

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Food or nourishment (*āhāra*) is the basic need of man. Without food, man cannot exist in the world. The food itself governs both physical and mental life, and all aspects of human life and society. All things are originated from and nourished by the food; it determines the destiny of human and world. Thus, the *āhāra* bears the profound and complex meaning; therefore, one should not understand simply that *āhāra* is something as rice, fish, meat, fruit, or vegetables to nourish his physical body. The so-called “*man*” is made of the components of body and mind, both need food to maintain. The body may absorb one, two or three meals in a day, but the mind really eats constantly both day and night. Man always cares for the material food for his body and he does not have the notion of the food for the mind. Buddhism attaches significance to the food for the mind, the control of the mind and the purification of the mind, because all good and evil deeds are the results of what has been founded by mind. Therefore, the Buddha’s teaching on *āhāra* as recorded in the *Pañca Nikāya* of *Pāli* Literature that is categorized into the four kinds of food: edible food, contact food, volition food, and consciousness food, in which the first one is the food for the body and the other three are the foods for the mind. Lord Buddha really pays attention to the nourishment of the mind, hence the amount of the food of mind is bigger than the body. “The food for the mind and the mind eats

constantly” is strange and new way of speaking to us, but it is true and that should be contemplated.

The truth of the *āhāra* in Buddhism, which is the foundation of all existence and lives, relates to the truth of life and happiness and suffering of the human beings.

“All that lives subsist on food.”¹

“Whatever pain arises is all in consequences of *āhāras*.

By the destruction of the *āhāras*, there is no origin of pain.”²

In the above statements, the Buddha has condensed the root of all existence, of all human problems, of happiness and anguish, of individual and society into the word *āhāra*. He equates sufferings with *āhāras*. According to the Buddha, this is the one single fact about life that deserves to be contemplated and understood. If understood widely and deeply enough this saying of the Buddha reveals indeed a truth that leads to the root of all existence and also to its uprooting. Here, too, Lord Buddha proved to be one who “saw to the root of things.” Hence, it was thought useful to study on the Buddha’s concept of *āhāra*.

From the statements, there is no reason for us to discuss food in Buddhism subjectively and superficially. In fact, researching on food in Buddhism, most of scholars and people have centered on the concepts of vegetable and non-vegetable (meat eating) in relation to the viewpoint of the two Buddhist traditions - *Theravāda* and *Mahāyāna*. The matter that for a long time has become a fascinating subject for everyone to think about *āhāra* in Buddhism and even is debated seriously still now. Actually, this is not the main issue for one who wants to learn about the truth of food in Buddhism, because it is not the central point concerning the truth and nature of food as taught by the Buddha.

¹ A.V, 51 (*sabbe stattā āhāraṭṭhikā.*)

² Sn., 747 (*Yaṃ kiñci dukkhaṃ sambhoti, sabbam āhārapaccayā; Āhārānaṃ nirodhena, natthi dukkhassa sambhavo.*)

Being essential for the human life, the food is always a burning subject for everyone to discuss. The previous and current food theories and studies on food, which have been mentioned and discussed widely from different angles of view, are very interesting and useful, but they have been crucially centered on the material foods and the physical health improvement, not for the mental food at all; therefore, those food theories cannot help people resolve the mysteries regarding food and life, their hunger and ill mentality though they take sufficient edible food daily. In this regard, a critical study of concept of “**Āhāra and its Importance as Depicted in the Pañca Nikāya**” is essential.

In the first chapter of the introduction of the present thesis, the researcher begins discussing firstly the problems in human life; secondly, *āhāra* (nourishment or food) known as a basic problem; thirdly, the importance of *āhāra* in human life; fourthly, the *Pāli Tipiṭaka* literature; fifthly, the sources for research on nourishment; sixthly, the purpose of the research; seventhly the methodology of the present work, and lastly the structure of the research.

1.1. Problems in human life

Never before human beings³ in the world have been in the great need to be free from problems of conflict, violence, earthquake, flood, drought, hurricane, global warming, climate change, and other crises. These problems have caused human life much insecurity. Here, the problem is the very suffering, when human beings say they have many serious problems, it implies that they are subject to sufferings not only both of

³ “Human being” means something of a totally different type. It means simply striving, persevering, working to get things one wants honestly and fairly, purchasing them with the sweat of one’s brow. This is what it is to be a human being. In short the meaning of “human being” is fatigue, a condition of habitual fatigue. The term “human being” in this thesis implies fatigue, exhaustion, shedding sweat, hard work, trading sweat of one’s brow for food and sensual pleasure. It has nothing to do with anxiety, delusion, or the others; it is the honest exchanging of the sweat of one’s brow for things one wants. This is the meaning of the term “human beings”. See the booklet, *The Danger of “I”* by Bhikkhu Buddhadasa, p. 20.

body but also of mind. Actually, more than twenty five centuries ago, Lord Buddha alone did the sole task: “This only do I teach: suffering and its end” (*dukkha and dukkhanirodha*). This means that He has warned us about the truth, that is, “life is suffering, its cause, its cease, and the way of leading to end it.”⁴ It is not too strange or fresh in the face of such problems or sufferings. The matter is how to know the cause of these problems and the root cause of the basic problem. Men often feel fearful and worried about bad results or effects when they come beyond than the control of causes. All current human problems are results from the bad causes that have not been carefully controlled. Thus, the duty of a human being is to find out where the basic problem/cause is that will continue to bring pain to us.

When one lives in fear and worry, he longs for peace and safety. Peace and safety are the common wishes of human beings in every age. The so-called “zenith of human civilization or that of technological and scientific progress” is regarded as human race’s great achievement that is accumulated from very long time by the efforts and brainpower of the generations. The marvels of modern technology, to some extent which really satisfy human’s needs of material life, have conquered some disasters. It still has not met man’s demand for his really peaceful and safe life - the inner happiness or the spiritual life. Let us have a look back into the past. Though our ancestors belonged to a simple way of life and did not have modern industries and machines, they were safer and happier than we are. Why is it? Is there something wrong with the so-called zenith of human civilization? The straight answer is that the civilization of the twentieth century is based on the desire of competition. This desire is really dangerous because this competition itself is an effort of man who

⁴ S. V, 56.

desires to be stronger than others, while his main matter is how to be better than what he is now.⁵ Furthermore, the civilization, which is crucially concerned much about the development of economy, nuclear weapons, arms, i.e., concerned much about production and advantages as well as show of power of a country - and in the process is almost ignoring the development of the moral and spiritual way of life. This course of development relating to the craving (*taṇhā*) and grasping (*upādāna*) of human beings has brought to human life the mass of problems that now have engrossed the whole world.

The term “*problem*” is defined as “something that causes difficulties, that happens in your life, that makes you feel worried, unhappy, or ill; or that stops you from making progress.”⁶ In the current life of human beings, there are not only a few bad situations but also so many difficulties, which can be enumerated as follows:

- The serious pollution of the air, the water, the soil, the environment.
- Natural resources being degraded.
- Rapid climate change and global warming.
- Population growth outstripping resources worldwide.
- Unequal distribution of financial resources.
- Nuclear weapons, the imminent danger of worldwide catastrophe.
- Military means is a way of resolving political problems.
- Cold and hot wars.
- The situation of Racism and Genocides
- The increase in conflict and terrorism.
- Ethnic groups clinging to land, to resources, to sacred space.
- Moral degeneration and misused intelligence.

⁵ Dhṛ. verse No. 103.

⁶ DVD-ROOM, Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, Language Activator, Pearson Longman, Software © IDM 2009.

- The crisis - of society, confidence, school.⁷

From the above list of the “*biggest problems*,” it is clear that the ‘*problems*’ discussed in “*problems in human life*” are not normal difficulties or worries such as sickness, unemployment, tension, health, and malnutrition, etc. They are the ‘*disasters*’ for the present and for the future if there are no positive found solutions for them. It can be guessed that human beings will encounter the danger of mass-destruction as warned by the contemporary educators, religious leaders, ecologists etc., all over the world. Extremely worrying events related to these disasters can happen in the near future. Prof. S.K. Acharya and Dr. A.B. Sharangi, who have been working in the field of environmental science and disaster management in their book, have stated that:

“Never before in the annals of human civilization disasters has been so much thought off and delved into as it is now. With the looming danger of global warming, climate change and social unrest, the context of disaster preponderance, disaster impact and disaster recurring have taken the present and future of civilization by sheer uncertainties and unfathomable holocaust. Disaster by becoming calamitous and instantaneous can shock the people and the animals by awe and thud.”⁸

The above quotation is a recent warning, which indicates that great progress of science and technology cannot help the humankind to be free, or removed from serious problems. Science and technology both have failed to bring peace and happiness to our fellow beings. For this peril of those problems that haunt world today who is responsible? Maybe the answer is “no one” In fact, scientists, politicians, economists, and leaders

⁷ Source: <http://www.mac.edu/faculty/richardpalmer/postmodern/application.htm>.

⁸ S.K. Acharya, *Disaster Management: Concept, People and Perception*, Udaipur: Agrotech Publishing Academy, 2009, p. 4.

are now very much worried and they fear for the imminent disasters (coming). They have considered many solutions for global warming and rapid climate change. Most of them hold the same point of view, that is, “*world problems need world cooperation to solve them.*”⁹ This can be a suitable idea for preventing those problems but it is hard to believe that the entire world will cooperate in harmony. Who can believe that all leaders of the countries in the world would sit together in harmony to make a decision for cooperation in stopping exploiting the natural resources, saving the planet as soon as possible, stopping the causes of all wars and conflicts, ending long standing hatred amongst one another, and even stopping development of science and technology? It is bringing in excesses to the living conditions of human.

The ordinary common human beings who have been tied by ignorance, craving and worldly pleasures. On the other hand, different from these are the holy men who have been free from all pleasures, who have conquered themselves and who have enlightened the truth of life, such great holy men are the founders of religions. The enlightened Ones always pay attention to the spiritual life of human beings. However, human beings, especially scientists and leaders of countries, seem to ignore what they have taught. Now it is time to apply the system of the teachings of religions to solve the problems. One of the religions of the world, Buddhism is known as a religion of peace. What the Buddha taught can help human beings to solve all their problems. Therefore, in this thesis, the researcher will concentrate on the study of the Buddhist teachings. It is his hope to find out where the basic problem in the mass of problems is as what are the solutions for that basic problem of human life in general.

⁹ Source: <http://www.angelfire.com/mac/egmatthews/worldinfo/problems/index.html>.

Buddhism, according to the word of the Buddha in the *Pāli Canon*, is unique in that it teaches an ethical system of self-development for human beings to be released from all sorts of problems, and become truly independent by not relying upon any forces from without.¹⁰ Indeed, in Buddhist view, all good or evil deed is the result of what we have thought, what is founded by our thoughts, and what is made by our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, anguish follows him; if does it with pure a thought, happiness follows him.¹¹ This is to say that happiness (*sukkhā*) or pain (*dukkhā*) is quite dependent upon deeds of man itself; God, Deity or Supreme Being will not bring it to him. Man experiences happiness and suffering through his body and mind. For this reason, the Blessed One always advises us to be mindful and aware of our deeds of body, speech, and thought. In addition, He reminds us to control our five sense organs (*eye, ear, nose, tongue, body*) because they are the main doors of our life that constantly produce the feelings of either joy or anguish when they come in contact with the external world (*sight, sound, odor, taste, touch*).

According to the Buddha's advice, the main queries about human life are from where we can get true happiness and from where the suffering in life appears, are really resolved. However, human beings from the past till now have looked for happiness without guarding, controlling, and without minding their deeds and sense organs as well as their wishes or dreams of lives. Therefore, they are always subject to suffering. Then they try to free from their sufferings by means of the acquisition of wealth, the competition of power, fame, and position. They do not know that in doing so, not only suffering is not reduced but is also

¹⁰ P. A. Payutto, *The Pāli Canon: What a Buddhist Must Know*, Thailand: Superior Printing House Co. Ltd., 2007, p. 29.

¹¹ Dhṛ., verses No. 01, 02.



increased. Why is it so? The so-called most precious wealth and fame of the worldly life and even the human civilization of great achievements are originated from the main roots of poisons (*mula priyaya*): attachment (*lobha*,) anger (*dosa*,) delusion (*moha*,) and grasping (*upādāna*.) From now on man's mind, which is constantly obsessed and disturbed by these poisons, makes it become blind, not to know how to distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil. Its effect is that man's mind cannot realize what the truth of life is. For this reason, ignorance (*avijā*) is known as the true nature of existence, of suffering, as cause of all diseases. However, the powerful and the rich, because of ignorance, do not believe that life is pain and constant changing. They try to hold the huge wealth of property in their hand, but they cannot realize that all things are changing and gradually leaving from them, even their bodies and dearest relatives.

In order to help human beings to realize the truth of suffering and the way leading to cessation of suffering, Lord Buddha has presented his experience in many ways. For example, for a greedy person, He will teach greed is pain. For the persons who are looking for high position, He teaches that position is pain. If one attaches himself to desire, He will preach that desire is suffering. If one craves for many kinds of nourishment or food (*āhāra*) and becomes immoderate in food, He will teach that nourishment is suffering. Generally, Lord Buddha has applied the different skilful ways to describe the Truth of life to human beings who are engulfed in passion and anguish.

The studying of the Buddha's teaching is not to accumulate or to show off knowledge, but it is only for attaining the aim to be free from suffering and defilement of body and mind. In reality, besides the noble and philosophical doctrines of no self (*anattā*,) impermanence (*anicca*,)

dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*.) Lord Buddha has taught us the basic teachings, which look easy, but they are extremely important because they relate directly to the entire life, death, and fate of all human beings. The basic teachings consist of a basic need of all human beings that is food or nutriment, way of eating, way of breathing, way of listening, way of looking, way of touching with external world, way of control of the inner feelings, way of nourishment of right wish, and way of purifying one's mind.

The researcher believes that *āhāra* is the ever-lastingly fascinating topic because it is a basic need of all human beings. Indeed, a so-called 'human' or 'being' is solely dependent on food for his existence "all beings subsist on food" (*sabbe sattā āhāraṭṭhikā*.)¹² Therefore, in the researcher's opinion all human problems directly originate from food; in other words, *āhāra* is regarded as main cause, which stimulates craving and hatred. In order to solve all our human problems, *āhāra* is the central matter to be considered.

1.2. *Āhāra* is the basic problem of human life

First of all the question is: why is *āhāra* (food) is the basic problem of human life? It is known that life is really an endless process of search for food, on which human beings have always conquered and rivaled each other for their existence. Moreover, in the process of search for food, human beings constantly want to satisfy all the needs of life, that are the need for dainty food and good clothes, for money and wealth, for fame and position, for marriage and sexual pleasure. A country is in the need of the power of the military and national defence, of high finance and the development of economy. In the researcher's opinion, a series of needs of man are his very foods that have stimulated and have urged him all his

¹² A. V, 51.

life. In order to attain or to satisfy all the needs or foods, one can do anything, regardless of good or evil; he can harm or kill his friends, neighbors and even relatives. Because of the satisfaction of food or needs, human beings can do countless evils and crimes. Any time *āhāra* is ever like a prey and man is like a hunter, he can immediately kill his prey for his hunger. Wealth is one of the preys that one always hungers for. According to Lord Buddha's teaching, the only fools long for wealth because it harms not only themselves but also others.¹³

Human beings always crave for foods. It is the most basic need of human life. Without food, no one can exist in the world. It is said that owing to *āhāra* one is born and one grows; due to food one is either happy or in pain, good or bad; due to food one can know what really he is; there is food, there is a human being and vice versa. The growth of the psychology and physicality as well as the deed and thoughtful capacity of a person depends upon what man eats, thinks and acts. For people, the laws of food and nutrition govern both biological and mental life; for a country and the entire world, it governs all the realms and systems of social organization such as economics, politics, culture, education, ethics, and public health. Thus, all aspects of human life have originated from food, and when there is food crisis, there is a system of social organization crises and vice versa.

Thus, the existence and operation of each individual is quite dependent upon *āhāra*. In addition, family, which is a group of individuals who are related to each other, especially a mother, a father, and their children, is also sustained by its food. Society, which consists of families, considered in relation to the laws, organizations etc. that make it possible for them to live together, needs to be nourished by food also.

¹³ Dhṛ., verse No. 355.

The environment, which contains the air, water, and land on Earth, is the source of all lives; it needs to be nourished by food. In other words, not only an individual needs food to exist but also his family, society, and environment also need foods to sustain.

Food for an individual consists of both physical food such as rice, beans, fruits, wheat, vegetable, etc. and mental food that is known as feelings of happiness, joy, compassion, without worry and fear, with right wishes or dreams for the future. Food for family is respect, harmony, help, honesty, modesty, and tolerance of every member in the family. Food for society is order, security and equality, without conflict and corruption, without violence and race. Food for environment is afforestation and verdure, the stop to resource exploitation and atom bomb manufacture. However, nowadays individual, family, society, and environment are not nourished by all those kinds of food; on the contrary, they are fed by all kinds of animal meat,¹⁴ by worry and fear, by lust and hatred, by selfishness and narrow-mindedness, by malice mind and pitilessness, by discord and disrespect, by conflict and violence from family to society, by struggle and competition. These foods for a long time have caused many troubles to individuals, families, society, and environment, have created a strong worldly wind that makes men's life-boat rock in the ocean of suffering.

It is at this very point that civilization has presented the human race with problems of suffering from all fronts in which food is known as a basic problem: Food problem leading to life's problems and social problems, to be compounded - and complemented - by environmental

¹⁴ Certain species that human beings depend upon for our food supply are going extinct; if their numbers fall too low we may face extinction ourselves. (Source:<http://www.arlingtoninstitute.org/wbp>.)

problems, which can be depicted as three concentric circles, as in the following diagram:

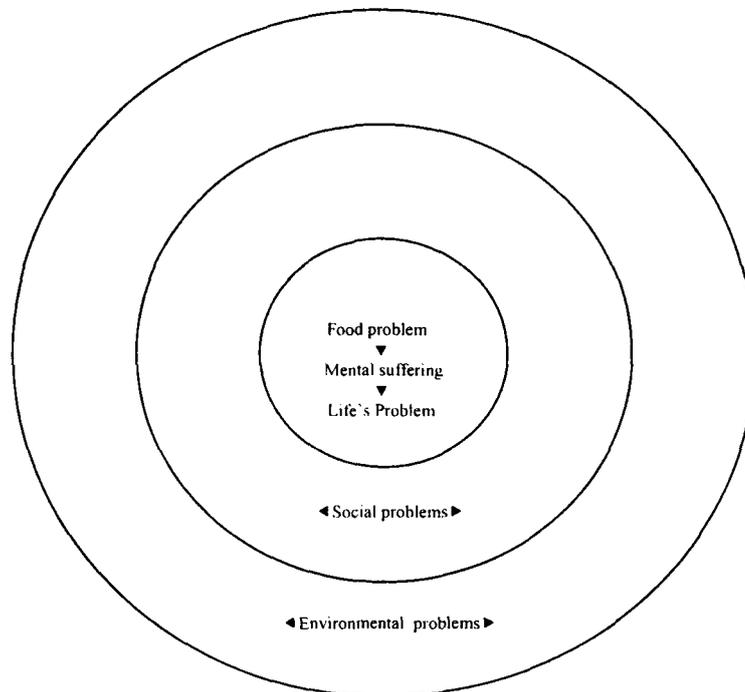


Diagram 1: Three circles of human problems

The innermost circle represents life's problems due to a wrong search and consumption of all types of food, the most profound of which is one of suffering in human mind. Even its crudest form, namely stress, is quite a pressing problem for the modern man.

From oneself outwards, in a wider circle, are social problems, or sufferings caused by wrongful relationships, which have resulted in violence and mutual infliction of harm.

The outermost circle surrounding man and society represents environmental problems, in particular ecological problems, which are now posing the most serious threat to the survival of humanity.

As far as environmental problems are concerned, it has been acknowledged that such problems have stemmed from the misguided

view that humans are distinct from nature. The hostile attitude towards nature has led them to their striving to conquer it and act upon it to serve human interests alone. To solve these problems, the human race needs a fresh mentality as a basis.

It is quite evident that while civilization at its zenith like this can hand all sorts of problem to humans, it can never lead them out of suffering triggered by these problems.

From the above description, it is obvious to say the operation of individual, family, society, and environment is that of food, of suffering and of happiness. Therefore, *āhāra* is called the basic problem or cause, everyone and everything can be out of *āhāra*. The human world will not operate if it has not *āhāra*, what makes it act that is a basic. Furthermore, nourishment that is called a cause of all problems does not mean it is not important but because of ignorance and desire, human beings cannot realize its importance to human life.

1.3. Importance of *āhāra* in human life

Most of the people think that *āhāra* is very important to human beings because it is the first and basic need of life and the sole means to release from hunger and thirst. It is correct, but this way of thinking has still not put forth the real importance of food in human life. An American idiom is: “Your eyes are bigger than your stomach.” This means what we see is more important than what we eat and that we eat nonstop. We fill our stomach through until we are uncomfortable. Though we eat for many reasons, we have been feeding ourselves for many years; we still do not know what fully nourishes us. Really, most of us let our eyes decide what our bodies need, but in reality our thoughts or ideas about what we eat are more important than the food itself, what our stomach can hold, or what

we need in this moment for good, strong energy.¹⁵ The food itself is no harmful but the manner and thought of a man who wants to consume it, this matter should be considered. When we are asked: who are you feeding? The answer cannot be the food itself or father and mother, but the very feelings or emotions of joy, anger, or anguish that arise when we are eating that are feeding ourselves. Thus, the importance of food will be evaluated by the very decision of awareness about how to eat, what to eat, and for what purpose to eat.

From the above discussion and based on the Buddha's teaching on nourishment, the importance of nourishment in human life that contains both food for mind and food for body can be mentioned as follows:

1. It is important because it is the only medicine to save the hunger and thirst of body and to maintain longer life. Being aware of food like a medicine or antidote, man who will take moderate in food, will eat at right time. As a result, he can control his mind and his sexual pleasure and can develop mindfulness and responsiveness to his inner being.

2. It is vital because it nourishes the inner energy of man through the touch of sense organs. This means when one take moderate in food, his eyes or ears become flexible, consequently his eyes will be lucidly aware of the nature of forms and sights, lust for forms will not arise in him, and his mind will not be contaminated.

3. It is important because it nourishes will that is inclined to the responsibility for others, to the respect for others as man does for himself, to the development of compassion for all beings, to the protection of the environment like the protection of one's mother.

4. It is important because it has the ability to purify one's mind or consciousness. Our consciousness is like a store, which contains both

¹⁵ Halé Sofia Schatz, *If The Buddha Came To Dinner: How to Nourish Your body to Awaken Your Spirit*, New York: Hyperion, 2003. p. 15.

good and bad things. Loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity are the kinds of food to purify our mind.

The above discussion, which obviously points out what the importance of *āhāra* in human life is, has put forth the profound meaning of food and the purpose of food consumption. However, for human beings, the importance of food seem to be ignored and the food is not evaluated by one's mind – how to eat and what to eat rightly for the growth of spirit or compassion. On the contrary, it is evaluated through the useful guidelines, models, and formulas in which the instructions are inclined to the aim of food consumption for sport, for indulgence, for personal charm, and for beautifying.¹⁶ These instructions constantly stimulate greed, hatred, sexual pleasure of human beings; hence, they are always subject to the food and face the sufferings. This is the reason why Lord Buddha has taught: “This body has come into being through food, is dependent on food; the food must be abandoned.”¹⁷ According to the Buddha, the abandonment of food is that of suffering.

Having known the importance of *āhāra* in human life, Lord Buddha taught about *āhāra* to his followers with the view of the Truth of life, *dukkha* and *dukkhanirodha* or *Nibbāna* in which *āhāra* is regarded as the cause of suffering:

“Looking upon this pain that springs from the *āhāras* as misery,
Having seen the result of all *āhāras*, no resorting to all *āhāras*.”¹⁸

According to Buddha's concept, *āhāra* is categorized into four types of *āhāra* viz, edible food (*kabalīnkārāhāra*), sense impressions (*phassāhāra*), volition (*manosañcetanāhāra*) and consciousness (*viññāṇāhāra*) as recorded in many texts in *Pañca Nikāya* as well as in

¹⁶ S. II, 98, sutta No. 63.

¹⁷ A. II, 144, Bhikkhūṇīsutta No. 9.

¹⁸ Sn., v. 748.

Abhidhammapiṭka and other Commentaries.¹⁹ The first is called food for the body, either gross or subtle that is processed as end-product after collecting from the environment and animal's flesh; the latter is called food for the mind that are feelings, and wishes. produced from the operation of the mind. These four nutriments are instrumental to the way individuals experience their lives and the extent to which they are happy or they suffer; they are prominent conditions for the individual life-continuity, for the sustaining of beings and for the assistance of those seeking birth.

It is clear that all *dhammas* that are taught by Lord Buddha are quite related directly to the truth of life, the truth of suffering and the end of suffering, and *āhāra* that is one of the *dhammas*, covers those values. Such a concept of *āhāra* will be considered throughout the present study entitled "A Critical Study of *Āhāra* and its importance as depicted in the *Pañca Nikāya*" belongs to *Pāli* Literature of *Theravāda* Buddhist Sect.

1.4. Pāli Tipiṭaka literature

Pañca Nikāya is also called *Suttapiṭaka* belonging to the *Tipiṭaka* of *Theravāda* tradition. It lies in the *Pāli Tipiṭaka* literature from the time of Lord Buddha to the time of the King Asoka. Nowadays, many are beginning to realize that Buddhism as represented in the *Pāli Tipiṭaka* holds the key to solving all human sufferings. Indeed, in order to solve the riddling problem of mental suffering, the *Tipiṭaka* introduces a system of teachings for one can eventually attain the objective truth of nature and completely eradicate the germ of mental distress, the mind being thus released once and for all from suffering, becomes relieved and radiant.

¹⁹ Sangītisutta and Dasuttarasutta of Dighanikāya III, Sammaditthisutta and Mahātanhāsankhayasutta of Majjhimanikāya I; Āhārasutta, Puttamamsūpamasutta of Samyuttanikāya II; Paṭhamamahāpañhāsutta of Aṅguttaranikāya V, Paṭṭhāna of Abhidhammapiṭka, Abhidhammattha Sangaha of Ācariya Anuruddha, and Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosa.

In order to help society eliminate violence and infliction of harm, the *Pāli* Canon has shared a history of genuine peace, preaching the principle of universal living-kindness (*metta*,) so that it has been recognized by many scholars as the world's first truly pacifist movement. The *Pāli Tipiṭaka* is therefore the most important source from which peace seekers can learn the rationale and methods in maintaining and protecting peace for the human world.

The environment that is regarded as the lung and heart of humankind is now gradually degrading by the discoveries of human. It has been acknowledged that such problems have stemmed from the misguided view that humans are distinct from nature. The hostile attitude towards nature has led to their striving to conquer it and act upon it to serve human interests alone. To serve these problems, in the *Pāli Tipiṭaka*, Lord Buddha taught the middle way, pointing to the objective fact that nature is a system of relations of all phenomena - man included - that are causally and conditionally interdependent.

All the teachings on the truth of human life, the truth of suffering and way to release suffering, and the solutions for human problems can be seen in the *Pāli Tipiṭaka*, *āhāra* is the basic problem and its solution without exception.

Buddhism is not only a philosophy, but also a religion. With Gotama the Buddha being the founder, whose Enlightenment all Buddhists believe in, Buddhism teaches a way of life which ultimately leads to the goal of final deliverance from suffering. The voluminous scripture where the tenets of Buddhism can be found is called the *Pāli* literature.

The *Pāli Tipiṭaka* refers to the set of scriptures in which the words of the Buddha (*Buddhavacana*) are enshrined. 'By the word of the Buddha' are meant the Doctrine (*dhamma*) and Discipline (*vinaya*) set forth and

laid down by Him. He had it made known to all Buddhists that the Doctrine and Discipline would take his place after his passing ‘Ānanda! the Doctrine and Discipline I have set forth and laid down for you all shall be your Teacher after I am gone.’²⁰ Thereby, *dhamma* and *vinaya* are proclaimed in the *Pāli Tipiṭaka*.

The *Tipiṭaka* literally designates its three major divisions of the teachings: *Vinayaṭiṭaka*, *Suttaṭiṭaka* and *Abhidhammaṭiṭaka*. *Vinayaṭiṭaka* contains the conduct, ways of living, customs, and administration of monastic affairs for monks and nuns.

The *Abhidhammaṭiṭaka* is divided into seven treatises: *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* (Enumeration of phenomena,) *Vibhaṅga* (Book of Divisions,) *Dhātukathā* (Discussion with Reference to the Elements,) *Puggalapaññatti* (Designation of Individuals,) *Katthāvatthu* (Points of Controversy,) *Yamaka* (Book of Pairs,) and *Paṭṭhāna* (Book of Relations.) These works were formed by the Buddha’s disciplines at the time of the Third Council held during King Asoka’s reign, in the third century B.C.

The *Suttaṭiṭaka* is a collection of Lord Buddha’s teachings during forty-five years of His life. It is classified into five collections known as *Pañca Nikāya*: *Dīghanikāya*, *Majjhimanikāya*, *Samyuttanikāya*, *Aṅguttaranikāya* and *Khuddakanikāya*.

1. The *Dīghanikāya* ‘Collection of Long Discourses’ covers (1) *Sīlakhandhavagga* contains 13 long discourses, starting with *Brahmajālasutta*. Several discourses deal with the attainment in morality, which is sometimes divided into Minor Morality (*cullasīla*), Middle Morality (*majjhimasīla*), and Major Morality (*mahāsīla*). Hence the collection name of the whole division: *Sīlakhandhavagga* ‘the Division Concerning Morality.’ (2) *Mahāvagga* contains 10 long discourses, mostly

²⁰ D. II, 154, Mahāparinibbāna sutta.

starting with the word *mahā* ‘great’, e.g. *Mahāprinibbānasutta*, *Mahāsamayasutta*, *Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta*, *Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta*, etc. (3) *Pāṭikavagga* contains 11 long discourses, starting with *Pāṭikasutta*. There are also well-known discourses such as *Cakkavattisutta*, *Aggaññasutta*, *Siṅgālakasutta* and *Saṅgītisutta*.

2. The *Majjhimanikāya* ‘Collection of Middle Length Discourses’ covers (1) *Mūlapaṇṇāsaka* ‘the first batch of 50.’ This contains the 50 middle length discourses, some of whose names might sound familiar, e.g. *Dhammadāyādasutta*, *Sammādiṭṭhisutta*, *Satipaṭṭhānasutta*, *Rathavin-ītasutta*, *Vīmaṃsakasutta*. (2) *Majjhimapāṇṇāsaka* ‘the middle batch of 50, this contains 50 middle length discourses. Among those discourses whose names might sound familiar are *sekhapaṭipadāsutta*, *Jīvakasutta*, *Upālivādasutta*, *Abhayarākumārasutta*, *Āṅgulimālasutta*, *Māgaṇḍiyasutta*, *Raṭṭhapālasutta*, *Bodhirājakumārasutta*, *Dhammacetiyasutta*, and *Vāseṭṭhasutta*. (3) *Uparipaṇṇāsaka* ‘the last batch of 50, their subject matters being multifarious. Among the discourses are, for example, *Devadahāsutta*, *Gopakamoggalānasutta*, *Sappurisasutta*, *Mahācattārīsakasutta*, *Ānāpāna-satisutta*, *Kāyagatāsatisutta*, *Bhaddekarattasutta*, *Cūḷakammavibhaṅgasutta*, *Puṇṇovādasutta*, *Salāyatanavibhaṅgasutta*, and *Indriyabhāvanāsutta*.

3. The *Samyuttanikāya* ‘Collection of Connected Discourses’ which covers 7,762 discourses is classified into 56 groups (*saṃyutta*), arranged in a special order by subject matter. Each group deals with a specific doctrine or personality. *Sagāthavagga* is a collection of verses mostly uttered by the Buddha and in response to different personalities, e.g. deities, *Māra* the Evil One, nuns, *brahmins*, king of Kosala, etc., it is concerned into 11 *saṃyuttas* according to the individuals and places.

Nidānavagga deals with causes and conditions, i.e. the law of the Dependent Origination, the elements, the penetration of *Dhamma*, the round of rebirths, material gain, food etc. This is classified into 10 *saṃyuttas*.

Khandhavāravagga deals with the various aspects of the five aggregates and miscellaneous subjects including concentration, together with some false views into 13 *saṃyuttas*.

Salāyatanavagga deals with the six sense-bases in accordance with the Three Characteristics, the five precepts, ways of practice leading to the unconditioned, extremist views, etc., into 10 *saṃyuttas*.

Mahāvāravagga which, covers the 37 virtues partaking of enlightenment, are rearranged, starting with the Noble Eightfold Path, the seven enlightenment factors, the four bases of mindfulness, the five controlling faculties, the four right efforts, the five powers, the four paths of accomplishment. It is included in other related topics, e.g. the five hindrances the ten fetters, the Four Noble Truths, the absorption along with the attributes of Stream Entry into 12 *saṃyuttas*.

4. *The Aṅguttaranikāya* 'Collection of Numerical Sayings' contains 9,557 discourses classified into 11 divisions known as *nipāta*, which are arranged in progressive numerical order, starting from the groups of single items, followed by the groups of two and so on, to the groups of eleven.

Eka-, *Duka*-, and *Tikanipāta* covers the topics of *dhamma* classified into groups of one (e.g. the prime object which trained is apt for work, i.e. the mind; the inner prime virtue that is for great benefit, i.e. heedfulness; etc. including accounts of the Buddha's foremost disciples,) groups of two (e.g. 13 sets of two types of happiness, two types of fools, two types of wise men, two types of kind reception, two types of prosperity, etc.) and groups of three (e.g. the three parental statuses with respect to their children, three types of intoxication, the three supremacies, Threefold Training, etc.)

Catukkanipāta covers the topics of *dhamma* classified into groups of four (e.g. the four noble *dhammas*, the four assemblies, the four efforts, the four biases, the four virtues wheeling one to prosperity, the four bases of social solidarity, etc.)

Pañcaka-, and *Chakkanipāta* cover the topics of *dhamma* classified into groups of five (e.g. the five powers, the five hindrances, the five ideas to be constantly reviewed, the five worriers,) and group of six (e.g. the six states of conciliation, the six excellent experiences, the six reverences, the six impossibilities, etc.)

Sattaka-, *Aṭṭhaka*-, and *Navakanipāta* cover the topics of *dhamma* classified into groups of seven (e.g. the seven noble treasures, the seven latent tendencies, the seven conditions of welfare, the seven qualities of a good man, the seven qualities of a good friend, the seven types of wives, etc.) groups of eight (e.g. the eight worldly conditions, the eight qualities of a messenger-to-be, the eight donations, the eight bases of donation, the eight levels on which to perfect the these bases of meritorious action, the eight gifts of a good man, the eight virtues conducive to the present and future benefits,) and groups of nine (e.g. the nine objects of malice, the nine mental states of gradual attainment, the nine progressive abidings, the nine states of immediate *Nibbāna*).

Dasaka- and *Ekādasakanipāta* cover the topics of *dhamma* classified into groups of ten (e.g. the ten fetters, the ten perceptions, the ten virtues which make for protection, the ten growths, etc.) and groups of eleven (e.g. the eleven phenomena that naturally arise one after another without volition, the eleven advantages of living kindness, etc.)

In the *Aṅguttaranikāya*, the teachings included are multifarious in nature, ranging from the present benefit (*diṭṭhadhammikattha*) to the highest benefit (*paramattha*), the means for both the ordained and the

laity. Scattered all over the whole collection, such teachings are arranged in groups according to the number of items in each group.

5. The *Khuddhakanikāya* ‘Collection of Minor Works,’ this is a collection of discourses, verses, explanations and miscellaneous subjects that cannot fit into the first four collections. There are 15 scriptures: *Khuddakapāṭha* ‘Shorter Texts’, discourses for chanting; *Dhammapāda* ‘Anthologies of Saying’ with 423 verses of *dhamma*; *Udāna* ‘Paeans of Joy’ with 80 discourses; *Itivuttaka* ‘It is thus said’ with 112 discourses, none of which begin with *Evam me sutam* (Thus have I heard;); *Suttanipāta* ‘Collected Discourses’ with 71 discourses; *Vimānavatthu* ‘Stories of Celestial Mansions’ covers accounts of those born in heaven, narrating their own good deeds in the past lives that brought about their present births. There are 85 such stories; *Petavatthu* ‘Stories of the Departed’ covers accounts narrated by ghosts (*peta*) of their own evil deeds in the past. There are 51 such accounts; *Theragāthā* ‘Verses of the Elders’ contains verses uttered by 264 *Arahant* elders, expressing the calm and delicate feeling in the penetration of *dhamma*; *Therīgāthā* ‘Verses of the Women Elders’ contains verses uttered by 73 female *Arahant* elders; *Jātaka* ‘Birth Stories;’ *Mahāniddesa* ‘Great Exposition;’ *Cūlaniddesa* ‘Small Exposition;’ *Paṭisambidāmagga* ‘Way of Analysis;’ *Apadāna* ‘Lives of *Arahants*;’ and *Buddhavaṃsa*.

Pañca Nikāya or *Sutta Piṭaka* was delivered to suit different occasions and different audiences with different temperaments. The discourses are intended for not only the Buddhist monk life but also deal with the material and moral progress of the layman. The *Sutta Piṭaka* are found not only in the fundamentals of the *Dhamma* but also practical guidelines to make the *Dhamma* meaningful and applicable to daily life.

1.5. Sources for research on *āhāra*

In this research work, the sources for research on *āhāra* refer to the above *Pañca Nikāya* as primary sources, and especially centers upon the *suttas* in which Lord Buddha has taught about *āhāra* such as: the *Saṅgītisutta* and *Dasuttarasutta* of *Dīghanikāya* III, 211, 213, 228. The *Sammādiṭṭhisutta* and *Mahātaṇhāsāṅkhasutta* of *Majjhimanikāya* I, 48, 261. The *Doṇapākasutta*, *Kasibhāradvājasutta*, and *Sakkasutta* of *Samyuttanikāya* I, 81, 225; the *Āhārasutta*, *Moḷiyaphaggunasutta*, *Bhūtasutta*, *Puttamamsūpamasutta*, and *Atthirāgasutta* of *Samyuttanikāya* II, 11, 12-13, 47, 98, 100; the *Sattaṭṭhānasutta* of *Samyuttanikāya* V, 100-104; the *Āhārasutta* of *Samyuttanikāya* III, 61. The *Aparihānīyasutta* and *Bhikkhunīsutta* of *Anguttaranikāya* II, 37, 144; the *Puññābhīsandasutta*, *Gilānasutta*, and the *Bhattādakasutta* of *Anguttaranikāya* III, 51, 140, 152; the *Paṭhamamahāpañhāsutta*, *Avijjāsutta* and *Iṭṭhadhammasutta* of *Anguttaranikāya* V, 50-51, 113-116, 136. The *Dhammapāda* verse No. 7, 8, and the *Suttanipāta* verses No. 707, 747, and 748 of *Khuddakanikāya*.

In *Saṅgītisutta* (The recital), *āhāra* is regarded as a special rule which must be chanted daily set forth by the Exalted One who knows, who sees thus, one thing “All beings persist through cause²¹ (food)” (*Katamo eko dhammo? Sabbe sattā āhāraṭṭhitikā*,)²² two things “Unguardedness of faculties and of intemperance in diet. Guardedness of faculties and of temperance in diet” (*Indriyesu aguttadvāratā ca bhojane amattaññutā ca. Indriyesu guttadvāratā ca bhojane mattaññutā ca*,)²³ and four things “Four supports (or foods,) to wit, solid (bodily) food, whether

²¹ Cf. Khp. IV; A. V, 50, 55. The *Dīgha* alone gives the second aphorism. ‘Cause’: *āhāra*, usually meaning ‘food,’ is literally a thing ‘adduced,’ ‘brought up’. Four kinds of *āhāra* are specific, e.g., S.II, ii f.; below, 219 - food, contact, purpose, consciousness (in connection with rebirth), all considered as so many causes, conditions, antecedents of ‘result’ or fruit. Hence *āhāra* in general can always be rendered by *paccaya*.

²² D. III, Saṅgītisutta 1, 211.

²³ Ibid. 213.

gross or subtle, contact, as the second, motive or purpose as third, consciousness (in rebirth) as fourth” (*Cattāro āhārā – kabaḷīkāro āhāro oḷāriko vā sukhumo vā, phasso dutiyo, manosañcetanā tatiyā, viññāṇaṃ catuttham.*)²⁴ Lord Buddha has advised his Disciples to chant these things in concord, not a wrangling, that thus this holy life may persist and be long maintained. That may be for the welfare and happiness of many folk, for compassion on the world, for the good, the welfare, the happiness of Devas and of men.²⁵

In *Dasuttarasutta* (The tenfold series), *āhāra* that is to be thoroughly learnt and understood fully thus, one thing that is to be thoroughly learnt is “All beings are maintained by food” (*Katamo eko dhammo abhiññeyyo? Sabbe sattā āhāraṭṭhitikā. Ayaṃ eko dhammo abhiññeyyo.*)²⁶ Four things are to be understood “the Four Nutriments, to wit, solid nutriments, gross or subtle; contact as second, the purpose of the mind as third, (rebirth) consciousness as fourth” (*katame cattāro dhammā pariññeyyā? Cattāro āhārā – kabaḷīkāro āhāro oḷāriko vā sukhumo vā, phasso dutiyo, manosañcetanā tatiyā, viññāṇaṃ catuttham. Ime cattāro dhammā pariññeyyā.*)²⁷

In *Sammādiṭṭhisutta* (Perfect view), *āhāra* is regarded as another method or as the truth of suffering and the way ending it by which a disciple of the *ariyans* achieves perfect view (*sammādiṭṭhi*.) unwavering confidence in *dhamma*, and has come into this true *dhamma*. Thus, “When a disciple comprehends sustenance²⁸ and comprehends the uprising of sustenance and comprehends the stopping of sustenance and comprehends the course leading to the stopping of sustenance. There are

²⁴ Ibid. 228.

²⁵ Tran. by T.W.Rhys Davids, Dialogues of the Buddha, vol. III, PTS, p. 204.

²⁶ D. III, Dasuttarasutta, 251.

²⁷ Ibid., 277.

²⁸ *Āhāra*, sustenance or nutriment, is a condition, *paccaya*, that brings, *āharati*, its own fruit.

these four (kinds of) sustenance (see above.) When a disciple of the ariyans comprehends sustenance thus, he has got rid of all addiction to attachment, having dispelled addiction to shunning, having abolished addiction to the latent view ‘I am,’ having got rid of ignorance, having made knowledge arise, is here-now end-maker of anguish. To this extent, a disciple of the *ariyan* come to be of perfect view, one whose view is upright, one who is possessed of unwavering confidence in *dhamma*, one who has come into this true *dhamma*.²⁹

In *Mahātanhāsankhayasutta* (the destruction of craving ‘greater’), *āhāra* is presented in meaning of cause or condition (*paccaya*), “This has come to be³⁰ because of the origination of nutriment. From the stopping of this nutriment, that which has come to be is liable to stopping.³¹ Moreover, the four (forms of) nutriment have craving as provenance, craving as source, craving as birth, craving as origin. Similar to craving, feeling, sensory impingement. ... Such is the arising of this entire mass of anguish.”³²

In *Doṇapākasutta* (Heavy meal), in order to achieve power of sense and long-life, Lord Buddha has advised the human being to be mindful and measured while observing the food:

“To sons of men who ever mindful live,
Measured observing in the food they take,
All minished become the power of sense.
Softly old age steals on, their days prolonged.”³³

In *Kasibhāradvājasutta* (The ploughing), human life seems only to have two things to do ‘work and eat,’ but one has to work hard then eats

²⁹ M. I, Sammādiṭṭhisutta, sutta No. 9, 47-48.

³⁰ This phrase alludes to ‘being’.

³¹ M. I, 260.

³² *Ibid.*, 261-262.

³³ S. I, 81.

like Farmer Bhāradvāja, in this *sutta*, who has to have ploughed and sown, after that, he eats. However, the purpose of work and eating of human beings really does not free them from suffering and hunger. Hence, Lord Buddha has instructed one how to work and to eat rightly in order to get out of pain, which is the aim of work and eating in human life.

In *Sakkasutta* (Aim,) a person who wants to gain his aim,³⁴ he is to be patient, fit with food and lodging here and there:

“All beings have some aim in view,
Now here now there as they are fit.
Food that is excellently blent
Will every creature satisfy.
Nothing forbearance doth excel.”³⁵

In *Āhārasutta* (*food*), Law of Dependent Origination presented starting with four kinds of food, “There are these four sustenances, brethren, for the maintenance of beings that have come to birth or for the forwarding of them that seek to become. Which are the four? Material food, contact, volition, consciousness. These four are the sustenances for the maintenance of beings that have come to birth, or for the forwarding of those that seek to become (see above) ... Craving is their base.”³⁶

In *Moliyaphaggunasutta*, Lord Buddha taught about the conditioned Nature of food, because of four types of food beings sustain, come to birth, and seek to become. Specially, Lord Buddha has instructed how to put a fit question for all existing things in order to realize the conditioned nature of things. In this *Sutta*, the venerable Moliya Phaggunā said to the Buddha ‘who feeds on the consciousness sustenance.’ For the Buddha, this is not a fit question because it is involving thought of self; therefore, a fit

³⁴ Aim of release.

³⁵ S. I, 225.

³⁶ S. II, 11.

question should be ‘of what now is consciousness the sustenance? And the fit answer to it is: the consciousness sustenance is the cause of renewed becoming of rebirth in the future. When that is to come to pass, is present, the sixfold sense-sphere becomes, and conditioned by the sixfold sense-sphere contact becomes. Similarly contact, feel, craving, and grasping ...’³⁷

In *Bhūtaṅsutta*, the term *Bhūtaṅ* means become or being, i.e., ‘born, produced, a name for the mental and bodily organism’, and the phrases ‘This has come to be’ is in this meaning. Lord Buddha has taught that a man who, has mastered well the truth of things, has seen ‘this has come to be’ is continual becoming from a certain sustenance. After seeing by right insight as it really is, and seeing that in this way, because of revulsion at that which has come to be, because of its fading away and ceasing he becomes free, grasping at nothing.³⁸ This *Sutta* centers on eliminating grasping at ‘This has come to be’ because it is conditioned, and continual becoming from a certain sustenance. Grasping (*upādānaṃ*) and Becoming or being (*bhavo*) are the elements of the twelve links of Dependent Origination, whenever one of them is eliminated, it ceases the entire mass of ill.

In *Puttamamsūpamasutta*, in order to explain the deep and wide meaning of the four kinds of food, Lord Buddha has preached the four similes³⁹ to His disciples. The truth of suffering and solutions for ending it will be seen through these similes. This will be examined in details in chapter IV.

In *Atthirāgasutta*, Lord Buddha taught about the dangers of passion, delight, and craving as to four foods. Whenever passion, delight, and craving arise as to those foods, it is there that consciousness is firmly

³⁷ Ibid., 12.

³⁸ Ibid., 47.

³⁹ Ibid., 97.

placed and becomes fruitful. Where consciousness is firmly placed and fruitful, there is descent of name-and-shape, growth of activities, in the future is renewed becoming and rebirth, decay-and-death, grief, affliction, and despair. If there be not passion, not delight, not craving as to any one of those four foods, the consciousness is not firmly placed nor fruitful, there is consequence name-and-shape does not descend, there activities do not grow, there in the future is no renewed becoming and rebirth, nor yet decay-and-death with grief, affliction, despair.⁴⁰

In *Sattaṭṭhānasutta*, the so-called man is merely made of the constituents of the Five Aggregates such as, Form (body,) Feeling, Perception, Activities, and Consciousness. The physical body is derived from the four great elements. From the arising of food comes the arising of the body: from the ceasing of food is the ceasing of the body: and the way of going to the ceasing of body is this *Ariyan* Eightfold Path, to wit: right view ... (and the rest).

That ease, that pleasure which arises because of the body that is the satisfaction that is in the body. In so far as the body is impermanent, is fraught with suffering and unstable, that is the misery that is in the body. That restraint of desire and lust, that putting away of desire and lust that are in body, that is the escape from the body.⁴¹ Here, sustenance of the body has been substituted for the usual conflict of existence (*dukkha*,) its origin (*samudayā*,) its cessation (*nirodha*,) and the path thereto (*magga*.)

In *Āhārasutta*, *āhāra* is known as a catalyst or a condition for happiness and suffering presented through the Five Hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇāni*) and the Seven Elements of Wisdom (*satta bojjhaṅgā*.) It is called the operation of thought either Five hindrances (suffering) or Seven Limbs of wisdom (happiness.) Here, the alluring feature of things

⁴⁰ Ibid. 101.

⁴¹ S. III, 61.

(*subhanimitta*) is said to be food for the arising of sensual lust (*kāmacchanda*,) while the repulsive feature of things (*paṭighanimitta*) is said to be food for the arising of malevolence (*byāpāda*,) ... and so on . Things based on the limb of wisdom that is mindfulness is food for the arising of mindfulness, ... and so on.⁴²

In *Aparihānīyasutta* (Incapable of falling away), manner and thought of having food are very important in human life, near to true happiness, i.e., ‘moderate in eating.’ This means that one has his food thoughtfully and prudently, not for sport, not for indulgence, not for personal charm or adornment, but just enough for the support, for the continuance of body, for its resting unharmed, to help the living of the God-life, with the thought: My former feeling I check and I set going to no new feeling. Thus maintenance shall be mine, blamelessness and comfort in life.⁴³

In *Bhikkhunīsutta*, the venerable Ananda went to visit the sick nun owing to immoderation in food and said that this body has come into being through food, is dependent on food; the food must be abandoned. Therefore, one has food with reflection and judgment, not for sport, not for indulgence, not for personal charm, not for beautifying, but just enough for the support, for the upkeep of body, for its resting unharmed, for helping the living of the God-life. He has food with the thought: Thus, do I check my former feeling and set going no new feeling; thus maintenance shall be mine, blamelessness and comfort in life. Then some time later, though dependent on food, he abandons food. As to the saying that the body has come into being through food, whatever was thus said was said in this connexion.⁴⁴

⁴² S. V, 102.

⁴³ A. II, 37.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 144.

In *Puññābhisandasutta*, merit is called the food, i.e., the cause of happiness (*sukhassāhāra*.) Similarly, consciousness and its cause (*pañcabīja-jātāni viññāṇaṃ sāhāraṃ datṭhabbaṃ*) are to be considered as the five sorts of seed (Root, trunk, shoots, joints, and grain-seed,) which require both the soil of the four stations of consciousness (*viññāṇatṭhiti*) and the water of lust (*nandirāga*) in order to grow and increase.⁴⁵ In other words, soil and water are called food, i.e. the cause of the five sorts of seed that grows. Similarly, by cleaving to the four stations (body, feeling, perception, and activities) is called food, i.e., the cause for consciousness is firmly placed and fruitful, there is descent of name-and-shape, growth of activities, in the future is renewed becoming and rebirth, decay-and-death, grief, affliction, and despair.

In *Gilānasutta* (A sick man,) if a sick man is always conscious of the cloying of the food, abides seeing nothing attractive in the body, he can destroy the cankers here and now.⁴⁶

In *Bhattādakasutta* (The Eater of eatable,) one who cannot endure forms, sounds, smells, tastes or touches, craves for these five things, in this way, he is called a gross eater or an over eater, filled with passion in his mind.⁴⁷

In *Paṭhamamahāpañhāsutta*, 'all beings are persisters of food.' In this one thing, if a man rightly feels revulsion, rightly feels fading interest (in the world,) rightly to be released, rightly has the sight to the furthest bounds and rightly comprehends the meaning of things, then in this same visible state he makes an end of Ill. Similarly, the four sustenances.⁴⁸

In *Avijjāsutta*, the five hindrances are called the food for the arising of ignorance (*avijjā*.) According to Law of Dependent Origination, ignorance is shown as the first condition (*paccaya*) which is not to be

⁴⁵ S. III, 54.

⁴⁶ A. III, 140.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 153.

⁴⁸ A. V, 51.



traced back any further, ‘for the origin of ignorance is not discernible,’ and it cannot be said, ‘there was a time when ignorance was not.’ Still it was definitely stated by the Buddha that ignorance, too, is conditioned and sustained by the five hindrances. Then follows a chain of dependent and conditioned origins, not unlike the *paṭiccasamuppāda*, but links are here shown as sustenances.⁴⁹

In *Itṭhadhammasutta*, sustenance (*āhāra*) is used in a sense of help, as opposed to obstacle when ten things are enumerated which will assist one to what is desirable, dear and charming, but hard to win in the world. Thus, energy and exertion are aids (*āhāra*) to wealth. Finery and adornment are aids to beauty; seasonable action is an aid to health; noble friendship is a help to virtues; sense-control is an aid to a life of holiness; non-quarrelling is an aid to maintain friendship; repetition is an aid to the storing of knowledge; listening and question are aids to the acquisition of wisdom; application and reflection are aids to understand the teachings; right conduct is an aid to attain happiness in heaven.⁵⁰

The above *Suttas* will be the main texts to research on *āhāra* in the present research work.

1.6. Scope of the thesis

Generally speaking, people often think that *āhāra* (food) is something to eat to be free from hunger; it, of course, is true. Nevertheless, in these *Nikāyas*, *āhāra* reveals extraordinary and specific meanings in relation to the truth of life, the doors of the mysteries of life and death, the solutions of *dukkha* and *dukkhanoridha*. Specially, in *Nikāyas*, *āhāra* comprises of four types of both body and mind (see above.) In *Nikāyas*, Lord Buddha always

⁴⁹ Ibid., 113.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 136.

reminds ones thought, manner, and purpose of taking *āhāra*; how to get happy while and after eating and touching.

The teaching on *āhāra* in the *Nikāyas* points out a human being is nothing but the constituents of four types of food flowing on and on. These four foods are the central point that will be studied in this thesis.

There are many research areas that can be studied under this topic, but this research work concentrates only on the following important topics:

- Human problems
- Āhāra as the basic problem
- Āhāra and specific teachings of the Buddha
- Concept of *āhārā* in Buddhism
- Buddhist view on man and his *āhāras*
- Cultivation of the four types of *āhāra*
- New courses of nutrition for the life of individual and community

1.7. Purpose of the research

In *Pañca Nikāya*, Lord Buddha has introduced the constituent of a so-called ‘being’ in different forms: sixfold-sense-fields (*salāyatana*;) six sense-organs and six sense-objects; six sense-organs, six sense-objects and six consciousnesses, five aggregates, Dependent Origination, and four kinds of foods. This present study rests on the firm belief in only the doctrine of Dependent Origination, of the Four Noble Truths and four kinds of food that can say what *āhāra* really is, the cause of pain, and show the way to resolve individuals’ problems and social crises.

This is not a pure research project on food for physical body or food products but ‘mental food science,’ food for mind or mind-eating, learning how to feed one’s mind so that one can be fed by it on a regular basis; that only refers to human beings. For this, the purpose of the present work is to show the nutritive value and quality of *āhāra* is not

dependent on the food itself, but on the manner and thought as well as the choice of food of a man before consuming it; this is applied for both body and mind. Again, the purpose is to introduce one with new idea and concept of food that have not been thoroughly studied in the field of research on food before. People usually think that the eater eats food but they never know the food itself devours the eater too 'what a man eats, eats back a man.' Then an attempt of the present study is to show that the four types of *āhāra* constitute man; so man is not a permanent entity, but is conditioned by *āhāra*; it is also to help people know how to realize the valuable source of nutrition for true happiness and the origin of food that creates suffering.

1.8. Methodology of the present work

Āhāra is a condition that affects directly the destiny of man and his world, it is always a burning topic for one to criticize and analyze; therefore, the studies on *āhāra* have contributed to the development of many methodological ideas and issues.

In order to achieve the aim and importance of research on *āhāra*, the present researcher attempts to discover methodology which is based on the usefulness and reliability of the *Pañca Nikāya* in order to attempt a study of *āhāra* and its importance in human life. In this work, the present researcher attempts that a central feature of this research will be the presentation of the concepts and the criticism analysis, and interpretation of those concepts on *āhāra* in the teachings of Lord Buddha as well as to mention the new solutions for the safety of *āhāra* of human beings and saving of environment in the future.

The *Pañca Nikāya* recorded in the *Pāli* language are translated into English and other languages. The primary sources of the present work are

Pāli Texts and English translations of *Pāli* Texts Society in London are the secondary sources.

To study the concept of *āhāra* in *Pañca Nikāya* is not at all easy at all because not many have studied it as a real project. The few brief writings about *āhāra* in Buddhism, have helped the researcher to develop ideas to present and develop the present thesis. In the course of conducting the research, the present researcher has collected and studied the teachings of *āhāra* from primary sources i.e. *Pāli* Texts and English translations as well. After that the *Suttas* in which Lord Buddha has taught about *āhāra* are found with different aspects. These collected *Suttas* have formed the main texts used in the present study. After studying the main texts and the relevant materials, the entire work is in the form of a critical analytical or a critical study. The present work is an interpretation of *āhāra* (food) in relation to human life. While criticizing and analyzing *āhāra* for both physical and mental processes of intake, uptake, and elimination as well, the terms such as eat, feed, nourish, consume, touch, absorb, assimilate, digest, dissimilate, reject, food, nourishment, nutriment have been used throughout the present study.

1.9. Structure of the research

The present study entitled “A critical study of *āhāra* and its importance as depicted in the *Pañca Nikāya*” comprises seven chapters.

Chapter I: Introduction

In the introduction of the present thesis, an attempt is made to consider the current human problems in which *āhāra* are the basic cause. This chapter emphasizes that all things have stemmed from *āhāra*. In this chapter, the object and method of the research and primary sources of the study are discussed.

Chapter II: Concept of *Āhāra* in the works of modern scholars and other religions

This chapter is to survey the concept of *āhāra* in the works of modern scholars and other religions. From their points of view on food, the present research work has been developed better.

Chapter III: *Āhāra* and specific teachings of the Buddha

The Buddha's teaching on the food in the *Pāli Nikāya* centers mainly around the term *āhāra*; therefore, this chapter has introduced the teachings on *āhāra* that pervade all specific teachings of the Buddha. It is found embodied in the earliest and most authenticated formulations and classifications of the Buddhist doctrine such as *āhāra* and the Four Noble Truths, Dependent Origination, the Three Characteristics of *Dhamma*, the theory of Action (*karma*), Rebirth, and the Five Aggregates. Through these doctrines, this chapter has established the value and importance of the Buddha's teachings on *āhāra* in the system of Buddhist tenets. These doctrines are like the miraculous keys to understand the door of painful life that have been mentioned in this chapter. This chapter also emphasizes that those, who understand fully the concept of *āhāra* in Buddhism, will understand the Buddha's teachings, and know the cause of suffering and the way to end it.

Chapter IV: Concept of *Āhāra* in Buddhism

The main issues have been discussed in more details in this chapter. The aim of this chapter is to make an attempt at enumerating the prominent kinds of food for the maintenance of beings and for the assistance of those seeking birth. It has explained the meaning of *āhāra* and introduced the four kinds of nutriment found in the *Pañca Nikāya* and in other Commentaries (*aṭṭhakathā*), after that they have been considered singly in details. It emphasizes that the operation of the four *āhāras* is

that of the Five Aggregates and of the Twelve Links, of suffering. It has arrived at a serious survey finding that the eater not only has consumed food, but also food has consumed him; they have constantly consumed each other. This chapter is to point out the problems of happiness and sufferings of a human being because of the craving for the four types of food.

Chapter V: Buddhist view on man and his *āhāras*

This chapter concentrates on examining the so-called man in Indian thought before the advent of Lord Buddha. The so-called man in Buddhism found in different forms that are always nourished and sustained by four types of *āhāra* has been introduced in this chapter. This chapter has made an attempt at demonstrating that ‘man is *cattāra āhārā*.) *Āhāra* and the problems of hunger, health, disease, and beauty have been discussed in this chapter. Especially, this chapter has emphasized that environment is the main source of food supply for both the body and the mind. Therefore, man must protect the environment as he does for him.

Chapter VI: Cultivation of four kinds of *Āhāra*

The study of the Buddha’s teaching is to refer to the purpose of elimination of pain of the body and the mind, of achievement of true happiness in this life. Therefore, the spirit of the practical applications is always encouraged by Lord Buddha. In order to refresh personality effectively, this chapter has given the useful methods and instructions about the cultivation of the four foods to the public. This chapter has asserted that human dignity is quite dependent on the way of eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lying, thinking, touching, and acting; all these ways contain the meaning of food in Buddhism.

Chapter VII: Conclusion

In conclusion, some important observations are brought into notice by the present research. Through the doctrine of Dependent Origination, the Four Noble Truths, it has been emphasized that a man is merely a conditioned being, conditioned by four kinds of food; man or food is not regarded as entity having a permanent self, but impermanent and not-self. If one understands this, he can find a new source of nutrition for him to refresh his life, to help him live happier. However, for a long time, human race has been nourished and sustained by the inherent foods such as 'self-thought food, desire food, grasping food, greed food, and others. When these kinds of food are digested, they have brought to life a lot of troubles and crises to man.

For the above reasons, this chapter has given new courses of nutrition for individual and community as well as solutions for the various current crises such as health crisis, sense organs crisis, will crisis, consciousness crisis, conscience crisis, hunger crisis, and educational crisis.

A critical study of *āhāra* in the *Pañca Nikāya* is to review the authentic meaning of *āhāra* as taught by Lord Buddha in order to help people know how to realize the valuable source of nutrition for true happiness and the origin of the nutrition that brings suffering.

Before studying this, it is necessary to survey the concept of *āhāra* in the works of modern scholars and different religions. This is dicussed next.