana that makes a man an Arahant….Every man’s purpose in life ought to be to tread the path to full Nirvana. (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 177-178)

1.2 Dissertation Statement

This study is precisely as:

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu proposes that in order to attain the best end for a human being, First is the need to complete any extinction of every kind of defilement and misery in the materialized age and second we need to progress from the state of ignorance to the state of wisdom. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu proposes the concept of “Manusya” as a person who has
developed the quality of mind from the status of ignorance to the state of wisdom, and this is possible for all to achieve.

1.3 Objectives of Dissertation

The purposes of this study are:

1.3.1 To identify the meaning of "Manuṣya" in the modern age as presented by Buddhāsā Bhikkhu.

1.3.2 To critically examine the approach of becoming a "Manuṣya" as proposed by Buddhāsā Bhikkhu based on Buddhist teachings.

1.3.3 To show the strengths and weaknesses of Buddhāsā Bhikkhu's theory and practice for humanity.

1.3.4 To examine how to attain "Manuṣya" status and to provide a positive philosophical contribution to the community in the modern age.

This study is expected to serve as a guideline for modern people to gain the real understanding and to transform their illusion or ignorance of living to their wisdom or truth of world. This study will explain how people neglect truth and grasp illusion and its reversed action, how they can return to origin through awareness. Human being normally is limited by time, language, pre-knowledge, perception, culture, and life-frame. So, everyone needs to realize correctly the structure of the real being, the law of nature, and the ultimate truth. This study will focus on the means to understanding truth and cessation of misery, suffering through the application of Buddhāsā Bhikkhu's teaching about "Manuṣya".
1.4 Limitation of Dissertation

This critical study focuses on the concept of "Manuṣya" as presented by Buddhaddāsa Bhikkhu, a scholar of Theravāda Buddhist religion. Thus, the scope of literature concentrates only on the traditional Buddhist doctrine and practice, Buddhism reinterpreted by Buddhaddāsa Bhikkhu's theory and practice including the mindfulness of breathing meditation. The information is collected through both primary and secondary sources and the Internet which are related to the research question and objectives.

1.5 Research Methodology

This study adopts a critical descriptive method which intends to critically analyze and criticize the concept of "Manuṣya" or human being as presented in Buddhaddāsa Bhikkhu's reinterpretation of Buddhadhamma. To achieve this aim of study, it is proposed to follow the following steps of study:

1.5.1 The study will describe the major Buddhist theory and practice, and the background of Buddhaddāsa Bhikkhu's concept of "Manuṣya".

1.5.2 The study also looks critically at Buddhaddāsa Bhikkhu's concept of "Manuṣya" and the approach of becoming "Manuṣya" for its strengths and weaknesses in the modern age.

1.5.3 The study will explain why people need this theory, how it can help solve problems facing modern society.

1.5.4 The study is able to extend the concept of ""Manuṣya"" to other levels or fields of understanding, having implications for the study of the philosophy of religion.
1.6 Definitions of the Terms Used:

1.6.1 "A man of wisdom" is a spiritually enlightened person.

1.6.2 "Attachment" means clinging or assuming. It includes clinging to sensuality, clinging to views, clinging to mere rules and rituals, and clinging to the ego-belief.

1.6.3 "Capitalism" means an economic system in which the means of production and distribution are privately or corporately owned and development is proportionate to the accumulation and reinvestment of profits gained in a free market.

1.6.4 "Consumerism" means the theory that a progressively greater consumption of good is economically beneficial, attachment to materialistic values or possessions.

1.6.5 "Detachment" means the even-minded stillness of non-attachment. It means simply not to attach, not to cling, disregard anything as "I" and "my".

1.6.6 "Egoism" means excessive preoccupation with one's own well being and interests, usually accompanied by an inflated sense of self importance, conceit.

1.6.7 "Ignorance" refers to the lack of essential knowledge of the Four Noble Truths which are ignorance of suffering, of the cause of suffering, of the cessation of suffering, and of the path leading to the cessation of suffering.

1.6.8 "Manusya" in Dhamma language, the word "person" refers to certain special qualities implied in the word "human" which means "possessing a lofty mind" or "high mindedness".

1.6.9 "Materialism" means the theory or attitude that physical well-being and worldly possessions constitute the greatest good and highest value of life.

1.6.10 "Modern world" means the late nineteenth century up to the present.

1.6.11 "Vimutti" is deliverance, liberation, freedom
"Paññāvimutti" means deliverance through insight, liberation through wisdom.

"Cetovimutti" means deliverance of mind, liberation by concentration.

1.7 Expectations

1.7.1 To enhance the profound understanding of ""Manuṣya"" concept of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu as well as to illustrate its deeper level of understanding.

1.7.2 To critically examine and guide the possibility of the strategy of human reformation for the community’s benefit in contemporary living.

1.7.3 To stimulate further research about ""Manuṣya"" or human being along with other philosophical ideas in different fields of knowledge for broader dialogue.
CHAPTER II

THE CONCEPT OF “MANUŚYA” OR “HUMAN BEING”

IN THE TRADITIONAL BUDDHISM

The concept of “Manuśya” or “Human Being” in this study is aimed at progressing the spiritual and intellectual aspects of all individuals from an average man to become a highminded man, an Ariyan or a noble man and an Arahant or worthy man, based on the original Buddhist teaching. This chapter describes briefly the general background of Buddha and Buddhism. The major concern is an attempt to define the meaning of “Manuśya” or human being and the strategy of attaining the best end for a human being based on the selected original Buddhist sources, called the Pali Text Society. In addition, it is also composed of the selected stories of ordinary men who later develop their quality of mind from ignorance to state of wisdom by using the traditional Buddhist text source, called Dhammapada or the Path of Perfection. The content serves as a guidance for all individuals who intend to fulfill their life.

All individuals need to learn the heart of their own religion which is beneficial for their development of mentality and intellect. When they profoundly understand their own religious doctrine and practices, they can broaden their views about religious knowledge and natural truth which can lead to the path of human fulfillment and to redefine harmonious living in the world.
2.1 The Founder of Buddhism "The Buddha"

The Buddha was a prince of the Kingdom of Sakaya in north India in the 6th Century B.C. His name was Siddhattha and family name was Gotama. While he had lived with pleasure and luxury in his palace, he reversely thought about the suffering conditions of life which were birth, old age, illness, and death. Thus he decided to leave his luxurious life in order to find the way out of all suffering states by becoming an ascetic. He had experienced the two extreme states of the prince of pleasurable life and of the ascetic of fearful austerity. He reckoned that the extreme sensual indulgence and ascetic self-affliction would not lead him to the true knowledge of life, consequently he began to practice a middle path between the two extreme states. On his enlightened day, He sat under the Bodhi tree, during his profound meditation states called Jhāna arose a certain knowledge in his mind. There were three knowledges caused the state of wisdom, the knowledge of past lives, of Kamma or action and its results, and of the destruction of the mental pollutions. They were described as:

The phrase 'Wisdom' means that the threefold wisdom, namely, (a) reminiscent knowledge of one’s former births, (b) knowledge of the decease and renascence of beings, (c) the knowledge that makes and end of the Intoxicants. (Trans. By Caroline A.F. and Rhys Davids, The Pali Text Society: A Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics, 1993a, p. 333)

These three knowledges are very significant to all individuals who want to learn and practice Buddhist doctrine and discipline since they are the path of attaining nirvana -- the ultimate objective in Buddhism. It represents the laws of nature as well as the absolute truth of the world. To explain further, first, the result of the wisdom of knowing one’s past lives guides man to reveal his wheel of birth and death kept in motion by desires for pleasure and existence. It is the cycle of life. This understanding is about the process of changing and becoming. Second, the wisdom of Kamma or action and its results leads a man to realize all sorts of being
having their past action that gives the present results and their present action the fruit in future results. In the last realization, man can reveal how the defilement arises and passes away. With craving and ignorance present, *Dukkha* or the physical and mental suffering occur and come into existence. But when they are abandoned then this cessation of suffering can be called *Nibbāna*. Man should realize the truth as it is. If man does not understand the world as it is and grasps it for his or her own satisfaction, he or she will suffer because everything is under the process of changing.

Prince *Siddhattha* attained enlightenment at the age of 35 with the knowledge of truth and became known as “the Buddha”, “The Enlightened one”, or “The Awakened one”. Later the Buddha left his doctrine to community for the true happiness of the world. His doctrine is for everyone to realize the causes of suffering and the cessation of suffering. He introduces the principle of the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. The practical path emphasizes the three main concepts: the moral conduct, the mind development, and the wisdom. The words of Buddha can be summed up to *Sīla* or the accomplishment of good conduct, *Samādhi* or meditation, and *Paññā* or cultivating insight. It refers in one verse leading to Nirvana:

To refrain from all evil, to do what is good, and to purify the mind. (Quote by, Kenneth W. Morgan, 1993, p. 107)

His guidance is feasible for all individuals to develop their mentality and intellectuals in order to become a holistic man and to reach the path and the fruit of *Arahatship*- the ultimate goal of Buddhism.
2.2 Schools of Buddhism

There were eighteen schools in early Buddhism. The differences among these schools were not fundamental but generally related to superficial beliefs and practices. In contemporary time, there are only two major schools of Buddhism composed of Theravāda or Sathaviravādins or Hīnayāna (the word is generally translated as small vehicle) which is found chiefly in Srilanka, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos. It mostly followed the rules and procedures of the original Buddha teaching and attempts to attain one’s own Nirvana or salvation. Second is the Mahāyāna school (the great vehicle) found in China, Tibet, and Japan. This school attempts to seek the salvation of all beings. It also believes in Bodhisatva who practices charity, patience, and wisdom. In addition, there is Tantrayāna school is within Mahāyāna, it emphasizes symbolism and rituals with esoteric teachings. It is widespread in Tibet and Mongolia.

2.3 The Scripture of Buddhism

The sacred texts of Buddhism are called Tipitaka or the Three Baskets or the Canon of the Buddhists and are used in both Theravāda and Mahāyāna schools. It is written in Pāli language and composed of Vinaya Pitaka or the Discipline Basket, Suttanta Pitaka or the Discourse Basket, and Abhidhamma Pitaka or the Special Teaching.

1. Vinaya Pitaka - The Discipline Basket: This collection of texts concerns the rules of conduct governing the daily affairs within the community of both male and female monks, called bhikkhus and bhikkhunīs.

2. Suttanta Pitaka - The Discourse Basket: It contains the teaching on doctrinal and ethical matters that concern both monks and lay people.
3. *Abhidhamma Pitaka* - The Special Teaching: It is unique in its analytical approach to one’s liberation. Its scope is profoundly psychological.

2.4 The Meaning of “Manuṣya” or “Human Being” in the Early Pāli Text Sources

The concept of “Manuṣya” or human being in Buddhist Dictionary can be identified in both language usages which are from the Sanskrit word “Manuṣya” or “Mānasavya”, and Pāli word “Manusa” or “Manussā”. In this study, we use the term “Manuṣya” or human being which is more familiar to the Thai people who have always used the word “Manusaya”. The general meaning of “Manuṣya” is described as:

“Manuṣya” generally means a man, human being, mortal, a mate, a class of manes.

The term of “Manuṣya” comes from manas + ush-ya. *Manas* is the mind, heart, understanding, perception, intelligence. And *ush-ya* means high and lofty. (Vaman Shivaram Apte, 1998, p. 1233, 1235)

From this description, the word “Manuṣya” can be explained to mean a human being who has a lofty mind. The concept of “Manuṣya” or human being in this study is an attempt to define the development of the high quality of mind in person, the noble one, and the worthy one who has the holy characteristic. In Pāli text sources everyone is categorized according to his or her quality of mind by the awareness of the ultimate truth which he or she must understand and practice the Four Noble Truths following the Buddha’s teachings.

In fact, the meaning of “man” in Pāli text sources is varied as:

The first “Pudgala” the term is explained as the ordinary man who does not realize the absolute truth of the world. Thus that man possesses the sense of belonging and becomes stuck in both pleasure and displeasure based on his desire which is infinite. The word “Pudgala”:

“Pudgala” means atom, the body or matter, the soul, the ego or individual, man, an epithet of Siva. The term of “Pudgala” comes from pum-gam + gal-ah. *Pum-gam* is a heap, collection, multitude. And *gal-ah* is the throat, neck, the resin of
the Sāla tree, a rope, a large particular disease of the throat. (Vaman Shivaram Apte, 1998, p. 1027, 1030)

Likewise, the word “Pudgala” can be identified as a man who heaps or swallows all in the throat. A man is considered an ignorant one who enjoys all external pleasure in this world. Whenever he does not get his desire, he suffers. If he realizes this ultimate fact, his intellect and mind will enable him to progress from the ignorant to the wisdom state of living.

The second “Attā satto jīvo” a man can be described as an existential being in living organisms:


In Buddhism, a man is composed of two major parts involving the material part and the non-material part which are divided into five aggregates of form, sensation, perception, mental formatives, and consciousness. And these five aggregates can also be further categorized into various subsets which all are related to each other.

In the Pāli Text Society, the person is decentralized through the components as:

The ‘person’ is known objectively, as both real and ultimate, so also the material form is known and so forth, a classification of the 57 ultimate of our conscious experience consisting of (5) aggregates, (12) sense-organs and objects, (18) elements and (22) controlling powers, being shown. (Trans. By Bimala Churn Law, The Pali Text Society: Debates Commentary, 1989, p. 10)

In fact, a few realize these actual elements of person, so they live their life in the ignorant state and mainly fulfill their three fetters of greed, hatred, and delusion. These men are required to develop their realization of the truth of nature in order to evolve their spiritual quality.

The third, the term of “man” can be found in the section dealing with productive action and age limit. In Buddhist teaching, the world refers to the totality. There are many different
realms of existences such as human beings, celestial beings, gods, hungry ghosts and so on. In addition, each existence has particular characteristics, the pattern of living and certain levels of the concealed world. In this part, the term “man” can be defined in the pattern of life and age limit that is different from other existences in the totality:

What is the age limit of human beings? One hundred years or less or more.

From the above mentioned, the term “man” is illustrated in terms of the life cycle of birth and death, and the process of change. The wise one can reveal this actual motion to gain the knowledge of non-self attachment.

The fourth, the term of “man” is explained by the intellectual and spiritual development of mankind. It is described by the different levels corresponding to the reality. In The Division of Human Types in the Pali Text Society, it is described distinctly in two broad levels which include average persons and noble persons. The first term ‘an average person’ means one who lives with endless of desire. An average person will perceive and act wrongly against the reality:

What sort of person is said to be an average person?
The person whose three fetters have not been put away and who is not proceeding to put these away-such a person is said to be an average person. (Trans. By Bimala Charan Law, The Pali Text Society: Designation of Human Types, 1992, p. 19)

According to this statement, everyone has three fetters of greed, hatred, and delusion. His or her satisfaction/dissatisfaction is based on the endless desire. One always clings to the sensual side, the opinion, the rites, and the ideas of selfhood. Thus one becomes slave to the created world, such person now loses his or her accurate direction of life and be considered as being in the ignorant state. The average persons need to realize the absolute truth of world to
develop the spiritual and intellectual quality in order to cease their unsatisfactory condition. This requires to progressing to what the Buddha called the stage of “Ariya” or the noble one. This sort of person can be identified as:

What sort of person is an Ariya?
The eight (type of) Ariyan persons are the Ariyas. The remaining persons are not Ariyas. (Trans. By Bimala Charan Law, The Pali Text Society: Designation of Human Types, 1992, p. 20)

The meaning of Ariyan person is one who trains his or her actual living through working on the correct path of Buddhist guidance and elaborately evolves to the eight types of Ariya.

One can eliminate the fetters in order to gain the higher quality of mind and consciousness and to live harmoniously with the world. A man can progress his or her spiritual ability to the four levels of the noble ones called first a Stream Enterer, second a Once-Returner, third a Never-Returner, and finally a Worthy One. This headway is divided into the four Ariya Paths and the four Ariya Fruitions based on the knowledge and practice of the Four Noble Truths.

According to the Buddha’s teaching, human beings have a choice to live their lives in ignorant state or in intellectual state, depending on their realization of the Four Noble Truths and the three characteristics of existences and things involving impermanence, suffering, and egolessness. A person who does not perceive the real world as it is will strengthen the roots of greed, hatred, and delusion. The ignorant man attached to the self and the worldly life without awareness of truth will endlessly strive for external things. On the opposite side, a person who understands clearly the compositions of life can avoid the suffering of living and able to establish a morality and harmony. A wise man can learn the truth of nature and becomes free from bondage. This person starts with the wisdom due to the end of ignorance.
2.5 The Theory and Practice to Attain the Status of “Manuṣya” or “Human Being” in the Early Pāli Text Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS</th>
<th>ANSWER</th>
<th>The Approach of the Intellectual and spiritual Development (From Ignorant being to Holistic being)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What is the real suffering or the fact of ill?</td>
<td>Aging, illness, death, the Five Aggregates as objects of attachments</td>
<td>Understood the truth of nature (realizing the three characteristics of impermanent, unsatisfactory, selfless)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What is the cause of suffering?</td>
<td>Desire (craving for pleasure, for becoming, for non-becoming)</td>
<td>Learn and observe the cause of suffering, and then try to put it away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What is the cessation of suffering?</td>
<td>The non-attachment to all craving, or freedom from desire. Nirvana</td>
<td>Correctly realize the truth of nature and the cause of suffering, then completely put away. Become free from the entire desire or attachment. (paññāvimutti, cetovimutti)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What is the path leading to the cessation of suffering?</td>
<td>The Eightfold Path</td>
<td>To gradually develop: right view, thought, speech, action, livelihood, effort mindfulness, concentration.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ariyasacca or The Four Noble Truths from the Pāli Text Sources is the highest acquisition knowledge of “Manuṣya” or human being. In reality, there is only one truth which provides the four basic knowledges for the ultimate truth. This absolute knowledge is the ultimate truth which Buddhists call Nibbāna. No one can dispute this truth, for it is the truth of nature that lies beneath the question of:

- What is the real suffering for human being?
- What causes suffering for human being?
- What is the cessation of suffering for human being?
- What is the maintaining path to the state of cessation of suffering for human being?
This essence of Buddhadhamma or the Buddha’s teaching can be summed up in two principles which are the theory and practice of the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. The first, the above three items cover the doctrine. The second, the last item covers practice. The following principle is the statement that the Buddha taught how human beings can enter the path of assurance and live the higher quality of life:

The Exalted One said that O Bhikkhus, it was concerning things unlearnt before that vision, insight, understanding, wisdom, light arose in me at ‘the thought of the Ariyan truth of the nature and fact of Ill’, and that this Truth was to be understood, and was understood by me. It was concerning things unlearnt before that vision, insight, understanding, wisdom, light arose in me at ‘the thought of the Ariyan Truth as to the Cause of Ill’, and that this Truth was concerning something to be put away, and was put away by me. It was concerning things unlearnt before that vision, insight, understanding, wisdom, light arose in me at ‘the thought of the Ariyan Truth as to the Cessation of Ill’, and that this Truth was concerning something to be realized, and was realized by me. It was concerning things unlearnt before that vision, insight, understanding, wisdom, light arose in me at ‘the thought of the Ariyan Truth as to the Course leading to the cessation of Ill’, and that this truth was to be developed, and was developed by me. (Trans. By Caroline A. F. and Rhys David, The Pali Text Society: A Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics, 1993a, p. 170)

The above mentioned knowledge becomes the ultimate guidance of mankind to the basic nature of reality. All men need to understand and perform properly to achieve the serenity. The Four Noble Truths will be discussed in detailed in the next section.

2.5.1 Dukkha or The Noble Truth of Suffering

Therein what is the Noble Truth of Suffering? Birth is suffering; ageing is suffering; death is suffering; sorrow-lamentation-pain (physical)-mental pain-despair is suffering; association with the disliked is suffering; separation from the liked is suffering; not to get what one wishes, that also is suffering; in brief the five aggregates (as objects of) the attachments are suffering. (Trans. By Pathamakyaw Ashin Thittila, The Pali Text Society: The Book of Analysis, 1995a, p. 130)
The first item of the Four Noble Truths focuses on the term “suffering”. Suffering means the undesirable or unsatisfactory condition. In Buddhism, the emphasis is on human life process which involves birth, old age, illness, and death. Human beings are composed of the five aggregates which are the form, sensation, perception, mental formative, and consciousness, and all elements of beings involved in Tilakkhana or the three characteristics: Aniccatā, Dukkhatā, Anattatā.

- **Aniccatā**: All elements of existence and things are impermanent. They do not last even for a moment, like birth and death.

- **Dukkhatā**: All elements of existence and things are unsatisfactory. There is no lasting satisfaction in them.

- **Anattatā**: All elements of existence and things are selfless. There is no lasting person, self or something in anything.

As a consequence, all beings are composed of elements of impermanence, suffering, and selflessness. From this knowledge, it is discovered that there is no living or being there to form a basis for such figments as ‘I am’ or ‘I’. Therefore, if human beings are not aware of this accurate knowledge they will become ignorant, they will attach to all elements of existence that cannot be truly possessed, so they will suffer in all things.

Suffering can be divided into three aspects of ordinary suffering, suffering as produced by change, and suffering as conditioned states.

- **Dukkha-Dukkhatā**: Painfulness as suffering is all kinds of suffering in both physical and mental forms in life such as birth, old age, sickness, and death. When people do not get what they desire they feel pain.
- **Viparītāma-Dukkhātā**: Suffering in change is explained by happiness which is not permanent. When it changes, it produces pain.

- **Sankhāra-dukkhātā**: Suffering due to formations is the analytic explanation of what is considered as a "being". Human beings are a combination of changing Rūpa or physical matters and Nāma or mental forces called Pañca-khandha or the Five Aggregates.

In Buddhism, the term human being means a combination of the five aggregates.

The first is Rūpakkhandha or the aggregate of form, it is a composition of the four fundamental elements which are solid matters, water, fire, and air.

- **Pahtavi-Dhatu** or solid is due to hardness and strength such as bone, hair, flesh.
- **Apo-Dhatu** or water is fluid, urine, blood, sweat.
- **Tejo-Dhatu** or fire is as heat and dryness.
- **Vayo-Dhatu** or air is the element of motion such as the breathing, the movement of air in all functions of body.

Once this form is manifest to eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind, its functions will correspond to the objects in the external world through visible form, sound, odor, taste and tangible objects, and mental objects such as memory or thought. Thus, the whole realm of matter, both internal and external, is included in this aggregate of form.

The second is Vedanā-khandha or the aggregate of sensation. It means feeling and a physical sensation. It is the reaction of the mental factor that arises from the six sense doors of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind itself, at the moment of contact. It presents the sensation of the pleasant, the unpleasant, or the neutral experiences through the contact of physical and mental organs with the external world.
The third is *Sañña-khandha* or the aggregate of perception. Perception means memory. It is the memory of a particular form, sound, odor, taste, tangible object, and mental object. It relates to six internal faculties and the corresponding six external objects. It can express as female perception, male perception, permanent perception, and impermanent perception, and so on.

The fourth is *Saṅkhāra-khandha* or the aggregate of mental formation. It means conception of thinking with regard to the mind, verbal, and body aspects. The verbal and body aspects are *Saṅkhāra*; however, it must first come from the mind which is frequently translated as mental formation. It includes all intended good and bad activities that is generally known as *kamma*. *Kamma* is an action motivated by defilement or ignorance.

The fifth is *Viññāna-khandha* or the aggregate of consciousness. It is the element of knowing. Knowing within the five aggregates involves knowing the form, knowing the feeling, knowing the perception, and knowing the conception. It is the foundation of the five aggregates.

A combination of the five aggregates is considered a “being” or “an individual.” And any beings are considered as impermanent, unsatisfactory, and selfless. In fact, there are very few men who realize this path of truth and live wisely in this world, while the others are not aware of this absolute truth of nature and remain in an ignorant condition.

**2.5.2 Dukkha-samudaya or The Noble Truth of the Origination of Suffering**

Therein what is the Noble Truth of the cause of suffering? That craving which is cause of becoming again, is accompanied by passionate lust, is strong passion for this and that. For example; craving for sense pleasure, craving for becoming, craving for non-becoming. (Trans. By Pathamakyaw Ashin Thittila, *The Pali Text Society: The Book of Analysis*, 1995a, p. 133)
According to the Buddha's teaching, Tanhā or the desire, the thirst, is the cause of suffering. It is this thirst which produces re-existence and re-becoming, and which is bound up with passionate greed, namely:

- **Kāma-tanhā** or Thirst for sense-pleasures
- **Bhava-tanhā** or Thirst for existence and becoming
- **Vibhava-tanhā** or Thirst for non-existence or self-annihilation

The term thirst includes not only the above mentioned, but also the desire for conceptions and belief which are called dhamma-tanhā. As long as there is this thirst to be and to become, the circle of continuity goes on. It can stop only when this thirst is cut off through the realization of reality.

While studying the cause of suffering subject, it is essential to reveal the principles of Idappaccayatā or the Law of Conditionality or the Orderliness of Nature and Paticca-Samuppāda or the Dependent Origination. All existences that arise and exist are governed by the Law of Conditionality or Idappaccayatā.

Decay-and death is impermanent, conditioned, arisen causally, is by nature withering away, passing away, fading away, coming to an end. So too is birth, becoming, grasping, craving, feeling, contact, sense, name-and-shape, consciousness, activities, ignorance. These also are impermanent, conditioned, arisen causally, are by nature withering away, passing away, fading away, coming to an end. These, brethren, are called things as having causally happened. (Trans. By Rhys Davids, The Pali Text Society: Book of Kindred Sayings Vol. II, 1994, p. 22)

Conditions arise when there are the cause and supporting factors working together. Suffering and no suffering can be proven here and now. When one becomes attached to feeling, suffering arises, but if one detaches oneself from feeling, this is immediately wise contact, so there is nothing arises or called Suññatā or emptiness. The nothing refers to the sense that upon contact, feeling arises, but desire or attachment does not arise; so suffering
does not arise. This practical principle must be learnt and applied with the process of Dependent Origination because all things are under this law of nature. The Dependent Origination means arising as the result of complete dependence. In Buddhism, “ignorance” means one who has not fully realized the following factors: suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path for practicing and maintaining the mind in the state of no-suffering. According to the law of nature, everything starts at “contact”. It means that both created world and authentic world begin with “contact”. In this study, there are two forms of contact, wise contact and ignorant contact. With wise contact, nothing arises, everything becomes Nirodha or cessation of suffering. However, with ignorant contact, all things arise, so everything becomes spiritual suffering:

This is the illustration of the Law of Dependent Origination which leads to the arising of suffering:

- With ignorance (avijja) as condition, there are the concocting (sankhara);
- with the concocting as condition, there is consciousness (viññāna);
- with consciousness as condition, there is mind-body (nāma-rupā);
- with mind-body as condition, there is sense-media (salāyatana);
- with sense-media as condition, there is contact (phassa);
- with contact as condition, there is feeling (vedanā);
- with feeling as condition, there is craving (tanhā);
- with craving as condition, there is clinging (upādāna);
- with clinging as condition, there is existence (bhava);
- with existence as condition, there is birth (jāti);
- with birth as condition, old age and death, sorrow, grief, pain, lamentation, and despair arise completely. The dependent co-origination of the entire mass of suffering naturally happens in just this way. (Translated from Paticca-samuppada from His Own Lips, p. 5-10. Vinaya-pitaka, Mahavagga; 4/11. Appears in other places, such as Khuddaka-nikaya, Udana, Bodhi-vagga, Bodhi-suttas #1, 2, & 3.)

These principles are presented to all mankind for the correct realization of the state of ignorance. Men should know the realm of existences and world in order to reform themselves.
2.5.3 *Dukkha-nirodha* or The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering

Therein what is the Noble Truth of the cessation of suffering? That which is the entire dispassionate cessation of, the forsake of, the discarding of, the freedom from, the non-attachment to the same craving. (Trans. By Pathammakyaw Ashin Thittila, *The Pali Text Society: The Book of Analysis*, 1995a, p. 135)

In Buddhism, the cessation of suffering refers to the state of mind opposite to suffering. It means the state of no suffering when its characteristics will be a clear, clean, calm, and cool mind for the original luminous mind. These are emancipation, liberation, and freedom from the continuity of suffering.

In the Law of Dependent Origination leading to no-suffering, the wisdom contact is orderly shown as:

- due to the quenching of ignorance, the concocting quench;
- due to the quenching of the concocting, consciousness quenches;
- due to the quenching of consciousness, mind-body quenches;
- due to the quenching of mind-body, the sense-media quench;
- due to the quenching of the sense-media, contact quenches;
- due to the quenching of contact, feeling quenches;
- due to the quenching of feeling, craving quenches;
- due to the quenching of craving, clinging quenches;
- due to the quenching of clinging, existence quenches;
- due to the quenching of existence, birth quenches;
- due to the quenching of birth, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are quenched. The quenching of the entire mass of suffering naturally happens in just this way. (Translated from *Paticcasamuppada* from His Own Lips, p. 5-10. *Vinaya-pitaka, Mahavagga*; 4/1/1. Appears in other places, such as *Khuddaka-nikaya, Udana, Bodhi-vagga, Bodhi-suttas #1, 2, & 3.*)

To eliminate suffering completely one has to eliminate the main root of suffering which is "the desire" or "the thirst". The condition begins upon contact, when feeling arises. Upon feeling, desire arises then suffering arises. Suffering arises only when contact occurs with ignorance.

The extinction of thirst can be known in the term of *Nibbāna*; it is explained as original luminous mind which is void, or neutral and free from suffering. *Nibbāna* is the complete
cessation of that very thirst, giving it up, renouncing it, emancipation, and detachment from it. It is to be realized by the wise man who practices the path leading to the cessation of suffering or the Noble Eight-Fold Path.

To attain the cessation of defilements, human beings can gradually progress themselves according to the five stages of extinction:

1. **Vikkhambhana-nirodha**: It is the extinction by suppression. The mind is released from ten fetters by virtue of absorption. This state lasts as long as absorption itself. The fetters are composed of greed, hatred, delusion, conceit, wrong view, doubt, sloth, restlessness, shamelessness, lack of moral dread.

2. **Tadanga-nirodha**: It is the extinction by substitution of opposites. It is momentary freedom from the view and belief that conditioned phenomena are permanent, pleasant, and egoism. This freedom is achieved while contemplating their impermanent, insecure and soulless nature.

3. **Samuccheda-nirodha**: It is the extinction by extirpation. The freedom brought about by uprooting of defilements on attainment of the Four Path which are the Path of Stream-Entry, the Path of Once Returning, The Path of Non-Returning, and the Path of Arahantship.

4. **Patipassaddhi-nirodha**: It is the extinction by tranquilization. The freedom from defilements brought about by the Four Fruitions following the attainment of the Four Paths which are the Fruition of Stream-Entry, the Fruition of Once-Returning, The Fruition of Non-Returning, and the Fruition of Arahantship.

5. **Nissarana-nirodha**: It is the extinction by getting free. It is the absolute releasing from defilements lasting up to Nibbāna.
2.5.4 *Dukkha-nirodha-gāminī* or The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering or The Noble Eight-Fold Path

Therein what is the Noble Truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering? Only this Noble Eight Constituent Path, namely: Right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. (Trans. by Pathammakyaw Ashin Thittila, *The Pali Text Society: The Book of Analysis*, 1995a, p. 138)

This Eight-Fold Path is used to maintain an individual’s mind in the state of no suffering. It consists of eight factors: Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Bodily Action, Right-Livelihood, Right-Effort, Right-Mindfulness, and Right-Concentration. All are required to follow the rule of *Majjimā patipadā* or the “Middle Path” which proposes a moderate way to practice in order to avoid the two extremes of sensual indulgences and of self-mortification.

- *Sammādiṭṭhi* or Right View is an understanding of things as they are. The right understanding will make proper critical reflection and leads to the wisdom which sees the ultimate truth.
- *Sammāsaṅkappa* or Right Thought denotes the thoughts of selfless renunciation or detachment. It means renouncing thoughts about sensuality, bearing no thoughts of hatred, and giving up thoughts of violence.
- *Sammāvācā* or Right Speech is related to ethics or morality. It means abstention from lying, from slander, from malicious language, and from babble and gossip.
- *Sammākammanta* or Right Action aims to promote moral conduct. People need to abstain from destroying life, from stealing, from dishonest dealings, from illegitimate sexual intercourse, and to enhance a peaceful life in the right way.
- *Sammā-ājīva* or Right Livelihood means that one should abstain from making one’s living through a profession that brings harm to others, such as trading in weapons,
intoxicating drinks, and so on. One should live by a profession which is honorable, blameless and innocent of harm to others.

- **Sammāvāyāma** or Right Effort is the energetic will to prevent *akusala-dhamma* or the unwholesome states of mind in order to produce and develop the good and *kusala-dhamma* or wholesome states of mind present in a man.

- **Sammāsati** or Right Mindfulness is a principle of the *Dhamma* known as *Satipaṭṭhāna* or the four foundations of mindfulness. The development of mindfulness incorporates both *samatha* or the cultivation of concentration meditation and *vipassanā* or the insight meditation. It is to be diligently mindful of the contemplation of the body, of feelings, of mind, and of ideas. The Right Mindfulness is aimed at eliminating greed and grief related to world.

- **Sammāsamādhi** or Right Concentration pertains to the concentration on a suitable object regularly with the aims of attaining wholesome happiness and peacefulness and overcoming the defilements. Concentration means stilling the mind or establishing one-pointedness of the mind. There are forty ways of the meditation practice, called *kammathāna* or "places of work" as follows:
  1. **Kasina** or Ten Meditation Devices: These are external meditation devices used to focus concentration. There are the concentration on earth, water, fire, air, blue color, yellow, red, white, light, and air.
  2. **Asubha** or Ten Unattractive Objects: This subject appears similar to the contemplation of bodily decay in the mindfulness of the body. There are bloated corpse, livid corpse, festering corpse, disjoint corpse, gnawed corpse, mangled
corpse, hacked and scattered corpse, bleeding corpse, worm-infested corpse, and skeleton.

3. *Anussatiyo* or Ten Recollections: The first three are devotional meditations on the great qualities of the Triple Gem which are the *Buddha*, the *Dhamma*, and the *Sangha*. The next three recollections also rely on the ancient formulas: the meditations on morality, generosity, and the potential for divine-like qualities in oneself. The remaining are contemplation on death, contemplation on the 32 impure parts of the body, mindfulness of breathing, and contemplation on virtue of *Nibbāna*.

4. *Brahmavihāra* or Four Sublime States: The meditator will develop the sublime states of mind in loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity.

5. *Arūppa* or Four Immaterial States: The meditator contemplates four absorptions of the formless spheres which are sphere of infinity of space, sphere of infinity of consciousness, sphere of nothingness, and sphere of neither perception nor non-perception.

6. *Āharepatikūlasāññā* or Perception of the Loathsomeness of Food: It is the perception of the repulsiveness of food to reduce attachment to the pleasures of the palate.

7. *Catudhātu-vavatthāma* or Analysis of the Four Elements: It is the contemplation of the body in terms of the four primary elements, namely earth, water, fire, and air.

These practices are called the forty subjects of meditation, and each meditation practice is guided according to *cariyā* or each intrinsic nature of a person which is divided into six types.

1. *Raga-cariyā* is a person who is full of lust, who is infatuated with beauty. The proper meditation is the ten unattractive objects.
2. *Dosa-cariyā* is a person who harbors hatred and is impatient and hotheaded. The proper meditation is the four sublime states and ten meditation devices.

3. *Moha-cariyā* is a person who is deluded, forgetful, and foggy. The proper meditation is the mindfulness of breathing.

4. *Saddhā-cariyā* is a person who is full of confidence in others and is too gullible and impressionable. The proper meditation is the first six modes of recollections.

5. *Boddhi-cariyā* is a person who has a good deal of wisdom, is accomplished, and likes to examine causes and effects. The proper meditation is an analysis of the four elements, a perception of the loathsomeness of food.

6. *Vitakka-cariyā* is a person who likes to think, who tends to speculate and worry. The proper meditation is ten meditation devices, and the mindfulness of breathing.

It is true that concentration is an important aspect of Buddhist practice; however, its sphere of pursuit of *vimutti* or the final goal of liberation has its own dimensions. The mental development has two states which are *samatha-bhāvanā* or tranquility development and *vipassanā-bhāvanā* or insight development. The result of tranquility practice is shown in the happiness of eight levels of *jhāna* or absorption and therefore remain at *lokiya* or a mundane level that is not associated with the final goal of Buddhism that are applied in order to attain wisdom. From this point, the practice that leads to the essence of *pañña* or wisdom, is called insight meditation which is needed.

To achieve the essence of wisdom, there are two selected method. The first method concentrates on *sammāsati* or the proper mindfulness. In this method, mindfulness plays an important role and applies concentration only for assistance. Mindfulness is crucial to the focusing of the attention. It allows wisdom to contemplate various objects of attention. This
practice is called insight meditation and its result is called paññāvimutti or liberation through wisdom. It is the elimination of āsava or mental intoxicants by means of wisdom. As soon as its result exists, the initial concentration practice becomes stable and pure as it becomes linked with wisdom and progresses to cetovimutti or liberation of the mind. In this case, the deliverance of mind is not fully accomplished and remains only in its initial stages until it achieves completion of liberation through wisdom. A person who has followed this method and clearly has the liberation through wisdom is known as paññāvimutta. This person has been liberated through wisdom and realized the extinction of mental intoxicants; however, he or she does not gain samāpatti or attainment.

The second method emphasizes concentration and gives it a role of utmost importance. It involves using concentration to make the mind tranquil and fixed, to the point that it reaches a state of samāpatti or attainment. This practice makes the mind firmly linked with its object of attention until it is ready for action, when this has been achieved, the mind is open for engaging in activities that can lead to the highest result. In this mental state, various types of unwholesome tendencies and kilesa-āsava or intoxicants which normally disrupt thought and cause pressures, are minimized, and stilled. This mode is called the development of tranquility. This mental state is suitable for making further progress in wisdom practice to eliminate all sediments in the mind, called insight meditation. The results of the second method can be divided into two parts. The first part is the result of cetovimutti or liberation of the mind due to the power of concentration. Later, the second part is called paññāvimutti or liberation through wisdom. As soon as this liberation through wisdom is attained, the previously achieved liberation of the mind is subject to deterioration and has no regress. A person who has followed the second method is called an ubhatobhāgavimutta or one who has been liberated in
both ways through mental attainments and wisdom. This person can attain certain abilities in
the process of practicing the absorptions or abhīñña or the six superknowledge. There are
mental powers, clairvoyance or divine ear, telepathy or mind-reading, clairvoyance or divine
eye or the ability to know of the decease and rebirth of beings according to their kamma;
recollection of former existences, knowledge of the extinction of all mental intoxicants.

When human beings develop their lofty quality of mental and intellectual stages, they
can gain Ariya-dhana or the noble treasures. They enhance all their confidence, morality,
conscience, moral dread, great learning, liberality, and wisdom. They have virtues of great
assistance to accomplish their peaceful lives and to practice for the welfare of others. They are
able to progress their mental and intellectual quality to the absolute, and become the
compassion, the wisdom, and the purity one.

To understand the Four Noble Truths, men get the possibility of self liberation. They will
have their right consciousness and their right view to transform their ignorant selves through
the cultivation of wisdom. They can live contentedly with what they have, with no further
desire to accumulate more. They can cease their defilement including personality view, doubt,
clinging to rules and rituals, sensual desire, aversion, desire for fine material existence, desire
for immaterial existence, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance. Thus, men can develop their
quality of mind and consciousness to the four steps of Noble Ones which are separated into the
four subsets of Ariya Paths and of Ariya Fruitions based on the awareness of the Four Noble
Truths. From the Pali Text Society, the division of human types by eight is demonstrated to the
Noble Ones as:

Who are the four persons identifiable with the path and who are the four
identifiable with the fruition?
The stream-attainer and one who proceeds to realize the fruition stage; the once­
returner and one who proceeds to realize the fruition stage; the never-returner and
one who proceeds to realize the fruition stage and the *Arahant* (elect or worthy) and one who proceeds to attain *Arahantship* – these are the four persons who are identifiable with the path and these the four identifiable with the fruition. (Trans. By Bimala Charan Law, *The Pali Text Society: Designation of Human Types*, 1992, p. 103)

These above mentioned are the four levels of the holy persons who can release the ten fetters composing of greed, hatred, delusion, conceit, wrong view, doubt, sloth, restlessness, shamelessness, and lack of moral dread. The more fetters they release, the more holistic quality of person they reach to. During their intellectual and spiritual development, they are recognized in the process of the noble paths and in the noble fruitions. Here is the description of the noble states in details.

1. From the *Pali Text Society: Designation of Human Types*, a Stream Enterer is defined as:

   What sort of person is a 'stream-attainer,' and what sort of person is one striving for realization of the fruition stage? A person who works for putting away the three fetters is one working for realization of the fruition stage of a 'stream-attainer'; the person whose three fetters have been put away is said to be a 'stream-attainer'. (Trans. By Bimala Charan Law, *The Pali Text Society: Designation of Human Types*, 1992, p. 26)

   *Sotāpanna* or a Stream Enterer refers to one who has attained the first stage of holiness.

   o *Sotāpattimagga* or the Path of Stream-Entrance: One practices to see a truly existing self in the five aggregates and the selfless nature of all phenomena. One has no doubt through the Buddha's teaching since one can see it for oneself. And one can be free from any rules through his practice of the Eightfold Path.

   o *Sotāpattiphala* or the Fruition of Stream-Entry: One can cut off the first three defilements of personality view, doubt, clinging to rules and rituals.

2. The term Once-Returner is described in the Designation of Human Types from *Pali Text Society* as:
What sort of person is a ‘once-returner,’ and what sort of person is one striving for realization of the fruition stage?
A person who is working for the destruction of attachment to sensual pleasures and malevolence is one working for realization of the fruition stage of a once­returner; the person whose attachment to sensual pleasures and malevolence has been destroyed is said to be a ‘once-returner’. (Trans. By Bimala Charan Law, *The Pali Text Society: Designation of Human Types, 1992, p. 27*)

*Sakadāgāmī* or Once-Returner refers to one who has attained the second stage of the Path and will be reborn on earth only once before attaining the final emancipation.

- *Sakadāgāminīmagga* or the Path of Once Returning: After reaching the Stream-Entry, one has to develop to cut off more defilements by his practice of insight contemplation, passes through the ascending stages of insight knowledge. This second path does not totally remove any of the fetters but it reduces the roots of greed, aversion, and delusion.

- *Sakadāgāminīphala* or the Fruit of Once-Returning: One gains the results for the path’s work of cutting off defilement of the second path.

3. The term of a Non-Returner is defined by the Designation of Human Types in *Pali Text Society* as:

What sort of person is a ‘non-returner,’ and what sort of person is one striving for realization of the fruition stage?
A person working for putting away the attachment to sensual pleasures and malevolence without a residuum is one working for realization of the fruition stage of a ‘non-returner’. The person whose attachment to sensual pleasures and malevolence has been entirely put away is said to be a ‘non-returner’. (Trans. By Bimala Charan Law, *The Pali Text Society: Designation of Human Types, 1992, p. 27*)

*Anāgāmī* or a Never-Returner refers to one who has attained the third stage of holiness.
One will not return to the human state of existence in any future life. One will be reborn in a higher sphere in the fine-material world and there reach deliverance.
• Anāgāmīmagga or the Path of Never-Returning: One who takes up the task of contemplation to the third stage of Ariya Path. One cannot fall into any desire for sense of pleasure and not be aroused to anger, aversion, or discontent.

• Anāgāmīphala or the Fruit of Never-Returning: One who cuts off further defilements of the two fetters of sensual desire and ill will.

4. This is the definition of the Worthy One from the Pali Text Society in Designation of Human Types:

What sort of person is an Arahant, and what sort of person is one striving for realization of the fruition stage? A person working for putting away attachment to form and the formless, to pride, haughtiness, and ignorance without any residuum is one working for the fruition stage of Arahatship. The person whose attachment to form and the formless, to pride, haughtiness and ignorance has been entirely put away is said to be an Arahant. (Trans. By Bimala Charan Law, The Pali Text Society: Designation of Human Types, 1992, p. 27)

Arahanta or an Arahant or Arahat or Worthy one refers to one who has attained Nibbāna, the extinction of all defilements and suffering.

• Arahattamagga or the Path of the Worthy One or Arahatship: One who has worked for the realization of the Fruition of Arahatship. This path needs the clear comprehension and practice of the Four Noble Truths.

• Arahattaphala or the Fruit of the Worthy one: One who is an Arahant, attains the final stage of holiness or the final freedom. One cuts off the five remaining fetters of desire for fine-material existence, for immaterial existence, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance.

According to the Four Noble Paths and the Four Noble Fruitions, the Noble Ones can be divided into two main types. First, Sekha means the learner who undertakes the seven levels of Noble paths and Noble Fruitions. Second, Asekha means the adept or one who attains
Arahattaphala. Both of them are called Dakkhineyya puggala or a worthy of donation. This is a selected quotation from Pali Text Society: Designation of Human Types:

What sort of person is a learner?
The four persons who possess the path and the three persons who possess the fruition are learners. Arahants are non-learners; the remaining persons are neither learners nor non-learners. (Trans. By Bimala Charan Law, The Pali Text Society: Designation of Human Types, 1992, p. 20-21)

Whenever realizing the profound knowledge of the Four Noble Truths, human beings can moderate their own lives along with the two extremes of living. The first extreme is to search for happiness through the pleasures of the senses. This is the usual living of the ordinary people. The second extreme is to search for happiness through self-mortification in different forms of asceticism. When they discover through personal experience of the middle path which gives right vision, right knowledge and accurate practice, then they are able to reach calm state, insight, enlightenment, and nibbāna. This middle path is generally undertaken with the Noble Eightfold Path. All men are required to enlarge both qualities of intellect and mind to reach the state of compassion and wisdom. The compassion represents love, charity, kindness, and tolerance to others. In addition, the wisdom will stand for the intellectual of man. If one develops only the emotional side and neglects the intellectual side, one may become a good-hearted fool. Conversely, if one develops only the intellectual side and neglects the emotional side, one may turn into a hard-hearted intellect without feeling for others. Thus the aim of the Buddhist way of life is to develop both compassion and wisdom equally in order to be a Noble one.
2.6 The Selected Stories of Persons who Develop their Quality of Mind from their Ignorant Being to Holistic Being in the Dhammapada Early Text Source or the Path of Perfection.

Dhammapada preserved the Buddhavachana or "word of Buddha". It was orally assembled from the sermons of the Buddha given on some three hundred different occasions to kings and queens, to ministers and merchants, cowherds, and peasants, to grieving mothers, distressed lovers, monks, ascetics, Brahmin, saints, paupers, and criminals. It was compiled at the First Council of Buddhist Elders three weeks after the Buddha's death. Dhammapada is therefore the oldest anthology on Buddhism which is recorded in Sutta Pitaka of the Tipitaka. It provides the story-telling of an exalted ethical treatise of twenty-six cantos giving the message of essence of Buddhist wisdom.

According to Dhammapada source, it was shown that "Manusya" or "human beings" were able to reach the Ariya Path and became the Worthy One at the moment of true realization of the sermon of Buddha. Mostly people misunderstand Buddhism and think that it is so lofty that it cannot be practiced by the ordinary man to achieve the holiness. They are of the opinion that the Buddha dhamma is merely for monks in monasteries or one who cuts him or her off from society. However, to be a true Buddhist does not mean running away physically from the world, "Manusya" or all human beings, be they religious or non-religious persons, can be pure and free from defilements at every moment of life and can gain the holistic state. From Dhammapada source, the Buddha said that:

If a man puts on the pure yellow robe with a soul which is impure, without self-harmony and truth, he is not worthy of the holy robe.
But he who is pure from sin and whose soul is strong in virtue, who has self-harmony and truth, he is worthy of the holy robe. (Trans. By Juan Mascafo, The Dhammapada: The Path of Perfection, 1973, p. 36)
Due to a lack of clear understanding of the sermons of the Buddha, this chapter will present a selected stanza from *Dhammapada* source which is suitable for all mankind. From *Dhammapada* source, there are articles of the minister, the queen, the acrobat, the monks, the fisherman who heard the word of Buddha and attained the *Ariya* path or the noble path, the *Ariya* fruition or the noble fruition, and the *Arahantship* or the worthy one at the moment of true realization of reality. It is shown that the development of the quality of human mind occurs during the transformation from the ignorant state to the wisdom state of beings while living amid the circumstances of both secular life and monastic life.

From *Dhammapada* source, the first sample is the story of Santati who was the minister of King Pasenadi. He suppressed a rebellion on the border, so the king gave him a dancing girl to entertain him for seven days. However, the dancer died while dancing. Santati was shocked and deeply distressed. He went to the Buddha and asked for help to get over his sorrow. The Buddha’s verse toward Santati is shown as follow:

> In the past there has been in you clinging due to craving; get rid of it. In future, do not let such clinging occur in you. Do not also harbour any clinging in the present; by not having any clinging, craving and passion will be calmed in you and you will realize *Nibbāna*. (Trans. By Daw Mya Tin, *The Dhammapada Verses and Stories*, 2000, p. 299)

After hearing the verse, Santati had the right understanding not to cling to all attachments. He developed the higher spiritual qualities and attained *Arahatship*. At that time, he realized that his life span was at the end. He passed away by attaining *Parinibbāna* or the complete Nirvana while he wore the secular dress with full regalia. The Buddha continually said that:

> But although a man may wear fine clothing, if he lives peacefully; and is good, self-possessed, has faith and is pure; and if he does not hurt any living being, he is a holy Brahmin, a hermit of seclusion, a monk called a *Bhikkhu*. (Trans. By Juan Mascaso, *The Dhammapada: The Path of Perfection*, 1973, p. 55)
According to Santati story, it is important to note that the thought of selfish desire is the result of the lack of wisdom. Most men are considered ignorant persons who perceive the world in the level of relative truth corresponding to his own intellectual level. But in the opposite side, the wise men are composed of the thoughts of self detachment. This wisdom is given with the noble qualities. They can see the reality of world and be free from all bondages; therefore, whatever they do or wherever they live they will become respectful and serene.

The second sample is the story of Theri Khemā. Khemā was the Queen of King Bimbisāra who was very beautiful and also very proud. Once Queen Khemā came to the Buddha monastery, she saw a beautiful young lady who appeared in front of her by Buddha’s supernatural power. That young lady began to fade gradually and changed into a corpse. Queen Khemā then realized the impermanence and worthlessness of beauty. The Buddha spoke that:

O Khemā! Look carefully at this decaying body which is built around a skeleton of bones and is subject to disease and decay. Look carefully at the body which is thought of so highly by the foolish. Look at the worthlessness of the beauty of this young girl. (Trans. By Daw Mya Tin, The Dhammapada Verses and Stories, 2000, p. 455)

When Queen Khemā heard this statement, she realized the truth of beings and entered the stream of a holistic one. She attained Sotāpatti Fruition. Then the Buddha spoke in verse as follows:

Those who are slaves of desires run into the stream of desires, even as a spider runs into the web that it made. Therefore some men cut their fetters and start to walk on the path, leaving sorrows behind. (Trans. By Juan Mascaño, The Dhammapada: The Path of Perfection, 1973, p. 84)

At the end of this verse, Queen Khemā attained Arahantship while being under the role of queen and was later admitted to the Order and became the Chief Female Disciple of the Buddha.
This story illustrates an ordinary woman who thoroughly understands the changing phenomenal world of impermanence, suffering, and selflessness. She realizes that the harmful thought of I and mine, craving, pride, egoism, and other defilements are the source of all troubles in the world.

The third selected sample is the story of Uggasena. Uggasena was the son of a rich man who married a young dancer. Later, Uggasena became an acrobat and followed the troupe. Once he was neglected by the audience and became very depressed. The Buddha then addressed Uggasana:

_Uggasana, a wise man should abandon all attachment to the khandhas i.e. aggregates and strive to gain liberation from the round of rebirths._ (Trans. By Daw Mya Tin, _The Dhammapada Verses and Stories_, 2000, p. 457)

Then the Buddha spoke in verse as follows:

_Leave the past behind; leave the future behind; leave the present behind. Thou art then ready to go to the other shore. Never more shalt thou return to a life that ends in death._ (Trans. By Juan Mascato, _The Dhammapada: the Path of Perfection_, 1973, p. 84)

At the end of this verse, Uggasana, the acrobat attained Arahantship and was soon admitted to the Order by the Buddha. This story described that men are composed of the Five Aggregates which are temporary, changeable, and selfless. Whenever they truly understand this reality of being they will be free from all worldly bondage. In Buddhism there are four different kinds of attachment which include the sensual attachment or the desirable sense of objects and materials, the opinion attachment or to have the wrong understanding that all things are selves, the rites attachment or the specific ritual commandments, and the idea of selfhood attachment or the wrong idea of egoism “me” and “mine”. These attachments lead people to the unsatisfied condition. The ignorant persons usually live their life in the memories of the past or in desires and speculations about the future. So they are unhappy and...
discontented with the present moment. Whenever a man is fully aware and mindful of the act he performs at the moment according to the reality, his spirituality will grow and he will be contented with his present life.

The fourth sample is the story of Five Hundred Bhikkhus or monks. During the time of Buddha’s life, there were some monks who did not comprehend Buddhadhamma and the essence of the Four Noble Truths. Some were considered average persons and others were Ariya who attained different levels of path and fruition. This story described the objective of being in the state of monks in monastery. During that time some monks were considered as having an average mind quality and needed to develop and practice in order to achieve the holistic mind quality. These monks had to devote time and practice in order to eliminate attachments to form and formless. They had to cut off all ten fetters of personality view, doubt, clinging to rules and rituals, sensual desire, aversion, desire for fine material existence, desire for immaterial existence, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance in order to attain the state of holiness. The sermon of Buddha is given as follows:

When the Five Hundred Bhikkhus returned to the Jetavana monastery in the evening and talked about their trips, the Buddha came to them in the midst of their conversation and said to them that:

Bhikkhus, the path you are talking about is external to you; a bhikkhu should only be concerned with the path of the Noble Ones (Ariyas) and strive to do what should be done for the attainment of the Ariya Path (Magga) that leads to the realization of the Perfect Peace (Nibbāna). (Trans. By Daw Mya Tin, The Dhammapada Verses and Stories, 2000, p. 407)

Then the Buddha spoke in verse as follows:

The best of the paths is the path of eight. The best of truths, the four sayings. The best of states, freedom from passions. The best of men, the one who sees. This is the path. There is no other that leads to vision. Go on this path, and you will confuse Māra, the devil of confusion.
Whoever goes on this path travels to the end of his sorrow. I showed this path to
the world when I found the roots of sorrow.
It is you who must make the effort. The Great of the path only show the way.
Those who think and follow the path become free from the bondage of Mara.
(Trans. By Juan Mascaño, The Dhammapada: The Path of Perfection, 1973, p. 75)

At the end of the discourse those Five Hundred bhikkhus attained Arahatship. From this
statement, the Buddha proposes the doctrine of the Four Noble Truths for all men to follow if
they want to attain self-liberation. Further he gives the Eight-Fold Path leading to the cessation
of all suffering. He adds that all men need to be free from their own desire; therefore, whoever
realizes this truth will be considered the best honorable man.

The last selected sample is the story of a fisherman named Ariya. Once, the Buddha
stopped near the place where Ariya was fishing. The fisherman informed the Buddha that his
name was Ariya. Then the Buddha explained that the Noble Ones (Ariyas) did not hurt any
living being, but since the fisherman lived by taking the lives of the fish he was not worthy of
his name. The Buddha said this verse:

He who injures living being is not an Ariya (noble); By nonviolence towards all
living beings one becomes an Ariya. (Trans. By Juan Mascaño, The
Dhammapada: The Path of Perfection, 1973, p. 75)

After hearing, the fisherman had the right view to transform his ignorant perception
through the cultivation of wisdom. He attained Sotapatti Fruition. When human beings
develop their lofty quality of mental and intellectual stages, they can achieve Ariya-dhana or
the noble treasure. They become harmless and virtuous. The right view will enhance the mode
of morality, conscience, compassion, liberty, and wisdom.

In Buddhist view, it can be concluded that all men have an opportunity to realize the
ultimate truth of nature and to progress through the wisdom and purity of mind in the present
life. From the original scripture the Pali Text Society and the Dhammapada, both defined the
meaning of “Manusya” or human being as a man who has a lofty mind. This study on the
concept of “Manusya” or human being attempts to define the development of the high quality
of mind in a person and finally gain the holistic quality. The doctrine and discipline are based
on the theory of the Four Noble Truths that explained what the real suffering for human being
is, what the cause of suffering for human being is, what the cessation of suffering of human
being is, and what the maintaining path to the state of cessation of suffering for human being
is. The knowledge is clear to anyone that all things in the universe arise, exist, and fade away,
including suffering. This process follows the laws of nature stating that all conditioned things
are characterized by impermanence and human being is also under this law. Concerning the
activities of mind, one is aware whether one’s mind is lusting or not, given to hatred or not,
deluded or not, and so on. In this way one is aware of all movements of mind, how they arise
and disappear. Understanding the Four Noble Truths is the core of human fulfillment for the
possibility of self liberation.

As a consequence, To be noble and pure Buddhists are possible for all humanity who
purposely purify their spirituality and be free from the defilements of greed, hatred, delusion,
conceit, wrong view, doubt, sloth, restlessness, shamelessness, lack of moral dread. They need
to practice their right view of egolessness in order to live harmoniously with nature. In the
Book of Gradual Sayings Vol.I Anguttara-nikaya, the Buddha states that:

Brāhmaṇa, one who is ablaze with lust...depraved with malice...bewildered with
delusion...if lust be abandoned...no longer plans thus, no longer suffers thus. To
that extent, brāhmaṇa, Nibbāna is seen in this life...it is to be realized for
themselves by the wise. (Trans. By F.L. Woodward, The Pali Text Society: The
CHAPTER III

THE CONCEPT OF "MANUŚYA" OR "HUMAN-BEING" IN
BUDDHADĀSA BHĪKKHU’S INTERPRETATION FOR MODERN AGE

3.1 The Development of Buddhism in Thailand

3.1.1 Buddhism in Thailand Past

Buddhism, founded by Gotama the Buddha, had completed its 2500 years of existence and was introduced to Thailand during the reign of Asoka, the great Indian emperor who sent Buddhist missionaries to various countries. Two elder monks, Sona and Uttara, were sent to spread the Buddha's Dhamma in these territories or Suvarnabhumi or Golden Land. This name was a term broadly used in ancient times to denote that part of Southeast Asia which now includes Southern Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Malaysia. In the book *Buddhism in Thailand Its Past and Its Present* by Dr. Karuna Kusalasaya, the author clearly states that Buddhism reached Thailand in various sects at four different periods namely:

- Theravāda or Southern Buddhism,
- Mahāyāna or Northern Buddhism,
- Burma (Pagan) Buddhism,
- and Ceylon (Lankāvamsa) Buddhism. (Kusalasaya, 2001, p. 4)

The four different sects were introduced to Thailand at different reigns, different times, and different parts of the country. Today, Thailand can be termed as Theravāda Buddhist country. However, there still remain people of different sects in Thailand who live in peace and co-operate with one another.
3.1.2 Buddhism in Thailand Present

In the long history of existence, Buddhism is a dominant force in the Thai way of life, relating with culture, arts, literature, ethics, philosophy, morality, folkways, and festivals. It is shown in this quotation that:

According to the national census taken in 2000, the population of Thailand numbers 61,878,746. Out of this number 94 percents are Buddhist. (Kusalasaya, 2001, p. 22)

In Thailand, indeed the Thai nation as a whole have been predominantly Buddhists. There are two parts of Buddhists namely the Bhikkhu Sangha or the Holy Order, and the Laity.

The Bhikkhu Sangha or the Holy Order is divided into two Nikāyas or sects of the Buddhist Order in Thailand: One is the Mahānikāya, and the other is the Dhammayuttika Nikāya. The monks of the two sects differ very little from one another. The entire monk population in 1988 are as quoted:

In the whole kingdom of Thailand 265,956 monks, 87,695 novices and 30,678 monasteries or temples. (Kusalasaya, 2001, p. 24)

In Thailand there are two categories of Buddhist monks one comprises those who become monks for a long period and those others who enter the order temporarily. Nowadays, there is a Mahāthera Samāgama or the Council of the Elders consisting of the two sects from Mahānikāya and Dhammayuttika Nikāya. The Council Committee members comprise not less than four and not more than eight senior monks under the supervision of the Department of Religious Affairs. Education of monks and novices in Thailand centers mainly on the studies of Dhamma or the Buddhist doctrine and Pāli, the language in which the Theravāda scriptures are written. There are two main institutes of learning exclusively for monks and novices. One is the Mahā Chulālongkorn Rājvidyālaya, and the other is the Mahā Mongkut Rājvidyālaya. Both are located in Bangkok and organized on a modern university footing and also added the
secular curriculum there. Both aim to give broad education to monks in order to enable them to be of better service to the cause of Buddhism amidst modern conditions.

Throughout its over 2,500 years of existence, Buddhism has been closely connected with the lay community. Co-operation between the laity and the monks in Thailand is close and spontaneous. The monks are expected to live exemplary lives for the benefit of themselves as well as of those who look to them as teacher and moral guides. The average Thai males customarily enter monkhood once in their life for merit-making. The idea of performing meritorious deeds is very deeply ingrained in the minds of the Buddhists. A man gains merit each time he gives alms to monks or contributes to any religious rites. There are various merit practices such as releasing caged birds, freeing caught fishes, plastering gold leaf on Buddha statue, constructing or repairing temples or other religious places. The belief in the law of Kamma or action is profoundly associated with Thai Buddhist attitude toward life; therefore, Buddhism becomes the prerequisite religious observances related to various fields of Thai way of life. Nowadays, there are many lay Buddhist organizations, the oldest one is the Buddhist Association of Thailand under the Royal Patronage. Later, there are organizations such as the Young Buddhists Association, the Dhammadāna Association in Chaiya, the Buddha Nigama of Chiangmai and so on. These organizations mostly have similar objective to promote the study and practice of Buddhism and to propagate the message in and outside Thailand. They try to demonstrate that Buddhism can contribute to harmonious and peaceful living.
3.2 Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu and Buddhism in Thailand

3.2.1 The Life of Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, (1906–1993) meaning the Servant of the Buddha, has played an important role in modern Thai Buddhism and has been widely regarded as one of the most influential Theravada Buddhist monks of the 20th century. He wrote the following vow in a notebook on 28 August 1932:

I commit this life and body as a dedication to the Lord Buddha. I am a servant of the Buddha, the Buddha is my lord. For this reason I am named “Buddhadāsa” (literally, “servant of the Buddha”) (Quoted by Jackson, 2003, p. 13): (Brahmacariya, “the pure or holy life”)

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu was born on May 21, 1906 at Phumriang village of Chaiya, Surathani province, southern Thailand. He was the eldest son of the three children of a Chinese merchant, Siang Phanit and Khluen. He was given the name Ngueam Phanit. In his childhood, he spent three years as a temple boy at Wat Nok in Phumriang, a monastery in his home town. He attended Phothipitthayakon school at Wat Photharam in Phumriang and completed primary education of Prathom IV there. He continued his education in Chaiya and completed high school grade of Mathayom III at Saraphi-uthit school. His father's untimely death forced him to work in his family's business at the age of sixteen. Later, he had to support the education of his younger brother, Yikoei Phanit, in Bangkok. After his brother completed his study and returned to his home town, Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu decided to enter the monkhood in 1926 since he was free from having to support his family. He was ordained into the Mahanikai Order at Wat Nok by Phrakhru Sophanaceta-sikaram, who gave him the Pāli name of Indapaño. He had a studious characteristic and seemed to have quickly developed his understanding of academic Buddhism. After he had passed Naktham Tri, he went to Bangkok for further study in 1928. He got the Parian Sam Prayok (III) Pāli examination in 1930;
however, he failed in his Parian Si Prayok (IV) Pāli examination. During his formal education, Buddhāsā Bhikkhu read and studied the profound teaching of Tipitaka by himself and felt that there were significant differences between the commentaries upon which his clerical examinations were based and the actual canonical scripture; as a consequence, he regarded further formal education as useless for him. Buddhāsā Bhikkhu said that:

In studying the pariyattidhamma in this period we don’t truly study the Tipitaka itself, we study only the commentaries.

(Quoted by Jackson, 2003, p. 11): (Sunthorn Na Rangsi, The Buddhist Concept of Karma and Rebirth, Bangkok: Mahamakut Rajavidyalaya Press, 1976, p. 82-83)

After two years residency in Bangkok, Buddhāsā Bhikkhu became disenchanted with rote learning, the noise and distractions of the city, and the lax behavior of Bangkok monks. He saw that purity was to live close to nature in order to investigate the Buddha teaching or Buddha Dhamma. He decided to return to his home town in the spring of the year 1932 and established a forest monastery, Suan Mokkhabalārāma or The Garden of Empowering Liberation, called simply as Suan Mokkh. He was interested in practical rather than scholarly study including the mindfulness of breathing meditation. He attempted to unite all genuinely religious people in order to work together and to help each other from the power of materialism. He set the Three Vows of duties for serving the world’s benefit. The first vow was that he would like to see people, regardless of their religion, truly understand the principles of their religion. All people could genuinely fulfill their spiritual liberation. The second vow, he intended to create a mutual understanding among various religions. Every religion teaches the concept of unselfishness but the differences were merely in methodologies. When people understand the heart of religious teaching, they will be able to live together in peace. The third vow, he wanted to drag human beings away from the tyranny of materialism, and as a result the world would be cleansed and calmed.
In Suan Mokkh monastery, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu studied all Buddhist schools and additionally other religions. His broadmindedness let him work with Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians and other religious people around the world. He encouraged interfaith dialogues among religions and explained how to become totally human being in the world. He had worked on extensive research of the Pāli texts in Canon and commentary and taught both Thai and foreigners about the pure Buddhism. He strived to show how to use Buddhism beneficially in the modern world. He emphasized the idea of man’s selflessness and the idea of man’s liberation from the bondage world by harmonizing traditional Buddhist teaching and his reinterpretting concept. His teaching focused on the concept of nibbāna that could be attained here and now. It sounded rather scientific, straight-forward, and practical for the daily life. He worked painstakingly to reinterpret the essential principles of original Buddhism. His teaching was received with increasing public recognition around the world. He wrote more than 140 books, one of them the “Handbook for Mankind” is one of the most famous and valuable books. His work became well known among scholars and activists and were published in many languages including English, Chinese, Japanese and other languages. The Venerable Buddhadasa Bhikkhu died in 1993 after a series of heart attacks and strokes, at the age of 87.

In his life time, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu received eight honorary doctorates from Thai universities. In 1980 the Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University conferred on him an honorary doctorate of Buddhism. This degree was conferred by the Supreme Patriarch of the Thai Sangha. He also received the honorary clerical title of Phra Ratchawisutthimethi. In the year 2005, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, or simply called UNESCO arranged a General Conference on October 20 and reached the decision to honor the venerated Thai monk, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu. His centennial birthday anniversary
was recognized and commemorated in UNESCO’s Calendar of Anniversaries of Great Personalities and Historic Events, 2006-2007.

3.2.2 Buddhadasa Bhikkhu and Buddhism in Thailand

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu is one of the most important reformers in the history of *Theravāda* Buddhism in Thailand. He has rationalized *Theravāda* Buddhist doctrines and the Thai Buddhist tradition in response to modern scientific empiricism and the growing Thai middle class of professionals and intellectuals. Dr. Karuna Kusalaya, remarked that:

Many leaders of *Buddhistic* thoughts in Thailand, have, therefore, come forward to try to purify the *Dhamma* of the many impurities that have crept into it. Notable among the reformative groups are the *Dhammadāna* Association in Chaiya, South Thailand, under the leadership of Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu, and the Buddha Nigama of Chiangmai (North Thailand) started by Paññānanda Bhikkhu. (Kusalasaya, 2001, p. 48)

Traditionally Buddhism taught that salvation from suffering is attained by detachment from the world of impermanence, which was assumed to be beyond the power of individual human beings to change for the better. In contrast to this traditional view of the world, the thought of progressive modernist Thai Buddhist is informed by the belief that the natural and social world can be transformed for the better and that human suffering can be alleviated through the exercise of human will. Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu’s systematic reinterpretation of Buddhism, developed a comprehensive view of human well-being in which neither transcendent *nibbāna* nor active world involvement is denied or given exclusive emphasis. He attempted to subsume the polar opposites of this world and the next world into a unity which, he hopes, will retain all the truth from the Buddha’s spiritual message. His goal has been to theoretically reconstruct the entirety of *Theravāda* thought in accord with reinterpreted doctrinal principles. In terms of the traditional role divisions of *Theravāda* Buddhism,
Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu attempted to integrate the renunciate’s hope for salvation with the layperson’s hope for well-being and fulfillment in this world here and now. In the process, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu lay a theoretical framework for the study of the Pāli Suttas and on sammādītthi or “right understanding”. His idea has identified him as a representative of the Buddhist emphasis on the centrality of paññā or wisdom in Buddhist praxis. He interpreted the word Buddhism as:

Buddhism means the Teaching of the Enlightened One. A Buddha is an enlightened individual, one who knows the true about all things, one who knows just what is what and so is capable of behaving appropriately with respect to all things. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 12)

From the concept of “Manuṣya” or human being, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu believes that Buddhism is a practical method for liberating oneself from suffering by means of coming to realize as what Buddha himself did, the true nature of things. Though a person may never have seen or heard of the Tipitaka, if he carries out a detailed investigation every time suffering arises and scorches his mind, he can be said to be studying the Tipitaka directly, and far more correctly than people actually in the process of reading it. Buddhism can be studied further from many different angles such as from the point of view of a religion, of morality, of truth, of psychology, of philosophy, of culture, of the art of living, and so on; however, finally he summarizes the meaning of the real Buddhism and the true Buddhist as:

The real Buddhism is the practice by way of body, speech, and mind that will destroy the defilement, in part or completely. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 25)

According to Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s idea, he sees the Buddhist society as “the state of nature”, human beings are socialistic, cooperative, and at peace. He proposes the theory of dhammic socialism for contemporary society. For him, nature represents the state of balance for the survival and well-being of human beings, animals, plants, and the ecology of the world.
It is based on the principle that none should take more than what they really need such as the case of war, it is considered as a creation of mankind out of unnatural desire for surplus. Leaders of various groups would be in charge of stockpiling supplies for their own group, and fighting among the groups was inevitable. To maintain control over society and to limit kilesa or human greed, laws or nature and moral systems are developed. Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu said that:

This dhammic socialism is not a system which should be abandoned and it is not the absolute monarchy which is so hated. Perhaps this system will be able to remedy the world’s problems better than other system. (Quoted by Jackson, 2003, p. 241)

As a consequence, he sums up that social and economic problems arise when human beings act against this original intention of nature and all problems are fundamentally a result of the self-centered greed. He attempts to solve all problems by practicing personal spiritual development instead of material development while always keeping in mind the Buddhist notions of “conditionality”, and “interdependent co-arising and reaching the state of the knowledge of the emptiness of self.

Paticcasamuppada or the Law of Dependent Origination is a profound teaching for human beings. It is a series of eleven interconnected events with 12 factors. It is a detailed analysis of suffering, its arising, its ceasing and the way leading to its ceasing. By understanding Dependent Origination, people will see clearly how to practice mindfulness at the moment of sense contact delivers wisdom and prevent suffering from arising. Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu said that:

Dependent Origination refers to the arising and passing away of attachment to the “I” concept any one time. Moreover, it means understanding the arising and passing away in term of paticca-samupana-dhammas: merely interdependent natural phenomena arising and passing away. Dependent on something,
something arises. Dependent of something, something passing away. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 2002b, p.74)

Suññatā or emptiness, this word is difficult to understand clearly and thus becomes the center of grave misunderstandings and distortions. In general, it means absence of phenomena, but in this study it means there is no idea of “I”, “me”, “mine”, and “self”. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu explained that:

Suññā means “void” or “empty” and -tā is the equivalent of “-ness”. Suññatā is emptiness or voidness....This word “empty” applied to physical things naturally means absence of any content, but in the metaphysical context, it means that though every sort of thing may present, there is utter absence of “I-ness” and “my-ness” In the physical world, the mental world, or anywhere at all, there is no such thing as “me” or “mine”. The conditions of “I-ness” and “my-ness” just not exist. They are unreal, mere illusions, hence the world is described as empty. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1999, p.37-39)

His conception of the state of nature and spiritual development for mankind is quite successful in the modern world for its similarity to Western theory of ecological evolution. His theory thus provides a positive foundation for solving today’s world-wide human-centered crisis. In an ecocentric view, man is inseparable from the inorganic or organic nature which has an intrinsic value and dignity. Man must learn to recognize and respect nature. For these reasons, man needs to transform the anthropocentric concept of human rights into an ecocentric one in order to maintain the wholeness of the environmental community. This quotation is presented by G.Tyler Miller:

We must learn anew that it is we who belong to earth and not the earth to us. Thus rediscovery of our finitude is fundamental to any genuinely human future. (Miller, 1972, p. 53)

When anthropocentrism and ecocentrism are analyzed according to Buddhism, it may be closely explained by the term attā or selfness and anattā or selflessness. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu said that:
When we cling to something as being a self, the result is selfishness, and our actions are biased accordingly.... When we look at things in the light of absolute truth, we find only elements: earth, water, wind, and fire; oxygen, hydrogen, and so on; body, feeling, perception, thinking, and consciousness. On examining these closely we find they all have one property in common namely emptiness. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1956, p.90-91)

In addition, Buddhāsā Bhikkhu emphasizes this theory of voidness through the egoness of human, and practice the compassion for the world as well as a life of non-desire and the realization of the true nature. From the general Buddhist teaching:

Attā comes from man, thus being man-made and subject to change. Most people, unfortunately, know only Relative Truth and attach to these man-made Attā, causing suffering to arise. They attach to external appearances, giving them a personal self or soul. When the appearance changes, suffering will arise as the result of their attachment. In Buddhism, however, the Buddha fully realized the Law of Nature, Idappaccayaṭa. That is, ‘All Things’ are impermanent, unsatisfactory, and non-self, Anattā. So in this aspect, Anattā means the Truth of Nature. (Varādhammo, 1996, p. 338-339)

In an insightful analysis of the relationship between humans and nature by Buddhāsa Bhikkhu, all members of the Buddhist community monks and laity are required to live in the harmony with nature. They must consume no more than their fair share of material goods. Excessive consumption is wrong and demerit. As a leading reformist Buddhist figure, Buddhāsa Bhikkhu has laid a religious foundation for contemporary Thai thinkers to search for a more realistic understanding which would link traditional Thai culture to the modern problems under the influence of globalization. He attempts to teach people to live a life of integrity and harmony in the face of endless desire and accumulation of worldly possession in the global village.
3.3 The Meaning of “Manuṣya” or “Human Being” by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu

From the previous chapter, the word “Manuṣya” or “Human Being” can be identified in the linguistics components as manas and ush-ya. Manas means the mind and ush-ya means high; therefore, it means a high mind.

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s view of “Manuṣya” or “Human Being” is widely shown in various forms of books, tapes, and cd-rom. In this chapter, the content is mainly selected from the Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s written sources such as Handbook for Mankind, A Handbook for Duties of Mankind, Keys to Natural Truth, Phasa khon - Phasa tham, Paticcasamuppada Practical Dependent Origination, A Handbook for a Perfect Form of Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā Meditation, and Roi Kon Rot Dhamma; the 100th year anniversary of the birth of Buddhadasa Bhikkh, and other related book references.

In this study, his interpretation of “Manuṣya” or “Human Being” is divided into two terms which are literal interpretation and religious context interpretation. The meaning of “Manuṣya” or “Human Being” in literal term can be found in Handbook for Mankind and Handbook for Duties of Mankind. It means a person who has a high mind. As he explains:

The term “human” (in Sanskrit “Manuṣya”) means something rather special. It implies a high-minded being, a descendant or Manu the wise, something higher than average. To deserve the title of human being, one must walk the True Path. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 193)

In religious context the meaning of the word “Manuṣya” or “Human Being” can be interpreted in two different levels of language usage, namely the physical way of speaking and the meta-physical way of speaking. In his books, Keys to Natural Truth and Phasa khon-Phasa tham, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu presents his own hermeneutic theory by distinguishing language usage into two categories, called phasa khon or everyday language and phasa tham or Dhamma language. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu said that:
Two principal cases can be recognized: (1) language referring to physical things, which is spoken by the average person; and (2) language referring to mental things, psychological language, Dharma language, which is spoken by people who know dharma. (Buddhāsa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 201)

From his teaching on Makabucha day in Suan Moak monastery, he points out that an ordinary man uses everyday language to name all tangible and intangible things according to his or her five senses to explain the world. However a holy man has discovered the absolute truth of world and has gained the meta-physical experience that is so profound and has never been used in daily conversation; therefore, that holy man has to apply everyday language to explain his meta-physical experience so that all mankind can understand him. To substantiate his point, Buddhāsa Bhikkhu has used an example of the word "nibbāna" which means cool in everyday language usage in the ancient time. This word is usually said by the Indian to explain a cool condition such as water is "nibbāna" or cool. In Dhamma language, he explains that the word "nibbāna" is taken from everyday language and reinterpreted as the total extinguishing and cooling of the fire of defilement and misery.

According to this analogy, the word "Manusya" or "Human Being" can be applied in two different terms of interpretation. First, it is interpreted as a physical man of flesh and bone through the usage of ordinary persons. Second, it is interpreted as the spiritual qualities attained by religious persons. As a result, the word "Manusya" or "Human Being" by Buddhāsa Bhikkhu’s reinterpretation can be clarified as this quotation:

In everyday language, ‘person’ refers to a creature with a body shaped like what they call a ‘person’ or human being. But in Dhamma language, the word ‘person’ refers to certain special qualities implied in the word ‘human’ which means ‘possessing a lofty mind’ or ‘high minded’ certain high mental qualities. (Buddhāsa Bhikkhu, 1999, p. 31-32)

Buddhāsa Bhikkhu also raises the interesting question that why human was born into this world. Following the Buddhist doctrine, he explains that a human was born because of
desire. When one desires to be a human by himself so there is the birth of “human”. He said that:

A person who does not as yet know Dhamma thoroughly is bound to feel himself involved in the process of birth. It is only an Arahant, one who has gone all the way in Buddha Dhamma, who will really realize that there is no birth, and on “being” or “person” or “self” to be born. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 157-158)

He explains further that physically the birth of human is composed of two dominant elements, physical and mental. From the concept of “Manuṣya” or “Human Being”, Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu teaches that everyone needs to realize and to comprehend the genuine knowledge of life. Based on the teaching of Buddha he describes the composition of “Manuṣya” or “Human Being” in three main divisions:

1. A material or physical aspect and non-material or mental aspect.
2. The Five Aggregates: corporeality, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness.
3. The Six Elements: earth, water, fire, air, space, consciousness.

From the theory of the composition of human being, one’s real life experience can support this when one sees that all creatures must die and decaying sooner and later. First, one will lose one’s breathing. Second, one will lose the temperature of the body. Next, the fluid of the body will be vaporized. And last, the flesh and bone will become soil. Thus, it is revealed that there is nothing to be seen as a person, as an animals, or things. The space of body and consciousness disappear. Everything returns to its origin – that is nature. If one is wise enough to see this truth, one can completely reject the false idea of selfhood and gains the right view to live righteously in the world.
Generally the word birth for the ordinary human is known as the birth of the physical body from the father and mother. But in Dhamma language, the word birth can be referred to as the mental birth which is a mental event taking place in the mind. It can be the rebirth, birth again and again in every moment of life. Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu describes it as the birth from ignorance, craving, clinging, the arising of the false notion of “I” and “my” following the Buddhist teaching. This false idea of self “I” and “my” comes from the secular knowledge under the changing process of illusion. To attain the best end for a human being, Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu; therefore, explained that a human was born in order to study the highest task possible for a human, and the further the human needs to progress his or her possibility to the state of fully enlightened man. To attain the complete freedom from the misery of unsatisfactory condition, everyone needs to realize the laws of nature which is unchanged. This freedom can be attained by following the Buddha’s directions, explained in the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path Practice. Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu is a great thinker who reinterprets the original Buddhist teaching, and makes it applicable and relevant to today’s living.

According to the Buddha’s doctrine, Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu divides the types of Human into three groups as follows:

1. **Puggala** or the average persons and **Ariya-Puggala** or the holy persons

The average persons have ten defilements: self belief, doubt, superstition, sensual desire, ill will, desire for the various stages of concentration of forms, desire for the full concentration on objects or other than forms, awareness of superiority or inferiority, agitation, and ignorance. The holy persons are in the process of cutting off the defilements. They are considered as **Sekha** or the learners who try to evolve the
intellectual and spiritual growth including Sotāpanna or the Stream Enterer, Sakadāgāmi or the Once-Returner, and Anāgāmi or Non-Returner. When they are completely free of all fetters, they are called Asekha or the adept or Arahanta or the Worthy One. The word “Manuṣya” or “Human Being” is considered as related to the development of the holistic character.

2. The persons who have Micchādīthi or the wrong view and the persons who have Sammādīthi or the right view

The ignorant persons have the wrong view and live in the world at the various levels of relative truth. The wise persons have the right view to live their life following the truth of nature. In this study, the concept of “Manuṣya” or “Human Being” is mainly interested in this aspect.

3. The persons who understand Lokāya Dhamma or the world in mundane states and the persons who understand Lokuttara Dhamma or the world in supramundane states.

The worldly human who have their mind in mundane states will live their life clinging to sensuous condition, form condition, and formless condition. Their mind becomes enslaved to things. The persons who understand the truth of life and develop their spirituality to supramundane states will go along with Magga or the Four Paths, Phala or the Four Fruitions, and Nibbāna or the Unconditioned State. Their mind becomes master of things and free from them. This path is for all mankind to enhance their mental development.

After studying all three major types of mankind, it can be seen that every group is based on the quality of mind and divided from the state of ignorance to the state of wisdom. It is possible for all individuals to develop these mentality and intellectual capacity. To be truly
human in Buddhism is to be above all problems or unsatisfactory condition. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu suggests that human being has to perform his/her best duties to the parents, the teachers, the friends, the nations, and finally the Buddha. Everyone is required to be the master to both worldly and religious problems. The path to the complete extinction of suffering and the achievement of wisdom is to understand the Four Noble Truths and to practice the Eightfold Path. The right and true knowledge of all phenomena will transform a person into a highminded one, to further become a holy one, and to develop ultimately into the worthy one or the fully human being.

3.4 The Theory and Practice to Attain the Concept of “Manusya” or “Human Being” by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu

It is advisable to learn how to be a human being without any problems, how to be free from dukkha or suffering. The term “Human Being” or “Manusya” means lofty-minded one, a mind high enough to be above all problems. This critical study is interested in what it takes to be fully human, rather than being mere physical matter. The study will offer a suggestion how to learn, to practice, and to work for the development of the intellectual capacity and spirituality above all problems in order to be completely human according to the Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s viewpoint. It represents the idea of truth which based on the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism and to the Noble Eightfold Path in order to achieve the wisdom.

Following the Buddha’s teaching ‘the truth of nature’ namely ‘Dhamma’, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu has reinterpreted it to reveal ‘what is what’. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu proposes the way to develop one’s spirituality and to attain one’s liberation. He guided human to understand the true nature and to behave in an appropriate way to that of a true nature. He said that:
“what is what” signifies to know things as they really are, in Pāli “yathābhuta nānadassana” (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1956, preface)

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu suggests the word tathatā or thusness which means it is as it is. He observes that truth is not the same thing to different people because they have their own ideas of what is the truth. Each person may change and develop his own truth day by day according to his degree of intellectual stages until he can completely understand the ultimate truth or the true nature of things. Buddhaddāsa Bhikkhu said about the ultimate truth and the worldly truth as:

Worldly truth, which has nothing to do with Dhamma, is a matter of what we see or feel or believe to be true. We are deceived as to the nature of objects and of cause-effect relationships, all of which are subject to change. What is true one moment may not be true the next...Truth that is truly truth does not change. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1999, p. 85)

He describes the reality into two categories involving the category of flowing and change such as existence, being, things in illusive world and the category of not flowing and unchange such as nirvana, emptiness in true world. It is the state of changelessness in itself. He suggests that all individuals must look for emptiness in all things which is the essence of dhamma. He provides the meaning of the word dhamma as the following:

The word “Dhamma” embraces.
1. Nature itself;
2. The Law of Nature;
3. The duty of each human being to act in accordance with the Law of Nature;
4. The benefit to be derived from this acting in accordance with the Law of Nature. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1999, p. 20)

From the above mentioned description, it is suggested that to achieve the concept of “Manuṣya” or “Human Being” following the Buddhaddāsa Bhikkhu’s viewpoint, a man needs to learn the pure nature and lives his life not against the law of nature. Thus this study fully supports the practice of Buddhism as proposed by Buddhaddāsa Bhikkhu.
### The Four Noble Truths of Buddhism: Reinterpretation by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS</th>
<th>TRADITIONAL BUDDHISM ANSWER</th>
<th>BUDDHADASA BHIKKHU'S INTERPRETATION</th>
<th>DEVELOPMENT FROM IGNORANCE TO WISDOM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What is the real suffering for human being?</td>
<td>the five aggregates exist</td>
<td>I exist</td>
<td>Study, Observe, the truth of nature, the Law of Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What is the cause of suffering for human being?</td>
<td>Desire/Craving desire</td>
<td></td>
<td>Study four attachments, nothing is worth to desire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What is the cessation of suffering for human being?</td>
<td>Freedom from desire. Nirvana (paññāvimutti), Emptiness of &quot;I&quot; (ceto vimutti)</td>
<td>No idea of &quot;I&quot;, Free from desire, momentary or Full Nirvana &quot;in this life. (paññāvimutti)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3.4.1 The First Noble Truth of Dukkha or Suffering

It points out that all things are a source of suffering because they are impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not self. All existence and things must follow the law of change.

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu said that:

A man may have been reciting the formula: "anicca, dukkha, anatta" morning and evening hundreds and thousands of times and yet not be able to perceive these characteristics... In short, then, insight into impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and non-selfhood amounts to realizing that nothing is worth getting or worth being.

(Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 42-43)

The concept of "Manusya" or "Human Being" by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu certainly follows this law of change. He suggests that there is no "self", no "I", and no "mine" by emphasizing the theory of the combination of a physical and mental aspect which further divides human being into five aggregates and later analytically through the theory of the three universal characteristics of impermanence, unsatisfaction, and selflessness. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu states that:
Everything in the whole world is included within the five aggregates, namely matter, feeling, perception, thinking, and consciousness. Each of these groups is a deception. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 92)

His teaching is often focused on the word anattā or "selflessness" and the word Suññatā or "emptiness of selfhood". Buddhadasa Bhikkhu said that:

The truth that doesn’t deceive is the truth of anattā, through which there is never again any clinging to anything as “mine”. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1999, p.136)

He remarks that the ordinary men usually live their life by attaching to self, I, and my, or called attā. People are taught that all things are named, everyone is taught to define one’s self and feels that all things can be possessed. This distorted teaching created the false idea of selfhood and people turned out to be in the state of ignorant based on grasping and clinging condition. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu said that:

There are no things at all; there is only emptiness, emptiness of selfhood. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 91)

When analyzing the concept of human being, he relates the three universal characteristics to the word emptiness which is divided into two characteristics. The first refers to the characteristic of all things which is emptiness. It is an object of realization. Second, it refers to the characteristic of the mind that is free from all grasping and clinging of delusion and ignorance. It is the characteristic of the mind that is empty through realizing the truth of emptiness. The example is about the principle of doerless doing. It can be explained that doing is done but there is no doer. This concept makes the mind constantly empty of the ego, so it becomes the natural state. All individuals can stay with the awareness that there is nothing worth having or being. All must understand correctly the meaning of the emptiness which involves: realizing emptiness, abiding with emptiness, being naturally empty and being empty
itself. A man must see that "I" and "my" is the root cause of all forms of suffering. Whenever there is clinging, then there is the darkness of ignorance. Buddhadaśa Bhikkhu said that:

The thing is to be got are impermanent, unsatisfactory, and nobody's property. But an individual who doesn't perceive this will naturally think "I am getting..., I have..., I am..." ...that is the source of distress and misery. (Buddhadaśa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 45-46)

3.4.2 The Second Noble Truth of Dukkha-Samudaya or the Origination of Suffering

It points out that desire is the cause of suffering. There are three kinds of desire: desire for pleasure, desire for becoming, and desire not to become. Whenever one has the desire, one will be in distress because nothing is worth getting or being, they are a source of suffering.

In this section, Buddhadaśa Bhikkhu explains the process of desire related with the four worldly attachments and the mental birth of "I" and "my". He mentions the four different kinds of clinging that identifies with illusive world. The result of suffering is the cause of the unrealization of truth of nature which can be overcome through the profound study of the dependent origination and specific conditionality theory. Buddhadaśa Bhikkhu said that:

The desires are the cause of suffering. They all desire this, that, and the other, simply because they don't understand the nature of desire. (Buddhadaśa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 30)

To study the cause of suffering or the desire, it is basically needed to realize what is the cause of the desire. The concept of "Manuṣya" or human being can be recognized along with the four kinds of individual clinging that involves the sensual clinging, the opinion clinging, the rite and ritual clinging, and the idea of selfhood clinging. Buddhadaśa Bhikkhu sees these four attached forms as the obstructions of the mental development of mankind. He demonstrated that to aim and to live a holy life is to enable the mind to give up unskillful grasping; therefore, the Buddhist must understand these four clinging in order to become
completely independent of things. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu sums up that, to know more of the concept a true guide will help people by means of dividing and explaining this concept of desire, that is first the sensual clinging. People cling to attractive things from their six senses and are incapable of withdrawing from them. They search for pleasure in the form of colors, shapes, sounds, odors, tastes, and tactile objects; therefore, the desire occurs. Secondly the opinion clinging, it happens because people have incorrect knowledge. People develop their own personal views on things based on their own received instruction and training. The clinging to the preconceived ideas and opinions are bound with customs, traditions, ceremonies, and religious doctrines. These views are considered a major obstacle to progress to the wisdom knowledge. Thirdly, the meaningless rite and ritual clinging, examples are the beliefs in amulets, magical artifacts, sacred places, and the thoughtlessness traditional practices. In fact, Buddhist practice must have a sound foundation in thought and aim to destroy the defilements; if not, it will be misdirected. Finally the clinging to selthood, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu explains that people become selfish and attach to the idea of a self-centeredness. In modern world people seek for material pleasures, wealth and ignore the needs of their communities. He mentions about the spiritual disease which is called "I" and "my" coming from "atta" or "self". It corresponds to the Latin word "ego". If the feeling of self-consciousness arises, it is called egoism because once the feeling of "I" arises, it naturally and inevitably gives rise to the feeling of "my". Thus, the feeling of self and the feeling of things belonging to self, taken together is egoism. The disease acts through the influence of self-centeredness and becomes greed, hate and delusion. It causes suffering to both oneself and others. Everyone has this disease of "I" and "my" which absorbs more germs every time when
one sees a form, smells an odor, touches a tangible object, tastes a flavor, or thinks in the manner of an ignorant person.

In addition, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu also emphasizes the related function of all dependent elements through the process of mankind which can be explained by *Idappaccayatā* or the Orderliness of Nature or the Law of Conditionality and the two doctrines of *Ayatana-kusalatā* or the skillful understanding concerning the sense bases and *Paticca-Samuppāda-kusalatā* or the skillful understanding concerning the Law of Dependent Origination. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu said that:

*Idappaccayatā* will prove quite useful for those studying *Paticcasamuppāda* because, in fact, they are the very same thing. The only difference is that *Idappaccayatā* is broader in scope. (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 2002b, p.1)

In Tipitaka, the Buddha talked about *Paticcasamuppāda* in the regular and common way, from the beginning to the end, covering all eleven conditions. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu has explained the eleven condition of *Paticcasamuppāda* as:

Ignorance gives rise to mental concocting;
Mental concocting gives rise to consciousness;
Consciousness gives rise to mentality/materiality;
Mentality/materiality gives rise to the sense bases;
The sense bases give rise to contact;
Contact gives rise to feeling;
Feeling gives rise to craving;
Craving gives rise to attachment;
Attachment gives rise to becoming;
Becoming gives rise to birth;
Birth gives rise to old age and death. (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 2002b, p.49)

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu explains briefly that the illusive world of mankind occurs through eyes, ears, noses, mouth, body, and mental. When the eyes contact with the physical being or things then the feeling arises, if that person does not realize truly the three universal characteristics of beings and things, he or she will grasp them for the essence and then he or
she has the desire to possess and so begins the birth of the suffering. The same process can occur in all six senses of mankind. As a consequence, Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu attempts to guide all persons to discern what the real being is because the way that people are usually taught is different from what the pure nature of being is. Whenever they can examine that there is no self absolutely, they can be free from all bondages and suffering. Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu said that:

One could think of craving as the mother and ignorance as the father; in any case the result is the birth of “I”, the arising of the false idea of “I”...and it is this kind of the birth that is perpetual suffering. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 202)

Finally, a man who does not realize the truth of things will become an ignorant person. He will have the desire for grasping wholly. That man will live his life based on worldly ideas of possessing while the pure reality cannot be gained at all.

3.4.3 The Third Noble Truth of Dukkha-nirodha or the Cessation of Suffering

It points out the freedom from suffering, called nibbāna or nirvana the complete extinguishing of desire. From Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu’s viewpoint, nirvana is not some sorts of miracle of supernatural or something to be achieved after death. He explains the idea of nirvana as indispensable for all individuals. Its state can be attained at any moment that the mind becomes free from all fetters. Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu explains the word nirvana into two states involving a momentary nirvana and the full nirvana. He said that:

Permanent cessation of compounding is full nirvana; temporary cessation is just a momentary nirvana. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 177)

Following his interpretation of the term “Manuṣya” or “Human Being”, therefore, the cessation of suffering or nirvana can possibly occur when a man has the realization of the truth
and can be free from all compounding in the present life. Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu has reinterpreted the word “nibbāna” or nirvana into two levels of language usage:

In everyday language, nibbāna is a dream city; in Dhamma language, nibbāna is the complete and utter extinction of suffering right here and now. (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 1999, p. 26)

To attain the cessation of suffering, Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu prefers to study this state with the theory of Suññatā or emptiness of selfhood, and paññāvimutti or the liberation by wisdom based on the realization of the ultimate truth, the nature of all beings and things. He suggests the intellectual and spiritual development of mankind and guides to deliverance through insight or liberation through wisdom. He applies it together with the practice of mindfulness of breathing with sixteen bases meditation. This method requires the process of thought, observation, experiment, and proof. It is considered easier and more direct path toward becoming fully human beings for both religious persons and non religious persons.

In “Ānāpānasati bhāvanā Meditation” Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu said that:

To practice Ānāpānasati meditation is to practice moral precepts, mental concentration and insight wisdom to the fullest. It is a method which is perfect in itself. What is unique about it is that it can be practiced at any place or anywhere such as at one’s own home.....when there is good concentration in the mind, there will be enough of mindfulness to drive one towards a life of good hygiene, sound physical health and proper spiritual well being. (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 2003, P.26-29)

To be free from all suffering, Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu also focuses on the emptiness of “I”. The practicing of Suññatā or emptiness principle is provided for achieving the cessation of suffering. Whenever there is no idea of self or “I” consequently there is no idea of desire. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu said that:

The voidness of “I” and “mine” that transcends the best....the voidness that is neither good nor evil, there’s no problem. In suññatā there’s no hunger....Therein dukkha is quenched and true spiritual peace remains. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1999, p. 104)
Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu explains that the true world of mankind occurs through eyes, ears, noses, mouth, body, and mental. When the eyes contact with the physical being or things then the feeling arises, if that person realizes truly the three universal characteristics of beings and things—the impermanence; unsatisfactoriness; and non-selfhood of all existences, he or she will not grasp them for the essence. He or she will be free from idea of selfhood, ‘I-ness’, and ‘mine’. Thus there is no idea of ‘desire’ or “I desire” that is the cause of suffering. The same process can occur in all six senses of mankind.

Ignorant persons may be able to progress their spirituality and intellectual capacity by means of being observant about three universal characteristics of beings and things, the five aggregates study and the practical Dependent Origination on the basis of the threefold training of Sīla or morality, Samādhi or concentration, and Paññā or sufficient insight in order to give up clinging to the self idea. From Paticcasamuppāda or the practical Dependent Origination, Buddhaddāsa Bhikkhu purposes the reverse form for cessation of suffering as:

Because of the extinguishing of craving, attachment is extinguished;
Because of the extinguishing of attachment, becoming is extinguished;
Because of the extinguishing of becoming, birth is extinguished;
Because of the extinguishing of birth, old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, etc. are extinguished. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 2003, p. 52)

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu divides its practice into two sides, the ignorance and the nirvana. Suffering is based on birth; birth on becoming; becoming on attachment, until mental concocting up to ignorant stage. It means that various inaccurate conditions and wrong view flow into the mental being. In the other side, it is as if mindfulness has arisen instead of mindlessly going on to the end of the chain. When craving is extinguished and so suffering does not arise at the end of the chain of Paticcasamuppāda or Dependent Origination.
From his teaching, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu intends to study the Law of Dependent Origination and arrange them orderly. When a man comes down to faith, he has confidence in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, this real practice will end suffering. It is called the beginning of faith. The correct usage of Dependent Origination is found as suffering and will become the base of faith and this faith will allow the Dhamma to blossom to the ending of the “āsāva” or “that which flows into” or the tainted mind such as being, sensuality, existence, views and ignorance. It is described orderly as the following details:

**The Twenty Four Elements of Dependent Origination**

*Ignorance*  
*Mental Concocting*  
*Consciousness*  
*Mind/Body*  
*Sense Bases*  
*Contact*  
*Feeling*  
*Craving*  
*Attachment*  
*Becoming*  
*Birth*  
*Old age, Death*---

* *Suffering*  

---Faith (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 2002, p. 107)

In Buddhism, there are two directions to attain nirvana, firstly cetovimutti or the liberation of mind and secondly paññāvimutti or the liberation through wisdom.

The first method is simply by means of calmness and coolness of the mind until it reaches deep concentration, that is called cetovimutti or the liberation of mind. The person who practices this method has to devote himself genuinely for practicing the deep concentration and later achieving the liberation through wisdom by extinction of mental intoxicants. This person will gain additional knowledge of abhiññā or the six superknowledge including the magical powers, the divine ear, the penetrating to the minds of others, the
remembrance of former existences, the divine eye, the knowledge of the exhaustion of all mental intoxicants.

The second method is considered a total insight meditation and the result is called *panñāvimutti* or liberation through wisdom. By this practice, the person does not gain any special types of knowledge since it is focused on the proper mindfulness and applies concentration only for assistance. The liberation through wisdom is needed for accurate realization of truth. The person who becomes liberated through wisdom will have the right view and right behavior for complete cessation of mental intoxicants.

According to Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's teaching, he preferably suggests this second method for all average human being because this practice can be simply verified in the daily life here and now, and it is proper and easier for the modern rational thinkers who have less time. When the mind comes to see things as not worth wanting, it becomes then empty or void mind. A human being then comes to understand reality as it is, so that ignorance of the true nature can be eliminated forever and there is no more cause for going on. So a human being who develops this accurate realization of natural truth will progress his quality of mind from the ignorance to the state of wisdom and become the fully human being who lives beneficially for all mankind.

When a human being discovers the truth of nature, he becomes free from any desire, free from suffering and reaches the state of wisdom to all things. This transformation is guided by insight observation that there is nothing to grasp at and to cling along with the true nature. When persons have the right view, they can be called a true Buddhist and his mind will be identical with Buddha, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha*. If the person becomes completely free from desire he can be called *Arahant* or the Worthy One. This is the highest possible mental
development of man, one stops acting on desire and cannot do wrong to all the living any more.

3.4.4 The Fourth Noble Truth of Atthangika-Magga or the Noble Eightfold Path.

It points out the path and the method for extinguishing desire. There are right understanding, right aspiration, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. From Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s teaching, he concentrates much on right understanding or right view. He said that:

It is possible to step over or overcome all suffering because of the practicing of Right View, that is Sammā-dīthi. (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 2003, p.38)

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu suggests that when people intend to study the pure religious scriptures, they are required to understand the Kālāmasutta-kaṇkhāniyatāthāna of the Buddha’s teaching. This theory is an advice on how to investigate a doctrine and how to deal with any doubtful matters; it becomes the primary requirement for all Dhamma study. In the Kālāmasutta, there are 10 tenets to follow:

1. Be not led by report
2. Be not led by tradition
3. Be not led by hearsay
4. Be not led by the authority of texts
5. Be not led by mere logic
6. Be not led by inference
7. Be not led by considering appearances
8. Be not led by the agreement with a considered and approved theory
9. Be not led by seeming possibilities
10. Be not led by the idea, “This is our teacher” (P.A. Payutto, 2002, p. 232)

The Kālāmasutta is appropriate for everyone, everywhere. It will lead everyone to achieve the right view and the right justice for developing the quality of mind. Studying this primary investigation is supportive to the study of the Noble Eightfold Path. Additionally,
Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu has explained the Noble Eightfold Path by related it into the threefold training of morality, concentration, and insight. He mentioned that the right speech, the right action, and the right livelihood are involved in morality training. It is simply elementary preparatory practice which enables everyone to stabilize the mind. The next step, the right effort, the right mindfulness, and the right concentration are examined in the concentration training. It develops the ability to control the mind and self, to make use of it to the best advantage. Finally, the right understanding and the right aspiration are arranged in the insight training. Buddhist insight must be intuitive insight, clear, and immediate. Thus, this threefold method is practically used for eliminating all suffering:

The Buddhist practice, based on morality, concentration, and insight, is a tool to be used for completely cutting out grasping and clinging. The objects of our clinging are the five aggregates: body, feeling, perception, active thinking, and consciousness. When we have come to know the true nature of the five aggregates, we understand all things so well that desire gives way to disenchantment, and we no longer cling to any of them. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 125)

Furthermore, Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu presents the idea of the right mindfulness and the right concentration in Ānāpānasati bhāvanā meditation or the breathing meditation. It embraces both ‘Samatha-bhāvanā’ or tranquility development and ‘Vipassanā bhāvanā’ or insight development. Ānāpānasati bhāvanā meditation is practiced by the Buddha before his enlightenment and considered as the true foundation of mindfulness or ‘Satipaṭṭhāna’. The mindfulness of breathing is comprised of four parts—kāyānupassanā or contemplation of the body, vedanānupassanā or contemplation of feelings, cittānupassanā or contemplation of mental condition, and dhammānupassanā or contemplation of mind objects or ideas. Each part is given four stages of practice to control the mind. The fourth part of Ānāpānasati meditation, the meditator will see quite enough of the impermanent, painful or suffering and non-self nature of all things and phenomena so that a sense of disenchantment and disillusionment
arises, resulting ‘virāga’ or detachment. When the sense of clinging is loosening gradually, it will finally be totally extinguished and makes room for ‘nirodha’ or the cessation of suffering.

In “Anāpānasati bhāvanā meditation”, Buddhāsā Bhikkhu wrote that

After having fully implemented all the sixteen steps of Anāpānasati bhāvanā, the Buddha said, “When one practices Anāpānasati bhāvanā to the last step or the sixteenth step, one’s foundation for mindfulness (or Satipaṭṭhāna) is perfect. When it is perfect, then the Seven Enlightenment Factors or the so-called the ‘Seven Bojjhanga’ is also perfect. When the mind is in this state, one is bound to attain ‘Vimutti’ or liberation and it is the liberation from all craving and desires. (Buddhāsā Bhikkhu, 2003, P.31)

To practice Anāpānasati bhāvanā meditation, Buddhāsā Bhikkhu also provides the practical intuition method in both dimensions, first in a natural dimension and second in methodical dimension. Both practical intuition methods can reach the true insight and true wisdom. They enable ordinary people to cut off from all sorts of sorrow and suffering.

In the Tipitaka, there are various examples of human beings who attain naturally all states of Noble Path and Fruit. These human beings did not go into the forest and practice concentration on certain objects in the way described in later manuals, but they could enrich their higher quality of mind. The clear example is shown in the first five disciples of the Buddha on hearing the discourse on non-selfhood and attaining Arahantship. Another example is the story of Therī Khemā who heard the Buddha’s teaching of the impermanence of things and occasionally saw the decaying body, then she realized this truth of beings and entered the stream of a holistic one. In fact, there are many stories in Tipitaka relating that ordinary humans succeeded in becoming Arahants, and none of whom knew anything of modern concentration techniques. Buddhāsā Bhikkhu has written in the Handbook for Mankind that:

We don’t have to attain deep concentration and sit with the body rigid. Rather, we aim a calm, steady mind, one so fit for work that when it is applied to insight practice, it gains right understanding with regard to the entire world. Insight so developed is natural insight, the same sort as was gained by some individuals
while sitting and listening to the Buddha expounding Dhamma. It is conductive to thought and instropection of the right kind, the kind that brings understanding. And it involves neither ceremonial procedures nor miracle. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 96-97)

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu believes that all people have this natural stillness of mind, he cites an example of firing a gun. When people take aim, the mind automatically becomes concentrated and steady. This is how concentration comes about naturally. It can lead actually to attain liberation, the fruit of the path, nirvana, and arahantship. Additionally, in the classroom, it can be observed that the natural concentration can occur when students tend to read the books, listen to the instructors, and perform the activities. This automatic steadiness is primarily required for further developing of insight in order to gain the right knowledge and fit for efficient work. Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu expresses this natural concentration developed by insight practice to reveal the natural truth of things. When people realize the transient, unsatisfactoriness, and non-selfhood, they can see truly the worthlessness of beings and things, so they will eliminate the defilements and give up inappropriate action and suffering.

Another kind of concentration is insight by organized training. Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu advises that:

The organized systems of insight training, which were not taught by the Buddha but were developed by later teachers. This kind of practice is suitable for people at a fairly undeveloped stage, who still cannot perceive the unsatisfactoriness of worldly existence with their own eyes, naturally. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 111)

These systems of practice for developing insight are now known by the technical term “Vipassanā-dhura.”, the study done within and strictly mental training. Vipassanā means clear insight, it is directed to the unobscured vision that may arise when a person’s mind is full of joy and devoid of any defilement. The basic requirement is proper morality and
concentration. This practice is described in a series of the Seven Purifications to culminating in the Path and the Fruit. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu has shown these in stages as follows:


I. Moral purity
II. Mental purity
III. (1) Freedom from false views
IV. (2) Freedom from doubt
V. (3) Knowledge and vision of what is the true Path
VI. (4) Knowledge and vision of the progress along the Path
   (a) Knowledge of arising and passing away
   (b) Knowledge of passing away
   (c) Awareness of fearsomeness
   (d) Awareness of danger
   (e) Disenchantment
   (f) Desire for freedom
   (g) Struggle to escape
   (h) Imperturbability
   (i) Readiness to perceive the Four Noble Truths
VII (5) Full Intuitive Insight (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 115)

In Tipitaka contains no detailed explanation of the nine steps in the process of developing knowledge along the path but later teachers recognized and added them together called as vipassanā. This methodical practice consists of developing mental power by following an organized system of concentration and insight practice. This requires the right teaching for making it progress and be appropriate for people with a certain kind of disposition.

Likewise, the theory and practice to attain the concept of "Manuṣya" or "Human Being" by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu follows directly the Buddha’s teachings. He attempts to motivate the highminded human to focus on the realization of the ultimate truth and liberation of all compounding in his or her present life. This possible guidance is for all mankind. Whenever a man succeeds in spiritual reformation, he or she will gain orderly the state of pīti and pāmojjā or spiritual joy, passaddhi or calm, yathābhūtañānadassana or insight into the true nature of things, nibbidā or disenchantment, virāga or withdrawal, vimutti or escape, visuddhi or
purification from defilements, santi or coolness, and finally nibbāna or freedom from suffering. Lastly, Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu has presented the relation of Buddhism and human being as:

Buddhism is for everyone. Buddhism is a universal religion. It can be put into practice by everyone, in every age and era. People everywhere have the same problem: to free themselves from suffering—suffering which is inherent in birth, aging, pain, and death, suffering which stems from desire, from grasping. (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 76)

3.5 The Selected Opinions of the Modern Famous Persons who Studied or Practiced the Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s Spiritual Development in the Roi Kon Roi Dhamma, the 100th Year Anniversary of the Birth of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu

To critically study whether the concept of “Manusya” or “Human Being” based on the pure Buddhist scripture reinterpreted by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu is proper and possible for all individuals in the modern age or not can be assessed through his book called “Roi Khon Roi Dhamma, the 100th Year Anniversary of the Birth of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu”, this book is a collection of comments of famous Thais and foreigners on Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s works. All his life Buddhadasa Bhikkhu attempts to motivate all individuals to develop both intellect and mind from the ignorant state to the liberated state following the path of Buddha. And the followings are some valuable opinions from well-known religious persons to Buddhadasa’s work achievement. Phra Phrohmangkalajarn (Paññānanta Bhikkhu) said that:

Once Buddhadasa Bhikkhu has taught “what the Suññatā and Abhidhamma are” at Buddha Samakhom (Association), and mentioned that “Abhidhamma is not in the Buddha’s words”. This statement is strongly criticized by the Abhidhamma’s followers, including both monks and laities. They blamed that Buddhadasa Bhikkhu has distorted the Buddha’s teachings and argues that the term ‘Suññatā’ does not exist in Tipitaka. Later at Thammasat University, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu taught the same topic of Suññatā and handed out a number of Tipitaka book references to the audience, the opposing audience realized that the word
‘Suññatā’ genuinely exists in Tipitaka.... Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu did not write a new dhamma, but simply clarifies the original scriptures where the real meaning is hidden. No one realizes this, but he tries to pick it up and makes it more attractive for everyone. If there is no Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu in Thailand, we would not be able to study this profound dhamma. (Collected by Samnakpim Sukhapab jai, Roi Kon Roi Dhamma, the 100th Year Anniversary of the Birth of Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 2006, p. 7-9 (T))

There is another great proponent of Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu’s work -- Phra Phromkhunaporn (P.A. Payutto), the abbot of Yarnavesakavan Temple, said that:

When we analyze the teaching of Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, we must have a meritorious mind. It means we have to learn his work, to apply it for the real practice and teaching, and to share it with others in order to give happiness to them.... Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu serves the Buddha. When we study his works and have an opportunity to organize the 100th Year Anniversary of his Birth, we also serve Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu. It means we serve both The Buddha and Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu. (Collected by Samnakpim Sukhapab jai, Roi Kon Roi Dhamma, the 100th Year Anniversary of the Birth of Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 2006, p. 14-15 (T))

Next, there are some opinions from laity who have studied and practiced following the Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu’s teaching. Professor Prawase Wasi said that:

When we do good deed and act properly with others, it can be observed that we become tranquil. When we are not selfish, we will gain the tranquility and the freedom. And we have to search further how we are able to extend this state be with us. Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu asserts that this state is not far away from us. (Collected by Samnakpim Sukhapab jai, Roi Kon Roi Dhamma, the 100th Year Anniversary of the Birth of Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 2006, p. 165 (T))

From the various selective quotations, there is another interesting one from Dr. Louis Gabaud, French Institution in the East, who wrote Ph.D. dissertation on the topic Une hermeneutique bouddhique contemporaine de Thailande (The Hermeneutics of Contemporary Buddhism in Thailand by Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu). He opines about Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu as:

Being humanness is very important since it is ground for everything. Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu is a good model who tries to respond to the principle of human being. He writes the book “What were the reasons that we were born?” It is the interesting question for everyone. If we ask others, it provides much more advantages to them especially the persons who like to hurt others must think twice. Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu says that nowadays Buddhism in Thailand has been taught in the traditional retribution, so the young generations are not interested in
Buddhist study. Thus, whoever we are; the young, the old, the wise, the ignorant, the monks, or the laities; have to realize the maximum benefits of Buddhist study for daily usage. (Collected by Samnakpim Sukhapab jai, Roi Kon Roi Dhamma, the 100th Year Anniversary of the Birth of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 2006, p. 727 (T))

Consequently it is possible for all individuals who genuinely study and practice to develop the quality of their intellect and mind right here and now to attain the status of “Manuṣya” or “Human Being” according to Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s concept based on pure Buddhist scriptures. Normally in the secular world, human being is limited by various conditions such as time, language, pre-knowledge, perception, culture, education, and life-frame. From this investigative study, everyone needs to realize correctly the structure of the real being, the law of nature, and the ultimate truth. Therefore, this study of “Manuṣya” or “Human Being” according to Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s concept has shown clearly the strength of theory and practice for everyone to achieve human reformation. This study also provides a positive philosophical contribution to the community in the modern age.
CHAPTER IV

CRITICISM OF BUDDHADĀSA BHIKKHU’S CONCEPT OF

“MANUŚYA” OR “HUMAN BEING” IN MODERN AGE

In this chapter, the scope of study concentrates critically on the concept of “Manuṣya” as presented by Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu and his possible methodical approach of becoming “Manuṣya”. This writing comprises both pros and cons in Eastern religious viewpoint and directly touches both the aspect of phenomenology of religion in order to reflect the deeper meaning and the religious humanism aspect to scrutinize the nobility of human achievement and possibility.

4.1 The Three Stages of Buddhist Social Development and the Concept of “Manuṣya” or “Human Being” by Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu

In Buddhism, there are the triple gems: the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha. The Buddha is called the Enlightened One who charges his disciples to carry the dhamma to all regions. The dhamma is referred to the truth of nature—a reliance on the order of things—as articulated in the Buddha’s teaching. The sangha is the community of bhikkhus or ordained men and bhikkhunīs or ordained women who announces all dhamma. In addition, lay Buddhists are also considered members of the sangha in its broader sense which includes all those following the path laid down by the Buddha. The sangha of all disciples includes eight categories of noble persons. The four levels of the spiritual noble development are those who have entered the stream to nirvana, those who have advanced enough to be reborn just once more, those who are so advanced that they will never return, and those who have ultimately
advanced to the state of realizing the arahant or worthy path. In all Buddhist traditions, both monks and laypeople are thought to be able to make good progress towards nirvana, although some forms of Buddhism expect that one eventually needs to take ordination in order to devote oneself full-time to the spiritual quest.

The concept of "Manuṣya" or "Human Being" by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu according to the developmental period of Buddhist society is divided into three sections which are:

The period of Canonical Buddhism, Traditional Buddhism, and Modern Buddhism (Satha-Anand, 1993, p. 88)

As a consequence, this section will focus on these three developmental Buddhist states related to the viewpoint of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu.

4.1.1 The Canonical Buddhism Teaching and the Viewpoint of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu

The Canonical or early Buddhism is the Buddhism reflected in the Pāli Canon and may be taken to refer to the form of Buddhist tradition developing up to the time of King Asoka, third century B.C.E. At that time, people became Buddhists because they recognized the Buddha's fulfillment and the truth coming from his Enlightenment. Later on, people became Buddhists because they admired the poise and inner peace of the early Buddhists.

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu follows the teaching and practice of this period. He is interested in studying directly through the meaning of pure essence of Buddhist scriptures, the Tipitaka, and tries to fulfill the best achievement of human being. He aims to teach others the truth of nature and how to achieve inner peace. His supportive idea can be noticed in his first vow, he said that he would like to see people, regardless of their religion, truly understand the principles of their religions. He has no intention to study academic literatures or any religious ceremonies, but practically the true knowledge of beings and things. He said that:
It is because of ignorance of the language of Dhamma that one abandons one's own religion and embraces another. If one really understands the meaning of one's own religion in the language of Dhamma, one will love his own religion just as one loves one's own life. (Quoted by Jackson, 2003, p. 256)

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu began with his own hermeneutic theory to reinterpret the original Buddhist scripture applying to the daily language usage in modern time. He proposes two levels of language, the dhamma language and the everyday language for reinterpreting the core of Buddhism. In his written books “Keys to Natural Truth” Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu quoted the word of Buddha as:

The wise and heedful person is familiar with both modes of speaking: the meaning seen by ordinary people and the meaning which they can’t understand. One who is fluent in the various modes of speaking is a wise person. (Buddhaddasa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 17) (*Samyutta-nikaya 187)

4.1.2 The Traditional Buddhism Belief and the Viewpoint of Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu

The traditional or historical Buddhism started with the reign of Asoka and lasted until the beginning of revival or reformist Buddhism in the mid - late nineteenth century. It is during this period that the gradual path of purification developed in formal terms. The goal of attaining enlightenment in this life was more perceived to be attainable only after an immensely long, gradual path of purifying oneself from imperfections. Buddhists came to perceive nirvana as being a thousand lives away. During this period, merit-making rituals, devā, and spirit cults became integral to Buddhism due to both Buddhism's geographical spreading across Asia and the effect of lay people encountering the problem of rebirth and immediate needs of this life.

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu is against this excessive traditional teaching. The Buddha himself was quite critical of the ritual conducted during his day such as the rituals of animal sacrifices
since these acts violated the ethic of nonviolence, the Buddha also disapproved of other rituals such as merit ritual or death ritual. It is not the ritual itself that is bad, but rather a person who clings to it. The Buddha compares the doctrine and rituals with rafts which are to be used, but should not become a burden for one’s journey towards mental purification and nirvana. During this period, people were led to give more weight to the idea of grasping and clinging to the four different attachments of sensuality, opinion, rites and rituals, and the idea of selfhood. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu advises that:

Finally, the Buddha discovered the superior and supreme truth that only the state of mind that is free from the feeling of or attachment to having self, or even purity, can be considered the most peaceful, purest, and most completely suffering-free. (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 1990, p. 11)

4.1.3 The Modern Buddhism Thought and the Viewpoint of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu

The third period, modern or revival Buddhism, commenced with Buddhist monks and spokesperson responding to the challenges posted by the impact of colonialism, missionary Christianity, and the disestablishment of the sangha in the nineteenth century. The main features of this reformist Buddhism include an emphasis on rationalist elements in Buddhist teachings accompanied by a tacit elimination of traditional cosmology, a heightened recognition and use of texts, a renewed emphasis on meditation practice, and a stress on social reform and universalism. There are Buddhists in nearly every country in Europe, Asia, and North America. Buddhists form a high percentage of the population in many countries in South and Southeast Asia, and also in East Asia. But in India, the land of its origin, Buddhists represent a very low percentage of population which is dwindling.

Today there are millions of people who identify themselves as Buddhists, or followers of the Buddha. Some also became Buddhists because they thought they would find material
security, a relatively easy life and a great deal of social prestige. Some became Buddhists by following the parents. However, the proper motive for becoming a Buddhist was the overriding concern for reaching a state of complete inner freedom and emancipation.

From Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s idea, he sees the modern world as the combination between the knowledge of canonical period and the traditional period. The mixture of the knowledge of truth and related truth are taught in modern world. He suggests in his book, *Keys to Natural Truth*, that one needs to follow the principle of the *Kālāma Sutta* taught by Buddha. These are the ten basic conditions to keep in mind in order to avoid becoming intellectual slave to anything. This principle can help all individuals to have independent knowledge and reason with which to understand the true meaning of the cessation of suffering. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu mentions the importance of *Kālāma Sutta* practice as:

The world is worshipping materialism, sex and luxury, because it lacks standards like that of the *Kālāma Sutta*. (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 1999, p. 12)

From Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s idea, the society now is misguided by the academic education. People wish to gain knowledge, but the knowledge they gain is false. They are taught to be the best and the most successful people following the stream of worldly society. Even in the religious study, it is also added with some blinded belief of various magical and ritual activities. Only a few think about the term humanity toward nirvana and spiritual development. The attitude of “I”, “me”, “my”, and “mine” are increasing because of the term individual’s maximum benefit. Modern men with their ever changing knowledge and behavior are more subject to disturbance from defilements. The more they know, the more deluded they become. They are too ambitious and do not know how to relax mentally. They live a life of sensual pleasure which is largely a deception according to the path of Dhamma. This confusion and misunderstanding of world has gradually become their habit. The problems of
mental birth, "I exist", "I am such as such", the attitude of wanting, being, grasping and clinging in the present day are neglected. This kind of thinking is against the laws of nature and leads them to meet misery and tears. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu wrote in the *Handbook for Mankind* that:

> It could be maintained that we were born to work for the material progress of mankind up to the ultimate. But in material progress there is no ultimate. Progress, as understood by the average house holder, the man of the world, never leads to any ultimate goal. By contrast, spiritual progress, progress towards the Truth known by an enlightened being, does have an ultimate goal. (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 183)

Lastly, in studying the concept of "Mamayya" or "Human Being" by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, it is advisable to consider the slogan of *Suan Mokh* that suggests a man to eat from a cat's plate, bathe in a stream, sleep in a pen, and listen to the mosquitoes sing. This is simply a practical standard for eliminating the problems of material life and supporting mental development. It provides the natural principle of simple living and high thinking. People are invited to perform properly by way of body, speech, and mind that will destroy the defilements in worldly nature, based on the progressive path of the realization of truth. The theory of the Four Noble Truths is recommended for the achievement of holiness of man. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu helps everyone to achieve the noble quality of being cleansed, clarity, and calmness. To live in the world, everyone has to make use of various things, to see, to eat, and come in contact with all sorts of things, but the most essential is to realize to live with these things without grasping at and clinging to them. Everyone must be able to think, speak, act intelligently, always mindful of the three universal characteristics. The proper awareness and the wisdom will fit all individuals for peace and be above the power of all defilement.
4.2 The Strengths of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s Concept of “Manusya” or “Human Being” in Modern Age

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu proposed the concept of human being as the active controller of their own material and spiritual progress. It is most clearly presented in his work that he tries to integrate both social and spiritual activities. From this study, his contribution is shown in his reinterpretation of the totality of original Buddhist Doctrine as well as his motivation of spiritual endeavor to the path of ultimate happiness achievement for all individuals. He is fundamentally concerned to shift the focus of Thai Buddhism from the transcendent to this world, and to incorporate the hopes and aspirations of contemporary Thai laymen and laywomen into Buddhism by conferring religious value on action in the social world.

The meaning of being human is a state which attains the higher qualities implied in the word human by practicing suññatā or emptiness of mind. It is the daily practice between the world of the everyday mundane awareness of the layperson and the supramundane condition of spiritual salvation. His religious idea is rather scientific and can be proved by all individuals at any time; therefore, it has not only great influence on contemporary Buddhists and many intellectual persons but also acceptable to people of other faiths. From his book Buddhadasa Theravāda Buddhism and Modernist Reform in Thailand Peter A. Jackson said significantly that:

Buddhadasa has made major contributions to Theravāda Buddhism at three different levels. At the level of Buddhist theory and doctrine he has presented a consistent demythologized view of the religion’s teachings. By incorporating notions of scientific rationalism and by re-emphasizing the implicit rationalism of doctrinal Buddhism, Buddhadasa has represented a radically simplified view of Buddhist teachings which systematically eschews metaphysical accounts of phenomena, whether physical or mental. At a more implicit level his rationalist account of Buddhism has changed the emphasis of the religion, focusing not on the immediacy of life here and now. Without devaluing the pivotal place and significance of nibbāna in Buddhist thought, Buddhadasa has related that
condition of ultimate salvation to activity in the social world. Provided it is informed by moral principles and practiced with *chit wang*, material activity oriented towards the progressive development of social, economic, and political orders is thereby given religious value, being viewed as part and parcel of the human quest for salvation from suffering. Buddhadāsa’s third major contribution to *Theravāda* Buddhism has been at the level of practice. With moral activity in the social world being defined as part of the Buddhist religious quest, Buddhadāsa has provided a justification for providing the layperson with access to the core of Buddhist teachings and practices which are concerned with the attainment of *nibbāna*. No longer excluded from the inner sanctum of Buddhist teaching or practice, in Buddhadāsa’s system the layperson is given spiritual rights and potentials equal to those of the monk. (Jackson, 2003, p. 262-263)

In this section, the strengths of Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu’s concept of “*Manuṣya*” in Modern Age are divided into three parts involving firstly his outstanding hermeneutical and demythologized reinterpretation of the original Buddhist scripture focusing on the concept of “*Manuṣya*” or “Human being”; secondly his selective and successful *dhamma* usage for attaining the best end of all mankind right here and now; and lastly his successive integration of the essences of various religions and the concept of “*Manuṣya*” or “Human Being” in Buddhism.

**4.2.1 The Hermeneutics and Reinterpretation of Buddha’s *Dhamma* in the Concept of “*Manuṣya*” or “Human Being” by Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu in the Modern Age**

To critically study this topic, it is needed to understand adequately the general meaning of words “hermeneutics” and “narrative” beginning from Western study. Hermeneutics is the study of the theories of interpretation that is the effort to squeeze out the meaning. It is called the knowledge about the theories of meaning or the Philosophy of Exegesis which studies the meaning of meaning. A narrative is defined as any work of literature that tells a story such as novels, plays, films, historical texts which are all focused in their different ways on particular events and their temporal and causal relations and it was applied first time in the study of the
Bible. In this section, the analysis of the Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s reinterpretation of the
Buddhist scripture on the concept of “Manusya” or “Human Being” will be separated into two
dimensions which are the hermeneutics in the original Buddhist scripture and the narrative of
the Buddha life, the disciples, and the Buddhist society.

Donald K. Swearer, an American Scholar of Thai Buddhism said that:

Buddhadāsa’s interpretation of the Buddha, as well as other aspects of the
Sāsanañ (religion), seeks to reveal the core of essence of the Buddhadhamma but
not to the exclusion of the rich and variegated textures of the tradition. His
understanding of the person of the Buddha in terms of the principles of “Whoever
sees me (Buddha) sees the Dhamma; whoever sees the Dhamma sees me
(Buddha)”, and the polarity of everyday language and Truth language make a
unique contribution to the ongoing Theravāda interpretation of the meaning and
significance of the founder of their tradition. (Kusalasaya, 2001, p. 54)

To effectively analyze the Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s hermeneutics and interpretative aspect,
it is necessary to have some fundamental knowledge of western hermeneutics and narrative
study. Gary Comstock, in an influential essay published in 1986, in U.S.A. identifies two types
of narrative theology, first the Yale School, second the Chicago School, and later California
School by James McClendon. The Yale School tends to focus on the original text and the
canonical Scriptures. The Chicago School deals with the writing of a much broader
philosophical, cultural basis, and myths that form the background framework of lives. And
lastly, the California School focuses on biography and autobiography that constitute a central
part of one’s identity.

From the Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s work, it can be observed that he successfully unites all
three types of the western narrative styles to fit his works. The life of Buddha and his disciples
become the best model for the modern men’s achievement. He reads and rereads the original
scriptures, Tipitaka, in order to get the true essence of dhamma and reinterprets it for ordinary
usage. Peter A. Jackson notes in his book praising Buddhadasa Bhikkhu that:
The sources of Buddhadasa’s reformist work and of his break with the doctrinal conservatism which has historically characterized Thai Buddhism are complex. External political, economic, and cultural influences from the West have triggered the development of Buddhist reform movements. These reform movements have acted as bases for reinterpreting doctrines and views, and activity which Buddhadasa has justified and authorized by a declared return to the original wisdom and insight of the Buddha. (Jackson, 2003, p. 67)

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s reinterpretation approach in the concept of “Human Being” or “Manusya”, is comparable to western method of writing criticism in both historical-criticism and literary criticism.

1. Historical criticism regards the text as a window to look through it. Its approach deals with its referential function and shows the vertical dimension of the text which refers to the end product. By this way, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu learns and scrutinizes the Tipitaka through the different time and place and describes its meaning in terms of its origin and process of development.

   Historical Event
   ↓
   Oral Tradition
   ↓
   Early Written Sources
   ↓
   Text

2. Literary criticism regards the text as a mirror. It can appreciate the meaningful content as a horizontal dimension of the text. It describes the meaning of a text in terms of what it communicates between its author and its reader. After Buddhadasa Bhikkhu studies the Tipitaka in the historical and original term, he studies the text that now exists and reinterprets the current of text in its finished form.

   Sender       Message       Receiver  (Communication)
   Author       Text           Reader    (Literary Criticism)
From his reinterpretation, it can be analyzed further through the four categories as M. H. Abrams offers:

M. H. Abrams categorizes four basic types of literary criticism
1. Expressive types are author-centered. It expresses the views and natures of writers.
2. Pragmatic types are reader-centered. It sees its work achievement on the audience.
3. Objective types are text-centered. It views the literary product as a self-sufficient world in itself.
4. Mimetic types view the literary work as a reflection of the outer world or of human life and evaluate it in terms of the truth or accuracy of its representation. (Abrams, 1958, p. 8-29)

From M. H. Abrams’ four basic types of literary criticism, the first three types correspond to the three components of the communication model which are author, text, and reader. The fourth type is related to what people designated as evolutionary model. From the reading of Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu’s books and his discourse, it seems he has made use of all the four categories.

Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu reads the Buddhist scriptures in order to scrutinize the pure intention of the writer. He also analyzes literature from both ancient and modern linguistic structures. He focuses on the means through which a work achieves and particularly affects on its intended reader. He is also interested in a central question, how the implied author guides the implied reader to understand the content. The theoretical hermeneutics of Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu is similar to the western hermeneutical theory of Paul Ricoeur in the general concept of narrative and time. It describes in three stages of scriptural interpretation that the goal of historical-critical study has been to clarify the meaning that a particular text at a given stage in its composition. Then it is needed to relate the relevance of this historically conditioned meaning with the present situation in order to derive ‘the meaning now’ from the critically determined ‘meaning then’. Thus, the interpreter must rely on the narrative criticism to bring
out the meaning of a text. He has to overcome the distance which presents the meaningful views between the story world of the writing in *Tipitaka* and the real world of the reader. Ricoeur states that:

We are following therefore the destiny of a prefigured time that becomes a refigured time through the mediation of a configured time. (Ricoeur, 1984 p. 54)

The real life stories and discourses are written at a certain time, to be read, and when they are read they are taken as one’s own and integrated into one's destiny. Ricoeur tries to link between the prefigured basis for language use and the reader’s refiguration of the text into the world of action by using the configuration of the text that is the reader’s organization of written language into a work. It is the route of the transfiguration of the world of action called, mimesis, a cyclical interpretative process.

By the dimension of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s reinterpretation, he begins with an original Buddhist text. It is pointed that a scripture provides any discourse and life stories fixed by writing and intention to say. The scripture is related to the linguistic structure, the intention, the world and the various fields concerned. The appropriate interpretation of scripture reached the self-interpretation of a reader who then understands him/herself better. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu reinterprets the Buddhist scriptures and discloses it to all mankind as the world in front of the text. He reviews the real dhamma scriptures, and reveals it to the real world. He provides the innovative scriptural interpretation approach for everyone to integrate one’s whole person through the real world by the world of texts and to discover the meaning of human existence. It can be supported by the book of Peter A. Jackson:

Buddhadāsa’s doctrinal innovativeness thus broke with the long conservative tradition in Thai Buddhism which even today remains the dominating influence on the contemporary practice and understanding of the religion. (Jackson, 2003, p. 31)
Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu’s Innovative Method of Scriptural Interpretation

1. *phasa khan* or everyday language and *phasa tham* or *Dhamma* language

2. the demythologization of Buddhist doctrine

In the notions of Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, he proposed the innovative hermeneutic reinterpretation of *Theravāda* doctrine. He distinguished two hermeneutic levels of Buddha’s words in the canonical scriptures calling these two levels *phasa khan* or everyday language and *phasa tham* or *dhamma* language. He said that:

> Everyday language is worldly language, the language of people who do not know *dhamma*. *Dhamma* language is the language spoken by people who have gained a deep insight into the truth, *dhamma*. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1974c, p. 1)

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu proposed the two different modes of speaking related to the two different time and events. First, focusing on the sender of religious message, in the ancient time, there is the everyday language usage to define any physical things that can be understood by the ordinary persons. Whenever the enlightened one experiences the transcendent wisdom, this mental world cannot be found in the ordinary language usage; therefore, he has to use the everyday language for reinterpretation of this spiritual sense in order to explain his ultimate mental knowledge to the ordinary person and called it the *dhamma* language. Second, focusing on the receiver of religious message, it can be considered through the readers or the listeners of the Buddha’s doctrine in the different periods of time. The receivers have to reinterpret the spiritual knowledge correctly, they must truly understand and be able to distinguish both religious and worldly languages for their most beneficial usage. Further the same group of receivers will reversely become the re-sender or re-interpreters who apply the *dhamma* language into the everyday language usage without devaluing the original meaning of scripture. This reinterpretation aims to lead to real mutual understanding in the contemporary
society. From this description, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu has mentioned the word “nibbāna” which has two different language usages:

In dhamma language, the word “nibbāna” refers to the complete and absolute extinction of every kind of defilement and misery. Any time there is freedom from kilesa and dukkha, there is nibbāna. If defilements have been eradicated completely, it is permanent nibbāna: the total extinguishing and cooling of the fire of kilesa and dukkha. This is nibbāna in dhamma language. In everyday language, nibbāna is a dream city. (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 1999, p. 25-26)

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu explains the word “nibbāna” as mentioned in the previous chapter that this word originally means cool and the Buddha has applied it to express the state of no suffering. Thus, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu reinterprets this word into two different levels of understanding. The first is picked up by the ordinary receivers who have no dhamma knowledge, they will interpret the word “nibbāna” as a place in a city of immortality as traditionally believed. It is considered as wrong translation. The second is taken by the true religious receivers who understand dhamma correctly and reinterpret “nibbāna” as cooling of the fire of defilement. They realize that this mentality can be practiced and developed at every moment of life. The right view and supportive statement is found in the book of His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand:

Only this life can really lead to well being because only this life provides the conditions to fulfill all wholesome deeds. (Nyanasamvara, His Holiness The Supreme Patriarch of Thailand. The Present Life is so Important, p. 21)

To summarize Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s idea, there are two different levels of language usage of speaking, one is for daily physical language usage and another is for mental meaning usage. From the book on Buddhadasa Theravāda Buddhism and Modernist Reform in Thailand, Peter A. Jackson said that:

While Buddhadasa speaks of two kinds of language, in fact the distinguishing point between phasa khon and phasa tham is that they represent two different types of knowledge which underlay the original composition of the scriptures and
which inform the reading of those scriptures today. According to Buddhadāsa, the Buddha's recorded statements in the scriptures fall into two general categories, depending upon whether the Buddha himself was speaking in a mundane or literal way about everyday things, that is, phasa khon, or whether his words were in fact expressing transcendent insights and so were founded on supramundane or spiritual knowledge, in which case they are phasa tham or dhamma language. (Jackson, 2003, p. 72)

From this research, it can be concluded that there are two categories of persons who read and translate religious texts, one who is able to realize the state of spiritual development and correctly understands the word of dhamma, and those who do not realize the transcendent mental states and know only the ordinary everyday language.

In addition, from the development of the average person to the holy person, the real meaning of the religious words interpretation can be evolved step by step related to the intellectual levels of the true awareness of the person. The research "Mahayana Buddhism in Buddhadasa's Philosophy" by Suwanna Satha-Anand also proposed the topic of everyday language and dhamma language by Buddhadāsa's concept and divided the channels of communication into four different levels:

1. the average person communicates with the average person.
2. the religious person communicates with the religious person.
3. the religious person communicates with the average person.
4. the average person communicates with the religious person. (Satha-Anand, 1993, p. 52)

These four types of communications show that in the first two channels people are on the same level which have less misunderstanding in their communication; however, the third and the fourth show the different levels of true awareness which lead to misinterpretation of messages.

From the study of the two language usages by Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, it can be understood that the religious language usage stands to gain most from the second type of
communication which provides the correct meaning of *dhamma*. In addition, the religious language usage should also benefit from the third type of communication if the religious person tries to communicate with the ordinary person. The Buddha teaches *dhamma* to ordinary persons or Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu reinterprets the Buddhist scripture for both monks and laity, both of them will intellectually use proper words and accurate meaning in order to explain the spiritual knowledge clearly.

The next inspired notion of Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu is the demythologization of Buddhist doctrine. Popular Thai religion is a combination of many influences with animistic and Brahmanical beliefs blending with Buddhist doctrines. Popular Buddhism in Thailand is associated with beliefs in the power of supernatural beings which can intervene in human life, whether for good or for bad. However, Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu's work represents a distinctly analytical and philosophical development. In traditional Buddhist teaching and practice, there is a sharp distinction between *lokiya* or the mundane and *lokuttara* or supramundane realms. However, Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu seeks to integrate the *lokuttara* or a supramundane path and the *lokiya* or a mundane path for the whole humanity in order to get salvation. He has studied the authentic Buddhist doctrine and reinterpreted as a means for reform based on the pure fundamental principles of the religion. The term reform is interpreted as a return to the purity of the tradition's original sources, which he takes to be the teaching of salvation as passed down in the recorded words of the Buddha in the *Theravāda* canon. His work is characterized by the systematic reduction of metaphysical aspects of Buddhist teaching, such as notions of rebirth in heaven or hell, to psychological conditions. Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu describes the word 'birth' in a person's mind as:

A person has a physical birth only once, and finally dies just once, but they can have mental birth and extinction many times. Even in a single day there can be
many cycles of birth and extinction...and each time it is suffering. For this reason, the *dhammic* doctrines which mention suffering denote mental suffering. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1968, p. 9)

His reinterpretation is characterized by a shift of the theoretical focus of Buddhist doctrine from the transcendent to this world here and now. In addition, he wrote in his *Keys to Natural Truth* that:

*nibbāna* is the complete and utter extinction of *dukkha* right here and now. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1999, p. 26)

The supportive statement can be found in "The Present Life is so Important" written by His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand:

This life means the present existence. It is important because in the present life we can escape from the effects of bad deeds performed in the past and we are also able to create a life in the future that is at its most optimal benefit within our power. (Nyanasamvara, His Holiness The Supreme Patriarch of Thailand. *The Present Life is so Important*, p. 61)

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu also motivates people to learn *dhamma* with the *Kālāma Sutta* of Buddha. It is the development of direct spiritual insight into reality which is considered as the scientific method in Buddhism. It offers the result of reason and logical analysis to the truth of the Buddha’s teaching. In his reinterpretation, he denies to reinterpret any traditional metaphysical issues or the additional text as represented by the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka*. He concentrates on the Buddhist scripture based on his hermeneutical theory which includes the social world and social action. From the book of Peter A. Jackson, he has mentioned about Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu that:

Buddhadāsa accepts the results of science and tries to bring scientific knowledge within the scope of his reinterpreted version of Buddhism. (Jackson, 2003, p. 34)

As a contribution, Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu proposed a practical religious learning for bringing people out of materialism. He explains how to be totally human being in the world
based on rational and scientific views. He encourages people to see their inner world by
Dhamma moments observation, and experiment by living. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu reinterprets
the Theravāda doctrine on traditional cosmology into the mental scope of human beings living
on earth here and now. His concern is to shift the focus of Thai Buddhists from the
transcendent to this world and also make it relevant to modern day living. The statement of
Thich Nhat Hanh also corresponds to his idea:

Life can be found only in the present moment, because “the past no longer is” and
the future has not yet come.” Buddhahood, liberation, awakening, peace, joy,
and happiness can only be found in the present moment. Our appointment with
life is in the present moment. The place of our appointment is right here, in this
very place. (Thich Nhat Hanh, 2005, p. 41)

In conclusion, it is essential to reinterpret the Buddha Dhamma in terms of dhamma
language as well as in terms of everyday language. Both languages must be considered in
order to gain the best understanding of religious knowledge. In addition, being in contact with
the present moment in this life, it is able to observe deeply what is what in the truth of nature
which is written in the original scripture. The recipients can apply this actual knowledge and
progress successfully to the richness of the spiritual life that is the theoretical pivot of
Buddhadasa’s reinterpretation as Buddha’s teaching in the Dhammapada: Wakefulness:

The followers of Buddha Gotama are awake and for ever watch; and ever by night
and by day they find joy in supreme contemplation. (Trans. By Juan Mascapo,
Dhammapada: The Path of Perfection, 1973, p. 78)

4.2.2 The Selected Essence of Dhamma Usage in the Concept of “Manusya” or “Human
Being” by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu in the Modern Age

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s works are popular and well-known worldwide because his
demythologized reinterpretation has rendered Buddhism relevant to modern age. His teaching
is practicable for all individuals to achieve *nibbāna* in present life. To support his idea, the study of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, *"The Buddha and His Dhamma"*, also affirms the notion that believing in the supernatural is not *dhamma*. He wrote:

In repudiating supernaturalism the Buddha had three objects
His first object was to lead man to the path of rationalism.
His second object was to free man to go in search of truth.
His third object was to remove the most potent source of superstition, the result of which is to kill the spirit of inquiry. (Ambedkar, 1992, p. 250)

Louis Gabaude, *Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient*, wrote that:

Buddhadāsa devoted himself to drawing all the consequences of the demythification begun in the last century by insisting on *hic et nunc* liberation, on the “egoism” of the ideology of merit, on the “materialism” of the belief in heavens and on the possibility of realizing in this very life, at least partially, some temporary or definite extinction of our ego, that is some temporary or definite *nibbāna*. He did not advertise this “for monks only”, but for the laity, too. (Sivaraks, 1990, p. 212)

Generally, Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu follows directly the Buddha *dhamma* and offers a clear and practical guide into the essence of Buddhism. He proposes the practice of man and spiritual development as the key. From the book *"The Buddha and His Dhamma"*, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar explains the word of Buddha similar to Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu’s reinterpretation in motivating all Buddhists to understand the concept of human beings:

Most religions are described as revelations. But the Buddha’s religion is not a revelation....His religion is a discovery in the sense that it is the result of inquiry and investigation into the conditions of human life on earth and understanding of the working of human instincts with which man is born, the moulding of his instincts and dispositions which man has formed as a result of history and tradition and which are working to his detriment. All prophets have promised salvation. The Buddha is the one teacher who did not make any such promise. He made a sharp distinction between a *moksha* data and a *marga* data, one who gives salvation and one who only shows the way. He was only a *marga* data. Salvation must be sought by each for himself by his own effort. (Ambedkar, 1992, p. 217-218)
With Buddha, salvation means *nibbāna* which is the path to control and to cease all passions and all men can practice to achieve this genuine happiness of life. From the Buddha’s teaching, he speaks of just one thing: *dukkha* or pain or dissatisfaction and the quenching of *dukkha* which is mainly focused on the disease and the cure of the disease for all human beings. The book “the Buddha and his Dhamma” by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, also mentioned that:

He (Buddha) claimed that he (Buddha) was one of the many human beings and his message to the people was the message of man to man. (Ambedkar, 1992, p. 222)

The Buddha guides all mankind to train their body, mind, and spirit to achieve the best noble quality of mind by using his life as example. When people asked questions about other matters, the Buddha refused to waste his or their time with such things, but only suffering and cessation of suffering. From the study, the teaching of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu towards mankind follows genuinely the *dhamma* of Buddha. He teaches people by emphasizing the freedom from compounding intoxicants, gaining the right knowledge of self detachment, the way that people have to practice by themselves, and transform their ignorant state to that of wisdom.

When Buddhadasa Bhikkhu describes the modern world, he feels that throughout this world there is little interest in this matter of *dukkha* and its end. Prawas Wasi, mentioned in “Buddhism in Thailand Its Past and Its Present” that:

*Archariya Buddha* Buddhadasa *Mahathera* for over half a century has been doing a research into the Buddha’s wealth of knowledge concerning Man and Nature and has produced voluminous teachings. The teachings center around getting rid of ‘self’ and becoming free to be in harmony with nature. Long before the contemporary awakening he had loudly pointed out that the world was running into crisis because it was traveling in the wrong track, induced by basically wrong thinking, wrong education, and wrong economic system. According to Buddhadasa *Mahathera*, it is morally a wrong way of life. He has been calling for the return of Global Ethics. (Kusalasaya, 2001, p. 53)
None of the world's schools pay any attention to it. In the universities, they don't teach or study it. The only thing taught in all schools and universities is cleverness, the storing up of many facts and the ability to perform mental tricks with them. Students graduate with cleverness and some skills to make a living. This is what modern education means being clever and earning lots of money. *Dukkha* and the quenching of *dukkha* are totally ignored. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu believes that all education in today's world is incomplete because the most important subjects are forgotten. There is another area of knowledge which the schools and universities don't teach, that is how to be a human being. Why do they ignore what it takes to be a proper human being, that is, a human being free of *dukkha*? Because a proper human being ought to have no spiritual disease but modern education is insufficient as long as it fails to cure spiritual disease. The following quotation from "Thai Buddhism in the Buddhist World" also provides similar concept for modern Buddhist education:

Buddhist institutions enjoying luxurious support fell into a kind of indulgence and did not adjust themselves to the changing conditions. Material support and cooperation continues to grow, while the intellectual and spiritual gap widens. (Sivaraks, 1990, p. 115)

From Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's view, he reflects the modernized, demythologized, and more rational view of the modern Buddhist of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He defines the essential truth of the *dhamma* for intellect and mind of human being development related to the core subject of the Four Noble Truths as the way to the realization of enlightenment, and the interdependent Co-Arising as the fundamental Law of Nature. Furthermore, to walk the path to enlightenment necessarily entails achieving a state of non-attachment through which suffering is overcome. He also emphasized the natural process of mankind, the theory of suchness and emptiness practice of "I" and "my". Phra Maha Thongyod Bhuripalo (Phrathepbodhivides, the Official Chief Abbot of the Royal Thai Monastery in Eastern Zone
Ven. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu may be regarded as a conservative and rational thinker, for as a conservative thinker, he holds the view that all the teaching of the Buddha are including in 'Suññatā' (Stp.ii.pp.261-62), and ‘Suññatā’ is the heart of the Buddha’s teachings (Stp.ii.pp.264-65). The Buddha never taught anything but Suññatā’ (Stp.ii.p.273)....and as rational thinker, he holds the view that practice the Dhamma and day-to-day work must go together side by side; they should not be separated from each other as some ignorant people hold : ‘To practice Dhamma one must be at Temple, and do the work one must be at home (Nr.pp.21-22). ....For this reason he encourages all old and young Buddhists to perform every kind of task with a void-mind either at the office or at home (Nr.p.19).

(Phra Maha Thongyod Bhuripalo, 1982, p. 316-317)

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu suggests everyone to truly know the pure Dhamma in order to know the true quality of Buddha. He refers to the Buddha as being universally present in his legacy of dhamma-vinaya, not in some metaphysical sense. To realize the true quality of Buddha; therefore, reversely means one must by necessity realize the inherent quality of the dhamma and can apply those teachings to the actual life. To see the true Buddha can be defined that one must grasp the essential meaning of dhamma as the way things really are. It is the knowledge of practical detachment to things by human beings and must understand the true nature in terms of purification of views, mind, wisdom and insight until reaching Nibbāna.

Yudhana Peinvej, the writer of the book What does Buddhadasa teach? Why? How? says that:

The textbook that Buddhadasa Bhikkhu guides us to read is not the written textbook but to read the real life which is our body, a span width and a cubit length. He emphasizes that life is composed of body and spirit which is the pure study of Tipitaka. (Peinvej, 2004, p. 28)

From the above mentioned, all individuals can learn dhamma of Buddha by themselves through their body and mind in order to achieve a condition of freedom. From this condition,
the mind will see with a clarity no longer clouded by defilements of lust, depravity, and unregenerate nature.

In sum, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu gives the essential meaning of the Buddha and the *dhamma* entails three fundamental levels of meaning:

1. Ontological issue: the world is in a particular way which is referred to the law of nature or Interdependent Co-Arising.

2. Epistemological issue: a particular way of understanding the nature of the world and of human existence freed from the defilements.

3. Ethical issue: a particular path or way of being and acting in the world in which one is freed from ordinary attachments to distinctions between good and evil.

One Buddhist thinker, Kovit Khemananda, who spent about eight years at Suan Mokh, reported about Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s work that:

There have been different “periods” (*samai*) in Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu’s thought. His works range from the concepts of Buddhist history “from the mouth of the Buddha,” to emptiness (*sūñatā*), freed-mind or no-self (*chit-wang*), selfhood and selfishness (*tua-ku, khong-ku*), causality (*idappaccayatā*) and *paticcasamupāda*), and currently to *atammayatā*. (Sivaraksa, 1990, p. 260)

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu’s works explained correctly the essential principles of pristine Buddhism. He attempts to separate the original realization of the Lord Buddha before it is buried under commentaries, ritualism, and the traditional teaching. He teaches whatever he can say truly quenching of suffering. His approach is straight-forward to elevate one’s mind to the higher intellectual and spiritual level because to be truly human is to be above all problems.

In his research paper *Suññatā in Theravāda Buddhism* of Phra Maha Thongyod Bhuripala, wrote this statement referring to Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu that:

The last chapter has been devoted to the interpretation of *Suññatā* as given by the well known meditation teacher of Thailand, Ven. Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu. It has
been highly appreciated by the people of Thailand in general and young men in particular for its practical appeal. In keeping with the spirit of the Suññatā doctrine, his emphasis is on the elimination of egoism. In this connection he points out that it is this misconception which creates problems for man at all levels. Therefore he instructs people to develop the Suññatā outlook in their day to day life, and carry on their activities, whether in factory, or office or on the fields, which what he calls a void-mind. Thus they will be able to lead a happy life free from tension and also contribute to social harmony. (Phra Maha Thongyod Bhuripalo, 1982, P. V)

As things are, dhamma is the true knowledge which tells exactly what it means to be human. Every one has a problem, and further, that all have the same problem that arises out of aging, illness, and death. In short, life is never exactly what all want it to be; however, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu pointed out that the Buddha dhamma involved an understanding of the common humanity, a solution of human nature, and the ultimate destiny of life. It provides the opportunities to join together in meritorious work for society. Its explanation is about the secret nature which people must understand in order to develop life to the highest possible benefit. For his most emphasized teaching, the selected dhamma usage is for those with wisdom, not for those who just believe. Grant A. Olson, Northern Illinois University, who wrote “From Buddhadasa Bhikkhu to Phra Debvedi: Two Monks of Wisdom” states that:

Buddhadāsa’s doctrinal approach has put him in the class of monks of “wisdom” (paññā). In fact, he is seen at the center of a line starting from Prince-Patriarch Wachirayanwarorot, continuing to Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, and coming to the most modern period with Phra Debvedi-agreement exists that these monks follow a line of monks of “wisdom”. (Wasi, 1987, p. 96)

Everyone has the potential to get freedom and transcend his/her life. One should be tolerant person with peaceful mind. These valuable ideas thus become more interesting to scholars, intellectuals and common people, to the point that they can listen, understand, and accept them. To understand human is to understand religious experience which are composed of many dimensions. Human beings should know truly about their spiritual development. Man
needs to realize himself and remove his restricted rule in mental, physical, emotion, to attain the state of a full human.

4.2.3 The Mutuality of the Concept of “Manụṣya” or “Human Being” by Buddhāsā Bhikkhu and Various Religions in the Modern Age

It is necessary to revise the three vows of Buddhāsā Bhikkhu, that he genuinely proceeds to achieve all his lifetime. He sets the three vows of duties for serving the world’s benefit. The first vow is for everyone to truly understand the essences of their religion. The second vow is to create a mutual understanding among various religions. And the third vow is to prevent human beings from the tyranny of materialism by contributing the essence of dhamma teaching and practice. In Trans Thai Buddhism & Envisioning Resistance: The Engaged Buddhism of Sulak Sivaraksa proposed that:

He (Buddhāsā) stressed simple living with natural surroundings, and the significance of applying the Dhamma appropriately to the modern world, rather than adhering to the tradition and ceremony. He combined learning with meditation practice, and was open to other Buddhist traditions of Zen, Mahayana and Vajrayana. He was also open to other religions, like Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Sikhism. Bhikkhu Buddhāsā’s three wishes are widely known to his students, myself included:

- We should understand the best in Buddhism, i.e., how to transform selfishness to serve others.
- We should respect our friends’ religions as our own.
- We should work with our friends, whether religious or non-believers, to overcome materialism, economism, and the like, which is the essence of selfishness. (Ip Hong Yuk, 2004, p. 27)

According to Buddhāsā Bhikkhu’s viewpoint, when people understand the heart of religious teaching which provides the idea of unselfishness of mankind, they will be able to live together in peace. He tries to bridge all essential virtues of every religious teaching to become effectively united for all mankind. Every religion teaches the concept of selflessness
leading to spiritual development, but the differences are merely in methodologies. Mr. Yudhana Peinvej, the writer of the book “What does Buddhadasa teach? Why? How?” presents his idea that:

All religions have the same purpose for the peace of human beings and the serenity of society; however, the means to introduce are distinctive according to the causes and factors of life and society. (Peinvej, 2004, p. 107)

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu had the idea to reinterpret all profound essence of various religions to become integrated usefully for all individuals. From his book, “Keys to Natural Truth”, he defines the word of religion as:

Taken as everyday language, “religion” means at best the teaching; taken as Dhamma language, it means the Sublime Way of Life, glorious is its beginning, middle, and end. (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 1999, p. 23)

Life is not a particular place or a destination. Life is a path to practice the mindfulness and true insight knowledge, every step can bring peace, joy, and liberation. In the authentic world, there is no distinction of things. From the article “What the Buddha Accepted” by Babasaheb Ambedkar, he said that:

The fourth distinguishing feature of his teaching (Buddha) is that real religion lies not in the books of religion but in the observance of the tenets of the religion. (Ambedkar, 1992, p. 105)

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu also contributes to the intrafaith-dialogue in Buddhism referring to cooperative and positive interaction between people of different Buddhist schools through the original essence of Buddha dhamma. He also proposed the statement of:

True Buddhism is neither Theravāda nor Mahāyāna. (Quoted by Jackson, 2003, p. 181: Buddhadasa (Trans.), Khams昂 Khong Huang Po, 1977, p. 1)

From the Radical Conservatism Buddhism in the Contemporary World, Grant A. Olson wrote about Buddhadasa bhikkhu that:
He used colloquial terminology to shock his audience into self-awareness, translated Pāli texts and chants into Thai, and generally reified the final goal of Buddhism through his interest in Mahayana and Zen Buddhism, coining the term chitt-wang (freed mind or no self similar to anattā and based on the doctrine of suññatā.) (Sivaraksa, 1990a, p. 254)

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu emphasizes the topic of spiritual progress for mankind in various religious teachings in order to motivate the interfaith-dialogues, such dialogues often involve mutual understanding among different religions which help to increase tolerance towards others, rather than to synthesize new beliefs. He makes no distinction between all religious works defined as a spiritual activity to establish oneself being free from suffering. To contribute his religious mutual understanding, Peter A. Jackson wrote that:

Buddhadāsa finds a soulmate in such Zen authors as Suzuki, who writes: “Zen disregards conventionalism, ritualism, institutionalism, in fact anything that is binding and restricting.” (Suzuki, Zen and Japanese Buddhism, 33) He finds in Zen a kind of Buddhism with the common goal of cutting through the encumbrances of past interpretations of the scriptures by returning to the practical core of the religion. (Jackson, 2003, p. 193)

From Buddhadāsa’s work, he also reinterprets many religions that share similar goals with Buddhism, a good example is in his book Keys to Natural Truth. He offers the initiative relationship between the heart of Buddhism and essence of Christianity. It can be found in the article “The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil” that has inspired interfaith dialogues. The brief explanation begins with the Genesis from the Bible that God forbids Adam and Eve to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. If they do not obey, they will die. To reinterpret the meaning of this passage, Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu is very keen to provide this biblical reinterpretation as a bridge to the core of Buddhism. He reinterprets the knowledge of good and evil in the mundane level as the birth of desire. The passion for things leads man the dualistic obsession with good and bad ideas. The pure spirituality of man becomes dead, and thus begins the cycle of birth and death in mundane level. Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu has studied
various religions and attempts to guide humanity to be free from hunger and to have wisdom for living in the world. He tries to help all mankind to realize the heart of one’s own religion, to help each other pull oneself out from the power of materialism, and to create mutual understanding among all religions. In The Buddha and His Dhamma Babasaheb Ambedkar also pays a tribute to the Buddha’s Greatness. The following quotation seems to concur with Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu’s idea of mutual understanding among religions:

I see in the spiritual psychology of Buddhism its most powerful contribution. Unitarian Christians like Buddhists reject the external authority of church books or creeds and find in himself the guiding lamp. Unitarians see in Jesus and Gautama noble exponents of the way of life. (Ambedkar, 1992, p. 597)

In sum, to study the religions, is to study the best achievement of body, mind, and soul of human beings. Thus, the different religious scriptures can be their similarity of spiritual transcendent of human beings. It can be observed that all nations and all religions in the world provide genuinely similar results of intellectual and spiritual experience of mankind. The interpretation of authentic life is originally the same, it becomes different whenever the words of interpretation and explanation is limited to the different time, place, and intellectual levels of mankind.

4.3 The Weaknesses of Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu’s Concept of “Manuṣya” or “Human Being” in Modern Age

From the study of Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu’s works, there are many criticisms to his dhamma reinterpretation and teaching from both monks and laities. For example:

Channong Tongprasert, a scholar at the Royal Institute, said that it is Buddhadasa’s borrowing from other traditions — Mahayana, Zen, and Taoism — that has made his teachings too deep for the matter-of-fact approach of traditional adherents to Theravada Buddhism and has left him open to criticism. (Sivaraksa, 1990, p. 259)
The Difficulties facing this morality in contemporary Thailand have been noted by critics of Buddhadasa. Some, who say it will bring Buddhism to its end, mean an end of the traditional religious system focusing on merit-making for the benefit of the monks. Other critics say it is impossible or even dangerous to ask the laity to behave with an empty mind because lay persons would not fulfill their social duties. Bodhirak thinks it is not realistic because it does not take into account the fact that people need norms, markers, precise percepts. He sees its effect as already having caused immorality in Thai society." (Sivaraks, 1990, p. 223-224)

Buddhadasa hardly corresponds to any other figure in the Theravada tradition of Commentators. He has not just repeated sets of texts, and he has been creative in two ways: first by picking up ‘jewels’ from the Scriptures, brief and inspiring formulas such as ‘nothing is worth grasping as me and mine’; secondly by proposing to make those ‘pearls’ change the society and the world. He probably would not be such an original and dangerous figure in a western Christian country where ‘theologies’ develop regularly. But he fits neither in the mold of monks preaching only on how to go to paradise by donating to the monks nor in that of monks preaching extinction (nibbāna) for monks only. This makes him, for some, the saviour; for others, the destroyer of Buddhism in Thailand. (Jackson, 2003, p. 296)

Criticism of Buddhadasa’s reinterpretations of “Birth”(44) An associate of Anan Senakhan and the senior member of the Abhidhamma Foundation, Bunmi Methangkun, maintains that “If the cycle of birth and death ((i.e) samsāra) as a being in various worlds should not be, Buddhism will fall into decay.”(Trans, Bunmi Methangkun, To than Phutthathat rueang chit wang, lem.57)...However, there is a sense in which Anan’s and Bunmi’s criticisms of Buddhadasa are misdirected. Buddhadasa does not in fact completely deny the actuality of rebirth. What he does deny is the reverence of literal rebirth to the spiritual enterprise of Buddhism. Buddhadasa says, If we can master this kind of birth (of “I”) here and now we will also be able to master the birth that comes after physical death. So let’s not concern ourselves with the birth that follows physical death. Instead let us concern ourselves seriously with the birth that happens before physical death. (Jackson, 2003, p. 120)

According to the above message, the wrong explanation often occurs because of the different dhamma realization from the different intellectual levels of persons toward the truth. From this critical study, the concept of “Manusya” or “Human Being” by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu in the modern age reveals that there are many writers, monks, religious teachers and students, and the ordinary people who criticize and disagree with Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s
reinterpretation and teaching of the Buddha’s dhamma in many articles. In fact, when people study the pure Buddha dhamma in Tipitaka deeply and truly, they will find that all essence of Buddha dhamma fits in directly with the Buddhadaśa Bhikkhu’s reinterpretation and teaching.

In the Radical Conservatism, Grant A. Olson wrote that:

The Theravāda tradition has usually been very conservative and has centered its debates mainly on aspects of discipline, conduct, and the wearing of robes. (Peter Jackson, Buddhadaśa: A Buddhist Thinker for the Modern World, Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1988, p. 33) Buddhadaśa Bhikkhu’s primary concerns compelled people to redirect their attention to the end point of Buddhist practice-final freedom, or nibbāna. (Sivaraksa, 1990, p. 255)

In his Ph.D. dissertation titled Suññatā in Theravāda Buddhism, Phra Maha Thongyod Bhuripalo states that:

Ven. Buddhadaśa Bhikkhu is one of the famous exponents of Dhamma and meditation masters in Thailand. He is a well known figure among both Buddhists and non-Buddhists for his presentation of the living spirit of the teachings of the Enlightened One. (Phra Maha Thongyod Bhuripalo, 1982, p. 312)

Consequently, after studying the Buddhadaśa’s work; we can conclude that all his discussion originate directly from the original Buddha’s discourse and scriptures. However, there are some weaknesses that must be critiqued in his dhamma teaching which may affect the comprehension of Buddhism and the progressive spiritual achievement. These obstructive works may occur because of the different intellectual levels of dhamma receivers, the exception of abhidhammapitaka study, and the lack of book references of quotations.

4.3.1 The Different Intellectual Levels of Dhamma Receivers

Buddhadaśa Bhikkhu has used the Tipitaka as a main source and incorporated other religious doctrines in his analysis. He breaks with traditional teachings and introduces his
theory of man and dhammic language. Since the Thai are conservative in terms of religion, he has made himself subject to criticism.

Chamnong Thongprasert, a scholar at the Royal Institute, said that Buddhadāsa incorporates other doctrines and speaks a language that is different from the one most people understand. Sometimes this has resulted in a negative reaction towards him. (Sivaraksa, 1990, p. 246)

One problem with Buddhadāsa’s vocabulary is that he uses common words but with a special meaning of his own. While this may cleverly infuse deeper meanings into common words, it causes confusion. (Sivaraksa, 1990, p. 220)

Somboon Suksamrans says he (Buddhadāsa) has a considerable body of published work, but his level of thought is such as to limit its circulation to intellectuals. (Quoted by Jackson, 2003, p. 265)

Unlike Buddhadāsa, he (Kukrit Pramoj) does not regard the Buddha’s life as a realistic model for the average person. Talking of nibbāna he says, the person who reaches a state such as this naturally cannot live in the world like an ordinary person. They cannot live as a householder in the society of householders. (Quoted by Jackson, 2003, p. 167)

Another Sri Lankan, Amarasiri Weerarame, criticizes the theory of phasa tham upon which Buddhadāsa bases his rapproachement with Christianity as “so much bluff”. There is no such thing as a common Dhamma language serving as a common denominator to all religions. (Quoted by Jackson, 2003, p. 255)

Human beings are special, unlike any other kind of animals. What makes them special is education, namely learning, training, and development. Human beings who have been trained, educated, or developed their spirituality to the truth of nature, are called “noble beings”. They know how to conduct a good life for themselves, to reach their wisdom of life, and also can help their society fare securely in peace and happiness. In the opposite side, if they gain only the worldly education for accumulating more money and things, those persons are considered the intellectual ignorant.

Analyzing the ways of Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu’s teaching, he possessed the distinguished quality of an educator. He performed the duties of a teacher by giving the right direction to the
students. He trained them to be good. He guided them until they understand. He taught the subject in full. And he encouraged and praised his students’ goodness and abilities and allowed them full practice and expression. The book *A Constitution for Living*, by Phra Dhammapitaka (P.A. Payutto), is supportive to this idea, he wrote the fourfold grace of a teacher as:

A capable teacher has the following techniques of teaching: making clear, inviting practice, arousing courage, and inspiring joy. (As in D.I.126) (P.A. Payutto, 2004, p. 65)

After realizing the required quality of an effective teacher, it is needed to know the characteristics of the successive religious learners. They must have the right view by associating with the wise, harkening to the teaching, thinking wisely, and practicing in accordance with principles. Phra Dhammapitaka (P.A. Payutto) also mentioned in his book about having learned the guaranties of a life that is progressing that:

1. Seeking out sources of wisdom and good examples.
2. Having discipline as a foundation for one’s life development.
3. Having a heart that aspires to learning and constructive action.
4. Dedicating oneself to training for the realization of one’s full human potential.
5. Adhering to the principle of conditionality; seeing things according to cause and effect.
7. Thinking wisely so as to realize benefit and see the truth. (P.A. Payutto, 2004, p. 67)

From the past to the present, there are mainly two distinctive kinds of life in Buddhist teaching of *Paññā*, the life in ultimate reality and the life in relative reality. The wise gains the right view to see world and the right knowledge to live with the truth of the world; however, the ignorant has the wrong view and lives with the illusive world. The problems will occur because of the wide gap between the ultimate reality realized by the wise and the relative
reality in accordance with the belief of common people. From the *Dhammapada*, the path of *dhamma* by the words of Buddha is guided in the verse of Contrary Ways that:

1.11 Those who think the unreal is, and think the real is not, they shall never reach the Truth, lost in the path of wrong thought.
1.12 But those who know the real is, and know the unreal is not, they shall indeed reach the Truth, safe on the path of right thought. (Trans. By Juan Mascaro, *Dhammapada: The Path of Perfection*, 1973, p. 36)

For further study, the book *Suffering and No-Suffering* by Ven. Varasak Varadhamma, also mentioned that:

In Buddhism we say, "Those who lack *Dhamma* (Nibbāna) are responsible for creating all the problems in the world. Those who practice *Dhamma*, by dwelling in the Noble Eight-fold Path, will not create problems. (Ven. Varaddhammo, 1996. p. 422)

Thus, all the problems of religious confusion and misinterpretation can be summarized as the lack of knowledge of Truth by both types of man who become effective and ineffective senders, learners, or receivers. This diversity finally creates varied problems from the simplest issue to the most complex and indefinite discussion. In the case of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu this weakness of *dhamma* teaching and understanding can be analyzed in the distinction between the true *dhamma* senders and the average receivers who have the different intellectual levels of *dhamma* knowledge; therefore, some ineffectiveness and misunderstanding of his works can occur. Dr. Suwanna Satha-Anand wrote in a research *Mahayana Buddhism in Buddhadāsa’s Philosophy*, describing the conflict of communication between the true *dhamma* knower and the non-*dhamma* knower that:

The real problem occurs between the *dhamma* knower attempting to communicate the *dhamma* language to the non-*dhamma* knower who clings to the ordinary language. For this reason, confusion arises. The non-*dhamma* knower will assume that the true *dhamma* knower teaches against the real *dhamma* related to the original scripture because it is against their traditional religious belief and practice. (Satha-Anand, 1993, p. 52)
In conclusion, the first weakness of Buddhadasa's works is the obstruction from the various intellectual levels of dhamma receivers. This problem will hinder any possible attainment of the high progressive intellectuality and spirituality of mankind. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu proposed in "Handbook for Mankind" that:

Lacking knowledge, we develop our own personal views on things, based on our own original stupidity....This is likely to be a problem for people who hold to naïve doctrines....For these very reasons, attachment to opinion is to be considered a dangerous defilement. (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 60-61)

4.3.2 The Uninterestedness of Excessive Dhamma Usage

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu aims to present the doctrines of Buddhism in a way that clearly reveal their relevance to contemporary life; therefore, he defines Buddhism as a religious system which is concerned only with this life. It must be noted that he does not in fact completely deny the cosmological reality of heaven and hell or the traditional supernatural interpretations of doctrine, but rather he renders them irrelevant to the human being's attainment of nibbāna in this life for the purpose which he takes to be the goal of true Buddhist. For these reasons, some monks and laities who emphasize the analysis of deep spiritual aids for overcoming delusion and for developing insight into reality, the transitory relations of elements in the substantial nature of the objects of experience will not be satisfied with this omitted section. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu said that:

As for that which is called dhamma or sasana (religion), it exists in order to be the refuge of the people of the world. I don't want good people to discard the world but I want people to live in the world beneficially and without suffering. (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 1981a, p. 18)
From his reinterpretation of Buddhist doctrine, he bases on the pure Buddhist scriptures, the Tipitaka. He rejects the large sections of both the Abhidhammapitaka and Buddhaghosa’s Visuddhimagga as not necessary for the ordinary men. He mentioned that:

On some occasion the Lord Buddha mentioned (in the Suttapitaka) the words abhidhamma and abhivinaya. These denote the part of the dhamma which are excessive or the parts which provide too deep an explanation, beyond what is necessary for a person to know or to have in order to attain nibbāna. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1982d, p. 82)

For Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, his analysis of Abhidhamma does not denote a certain text but rather the existential condition of knowledge of anattata or the voidness of self attained through meditative insight. From his idea, he sees it as superfluous because it is not necessary for all mankind to know this theoretical doctrine in order to become the noble one or the enlightened one. He adds that monks and laities who study Abhidhamma teachings in Thailand emphasized the supernatural and the miraculous in stead of the original analytical emphasis of the Abhidhammapitaka itself. From his book titled “Buddhadāsa: A Buddhist Thinker for the Modern World” Peter A. Jackson, said that:

Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu is particularly critical of traditional Buddhist concern with kamma and rebirth, which he regards as being most strongly supported by the Visuddhimagga and traditional interpretations of the Abhidhammapitaka...He concedes that the study of the Abhidhammapitaka is appropriate for those with penetrating understanding who wish to undertake an intellectual study of Buddhist Principles. But he also claims that the Abhidhammapitaka is both excessive and a spiritual hindrance to the ordinary person. (Jackson, 1988, p. 125-127)

The Abhidhamma therefore is not the only Buddhist text that Buddhadhāsa Bhikkhu has commented, he also criticized the Visuddhimagga of Buddhagosa written in the fifth century as a summary of Buddhist teachings. He said that:

I don’t respect or believe in Buddhaghosacariya one hundred percent, because there are parts (of the Visuddhimagga) I have quite some disagreement with. I can respect up to ninety or ninety-five percent of Buddhaghosa’s teaching. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1981b, p. 95)
His main point of disagreement with Buddhaghosa concerns the interpretation of *paticcasamuppāda*, the doctrine of dependent origination and the rebirth. Buddhaghosa interpreted the twelve cycles of becoming as spanning three separate lifetimes; however, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu maintains that the *paticcasamuppāda* is taken as explaining the arising of suffering at any given moment and the birth is interpreted as the psychological arising of the deluded sense of selfhood.

From his selective emphasis on certain aspects of the *Theravāda* scriptures, he is widely opposed by many religious persons, monks, and laities such as Bunmi Methangkun, head of the *Abhidhamma* Foundation (*Wat Phra Chetuphon*), he criticizes Buddhāsa's demythologizing of Buddhist doctrine and his emphasis on the religion as a this-worldly doctrine in the following way:

He is one who has opened the door wide to accept those who like politics and do not hold to our religion...in order to destroy Buddhism. (Methangkun, 1979, p. 94)

Another example:

Sunthorn Na Rangsi says, in the Pāli scriptures there are many stories telling about some of the Buddha’s disciples who passed away and assumed new births in some realm of existence or other. All such stories stand as scriptural proofs of rebirth. (Jackson, 2003, p. 113)

The supporters of the *Abhidhamma* in Thailand vehemently disagree with Buddhāsa’s *phaśa tham* interpretation of birth and rebirth. Anan Senakhan affirms that “birth” denotes the birth of all sentient beings, according to their respective categories in the thirty-one realms of existence. (Jackson, 2003, p. 120)

Some opponents to Buddhāsa have blamed him for “destroying religion in Thailand” particularly with his psychological interpretation of rebirth which tends to nullify most of the rites of folk Buddhism. (Sivaraksa, 1990, p. 216)

In fact, Buddhāsa Bhikkhu is also attacked by people of different intellectual levels who studied Buddhism and criticized his skipping over the topic of magic, sacred objects,
charms, and talismans. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu thinks that those sacred objects can not be the solutions for solving the real suffering of all mankind.

From the phone interview in August 2006 with Phrathepbodhivides, Official Chief Abbot of the Royal Thai Monastery in Eastern Zone (Wat Thai Buddhagaya, India) and the Head of the Standing Committee on Education, Religion, Arts and Culture to the Senate of the Kingdom of Thailand, he said that:

He (Phrathepbodhivides) has profoundly studied both the Tipitaka, the Buddhist scriptures and the Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's works while writing his Ph.D.'s thesis of Suññatā in Theravāda Buddhism. He (Phrathepbodhivides) is convinced that Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's works followed directly and accurately the Tipitaka; therefore, whoever opposes Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's works, has the false view of genuine Buddhism, calling "micchādītthi". (Phrathepbodhivides, the phone interview, 2006)

According to the above mentioned, there have been supportive ideas from the words of Buddha in the study of the essential dhamma for the different understanding of persons that:

A man is not old and venerable because grey hairs are on his head. If a man is old only in years then he is old in vain. But a man is a venerable 'elder' if he is in truth free from sin, and if in him there is truth and righteousness, non-violence, moderation and self-control. (Trans. By Juan Mascaro, Dhammapada: The Path of Perfection, 1973, p. 73)

In sum, this weakness of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu exists because of his lack of interest in the traditional cosmological truth. He does not instruct the complicated spiritual meditative knowledge and supernatural power which is the cause of strong criticism from his opponents. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's works are aimed to provide the present holistic states or the moment of nirvana state for all mankind. His teaching is considered as the direct contribution of the intellectual and spiritual development for the contemporary society. However, this demythologization affected some individuals who need to learn the advanced and excessive
details of the meditative practice and the deep mental experience which are not provided in his teaching.

In conclusion, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s teaching is still rationalized and popularized among people who are highly educated with the right view of *dhamma*. This assertion is reaffirmed in the teaching of the Nobel Peace Prize Nominee, Thich Nhat Hanh, whose book “Our Appointment with Life”, states something similar to Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s reinterpretation:

According to Buddhism, hell, paradise, *samsara*, and nirvana are all here in the present moment. To return to the present moment is to discover life and to realize the truth. All the Awakened Ones of the past have come to Awakening in the present moment. All the Awakened Ones of the present and the future will realize the fruit of Awakening in the present also. Only the present moment is real: “the past no longer is, and the future has not yet come.” (Thich Nhat Hanh, 2005, p. 35)

4.3.3 The Lack of References

It is noticeable that Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s works have quoted many verses, discourses, and messages from the words of Buddha, *Tipitaka*, and other original religious scriptures; however, he does not address any specific book references or any contextual sources to his quotations. For example the *Handbook for Mankind*, he quotes the words of Buddha as:

Now let us have a look at a saying of the Buddha which I believe may help us to answer the question of why we were born.

*Sankhara parama dukkha,*  
*Nibbanam paramam sukham.*  
*Etam natva vathabhutam*  
*Santimaggam va bruhayeti*  
Compounding is utter misery  
Nirvana is highest Bliss  
Really knowing this truth  
One is on the Path to Peace (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 166)
It is found that all his books do not mention the details of book references, thus other Buddhist scholars, writers, listeners, and readers attack him at this discreditable academic point. Many people say that his works are unreliable and seem ungrateful to the Buddha. It is rather difficult for the researchers to find the original textual sources of those quotations because they are not shown in the text. In Radical Conservatism, Buddhāsa Bhikkhu is criticized that

It is occasionally reported that some professors at secular universities of Thailand do not like Buddhāsa’s works and will not assign them to students because of a lack of scholarly references. (Sivaraksa, 1990, p. 260)

Most of Buddhāsa’s works are spoken, being first recorded on tape and then typed out. This causes a great deal of difficulty for translators and makes assessing his often extemporaneous and repetitive lectures as a philosophical system a major task. (Sivaraksa, 1990, p. 260)

Swearer has said that before any assessment of Buddhāsa Bhikkhu’s thought can be done, the corpus of his works will have to undergo a thorough and careful editing. (Sivaraksa, 1990, p. 260)

From the phone interview with Phrathepbodhivides, he said that:

He wrote his Ph.D. dissertation ‘Suññata’ related to Buddhāsa Bhikkhu’s work in the year 1982 and encountered the problem of lacking book references from those quotations in the Buddhāsa Bhikkhu’s text. Once he had a chance to meet Buddhāsa Bhikkhu himself and discussed this problem with him. Buddhāsa Bhikkhu said that he did not cite the original textual sources because he wanted others to genuinely study and find the ultimate truth by themselves. He just mentioned that he got the essential sources from the Buddha’s speech, Tipitaka, or any religious text in general and if anyone wanted to study more, then he or she must search, read, and study the original one profoundly. It is the means to invite all interested people to study the pure scriptures. After this conversation, Phrathepbodhivides studied intensely the Tipitaka and found that all Buddhāsa’s teaching and quotations are in Tipitaka scripture directly and correctly, he affirmed. (Phrathepbodhivides, the phone interview, 2006)

From the above mentioned remark the lack of book references of the quotations is the major problem for researchers and readers who want to truly study the works of Buddhāsa Bhikkhu. For this reason the genuine study of Tipitaka scriptures is further encouraged.
Another critical point is that the lack of references also affects ignorant persons who try to attack and discredit Buddhadāsa Bhikkhū’s works since they do not cite sources of reference as normally done in academic writing. As a consequence, Buddhadāsa Bhikkhū always guides all individuals: readers, listeners, and learners to study dhamma with the principles of Kālāma Sutta, how to deal with doubtful matters and to investigate doctrine. He advises that:

If one follows the principle of the Kālāma Sutta, one will have independent knowledge and reason with which to understand the meaning and truth of ideas and propositions heard for the first time. (Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu, 1999, p. 7)

According to Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu’s guideline, he suggests people to study dhamma with their intelligence and wisdom. Kālāma Sutta can be used by people of all ages to help them think and examine all received knowledge from every direction in order to ultimately attain reason and truth. From the words of Buddha:

There are two factors for the arising of right view or understanding, namely, hearing and learning from others and wise consideration (by oneself). (M. I. 294; A. I. 87) (Prayuth Payutto, 1990, p. 78)

In Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu’s view, Buddhism is scientific since it is based on the experience of things as they really are. His interpretation of the Buddha person, as well as other aspects of religion seeks to reveal the core or essence of the Buddha dhamma but not the exclusion of the rich and variegated textures of tradition. His understanding of the person of the Buddha and the best end of man’s achievement in the present life becomes the strong contribution for modern society. However, he faced some criticisms because of his innovative teaching and reinterpreting the Buddha dhamma’s, but finally he is accepted widely by the wise and intellectual persons. They assert his teaching as following directly and genuinely the words of Buddha. Thus in turn, one who opposes his idea becomes ignorant person who has the wrong understanding of the authentic Buddhism.
From the personal interview on February, 2006 with Ven. Phrarajrattanarangsi (Veerayutho), Official Chief Abbot of the Royal Thai Monastery in Eastern Zone (Wat Thai Lumbini, Nepal and Wat Thai Kusinarachalermraj, India), Advisor to the Standing Committee on Education, Religion, Arts and Culture to the Senate of the Kingdom of Thailand, he gave his opinion to critically analyze Buddhadasa Bhikkhu as follows:

First, Ven. Phrarajrattanarangsi praises Buddhadasa Bhikkhu that
1. He teaches the core of Buddhism.
2. He bridges positive ideas of every religion for mutual understanding.
3. He gives the clear guidance of suffering therapy for mankind.

Second, Ven. Phrarajrattanarangsi believes Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s teaching faces the problem of
1. The ego of the dhamma receivers, egoism will be a hindrance to human fulfillment. (Ven. Phrarajrattanarangsi, the personal interview, 2006)

Regarding Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s teaching, he has shown the three gauges as the good religious teacher, it is found in A Constitution For Living that:

A teacher may examine himself with the three kinds of manner that characterized how the Buddha taught:
1. He teaches with true knowledge: having first himself acquired true knowledge and accomplished his goal, he teaches others.
2. He teaches logically, so that his listeners can clearly see the meaning with their own wisdom.
3. He teaches pragmatically, accomplishing the objective of the teaching by, for example, guiding his listeners to truly understand, to see the truth, to actualize the practice and to attain the results of the practice. (A. I. 276) (P.A. Payutto, 2004, p. 65)

In sum, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu performs the good duties of a teacher to all individuals by helping them to the right direction of Buddhism. He trains them to gain a high mind, he guides them through Buddhist understanding and leads them to achieve the freedom from suffering in this life. Thus the transformation of mind can become a source of peace and joy for everyone.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Anumondana

Break out the funds to spread Dhamma to let Faithful Trust flow,
Broadcast majestic Dhamma to radiate long living joy.
Release unexcelled Dhamma to tap the spring of Virtue,
Let safely peaceful delight flow like a cool mountain stream.
Dhamma leaves of many years sprouting anew, reaching out,
To unfold and bloom in the Dhamma Centers of all towns.
To spread lustrous Dhamma and in hearts glorified plant it,
Before long, weeds of sorrow, pain, and affliction will flee.
As Virtue revives and resounds throughout Thai society,
All hearts feel certain love toward those born, ageing, and dying.
Congratulations and Blessings to all Dhamma Comrades,
You who share Dhamma to widen the people’s prosperous joy.
Heartiest appreciation from Buddhadasa Indapañño,
Buddhist Science ever shines beams of Bodhi longlasting.
In grateful service, fruits of merit and wholesome successes,
Are all devoted in honor to Lord Father Buddha.
Thus may the Thai people be renowned for their virtue,
May perfect success through Buddhist Science awaken their hearts.
May the King and His Family live long in triumphant strength,
May joy long endure throughout this our world upon earth. (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 1987, p.iii) : (the Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s verse (Buddhadasa Indapañño) that provides to all Dhamma Comrades, and those helping to spread Dhamma at Mokkhabalārāma, Chaiya, 2 November 2530 (1987), Translated by Santikaro Bhikkhu, 3 February 2531 (1988).)

In this study, the emphasis is on the term “Mānasya” or “Human Being” and aimed to guide the practical best end of intellectual and spiritual development. Its scope is concentrated on traditional Buddhism scriptures and their reinterpretation by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu based on the core principle of the Four Noble Truths and any related Buddhist doctrine and practice. The content is directed to the possible moment transformation from ignorant living to wise living for all mankind. As a result, a man is able to reject the main root of human’s suffering –
desire – that leads to attachment of a sense of possession and accumulation of worldly things including egoism, materialism, capitalism, consumerism, and all defilements. If a man succeeds in his rejection of the roots of suffering, then he can achieve the true selfhood liberation in this life.

In summarizing this study, beginning with the definition of the word “Manuṣya” from the Buddhist doctrine, it is clearly identified as:

a man, human being, mortal, a mate, a class of manes. The term “Manuṣya” comes from manas + ush-ya. Manas is the mind, heart, understanding, perception, intelligence. And ush-ya means high and lofty. (Vaman Shivaram Apte, 1998, p. 1233,1235)

And from the interpretation of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, it appears that he has proposed the concept of “Manuṣya” by emphasizing the development of the quality of mind from the state of ignorance to state of wisdom, and this is feasible for all humans in the modern age. His interpretation of “Manuṣya” or human being is divided into two terms namely, the literal interpretation and the religious contextual interpretation. The meaning of “Manuṣya” or human being in literal term can be identified as:

The term “human” (in Sanskrit “Manuṣya”) means something rather special. It implies a high-minded being, a descendant or Manu the wise, something higher than average. To deserve the title of human being, one must walk the True Path. (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 1956, p. 193)

Furthermore, in the religious contextual meaning, the word “Manuṣya” or human being can be reinterpreted in two different levels of language usage. He identifies that:

In everyday language, ‘person’ refers to a creature with a body shaped like what they call a ‘person’ or human being. But in Dhamma language, the word ‘person’ refers to certain special qualities implied in the word ‘human’ which means ‘possessing a lofty mind’ or ‘high minded’ certain high mental qualities. (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 1999, p. 31-32)
From the above mentioned, it is suggested that to be “Manṣya” or “Human Being”, one must develop his or her intellect and spirituality towards the Truth.

Today, people are oppressed by a feeling of something missing in their lives. Everyday men and women are faced with numerous decisions and choices, they are always trying to define the proper role that pleasure should play in their lives: father, daughter, doctor, lawyer, soldier and so on. They face many materialistic problems and are drowned in the sea of craving for material gain. They do all possible things to satisfy this hunger. They become slaves to their created world: money, objects, fame, power, culture, and society. The pervasiveness of anxiety and tension in man’s culture are detrimental to an individual’s pursuit of true happiness. Excessive anxiety and worry can, like anger and hatred, have devastating effects on the mind and body, or become the source of much emotional suffering and even physical illness. There are so many things that men or women desire. A desire may be excessive or negative depending on the circumstances or society in which they live. For example, if men or women live in an affluent society where a car is required to help them manage their daily life, then of course there’s nothing wrong in desiring a car. If they already have a car but still want more cars and expensive ones too; this can create an uncomfortable feeling and anxiety. The desire never seems to stop. When individuals can not fulfill their endless desire, they suffer “dukkha” because of their “tanha” or desire. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu says that it is human nature to desire. It happens to everyone regardless of age, sex, belief, social status, ect. For example a poor man may desire wealth, a young person may desire success, an invalid may desire health, and elderly may desire longevity. Desire may vary depending on circumstances of an individual’s life. However it is human nature to desire more
and more but not all desires can be fulfilled, so people have to face both unsatisfied and satisfied conditions in every moment of life. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu explained that:

As it is, we are ignorant of the true nature of things, thus our behavior results in suffering. Buddhist practice is designed to teach us how things really are. To know this in all clarity is to attain the fruit of the Buddhist path, perhaps even the final fruit, nibbāna, because this very knowledge is what destroys the defilements. (Swearer, 1991, p. 22)

In the modern age, human beings have devised a vast repertoire of strategies for avoiding suffering. Sometime they use external means such as drug or alcohol to soothe their emotional pain. Sometime they use internal mechanisms such as psychological defense refusing to recognize that a problem exists. Suffering can only be avoided temporarily. Drugs and alcohol certainly ease their pain for a while, but with continued use, it will cause physical damage to their bodies and social damage to their lives resulting in far more suffering. The internal psychological defenses such as denial or repression may shield and protect them from feeling the pain a bit longer, but it still does not make the suffering disappear. In the Art of Happiness: A Handbook for Living, it is described that:

In studies, such as one conducted by Dr. Larry Scherwitz, examining the risk factors for coronary heart disease, it has been found that people who were most self-focused (those who referred to themselves using the pronouns “I”, “me”, and “my” most often in an interview) were more likely to develop coronary heart disease. (His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 1998, p. 59)

Trying to avoid this unsatisfied condition, the physical and psychological therapy provides only temporary relief. The analysis of the modern conception of the term ‘man’ is represented roughly by a threefold division namely, body, mind, and soul. The structure and functions of the body are the main concern of scientific field in modern age. The mind as studied in the systems of psychology, roughly means the personal thinking, ego and its thoughts, emotions, and volitions. The soul is an even more vague conception since it stands
for what in religion is regarded as the insight of man. From these reasons, the human approach to suffering and life fulfillment ultimately requires deeper levels of understanding. In *The Art of Happiness: A Hand Book for Living*, His Holiness the Dalai Lama said that:

Although it is possible to achieve happiness, happiness is not a simple thing. There are many levels. In Buddhism, for instance, there is a reference to the four factors of fulfillment, or happiness: wealth, worldly satisfaction, spirituality, and enlightenment. Together they embrace the totality of an individual’s quest for happiness. (His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 2001, p. 24)

In this study there is a better approach. If human directly confronts his or her suffering, he or she will be in a better position to appreciate the depth and nature of the problem. If men and women realize the truth of self and nature that there is nothing worth wanting and grasping because all existences and things are transitory, unsatisfactoriness, and being not self, they become wise masters of all things. When they do not cling to self and things, “I”, “my” and “mine”, they are free from all bondages and can attain liberation. But if they do not understand the truth of nature, they become an ignorant slave to this world of flux. His Holiness the Dalai Lama said that:

Pleasure is the beginning and end of the blessed life. (His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 2001, p. 35)

In Buddhism, everyone can develop his or her spiritual and intellectual aspects from the study and practice of *Sīla* or precepts, *Samādhi* or meditation, and *Pāññā* or insight for knowing “what is what”, the truth of nature in order to become totally human being. Everyone can develop his mental quality from an average man to become a highminded man, an *Arayan* or a noble one, and an *Arahant* or a worthy one. From this understanding, Buddhaddāsa Bhikkhu encourages men and women to look within self by *Dhamma* moments observation and experiment by living. He presents an authentic path of self analysis, self development, and true self satisfaction based on the realistic aspects of Buddhism and his own reinterpretation of
Buddha Dhamma. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu provides important documented guidance for all mankind to the extinction of defilements and suffering in the materialized age. He uses the core principle of the Four Noble Truths; the knowledge of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path leading to the cessation of suffering.

Given the importance of this study, suffering means the undesirable condition such as old age, illness, and death. Everyday people fail to realize causality of existences and the three characteristics of life which are the state of impermanence, the state of suffering, and the state of being not self. They face pain and suffering as universal phenomena because of their ignorant endless desire. Millions of individuals search for the good life with the wrong view of living. Their mentality produces the three unhealthy defilements of greed, anger, and delusion and increases the egoistic desire, the wrong attitude of sensual craving, craving for eternal existence, craving for perpetual youth, for constant good health, for temporal happiness, and so on. The pleasures derived from sensual craving cannot satisfy one’s most heart-felt longing. Craving may lead people to do harm to themselves, and communities. Ignorance and desire are the sources of human suffering and human beings need to rectify this erroneous conception. As a consequence, people become attached to all elements of existence and things that cannot be truly possessed, so they suffer.

To solve this universal human problem, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s work ultimately includes a belief in the possibility of freedom from suffering but starts with accepting suffering as natural fact of human existence, and courageously facing the problems head on. He presents the practical intuition method in both dimensions, first in a natural dimension and second in methodical dimension by using ānāpānasati bhāvana. Both practical intuition methods can reach the true insight and true wisdom. They enable ordinary people to cut off from all sorts of
fetters: greed, hatred, delusion, conceit, wrong view, doubt, sloth, restlessness, shamelessness, lack of moral and death. He focuses on an awareness of the nature of truth and the emptiness of “I” in order to achieve the essence of wisdom in the present life. People will not cling to the worldly life because of an awareness of truth that can promote good mental hygiene and help combat negative physical and emotional conditions of human beings. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu teaches that there is no idea of self attachment or “I”, consequently there is no idea of “desire”. People with a spiritual basis are assured of a peaceful life and livelihood, undisturbed by the impermanence and unsatisfactoriness of the world, and not agitated by craving and desire which lead to exploitation and crime. The false idea of a sense of possession and accumulation, egoism, materialism, capitalism, consumerism will be liberated in the present life. He suggests that the liberation of wisdom is composed of a momentary nirvana, and a full nirvana for every man’s mental liberation. In The Good Life: A Guide to Buddhism for the Westerner, Gerald Roscoe said that:

One should not think I am in pain, but rather there is pain; not that I am angry but rather there is anger; not that I am joyful but rather there is joy. One should realize that whatever arise, i.e. whatever “there is” such as pain, feelings, sensations, thoughts, emotions soon passes away. It is the law of impermanence: what arises passes away. Thus, one should realize that I, although a useful and necessary social-communicative term, cannot be regarded as a permanent self. It should not, and cannot, be clung to. (Roscoe, 1990, p. 35)

In What the Buddha Taught, Venerable Dr. W. Rahula said that:

The Buddha’s teaching is meant not only for monks in monasteries, but also for ordinary men and women living at home with their families. The Noble Eightfold Path, which is Buddhist way of life, is meant for all, without distinction of any kind. The vast majority of people in the world cannot turn monk, or retire into caves or forests. However noble and pure Buddhism may be, it would be useless to the masses of mankind if they could not follow it in their daily life in the world of today. But if you understand the spirit of Buddhism correctly, (and not only its letter), you can surely follow and practice it while living the life of an ordinary man. (Rahula, 1988, p. 76)
From this research study, it may be assumed that the approach to becoming "Manusya" by Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu is identical to the teachings of Buddha. According to the Buddha Dhamma, for all mankind should learn the core principle of the Four Noble Truths and to practice the detachment of all illusion and to achieve the wisdom of truth in order to have the serene life. It can be seen from many examples of his disciples who gain the holiness and the nirvana state at the moment of the Buddha’s verses. This selective essence of quotations is from the word of Buddha in Tipitaka:

Oh! sons, the mind which engages in sadness with lust will never get liberty. And the mind which engages in suffering with ignorance will never reach enlightenment. So sons, to be free from all greed is called mind enlightenment. And to be free from ignorance is called wisdom enlightenment. When one achieves both, that is pure enlightenment. (Quoted by Chai Na Pol Akarasupaset, 1999, p. 118) : (Tipitaka: Siamratha Version “Unkutaranikaya” Vol.35, p. 445)

This quotation corresponds to the Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu’s teaching when he said that:

The essential principle of Buddhism is this: through the studious search for the truth within one's body, through learning the true nature of things and persons, and through avoiding the attachment that produces suffering, one may extinguish suffering in mind and in heart. Regard for the law of not-self produces a mind that is freed and at ease. (Swearer, 1991, p. 8)

According to his innovative spiritual development, Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu has spread out the teachings of the Buddha like a vast sea to Thai Buddhist scholars and influenced a revitalization of writing applying Buddhist principles to education, mental health, and other subjects. During his life time he often invites Buddhists from other sects to dialogue, hoping to integrate all Buddhists. W. Wachiramethi, a famous Buddhist monk and writer, made the following remarks:

In Thailand, Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu is considered a progressive person because he does not adhere to any particular Buddhist Sect. Almost all Thai Bhikkhus believe that all Dhamma is completely in the Theravāda Sect and there is no need to learn the Mahāyāna Sect. However, Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu has studied both Theravāda Sect and Mahāyāna Sect. He translates ‘the Teaching of Huang Po’, ‘the Principle
of Vei Lang’. W. Wachiramethi calls him ‘a Buddhist living beyond the sect’. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu says that sects are similar to children’s toys, so he turns to study the original Buddhist scriptures of the Buddha. (Collected by Samnakpim Sukhapab jai, 2006, p. 40)

The concept of development of human being in Buddhism and Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s reinterpretation is focused on the discovery of the true nature which is contributed to compassion for the world. Its core is close to many religions that one can include the interfaith dialogues. Chuang Tzu, a man who develops further the ideas in the Tao Te Ching, summarizes a pure man as:

The pure man of old knew neither to love life nor hate death. He did not rejoice in birth, nor did he resist death. Without any concern he came and without any concern he went, that was all. He did not forget his beginning nor seek his end. He accepted his body with pleasure, and forgetting life and death, he returned to the natural state. He did not violate Tao with his mind, and he did not assist nature with man. This is what is meant by a pure man. (Bush, 1988, p.183)

In Indian mystics, the prayer in the word of Upanisad is:

Asato mā sad gamaya, tamaso mā jyotir gamaya, mṛtyor mā amṛtam gamaya.
Lead me from the unreal to the real, lead me from darkness to light, lead me from death to immortality. (S. Radhakrishnan, 1992, p. 47)

The term “man” and “the path of intellectual and spiritual reformation” can be reinterpreted through the true religious worldview by studying the relation between human beings and the real nature. In cosmic religion, the nature exists as it always is and always will be, in ever-renewing cycles. Human beings cannot really interfere with that or change it. They cannot begin in it, nor can they end in it. In Western understanding, humans and nature are the creation and property of God, so they will always be wholeness. Buddhists are required to develop their right view of egolessness in order to live harmoniously with nature. The quotation of the Buddha’s verse shows the true path of human beings as:

Oh! sons, Of all truth:
Pleasure is the base of all,
Deliberation is the birth place,
Attachment is the cause of birth,
Feeling is the assembly floor,
Concentration is the chief,
Wisdom is the greatest,
Enlightenment is on the top,
Liberty is the true essential,

People need to delve deeply into the complexities of religious plurality in order to be able to unite the essence of all religions for the development of their spirituality and intellectuality with the pure nature. Hence, when they possess profound understanding of the concept of “Manusya” or “Human Being” of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, they will be able to apply this understanding in different fields of knowledge for broader dialogue.

In conclusion, it is also important to point out that the works of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu emphasizes “all insight experience of mankind” not on “the literal books”. His works range from the concepts of Buddhist history, the Four Noble Truths, selfhood and selfishness, the emptiness, freed-mind or no-self, causality, and so on. He uses the scientific principle that can stand proof. Each individual is different since he or she has not the same gift, experience, exposure, culture, and so on. When the individuals observe insight themselves, scrutinize, test, they must know who they are exactly which is called awareness. The liberation of wisdom is appropriate for modern people since they believe in the present verification. They can accept and achieve it simply in their daily life.

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu’s works provide the strategy for human being’s possible evolution which is referred to “transformation. His strengths are related to his innovative hermeneutics and reinterpretation of Buddha Dhamma, the demythologizing approach, the selected essence of Dhamma usage, the mutuality of various religions. However, he is also criticized for his
break with traditional teachings and the conventions of most people’s language. He is accused of being a destroyer of Buddhism. But finally, in light of his teachings, no one can postpone paying attention to matters of fulfillment or enlightenment until the next life; falling into hell or going to heaven is the direct result of proper actions performed from moment to moment. It is acceptable and practical for all mankind.

In Buddhism, everyone can develop their intellect and quality of mind from ignorance to wisdom, or from an average man to an arahant or worthy one. From Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu’s concept of “Mamṣya” or “Human Being”, the researcher is convinced that his teaching is relevant for the modern age if we truly practice as he has taught. Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu’s, in the researcher’s opinion did not stray from the core teachings of the Buddha, what he did is to show that the teaching of Buddha is still suitable for contemporary living. However, modern people do have limitation in terms of time, education and life circumstances, therefore not all of them can gain true wisdom. The evolution of human being depends on how much a person understands the truth of this world and its illusion. The primary requirement is to realize genuinely the truth of world and all bondages. In the Buddha Dhamma and Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu’s Buddhist reinterpretation, to develop a mind free from all bondages is the core requirement for being a holy one and possible for all humankind in this life.
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