

## A Comparative study on the Buddhist Concept of Emptiness

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The concept of Emptiness is recognized as the central philosophy of Early Mahāyāna particularly, in Mādhyamaka school of Buddhism. Nonetheless, this concept of emptiness or *suññatā* exists in both early Buddhist teachings and early Mahāyāna Buddhism. Although this term appears in early Buddhist *suttas*, many scholars attempt to undertake the theory of emptiness as an innovation of Nāgārjuna and it was created as a result of the development of Buddhist philosophy and Buddhist logic. Ven. Nāgārjuna who was the founder of the Madyamaka school, use emptiness as an equivalent for dependant arising (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), as him, emptiness is a synonym for dependent arising and the *Nibbāna*. But, though this theory of causality has been considered as the central teaching of the early Mahayana Buddhism in accordance with the Prajñāpāramitāsūtra and Loukāvātārasutta, it is accepted as a special term for a central teaching of early Buddhism following the Theravada point of view. According to the early Buddhist teachings, the way of liberation has been identified though the understanding of three characteristics of existence known as *tilakkhana*, and by means of the realization of causality. Evidently, it is proved that the *suññatā* has been used in early Buddhist teachings as an equivalent for dependent origination which is also recognized as the central teachings of Buddhism. Nonetheless, though the theory of dependent origination is honoured as the sunnata in Theravāda Buddhism as same as in early Mahāyāna teachings. Therefore, there should be an essential discussion to be elucidate the concept of *suññatā* as the central teaching of Theravāda Buddhism as well. This attempt is not against the teaching of the Buddha, but will help to be the brilliance of Buddhism.

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