Quest for reality: a preliminary study of platonic philosophy and Buddhist philosophy respectively with special reference to *the Republic* and *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*

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Different philosophical schools and doctrines have always attempted to investigate the fundamental issue on "Man versus Universal Reality", considering the capability and the capacity of the individual. Buddhist philosophy and the Platonic Philosophy can be considered as two such great philosophical schools that sprung from the East and the West to direct the man in the quest for Reality. Thus, this study compares Plato's conception of Reality and the discussion of spiritual growth with the Buddhist perception of Reality and spiritual growth focusing on Plato's treatise *The Republic* and the first discourse of Gautama Buddha, namely *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*.

Buddhist philosophy is known as a mind centric philosophy that encourages the cultivation of the mind and similarly, in Plato's *The Republic*, *ψυχη* (psyche) or soul is cultivated in a way to comprehend the Universal Truth that cannot be grasped though the ordinary sensory perceptions alone. Thus, whether it is through the mind or the soul, both doctrines believe that it is through the awakening of the mind's eye that human being can achieve the highest knowledge. Yet ostensibly, the prescribed processes of the cultivation of the mind's eye differ with the ultimate objectives of each of these philosophical schools. In Buddhist philosophy, the aim of spiritual growth is to eradicate suffering through ceasing the cycle of birth. But, in Platonic doctrine, spiritual growth is crucial in the upbringing of the philosopher-ruler accommodate his *Ideal State*. Therefore, the Platonic doctrine root the moral and the metaphysical theory into worldly values. Despite of these different objectives, a similar nature of expression could also be traced in these two philosophies in relation to Universal Reality. *The Form of the Good* in Platonic doctrine and *the Four Noble Truths* in Buddhist philosophy, share the common attributes such as permanency and eternity, due to their incorporeal and non-temporal existence in the metaphysical realm. Furthermore, the strenuous and extremely difficult upward movement of the cognitive states, as depicted through the analogue of *the Divided line, the Sun* and *the Cave* in Platonic doctrine reflect the virtues that are cultivated through *the Eightfold path* in Buddhist philosophy.