

# **Spread of Hua Yen Buddhism in the World and its Impact on Beat Poetry**

Senior Lecturer, Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka  
Nipunika Dilani

## **Abstract**

Buddhism branched out into its various sects as Theravada, Mahayana, Zen, Tibetan, Hua Yen, etc., broadening the traditional framework has spread its basic principles which arise from a common source all over the world. Hua Yen, a branch of Mahayana Buddhism originated in China during Tang Dynasty has now been spread worldwide beyond the boundaries of China. Beat generation is a group of American Buddhist poets whose writing evidences the reach of Hua Yen Buddhism in the world. Beat generation poets like Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder, Phillip Whalen, Jack Kerouac, Michael McClure, etc, have been greatly influenced by Zen and Hua Yan Mahayana Buddhisms, the principles of which have been included in their poetry to a large scale. Accordingly this study analyses a selection of poems by the above poets in order to understand how they have been influenced by Hua Yen Buddhism, what Hua Yen Buddhist principles they have included and those principles will be compared with Theravāda Buddhism. The current study falls into the category of qualitative genre of research for which the data is collected from the above poets and Hua Yen and Theravāda Buddhist canon. The study concludes that the concepts of the sects of Buddhism under concern are quite similar and the Beat poetry shows the effective spread of Hua Yen Buddhism in the world.

**Keywords: Beat poetry, Hua Yen Buddhism, Mahayana Buddhism, Theravāda Buddhism**

## Introduction

The Buddha's Dhamma which has six supreme characteristics as (1) well expounded (2) could be self-realized, (3) yielding immediate results (4) is worthy of invitation, "Come and see", (5) is worthy of being perpetually borne in mind and (6) could be realized by the wise individually, has fascinated the modern world beyond borders of its native and neighboring regions proving its Supreme power. Once restricted to the East, it was known as an eastern religion of which by now people from various parts of the world seek refuge in understanding its practical value and flexible adaptation in various cultural contexts. The great and noble mission of the Buddha initiated with the turning of the Dhamma wheel which was later shouldered by His disciples and the followers, is still being continued in the modern global world, confirming its presence in almost every nook and corner of the world. This further confirms *Akālika* nature of the Buddha's Dhamma which is well expounded and being noble at the beginning, middle and the end, cannot be limited to a specific time period. In the twentieth century, Buddhist practitioners, both professional and lay, emigrated throughout the world to an unprecedented degree."(Wallace,34) By now an unprecedented growth of interest in Buddhism by non-Asians has contributed to the spread of Buddhism in the world. Buddhism branched out into its various sects as Theravada, Mahayana, Zen, Tibetan, Hua Yen, etc., broadening the traditional framework has spread its basic principles which arise from a common source all over the world. Hua Yen, a branch of Mahayana Buddhism originated in China during Tang Dynasty has now been spread worldwide beyond the boundaries of China. Beat generation is a group of American Buddhist poets whose writing evidences the reach of Hua Yen Buddhism in the world. Beat generation poets like Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder, Phillip Whalen, Jack Kerouac, Michael McClure, etc, have been greatly influenced by Zen and Hua Yen Mahayana Buddhisms, the principles of which have been included in their poetry to a large scale.

Accordingly this study analyses a selection of poems by the above poets in order to understand how they have been influenced by Hua Yen Buddhism, what Hua Yen Buddhist principles they have included and those principles will be compared with Theravāda Buddhism.

## **Objectives**

The main objectives of the current study are;

- To examine Hua Yen influence on American society
- To analyse how Hua Yen Buddhism has influenced Beat Poetry
- To compare Hua Yen concepts in poems with Theravāda perspective

## **Methodology**

The study was conducted as a library research collecting data from Beat poetry with especial reference to the poets like Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder, Phillip Whalen, Jack Kerouac and Michael McClure who are pioneers of the Beat movement. First, the collected poems were textually analysed studying Hua Yen concepts in them. Then the concepts were analysed referring them to the Theravada Buddhist canon. The research belongs to the category of qualitative research and in analyzing the data qualitative and comparative methods have been employed.

## **Buddhism in America**

The western civilization was once influenced by the Greek spirituality which has changed in the modern times to be the impact of the eastern philosophy. “By this time, it has been to a saturating point, so that the profounder spirits in the West have begun to feel what it lacks, just at a time when the more progressive elements in the East have begun to sense its strength. ... However, the fact that the spirit of Zen has begun to permeate the vanguards of western thinkers is bound to affect the East in the long run.”(pg.37) Likewise, the influence of Zen Buddhism in the West has been felt by the Americans more rigidly than other nations. This influence is more obvious in the claim of Thomas Merton, an ardent follower of Zen Buddhism who has made a great contribution for the rigid establishment of Buddhism in America.

... But in its association with the need to recover authentic sense experience, western Zen has become identified with a spirit of improvisation and experimentation , with a sort of moral anarchy that forgets how much tough discipline and what severe traditional mores are presupposed by the Zen of Japan and China...(pg.37)

In this manner, according to scholars Zen Buddhism has done revolutionary changes in American society. In spite of early reach of Buddhism in America, the formal

entry of Buddhism in America traces back to the World Parliament of Religions which was held as an adjunct to the Chicago World's Fair of 1893. While this summit opened avenues for the Eastern religions in America, "the most popular Buddhist at the parliament was Anagarika Dharmapala" (Coleman,2001,P.58) who became a great source in attracting people to Theravada Buddhism. However, the Japanese RinZai master Soyen Shaku who also attended the conference made a greater influence on American religion in the years ahead. His student, D.T. Suzuki whom Rick Field introduces as "first patriarch of American Zen" (cited in Coleman, *ibid*) contributed massively in popularizing Zen Buddhism in the West especially in America. The Americans had no broad experience of Buddhism till the World War II and the time subsequent to this period greatly changed the American culture which was rejected by the Beats increasing their interest in Buddhism. The dawn of this interest of the Beats was spurred by the encounter of D.T Suzuki at a series of lectures at the Columbia University in early 1950s. Accordingly, the pioneer Beats known as Zen Beats include Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder and Jack Kerouac who made revolutionary alterations to conventional American culture through the adoption of Zen Buddhism in their writing.

Thus the Beats were highly influenced by Zen Buddhism which is a sector in Mahayana Buddhism although Theravāda has a slight influence in them.

### **Beats and Huayan Buddhism in Research**

"“Beat” and its several cognates, “Beatnik”, “Beat-i-tude”, “Beat Generation”, “Beat” by group of writers who similarly utilized the term to describe both their literary styles and styles of life.”(Elkholy, 2012,1) Elkholy further suggests that as beat is used to both literary style and a life style, Beat with an uppercase B could be used to be referred to the group of writers and the beat with the lowercase b for the literary style, the same will be followed in the current study too. The Beats have made vast changes in American culture consequently spreading to the whole world. “Beat writers introduced Americans and their readers around the world to new beginnings, new mythologies and new frameworks for self-understanding through the spontaneous and dynamic modes of expression that came to mark both the beat literary style and the beat way of life.”(*ibid*,2). At an interview for the *New York Times* in 1948 Jack Kerouac claims publicly;

We are beat, man. Beat means beatific, it means you get the beat, it means something. I invented it. We love everything, rock and roll, Zen, apple pie,

Eisenhower- we dig it all. We are in the vanguard of the new religion.(Gold, 2002,p.80)

In fact, the initiative steps and the revolutionary nature of conventional demeanor that they had taken in have attracted the attention of the whole world. Another reason for the fascination of the world on them is in parallel to changing the course of American culture after the World War II is their inspiration in the Eastern religions especially in Buddhism. Accordingly the beat has been researched by the scholars through-out the world.

David Halberstam, identifies Beat as different from the mainstream because they esteem people who perceive differently even prison inmates, because they thought inmates embodied the essence of freedom from the system.(1993,P.300) Another scholar of Beat, Allen Matusow, a historian, mentions that the beat as the forerunners of the Hippie Movement as the Beats had deviant tastes in literature, music, language, drugs and religion. They were alienated from American values because they rejected materialism, hygiene, sexual repression and lived in voluntary poverty.(1984,P.287) Howard Prothero, commends the Beats as literary innovators in addition to being spiritual protesters who should be viewed as minor characters in the drama of American religion.(1991,P.208) Likewise many critics in 1950 negatively discussed the impact of the Beats in the American culture. Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Gertrude Stein, Pablo Picasso and Salvador Dali were just a few of the writers and artists who introduced Beats as the “Lost Generation” because they expatriated to Paris in the 1920s and 1930s.

The Beats endeavor to capture the “real America” what they mean by the real is the underclass Americans like the poor, the powerless, the underprivileged and the hustler.

Engaging in a research on the Zen Buddhist concepts of Gary Snyder’s Surapeepan Chatraporn(2009,53) mentions that Snyder’s short poems reflect fundamental Zen Buddhist concepts of emptiness, impermanence, non-duality, the interpenetration and interdependence of all existence, Buddha’s nature as well as mindfulness and the connection between mindfulness and daily manual work. It is concluded in the study that Snyder creates a new kind of poetry with new ethics, aesthetics, and thus signals a new direction in American poetry through the configuration of Eastern ethics and aesthetics.

While Allen Ginsberg's poetry, poetics or cultural activism; Jack Kerouac's prose, poetry and his method of composition; Gary Snyder's environmental and Buddhist consciousness and bioregional ethos, or the opening made by the Beats for Eastern spirituality in the west are of intrinsic value and will be for generations...(ibid)

It is evident from the above review that the Beat has been widely researched into in terms of the poetic style, poetic devices and the incorporation of Zen Buddhism. Beats being a great Buddhist movement in the west, their Zen and Hua Yen perspectives have been constantly studied. However, hardly any research regarding Theravāda Buddhism in their poetry has not been traced.

### **Hua Yen Buddhism**

Hua Yen Buddhism is a sect of Zen Buddhism which developed especially during the Tang dynasty of China (618-907). This tradition of Buddhism known as *Huayan* in China is known as *Huaóm* in Korea and as *Kegon* in Japan. (Gale, 2005). This tradition is called the "round" or "all embracing" doctrine which means "syncretic harmonization pattern" of metaphysical thought which unifies all fundamental teachings of different sects of Buddhism." (Odin, 1995,9 ) The term Hua Yen means "Flower Garland". The teachings of the school of Hua Yen Buddhism is based on the Hua Yen Sutra known as the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* in Sanskrit. The *Avataṃsaka sūtra* presents concrete and detailed descriptions of the whole career of *Bodhisattava* and the basic concepts of Hua Yen Buddhism like *śūnyatā* which means emptiness, *dharmadhātu*, mindfulness, inter-connectivity, causality and ecological principles.

The Jeweled Net of Indra, is the most popular metaphor of Hua Yen Buddhism. It illustrates the interpenetration, inter-causality and inter-connectivity of all entities in the world. The realm of the god Indra is a vast net that stretches infinitely in all directions. In each eye of the net is a single brilliant, perfect jewel. Each jewel also reflects every other jewel, infinite in number, and each of the reflected images of the jewels bears the image of all the other jewels. Whatever happens to one jewel affects them all. Likewise it shows interbeing and inter connectivity which refers to a teaching that all of existence is a vast nexus of causes and conditions, constantly changing, in which everything is interconnected to everything else. Furthermore Huayan Buddhism emphasizes the concept of totality of *dharmadhātu* arises in interdependency.

Another major concern Hua yen Buddhism is environment. Hua yen philosophy concerns environmental protection as a major teaching. Every entity in the environment is interconnected that any harm to the chain will ruin the system.

Accordingly, Hua Yen Buddhism and Beat Generation has a close relationship which has not been researched much. Even though there are few research on selected Beat Poets and Hua Yen Buddhism, an extended research on the influence of Hua Yen Buddhism on Beat poetry and the integration of Theravada perspective into such research is rare to be traced.

## **Discussion**

The above literature survey bears evidence that the beat poetry is the most influential and popular Buddhist movement in America. Not only that this movement has paved the way for the new Buddhists in the West to embrace Buddhism. The Beats and the majority of the Americans have been greatly influenced by Mahayana, Zen and Hua Yen Buddhisms by now. Many Americans and the Beats admire Hua Yen Buddhism for its emphasis on interconnectedness, ecological principles, impermanence, *Kamma*, causality, emptiness, totality and dependent origination.

Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997), is one of the leading notables of the Beat generation and the counter culture movements in America. Basically influenced by Tibetan Buddhism and his Buddhist associates, Ginsberg becomes a true follower of Zen Buddhism. Ginsberg was greatly influenced by Zen Buddhism since his young age. When he entered Columbia University as a student in 1940s, he began close friendships with William S. Burroughs, Neal Cassady, and Jack Kerouac, all them later became leading figures of the Beat movement. This influence of Buddhism he received through the friendships of the above poets develops when he joins Beat movement. October 7, 1955 has been hailed as the birth of the Beat Generation, where Ginsberg did the first public reading of "Howl," a poem that garnered worldwide attention. Not only that, Ginsberg had the association of D.T. Suzuki who disseminated Zen Buddhism in America. Suzuki who also started lecturing at Colombia University was much influential on Ginsberg's Buddhist life.

Later on, he systematically studied Zen Buddhism in 1960s and 1970s under gurus and Zen masters. Thus it is clear that Ginsberg is directly influenced by Zen Buddhism in different ways and seems indirectly influenced by Hua Yen Buddhism through his friends who are followers of this sect of Zen.

Based on his personal experience of the sudden death of the father, Ginsberg writes about impermanence of life in “Father Death Blues”. He tries to make up his mind by seeing the unavoidable nature of death which affects everyone regardless of age. Taking a Buddhist approach to the poem, he realizes that the transitory nature of life and the only relief for impermanence lies in Buddhism for he says;

Buddha Death, I wake with you  
 Dharma Death, your mind is new  
 Sangha Death, we'll work it through

Suffering is what was born  
 Ignorance made me forlorn  
 Tearful truths I cannot scorn

Taking Pali and Sanskrit words like “Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha” Ginsberg finds solace to his forlornness created out of born ignorance of reality of impermanence. According to Theravada Buddhism separation from the loved ones creates dukkha. Suffering and ignorance are inherent human traits that someone at the death of the loved ones is subjected to. He is enlightened to the reality by the Buddha, guided by the Dhamma and buoyed by the Sangha.

The Buddha highly admires peace of mind as a key factor leading to enlightenment. The mind devoid of defilements results in wholesome deeds and words. Meditation in addition to providing many benefits in spiritual path, is the best means for peaceful mind. The poem, “Five A.M.” showcases many of Ginsberg’s personal beliefs as well as the ideals of the beat generation like the opposition to western religions, search of inner peace, consciousness, interest in eastern religions, etc.

Buddha’s a help, promises ordinary mind no nirvana  
 Coffee, alcohol, cocaine, mushrooms, marijuana, laughing gas?

Ginsberg makes a reference to drug usage of an average person in sought of the inner peace. In contrast he admires true inner peace that can be achieved through Buddhism. Nirvana in Theravāda Buddhism, the ultimate goal of Buddhism is the true inner peace and the most elevated position that a person could achieve.

Gary Snyder (1930) who is introduced as the cultural bridge between the East and



the West (Takahashi, 2002, 314) is another leading Beat poet who uses Buddhist literary forms and infuses them with new life by drawing upon the material of American popular culture. Snyder's learning of Buddhism formally starts with his joining the first Zen institute in America in October 1952. He enrolled at the University of California at Berkeley's Asian Language Program, where he learned Japanese and Chinese. There he joined the Beats movement by reading his first poem, "Berry Feast" at San Francisco's Six Gallery reading, along with Allen Ginsberg in 1955. In 1956, he having received a scholarship from the Zen Institute of America to study Zen Buddhism, he broadened his knowledge on Zen Buddhism. The influence of Hua Yen Buddhism on his clear in the way he refers to the basic principles of Avatamsaka Sutra in his writing and he further mentions that Zen was 'founded on Avatamsaka, and the net-network of things'. (Ibid, 124) He furthers this idea asserting the link between Zen and Avatamsaka and describing the latter as 'the intellectual statement of Zen' (ibid). Accordingly, Snyder has greatly influenced by Hua Yen Buddhism specially by its ecological principles which is shown in his writing.

Snyder also has discussed temporariness of entities in a number of poems and in "Piute Creek", he mentions;

All that junk that goes with being human  
Drops away, hard rock wavers  
Even the heavy present seems to fail  
This bubble of a heart

The Buddha has compared life to a bubble (170, Dhammapada) that can vanish at any moment. Snyder adopting that idea into his poetry excellently instructs the reader on the brevity of life. Transience known as "*Anicca*" in Pali, is the bedrock in Buddhist teaching. All the entities in the phenomenal world are subjected to impermanence. The beings are getting old, falling ill and finally perishing leading them to suffering. The Buddha emphasizes that impermanence is inherent to any existing being. The Buddha had taught of three forms of transience as compounded, constructed and fabricated. The Buddha has not stopped by just showing the true nature of impermanence but also has shown the practical path to boot out transience. The Buddha expounds that Nirvana, the ultimate goal in Buddhism is the only escape from transience. Thus Buddhism introduces such an extensive discussion of transience that makes it unable to talk about transience without referring to Buddhism.

In the poem “Go Round”, Snyder discusses the suffering of cycle of rebirth. According to Buddhism birth is suffering. Following extract clearly explains how one suffers at birth and thereafter throughout birth cycle.

Arms shielding my face  
Knees drawn up  
Falling through flicker  
Of womb after womb, thro ugh worlds,  
Only begging, Mother, must I be born again?

Posing a rhetorical question at the end of the extract the poet most effectively conveys the dreadfulness of *samsara*.

The poet tries to create harmony with nature in his ecological poems. He aims at creating inner harmony in correspond to the external harmony which is a main goal of Hua Yen Buddhism.

Lay down these words  
Before your mind like rocks.  
placed solid, by hands  
In choice of place, set  
Before the body of the mind  
in space and time  
Solidity of bark, leaf, or wall  
riprap of things:  
Cobble of milky way,  
straying planets,  
These poems, people,  
lost ponies with  
Dragging saddles  
and rocky sure-foot trails

In the above extract from “Riprap”, by depicting the interpenetration of these binary oppositions: body and mind “before the body of the mind”: solidity “solidity of bark, leaf or wall” and changeability “all change”: physical and spiritual: the poem

illustrates the Zen concept of non-duality in which there is no contradiction as all elements are complementary to one another.

In the poem, “Avocado”, Snyder incorporates a Buddhist phenomenon in a remarkable manner. The Gauthama Buddha, once enlightened equalizes the human world to a pond of lotus where some lotuses can be seen born in the water, grown up in the water, and thriven while submerged in the water, without rising out of the water; some lotuses are born in the water, grown up in the water, and stood up at an even level with the water; and the others are born in the water and grown up in the water, but would rise up from the water and stand up in the water without being soiled by the water.(26,MN). The Buddha applies this to human nature as the human beings are also of different nature like born with keen faculties and dull faculties, having different levels of pañña and merit to realize the Dhamma.

This nature has been applied to the nature of the Dhamma with the simile of Avocado as;

The Dharma is like an Avocado!  
 Some parts so ripe you can't believe it,  
 But it's good.  
 And other places hard and green  
 Without much flavor, Pleasing those who like their eggs well cooked.

“The avocado” consists of both the ripe soft part and the hard green part, making the avocado appealing to different people of different tastes and so does the Dharma. This “Pure and smooth” seed embedded in the center is the Buddhist nature inherent in all beings. However, this original pure nature has been enveloped and long buried underneath greed, anger, attachment, lust, ignorance and other defilements, making it difficult or almost impossible for humans to gain this awareness and realize their potentiality for awakening “Almost nobody ever splits it open / Or ever tries to see / If it will grow.

Snyder in his poem, “Smokey the Bear Sutra” instructs people to live in the natural environment in harmony inculcating compassion to every living species and the natural environment. The characteristics of the ancient Sun Buddha are attributed to Smokey the Bear, a character created by the United States Forest Service. Snyder playfully explains that Smokey the Bear will enlighten those who are dedicated to protect the

woodlands and waterways preserving the environment. The idea he has derived from Mahayana Buddhism but at the end of the poem he says that those who recite the poem would accumulate merit. Spreading loving kindness and compassion are sublime because they are the right or ideal way of conduct towards living beings. In many Theravāda Buddhist sutras including *Meththanisamsa* and *Ma Punya Bai*, the Buddha explains the importance of inculcating loving kindness that can help in spiritual and worldly enhancement of people. The poem goes;

Now those who recite this Sutra and then try to put it in practice will accumulate merit as countless as the sands of Arizona and Nevada.

Will help save the planet Earth from total oil slick.

Will enter the age of harmony of man and nature.

Will win the tender love and caresses of men, women, and beasts.

Will always have ripe blackberries to eat and a sunny spot under a pine tree to sit at.

AND IN THE END WILL WIN HIGHEST PERFECT ENLIGHTENMENT.

In Theravāda Buddhism it is said that reciting dhamma is a good way of accumulating merit. Accumulation of merit will relieve one from the birth cycle and if reborn will be born in a better place.

*Kamma* has been widely discussed in all Buddhisms; another main focus of Theravāda Buddhism. In Theravāda Buddhism *Kamma* simply means action in English; any kind of intentional action whether mental, verbal or physical is regarded as *Kamma*. The Buddha in *Culla Kamma Vibhangha Sutta* (MN, 135) explains that beings are owners of *Kamma*, heirs of *Kamma* and they have *Kamma* as their progenitor. Various differences that beings are born with are results of their own actions done in the cycle of *samsāra*.

The first verse of *Dhammapada*, “*Manopubbangama dhamma*”(Dhammapada,PTS) also well illustrates the true nature of *kamma* equalizing it to a wheel of a cart that follows the hoofs of the ox that is yoked to the cart. The cart-wheel, along with the heavy load of the cart, keeps following the draught oxen. As the animal is bound to this heavy load, cannot leave it. The load is similar to the actions that people have done throughout *samsāra* and the results of these actions follow them like the cart. According

to Buddhism the functioning of *kamma* is only under the Buddha's perception and it is beyond the purview of the common people. A study of behaviour of people in the society shows that may be due to their ignorance of the true nature of *kamma*, people engage in various types of *akusala kammās* and not only that they are ignorant of the way of increasing the power of *kusala kamma* that they have committed by constant concentration of them. Accordingly, Snyder also contemplates on *kamma* in the way life flows. In "Four Poems for Robin", Snyder contemplates on and commemorates his love life as a young man. While the poet sometimes becomes happy and sometimes regrets to lose his teenage love and finally, agreeing with the Theravāda concept of *Kamma* assumes that life has become its nature according to *Kamma*.

And may never now know  
If I am a fool  
Or have done what my  
karma demands.

In this manner, the poet tries to make up his mind without repenting over the past according to Buddhism.

He further discusses the true nature of Karma in the poem, "See or go blind!" emphasizing on the rare opportunity of being born as a human. "How rare to be born a human being! /Wash him off with cedar-bark and milkweed". Conveying the Theravāda view of *Kamma* as that one would be reborn based on the *kamma* incurred in the previous birth. The human beings who are blessed to be born as humans should extend compassion to all beings.

Meaning: compassion.  
Agents : man and beast, beasts  
Got the Buddha-nature  
All but  
Coyote

Snyder asks humans to learn to develop compassion to the all beings and animals as they all are inter-connected according to Hua Yen Indra's jewel net and that is named as a Buddhist quality.

Philip Whalen (1923-2002) like other Beat poets received Zen exposure at Columbia University and then finally he became a Zen monk. Majority of his poems also are based on Zen Buddhism and they can be analysed from a Theravāda perspective. Whalen directly quoting from the Buddha in his poem, "Sourdough Mountain Lookout", discusses the nature of impermanence as;

BUDDHA: "All the constituents of being are  
Transitory: Work out your salvation with diligence."

Accordingly, impermanence which stands as one of the major concepts in Theravāda, a similar attention to it has been given by Beats in their poetry.

Jack Kerouac (1922-1969), an American novelist and poet is another literary iconoclast who has espoused Beat generation. Born on the 12<sup>th</sup> March, 1922, in Lowell, Massachusetts, Jack Kerouac begins his writing career in the 1940s and his ad lib talent in writing credited him as one of the greatest Beats. As his companion Beats, Kerouac also has fused Buddhism into his writing which opened out Buddhism to the world.

The poem, "How to Meditate" is a reveal of tranquility gained through Buddhist meditation. The poet understands that the peace of mind that one could achieve through Buddhist meditation cannot be gained from anything else.

but the mind  
blank, serene, thoughtless. When a thought  
comes a-springing from afar with its held-  
forth figure of image, you spoof it out,

In this manner while explaining the way to meditate, the poet emphasizes on the benefits of meditating. In Theravāda, *Dhana*, *Sila* and *Bhavana* are the three types of merit that a person by engaging in them can accumulate merit.

In the poem named "2<sup>nd</sup> Chorus Mexico City Blues", Kerouac includes some major teachings in Buddhism like *Kamma*, *Nirvana* and *rebirth* which are major concepts in Hua Yen and Theravāda Buddhisms.

But his Karma,  
Unknown to him,

May end –

Which is Nirvana

Wild Men

Who Kill

Have Karmas

Of ill

Good Men

Who Love

Have Karmas

Of dove

Those who engage in wholesome deeds from mind, body and words, accumulate merit whereas those who engage in unwholesome deeds collecting ill kamma get the cycle of Sansara prolonged. When a person reaches Nirvana he/she ends up accumulation of Kamma.

In “Bowery Blues”, Kerouac assumes himself to be a Bodhisattva according to Mahayana tradition but in Theravāda a Boddhisathva is somebody who is preparing for Buddhahood throughout the cycle of births.

Then it's goodbye

Sangsara

For me

Besides

Girls aren't as good

As they look

And Samadhi

Is better

Than you think

Michael McClure(1932) is a poet, essayist, and playwright associated with the Beat Generation. He also has proven his learning of Zen Buddhism and Hua Yen Buddhism in his writing.

McClure uses images from Indra's Net in Hua Yen Buddhism as a metaphor for the universe being made up of a net of infinite size ;

This is all a string of pearls  
with reflections of reflections in the opulent  
glimmering surface of endless flaws  
making a surface  
for the fingertips to touch  
while remembering perfumes.  
These are shadows of the wisps  
of nothingness

Each jewel of the net reflects the images of each as such the entities of the world are interconnected closely according to the above extract from "Grafting twelve". He expands the same idea in the poem "Mysteriosos".

INSPIRATION,  
and the reflections, and counter-reflections, of energy.  
Sow bugs sleeping in cold owl burrows  
dream destinies  
AND FIRE

The reflections and counter-reflections mentioned here evoke images of "The Jewel in Indra's Net", in which everything is reflections of the godhead in each other. This is directly interconnectedness and interdependency in Hua Yen Buddhism.

## **Conclusion**

In spite of various criticisms received by the Beats, the current study finds that they are the main force that has attracted the attention of the Buddhism in the West especially attention of the Americans. On the other hand, Buddhist touch in their poetry has given them more recognition. Moreover, the way they have taken in Zen Buddhism and Hua Yen into their poetry is remarkably praise worthy and that step has broadened the avenues of scholars for research as well as the attraction of people to Buddhism. The above discussion evidences that Beat Poetry has been a quick vehicle in propagation of Hua Yen Buddhism in America and the West beyond limits of China, the native land.



Analyzing Hue Yen concepts in the Beat poetry is a novel approach that furthers access to Buddhism far and wide. Even though they have been influenced by the Zen Buddhism, many of the Buddhist concepts that they have assimilated into their poetry can be analysed from a Theravāda Buddhist perspective. The concepts that the Beat poets have used in their poetry are common to all the sects of Buddhism. Finally the study evidences that whatever the sect of Buddhism that the Beats been influenced by, the Beat poetry can be broadly categorized as Buddhist poetry that has fascinated the world.

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