FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE BUDDHA'S DIALOGUES IN THE SUTTA PITAKA

Le Ngoc Bich Ly[1]

ABSTRACT

Interreligious dialogue is an important tool for building a peaceful multireligious society. Scholars have been debating about what makes it effective. This study contributes to this knowledge from a Buddhist perspective. It draws from the Buddha's dialogues with people of other faiths in the Buddhist Pali Canon, the Sutta Pitaka through a qualitative content analysis of the three collections: Digha Nikaya, Majjhima Nikaya, and Anguttara Niakaya. Particularly, the study addresses two questions: How effective is the Buddha's dialogue as described in the Sutta Pitaka? What are the factors contributing to its effectiveness? The study found four levels of effectiveness: (1) negative responses; (2) clarification of each other's view; (3) transformation of attitudes; and (4) conversion which has three types: (i) converting and remaining in one's old religion, (ii) smooth conversion, and (iii) dramatic conversion. The study finds that both internal and external factors contribute to these levels of effectiveness. The Buddhist insights suggest that

[1] Head of the Department of Peace Studies, Payap University, Chiangmai, Thailand. Email: lgbl1981@gmail.com.

positive effects of dialogue require, among other factors, knowledge, virtue, communication skills, openness to truth, capacity to discuss truth rationally, and an environment conducive to dialogue.

Keywords: Interreligious dialogue; Sutta Pitaka; Buddhism; effective dialogue

Introduction

Interreligious dialogue or the encounter between people of different religions or worldviews has been promoted as an important tool for building a peaceful multi-religious society.[2] Contemporary scholars often debate about how to conduct it and make it effective, and they have produced various guidelines for it. However, scholars often overlook its history. Interreligious dialogue goes back to ancient times. It has always been a major tool for the wise of ancient religious traditions to communicate their views to the surrounding world. A typical example is Gautama Buddha, founder of Buddhism in ancient India around the sixth century before the common era. The Buddha and his community have contributed many insights on interreligious dialogue in the Buddhist Pali Canon, particularly the *Sutta Pitaka*. Studies of the Buddha's approach to interreligious dialogue have been few, and there is a lack of a systematic studies on the effectiveness of his dialogues with people of other faiths. This paper will attempt to systematize the various themes of the Buddha's approach to dialogue, the factors which promote it, and their levels of effectiveness.

---

[2] David R. Smock, "Conclusion," in *Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding*, ed. David R. Smock (Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2002), 127–31; Ina Merdjanova and Patrice Brodeur, *Religion as a Conversation Starter: Interreligious Dialogue for Peacebuilding in the Balkans* (London and New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009).

Literature Review and Research Methodology

The Buddhist Pali Canon or the *Tipitaka*, which is considered as the oldest, most original, most complete and most accurate record of the Buddha's teachings until today, is a rich source for the understanding of interreligious dialogue. There we find the Buddha's interaction with people of other faiths and social backgrounds in ancient Indian society. The Buddha appears as an expert of dialogue in these narratives. Yet, there are few studies which study interreligious dialogue in the Pali Canon, and these mostly focus on the Buddha's attitudes towards other religions[3] or the Buddhist values that foster dialogue.[4] There is a lack of a systematic study of the effectiveness of the Buddha's dialogues. This is the gap this study wishes to fill. This study uses the qualitative content analysis method[5] to study dialogues between the Buddha and people of other faiths in the three collections of the *Sutta Pitaka*: *Digha Nikaya* (DN) (The Long Dialogues of the Buddha), *Majjhima Nikaya* (MN) (The Middle Length Sayings of the Buddha), and *Anguttara Niakaya* (AN) (The Book of the Gradual Sayings). This study does not deal with the issue of authenticity

---

[3] Richard P. Hayes, "Gotama Buddha and Religious Pluralism," *Journal of Religious Pluralism* 1 (1991): 65–96; Kristin Beise Kiblinger, "Identifying Inclusivism in Buddhist Contexts," *Contemporary Buddhism* 4, no. 1 (2003): 79–97; Kristin Beise Kiblinger, *Buddhist Inclusivism: Attitudes towards Religious Others* (Hants, England: Ashgate, 2005); J. Abraham Velez de Cea, *The Buddha and Religious Diversity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013); Elizabeth J. Harris, "Buddhism and the Religious Other," in *Understanding Interreligious Relations*, ed. David Cheetham, Douglas Pratt, and David Thomas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 88–117.

[4] K. N. Jayatilleke, *The Buddhist Attitude to Other Religions* (Chiang Mai, Thailand: The Buddhist Publication Foundation, 1987); Padmasiri de Silva, "Transformative Dialogue & Contemplative Traditions: A Buddhist Perspective," in *Transformative Dialogue & Contemplative Traditions: A Buddhist Perspective* (Univerity Press, 2009), 37–42; Piseth Sek, "Buddhist Perspectives on Interfaith Relations," *Journal of Buddhist Education and Research* 3, no. 1 (June 2017): 19–23.

[5] Margrit Schreier, *Qualitative Content Analysis in Practice* (Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC: SAGE, 2012).

of the text. Its main purpose is to analyze the content of the Buddhist narratives to identify the levels of effectiveness and factors behind them. In total, 84 *suttas* were selected and analyzed including 13 *suttas* from *Digha Nikaya*, 42 *suttas* from *Majjhima Nikaya*, and 29 *suttas* from *Anguttara Nikaya*. These texts were considered according to two main themes: the level of dialogue effectiveness and the factors contributing to dialogue effectiveness. The study does not include dialogues between the Buddha's disciples and others or those between the Buddha and his own disciples. Nor does the study include the Buddha's dialogues with people of other faiths in other collections within the Pali Canon such as *Samyutta Niakya* (The Connected Discourses of the Buddha) and *Khuddaka Nikya* (The Minor Collection of Discourses). Finally, it does not address dialogues from texts outside the Pali Canon such as the Chinese Agamas and Mahayana Sutras.

Research Findings

This study found four levels of dialogue effectiveness: (1) negative responses; (2) clarification of each other's view; (3) transformation of attitudes; and (4) conversion. Conversion has three types: (i) converting and remaining in one's old religion, (ii) smooth conversion, and (iii) dramatic conversion. The factors behind these levels of effectiveness are various. They are grouped into internal factors and external factors that can result in both positive and negative outcomes. In the case of the Buddha, the internal factors which lead to his effectiveness in dialogue are his intellectual capacity, his embodied virtues, and his skillfulness in communicating dialogue content and dealing with different types of people. However, in other cases his lack of reputation during his early religious career, and his incompatible religious views become obstacles for some of the people he engages in dialogue with. In the case of the Buddha's interlocutors, the positive effect of the dialogue is due to their respect and admiration toward the Buddha, their openness to truth, and their capacity to discuss truth logically and intellectually. However, in some cases, while these factors are present, the dialogue ends negatively

due to other factors such as the intervention of the community, and the readiness of people to accept a new truth. Finally, an important external factor contributing to the effectiveness of those dialogues is the cultural and religious public context during the Buddha's time which supported religious tolerance and intellectual freedom.

Four Levels of Dialogue Effectiveness and Reasons in the *Sutta Pitaka*

According to the findings, there are four levels of effectiveness from lower to higher: (1) negative responses; (2) clarification of each other's view; (3) transformation of attitudes, and (4) conversion. Conversion has three types: (i) converting and remaining within one's old religion, (ii) smooth and (iii) dramatic conversion to Buddhism. In this study, the effectiveness of dialogue is understood in terms of the immediate outcome or result of the dialogue which is explicit in the narratives. The effectiveness of dialogue increases when the result is more positive. "Positive" means the dialogue brings people toward transformation of attitudes and understanding that make them emotionally satisfied, intellectually developed, and behaviorally mature. These are immediate effects of the dialogue and cannot be treated in terms of failure or success because of the inability to predict what will happen to the person who has been through a powerful dialogue that touches the heart deeply. He or she may react negatively at the moment, but such a deep impression can transform the person in a long run. Below is the finding summary. In each level of analysis, I combine the description of the effectiveness and analyze the reasons behind.

Table 1: *Summary of findings on the four levels of dialogue effectiveness*

Level	Dialogue results	Themes	Suttas (complete discourse)
1	Negative responses (9 suttas)	Rejection and walking away	MN 18, 26, 87
		Dissatisfaction and condemnation	AN 10.95
		Annoyance, shame, silence	DN 25; MN 14, 101, 152; AN 3.61
2	Clarification of each other's view (1 sutta)	Dialogue stops at clarifying the meaning of the doctrine.	MN 56
3	Transformation of attitudes (15 suttas)	From hostility to respect and admiration	DN 3; MN 35, 36
		Joy and satisfaction	DN 6, 7, 16 [Chapter1]; MN 71, 77, 86, 90, 92; AN 4.35; 4.183; 4.187; 7.54
4	Conversion (65 suttas)	Converting to new religious path but remaining within one's old religion (3 suttas)	DN 4, 24; MN 79

Level	Dialogue results	Themes	Suttas (complete discourse)
4	Conversion (65 suttas)	Smooth conversion (40 suttas)	DN 5, 9, 12, 13, 16 [Chapters 4,5], 31; MN 4, 7, 27, 30, 41, 42, 57, 60, 72, 73, 85, 91, 92, 98, 107, 135, 150; AN 3.53; 3.55; 3.56; 3.65; 4.100; 4.111; 4.184; 5.193; 6.47; 6.48; 6.52; 6.53; 7.44; 7.47; 8.12; 10.177; 10.209.
		Dramatic conversion (22 suttas)	DN 3, 8; MN 54, 55, 56, 58, 74, 75, 80, 86, 93, 95, 96, 99, 100; AN 3.58; 3.60; 4.195; 6.38; 10.119; 10.167; 10.176.

Level 1: Negative responses

The first level of interreligious dialogue outcome according to the Buddhist narratives is the negative responses from those he engages in dialogue. The study found 9 *suttas* of this category. After the Buddha achieved enlightenment and began to preach his new religious path, he was still a young man of his thirties and had not yet achieved a public reputation. In some of these early dialogues, the Buddha's interlocutors reject his utterances and walk away because they look down on him as a young recluse of no public reputation (MN 18, 26). Some people reject the truth that he declares because the truth is contrary to what they want to hear (MN 87). Sometimes the Buddha's interlocutors show dissatisfaction with the dialogue because the Buddha does not address their ultimate questions or they condemn it because they do not understand the

Buddha's view (AN 10.95). There are occasions that, out of compassion for the wellbeing of the religious others, the Buddha straightforwardly criticizes their wrong views and practices. In such situations he encounters defensiveness, silence, and resistance to change (MN 14, 101, 152; AN 3.61). There is also a case that the Buddha enthusiastically takes time to lead his interlocutors to distinguish the right from wrong view which leads to the participants to positively respond to the new insight. However, when he invites them to practice this new way, they respond with annoyance, silence, and downcast heads (DN 25). From the above cases, negative results of the dialogue come from different reasons such as age, hierarchy and status, incompatibility of religious views, people's attachment to their old view regardless of reasonable criticism, and the unwillingness of the human heart to accept new things.

Level 2: Clarification of each other's view

The second level of dialogue effectiveness of the Buddha's dialogues is when the participants stop at the understanding of each other's religious view. At this level, the dialogue ends when the views of both dialogue parties are clarified. This type of dialogue is rare in the Pali Canon. This study found only one narrative that falls into this category. It is *Majjhima Nikaya* 56, *Upali Sutta* (To Upali). In this dialogue narrative, Digha Tapassi, an ascetic disciple of Nigantha Nataputta (founder of the Jains), visits the Buddha. They discuss the topic of action and its consequence. The *Niganthas* or the Jains believe that there are three channels that produce evil: bodily, verbal and mental channels. Of the three, bodily channel is the heaviest. The Buddha has Tapassi confirm this view three times. Then Tapassi asks the Buddha in return to comment on the same issue. The Buddha says that he also teaches the three channels that produce evil: bodily, verbal, and mental channels. But for him, the mental channel is the heaviest one. Tapassi also has the Buddha confirm his view three times. Then Tapassi stands up and leaves. This dialogue narrative shows that both the Buddha and his dialogue partner cease their dialogue at the level of clarifying each other's view. The narrative reveals

that Tapassi does not pursue the topic further with the Buddha because he fears of being converted by the Buddha. In today's interreligious dialogue, this level of effectiveness can be seen when dialogue participants come to dialogue to share their religious views and stop after exchanging views. This level is safe and comfortable for dialogue participants. Any deeper examination of doctrine leads to suspicion and fear of being the target of conversion from both sides. This is evident in some studies.[6] However, such a dialogue is not deep and not effective in the long run.

Level 3: Transformation of attitudes

The third level of dialogue effectiveness according to the Buddhist narratives is transformation of attitudes without conversion. This transformation of attitudes which results from dialogue can be dramatic, from hostility to respect and admiration, but remains short of conversion.

(1) Dramatic transformation of attitudes

Dramatic change of attitudes means a change from negative attitudes to positive ones, such as from feelings of hostility to respect and admiration. This also includes the realization of one's own ignorance of the truth or bad behavior, leading to a change in attitudes and behavior for the better. For example, in *Digha Nikaya* 3, *Ambattha Sutta*, the young brahmin Ambattha together with his young brahmin friends go to visit the Buddha in his hut. Ambattha shows disrespect and rudeness toward the Buddha such as walking back and forth while the Buddha is sitting, or speaking offensively to the Buddha. When the Buddha asks him why he acts in such a way, he appeals to the brahmins' prejudice toward the Buddha's class – the Sakyans. The brahmins view them as "menials, black scourings from Brahma's foot," "fierce, rough-spoken, touchy and

---

[6] Jane Idleman Smith, *Muslims, Christians, and the Challenge of Interfaith Dialogue* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 67–68, 70–74, 79–80; Whalen Lai and Michael von Bruck, *Christianity and Buddhism: A Multicultural History of Their Dialogue*, trans. Phyllis Jestice (New York: Orbis Books, 2001), 38.

violent." [7] The Buddha is calm, and patient while listening to Ambattha's rude explanation. He then tries to enlighten Ambattha about his prejudice. However, after seeing that this young brahmin is still stubborn, the Buddha humbles him by exposing the truth of Ambattha's own ancestral 'inferior' birth. Unable to deny it, Ambattha becomes ashamed. His brahmin friends ridicule him. Seeing that, the Buddha defends him by telling another story of his powerful ancestor. Ambattha changes his attitude toward the Buddha. He becomes interested in learning new truths from the Buddha. The dialogue ends with Ambattha's feeling of contentment. In this dialogue narrative, Ambattha dramatically transforms his attitudes toward the Buddha from arrogance and rudeness to interest in learning from the Buddha and being satisfied with his new knowledge. This transformation is the result of the Buddha's virtue (patience, compassion), and excellent knowledge (concerning Ambattha's birth and ancestral history).

(2) Increased positive attitude

The increased positive attitude means that the attitudes of the interlocutors become positively transformed after the dialogue with the Buddha. This transformation sometimes includes a dramatic change in understanding and behavior. For most cases, the Buddha's interlocutors are people of powerful political status such as kings, army leaders, royal brahmins who know and respect the Buddha for his reputation (DN 16 [Chapter1], MN 90, AN 4.35; 4.183; 7.54). Their encounters with the Buddha lead to joy and satisfaction. Some encounters lead to the abandonment of violence and bloodshed such as the case of King Ajatasattu Vedehiputta of Magadha who plans to attack the Vajjian nation but then abandons his plans after a consultation with the Buddha through his chief brahmin minister. In the consultation, the Buddha does not give any directive but provides a good framework with concrete criteria for the minister to reflect on the situation and its possible effects of his action. Then the minister and the king make the decision by themselves

---

[7] Maurice Walshe, trans., *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikaya* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1987), 113.

(DN 16 [Chapter 1]).

An analysis of the narratives of attitude transformation whether dramatic or smooth shows that the transformation happens based on four factors: (1) the Buddha's capacity to enlighten and satisfy his dialogue's partners' spiritual quest and intellectual enquiries; (2) the Buddha's virtues and reputation stimulate respect and admiration in his dialogue partners; (3) the Buddha's skillfulness in communication of the dialogue content and with different types of people; and (4) the capacity of the Buddha's interlocutors to clearly discuss the truth and to realize superior wisdom and virtue in the Buddha. Their encounter with the Buddha leaves them with new knowledge, happiness, satisfaction, and change of behavior.

Level 4: Conversion

The highest level of effectiveness is a dialogue which results in conversion. This can be divided into three categories: (1) converting to the Buddhist path but still remaining in one's own native tradition; (2) smooth conversion; and (3) dramatic conversion. In modern times, dialogue which aims at conversion is viewed with suspicion or even condemned as inauthentic dialogue. However, the purpose of this paper is not to judge the aims of Buddhist dialogue, but to identify factors behind such a rational transformation through dialogue. By knowing the enabling factors behind this radical transformation, we can learn to improve our capacities and skills to engage in dialogues for better transformation of human beings towards peace and happiness.

(1) Conversion but remaining in one's native religion

Regarding the first category of conversion, the study found three cases (MN 79, DN 4, 24). In these cases, the Buddha's dialogue partners voluntarily convert after a dialogue with the Buddha. Two of them verbally confess their new faith in the Buddha even in the presence of their own religious community (MN 79, DN 4). However, each has a different reason to continue to remain in their former religious tradition. In the first case, the convert is already a teacher of a religious community. Abandonment of

his native religion would bring shame on him and his disciples (MN 79). For the second case, the person fears losing respect and benefits gained from his own religious community. He prefers to follow the Buddha secretly (DN 4). For the third case, the person is interested to achieve the highest goal of Buddhism while still keeping his own religion (DN 24). All these cases show that embracing the Buddhist path while remaining in one's native religious tradition is more favorable and less problematic. Today, this category of conversion is quite popular among modern people who claim dual religious identity or multireligious identity. The reasons for remaining between traditions are various such as (i) one's becoming fluent in another or more religious traditions based on intellectual study; (ii) one's being socialized into two or more religious traditions and not wanting to lose any of them, such as the case of children of parents from different religious backgrounds, and immigrants who are socialized into a different religious environment.[8]

(2) Smooth conversion

The second category is smooth conversion. It means a public declaration of faith and loyalty to the Buddhist path and community without any obstacle. In this type of conversion, there is a smooth progression from the beginning to the happy ending of the dialogue. Converts of this type come from a variety of religious backgrounds and social statuses such as wealthy and influential brahmins, brahmin householders, young and old brahmins, ascetic wanderers, other religious groups, political leaders, clan people, elephant-trainers, and horse-trainers. Despite the background diversity, the common characteristics of these people are that they are intelligent and genuine truth-seekers. They are sincere, open-minded, and willing to learn and discuss truth rationally. Another common trait among them is that they already have reverence and admiration for the Buddha in advance, after hearing good reports about him. They look to the Buddha as a source of authoritative knowledge. When they finally have chance to meet the Buddha, they listen with all their attention and

---

[8] Bernhardt, 137.

intellect, and willingly engage in conversion. These can be seen as the factors that contribute to the positive effect of the dialogue.

These people come to the Buddha on various purposes and the Buddha addresses their needs skillfully. Some have doubts and want to know which religious path is correct and who has supreme enlightenment (DN 16 [Chapter 5]; MN 30; AN 3.65). In response, the Buddha does not make any judgment of other religions or religious teachers, but he presents the internal teachings of Buddhism which indirectly addresses the questions and provides a wholesome framework for judging the issue. For those who are interested in metaphysical issues such as the existence of the soul, life after death, and so on (DN 9; MN 72), the Buddha refuses to answer because these questions are not beneficial and do not lead to liberation from suffering. However, he is decisive, clear, and concrete on his doctrinal position of the Four Noble Truths. When people come with a sincere attitude and raise right questions, the Buddha promptly responds with the appropriate teachings. He also uses daily life examples, analogies, question-and-answer method to get them engaged intellectually in the whole process of truth exposition. People leave with new understanding and feelings of joy and satisfaction. All these examples show that the Buddha's discriminative wisdom and communication skills are important factors contributing to the positive effects of the dialogue.

(3) Dramatic conversion

Dramatic conversion moves from negative attitudes to positive ones toward the Buddha and his teachings. This also includes a public declaration of faith and loyalty to the Buddhist path and community. In some narratives, people even make a clear break with their former religious community. In these dialogues, the dramatic converts are grouped into two categories: (1) those who are initially arrogant, disrespectful, and even hostile toward the Buddha; and (2) those who come initially with accusations against the Buddha's position.

Concerning the first category, converts who are initially arrogant, disrespectful, and even hostile towards the Buddha, come from various

backgrounds: brahmins, *Niganthas* or the Jains, ascetic wanderers, householders, and robbers. There are various causes for their attitudes. For example, the brahmins' rudeness and hostility toward the Buddha is usually the result of their belief in the caste system which considers brahmins as superior to other classes. The Buddha discredits the caste system and argues for the purity and equality of all castes. The brahmins are also proud of their beliefs and religious practices and believe that they are superior to other religions. The Buddha uses various methods to challenge and transform their understanding and attitudes such as using concrete factual evidence, logical reasoning, analogies, stories, question-and-answer method, and so on, to lead them to see the problems of their views and to come to agreement with the Buddha's view. The Buddha also sincerely gives personal testimony of his own spiritual journey, or provides a comprehensive framework with concrete criteria before responding to his opponent's questions. Sometimes he does not judge their views or practices but simply says that their view or practice is different from that of his own noble discipline. When his opponents become more curious to know, he presents the Buddhist norm and practice. By various methods, the Buddha dialogical techniques result in the brahmin's amazement and conversion.

The second category of dramatic converts includes people who initially come to the Buddha with accusations. There are various accusations against the Buddha, such as the Buddha's discrediting of all forms of asceticism which were popularly practiced at that time (DN 8), the Buddha's use of magic to attract gentile disciples (AN 4.193), the Buddha's disrespect to elderly brahmins (AN 5.192; 8.11), the Buddha's consumption of animal meat which was intentionally killed for him (MN 55), and so on. Occasionally there are people who approach the Buddha and ask for clarification. The Buddha uses various methods to respond to and discredit these accusations such as appealing to his recognized virtue and wisdom (DN 8; MN 55), providing correct understanding and patiently explaining it within a clear framework for the others to understand and verify (AN 8.11), and direct experience with him for his

accusers to evaluate who he is (AN 4.193).

In short, when reflecting on the positive levels of dialogue effectiveness (transformation of attitudes and conversion), the common factors facilitating dialogue effectiveness include the Buddha's ability to develop his interlocutor's intellectual capacity to discuss truth according to their perspective of reality, and the Buddha's ability to awaken the curiosity of his interlocutors leading to the freedom to embrace a new truth. Some of these people are initially arrogant but become enthusiastic to explore new things. This distinguishes them from the people of the first and second levels of dialogue effectiveness (negative responses and limit to clarification of each other's view). People of these two levels stop pursuing the truth further for fear of being converted or have no interest in learning new things and rethinking their religious views. Additionally, the Buddha's knowledge, virtues, and communication skills are also key to dialogue effectiveness. Through excellent knowledge of his own path and his interlocutor's tradition, he can communicate religious truths intelligibly, and skillfully lead them step by step to see a new truth. With patience, tranquility, gentleness, and compassion, he can overcome unpleasant attitudes and behaviors of his interlocutors and transform them.

Lastly, the social context of ancient India greatly contributed to the effectiveness of interreligious dialogue. According to de Zoysa, the society in ancient India during the Buddha's time had high religious tolerance and intellectual freedom. Religious teachers could freely travel around and preach their own views as well as criticize and challenge other religious views. There was no bloodshed or violence between religious groups. People gained much benefit from religious public debates because these debates sharpened their intellect.[9] In modern times, the space for open interreligious dialogue has become narrower when more rules are set to prevent problems and offense. Therefore, this study, based on the insights of the Buddha's dialogical approach, proposes that an open space for interreligious dialogue should be encouraged for the expression of

---

[9] A. P. de Zoysa, *Indian Culture in the Days of the Buddha* (Colombo: M.D. Gunasena & Co., Ltd., 1955), 3–4.

views, and people should cultivate themselves to be self-controlled in responding to the position of others.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has presented a systematic analysis of the factors contributing to effectiveness of the Buddha's dialogues with people from other faiths and viewpoints in three collections of the *Sutta Pitaka* (*Digha Nikaya*, *Majjhima Nikaya*, and *Anguttara Nikaya*). There are four levels of effectiveness of the Buddha's dialogues: (1) negative responses; (2) clarification of each other's view; (3) transformation of attitudes; and (4) conversion. This study found both internal and external factors contributing to these levels of effectiveness. One internal factor involves the Buddha's interlocutor's intellectual capacity to discuss truth logically and their curiosity and openness to learning new truths. The other is the Buddha's excellent knowledge, virtue, and communication skills. The external factor is the environment that is conducive to dialogue. The paper argues that dialogue participants should cultivate knowledge, virtue, communication skills to make their dialogues more effective. Our society needs to create a more favorable environment for dialogical activities by promoting religious tolerance and intellectual freedom. For a more comprehensive understanding of the Buddha's dialogue effectiveness, future studies should focus on other collections of the Pali Canon and other texts outside the Pali Canon.

REFERENCES

Bernhardt, Reinhold. "Religious 'Multi-Identity.'" *Journal of the Academic Study of Religion 27,* no. 2 (2014): 132–52. https://doi.org/10.1558/jasr. v27i2.132.

Harris, Elizabeth J. "Buddhism and the Religious Other." In *Understanding Interreligious Relations*, edited by David Cheetham, Douglas Pratt, and David Thomas, 88–117. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. https://global.oup.com/academic/product/understanding-interreligious-relations-9780199645855

Hayes, Richard P. "Gotama Buddha and Religious Pluralism." *Journal of Religious Pluralism* 1 (1991): 65–96.

Jayatilleke, K. N. *The Buddhist Attitude to Other Religions*. Chiang Mai, Thailand: The Buddhist Publication Foundation, 1987.

Kiblinger, Kristin Beise. *Buddhist Inclusivism: Attitudes towards Religious Others*. Hants, England: Ashgate, 2005. https://archive.org/details/buddhistinclusiv0000kibl/page/n5/mode/2up

———. "Identifying Inclusivism in Buddhist Contexts." *Contemporary Buddhism* 4, no. 1 (2003): 79–97.

Knitter, Paul F. *Without Buddha I Could Not Be a Christian*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2013.

Lai, Whalen, and Michael von Bruck. *Christianity and Buddhism: A Multicultural History of Their Dialogue*. Translated by Phyllis Jestice. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001.

Merdjanova, Ina, and Patrice Brodeur. *Religion as a Conversation Starter: Interreligious Dialogue for Peacebuilding in the Balkans*. London and New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009. https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/religion-as-a-conversation-starter-9780826439024/

Nanamoli, Bhikkhu, and Bhikkhu Bodhi, trans. *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya*. 3rd ed. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995.

Schreier, Margrit. *Qualitative Content Analysis in Practice*. Los Angeles: SAGE, 2012. https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/qualitative-content-analysis-in-practice/book234633

Seitz, Jonathan A. "Religious Dualism and the Problem of Dual Religious Identity." *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 35 (2015): 49–55. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24801388

Sek, Piseth. "Buddhist Perspectives on Interfaith Relations." *Journal of Buddhist Education and Research* 3, no. 1 (June 2017): 19–23. https://so06.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/jber/article/view/243049

Silva, Padmasiri de. "Transformative Dialogue & Contemplative Traditions: A Buddhist Perspective." In *Transformative Dialogue & Contemplative Traditions: A Buddhist Perspective*, 37–42. Colombo: Univerity Press, 2009. https://www.academia.edu/17835032/BUDDHIST_CHRISTIAN_DIALOGUE

Smith, Jane Idleman. *Muslims, Christians, and the Challenge of Interfaith Dialogue*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Smock, David R. "Conclusion." In *Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding*, edited by David R. Smock, 127–31. Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2002.

Velez de Cea, J. Abraham. *The Buddha and Religious Diversity*. London and New York: Routledge, 2013. https://www.routledge.com/The-Buddha-and-Religious-Diversity/VelezdeCea/p/book/9781138108080

Walshe, Maurice, trans. *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikaya*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1987.

Zoysa, A. P. de. *Indian Culture in the Days of the Buddha*. Colombo: M.D. Gunasena & Co., Ltd., 1955. https://archive.org/details/ndiancultureinthedaysofthebuddhazoysadea.p.bookmarked_131_a