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The Law of Karma : The Foundation of the Ethical Doctrine in Buddhism

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Abstract

What is the conception of the ethical doctrine in Buddhism? Buddhism conceives of the ethical doctrine as one of Happiness, Perfection, Realisation and Freedom. These ethical goals, in fact, coincide, and the highest good is at the same time one of ultimate Happiness, moral Perfection, final Realisation and perfect Freedom. This is the goal to be attained in the cosmic or personal dimension of existence. The highest good or the ethical doctrine for each realisation. There are three objectives of the research : 1) to study of general idea of ethics 2) to study of ethical doctrine of Buddhism and 3) to study of freewill and freedom of will in Buddhism. Buddhism can be conceived as a teaching which guides beings in their search for the highest good, which can only be attained by overcoming the evil.¹ Generally, the terms “good” and “evil” are used in various ways. As far as ethical studies are concerned, both of the terms “good” and “evil” are inevitable mentioned. The questions such as “what should men do for their own good?” or “what should men do for the good of others or society?” always arise. In this regard, the sum and substance of Buddhist ethics is described as follows : “Not to do any evil, to cultivate the good and to purify one’s mind – this is the teaching of the Buddhas.”² The method of research is the descriptive and analytic. The concepts of ethics will be studied by means of a documentary examination and investigation as well as by its analysis. The study and presentation of the materials found from the primary sources and the secondary sources are : 1) the information in the primary sources ; the *Pāli Nikāyas* and the *Pāli Abhidhamma* as well as their translations. Besides, their commentaries (*Atthakathā*) Later renowned *Pāli* scriptures as *Milindapanhā*, *Visuddhimagga*, also are carefully looked into, as they are treated as the systematic works on Buddhism. 2) the information in the secondary sources : the explanatory works on Buddhism written by various scholars and supporting literature.

Keywords: Buddhist Ethics, Law of Karma, Freewill, Nibbana

¹ G.P. Malalasekera, ed., **Encyclopedia of Buddhism**. Vol. V p.359.

² **Dhammapada**. Ed. S. Sumangala. (London : Pali Text Society, 1914), Verse. 183.

Introduction

As it well know, there are various uses of every term or word. Something which is said by one person to be “good” might not be good to others. Looked at from one angle or perspective a certain thing may be good, but not from another. Behavior which is considered as good condition in one area, district or society might not be so in another. The reason for this disparity is the different values which exist in the world.³ Other words denoting very similar meanings to good and evil, which can be substituted one for the other are : *kusala* and *puñña* meaning right and *akusala* and *pāpa* meaning wrong.

From the ethical point of view, it normally uses the words “good” or “bad,” “right” or “wrong,” *kusala* or *akusala* and *puñña* or *pāpa* to denote the classes of actions and sometimes the specific actions of human beings. Human actions may be classified as being morally right (*kusala*), morally wrong (*akusala*), morally neutral (*avyākata*) and morally ‘mixed’ (i.e. both right and wrong) in character.

“ It makes sense to speak of some acts as being right and others as being wrong or mixed in character, only if human beings are free to act within limits in a causally conditioned world. If a man’s actions were mere responses to stimuli or merely reflected the hereditary structure or constitution of his body or were strictly determined by his psychological past, then it would not make sense to say that his actions were right or wrong, since they are constrained and not free.”⁴

In this way, insane people’s actions are not considered to be right or wrong because the person doing the action does not have intentions. However, the ethical appraisal of any action or thought varies depending on many factors. An examination of the nature and the characteristics of the actions is needed in order to give responses to questions such as, ‘Which actions are designated right or wrong?’ or ‘What is the measure or what are the criteria which enable us to recognize and distinguish right actions from wrong?’ In this regard, a survey of the opinions of two major philosophical schools of thoughts is necessary.

1. Objective View : The objectivists have held that “acts are right or wrong, irrespective of the person by whom or the time and place at which they are performed.”⁵ According to objectivists, rightness or wrongness is absolute and does not vary. Its value is not effected by any cause or condition. Among the objectivist theories are metaphysical theories such as those of the theists. They have held either that right actions are right because this is God’s will, that God has willed these actions because they are right, or that God’s will and what is right coincide.

2. Relative View : The relativists have held that “the notions of right and wrong have differed in different periods of history and in different societies, though they have a relative

³ P.A. Payutto, **Good, Evil and Beyond ; Kamma in the Buddha’s teaching**, (Bangkok : Buddhadhamma Foundation, 1993), p. 16.

⁴ K.N. Jayatilleke, **Ethics in Buddhist Perspective** (Kandy : BPS, 1984) p.42.

⁵ **Ibid** , p. 42.

objectivity within their frames of reference.”⁶ Among those who believe right and wrong are relative, Emotivists held that the rightness or wrongness of actions depends on the thoughts and feelings of human beings. Right actions are actions which all or most people like or approve of, whereas wrong actions are disliked or disapproved of.

Between these two main streams of thought, there are many subdivisions on justifications of right and wrong. To elaborate them in detail is not the purpose here. In short, it has held that there are two kinds of thoughts the justification of right and wrong or good and evil. In one way, right and wrong are absolute and fixed, not depending on relative factors. In the opposing way of thought, concepts of right and wrong are not static, they change in accordance with the factors concerned.

When our gaze returns to Buddhism, some questions may arise : What is the position of Buddhism regarding ethical propositions and the notions of right and wrong ? To give the precise and accurate answers to the questions, regarding the Buddhist point of view on ethics, it should turn to an analysis of the Buddhist scriptures.

1. The Criteria of Ethical Doctrine in Theravada Buddhism

In Buddhism, the word “Karma” means action which there are three kinds of action (karma) namely ; bodily action, verbal action and mental action. Concerning the action, right or wrong is something that can be defined. As it had said earlier, right and good and *kusala* are synonymous. According to K.N. Jayatilleke, the term “good” is used in two important senses. There is the sense in which we speak of what is good as an end or what is intrinsically good. There is also the sense in which we speak of what is good as a means or what is instrumentally good.⁷ These two senses of good are inter-related. In the Buddhist notion, the explanation of *kusala* (right or good) is given as follows :

1. Ārogya : free of illness ; that is, the mind free of illness, much as is generally known as ‘a healthy mind’ ; referring to those conditions or factors which support mental health, producing a healthy, untroubled and stable mind.

2. Anavajja : unstained ; the mind that is not stained or murky but clean, polished and clear.

3. Kosalasambhūta : based on wisdom or intelligence ; the quality of mind which contains wisdom, or the various qualities which arise from knowledge and understanding of truth. This corresponds with the teaching which states that *kusala* conditions have *yoniso-manasikāra* (clear thinking) as a forerunner.

4. Sukhavipāka : rewarded by well-being ; *kusala* is a condition which produces contentment. When *kusala* conditions arise in the mind, there is naturally a sense of well-being without the need for any external influence.⁸ The meaning of *akusala* (wrong or evil) should be understood in the exact opposite way of the explanation of *kusala* mentioned above.

⁶ **Ibid.**, p. 45.

⁷ K.N. Jayatilleke, **Ethics in Buddhist Perspective**, (Kandy : BPS, 1984), p.15.

⁸ P.A. Payutto, **Good, Evil and Beyond : Kamma in Buddha's Teaching**, p. 18.

1.1 Ethical Idea Seem up the Motivation

Regarding action, the Buddha said, “Bhikkhus, intention, I say, is *karma*. Having willed, men create *karma*, through body, speech and mind.”⁹ Therefore, in the Buddhist context, *karma* is intention, which includes volition, will, choice and decision, or the energy which leads to action. Any instance without intention is not regarded as action. Hence without the presence of intention, *karma* does not exist. In the Buddhist sense, when person talks about action, it means he is talking about intention. Action is motivated by intention. What is behind the scenes of the action leads to the variety of good actions and bad actions. Upon investigation, it was found that our actions are motivated by three skillful (*kusala*) conditions and three unskillful (*akusala*) conditions. As the Buddha said :

“What are skillful (*kusala*) conditions ? They are the three roots of skillfulness – non-greed, non-aversion and non-delusion – and all the defilement which arises from them ; feelings, perceptions, proliferations and consciousness which contain those roots of unskillfulness ; bodily *karma*, verbal *karma* and mental *karma* which have those roots of unskillfulness as a foundation; these are unskillful conditions.”¹⁰

1.2 Ethical Idea Seem up from the Point of Effect of the Action

One of the main criteria of judging an action concerns the question as to whether it constitutes the right means towards the realization of the ultimate goal, or the wrong means for the opposite purpose. According to Buddhism, the ultimate goal for each individual is the attainment of *Nibbāna*, (the state of highest happiness, moral perfection, supreme realization, utter freedom and perfect mental health).¹¹

In this regard, *Nibbāna* is the criteria for justification of right or wrong action. As it had said many times, whatever means we pursue in the field of Buddhist practice, all are directed towards *Nibbāna*. And the way leading to *Nibbāna*, according to the Buddha, is the Eightfold Path. Therefore, the method of justification is that whatever actions correspond to the way of *Nibbāna*, are right, while other actions which are incompatible with the way towards *Nibbāna*, are wrong.

The Buddha’s teaching also approaches the judgment of the ethical value of actions from the ends rather than the means :

“When you know for yourselves that these things are unskillful, these things are harmful, these things are censured by the wise, these things, if acted upon, will bring about what is neither beneficial nor conducive to welfare, but will cause suffering, then abandon those things.”¹²

⁹ **Anguttara-Nikaya. Vol. III** (London : Pali Text Society, 1994) p. 415.

¹⁰ **Dhammapada**. Ed. S. Sumangala, (London : Pali Text Society, 1994), p. 181. (Bangkok : Bhumibhalo Foundation), p.320.

¹¹ K.N. Jayatilleke, **Ethics in Buddhist Perspective**, (Kandy : PBS, 1984), p.48.

¹² **Anguttara-Nikaya. Vol. I** Tr. R. Morrist & E. Hardy, (London : Pali Text Society, 1985), p. 189.

As the saying of the Buddha, it is clear that in Buddhism, there is a standard by which to gauge moral justifications. However, the standard must align with the law of *karma* or *kammaniyāma*. *Kammaniyāma* is the natural law pertaining to human behaviour, that is the process of the generation of action and its result. Specifically, *kammaniyāma* refers to the workings of intention, or the process of mental proliferation and its consequence.”¹³ Put simply, the law of *karma* can be described as ‘good deeds bring good results, bad deeds bring bad result.’

On the level of conventional truth, justification of moral values according to Buddhism is static. Skillful or unskillful action changes according to circumstance, but the actual judgment of the individual’s intention in each circumstance is static. The quality of each intention causes variation in the judgment or value of the action. In other words, the value of an action can be justified by the end which Buddhism specifies as *Nibbāna*. Therefore, good action, in this regard, is the action leading to *Nibbāna*.

2. Freewill as the Basic Criteria of Buddhist Ethics

The doctrine of *karma* has been studied by ancient Indian Buddhist, Jain, Brāhmin and Ajīvaka scholars. Despite its prevalence, there are differences as regards the connotations of *karma* between each school of thought. Here, it should be distinguish the Buddhist doctrine of *karma* from the Buddha’s contemporary non-Buddhist notion of *karma*. One of the purposes of the study is to find out whether there is “free-will” in the Buddhist doctrine of *karma*.

Before beginning of our comparison, it is worthwhile to note that the term freewill is essentially a modern western concept. Therefore, when it is difficult to pinpoint the exact equivalent expression. However, freewill can be roughly defined as

“the unconstrained ability to do or act ; the freedom to choose from alternative courses of action without restraint or coercion ; the unhindered capacity to make a conscious, deliberate decision or carry out the course of action which one chooses. However, this unconstrained ability does not mean absolute freedom, a form of absolute liberationism. Freedom is a relative concept and in this particular context, especially when viewed from the Buddhist point of view, has a specific use as a moral and social concept.”¹⁴

However, in the attempt to understand freewill using the definition given above, it should be investigate Buddhist texts keeping in mind that Buddhism is not satisfied with the attainment of simple freewill. Buddhism asserts that beyond freewill lies ‘freedom of will’ which denotes the state of mind unstained by any kind of defilement. Freewill will be the topic discussed first, followed by an elaboration of the Buddhist conception of freedom of will.

The Buddha did not agree with the law of karma in Hinduism and six masters in contemporary on the basis that their teachings were deficient ; neither acknowledged the existence of freewill and moral responsibility. Without these two components, the teaching of *karma* bears no fruits. They upheld the wrong views. And the upholding of wrong views, according to the Buddha, is classified into three groups, namely :

¹³ P.A. Payutto, **Good, Evil and Beyond :Kamma in the Buddha’s Teaching**, p.1.

¹⁴ G.P. Malalasekera, ed., **Encyclopedia of Buddhism**, Vol. V,(Kandy : TBS, 1994), p.278.

1) *Pubbekatahetuvāda* : The belief that all happiness and suffering arise from previous *karma* (past-action determinism)

2) *Issaranimmanahetuvāda* : The belief that all happiness and suffering are caused by the creation of a Supreme Being (theistic determinism).

3) *Ahetuvāda* : The belief that happiness and suffering are random, having no cause (indeterminism or accidentalism).¹⁵

3.The Stand-point of View in the Ethical Doctrine of Buddhism

The Buddha spoke against all of these divergent views. The Buddha responded to those who do not believe in the responsibility of man for his actions. He disagreed with past-action determinism as follows :

“Bhikkhus, of those three groups of ascetics and Brahmins, I approach the first group and ask, ‘I hear that you uphold this teaching and view... Is that so?’ If those ascetics and Brahmins, on being thus questioned by me, answer that it is true, then I say to them, ‘if that is so, then you have killed living beings as a result of *karma* committed in a previous time, have stolen as a result of *karma* done at a previous time, have engaged in sexual misconduct... have uttered false speech... have held wrong views as a result of *karma* done in a previous time.’ Bhikkhus, adhering to previously done *karma* as the essence, there is neither motivation nor effort with what should be done and what should not be done...¹⁶

Though, there is no direct reference to freewill in this text, this statement concerning motivation and effort is an indirect assertion of freewill. Despite its conditioned state, freewill is the ability to choose what is morally good and what is morally bad. Buddhism also accepts the premise that if this ability is not present, the purpose of living the religious-life (*brahmacariya*), which has *Nibbāna*, and the release from the bond of *samsāric* existence as its goal, becomes completely futile.¹⁷

In the *Aṅguttaranikāya* there are,¹⁸ a number of terms are used to bring out this idea of initiative : *ārabhha* (initiative effort, inception of energy), *nikkama* (endurance, exertion), *parakkama* (striving, endeavor), *thāma* (resistance), *thiti* (persistence), and *upakama* (undertaking).¹⁹ These words in one way or another, connote the ability of voluntary initiation of action in accordance with one’s choice of the course of that particular action.

Buddhism accepts the importance of previous *karma* to some degree but does not agree with the doctrine of past-action determinism which holds that happiness and suffering arise only from previous actions in previous lives. According to that view, there are not have freewill or any

¹⁵ **Dhammasangani** Ed. E.Muller I. (London : Pali Text Society, 1994) p.53.

¹⁶ **Anguttara-Nikaya.Vol. I** Tr. R. Morriss & E. Hardy, (London : Pali Text Society, 1985), p.174.

¹⁷ **Ibid**, p.260.

¹⁸ **Ibid.**, p.337.

¹⁹ G.P. Malalasekera, edit., **Encyclopedia of Buddhism**, Vol. V, p.279.

choice because they are already determined by previous actions. But according to the view of the Buddha, previous *karma* is seen in a cause-and-effect process, in accordance with the law of *Paticcasamupāda*. It is not a super-natural force to be clung to or submitted to passively. Although past-actions can effect our present state, in the continuous process of *karma*, from the past to the future, at any moment they still have choice or are free to initiate new *karma*; human have freewill. The following example given by P.A. Payutto makes this concept quite clear :

“If a man climbs to the third floor of a building, it is undeniably true that his arriving is a result of past action, that is walking up the stairs. And having arrived there, it is impossible for him to reach out and touch the ground with his hand, or drive a car up and down there. Obviously, this is because he has gone up to the third floor. Or, having arrived at the third floor, whether he is too exhausted to continue is also related to having walked up the stairs. His arrival there, the things he is able to do there and the situation he is likely to encounter, all are certainly related to the old *karma* of having walked up the stairs. But exactly which actions he will perform, his reactions to the situations which arise there, whether he will take a rest, walk on, or walk back down the stairs and out of that building, are all matters which he can decide for himself in that present moment, for which he will also reap the results.”²⁰

The above passage implies that although present action is influenced by previous actions, the choice to create new action is still reserved for the individual. It is obvious that the human is free to choose and freewill is inherent in the human's decision making process. Because of free-will, human is not merely the slaves of the past. Man can choose to initiate good things in life. At any rate, this process of freewill can be possible only if it coincides with the doctrine of Dependent Origination (conditionality). It is this point which creates the differentiation between Buddhism and Jainism. While the later holds strictly that human is determined by previous action and they cannot change, the former believes that despite having been influenced by previous *karma*, by the intervention of *paticcasamupāda* (Dependent Origination) one can gradually eradicate the old *karma* and initiate new *karma* by one's own choice and agency.

In summation, Buddhism asserts the reality of human freedom or freewill without denying that this freewill was conditioned but not wholly shaped or determined by the effects of previous factors. Freedom of choice lies at the very heart of Buddhist ethics. The possibility of our refraining from evil and doing good, depends upon the fact that our choices and decisions are not strictly and wholly determined and in this sense are free.²¹

By exercising his own freewill a human being can change his own nature for the good of himself as well as others. In this way, man is master of his own fate.

4. The Buddhist Notion on Freedom of Will

Freewill was discussed already and found out that it is not an absolute freewill because it is only one of the factors determining man's position in his life. He is also subject to the process of conditionality outlined in Dependent Origination. At any rate, the concept of freewill is

²⁰ P.A. Payutto, *Evil and Beyond : Karma in Buddha's Teaching*, p.86.

²¹ Cf. K.N. Jayatilleke, *Ethics in Buddhist Perspective*, pp.6-14.

discussed on the level of conventional truth (*sammati sacca*). The ultimate truth (*paramattha sacca*) goes beyond this initial interpretation of freewill.

According to the Buddhist view, all persons naturally possess freewill (the ability to initiate intentioned action and thought). Human beings have freedom to exercise their freewill in accordance with the law of Dependent Origination (conditionality). However, Buddhism does not advise people to stop simply at freewill but encourages us to strive towards a state of freedom of will which transcends the power of will. For example, an average human's mind is based on desire, attachment and ignorance. But for the *arahant* (an enlightened person), existing on the level of ultimate truth, his mind is free of these things, he has freedom of will. In the same way, the average man's mind is inhabited by defilement, such as greed, aversion and delusion. Although, he is endowed with freewill, he cannot exercise it because his mind is inhabited by defilement. Therefore, in this regard, an *arahant* is called the person who possesses freedom of action, or freedom of will, because his mind is free from all attachments such as greed (*lobha*), aversion (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*). Freewill, then, can be viewed as a supportive tool to reach the freedom of will. In other words :

“Thus, it is possible to maintain that by exploiting the element of freewill with which a man is endowed he can work himself upwards to completely decondition himself from the factors that effect him and thus [he can] disjoin the chain of causation. He then has complete control over his mind (*cetovasippatto*). He is able to entertain, he is equally capable of not entertaining whatever thoughts/intentions which he does not want to entertain. He has come to the state of unconditioned (*asañkhata*) freedom from bondage (*yogakkhema*), and that state is generally known as *Nibbāna*.”²²

By reaching the state of freedom of will, an *arahant* is considered to be the man who is free from all things. As the Buddha says,

“There is no suffering for him who has completed his journey, who is freed from sorrow, who has freed himself on all sides, who has shaken off all fetters.”²³

According to Buddhist ethics, there are actions which are ethically good and bad, actions which are neither good nor bad, and actions which tend towards the ceasing of all actions. Although good actions are necessary in order to reach *Nibbāna*, once the ultimate goal of the holy life is actually attained, one transcends both good and evil. In the Buddha's words :

“Righteous things (*dhamma*) you have to give up ; how much more the unrighteous things (*adhamma*).”²⁴

In other words, once one has reached *Nibbāna*, he gives everything up – both the righteous and the unrighteous. Just as one needs a raft to cross the river, once one has gotten across, he can even discard his raft. As far as ethical action is concerned, an *arahant's* actions are beyond the simple division of good or bad, because his actions are not rooted by greed (*lobha*), aversion

²² *Ibid.*, p.276.

²³ *Dhammapada*. Ed. S. Sumangala, (London : Pali text Society, 1994) verse. 90.

²⁴ *Majjhima-Nikaya*. Vol.I Ed. V.Trenckner & R.Chalmers, (London : Pali Text Society, 1994), p. 135.

(*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*). This idea which exists on the level of ultimate truth is confirmed by Nārada Thera in *The Buddha-Dhamma* :

“The deeds of an *arahant*, a perfect Saint, are neither good nor bad because he has gone beyond both good or bad. This does not mean that he is passive. He is active, but his activity is selfless and is directed to keep other to tread the Path he has trod himself. His deeds, ordinarily accepted as good, lack creative power as regards himself. Purest gold cannot be further purified. He accumulates no fresh *karmic* activities.”²⁵

From this statement, it is undoubtedly clear that *arahants* are the people live in the world, but whose minds are not touched by worldly suffering, happiness because they have reached the state of the freedom of will.

5. The Conclusion

It is obvious that from the Buddhist standpoint, the first criteria of goodness and badness is the motivation or intent of the actor. If the action is motivated by the root-causes of good action, the action is classified as good. On the contrary, if the action is motivated by the root-causes of bad action, the action is classified as bad. This is the very simple way for us to justify any action. According to this method, it seems that the Buddhist perspective on *karma* is absolute and static. It seems not to vary according to outer factors. The three root-causes of good action can bring about the good consequences which lead towards the attainment of the highest goal, i.e. *Nibbāna*. Therefore, by seeing the root-causes, we can justify the end. Therefore, in determining the rightness or wrongness of an action, the motivation or intention is the first factor that out to be considered. From this explanation, it can be summed up that is the volition or intention that makes a state of consciousness or action good or bad. For distinguishing moral criteria, it could be justify actions by the presence or absence of moral or immoral roots. The highest good is to be attained by overcoming all evils. Therefore, between the two kinds of the root-cause, the good side is to be cultivate and bad side is to be eliminated.

²⁵ Narada Thera, *The Buddha-Dhamma*, (New Delhi : Asian Education Services, 1991), p. 97.

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Utilization and Satisfaction of the College of Education Library Holdings among Drafting Students

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Abstract

The main objective of this study was to evaluate the College of Education Library Holdings in how it assesses the respondents in terms of usability, satisfaction and awareness and how the frequency of visit affects the Grade Point Average of the respondents. Help the library improve their library holdings in order to serve well the students that have relied on their libraries to support their growth, and access to resources and equipment, have seen motivation. This study aimed to evaluate the drafting students in usability, satisfaction and awareness in the library of College of Education. The methods are qualitative and quantitative. It explained the research design, sampling techniques and data collection methods. The profile of the respondents in this study was gathered using the survey form. This study was conducted to eighty three (83) female students and thirty two (32) male students from 1st year to 4th year Drafting Technology Students in Mindanao State University- Iligan Institute of Technology College of Education for this year 2016. They are knowledgeable enough to answer the problems. Data showed that 115 respondents 46% belonged to 16 -18 years; 43% belonged to range 19 -21 years; and 11% belonged to 22 -24 years. Most of the respondents were females. 43% visited the library for five times or more a month; 17% visited for three or four times a month; 24% visited for two or three times a month; and 16% visited for once a month. Most of the respondents had GPA belonging to range 1.51 -2.00, and 35% were freshmen; 12% were sophomores; 26% were juniors; and 27% were senior. The respondents preferred to self-study, peer tutoring or use their own gadgets to find sources of information that are needed in their activity, assignments or research that could improve their academic performance.

Keywords: Utilization, Satisfaction, Library holdings, Usability and Awareness

1. Introduction

The library holdings must be updated and must assess the respondents needs in terms of visit, frequency of use, usability of e-library, satisfaction, and awareness and how does the respondents assess the by library holdings in terms of visit, frequency of use, usability of e-library, satisfaction, and awareness? These questions will help to know that the college library is effective to the students. Is the frequency of visit of the respondents in the library affects their academic performance? The most common problem of the library was the internet connection and availability of the resources that the students' needs. The more access that early learner to books and materials, along with increased access to literacy support and technological instruction that the College of Education library provide. School libraries and school librarians also promote teacher effectiveness by contributing to student learning through access to resources and tools.

An ideal library must contain such key components like helpful librarians/assistants, online access to databases/resources, working computers and printers, a vast DVD collection and books on every possible topic. The importance of a good library is to provide an additional support and help early learners become more experienced readers, and also promote motivation in their studies. It is clear that school libraries play an important role in student achievement, curriculum development, and instruction. In these times of fiscal constraint, states should look for ways to enhance the partnership between schools and libraries in order to more effectively leverage existing resources, rather than sacrificing those resources and, as a result, student achievement.

Library is a collection of manuscripts, publications, and other materials for materials for reading, viewing, listening, study or references and a public organizing and maintaining such an establishment while the library holdings are documents that is being help and categorized by the date of publication.

The main objective of this study was to know the utilization and satisfaction of the College of Education Library Holdings among Drafting Students in how it assesses the respondents in terms of visit, frequency of use, usability of e-library, satisfaction, and awareness and how the frequency of visit, frequency of use, usability of e-library, satisfaction, and awareness affects by age, gender, previous GPA and year level. Help the library improve library holdings in order to serve well the students that have relied on their libraries to support their growth, and access to resources and equipment, have seen increased motivation.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study is anchored in several theories:

Libraries have a long tradition of evaluation, which started with the emergence of modern librarianship at the end of the 19 century and concentrated for a long time thereafter of evaluation as to compliance with established standards and best practices, related to holdings, representation, arrangements, space, staffs, operations, etc.

With diminishing finances, it is rarely possible for a library or information center to have enough resources to fulfil the needs of its clients. What is being delivered is only a portion of what their clients actually need (Ramos and Mohd Ali, 2005). Collaboration is widely recognized as the best way for libraries to cope with the ever increasing challenges, volume of information resources; nature and quality of information; user needs and expectations; information and communication technology competencies and infrastructure; inflated cost of information resources; and staffing needs.

Luther, (2008), cited in (Iivonen et.al, 2009). State that, an essential part of university librarians' everyday life is analyzing their function and impact. Librarians must be able to show that researchers use the resources provided to them in the best possible way, and that library funding benefits the university's research, teaching and studying. University administrators expect to get a return on investment in university libraries because, most of the libraries budget is spent on resource acquisition. Therefore, resources in the library's collections should be reflected in the bibliographical references cited in student's dissertations undertake in the university's faculties.

Utilization of electronic resources by the students depends largely on some factors pertaining to the uses, especially E resource service and satisfaction. User satisfaction is one method of evaluating the effectiveness of library services (Andaleeb & Simmonds, 1998; Cullen, 2001; Niyonsenga & Bizimana, 1996) (As cited in Bergman & Holden 2010). Madhusudhan (2010) has suggested that libraries should introduce a feedback system (both online and offline) for observing the use of eresources. According to Zhang, Ye, and Liu (2011) understanding users' demands to improve the efficiency and value of the utilization of e-resources has become a great challenge for electronic resource producers and providers. Jeyaprakash (2009) suggested that increased availability of computer systems and direct links to e-journals from the member institutions library OPAC may be considered. Month wise usage reports for e-journals could be measured by using logs on file system by the consortium to prove the statistics being provided by the publisher or aggregators concerned to support future e-resources building.

McCarthy (1995, p. 226) had found that the sources of students' satisfaction and dissatisfaction may be the same: if they were satisfied, they were satisfied with the materials that they were able to locate and find; those that were dissatisfied, were dissatisfied with their ability to find materials and the lack of available materials. It has even been shown that users will be satisfied with services regardless of whether they regard them as particularly good.

Students' library use is another variable influencing the use of electronic resources. It is reasonable to assume that the more an undergraduate uses the library, the more familiar the student will be with its resources, including its electronic resources. However, if students use the library primarily as a quiet and convenient place to study, they may not be aware of its resources at all, as compared to the student who never puts a foot in the library. Several studies have shown that undergraduates use the library mostly as a place to study and make photocopies, but do not make great use of some of the available library services, such as interlibrary loan and the reference desk (Whitmire, 2001b).

When library customers are faced with a variety of alternative channels of information delivery, many of which are more convenient and can compete on cost, libraries need to re-examine the range and quality of services they provide and develop systems for consultation and cooperation with their customer needs and customer expectations to the highest degree. Abigail (1993) noted that the use of library by users and indeed their satisfaction with library services depend on the availability of suitable learning materials, accommodation and competent staff in the library. On the other hand, the satisfaction of the college library depends on the user. However, literature has revealed that information availability does not mean accessibility and utilization; therefore, university libraries have to market their resources and services to attract users. Osinulu (1998) also confirmed in her study that low use of the library is due to lack of awareness on the part of users. The essential components in the library and information system are documents, users and library personal. It has often complained that the information scientist had neglected the user and his information needs. One of the main goals of any information system is to provide pinpointed, exhaustive and expeditious information service to its users.

According to the Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers (2006), libraries are an important consideration when students select a university or college, and, as a result, academic libraries can help institutional admissions boost enrolment (Simmel 2007, 88). Specifically, the library ranked second in terms of facilities important in the selection decision process; only facilities for students' majors ranked higher

. Libraries were ranked ahead of technology facilities, the student union center, and even recreational facilities (Michigan Academic Library Council 2007, 2). It is clear that libraries can help their institutions attract the best possible prospective students, as well as matriculate the best possible admitted students, in a variety of ways depending on the institution type, size, profile, etc.

Impact on students' achievement

Track library influences on increased student achievement. Libraries support student achievement in the form of GPA and professional/educational test scores. In order to demonstrate this impact, librarians can investigate correlations between student library interactions and their GPA well as conduct test item audits of major professional/educational tests to determine correlations between library services or resources and specific test items. Demonstrate and develop library impact on student learning.

2. Method

The method of the study that are being used are qualitative and quantitative, sampling techniques and data collection methods used; and describes how data collected from the research has been analyzed.

The study is conducted to one hundred fifteen (115) Drafting Technology students from Mindanao State University- Iligan Institute of Technology, College of Education, Department of Technology Teacher Education. They are knowledgeable enough to answer the problems. They answered the questionnaire given by the researcher which supplies the information needed by the researcher.

The researchers adopted a questionnaire from the study of Aisah C. Alis and Sitti Ana Johaida U. Dital (2013) on Perceptual of Students in the use of E-library: basis for an Action Plan and other questionnaire from the internet in Qualtrics Survey Software that was given by our thesis adviser, Professor Osuardo A. Pabatang. There is only one (1) set of questionnaire prepared which first contain the general question about the respondent's frequency of visit, second (2nd) is about the respondent's frequency of use of the library services each year, third (3rd) is the respondent's usability of the library related to E-library, fourth (4th) is the respondents awareness of the library collection and how important each collection for theme in their studies.

3. Results

Table 8 Responses on the Awareness

| Statement | Aware | | Not Aware | |
|---|-------|----|-----------|----|
| | Freq. | % | Freq. | % |
| Books (print) | 114 | 99 | 1 | 1 |
| Journals and magazines (print) | 111 | 97 | 4 | 3 |
| Books (electronic) | 106 | 92 | 9 | 8 |
| Manuscripts, letters, papers, drawings, maps, photographs, and other primary source material in print (i.e., not digitalized) | 104 | 90 | 11 | 10 |
| Journals and magazines (electronic) | 101 | 88 | 14 | 12 |
| Popular works of fiction and nonfiction | 101 | 88 | 14 | 12 |
| Data collections (financial, statistical, demographic, geospatial, etc) | 95 | 83 | 20 | 17 |
| Federal, state, and international government documents | 89 | 77 | 26 | 23 |
| Sound and video recordings | 72 | 63 | 43 | 37 |
| Music scores | 70 | 61 | 45 | 39 |
| Microfilm or microfiche | 57 | 49 | 58 | 51 |

Table 8 shows the responses on the awareness. There were more respondents who were aware of the library services than those who were not aware. This implies that most of the respondents were aware of the library services.

Table 9 Responses on the Importance

| Statement | Mean | Remark |
|--|-------------|-----------------------|
| Books (print) | 3.00 | Very important |
| Books (electronic) | 2.95 | Very important |
| Sound and video recordings | 2.95 | Very important |
| Data collections (financial, statistical, demographic, geospatial, etc.) | 2.95 | Very important |
| Popular works of fiction and nonfiction. | 2.93 | Very important |
| Journals and magazine | 2.92 | Very important |
| Microfilm or microfiche | 2.90 | Very important |
| Manuscripts, letters, papers, drawings, maps, photographs, and other primary source material | 2.89 | Very important |
| Music scores | 2.88 | Very important |
| Federal, state, and international government documents | 2.86 | Very important |
| Journals and magazines (electronic) | 2.83 | Very important |
| Overall Mean | 2.91 | Very Important |

Table 9 shows the responses on the importance. According to the respondents, print and electronic books, print and electronic journals and magazines, manuscripts, letters, papers, drawings, maps, photographs, and other primary source material in print, federal, state, and international government documents, sound and video recordings, music scores, data collections, microfilm, and popular works of fiction and nonfiction are very important.

Table 10 Responses on the Satisfaction

| Statement | Mean | Remark |
|--|-------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Overall, how satisfied are you with library services. | 4.16 | Somewhat satisfied |
| 2. How satisfied are you in the Reference Desk. Check-out Desk | 4.15 | Somewhat satisfied |
| 3. How satisfied are you in the Reference Desk. | 4.13 | Somewhat satisfied |
| 4. I like to visit the library. | 4.11 | Somewhat satisfied |
| 5. The library not meet your expectations. | 3.44 | Somewhat satisfied |
| Mean rating | 4.00 | Somewhat satisfied |

Table 10 shows the responses on the satisfaction. The respondents were somewhat satisfied with the library services like the reference desk, check-out desk, expectations, and visiting the library. This implies that respondents were somewhat satisfied about the library services.

Table 11 Relationship between Age and Dependent Variables

| Independent Variable | Dependent Variable | p-value | Remark |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------|-----------------|
| Age | Frequency of visit | 0.6866 | Not significant |
| | Usability | 0.5690 | Not significant |
| | Satisfaction | 0.8118 | Not significant |
| | Awareness | | |

Table 11 shows the relationship between age and the dependent variables which are frequency of visit, usability, satisfaction, and awareness. There was no significant relationship between age and frequency of visit, usability, and satisfaction since the p-values were greater than 0.05 level of significance. This implies that the frequency of visit, usability, and satisfaction were not affected by the age of the respondents.

Table 12 Relationship between Gender and Dependent Variables

| Independent Variable | Dependent Variable | p-value | Remark |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------|-----------------|
| Gender | Frequency of visit | 0.0562 | Not significant |
| | Usability | 0.4547 | Not significant |
| | Satisfaction | 0.1653 | Not significant |
| | Awareness | | |

Table 12 shows the relationship between gender and the dependent variables which are frequency of visit, usability, satisfaction, and awareness. There was no significant relationship between gender and frequency of visit, usability, and satisfaction since the p-values were greater than 0.05 level of significance. This implies that the frequency of visit, usability, and satisfaction were not affected by the gender of the respondents.

Table 13 Relationship between GPA and Dependent Variables

| Independent Variable | Dependent Variable | p-value | Remark |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------|-----------------|
| Grade point average | Frequency of visit | 0.3046 | Not significant |
| | Usability | 0.5162 | Not significant |
| | Satisfaction | 0.6228 | Not significant |
| | Awareness | | |

Table 13 shows the relationship between grade point average and the dependent variables which are frequency of visit, usability, satisfaction, and awareness. There was no significant relationship between grade point average and frequency of visit, usability, and satisfaction since the p-values were greater than 0.05 level of significance. This implies that the frequency of visit, usability, and satisfaction were not affected by the grade point average of the respondents.

Table 14 Relationship between Year Level and Dependent Variables

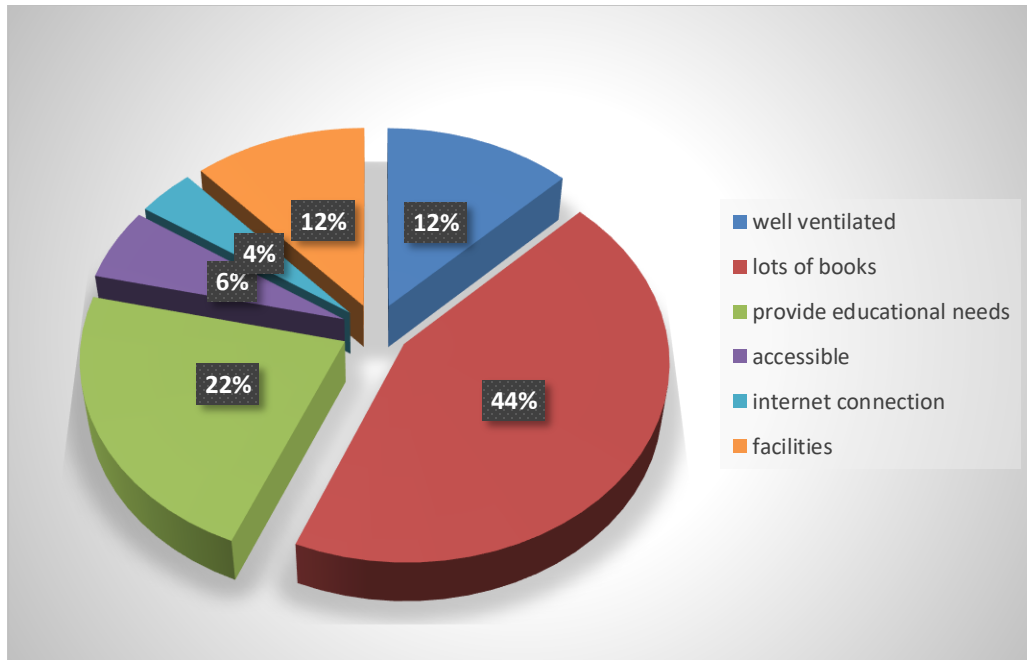
| Independent Variable | Dependent Variable | p-value | Remark |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------|-----------------|
| Year level | Frequency of visit | 0.0285 | Significant |
| | Usability | 0.6916 | Not significant |
| | Satisfaction | 0.0133 | Significant |
| | Awareness | | |

Table 14 shows the relationship between year level and the dependent variables which are frequency of visit, usability, satisfaction, and awareness. There was no significant relationship between year and usability since the p-value was greater than 0.05 level of significance. This implies that the usability was not affected by the year level of the respondents.

However, there was a significant relationship between year and frequency of visit and satisfaction since the p-values were less than 0.05 level of significance. This implies that the frequency of visit and satisfaction were affected by the year level of the respondents.

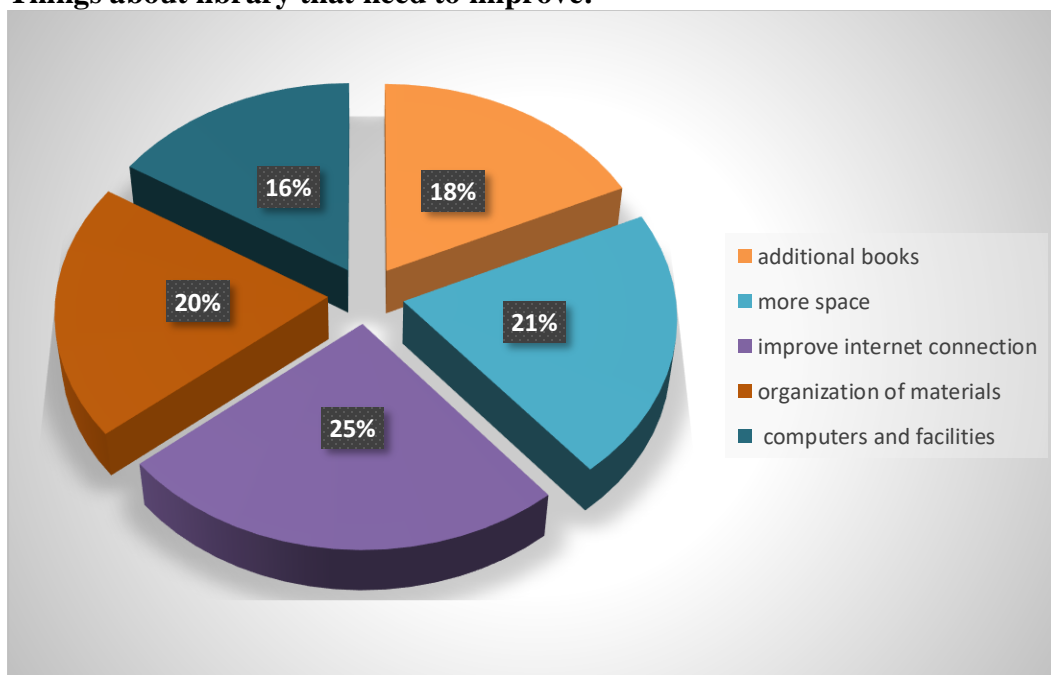
Respondent's opinion

- best thing about the library



Pie graph 1 shows that the respondents opinion of the best thing about the library where 44% to the lot of books, 22% for the provide educational needs, both 12% when it comes to the facilities and well ventilated, 6% for the accessibility and 4 % for the internet connection. This implies that most of the respondents response about the best thing about the library is it contains lot of books.

- Things about library that need to improve.



Pie graph 2 shows the respondents opinion about the things that need to improve in the library where 25% for the improvement of the internet connection 21% for adding more space in the library, 20% for the organization of the materials, 18% for additional books and 16% for computers and facilities. This implies that most of the respondents' response about the things that the library should be improved is the internet connection.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to know the utilization and satisfaction of the College of Education Library Holdings among Drafting Students in how it assesses the respondents in terms of visit, frequency of use, usability of e-library, satisfaction, and awareness and how the frequency of visit, frequency of use, usability of e-library, satisfaction, and awareness affects by age, gender, previous GPA and year level. Help the library improve their library holdings in order to serve well the students that have relied on their libraries to support their growth, and access to resources and equipment, have seen increased motivation. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the respondents profile in terms of:
 - a. Age
 - b. Year Level
 - c. Gender
 - d. Previous GPA
2. How does the respondents assess the by library holdings in terms of :
 - a. Frequency of Visit
 - b. Frequency of Use
 - c. Usability of E-Library
 - d. Satisfaction
 - e. Awareness
3. Is there a significant relationship between the respondent's age, gender, previous GPA, year level and the utilization and satisfaction of library holdings as perceived by the respondents in terms of frequency of visit, frequency of use, usability of e-library, satisfaction, and awareness?

However, the overall approach will be qualitative because qualitative methods focus on the experiences of people involved, and attempt to understand the reasons behind certain behavior description (Taole, 2008). The evaluation has been carried out using two systems of data collection techniques, literature review, and questionnaires. The literature review is used to collect qualitative data and the questionnaires also.

Findings

Based in the interpretation of data presented on the tables the researchers found out that 46% belonged to age range 16 – 18 years; 43% belonged to range 19 – 21 years; and 11% belonged to 22 – 24 years. Most of the respondents were females. 43% visited the library for five times or more a month; 17% visited for three or four times a month; 24% visited for two or three times a month; and 16% visited for once a month. Most of the respondents had GPA belonging to range 1.51 – 2.00. 35% were freshmen; 12% were sophomores; 26% were juniors; and 27% were seniors. On the average, the respondents used the library services for at least once a month. On the average, the respondents agreed on the services of the library. Most of the respondents were aware of the library services. On the average, the respondents considered the library services as very important. On the average, the respondents were somewhat satisfied with the library services. The frequency of visit, usability, and satisfaction were not affected by the age of the respondents. The frequency of visit, usability, and satisfaction were not affected by the gender of the respondents. The frequency of visit, usability, and satisfaction were not affected by the grade point average of the respondents.

The usability was not affected by the year level of the respondents. However, the frequency of visit and satisfaction were affected by the year level of the respondents. On the average, the respondents' opinion about the best thing of the College Library were it provides educational needs. On the average, the respondents' opinion about the thing in the library that should be improved the library's space that can accommodate more students.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, we researchers concluded that among 115 respondents as a source of information in gathering the data, most of the respondents were on the average of 16 – 18 years old, most visited the library is female students from the College of Education, Department of Technology Teacher Education, Major in Drafting Technology.

Even though they visited the library five times or more a month, considered the library services as very important, used the library services for at least once a month, somewhat satisfy on the services of the library, were aware of the library services, considered the library services as very important, their GPA is not affected by this factors. The frequency of visit, usability, and satisfaction were not affected by the age of the respondents. The frequency of visit, usability, and satisfaction were not affected by the gender of the respondents. The usability was not affected by the year level of the respondents. The frequency of visit and satisfaction were affected by the year level of the respondents.

The best thing about the library is it contains lot of books, provide educational needs, contain facilities and well ventilated, can be access easily internet connection. Even though it has an internet connection not all the students can access because is it very slow. A library should have enough space to accommodate all the students and all the materials should be organize so that the user can easily locate the materials they needed. Additional books for other references and also additional computers and other facilities.

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The Buddhist Zhai-tian (齋天, Offering to gods) Ritual in Taiwan

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Abstract

From the ancient times, there has been Zhai-tian ritual in Chinese tradition. The ninth day in lunar January has been taken as the birthday of Jade Emperor (玉皇大帝, also know as Tian-gong (天公) in the folk customs, people on this day would prepare abundant offerings, take a bath, burn incense and then “worship Jade Emperor” (拜天公) to celebrate his birthday and pray to him for blessings. Buddhists do not take refuge to the heavens, but Buddhist temple also hold offering gods ritual on the same day. This may be a phenomenon of syncretism with traditional culture and religious interaction.

Buddhism as a foreign religion, which was introduced to China, is bound to have interaction with the Chinese local culture and religion, so developed quite differently from Indian Buddhism. How does the Chinese Buddhist Zhai-tian rite being generated, and is it inconsistent with the basic teachings of Buddhism? In this article, first I will declare the meaning of the word “Zhai-tian (齋天)”, secondly describe the Buddhist concept about gods as well as traditional Chinese gods belief, and finally explore the origins, development and the participants’ perception of the Buddhist Zhai-tian ritual.

Keywords: Zhai-tian (Offering to gods ritual, 齋天) , worshipping Jade Emperor (拜天公) , gods, The Golden Light Repentance rite (金光明懺)

1. The Meaning of the Word “Zhi-tian (齋天)”

According to *The Origin of Chinese Characters* (《說文解字》) and *Analects of Confucius* (《論語》), “Zhai” means careful, respectful and clean, especially in diet, action and thought. In the *Book of Rites* (《禮記》), it is also declared that before ceremony the gentleman (君子) must control his own physical and mental activities, make his manners appropriate and concentrate without distractions, so he can communicate with the god. Mencius (孟子) also said that as long as you keep abstinence and take a bath (齋戒沐浴), which cleansing your body and mind, you can go to sacrifice to God. Worshipping God is a very sacred thing, so worshippers must be abstinent to present his sincerity and respect. Abstinence (齋戒) has always been a ritual before a very important activity, therefore when emperors participate in important worshipping ceremonies, they must keep abstinence first.

In Buddhism, the Sanskrit correspondent of “Zhai” is “upavāsa” which means fast. Before Buddhism, the ancient Indians would keep a fast before soma sacrifice, and that day is called “upavasatha”. In Buddhism, “Zhai” means no food after noonday and afterwards its meaning turn to be “vegetarian food”. The Chinese Buddhist “Zhai-tian” means offering pure vegetarian food to gods.

2. The Buddhist Concept of Gods

The ancient Indian gods are incorporated into Buddhist pantheon. 33 gods (Vedic gods), Indra and Brahma frequently appear in the early Buddhist scriptures, in which Indra is called Dishī (帝釋) or Shitihuanyin (釋提桓因) as the Lord of 33 gods. There are many gods in early Buddhist canon, and the god species gradually increase. According to Buddhist doctrine, the gods are one of the beings in samsara (輪迴, reincarnation), even Indra and Brahma are not immortal, omniscient, omnipotent nor the supreme God of the universe, they are controlled by their karma. The gods especially in desire realm have good looking and bliss. In the heaven of desire realm, things are so very comfortable here that most of the gods neglect to work towards enlightenment. Instead they gradually use up the good karma they had previously accumulated, and so they subsequently fall to a lower rebirth. Sentient beings can become gods in the next life through generosity, morality and other good deeds. However Buddha criticizes and rejects Indian traditional sacrifice to gods with killing animals.

Buddhism absorbs the inherent Indian gods, and gives their identity as protective deities. The first protective god should be Brahma, because when Buddha attained enlightenment, he thought it was so hard to teach human beings that he was unwilling to expound his teaching and would like to enter nirvana (入涅槃), but after Brahma's persuasion, Buddha decided to live in the world and teach people how to achieve liberation from samsara. The gods respect Buddha and his disciples very much. Sometimes they descend from heaven to ask Buddha about his teaching. They are also diligent to protect Buddhist Dharma.

There are more gods appear in the Mahayana Buddhist scriptures. The Mahayana gods take refuge to Buddha, Dharma and Buddhist order, they love to listen to Buddha's Dharma, and protect Buddha and his disciples. Many Mahayana gods are bodhisattva's embodiment.

3. Chinese Traditional Gods Belief and Development

The Chinese highly respect gods since ancient times. In Zhou dynasty (周朝), the Hao-tian God (昊天上帝) also known as Huang-tian God (皇天上帝) was regarded as supreme god.¹ The belief of emperor of heaven has great influence in civic life. In Taoism, Jade Emperor has more important status and is seen as the emperor of gods by ordinary people.

¹ 劉屹, 《敬天與崇道: 中古經道教形成的思想史背景》(北京: 中華, 2005), 頁136~138。

In Song dynasty, Jade Emperor from the Taoist beliefs and the traditional Chinese political Haotian God are combined together.² The faith in Jade Emperor was popular and spreaded to the whole country. In Taoism, Jade Emperor is the ruler of Heaven and governs all of the mortals' realm and below including that of man and hell, but ranks below the Three Pure Ones (三清). The ninth day of the first lunar month is said to be the Jade Emperor's Birthday (天公生). On this day Taoist temples holds Jade Emperor rituals (拜天公, literally "heaven worship") at which priests and laymen prostrate themselves, burn incense and make food offerings.

The Jade Emperor's birthday celebration is held with respect and excitement in every Taoist temple. In the early morning from 12 to 4 Am. of the birthday which is the time for the Jade Emperor ritual, Taiwanese households would set up at home an altar table with two layers: one top (containing offertories of six vegetables (六齋), noodles, fruits, cakes, rice balls (tang-yuan, 湯圓), vegetable bowls, three cups of tea and the lower level containing the five sacrifices and wines to honor the deities below the Jade Emperor. The household then kneels three times and kowtows (磕頭) nine times to pay genuflection, wish him a long life and ask for blessing. At the end of the ritual, the family burns Tian-gong gold paper (天公金), and set off firecrackers.³

Nowadays in Taiwan, people still emphasize the Jade Emperor's birthday, but the worshipping form is slightly simplified, for example only one alter table with vegetarian foods replaces two and incensing instead of kneels and kowtows. In addition to the Jade Emperor's birthday, when a son, especially the eldest son, will get married, the family would also hold Jade Emperor ritual to thank him and all the gods for protecting their son grown up and getting married. The day before the wedding, groom's family would set up altars in front of their house for the ritual. This ritual is grander than the annual Jade Emperor ritual at home. However, some people keep it simple and go to the Jade Emperor Temple to worship instead of setting up alters at home.

4. The origin of Chinese Buddhist Zhai-tian Ritual

The Chinese Buddhist Zhai-tian ritual derives from *The Golden Light Repentance Ritual* (《金光明懺》) which was composed by Ten-tai master Ven. Zhiyi (天台宗大師智顛)(538-597) on the basis of *The Golden Light Sutra* (《金光明經》). In Northern and Southern Dynasties (南北朝), the royal family held the ritual to pray for peace and prosperity of nation and people. Ven. Zhiyi's *The Golden Light Repentance Ritual* compiled in *The Guo-qing 100 recording* (《國清百錄》) was briefly described, there was no detail of the rituals. It just listed the ten subjects as follows: 1. decorating temple, 2. prostration to Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. 3. offering incense and flowers, 4. inviting gods, 5. repenting, 6 reciting gods' names 7. spreading food in every directions, 8. reciting mantras, 9. procession in circle, 10. chanting sutra. According to the sutra, all the gods reciting here are bodhisattvas. In the following dynasties, this ritual remained popularity, and several Buddhist monks revised it.

² 砂山稔, 〈玉皇大帝と宋代道教〉收錄於野口鐵郎編《道教の神々と經典》(東京: 雄山閣, 1999), 頁65~66。

³ 李秀娥, 《祀天祭地——現代祭拜禮俗》(台北縣: 博揚文化, 1999), 頁42~45。

5. Buddhist Offering to Gods Rite in Taiwan

Today the “offering gods rite” in Taiwan has two types: the large one(大齋天) on the base of *The Large Zhai-tian Ke-Yi* (《大齋天科儀》) and the small one (小齋天) according to *The Golden Light Repentance Zhai-tian Ke-Yi* (《金光明懺齋天科儀》). The large Zhai-tian rite is grander, and needs longer time than the small one. The time for holding the large Zhai-tian rite is at 3~4 am. on the ninth day of the Lunar January, which is the same day for the Jade Emperor ritual in Taoism and popular religion. The Zhai-tian ceremony can be divided into five parts: 1. cleaning altar, 2. burning incense and candles 3. inviting gods with flowers, 4. reciting the Shu-wu (疏文), 5. chanting and spreading food for the gods. The content of the Shu-wun is about the protective gods have power to guard the country, to bring peace, to instruct human beings and help people attain buddhahood. And hope the gods will not break their vows and can fulfill the wish including mundane and transcendental benefits from the Buddhists. The Zhai-tian ceremony is different from the Golden Light Repentance ritual in Song dynasty which is composed mainly for repentance. The Zhai-tian is the ritual for offering to gods and adopting some elements from Taoism and popular religion. Buddhist Zhai-tian ritual would be held on the ninth day of lunar January, and would also be held in lay Buddhist house at the night before their son’s wedding according to the folk custom. In addition, the Zhai-tian ritual is also arranged on the program of every big Buddhist Fa-hui (法會, dharma ceremony?). In Buddhism, Zhai-tian has been a very popular ritual, being loved by the lay Buddhists, and a large number of Buddhists would participate in it.

6. Taiwanese Participants' Perception

Most of Buddhist temples hold Zhai-tian ritual, but some which mainly advocate returning to primitive Buddhism would refuse the ritual, because they worry about misleading the followers to confuse Buddha with the gods (especially Jade Emperor). People to participate in a Buddhist Zhai-tian ritual may not be limited to the Buddhists, also include Taoists and believer of popular religion, perhaps these non-Buddhists think that it is just worshipping the gods regardless of Buddhist gods or Taoist gods, it is nothing inappropriate to participate Buddhist Zhi-tian ritual.

According to Ven.Yongdong’s (永東法師) observation in Foguangshan temple, most of the Zhai-tian participants are businessmen, and then the elderly, young people are the minority.⁴ But in my monastery, businessmen are not the maximum, but compared to their attitude to participate in other Fa-hui, obviously they are more keen to participate in Zhai-tian and their purpose of participation is just for prosperous business and successful career. And others’ purposes are praying for good fortune in family, marriage, career, exam, school work, etc. Praying for blessing is basic need of ordinary peoples’ religious belief, so probably there are few people holding gratitude for the gods’ protection, inviting them to enjoy the offerings, and praying for attaining buddhahood as soon as possible with the gods’ protection. For general believers, no matter they are pious Buddhists or not, secular benefits are more actual and important than the distant goal of liberation (解脫) or Buddhahood. Although the Buddhist masters composed the Golden Light Repentance ritual, and explained the gods whom are invited to the ritual as big bodhisattvas protecting Dharma, and not being ordinary gods, general Buddhists may not be able to get rid of the traditional deep-rooted concept, their purpose to coming to temple to worship are praying for blessing from Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and even the gods. The identity of gods or bodhisattvas does not really matter.

Perhaps intending to distinguish from the Jade Emperor ritual in Taoism and popular religion from the Buddhist one, Taiwanese Buddhism would highlight its Zhai-tian is not just offering to gods, today the word “offering Buddhas” (gong-fo供佛) are added and the term “Gong-fo Zhai-tian” (供佛齋天) is so frequently adopted by many big temples and Buddhist masters. In order to avoid the confusion of the

⁴ 釋永東,《佛教人性與療育觀》(台北:蘭臺,2009),頁182。

beliefs of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas with that of gods, Buddhist masters always endeavor to illuminate the reason of Buddhist Zhai-tian, that is to repay an obligation to gods for their protection of Dharma. For example, Ven. Wu Yin (悟因法師) of Hsian-Kuang Convent (香光尼寺) said: when Buddha attained enlightenment, he originally wanted to enter nirvana, but Brahma asked Buddha to live in the world and instruct his teaching for of all sentient beings. Hence the Buddhists and even the world owe to Brahma, and Zhai-tian reveals that we should repay obligation to god for the protection of Dharma. Participation in Zhai-tian ritual with piousness can invoke many gods' protection, and wishes will soon be fulfilled.⁵ Ven. Hai-yun (海雲法師) of Large Hua-yan temple (大華嚴寺) also stated that taking part in Zhai-tian ritual can receive strong induction (很有感應, 很靈), devoutly respecting gods can get numerous gods' protection and participants' wishes will come true quickly. However striving to practice Dharma, purifying oneself, generating positive influence to the world, this is just the aim of the compassionate god (Brahma) asking Buddha to live and spread his Dharma.⁶ It is clear that so far as Zhai-tian is concerned, Buddhist masters would have interpretation positively and corresponding to Dharma to the followers in order to prevent confusion.

7. Conclusion

Buddhists do not take refuge to gods taken as heavenly beings with merits and still being in samsara. Nowadays this-worldly Buddhism does not emphasize the gods, because it advocates all the Buddhas are from this world, human beings excel the gods. However, today most of the Buddhist temples generally hold Zhai-tian rituals, even the temples advocating this-worldly Buddhism also hold the ritual. Buddhism absorbed the ancient Indian traditional gods, and made them turn to be Buddhist protective deities. Bodhisattvas who embody as protective deities appear in the Mahayana Buddhism. Owing to the interaction with Taoism and popular religion, Chinese Buddhism gradually generates Zhai-tian ritual.

The Chinese Buddhist popular Zhai-tian ritual derives from *The Golden Light Repentance Ritual* which is composed by Ten-tai master Ven. Zhiyi (538-597) on the basis of *The Golden Light Sutra*. Ven. Zhi-yi incorporated the part of inviting gods to offering into *The Golden Light Repentance Ritual*, and he explained all of these gods are big bodhisattvas protecting Dharma to solve Buddhist doubt because there has been no offering to gods rite in Buddhist rituals before this. In the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, *The Offering to gods Rite* (《供諸天科儀》) was created out of *The Golden Light Repentance Ritual*. Perhaps this ritual was composed under the influence of thought of three religions in one (三教合一) in the late Ming, and from the absorption of the respecting and worshiping gods tradition in Taoism and popular religion.

Buddhist Zhai-tian ritual usually holds on the day before every large Fa-hue's final day and also hold on Jade Emperor's birthday in popular religion. The participants of Zhai-tian rituals held in Buddhist temples may be not limited to Buddhists, Taoists and followers of popular religion also go to Buddhist temples to take part in the ritual. For Buddhists, the reason of Zhai-tian is to repay obligation to gods for their protection of Dharma. However, the most important goal of Buddhist participants is to pray for gods' blessing, and all the wishes fulfilled. During the process of encountering and interaction of different religions, different beliefs and practices may be combined, and the followers' participation and practice during this process is very important. To understand one's own traditional doctrine is one thing, and to practice actually is another.

⁵ 釋悟因,〈從「自護天護」談佛教的齋天〉收於《春風化雨》第89期,2007年3月。

⁶ 〈意義深遠的齋天〉收於《華嚴電子報》2009年2月4日。