

Compare and contrast between the Buddhist and Hindu ethics

Hinduism and Buddhism have had great impact on every aspect of Indian people's life, philosophically, religiously, and ethically. In this paper, I am going to compare and contrast the Buddhist and Hindu ethics within the scope of the five universal codes including the acts of killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, and taking intoxicants, as well as marriage, the spousal relationship, and the bond between parents and children.

Before going into detail of the discussion, I would like to review the general ethical perspectives of these two great traditions. Buddhist morality tends to develop human's moral and spiritual life to the natural wholeness through self effort and self realization. In cooperation with intellectual inclinations, Buddhist morality determines people's social status. It is clear, coherent, comprehensive, impartial, rational, and extensive as being accepted by rational people beyond the mere moral rules or command; it integrates moral thought and action; it is a truly universal public system which enhances people to achieve to the highest human good, ultimate freedom, happiness, peace, love, and compassion.¹ Indeed, the Buddha focuses on the moral and spiritual developments of humanity in a holistic way without being contingent to any irrelevant external divine agent, caste, creed, ideology, nationality, and gender. Generally, the Buddha views impartially human beings as the whole and pure persons in nature without any hidden agenda. His sole appearance in the human realm is to teach human beings a goal of spiritual attainment within the reach of humanity.² As a result, he provides basically substantial codes of behavior or ethical rules for every lay Buddhist to live and

¹ Hari Shankar Prasad, *The Centrality of Ethics In Buddhism* (Delhi, India: Motilal Banarsidass, 2007), 186, 234.

² Ananda Guruge, *Buddhist Answers to Current Issues* (Bloomington, IN: Author House Publication, 2005), 1.

conduct properly; they also serve as the foundations for spiritual advance that have been described in the *Sigalovada Sutta* (of the Pali), *Brahma Net Sūtra* (of the Sanskrit), and others.

On the other hand, the Hindu ethics, represented by the Law of Manu and the Dharmastutras, spells out different responsibilities according to the caste system. These Vedic texts are the centerpieces of Hinduism's *varnasram-dharma*, the social and religious responsibilities of social class and stage of life, which include the family life, psychology, concepts of the body, sex, human relationship, caste, politics, money, law, purification and pollution, ritual, social practice and ideal, karma, redemption, and worldly and transcendental goals.³ They were compiled by priestly and householder Brahmins for them and for their paradigmatic human and spiritual authoritarian throughout many centuries.⁴ Their themes focus on karma and rebirth, purification and restoration, and good and bad people.⁵ Historically, the Indo-European Aryan devised a caste scheme of Varna system which divided society into quadripartite structures of Brahman or the priests, Kshatriyas or royal nobles, Vaisyas or common people among the Aryans, and Sudras or the conquered indigenous people to maintain the order, personal privilege, and control over the non-Aryan indigenous people in religion, regulation, defense, and productivity.⁶ Legendarily, amongst the most famous of all Vedic hymns is the *Purusa-sūkta* whose gods created the cosmos by performing a sacrifice of Purusa, or personified man, from the various organs of whose body the essential phenomena of the cosmos, including the four *varnas* social categories. His mouth became the Brahmin

³ Wendy Doniger and Brian K. Smith, trans., *The Law of Manu* (Auckland, New Zealand: Penguin Books, 1991), xvii-xviii.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xxiii.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1-li.

⁶ Brian K. Smith, *Classifying the Universe* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1994), 27.

priest; his arms were transformed into the Warrior Kshatriyas; his thighs were the Vaisyas or commoners; from his feet, the Servants or Sudras were born.⁷ This formed a series of binary oppositions of the “ruling class” and “oppressed class.” Specifically, the Manu writers believed that past karma determined the innate quality (*gunas*) of the four castes,⁸ philosophically: Goodness (*satva*) belonging to the Brahmin; activity (*rajas*) belonging to the *ksaya*; and darkness (*tamas*) belonging to the Vaisya and Sudra. Namely, if one had done good deeds in a previous life, one would go into the superior womb (of Brahmin and Ksatriya); if one had done bad deeds in the past life, one would go into inferior womb (of Vaishya and Sudra). If the lower caste is doing good deeds and obeying this Law of Manu now, he will obtain a higher caste in the next life.⁹

Ideologically, the Aryan or twice-born castes were more pure and sacred than other castes largely due to the sacraments done for generations.¹⁰ Namely, the foundation of caste system was based on karma, purity, and pollution that graded the time, places, and condition of people, not much by rank, social position, or economic condition. Therefore, things associated with the higher castes of Brahmin and Ksatriya are considered pure and sacred, while any thing related to the lower caste is deemed impure or polluted such as food, birth, and death.¹¹ Structurally, the writer constructs social hierarchy based on several distinctive castes: four original castes; and castes were produced by mixture of

⁷ Smith, 27-28.

⁸ The word “Caste” has been used since the seventeenth century in Indian context; it came from the Spanish word of “Casta,” which means pure. Ketkar classified “Caste” into two social characteristics: confined membership by birth and exclusive endogamy (Shridhar V. Ketkar, *The History of Caste in India* (Ithaca, NY: Booksellers and Publishers, 1909), 12, 15).

⁹ Ketkar, 114-115.

¹⁰ According to the Law of Manu, the twice-born castes should perform sixteen sacraments in a life time from birth to death (Ketkar, 80-81).

¹¹ Ketkar, 119-120.

pure and mixed caste.¹² Castes have lost their status because of sacred rites' neglecting; castes of exclusive person from the community; slaves and their descendants; and others excluded from their community of four castes and their respective descendants.¹³ By having sacramental initiation, one could obtain his social or caste status even if there was no need for having the formal conversion into Hinduism because of the concept of belonging to certain caste by birth.¹⁴ In short, the Hindu ethics are based on the hierarchical caste system. Having understood the backgrounds of Buddhist and Hindu perspectives on human society, let's compare and contrast their ethical spectrums based on the five universal codes.

Concerning the killing offense (namely, taking the life of other human being), within Buddhist ethics, it is the most serious crime for both ordained and lay people. For instance, in the third major monastic offense, a monk would be disrobed if he kills or incites others to kill.¹⁵ In the case of lay people, the Buddha advises: "There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones, abandoning the taking of life, abstains from taking life."¹⁶ The first Bodhisattva precept for ordained and lay people explain further that while one should neither kill by himself nor incite others to kill intentionally, one also need to nurture the compassionate mind to rescue living beings.¹⁷ In brief, since human

¹² There are thirty mixed castes which can be classified into three types: caste produced from two different pure castes; castes produced by mixture of pure castes on one side and mixed on the other; and castes produced from parents of mixed origin on both sides (Ketkar, 84).

¹³ Ketkar, 83-84.

¹⁴ Ibid., 89.

¹⁵ Hermann Oldenberg, trans. *Vinaya Texts: Volumes 1, 2, 3* (Forgotten Books, 1881 and 2007), 19.

¹⁶ AN 8.39. *Abhisanda Sutta*.

¹⁷ A disciple of the Buddha shall not himself kill, encourage others to kill, kill by expedient means, praise killing, rejoice at witnessing killing, or kill through incantation or deviant mantras. He must not create the causes, conditions, methods, or karma of killing, and shall not *intentionally* kill any living creature. As a Buddha's disciple, he ought to nurture a mind of compassion and filial piety, always devising expedient means to rescue and protect all beings. If instead, he fails to restrain himself and kills sentient beings without mercy, he commits a *Parajika* (major) offense." (Kumarajiva, *Bodhisattva Precept: ten major and forty eight minor precepts*, trans. into Chinese, <http://www.ymba.org/bns/bnstext.htm>).

life is so valuable and precious, the Buddha advises his followers that they should not only restrain from harm others or encourage others to kill, but also find the way to rescue and protect others' lives. Also, committing suicide is unacceptable in Buddhism, because it is considered as killing a person, as it is mentioned in the third major monastic precept.¹⁸ According to the Buddha, the reason why Buddhists should follow this universal code is that they will be free from danger (of being revenged by the enemy), animosity (of hatred), and oppression (from others).¹⁹ The consequence of creating this killing karma is having a short life span in human realm, or falling into the hell, or common animal, or hungry ghost.²⁰ Moreover, in modern time, if one kills someone else, generally one may receive capital punishment or serve in prison for a life time.

Within the Hindu ethical caste system, a Ksatrya, Vaisya, or Sudra would commit grave offense only whenever he kills a Brahmin (even if he creates all kinds of evil deeds) because of the Brahmin's highest social status.²¹ For example, Manu said that there is no greater act of irreligion on earth than killing a priest; hence, the king should not even conceive in his mind killing that man.²² A ruler or a commoner should be chopped off his head and his property would be confiscated if he kills a priest.²³ However, if one kills other caste members, one just commits a minor offense.²⁴ In different text, a Sudra will be executed if he kills a man. A Brahmin will be blindfolded if he kills others.²⁵ If a

¹⁸ Oldenberg, 19.

¹⁹ AN, 8.39.

²⁰ AN 8.40, *Vipaka Sutta*.

²¹ Doniger, 181, 193.

²² *Ibid.*, 193.

²³ Doniger, 224; Patrick Olivelle, *Dharmasutras*, trans. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 160.

²⁴ Doniger, 257.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 71.

Brahmin kills another Brahmin, the king should banish that Brahmin from his kingdom.²⁶

When people kill a man of equal or lower class, the king should impose a suitable punishment according to their classes.²⁷ To erase the enmity, one should hand over to the king: a thousand cows plus a bull if he kills a ruler; a hundred cows if he kills a commoner; and ten cows if he kills a servant.²⁸ Discriminatively, a Brahmin's life is much more precious than that of other castes' life. Concerning the act of suicide, Hindu codes condemn it, but they allow people to do so if they fast for three days.²⁹

In short, regarding the act of killing other, Buddhism emphasizes on the seriousness of committing this offense to anyone, whereas Hinduism focuses its gravity only on the Brahmin's life while diminishing the seriousness when it comes to the lives of others.

Regarding the act of stealing, in Buddhism, it is a grave offence for both ordained and lay people. If a monk violates this second monastic precept, he will be expelled from the sangha community and punished by the secular law.³⁰ The Buddha advises lay people to abstain from this wrongdoing: "Furthermore, abandoning taking what is not given, the disciple of the noble ones abstains from taking what is not given." The reward of upholding this code is that one will be free from danger (of violation of the law), animosity (from whose things have been stolen), and oppression (of law).³¹ The consequence of stealing karma is losing one's wealth in human realm, or falling into hells, or animal, or hungry ghost.³² Of course, if one commits any stealing, fraud, cheating, etc.,

²⁶ Doniger, 160.

²⁷ Ibid., 160.

²⁸ Ibid., 160.

²⁹ Ibid., 312.

³⁰ Oldenberg, 19.

³¹ AN 8.39.

³² AN 8.40.

one may be punished according to the secular law. According to the second Bodhisattva precept for both ordained and lay people, while one should neither steal by any means nor encourage others to steal, one should assist people to earn merit and achieve happiness.³³ Namely, to counteract the stealing lust, one should practice generosity for material and spiritual achievements, because it is one of the greatest protections and blessings, a fundamental requirement for success on the spiritual path and obtaining the valuable treasure.³⁴

In Hinduism, if a priest steals valuable things, he should confess his guilt to the king, who will strike him once with a club, or he will be blindfolded, or he should be fined sixty-four times the stolen items' values (of the priest, ruler, or commoner).³⁵ A priest can take any possession from the servant (Sudra).³⁶ A ruler and a commoner should be fined thirty-two times and sixteen times the stolen items' values, respectively.³⁷ A Sudra should be executed, and his properties should be confiscated, if he steals or appropriates the land.³⁸ Also, one will lose one's caste status if one steals a Brahmin's property or a deposit.³⁹ Manu warned about the consequence of stealing that whenever a man has forcibly taken away another man's property, he inevitably becomes an animal.⁴⁰ A priest who is a thief that he will be reborn in thousand times in spiders, snakes, and lizards, aquatic animals, and violent ghouls.⁴¹

³³ Kumarajiva, *Bodhisattva Precept*.

³⁴ *Maha-mangala Sutta* (SN 2.4), *Macchhariya Suttas* (AN 5.254).

³⁵ Doniger, 187, 260; Olivelle, 71.

³⁶ Doniger, 196.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 187, 188.

³⁸ Olivelle, 71.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁴⁰ Doniger, 285.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 283-284.

In short, both Buddhism and Hinduism advise their followers to restrain from stealing. However, Hinduism spells out specific punishment and fine according to each caste.

Regarding the act of lying as the third monastic major precept, Buddha advises a monk not to deceive others, especially if he says that he has achieved to sagehood, but actually he has not.⁴² For lay people, Buddha reminds them: “Furthermore, abandoning lying, the disciple of the noble ones abstains from lying.”⁴³ In the fourth Bodhisattva major precept for both ordained and lay people, while reminds them clearly neither to tell lie in any means nor encourage others to do so, it advises them to maintain the Right Views and convince others to do so.⁴⁴ The consequence of lying karma, including telling falsehoods, divisive tale-bearing, harsh speech, frivolous chattering are lead to be falsely accused in human realm, or falling into hells, or animal, or hungry ghost.⁴⁵ The rewards of not telling lie, divisive tale-bearing, harsh speech, and frivolous chattering are free of danger of being falsely accused, animosity from whose things have been stolen, and oppression by secular law.⁴⁶

In Hinduism, Manu reminds its followers that they should tell the truth and speak with kindness.⁴⁷ It says that the witness in the court to tell the truth wins magnificent world after death, unsurpassed renown here on earth, revered by Brahman.⁴⁸ If they tell a lie while testifying, they will be bound fast by Varuna’s rope for one hundred rebirths.⁴⁹

⁴² Oldenberg, 19.

⁴³ AN 8.39.

⁴⁴ Kumarajiva, *Bodhisattva Precept*.

⁴⁵ AN 8.40.

⁴⁶ AN 8.39.

⁴⁷ Doniger, 87.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 160.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 160.

If people speak something other than the truth, their life time merit will go to the dogs.⁵⁰
One will lose one's caste status if one bears false witness with regard to land.⁵¹

In short, both Buddhism and Hinduism encourage their followers to tell the truth. They explain similar reprimands for committing this offense, but different rewards in telling the truth.

Regarding sexual behavior, a Buddhist monk should abstain from sexual activity purely as it is the first precept in the monastic Vinaya.⁵² The Buddha advises lay people: "Abandoning illicit sex, the disciple of the noble ones abstains from illicit sex."⁵³ The *Brahma Net Sūtra* reminds lay Buddhist should neither engage in licentious acts nor encourage others to do so. They should teach others in the Dharma of purity and chastity.⁵⁴ If one commits this offense, one may create rivalry and revenge in human realm, lead to the hell, or animal, or hungry realms in the next life.⁵⁵ Or they may demerit their wealth, lack of good sleep, have censure, and be inflicted with a harsh punishment, if they violate this code.⁵⁶ One will be free from danger, animosity, and oppression if one restrains oneself from committing this offense.⁵⁷

In Hinduism, since the rules of conduct depended on the social caste system, the degrees of committing this offense are different among the four castes. If a ruler, commoner, or servant has sex with a Brahmin woman, he should be wrapped in *Virana* grass and thrown into a fire; the Brahmin woman's head should be shaved and her body smeared with ghee, and she should be paraded on a highway naked and seated on a black

⁵⁰ Doniger, 161.

⁵¹ Olivelle, 168.

⁵² Oldenberg, 19.

⁵³ AN 8.39.

⁵⁴ Kumarajiva, *Bodhisattva Precept*.

⁵⁵ AN 8.40.

⁵⁶ DhP XXII, *Nirayavagga*, verses 309-310.

⁵⁷ AN 8.39.

donkey to purify her offense.⁵⁸ If a priest rapes a guarded woman of the priestly class, he should be fined a thousand pennies; but if he has sex with her when she wants it, he should be fined five hundred pennies.⁵⁹ A priest should be fined a thousand pennies if he has sex with guarded women of the ruler and commoner class. If a commoner has sex with a guarded woman of the ruling class, or a ruler with a guarded woman of the commoner class, they both deserve the punishment for sex with an unguarded woman of the priestly class. For having sex with an unguarded woman of the ruling class, a commoner should be fined five hundred pennies. A priest who has sex with an unguarded woman of the commoner class or the ruling class or with a woman of the servant class should be fined five hundred pennies, but a thousand for having sex with a woman of the lowest castes.⁶⁰ In addition, a priest who climbs into bed with a servant woman goes to hell; if he begets a son by her, he loses the status of a priest.⁶¹ A man of the servant class who cohabits with someone of the twice-born castes, guarded or unguarded, loses his [sexual] member and all his property if the person were unguarded, and his entire [body and property] if the person were guarded (it is punishment for sexual misconduct).⁶² A man who has had sex with the wife of an elder should lie on a heated iron bed.⁶³ Basically, if a wife is unfaithful to her husband, according to the Manu, she will be reborn in the womb of a jackal and tormented by the diseases of her evil karma.⁶⁴

In short, although the Hindu approach to condemn sexual misconduct is similar to that of Buddhism (which considers everyone equally with the same responsibility,

⁵⁸ Olivelle, 306-307.

⁵⁹ Doniger, 192.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 192-193.

⁶¹ Ibid., 44.

⁶² Ibid., 192.

⁶³ Olivelle, 165.

⁶⁴ Doniger, 200.

punishment, and reward), it bases its reprimands more on hierarchical levels of social caste system when determining the degree of the offense.

Regarding the act of taking intoxicants, the Buddha prohibits monks to drink or take any type of intoxicant substances, but it is a minor offense.⁶⁵ This is also the fifth cardinal precept for the lay people: “Abandoning the use of intoxicants, the disciple of the noble ones abstains from taking intoxicants.”⁶⁶ In Bodhisattva precept, drinking alcohol is considered as a minor precept, but selling it is deemed as a major one because it causes others being drunk and harmed to their physical, mental, spiritual life.⁶⁷ The Buddha also lists out six dangers from the addiction to strong drinks, distilled drinks, fermented drinks and that which causes heedlessness: The immediate (and visible) loss of wealth; an increase of quarrels; the likelihood of illness; it is a source of disgrace; the indecent exposure of oneself; and it weakens one’s intelligence.⁶⁸ Taking intoxicating substances may include gambling, so the Buddha reminds lay people to stay away from it. He also points out six dangers from addiction to gambling, a basis for heedlessness: when one wins, one begets hatred; when one loses, one regrets one’s loss; there is immediate [and visible] loss of wealth; one’s word carries no weight in an assembly; one is looked down by friends and colleagues; and one is not sought after for marriage, for how could a person addicted to gambling support a wife?⁶⁹ If one restrains oneself from taking intoxicants, one will be free from danger, animosity, and oppression.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Oldenberg, 13, 32.

⁶⁶ AN 8.39.

⁶⁷ Kumarajiva, *Bodhisattva Precept*.

⁶⁸ *Sigalovada Sutta: The Discourse to Sigala* (DN 31).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*,

⁷⁰ AN 8.40.

Although Hinduism mentions that there is nothing wrong with drinking wine because of their engagement in secular life, it suggests people disengage in drinking liquor.⁷¹ In fact, similar to that of Buddhist guidance, Hinduism warns and prohibits its followers to take intoxicants. For instance, a liquor-drinker commits a major offense.⁷² If a man drinks liquor, he should scald his body by drinking hot liquor.⁷³ According to Manu, liquor is made from defiling dirt excreted from rice, which is considered evil; hence, priest, ruler, and commoner should not drink it. Especially, a drunken priest confused by drunkenness will cause his priest-hood disappears, and he becomes a servant.⁷⁴ Manu also warned the drunken priest: “A priest who drinks liquor enters the womb of a worm, bug, or moth, of birds that eat excrement, and of violent creatures.”⁷⁵ It also mentioned that drunks and addicted gamblers are the lowest level of existence to which energy leads.⁷⁶ It also said that drinking, gambling, and hunting are known to be the very worse desires.⁷⁷ It suggests that the king should ban gambling and betting from his kingdom, punish physically any gambler or betters, and expel them out of the kingdom.⁷⁸

In short, there are common acceptances between Buddhism and Hinduism in term of warning their followers about the harmfulness of drinking alcohol and gambling.

Regarding the relationship between the spouses and their responsibilities, Buddhist guidelines are more simple and straightforward, whereas Hindu codes are more complex and sophisticated due to its discriminative caste system. According to Buddhist

⁷¹ Doniger, 104.

⁷² Ibid., 223.

⁷³ Olivelle, 166.

⁷⁴ Doniger, 260.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 283.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 283.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 222.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

codes, any male can marry likeminded female regardless of their cultural, educational, and social statuses. Also, as Buddhism has a monastic emphasis, marriage is not regarded as “sacred,” but as a secular contract of partnership.⁷⁹ As they have made their own commitment to each other as the spouses, the Buddha provides the guidelines for them to live harmoniously, peacefully, and happily with each other. To the husband, the Buddha advises that he should: treat his wife with respect; not show her discourtesy; not be unfaithful to her; hand over authority over domestic matter to her; and provide her with adornments. In the return, the wife should: manage her chores of the household work very well; be hospitable to those around her [such as servants and husband’s relatives]; not be unfaithful to him; look after the household stores [and property]; and be skillful and diligent in all her duties.⁸⁰ The Vinaya lists ten different kinds of wives: those bought for money; those living with their husbands voluntarily; those who are to be enjoyed or made use of occasionally; those who have given cloth; those who have the quality of providing the house with water; those who used head cushion to carry vessels on their heads; those who were slaves and wives; those who were artisans and wives; those who were acquired as prisoners of war; and those who were temporary or monetary wives. In *Anguttara sutta*, Buddha suggests seven personal qualities of a wife which are divided into two negative and positive characteristics. The negative types of wife are whom behavior like a murder, a thief, or a master. The positive types of wife are whom behavior like a mother, a sister, a friend, or a slave.⁸¹ Here, the Buddha provides the guidelines for women to conduct themselves virtuously and equally. Since marriage was neither legally

⁷⁹ Brian Peter Harvey, *An introduction to Buddhist ethics: foundations, values, and issues* (Cape Town, South Africa: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 102.

⁸⁰ DN 31.

⁸¹ Alexandra R. Kapur-Fic, *Thailand: Buddhism, society, and women* (New Delhi, India: Ahakti Malik Abhinav Publication, 1998), 402.

nor religiously sanctioned, divorce was simple and easy and could be settled by the parties involved.⁸² Polygamy was rare but an acceptable form of marriage confined to the upper classes of society, while monogamy was the prevailing practice in early Buddhism.⁸³

In Hinduism, a husband takes his wife as a gift from the gods, not by his own wish; he should support a virtuous woman to please the gods. Namely, in a polytheistic society, he has no control on his part of having a wife.⁸⁴ Also, marriage and the relationship between spouses are determined by the social caste system. Four marital types are suitable for the Brahmin: a “Brahma” marriage, when a girl is given to a *vedic* student who requests her after the inquiry into his learning and character; a “Prajapati” marriage, when a girl is given with the formula, “Here she is! May you jointly fulfill the Law,” after dressing her up and adorning her with jewels; a “Seer’s” marriage, when the groom first offers parched grain in the sacred fire and gives a cow and a bull to the girl’s father; and a “Divine” marriage, when a girl is given to the officiating priest within the sacrificial arena while the sacrificial gifts are being taken away. Two marital types are suitable for the ruler: a “Gandhara” marriage, when a lover has sex with his beloved through mutual consent; and a “Fiendish” marriage, when a man takes away a girl by force. Two marital types are suitable for the commoner and servant: a “Demonic” marriage, when the groom takes the girl after gratifying her parents with money; and a “Ghoulis” marriage, when a man has intercourse with a girl who is asleep.⁸⁵ After marriage, if the husband does not have sexual intercourse with his wife within three years, after her bath that concludes her menstrual period, or during her season, he incurs a guilt

⁸² Kapur-Fic, 397-398.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 398.

⁸⁴ Doniger, 208, 209.

⁸⁵ Olivelle, 161, 162.

equal to that of performing an abortion or his ancestors will lie during that month in her menstrual discharge.⁸⁶ According to the order of the classes, a Brahmin may take three wives; a ruler may take two wives; a commoner and servant may take one wife.⁸⁷

However, so long as his wife participates in religious rites and bears children, a man may not take another wife.⁸⁸

Although marrying with a different caste was not encouraged, the writer provides guidelines for such a marriage; for example, whenever a woman married a man of superior class or that of the ruler class, she should hold an arrow if she married with a man of a priestly class.⁸⁹ In marriage, not a single story mentions a servant woman as a wife of a priest or a ruler, even in extremity.⁹⁰ A serious horror if the Brahmin caste married a servant (Sudra) caste, and the writer denounces this type of marriage severely as Chandalas.⁹¹ For instance, a priest who climbs into bed with a servant woman goes to hell; if he begets a son by her, he loses the status of a priest.⁹² In order to maintain the purity of the caste, the writer did not encourage inter-caste marriage; for example, the twice-born man can not marry the Sudra woman, because it will degrade him and his descendants.⁹³ However, a Sudra woman alone may be the wife of a Sudra. A commoner may have one wife and one of his own (wife of) Vaishya. A ruler may have two wives and one of his own (wife of) Ksatriya. A priest may have three wives and one of his own (wife of) Brahmin.⁹⁴ For marrying a woman of equal caste, the bride and bridegroom join

⁸⁶ Olivelle, 229.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 250.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 54.

⁸⁹ Doniger, 47.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 44-45.

⁹¹ Ketkar, 144.

⁹² Doniger, 44.

⁹³ Ibid., 44.

⁹⁴ Ketkar, 143.

hands. In marrying a higher caste man, the bridegroom should take a hold of a whip.⁹⁵ In marrying a higher caste man, a Sudra bridegroom should hold the fringe of his garment.⁹⁶ In marrying a higher caste man, a bridegroom of the commoner class should take a hold of a whip.⁹⁷ Men have authority to divorce their wives. For example, if a wife bears no children in the tenth year, if she bears only daughters in the twelfth year, if all of her children were die in the fifteenth year, or if she is a sharp-tongued, a man may dismiss her.⁹⁸ Within the spouse relationship, if a husband unjustly abandoned his wife, he should wear a donkey's skin with its hairy side out and beg from seven houses. If a wife unjustly abandoned her husband, she should perform the twelve-day arduous penance for the same length of time.⁹⁹ A wife cannot act independently in the matters relating to the Law. She should never go against her husband and keep her speech, eyes, and actions under strict control. If her husband is missing, she shall wait for six years; if she has heard from him, she should go to him. When a Brahmin has gone away to study the Veda, his wife should wait for him twelve years. If her husband has become an ascetic, she should give up all attachments.¹⁰⁰ When her husband dies, she should abstain from honey, meat, liquor, and salt, and sleep on the floor for one year. After that time, if she has no son, she may bear one through a brother-in-law with the consent of her elders.¹⁰¹ A man may go away on a journey on business only after he has established a livelihood for his wife. Thereupon, she should subject herself to restrain in her life. If her husband has not provided any meaning of livelihood, she may make her own living by crafts that are not disapproved of.

⁹⁵ Doniger, 47.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 47.

⁹⁷ Doniger, 47.

⁹⁸ Olivelle, 176.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 39.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 110.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 176.

A husband should wait for one year for a wife who hates him, and after that he should take away her inheritance and not live with her. If she transgresses with infatuated, drunk, or ill, he may deprive her of her possession. If she hates him because he is insane, fallen, impotent, without seed, or suffering from a disease cause by his evil, she should not be deserted or deprived of her inheritance. If a wife drinks wine, behaves dishonestly, or is rebellious, ill, violent, or wasteful of money, or says unpleasant things, she should be abandoned immediately. If a wife is well-behaved and kind, but becomes ill, she should be abandoned only after her consent and honor.¹⁰² Since the wife brings forth a son who is just like the man she makes love with, her husband should guard her zealously in order to keep his offspring clean. To guard his wife, he should keep her busy in amassing and spending money, engaging in purification, attending to her duty, cooking food, and looking after the furniture. Otherwise, according to Manu, his wife would be corrupted when she is drinking, associating with bad people, being separated from him, wandering about, sleeping and living in other people's houses.¹⁰³

In short, the similarity between Buddhist and Hindu codes for the spouses are the husbands and wife should be faithful each other; both codes remind the husbands to give the authority for their wives to take care of the domestic matters as well as providing or allowing them to have adornments. The differences between these two codes are: Buddhist husbands should treat their wives with respect and courtesy. On the other hand, the Hindu husbands treat their wives differently and discriminatively according to the hierarchical classes. Especially, because of the Manu's prejudice towards women, its codes describe women negatively as people who have all the malicious nature, bad

¹⁰² Doniger, 206, 207.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 197, 198.

conduct, crookedness, lust, and anger. Explicitly, husbands have more rights and powers than that of their wives, unequally, because the Vedic text said that the fathers take care of their daughters, the husbands take care of their wives in their youth, and the sons take care of their mother in their aging. Women are devoid of strength and not fit to act independently.¹⁰⁴

Regarding the relationship between parents and children, the Buddha spells out clearly their responsibilities with each other. Parents' responsibilities are: to restrain their children from doing evil deed; to exhort them to do good deed; to have them trained in a profession; to arrange for them marriage to a suitable wife [suitable husband]; and to hand over his inheritance in due time. Children's responsibilities are: to attend caringly to their parents so as to provide them with all the requisites in life, to carry out the family affairs, such as the business matters of their parents; to maintain their parents' properties, clan name, religious duties, good name, and lineage to try and straighten their parents' religious view if they have a wrong view; to obey their parents and make themselves worthy of the parents' heritage; and to do good deeds, when their parents pass away, in dedication to them and share the merits with them.¹⁰⁵

Hinduism does not have many clear codes of responsibilities for parents and children. Furthermore, because of the complexity of the caste system, the children inheritance's rights are more complicated than that of Buddhism. For example, if a Brahmin has sons from wives of Brahmin, Ksatriya, and Vaisya classes, the son of the

¹⁰⁴ Olivelle, 175.

¹⁰⁵ DN 31.

Brahmin wife should take a triple share; the son of the Ksatriya wife should take a double share; and the others should get equal shares.¹⁰⁶

In short, Buddhism provides comprehensive codes for parents and children to perform their responsibilities regardless of their background. Conversely, Hinduism does not provide many codes of the responsibilities of the parents and children, but it spells out clearly the children inheritance's rights according to their caste.

In conclusion, by comparing and contrasting Buddhist and Hindu ethics, we can see that there are various similarities and differences between these two traditions. Namely, both contain similar codifications for their followers' conduct to live, act, speak, and think properly. Nonetheless, since Buddha views human beings impartially as the whole and pure persons in nature without any hidden agenda, his sole appearance in the human realm is to teach human beings a goal of spiritual attainment within the reach of humanity. As a result, he provides basic but substantial codes of behavior or ethical rules for every lay Buddhist to live and conduct properly, regardless of their gender, age, nationality, or social status. Specifically, his five universal codes, guidelines for marriage, and instructions for maintain the healthy and harmonious relationships of spouses and parents and children, and others are for everyone to practice equally and fairly. Conversely, concerning the five universal conducts (abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, and taking intoxicant), marriage, the relationships between husband and wife and parents and children, the Hindu codes are based on the hierarchal and social caste systems and are influenced by religious creed. Namely, these codes treat people differently according to their caste. Generally, people in higher caste may have more

¹⁰⁶ Olivelle, 295.

privileges in society than that of the lower caste. As a result, it creates an inequality among people within a community or society.

In short, Buddhist and Hindu ethical codes share a lot of commonalities due to their similarity in geographical arena. On the other hand, their ethical differences (of guiding their followers) are mostly based on how they: treat people according to their castes; or treat people regardless of gender, age, nationality, or social status.

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