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# **The Buddha and Schopenhauer:**

## **On the Concept of Human Liberation**

By

Naw Kham La Dhammasami

University of Peradeniya

Peradeniya, Kandy, Sri Lanka

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### **Abstract**

The nineteenth century witnessed the beginning of serious European study of Asian philosophies, religions and cultures. Scholars were particularly attracted to Buddhism, which fitted the Pessimism and Romantic world weariness that characterized the era in Europe. One scholar who was particularly interested in Buddhism was philosopher in his own right: Arthur Schopenhauer. His philosophy essentially encapsulated the range of European interpretations of Buddhism. Schopenhauer saw this philosophy as an affirmation of his own philosophy of an all pervading will which made human life a misery. Buddhism represented an important part of his philosophy, and his attitudes toward that religion reveal a great deal about what they esteemed in European culture.

In this thesis, comparison will be drawn between the *Four Noble Truths of Buddhism and some of the Key Themes in Schopenhauer's Philosophy*. In the first chapter, I discovered the various definition of the term "liberation." Using sources ranging from the basis (i.e. the dictionary) through to the philosophical, I have compiled a broad overview of the term. I then explored the Western relationship with Buddhist philosophy in chapter two. In chapter three, I explained the concept of suffering according to the Buddha and Schopenhauer. In chapter four, I have exposed what the

Buddha and Schopenhauer thought about the cause of suffering. Chapter five continues to examine what the Buddha and Schopenhauer pointed out as the cessation of suffering. Chapter six is an exploration of the way to liberation according to Buddha and Schopenhauer. Chapter seven gives a comparison of two methods of philosophies by the Buddha and Schopenhauer. Finally, chapter eight is the conclusion which summarises what has been said from the beginning to the end.