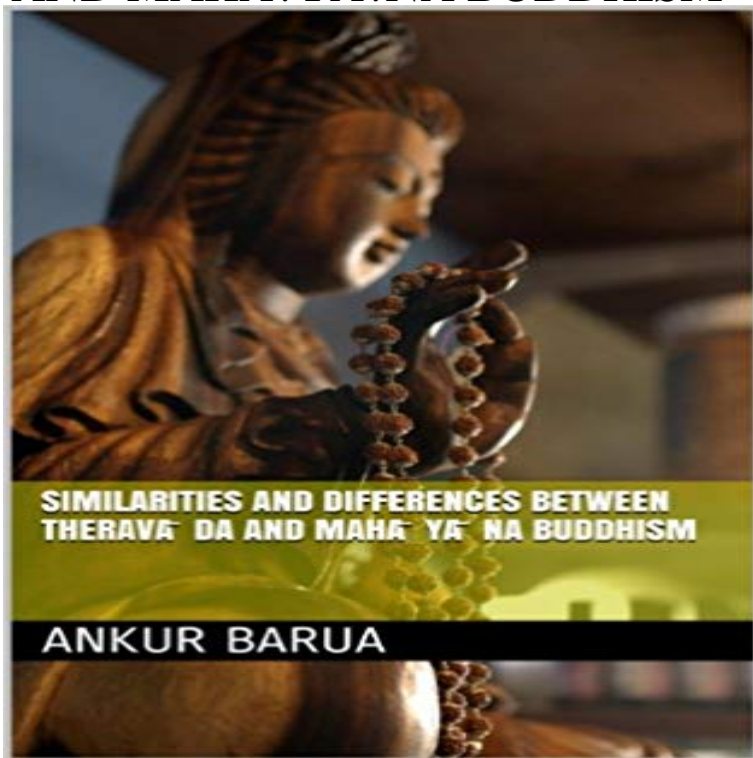


SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THERAVADA AND MAHAYANA BUDDHISM



The Theravada School of Buddhism was formally established at the Third Buddhist Council during the time of Emperor Asoka in the 3rd Century B.C. In the later period, the Mahayanists took a firm stand and the terms of Mahayana and Hinayana were introduced after the 1st Century A.D. However, during the 2nd Century A.D. Mahayana became clearly defined. There is hardly any difference between Theravada and Mahayana schools of Buddhism with regard to the fundamental teachings of the Buddha. Though there are many similarities, but there are some important aspects in which both schools of Buddhist thoughts differ from each other. The major aspects of these are the Bodhisattva concept, the deification of the Buddha, emphasis on meditational aspect and the concept of emptiness or sunyata.

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