

**BUDDHIST DELIVERANCE:
A RE-EVALUATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN *SAMATHA* AND *VIPASSANĀ***

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Table of Contents

Abstract	v
Acknowledgements	vii
Abbreviations	viii
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
Overview and Statement of the Problem.....	1
Scope and Methodology of the Study.....	6
An Outline of the Work.....	10
Chapter 2 <i>Samatha</i>	12
Introduction.....	12
The Main Characteristic of <i>Samatha</i>	14
<i>Definition of Samatha</i>	15
<i>Samādhi: the Synonymous Term of Samatha</i>	17
<i>The Distinguishing Marks of Samatha</i>	19
The Benefits of <i>Samatha</i>	21
A Consideration of Moral Preparation for <i>Samatha</i>	29
Entrance to <i>Jhāna</i>	37
Discussion of the Concentrative States of <i>Jhāna</i>	45
<i>Overview of the Jhānas</i>	46
<i>The Four Rūpajjhānas</i>	49

The First <i>Rūpajjhāna</i>	51
The Second <i>Rūpajjhāna</i>	64
The Third <i>Rūpajjhāna</i>	70
The Fourth <i>Rūpajjhāna</i>	74
<i>The Four Arūpajjhānas (Non-rūpajjhānas)</i>	80
Forty Concentrative Subjects.....	92
Conclusion.....	103
Chapter 3 <i>Vipassanā</i>	106
Introduction.....	106
The Main Characteristic of <i>Vipassanā</i>	108
Benefits of <i>Vipassanā</i>	117
The Commencement of <i>Vipassanā</i>	125
<i>The Essence of Samatha</i>	126
<i>The Necessary Level of Samatha</i>	132
An Evaluation of Five Mental Qualities.....	148
<i>Vision (Cakkhu)</i>	148
<i>Intuition (Ñāṇa)</i>	156
<i>Wisdom (Paññā)</i>	166
<i>Knowledge (Vijjā)</i>	175
<i>Light (Āloka)</i>	191
Obstruction of <i>Vipassanā</i>	196

Functions of <i>Vipassanā</i>	203
Conclusion.....	210
Chapter 4 Re-evaluation of the Relationship Between <i>Samatha</i> and <i>Vipassanā</i>.....	214
Introduction.....	214
The Relationship between <i>Samatha</i> and <i>Vipassanā</i>	216
The Threefold Training.....	228
Relationship between <i>Satipaṭṭhāna</i> and the Twofold Meditation.....	240
<i>The Relationship between Satipaṭṭhāna and the Jhānas</i>	241
<i>Analysis of the Contemplation of Body in Body (kāye kāyānupassī).</i>	245
<i>A Discussion of Satipaṭṭhāna Practice in Relation to the Five Mental Qualities and the Deathless Element</i>	258
<i>An Examination of the Contemplation of Feeling, Mind and Dhamma</i>	263
Determination of the Cessation of Perception and Feeling (<i>saññāvedayitanirodha</i>) in Regard to <i>Samatha</i> and <i>Vipassanā</i>	270
Determination of the Ceasing of Cankers Regarding <i>Samatha</i> and <i>Vipassanā</i>	278
Conclusion.....	291
Chapter 5 Conclusion.....	294
Bibliography.....	301

Abstract

This work provides an analysis of the two inter-related processes of Buddhist meditation, *samatha* and *vipassanā*. Despite their frequent appearance in the Buddhist canonical and commentarial texts, most scholars have not settled the exact role of *samatha* and *vipassanā* in the path of enlightenment. They continue to remain divided over the question as to how *samatha* and *vipassanā* are related. This research contributes to the eventual resolution of this question for the Buddhist presentation of the way to liberation. The determination will focus on the clarification of *samatha*, *vipassanā*, and their collaboration.

The clarification of *samatha* begins with its etymological study as well as the detailed examination of the principle equivalent term, ‘*samādhi*.’ Its perspective of important set of concentrative attainments, namely, the *jhānas* will be investigated covering three major areas: the general characteristics of the term ‘*jhāna*,’ the specific characteristics of each *jhāna* state and the potentiality of subject of concentration for the *jhāna* attainments. This investigation of *jhānas* focuses on their relationship with *vipassanā* contemplation and Buddhist ultimate goal in reference to the mental quality rather than meditative exercise.

The critical analysis of *vipassanā* is based on two inquiries: the development of *vipassanā*, and its advantage. The first inquiry is to explore the etymological characteristic of the term ‘*vipassanā*.’ And then the commencement of *vipassanā* will be discussed in relation to the complementary process which is *samatha*. The second inquiry is to examine how the process of *vipassanā* operates in order to overcome the mental defilements.

The evaluation of the relation between *samatha* and *vipassanā* will be performed to understand the path of enlightenment. This section aims to clarify the issue of whether or not *samatha* needs to be strengthened during the process of *vipassanā* and how they work together in order to nullify all cankers.

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Abbreviations

A.	<i>Aṅguttara Nikāya</i>
Abhi-s.	<i>Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha</i>
As.	<i>Dhammasaṅgaṇī-aṭṭhakathā (Aṭṭhasālinī)</i>
D.	<i>Dīgha Nikāya</i>
Dhs.	<i>Dhammasaṅgaṇī</i>
Dhp.	<i>Dhammapada</i>
It.	<i>Itivuttaka</i>
It.-a.	<i>Itivuttakaṭṭhakathā (paramatthadīpanī)</i>
Kh.p.	<i>Khuddakapāṭha</i>
M.	<i>Majjhima Nikāya</i>
Mil.	<i>Milindapañha</i>
Mp.	<i>Aṅguttaranikāyaṭṭhakathā (Manorathapūraṇī)</i>
Nid.II.	<i>Cūḷaniddesa (Mahāniddesa Part II)</i>
Paṭis.	<i>Paṭisambhidāmagga</i>
Ps.	<i>Majjhimanikāyaṭṭhakathā (Papañcasūdanī)</i>
S.	<i>Saṃyutta Nikāya</i>
Sdp.	<i>Paṭisambhidāmaggaṭṭhakathā (Saddhammappakāsinī)</i>
Sn.	<i>Sutta Nipāta</i>
Sp.	<i>Vinayaṭṭhakathā (Samantapāsādikā)</i>
Spk.	<i>Saṃyuttanikāyaṭṭhakathā (Sāratthapakāsinī)</i>

- Sv. *Dīghanikāyaṭṭhakathā (Sumaṅgalavilāsinī)*
- Ud. *Udāna*
- Vibh. *Vibhaṅga*
- Vibh.-a. *Vibhaṅgaṭṭhakathā (Sammohavinodanī)*
- Vin. *Vinayapiṭaka*
- Vism. *Visuddhimagga*
- Vism-mhṭ. *Visuddhimagga-mahāṭṭkā (Paramatthamañjūsā)*
- C.E. Christian Era

Chapter 1 Introduction

Overview and Statement of the Problem

A continuing central issue in Buddhist meditation, a popular substitute for the *Pāli* term ‘*bhāvanā*’ which literally means ‘development’ or ‘culture,’ i.e., mental development or mental culture, is how two interconnected processes are related. These processes are *samatha* (tranquillity) or *samādhi* (concentration) on the one hand and *vipassanā* (insight) or *paññā* (wisdom) on the other.¹ *Samatha* which denotes calmness, tranquillity, serenity and concentration possesses the function of calming, centering and unifying the mind by means of which the mind and its concomitants remain focussed on a single object. The mental unification cannot be attained all at once but develops in a graded sequence of absorption levels, namely the *jhānas*.² *Vipassanā* aims to gain direct understanding of the true nature of phenomena as they really are, in terms of the three characteristics; *anicca* (impermanence), *dukkha*³ (unsatisfactoriness) and *anattā* (not-self). It is generally regarded as the unique discovery of the Buddha and of central importance for the achievement of *nibbāna*.⁴ The issue of the relationship between these processes is crucial because meditation provides the reliable means for the achievement of Buddhist liberation from the circle of existences and supreme security from bondage to ignorance.

¹ Henepola Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, (Ph.D thesis, The American University, 1980), p. 11.

² The grammatical rules for the use of the plural forms of *Pāli* terms, are very complex and depend on such things as the gender and final vowel of the term. For example, the term *jhāna* could be pluralized as *jhānāni*, and *khandha* as *khandhā*. To avoid explaining each different individual use of *Pāli* pluralization, and for the sake of simplicity and readability, this study will add the suffix “s” in *non-italic* type to the *Pāli* term, in *italic* type, in order to represent two or more units of the terms.

³ The term “*dukkha*” is occasionally interpreted as different meanings such as; pain, suffering, ill, unsatisfactoriness, according to its certain connections (Nyanatiloka: *Buddhist Dictionary*, p. 54). In this research, it will be rendered as unsatisfactoriness in connection with the three characteristics, as suffering with four noble truths, as pain with the mode of feeling.

⁴ Piyadassi, *The Buddha's Ancient Path* (Taiwan: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, 1964), p. 204.

In the varying opinions about and practice of Buddhist meditation,⁵ the relationship between *samatha* and *vipassanā* can be abstracted into three categories: 1) regarding the development of *vipassanā* as a direct approach to enlightenment in which the development of *samatha* is not essential; 2) the contemplation of the meditation methods independently of each other as a path to enlightenment; 3) the concomitant contemplation of *samatha* and *vipassanā* in order to achieve enlightenment.

From these three diverse positions, the relationship between *samatha* and *vipassanā* can be seen as potentially problematic. In particular, *vipassanā* practice lacks clarity due to differing and contradictory interpretations of the Buddhist canon. To date, this conflict of practice remains unresolved and the debate continues. The principle purpose of the current study is to determine what the intrinsic characteristics of *vipassanā* are and how they are related to *samatha*. To contribute to the debate of *vipassanā* which is generally related to *samatha*, the later chapters attempt to examine *samatha* and *vipassanā* individually and then to draw out the ideas about and understanding of their relationship in Theravāda Buddhism. This work attempts to determine which position may be correct. Moreover, some suggestions will be posited to help clarify what Buddhist soteriological practice is actually all about. It is useful to present a body of evidence which may contribute in a minor way to an eventual resolution of the question.

This introductory chapter has three main aims. It will first introduce the three main positions in the debate about the relationship between these two processes and to position this thesis in this debate. It will then give a methodological

⁵ See, for example, Nārada, *The Buddha and His Teaching*, 4th edition, (Malaysia: Buddhist Missionary Society, 1988; 1st publ. 1964), p. 537; Paul J. Griffiths, *On Being Mindless : Buddhist Meditation and the Mind-Body Problem* (La Salle: Open Court, 1986), p. 14; and Prakash Pathak, “Vipassanā and Relation with Puggala-Paññatti,” in *Vipassanā the Buddhist Way*, ed. Harcharn Singh Sobti (Delhi: Eastern Book Linkers, 2003, pp. 138-147), p. 140.

approach to the issue of the relationship between *samatha* and *vipassanā* and a preliminary description of our scriptural sources. The third aim is to give an overview of the thesis by introducing the individual concept of each chapter.

Regarding the first position, most scholars (e.g. Nārada, Nyanaponika, and Bucknell) argue for the significance of *vipassanā* alone. For instance, Nārada states that *samatha* is not essential and is regarded as an asset only; the meditator can direct him/herself to *vipassanā* alone in the pursuit of arahantship.⁶ Dependant on the unique practice of *vipassanā*, Nyanaponika classifies the practice of bare insight (*sukkha-vipassanā*) into the direct and exclusive practice of *vipassanā* without the progress of *samatha* into the state of *jhānas*.⁷ In *The Twilight Language*, Bucknell says: “It is stated that tranquillity meditation, though valuable as a foundation for insight meditation, is not indispensable, and may be bypassed by exceptionally gifted meditators.”⁸ While these scholars attempt to interpret *vipassanā* as essential and *samatha* as inessential in the pursuit of ultimate goal, one might ask why the Buddha taught numerous methods of meditation to bring about one-pointedness of mind. Moreover, the Buddha says:

Perfect concentration, Ānanda, when developed and made much of, has as its final goal the removal of desire, the removal of hatred, and the removal of delusion.⁹

At this point, the opinion of the first category which disregards *samatha* as non-essential appears to be controversial.

⁶Nārada, op. cit., p. 537.

⁷Nyanaponika, *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation: A Handbook of Mental Training Based on the Buddha's Way of Mindfulness*, 2nd edition, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1st publ. 1962), p.103.

⁸R.S. Bucknell, & M. Stuart-Fox, *The Twilight Language : Explorations in Buddhist Meditation and Symbolism* (New York: St. Martin Press, 1986), p. 6.

⁹S.V.5-6: “*Sammāsamādhi Ānanda bhāvito bahulīkato rāgavinayapariyosāno hoti, dosa... mohavinayapariyosāno hoti.*”(All translations from Pāli to English throughout are the author's own translations unless otherwise stated.)

Regarding the second position, a few scholars propose that both *samatha* and *vipassanā* are clearly distinguished in relation to the Buddhist soteriology and Buddhist philosophical theory. For example, Griffiths focuses on the independency of these two meditative techniques as a result of their different soteriological methods and goals. On the one hand, he says about *vipassanā*: “Those who follow and advocate the analytical techniques tend to perceive the basic human problem as one of ignorance, an inaccurate understanding of the way things are.”¹⁰ Regarding *samatha*, on the other hand, he says: “the practitioners of the enstatic¹¹ techniques aimed at tranquillity tend to perceive the basic human error as one of attitude rather than cognition; the key Buddhist term here is ‘thirst’ (*taṇhā*), a term that denotes all types of passionate desire and attachment.”¹² However, if *samatha* and *vipassanā* are clearly independent, why are their synonymous terms, *samādhi* and *paññā* arranged in the group of threefold training (*sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*)? Indeed, Griffiths’ point about the inconsistency between *samatha* and *vipassanā* seems to contradict the Buddha’s statement of their identical responsibility for obtaining knowledge (*vijjā*).

These two things, monks, are partaking of knowledge. What two?
Tranquillity and insight.¹³

Regarding the third position, a considerable number of scholars (e.g. Pathak, Anālayo) attempt to portray both meditative processes as equal for Buddhist liberation. For example, Pathak states in regard to their cooperation continuing up to *nibbāna*, that *samatha* and *vipassanā* must be combined into a single process to *nibbāna*.¹⁴ In support of this, Anālayo states: “...not two different approaches to realization but two aspects of the meditative path, one of which is

¹⁰ Paul J. Griffiths, op. cit., p. 14.

¹¹ The word ‘enstatic,’ derived from the Greek word ‘en-statis,’ provides the meaning of ‘standing within.’ It is generally employed in the opposite of ecstatic which means standing without (Amjol Shrestha). The enstatic meditation aims to reduce the contents of consciousness, to focus awareness upon a single point (Paul J. Griffiths, op. cit., p. 18).

¹² Paul J. Griffiths, loc. cit.

¹³ A.I.61: “*Dve me, bhikkhave, dhammā vijjābhāgiyā. Katame dve? Samatho ca vipassanā ca.*”

¹⁴ Prakash Pathak, op. cit., p. 140.

not sufficient by itself to bring realization.”¹⁵ His statement can be justified as it coincides with the *Samathasutta* where the Buddha advises monks to put effort into both *samatha* and *vipassanā* processes:

...a monk while considering knows thus: ‘I have gained the tranquillity of heart within oneself, but have not gained insight into dhamma through higher wisdom.’ Then, Monks, he should apply himself to establish the tranquillity of heart within oneself and to insight into dhamma through higher wisdom.
 ...a monk while considering knows thus: ‘I have gained insight into dhamma through higher wisdom, but have not gained the tranquillity of heart within oneself.’ Then, Monks, he should apply himself to establish insight into dhamma through higher wisdom and to the tranquillity of heart within oneself.¹⁶

Although both processes seem to be useful and necessary in a quest for *nibbāna*, the definite answer of “how and when to develop both processes” is unclear. Consequently, we use the psychological and analytical approaches to the specific relationship between both processes. In order to determine the specific relationship between *samatha* and *vipassanā*, in the quest for *nibbāna*, this research clarifies the two issues: 1) Is *samatha* required prior to commencing *vipassanā*?; and 2) At what level of *samatha* can we begin *vipassanā*?

It is useful to present the various opinions relating to the two issues. Having addressed the relationship between *samatha* and *vipassanā*, Sujato claims that both are important, but the meditator can begin *vipassanā* without any practice of *samatha*: “Thus *samatha* and *vipassanā* function as a pair, not only in the preliminary training, but also right up to the ultimate liberation.”¹⁷ Dhammavuddho shares this sentiment: “Both *samatha* and *vipassanā* are needed for final liberation. But the order of practice is not important. One can

¹⁵ Anālayo, *Satipaṭṭhāna the Direct Path to Realization*, (Birmingham: Windhorse Publication, 2003), p. 90.

¹⁶ A.V.99: “...bhikkhu paccavekkhamāno evaṃ jānāti– ‘lābhīmi ajjhattaṃ cetosamathassa, na lābhī adhipaññādharmavipassanāya’ ti, tena, bhikkhave, bhikkhunā ajjhattaṃ cetosamathe patiṭṭhāya adhipaññādharmavipassanāya yogo karaṇīyo.
 ...bhikkhu paccavekkhamāno evaṃ jānāti– ‘lābhīmi adhipaññādharmavipassanāya, na lābhī ajjhattaṃ cetosamathassā’ ti, tena, bhikkhave, bhikkhunā adhipaññādharmavipassanāya patiṭṭhāya ajjhattaṃ cetosamathe yogo karaṇīyo.”

¹⁷ Bhikkhu Sujato, *A Swift Pair of Messengers* (Penang Malaysia: Inward Path, 2001), p. 27.

either practise *samatha* first or *vipassanā* first.”¹⁸ Out of this idea, the meditator can realize the true nature of all phenomena without the mental stability of *samatha* practice. In contrast, Buddhādāsa refers to various states of concentration: “Each of the various states of concentration is a basis for insight (*vipassanā*), that is, seeing impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-selfhood.”¹⁹ Gunaratana agrees with Buddhādāsa about the significance of *samatha*, and speaks of the particular level of momentary concentration (*khaṇikasamādhī*) to be the basis of *vipassanā* practice: “...for no insight (*vipassanā*) is possible without momentary concentration.”²⁰ However, Soma disregards the momentary concentration as insufficient to support *vipassanā*, and points to the concentrative levels of the *jhānas* as sufficient.

Of no state before the first *jhāna* has it been said by the blessed one that it is separate from sense-desires and separate from other evil states, that is to say, aloof from the hindrances that obstruct clear vision,²¹

Scholars, such as Sujato, Dhammavuddho and Gunaratana, disagree, and even provide contradictory evidence, as to whether one can practice *samatha* or *vipassanā* alone, in order to reach *nibbāna*. Or, if one should be practiced before the other. Or, indeed, whether they should be practiced together. This thesis aims to clarify whether *samatha* is essential before starting *vipassanā*. If it is essential, then, to which level does *samatha* need to be developed?

Scope and Methodology of the Study

The methodological approach to these questions begins with an etymological definition of *samatha* and *vipassanā* in terms of the roots of these expressions, the types of compounds employed, and so on. Following this, the psychological characteristics of the expressions will be examined. The technique of

¹⁸ Ven. Dhammavuddho Thero, "Samma Samadhi, Samatha and Vipassana," *The Middle Way; Journal of the Buddhist Society* 77, no. 2 (2002), 67-80, 76.

¹⁹ Bhikkhu Buddhādāsa, *Ānāpānasati (Mindfulness of Breathing)*, trans. Bhikkhu Nāgasena (Bangkok: Sublime Life Mission, 1976), pp. 79-80.

²⁰ Henepola Gunaratana, op. cit., p. 173.

²¹ Thera Soma, "Contemplation in the Dhamma," an essay in appendix of *The Path of Freedom*, trs. Soma Thera, N. R. M. Ehara, and Kheminda Thera (Colombo: The Saman Press, 1959), pp. 353-362, p. 359.

examination consists principally in (1) semantically interpreting the various *Pāli* terms such as; *jhāna*, *vipassanā* and *arūpa* as they refer to meditative practice and (2) analysing the scriptural context in order to evaluate how these terms reflect the psychological development of *samatha* and *vipassanā*.

The characteristics of *samatha* will be evaluated by means of a detailed examination of its etymology as well as of its principle equivalent term, ‘*samādhi*.’ These characteristics will be explored further through an examination of its structural levels, that is, the levels of absorption (*jhānas*).

In a similar manner, the characteristics of *vipassanā* will be explored through a discussion of the connection between the psychological experiences²² and the four noble truths as they appear in the *Dhammacakkappavattanasutta* (*Setting in Motion the Wheel of Truth*).²³ Thereafter, the psychological interaction between *samatha* and *vipassanā* will be clarified through a response to the question of whether or not *samatha* is an essential prerequisite to the foundation of *vipassanā* and, if it is, what level of *samatha* is sufficient for the subsequent development of *vipassanā*. Moreover, this issue will be explored further through four related doctrinal analyses. The first two are; an examination of the threefold training (*sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*), and a similar investigation of *satipaṭṭhāna* (foundation of mindfulness) practice. Subsequently an evaluation of the cessation of perception and feeling will be carried out together with an examination of the eventual goal of freedom (*vimutti*) from the cankers (*āsavas*) and defilements (*kilesas*).

In other words, the present study aims to contribute to the existing scholarship on the relationship between *samatha* and *vipassanā* by examining the textual

²² The psychological experiences are vision (*cakkhu*), intuition (*ñāṇa*), wisdom (*paññā*), knowledge (*vijjā*) and light (*āloka*).

²³ S.V.422-423. The *Dhammacakkappavattanasutta*, the first sermon of the Buddha, contains some of the most significant teachings of the contemplative practices that lead to enlightenment.

evidence of the doctrines as presented in the *Pāli* canon. Since it represents a detailed exposition of the discourses on Buddhist meditative practices, the *Pāli* canon is understood as the most authoritative source on the topics relating to *samatha* and *vipassanā*.²⁴ The *Sutta Piṭaka* forms part of the *Tipiṭaka* (The Three Baskets), which is comprised of a large collection of canonical scriptures belonging to the Theravāda school of Buddhism.²⁵ The *Sutta Piṭaka* is divided into five separate collections known as *Nikāyas*.²⁶ For these collections, the *Pāli* Text Society's publications provide the original texts, while the author, as noted above, will provide all translations unless stated otherwise. The editions of the *Pāli* Text Society provide the systems of transliteration used in citations of the Romanized *Pāli* texts.

For the reasons stated above, the primary emphasis will be on material from the *Sutta Piṭaka*. Therefore, in each instance where a principle needs to be demonstrated, the *Sutta Piṭaka* will be consulted first. The *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* is a collection of psychological and philosophical implications of the doctrines set out in the discourses. As such, these texts will contribute a second level of interpretation. That is, where a demonstration or example is not readily available in the *Sutta Piṭaka*, or where additional interpretation is needed, a reference will be provided from the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*.

A third level of investigation will take as its object material drawn from post-canonical texts such as Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga*. Of the numerous sources of commentary in the later Theravāda tradition, Ñāṇamoli's translation

²⁴ Edward Fitzpatrick Crangle, *The Origin and Development of Early Indian Contemplative Practices*, *Studies in Oriental Religions*, V. 29. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1994), p. 131.

²⁵ The first collection is *Vinayapiṭaka* incorporating the injunctions of the Buddha on monastic discipline. The second is *Suttapiṭaka* which contains the Buddha's discourses and sermons on various occasions. The third is *Abhidhammapiṭaka* which is composed of the psycho-philosophical aspect of the Buddha's teaching (U Ko Lay, p.18).

²⁶ They are *Dīgha Nikāya* (Long Discourses), *Majjhima Nikāya* (Middle Length Discourses), *Samyutta Nikāya* (Kindred Sayings), *Ānguttara Nikāya* (Gradual Sayings), and *Khuddaka Nikāya* (Miscellaneous Discourses).

of Buddhaghosa's (*The Path of Purification*) was found particularly useful for the purposes of this study.²⁷ The *Visuddhimagga* from around 412 C.E. continues to be regarded in the Theravāda tradition as an important text on meditation.²⁸ Moreover, Upatissa's *Vimuttimagga* (*The Path of Freedom*) translated from the Chinese by Ehara, Soma Thera and Kheminda has been found valuable as a practical instruction for the path of deliverance.²⁹ The present contribution of these two post-canonical texts and the later canonical *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, as stated above, is supplementary to the primary research on the *Sutta Piṭaka*.

In addition, the modern commentaries of such authors as Nyanatiloka Thera, Richard Gombrich and L.S. Cousins will be consulted. They represent an analytical interpretation of the *Pāli* canon from a present-day perspective. These modern interpretations of the early Buddhist material will help to clarify both the etymological investigations and the phenomenological interpretations of the original meditative and psychological practices.

A comprehensive comparison of aspects of the *Sutta Piṭaka* and the later canonical *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, as well as an evaluation of the additional material provided by the early and modern commentaries, will be fruitful areas of this research. These scriptural sources propose varied methodologies for combining *samatha* and *vipassanā*. In its emphasis, the present task evaluates these attempts at reconciliation and combination as they are related to the psychological and contextual points of view.

²⁷ Buddhaghosa, *The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)*, translated from the *Pāli* by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli. (Colombo, Ceylon: R. Semage, 1956).

²⁸ Vajirañāṇa Paravahera Mahathera, *Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice*, Colombo: Gunasena, 1962, (in Introduction), Henepola Gunaratana, op. cit., p. 8, Paul Griffiths, "Concentration or Insight: The Problematic of Theravada Buddhist Meditation-Theory," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 49, no. 1 (1981), 605-24, 606.

²⁹ Upatissa, *The Path of Freedom*, translated and edited by N.R.M. Ehara, Soma Thera and Kheminda (Colombo, Ceylon: D. Roland D. Weerasuria, 1961).

An Outline of the Work

The first chapter provides an overview of the thesis and statement of the problem, including methodology and definitions of terms, and examines the relevant textual evidence. The above mentioned methodological considerations regarding textual sources are expanded on. It also includes a brief description of each chapter.

The second chapter presents an analytical approach to the understanding of the crucial roles of *samatha* in order to develop the path of enlightenment and its culmination. The main analysis which is discussed proceeds along the examination of the two sets of the attainment of altered states of consciousness, namely *rūpajjhānas* and *arūpajjhānas*. Finally, this chapter will explore the potentiality of the forty subjects of concentration for the quality of concentration and for the initiation of *vipassanā*.

The third chapter examines the phenomenological and psychological characteristics of *vipassanā* as a profound internal vision arising from the role and function of *samatha*. The examination continues to determine the specific level of *samatha* which facilitates the development of a methodological approach to *vipassanā*. It will also be shown how the profound internal vision of *vipassanā* incorporates the five instrumental factors of insight, vision (*cakkhu*), intuition (*ñāṇa*), wisdom (*paññā*), knowledge (*vijjā*)³⁰ and light (*āloka*) that augment and expand upon the psychological paradigm of *samatha*.

The fourth chapter is an analytical and psychological study of the mutual relationship between *samatha* and *vipassanā*, with a focus on how they can be

³⁰ *Ñāṇa* and *vijjā* are usually rendered as knowledge. This research will render *ñāṇa* as intuition and *vijjā* as knowledge. When *ñāṇa* is a member of the compound term referring to mode of *vijjā* and *abhiññā*, it will be rendered as knowledge.

used together in practice. That is, that they are in fact, not separate things, but that they are different aspects of the same process of meditation practice. This critical concept of yoking together of *samatha* and *vipassanā* is based on an examination of the four other frameworks of the Buddha's teachings: the threefold training (*sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*), the four foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*), the cessation of perception and feeling (*saññāvedayitanirodha*), and both types of freedom (*vimutti*).

The fifth chapter concludes the evidence and discussion regarding *samatha*, *vipassanā* and their intrinsic relationship. It is determined that the ultimate goal of Buddhist deliverance is the aim of neither *samatha* nor *vipassanā* as distinct practice paths. Rather, it is the complementary and simultaneous practice of both *samatha* and *vipassanā*. This practice must be based on the foundation of first practicing *samatha*.

From the above overview and description of the methodological approach to the research, we now begin the study with a detailed examination of the first meditative process, *samatha*.

Chapter 2 *Samatha*

Introduction

This chapter gives a detailed analysis of the first of two meditative practices, *samatha*. The main reason to study *samatha* is to determine its precise role in relevance to the second technique, *vipassanā*, and the way towards liberation of the mind in the sequences that follow.

To begin, this chapter examines *samatha* through its etymological characteristic as well as the detailed examination of the principle equivalent term, ‘*samādhi*.’³¹ The next part explores the significance of *samatha* by presenting its benefits in regard to three aspects as follows: 1) the establishment of *vipassanā*, 2) the attainment of fivefold supernatural knowledge³² and 3) its importance for the development of the ultimate goal: *nibbāna*.³³ The moral requirements that are prerequisite to initiation of the process of *samatha* will be investigated in reference to the discourse entitled, *Gaṇakamoggallānasutta* (Discourse to Gaṇaka-Moggallāna).³⁴ Thereafter, for the purpose of approaching an important set of concentrative attainments, namely the *jhānas*, this chapter will evaluate two overlapping themes that are the subject of mental images and the degree of concentration.

The *jhānas* are a set of altered states of consciousness achieved through the process of *samatha*. They comprise eight progressive stages of mental

³¹ The term ‘*samādhi*’ signifies the unified state of mind and the method applied to attain that state (Vajirañāṇa, p. 17).

³² The fivefold supernatural knowledge is attainable through the perfection in mental concentration, consisting of: 1) supernormal power (*iddhividha*), 2) divine ear-element (*dibbasotadhātu*), 3) knowledge of the others’ minds (*cetopariyañāṇa*), 4) divine eye (*dibbacakkhu*), 5) knowledge of recollection of former lives (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*) (Nyanatiloka: *Buddhist Dictionary*, p. 2).

³³ *Nibbāna*, the ultimate goal of all Buddhist aspirations, constitutes the complete deliverance from all suffering and misery (Nyanatiloka: *Buddhist Dictionary*, p. 105).

³⁴ M.III.1-7.

absorption: the four *rūpajjhānas* and the four *arūpajjhānas*.³⁵ The analysis of the *jhānas* is based on three principal inquiries.

The first inquiry explores the analytical and psychological approach to the term ‘*jhāna*’ in reference to the ultimate goal through a detailed consideration of its derivation and definition.

The second inquiry is to examine individually the four *rūpajjhānas* in terms of their stereotype formulas and their factors. In the case of the first *jhāna*, the appointed task is to answer the question of “Whether or not the one-pointedness of mind exists in the first *jhāna*.” The second *jhāna* will be examined in order to determine the proper method for its development and the relationship between its two factors; *pīti*³⁶ and *ekaggatā*.³⁷ For the third *jhāna*, this study will investigate the type of happiness (*sukha*)³⁸ derived from it and whether or not the happiness obstructs mental development. Subsequently, this research will examine the fourth *jhāna* to evaluate its relation with *satipaṭṭhāna*³⁹ practice and to survey the existence of happiness in the fourth *jhāna*.

The third inquiry examines the four *arūpajjhānas* by referring to the following aspects: the interpretation of the term ‘*arūpajjhāna*,’ the appropriate method for their development, an investigation of the true meaning of the sphere of no-

³⁵ The *rūpajjhānas* refer to the preceding set of concentrative attainments; the first, second, third and fourth *jhānas*. The *arūpajjhānas* are the set of higher concentrative states ; the sphere of infinite space (*ākāśa-nañcāyatana*), the sphere of infinite consciousness (*viññāṇañcāyatana*), the sphere of no-thing-ness (*ākāśa-nañcāyatana*), and the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*). They are individually designated by the way of their respective objects (Henepola Gunaratana: 1980, p. 129).

³⁶ *Pīti*, rendered by joy, is one of the mental factors. A higher degree of *pīti* is characteristic of certain stages in concentration (Nyanatiloka: *Buddhist Dictionary*, p. 142).

³⁷ *Ekaggatā* or one-pointedness is related to concentration (Henepola Gunaratana: 1980, p. 90).

³⁸ This work uses the term ‘happiness’ for the translation of *Pāli* term ‘*sukha*’ not to describe happiness from sense pleasure, such as telling a good joke. But a more profound happiness derives from lack of self preoccupation.

³⁹ *Satipaṭṭhāna*, treated in the discourse entitled the *Satipaṭṭhānasutta*, is the meditative practice depending four objects; body, feeling, mind and *dhamma* (M.I.56-62).

thing-ness (*ākiñcaññāyatana*),⁴⁰ and their contribution to attainment of the ultimate Buddhist goal of *nibbāna*.

The last section is devoted to an examination of the forty subjects of concentration. Since these forty subjects are essential for the development of *samatha*, this section will clarify them, targeting the following three aims: the first is to determine the prominent factor in selecting the type of subject for the development of *samatha*. Secondly, this section seeks to clarify the characteristics of the four subjects of *arūpa* states. Finally, the type of subjects needed for the commencement of *vipassanā* will be evaluated.

The Main Characteristic of *Samatha*

Samatha is a Buddhist meditative method that seeks to attain certain states of consciousness by achieving increasingly refined levels of mental tranquillity and stillness. It is related to the essential mental quality for Buddhist deliverance and its means. In the *Udumbarikasīhanādasutta*, the Buddha appears to possess the quality of *samatha* and states the practice of *samatha* with the words: “The Blessed One is calm and preaches *dhamma* for the sake of tranquillity.”⁴¹ The term is employed throughout various Buddhist works, such as the *Visuddhimagga*, as a representation of a meditative process.⁴² According to various scholars,⁴³ the *Pāli* term ‘*samatha*’ denotes such things as, calmness, tranquillity, serenity or concentration. An analysis of the characteristics of *samatha* contributes to our understanding of how the process of *samatha* can be developed. The following analysis of these characteristics will be conducted in

⁴⁰ Most scholars translate the term ‘*ākiñcaññāyatana*’ as nothingness. This research uses that convention. However, no-thing-ness should not be mistaken for nothing, but rather a state of realizing all phenomena have no inherent existence.

⁴¹ D.III.54: “*santo so Bhagavā samathāya dhammaṃ deseti.*”

⁴² See: for example, *Vism.*, p. 148-149 (tr. Ñāṇamoli pp. 154-155), for a discussion of the concept of *samatha* and issues concerning its characteristics.

⁴³ For example Buddhaghosa, Ñāṇamoli and Nārada. Theirs and others use of the term will be discussed in the section ‘*Definition of Samatha.*’

terms of the definition, the mental states, and the distinguishing marks of *samatha*.

Definition of Samatha

The cognitive processes arising during meditation practice can be clarified through a definition of the word ‘*samatha*.’ Its definitions, derived from the *Pāli* sources are shown to involve the cognitive processes of tranquillity. In the *Pāli* canon, the *Uddhaccasutta* demonstrates that the mental state in which *samatha* is well-developed can abandon restlessness.⁴⁴ This connotation of *samatha* as opposing restlessness relates *samatha* to the ability of tranquilizing the mind. This definition of *samatha* as tranquillity is found in the commentaries. For example, the *Atthasālinī* defines the word ‘*samatha*’ as referring to its function of tranquilizing: “It causes the opposing states to calm down, thus it is called tranquillity (*samatha*).”⁴⁵ The opposing states are related to the five hindrances; sensual desire (*kāmachanda*), ill-will (*byāpāda*), sloth and torpor (*thīna-middha*), restlessness and worry (*uddhaccakukkucca*), doubt (*vicikicchā*).⁴⁶ The ceasing of the five hindrances coincides with the development of *samatha*. The term ‘*sameti*’ is derived from the root *sam* in the causative form, meaning ‘causes to calm.’⁴⁷ This meaning of *samatha* is found in the *Paramatthamañjūsā*, where Dhammapāla explains: “It is called tranquillity (*samatha*) because of suppressing the opposing states with distinction.”⁴⁸ Dhammapāla derives *samatha* from the root *sam* which provides its characteristic mark of putting down the five hindrances. In the *Majjhimanikāyaṭṭhakathā*, Buddhaghosa offers an implication of *samatha* as referring to tranquilizing the mental activities: “Even tranquillity (*samatha*)

⁴⁴ A.III.449: “*Uddhaccassa pahānāya samatho bhāvetabbo.*”

⁴⁵ As.53: “*Paccanīkadhamme sametī ti samatho.*”

⁴⁶ As.131: “*Kāmacchandādayo* (such as sensual desire) *paccanīkadhamme sametī ti samatho.*”

⁴⁷ R. C. Childers, *A Dictionary of the Pali Language*, 2nd reprint (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services; 1st publ. 1875), p. 435.

⁴⁸ *Vism-mhṭ.I. 173*: “*savisesaṃ paccanīkadhammānaṃ vūpasamanato samatho.*”

exists in this peace, thus it is called one-pointedness.”⁴⁹ Therefore, the traditional definition of *samatha* is related to the sense of tranquilizing or subduing the mind’s functions and then its defilements.

Moreover, most scholars define *samatha* as being in collaboration with its formal definition in commentaries and sub-commentaries. For example, Nārada derives *samatha* from the root *sam*, which means ‘to lull’ or ‘to subdue.’⁵⁰ He also demonstrates that during the process of *samatha*, the principal mental characteristic is mental quiescence and the suppressing of the unwholesome states respectively. Griffiths clearly agrees with Nārada about the first derivation. After identifying *samatha* with *samādhi*, Griffiths defines *samatha* as the process of mental tranquillity.

...a kind of meditation designed to exclude unwanted stimuli from awareness, to reduce the content of consciousness, and ultimately to issue in a state in which the mind has no content....⁵¹

Keown agrees that *samatha* practice, continuing into the stages of *jhāna*, conduces to the elimination of discursive thought.⁵² The study of the outcome of *samatha* practice confirms this derivational characteristic of *samatha* as Gimello points out: “Psychic and intellectual activity is reduced to the barest minimum.”⁵³ Solé-Leris shares this sentiment: “...the mind withdraws more and more from all physical and mental stimuli.”⁵⁴ This means that the word ‘*samatha*’ refers to the development of tranquillity and serenity in the mind constituents which include feelings (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), mental-formations (*saṅkhāra*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*), rather than the body.

⁴⁹ Ps.II.401: “*Ettha (nibbutiyaṃ) ca samathoti ekaggatā.*”

⁵⁰ Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 5th edition (Kuala Lumpur: Buddhist Missionary Society; 1st publ. 1956), p. 394.

⁵¹ Paul Griffiths, op. cit., p. 607.

⁵² Damien Keown, *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), p. 77.

⁵³ Robert M Gimello, "Mysticism and Meditation," in *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*, ed. Steven T. Katz (London: Sheldon Press, 1978, pp. 170-199), p. 183.

⁵⁴ Solé-Leris, *Tranquillity & Insight : An Introduction to the Oldest Form of Buddhist Meditation* (London: Rider, 1986), p. 21.

Thus, cognitively, the process of *samatha* enables the mind to become tranquil so that feelings, perceptions, mental-formations, and consciousness are lulled or subdued during the process of *samatha*. Even though modern scholars generally define *samatha* as diminishing mental activity, its definition, in term of suppressing the opposing states, seems to be a by-product of mental tranquillity.

Hence, there is reason to suggest that the principal meaning of *samatha* is ‘to lull’ in relation to calming the mind, and ‘to subdue’ in relation to overcoming the mental hindrances in the meditation process. From the viewpoint of mental development, the definitions of *samatha* as ‘to lull’ or ‘to subdue’ are the most accurate representations of the corresponding mental process.

Samādhi: the Synonymous Term of Samatha

The definition and analysis of *samatha* itself can help in the understanding of the practice of *samatha*. To further clarify the mental state of ‘*samatha*,’ an examination of the synonymous term ‘*samādhi*’ (concentration), which the Buddha refers to in various discourses,⁵⁵ should be considered. For example in the discourse of concentration (*Samādhisutta*), the Buddha states: “Monks, develop concentration. A monk, who is concentrated, monks, understands things as they really are.”⁵⁶ Indeed, the two terms have been used interchangeably in the *Pāli* literature. The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* explains *samatha* and *samādhi* as being similar, using both terms to refer to a mental state of non- agitation or non-distraction.⁵⁷ A close relationship is also shown in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*.

What is tranquillity (*samatha*) on that occasion? That stability, station, steadiness, absorption and not moving of mind, unperturbed mental procedure, tranquillity (*samatha*), the faculty and the power of

⁵⁵ S.III.13-15, S.IV.80, S.V.21, A.III.24.

⁵⁶ S.III.13: “*samādhim bhikkhave bhāvētha samāhito bhikkhu yathābhūtam pajānāti.*”

⁵⁷ Paṭis.I.74: “*Avikkhepaṭṭhena sammāsamādhi, Avikkhepaṭṭhena samatho.*”

concentration (*samādhi*), the perfect concentration - this is called tranquillity (*samatha*) on that occasion.⁵⁸

Buddhaghosa suggests in the same way that the expressions *samatha* and *samādhi* closely approach one another and are in principle equivalent.⁵⁹ Most scholars equate *samatha* with *samādhi* according to this identification of the characteristics of *samatha*. For instance, Gunaratana indicates that the practice and cultivation of *samādhi* are equivalent to the development of *samatha*.⁶⁰ Likewise, Griffiths speaks of their identity and interchangeability.⁶¹ Gimello states the relationship between *samatha* and *samādhi*: "...that of 'concentration' or 'collectedness' (*samādhi*), which term is in many circumstances synonymous with *samatha*."⁶² Moreover, Vimalaramsi interprets the word '*samādhi*' as "calmness, unified mind, tranquillity, peacefulness, stillness, composure of mind, quiet mind,"⁶³ which signifies the same mental characteristics as *samatha*. It can therefore be concluded that the method of practice, characteristics and application of *samatha* can be identified as *samādhi*.

Even though their prominent aspects are identical, Vimalo's interpretation of *samatha* as an 'inner' stillness⁶⁴ reveals a particular aspect which distinguishes it from *samādhi*. However, this small difference in meaning does not affect the identity of *samatha* and *samādhi*. Vimalo's interpretation of *samatha* reveals his understanding of *samatha* as a sense of mental tranquillity (*samatha*) within oneself, which the Buddha describes as being the essential quality or necessity

⁵⁸ Dhs.16: "Katamo tasmim samaye samatho hoti? Yā tasmim samaye cittassa thiti saññhiti avatthiti avisāhāro avikkhepo avisāhaṭṭamānasatā samatho samādhindriyaṃ samādhibalaṃ sammāsamādhi- ayaṃ tasmim samaye samatho hoti."

⁵⁹ Sv III 983: *Samatho Samādhi*.

⁶⁰ Henepola Gunaratana, op. cit., p. 20.

⁶¹ Paul Griffiths, "Concentration or Insight: The Problematic of Theravada Buddhist Meditation-Theory," op. cit., p. 606.

⁶² Robert M Gimello, op. cit., p. 183.

⁶³ U Vimalaramsi, *The Ānāpānasati Sutta A Practical Guide to Mindfulness of Breathing and Tranquil Wisdom Meditation*, ed. first (The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation), p. 9.

⁶⁴ Vimalo, "The Contemplation of Breathing," in *Vipassanā: The Buddhist Way*, ed. Harcharn Singh Sobti (Delhi: Eastern Book Linkers, 2003), pp. 58-63, p. 61.

for getting rid of all cankers (*āsavas*).⁶⁵ Further evidence of support for Vimalo’s view appears in the discourse of *Rohitassa*, in which it is stated that the end of suffering is accomplished within one’s own body.⁶⁶ From this, it becomes apparent that the undistracted mental state of *samatha*, experienced through an object of concentration, remains within the body. Vimalo’s definition of ‘inner stillness’ as *samatha* and the definition of ‘concentration,’ as *samādhi* are based on different contexts. However, the characteristics and qualities of the two terms are in fact identical. Therefore, *samatha* (inner stillness) is synonymous with the concentrative state known as *samādhi*.

The Distinguishing Marks of Samatha

The study of the characteristics of *samatha* by means of its distinguishing marks provides an understanding of how concentration relates to mindfulness (*sati*). In a discussion between the *Bhikkhunī* Dhammadinnā and the devotee Visākha, preserved in the *Cūḷavedallasutta*, refers to mental states, distinguishing marks and prerequisites of *samādhi* (concentration) as being interchangeable with *samatha*.⁶⁷

Visākha asks:

What, sister, is concentration? What are the distinguishing marks of concentration? What are the requisites for concentration? What is the concentrative development?

The sister replies:

Friend Visākha, whatever is one-pointedness of mind, this is concentration; the four foundations of mindfulness are the distinguishing marks of concentration; the four right endeavours are the requisites for concentration; whatever is the repetition, the development, the increase of these very things, this is herein the concentrative development.

⁶⁵ A.II.93: “*yvāyaṃ puggalo lābhī ceva hoti ajjhataṃ cetosamathassa lābhī ca...puggalena tesuyeva kusalesu dhammesu patiṭṭhāya uttari āsavānaṃ khayāya yogo karaṇīyo.*”

⁶⁶ S.I.62: “*Api ca khvāhaṃ āvuso imasmimyeva byāmatte kaḷevare sasaññimhi samanake lokaṇca paññāpemi lokasamudayaṇca lokanirodhaṇca lokanirodhagāminiṇca paṭipadanti.*”

⁶⁷ M.I.301: “*Katamo paṇ’ayye samādhi, katame samādhinimittā, katame samādhiparikkhārā, katamā samādhibhāvanā ti. Yā kho āvuso Visākha cittaṃ ekaggaṭā ayaṃ samādhi, cattāro satipaṭṭhānā samādhinimittā, cattāro sammappadhānā samādhiparikkhārā, yā tesam yeva dhammānaṃ āsevanā bhāvanā bahulīkammaṃ ayaṃ tattha samādhibhāvanā ti.*”

In the above quotation, the state of one-pointedness of mind (*cittassa ekaggatā*) relates to the sense of the concordance of consciousness and its concomitants in usually focusing on a single object. We also see that mindfulness (*sati*) plays a crucial role as a prerequisite of the one-pointedness, i.e. the mental state *samādhi*. In contrast to this, Gunaratana states that concentration and mindfulness have distinct functions during the meditative process.⁶⁸ While concentration represents the usual focusing of mind on one object without interruption, mindfulness, by its wide form of attention, can feature a limitless number of objects.⁶⁹ This would mean that mindfulness and concentration are two clearly different spiritual practices with distinct functions. On the contrary, an opposite interpretation is found in the *Dvedhāvittakkasutta*,⁷⁰ where the meditative practice is concluded to be the collaboration between mindfulness and concentration.

In order to demonstrate this relationship, it is significant to refer to one of Buddha's similes,⁷¹ which describes how a cowherd relaxes, sits under a tree and observes his cows from a distance. The term '*sati*' is employed to refer to this comparatively relaxed and distant observation. This simile implies the prominent aspect of mindfulness as a relaxed and calm observation as opposed to the skillful thought in order to develop concentration. After having given the simile, the Buddha said "unconfused mindfulness was established, the body was tranquil and untroubled, the mind concentrated and one-pointed"⁷² on the path to the soteriological goal. So, there is considerable evidence that inner stillness, i.e. *samatha*, needs to be cultivated on the foundation of mindfulness (*sati*) so that they can progress together along the path towards enlightenment.

⁶⁸ Henepola Gunaratana, *Mindfulness in Plain English* (Singapore: The Singapore Buddhist Meditation Centre, 1990), p. 155.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 156-158.

⁷⁰ M.I.116-117.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² M.I.117: "*upaṭṭhitā sati asammuṭṭhā, passaddho kāyo asāradaddho, samāhitam cittam ekaggam.*"

It can thus be asserted that there exists a widespread practice to use the term *samatha* in the place of *samādhi*. Despite this, a closer analysis reveals that *samatha* is related to one particular aspect of *samādhi*, which is calmness inside of one's own body. During *samādhi*, however, the mind can be focused on objects within *or* outside of the body. Both processes have in common the fact that they need to be developed on the foundation of mindfulness (*sati*).

An understanding of the characteristics of *samatha* will facilitate the meditators in their meditation practice and promote their meditation progress. It will be presented below how the successive development of *samatha* will be advantageous for the path of enlightenment.

The Benefits of *Samatha*

The Buddha emphasizes that mental development is the single most important activity that one can undertake to realize true benefits in his/her life.⁷³ Indeed, the Buddha clearly states the importance of a well-trained mind. During the process of *samatha*, consciousness calms down to a peaceful state in order to cleanse the residual contaminants that pollute the mind, cloud the emotions and darken wisdom. This section argues that these peaceful mental states of *samatha*, in fact, play a crucial role in attaining several advantages, some of which cannot be attained through *samatha* alone since they require the collaboration of other meditative processes, especially *vipassanā*.⁷⁴

This section outlines the three main benefits of *samatha*. Firstly, it examines how *samatha* is the essential prerequisite for the development of *vipassanā*. The second benefit is closely related to the previous one, that is, *samatha*

⁷³ A.I.5: “*Nāhaṃ bhikkhave aññaṃ ekadhammam pi samanupassāmi yaṃ evaṃ bhāvitaṃ mahato atthāya samvattati yathayidaṃ cittaṃ.*”

⁷⁴ The development of *vipassanā* generates degrees of profound intuitive insight. The practice of *vipassanā* is not clearly defined or explained in the *suttas*. Chapter 3 is an in depth discussion of *vipassanā*.

provides the basic steps in the attainment of supernatural knowledge (*abhiññā*), but needs the collaboration of *vipassanā* to attain a more profound step. Finally, it will describe how the accomplishment of the ultimate goal also needs the basis of *samatha*.

The first main benefit of *samatha* is that it is necessary for the later practice of *vipassanā*. There has been some debate about this since most scholars, such as Rahula and Gunaratana, have regarded *vipassanā* practice as being more important than *samatha* practice for mental development. One group of scholars, such as Abeysekera and Piyadassi, classifies the psychological processes involved in *samatha* as being essential for the commencement of *vipassanā*, whilst another group, such as Rahula and Gunaratana, classifies it as being non-essential. Among the scholars of the former group, Abeysekera arrives at the importance of *samatha* in accordance to his particular interpretation of *samatha* as the basis of *vipassanā*: “Before one starts *vipassanā* meditation one needs to strengthen, develop and discipline the mind through *samatha* meditation.”⁷⁵ This is because *samatha* meditation develops the mind so that it takes on the characteristics of a purified, calm and undistracted state that strengthens the mental ability for the true penetration of reality. Piyadassi agrees with the importance of *samatha* for the commencement of *vipassanā* practice: “It is this insight, with calm concentration of mind as its basis that enables the yogi to purge his mind of all defilements and see reality.”⁷⁶ Even though Nārada states that “...insight alone enables one to see things as they really are, and consequently reach the ultimate goal,”⁷⁷ he also agrees that, for clearing obstacles from *vipassanā*’s path and for inhibiting the passions, *samatha* is still the significant process toward the development of

⁷⁵ Radhika Abeysekera, *Practising the Dhamma with a View to Nibbana*, Second ed., (Taiwan: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, 2002), p. 114.

⁷⁶ Piyadassi, op. cit., p. 204.

⁷⁷ Nārada, *Buddhism in a Nutshell*, Rev. ed., (Rangoon: Religious Affairs Department, 1978), p. 54.

vipassanā.⁷⁸ Furthermore, the work of Kheminda regards *samatha* as the preliminary of *vipassanā*: “When the commoner (*puthujjana*) practices serenity (*samatha*) followed by insight (*vipassanā*) the path (*magga*) arises.”⁷⁹ He emphasizes the statements of Ānanda⁸⁰ and Sāriputta,⁸¹ which mention the significance of getting rid of the five hindrances in order to develop the wisdom.⁸² In support of this viewpoint, the *Mahāvedallasutta* asserts again that the attainment of the first *jhāna* eliminates the five hindrances.⁸³ From this it emerges that before the commencement of *vipassanā*, the meditator must develop *samatha* into the psychological state of, at least, the first *jhāna* for the suppression of the five hindrances.

Thus, it appears that *samatha* techniques are the means by which the mind can be restructured, to have the proper affective state for the practice of *vipassanā*. However, there is some argument about this. Some scholars, such as Rahula and Gunaratana, disregard *samatha* as an unessential process for the development of *vipassanā*. For instance, Rahula considers *samatha* as mental quiescence, where the mind is calm, and he states that this form of practice existed before the Buddha.⁸⁴ Rahula also seems to use the term ‘*vipassanā*’ to indicate a more analytical practice of becoming aware of, and labelling each physical, emotional and mental action. He concludes that *samatha* is, therefore, unessential for the realization of *nibbāna*. Furthermore, Rahula supports mindfulness, awareness, vigilance and observation to be the prerequisites of *vipassanā*.⁸⁵ It is generally accepted that *samatha* practice is common to both

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Kheminda Thera, *Path Fruit & Nibbāna*, (Machine Readable Edition, Dhammacakka, 2003; 1st. publ. 1965), p. 15.

⁸⁰ A.V.195.

⁸¹ D.III.101, S.V.160-161, D.II.83.

⁸² Kheminda Thera, op. cit., pp. 15-17.

⁸³ M.I.294-295: *Idh’āvuso paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ samāpannassa bhikkhuno kāmacchando pahīno hoti, byāpādo pahīno hoti, thīnamiddhaṃ pahīnaṃ hoti, uddhaccakukkucçaṃ pahīnaṃ hoti, vicikicchā pahīnā hoti.*

⁸⁴ Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, (Taipei: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, 2002), pp. 68.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 68-69.

Buddhist and non-Buddhist contemplative practices. However, one might ask why the prior quiescent states of *samatha* are unessential for *nibbāna*. Still disregarding *samatha*, Gunaratana agrees with Rahula: “Concentration is merely focusing of the mind, rather like a laser beam. It has the power to burn its way deep into the mind and illuminate what is there. But it does not understand what it sees.”⁸⁶ He regards mindfulness (*sati*) as the crucial attribute of *vipassanā*. The meditator needs to practice concentration together with mindfulness because mindfulness is the center of meditation. He asserts that *samatha* does not seem to be as inherently valuable as mindfulness. Yet the Buddha recommends one *samatha* technique (contemplation on feeling, perception and thought) as being conducive to the production of mindfulness:

Monks, how does concentrative meditation, when developed and made much of, conduces to mindfulness and awareness?
Here, Monks, for a monk feelings are known as they arise, as they remain and as they come to an end...the perceptions... the thoughts...⁸⁷

This consistency between *samatha* and mindfulness explicitly implies the essential role of *samatha* for the development of *vipassanā*. Moreover, as the Buddha regards the four important attainments of the process of *samatha*, namely the *jhānas*, as perfect concentration (*sammāsamādhi*),⁸⁸ then *samatha* is of considerable significance for awakening. Hence, the purified, calm and undistracted mental states of *samatha* are beneficial for the commencement of *vipassanā*.

The second major benefit of *samatha* is that these profound states of concentration provide the basic step to gain the five supernatural knowledges (*abhiññā*); supernormal power (*iddhividha*), divine ear-element (*dibbasotadhātu*), the knowledge of others’ minds (*cetopariyañāna*), the

⁸⁶ Henepola Gunaratana, *Mindfulness in Plain English*, op. cit., p. 160.

⁸⁷ A.II.45: “*Katamā ca bhikkhave samādhībhāvanā bhāvitā bahulīkatā satisampajaññāya samvattati? Idha bhikkhave bhikkhuno viditā vedanā uppajjanti viditā upaṭṭhahanti viditā abbattham gacchanti, viditā saññā ...vitakkā....*”

⁸⁸ D.II.313.

knowledge of recollection of former lives (*pubbenivāsānussatiññāṇa*) and divine eye (*dibbacakkhu*).⁸⁹ Indeed, these spiritual benefits are regarded by most scholars as the outcome of *samatha* alone. For instance, Vajirañña states that this fivefold *abhiññā* is based on the successful concentration practice.⁹⁰ Similarly Narāsabho emphasizes the strong relationship between *samatha* and *abhiññā*, arguing that even the meditator who employs *vipassanā* from the very beginning through to the accomplishment of the final goal, has to develop *samatha* for the development of *abhiññā*.⁹¹ Saddhatissa suggests that *samatha* development for tranquilization of the mind is necessary up to an advanced level, namely the *jhānas*, as a prerequisite for entry into the mode of *abhiññā*.⁹² These sources suggest that the entire process of *samatha* allows the ability to achieve psychic benefits of *abhiññā* and indeed, is the essential process for the development of *abhiññā*.

While *samatha* is beneficial to the development of fundamental *abhiññā*, regarding *vipassanā*, they appear to have a combined purpose for the attainment of a more profound state of *abhiññā*. Even though most scholars classify the fivefold *abhiññā* as the consequence of the concentrative practice of *samatha* only, its relation with the mode of wisdom (*paññā*) which is the term generally used to define *vipassanā*⁹³ is, in fact, found in many places throughout the canonical texts. First, according to the discourse entitled *Soṇadaṇḍasutta*, the arrangement of these psychic powers is proposed under the mode of wisdom.

Monk enjoys the various supernormal power- having been one, he becomes many, or having been many, he becomes one... he applies and bends down his mind to the divine ear-element... he applies and bends down his mind to the knowledge of the others' minds... to the knowledge of the recollection of former lives... to the knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of beings. With the divine eye, purified and

⁸⁹ Upatissa, op. cit., p. 41.

⁹⁰ Vajirañña Paravahera Mahathera, op. cit., pp. 441-442.

⁹¹ Phra Singhathon Narāsabho, *Buddhism*, third ed. (Lumpun: Liberty Press, 1994), p. 22.

⁹² Saddhatissa, "A Survey of Samatha Meditation," in *Vipassana the Buddhist Way*, ed. Harcharn Singh Sobti (Delhi: Eastern Book Linkers, 2003), p. 98.

⁹³ Vajirañña Paravahera Mahathera, op. cit., p. 22.

surpassing that of men, he sees beings passing away... This, Brāhmin, is that wisdom.⁹⁴

Second, in the *Mahāsīhanādasutta*, the strong relationship between the two categories of meditative practice is emphasized through the classification of supernatural knowledge into the mode of blissful attainment in *paññā*.⁹⁵ The explanation of supernatural knowledge in this discourse is equivalent to the above passage.

Third, the *Subhasutta*, in which Ānanda attempts to classify the supernatural knowledge into the noble body of doctrine regarding wisdom (*paññā*),⁹⁶ he also demonstrates the association between supernatural knowledge and wisdom. All statements of the three discourses have the identical explanation to interpret wisdom (*paññā*) in relation to the fivefold *abhiññā*.

Therefore, this evidence in the canonical texts suggests the relationship between *vipassanā* and *abhiññā* whereby *paññā* involves the capability for the spiritual powers of *abhiññā*. In this light, it should be noted that the Buddha and his disciples identify the process of *vipassanā* as the essential meditation technique for the arising of *abhiññā*. If *samatha* is an essential process only for the arising of *abhiññā* in the view of scholars, by regarding the meditative aspect of the Buddha, there is no reason to classify *abhiññā* in the mode of *paññā*. However, these dichotomous viewpoints can be reconciled through a consideration of the various levels within each type of *abhiññā*. For instance, the ability of the knowledge of recollection of former lives (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*) can be

⁹⁴ D.I.124: “So anekavīhitaṃ iddhividhaṃ paccanubhoti— ekopi hutvā bahudhā hoti, bahudhāpi hutvā eko hoti...dibbāya sotadhātuyā cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti... cetopariyañāṇāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti ...pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇāya...sattānaṃ cutūpapātañāṇāya... So dibbena cakkhunā visuddhena atikkantamānusakena satte passati cavamāne... (this detail of fivefold supernatural knowledge is referred to the full recollection of the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* D.I.77-83) *ayaṃ kho sā, brāhmaṇa,paññā*.”

⁹⁵ D.I.174. (Rhys Davids has abbreviated the text here. This detail of fivefold supernatural knowledge is referred to the full recollection of the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* D.I.77-83)

⁹⁶ D.I.208-209. (Rhys Davids has abbreviated the text here. This detail of fivefold supernatural knowledge is referred to the full recollection of the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* D.I.77-83)

categorized into six levels depending on the time interval of recollection of specific persons.⁹⁷ For example, the recollection of former lives of yogic practices covers a shorter time interval than that of the recollection of former lives of the Buddha and his disciples. This may be because the yogic meditators acquired the mental development of *samatha* technique, while the Buddha discovered other forms of meditation such as *vipassanā*, which was taught to his disciples.⁹⁸ The process of *vipassanā* and the fivefold *abhiññā* are seen to be interrelated as a result of which the former is the supportive aspect of the latter. Perhaps, it can be argued that both *samatha* and *vipassanā* result in the cultivation of fivefold *abhiññā*, but the former induces the superficial levels, whereas the latter induces the profound states.

While the last main benefit of *samatha* is that it is an essential means of attaining enlightenment, this has been disputed sometimes. In considering the benefit of *samatha* for the attainment of Buddhist release, the central question of “Whether or not *samatha* has to be performed together with *vipassanā*,” is subsequently also considered. Certainly the Buddha points to both *samatha* and *vipassanā* as the consequent processes of supernatural knowledge (*abhiññā*).

Monks, what things should be developed through supernatural knowledge? Tranquillity and insight-these are the things that should be developed through supernatural knowledge.⁹⁹

Thus, *samatha* and *vipassanā* proceed together and they progress simultaneously. Piyadassi also claims that *samatha* combines with *vipassanā* as interdependent steps, whereby the former leads to the latter.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, Pathak states in regard to their cooperation continuing up to *nibbāna*, that *samatha* and *vipassanā* perform as a synthetic process to *nibbāna*.¹⁰¹ In support

⁹⁷ Vism. 411 (tr. Nāṇamoli p. 452).

⁹⁸ Walpola Rahula, op. cit., p. 68.

⁹⁹ M.III.289: “*Katame ca, bhikkhave, dhammā abhiññā bhāvetabbā? Samatho ca vipassanā ca, ime dhammā abhiññā bhāvetabbā.*”

¹⁰⁰ Piyadassi, op. cit., p. 204.

¹⁰¹ Prakash Pathak, op. cit., p. 140.

of this, Anālayo states that they are: “not two different approaches to realization but two aspects of the meditative path, one of which is not sufficient by itself to bring realization.”¹⁰²

On the contrary, according to Nārada, *samatha* is not essential and is regarded as an asset only; the meditator can proceed directly to *vipassanā* alone in the pursuit of arahantship.¹⁰³ Still relying on the unique practice of *vipassanā*, Nyanaponika classifies the practice of bare insight (*sukkha-vipassanā*) into the direct and exclusive practice of *vipassanā* without the progress of *samatha* into the state of *jhānas*.¹⁰⁴ Bucknell says: “...that tranquillity meditation, though valuable as a foundation for insight meditation, is not indispensable, and may be bypassed by exceptionally gifted meditators.”¹⁰⁵ Nonetheless, these aspects of the inconsistency between *samatha* and *vipassanā* contradict the Buddha’s statement of their identical responsibility for obtaining knowledge (*vijjā*): “These two things, monks, are partaking of knowledge. What two? Tranquillity and insight.”¹⁰⁶ This suggests that *samatha* and *vipassanā* have identical significance for Buddhist liberation. Therefore, an important benefit of *samatha* is as an indispensable meditative practice for the achievement of realization through collaboration with *vipassanā*.

From the discussion above, we can see that there are three main benefits of *samatha* as evident in the Buddhist scriptures and modern research. The first benefit of *samatha* is that the purified, calm and undistracted mental state of *samatha* provides the significant state which strengthens the mental ability necessary to the establishment of *vipassanā*. The second benefit of *samatha* is linked to the previous one in that *samatha* alone causes the basic fivefold

¹⁰² Anālayo, op. cit., p. 90.

¹⁰³ Nārada, *The Buddha and His Teachings*, op. cit., p. 537.

¹⁰⁴ Nyanaponika, op. cit., p. 103.

¹⁰⁵ Roderick S. Bucknell and Martin Stuart-Fox, op. cit., p. 6.

¹⁰⁶ A.I.61.

abhiññā to arise and be cultivated, while the progress of *abhiññā* into its profound states is based on both *samatha* and *vipassanā*. The last benefit of *samatha* is that it provides the prerequisite required to attain the soteriological goal, since it can be obtained only through the collaboration of *samatha* and *vipassanā*. Although many scholars, such as Nārada, Nyanaponika and Gunaratana, do not share this view of the crucial role of *samatha* in attaining these benefits, the above discussion shows that *samatha* constitutes the basic process for *vipassanā* and Buddhist deliverance.

A Consideration of Moral Preparation for *Samatha*

Like any other construction, *samatha* requires a foundation -one of wholesome mental, verbal and physical actions, consisting of the preparatory practices developed in order to refrain from committing unwholesome physical, verbal and mental deeds. Since these practices need to be fulfilled before the development of *samatha* can commence, the aim of this section is to clarify the proper method of mental preparation and its relationship with *samatha*. This section will survey the moral requirements of *samatha* in reference to each of the components of the gradual method of mental training as discussed in the discourse entitled *Gaṇakamoggallānasutta*.¹⁰⁷ In this discourse, the Buddha demonstrates the step-by-step process of mental development in the following procedure. The first step is to cultivate virtue (*sīla*). The second step comprises three exercises: 1) guarding the sense doors (*indriyaśamvara*), 2) moderation in eating (*bhojane mattaññutā*) and 3) a habit of vigilance (*jāgariyānuyoga*); the third is composed of two exercises, mindfulness (*sati*) and awareness (*sampajañña*). The last step is to maintain seclusion (*viveka*). This section argues that the development of these practices constitutes the fundamental processes of *samatha* and that they are all subsumed together with *samatha* into one process of mental development (*bhāvanā*).

¹⁰⁷ M.III.2-3.

Before the commencement of the *samatha* process, the first preparation is the Buddhist moral training by means of disciplining speech and action in the right manner. According to the Buddha's explanation in various discourses, the short, middle and large sections on virtue are the preliminary practices for the concentrative practice.¹⁰⁸ The meditators, after the fulfilment of moral practice, in fact, can achieve the development of *samatha* according to the *Dutiya-agārasutta*: "Without fulfilling the body of virtue, that monk should fulfil the body of concentration is not possible."¹⁰⁹ Therefore, the meditators who are morally stable and ethically sincere in their efforts can achieve the fulfilment of mental calmness. They should practice the moral discipline as taught by the Buddha to guide his lay followers in the mode of *pañcasīla* (five precepts) - abstinence from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, false speech and intoxicating drugs and drinks. For monks or nuns participating in the monastic life of renunciation, the *Visuddhimagga* states of the fourfold mode of purification of virtue (*catupārisuddhisīla*) as follows:¹¹⁰

1. the virtue of restraint regarding the monk's rule (*pātimokkhasaṃvarasīla*);
2. the virtue of restraint of the senses (*indriyasaṃvarasīla*);
3. the virtue of purification of livelihood (*ājīvapārisuddhisīla*);
4. the virtue regarding the use of the requisites (*paccayasannissitasīla*).

*Sīla*¹¹¹ appears to be the fundamental quality of not only *samatha*, but also of other wholesome practices, such as *sati* and *paññā*. That is what the following discussion between the *Bhikkhu* Nāgasena and the king Milinda refers to:

Milinda asks: "Venerable sir, what is the characteristic mark of virtue?"

¹⁰⁸ D.I.63-76, D.I.147, D.I.172-174, D.I.206-208. (Rhys Davids has provided the full text in D.I.63-76 and has abbreviated for the other parts.)

¹⁰⁹ A.III.15: *Sīlakkhandham aparipūretvā samādhikkhandham paripūressatī ti n'etaṃ thānaṃ vijjati.*

¹¹⁰ For a brief explanation of the fourfold mode of purification of virtue see *Vism.* 15-16 (tr. Ñānamoli pp. 16-17).

¹¹¹ *Sīla*, rendered as virtue or morality, implies all good qualities which are included in the category of moral and ethical teaching (Nyanatiloka: *Buddhist Dictionary*, pp. 170-171).

The monk replies:

Great King, virtue has supporting as its characteristic mark. Virtue is the basis of all wholesome qualities: the five controlling faculties ... the four modes of concentration And to him who builds upon virtue, all these wholesome qualities will not decrease.¹¹²

The conduct of *sīla* nourishes mental characteristics and makes the mind steady and calm.

Conversely, Keown argues that the resultant process of concentration is only a technique for the development of *sīla*.¹¹³ Likewise, he writes: “technique of *samatha* meditation exists to enrich and deepen the capacity for human sympathy which exists in all to some degree.”¹¹⁴ According to Keown’s viewpoint, *samatha* is the means by which the mind is reconstructed to have the proper state of moral concern. Considering this, the question of how exactly *samatha* techniques cultivate moral concern, should be examined. From textual evidence in the canonical texts, his marginalization of *samatha* is not warranted as shown in the work entitled the *Mahāparinibbānasutta*,¹¹⁵ where it is stated: “Concentration, when fully developed by virtue, brings great fruit and profit.” Additional evidence found in the *Rathavinītasutta* also verifies the role of *sīla* as the foundation of *samatha*: “In this way, friend, purity of virtue is of purpose as far as purity of mind; purity of mind is of purpose as far as purity of view.”¹¹⁶ Consequently, there is an underlying implication of gradual meditative practice that *samatha* requires the preliminary practice of *sīla*.

The next proceeding practices as prerequisites to *samatha* involve the three exercises: guarding the sense doors (*indriyaśamvara*), moderation in eating

¹¹² Mil.33: “*Kim lakkhaṇaṃ bhante sīlanti? Paṭiṭṭhānalakkhaṇaṃ mahā rāja sīlaṃ. Sabbesaṃ kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ indriya...samādhi... sīlaṃ paṭiṭṭhā. Sīle paṭiṭṭhitassa kho mahārāja sabbe kusalā dhammā na parihāyanti.*”

¹¹³ Damien Keown, op. cit., p. 38.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. p. 77.

¹¹⁵ D.II.84: *Sīlaparibhāvito samādhi mahapphalo hoti mahānisaṃso.*

¹¹⁶ M.I.149: *Evam-eva kho, āvuso, sīlavissuddhi yāvad-eva cittavisuddhatthā, cittavisuddhi yāvadeva Diṭṭhivissuddhatthā.*

(*bhojane mattaññutā*), and a habit of vigilance (*jāgariyānuyoga*). They are relevant to the fourfold mode of purification of virtue and are essential for the cultivation of concentration. The first exercise of guarding the sense-organs implies restraining the sense faculties regarding objects of sight (*rūpa*), sound (*sadda*), smell (*ghāna*), taste (*rasa*), touch (*phoṭṭhabba*) and thought (*dhammārammaṇa*).¹¹⁷ While the agreeable objects tend to arouse desire and attachment, the disagreeable objects cause the arising of antipathy and sorrow. Having guarded the senses in their experience with objects, the meditator can avoid this dualistic pattern of emotional involvement which influences the mind to roam. The second exercise of moderation in eating (*bhojane mattaññutā*) denotes careful reflection while eating a meal.¹¹⁸ By taking food mindfully, the meditator avoids the indulgence which causes the mind to become agitated and, instead, comfortably cultivates *samatha*. The last exercise of a habit of vigilance (*jāgariyānuyoga*) implies lying down during the middle watch of the night, and wakefully dwelling during the rest of the day.¹¹⁹ *Jāgariyānuyoga* leads to an absence of stupor (*uddhacca*) and agitation (*kukkucca*), the two factors that make the mind cloudy and dull and result in the mind losing clarity and stability.

In summary of these three exercises, a close investigation shows that the first exercise refers to the second moral discipline of renounced monks or nuns, the second to the fourth moral discipline (*paccayasannissitasīla*), and the third exercise to the third moral discipline (*ājīvapārisuddhisīla*). Because of this, the three exercises can be arranged into the mode of moral practice. As they cleanse the mind of unwholesome states, the meditator has to accomplish these exercises before moving on to the next stage of mindfulness and awareness.

¹¹⁷ M.III.2.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ M.III.3.

However, in the *Living Buddhist Masters*, edited by Jack Kornfield, Buddhādāsa disregards the organized training of concentration as an excessive process of marginal usefulness. He regards natural concentration as the appropriate process for introspection and insight.¹²⁰ Though natural concentration seems to approach the perfect mental qualities without any influence of the cankers (*āsavas*), it cannot be justified according to the discourses of the Buddha for several reasons. First, the *Agāravasutta*¹²¹ clearly justifies the essence of moral practice for the development of *samatha*, while suggesting that, without having mastered virtue (*sīla*), it is not possible to fulfil concentration. Second, in the entire process of concentration, the meditator has to train the mind in the mode of training in higher consciousness. Instead of advancing spontaneously, the mind needs to be cultivated through decreasing mental activity by which the mode of gradual training of the *jhānas* progresses from the first state to the fourth.¹²² Third, the confirmation of the need for concentrative practice comes from the *Samādhisutta*:

Monks, develop concentration. A monk, who is concentrated, monks, understands things as they really are.¹²³

Consequently, it is clear that there are no grounds for neglecting the moral preliminaries of concentration and mental training for the practice and the attainment of deep concentration.

The third moral preparation for the development of *samatha*, arranged into mindfulness (*sati*) and awareness (*sampajañña*), is together with *samatha*, actually subsumed into the one process of mental development. In the *Gaṇakamoggallānasutta*, mindfulness and awareness are the significant

¹²⁰ Buddhādāsa, "Insight by the Nature Method," in *Living Buddhist Masters*, ed. Jack Kornfield (Santa Cruz, CA: Unity Press, 1977), p. 119.

¹²¹ A.III.15.

¹²² A.I.235.

¹²³ S.III.13: "samādhim bhikkhave bhāvētha samāhito bhikkhave bhikkhu yathābhūtam pajānāti."

processes in the gradual path of mental development and are interpreted as follows:

Come, monk, be endowed with mindfulness and awareness, acting with awareness whether you are approaching or departing, acting with awareness whether you are looking ahead or looking round, acting with awareness whether bending in or stretching out (arms), acting with awareness whether bearing the outer cloak, the bowl or robe, acting with awareness whether eating, drinking, munching, tasting, acting with awareness whether obeying the calls of nature, acting with awareness whether going, standing, sitting, lying, awake, talking or being silent.¹²⁴

The Buddha here gives an interpretation of mindfulness (*sati*) and awareness (*sampajañña*) as pure attention to every activity of our daily life. To illustrate their relation, Gunaratana proposes the strong relation between mindfulness and awareness through his definition of the former as the present-time aspect of the latter.¹²⁵ According to Sujato, mindfulness is the basis of *samādhi* and its role is like a gatekeeper allowing *samatha* to enter into the city.¹²⁶ This is the exact sentiment, which the Buddha and Sāriputta express: it is to be expected that the disciple, who resolves in energy and establishes mindfulness, will gain concentration and one-pointedness of mind.¹²⁷ Namto, in contrast, disagrees with the collaboration between mindfulness and deep concentration. Correspondingly, he states that, when concentration progresses into the profound states, namely the *jhānas*, the meditator inclines to the weakening state of mindfulness. In his additional statement of the marginalization of *samatha*, the meditator cannot develop insight wisdom through the highly tranquilized mind.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ M.III.3: “*Ehi tvaṃ, bhikkhu, satisampajaññaena samannāgato hohi, abhikkante paṭikkante sampajānakārī, ālokitē vilokite sampajānakārī, samīñjite pasārite sampajānakārī, saṅghāṭipattiacīvaradhāraṇe sampajānakārī, asite pīte khāyite sāyite sampajānakārī, uccārapassāvakkamme sampajānakārī, gate ṭhite nisinne sutte jāgarite bhāsīte tuṅhībhāve sampajānakārī.*”

¹²⁵ Henepola Gunaratana, *Mindfulness in Plain English*, op. cit., p. 145.

¹²⁶ Bhikkhu Sujato, op. cit., p. 35.

¹²⁷ S.V.225: “*upaṭṭhitassatino etaṃ pāṭikānkhaṃ yaṃ vossaggārammaṇaṃ karitvā labhissati samādhim, labhissati cittassa ekaggataṃ.*”

¹²⁸ Achan Sobin S. Namto, *Insight Meditation Practical Steps to Ultimate Truth* (Bangkok, Thailand: Amarin Printing Group, 1989), p. 16.

It would seem here that the development of *samatha* and its predominant factor which is mindfulness cannot be reconciled. In that case, the focusing of the *jhāna*'s absorption states into a single mental object sounds nothing like mindfulness at all. But according to Buddha's teaching, the deep states of concentration called *jhānas* are the right or perfect concentration,¹²⁹ which accompanies mindfulness as detailed in the *Mahācattārīsakasutta*:

Now what, monks, is noble perfect concentration with its means and requisite conditions? Monks, one-pointedness of mind, equipped with these seven factors -- perfect view... perfect mindfulness -- is called noble perfect concentration with its means and requisite conditions.¹³⁰

Another relevant factor concerning the analysis of the very deep concentrative state of the fourth *jhāna* encounters its constituent called *upekkhāsatipārisuddhi* which is rendered as "purity of mindfulness due to equanimity."¹³¹ So, the purpose of mindfulness is clearly to get the mind to settle down into states of deep concentration. Thanissaro too confirms the accompaniment of deep concentration and mindfulness by saying that the attainment of deep concentration does not weaken mindfulness at all; instead, it brings about the very broad sense of awareness.¹³² This is the point where mindfulness and deep concentration progress together; both are deeply involved as parts of one process. So there should be no problem in combining mindfulness practice with concentrative practice in the process of mental development.

The choice of dwelling place is the last consideration of the moral preparation for *samatha*: although a secluded place is the major factor, the individual personality of the meditators must be considered as well. In fact, the proper choice of dwelling place is the secluded or solitary place, as the Buddha

¹²⁹ D.II.313.

¹³⁰ M.III.71: *Katamo ca, bhikkhave, ariyo sammāsamādhī sa-upaniso sapaṛikkhāro? Seyyathidaṃ: sammādiṭṭhi... sammāsati. yā kho, bhikkhave, imehi sattaṅgehi cittaṣṣa ekaggatā paṛikkhatā, ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, ariyo sammāsamādhī sa-upaniso iti pi, sapaṛikkhāro iti pi.*

¹³¹ *Vism.* 165 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 171).

¹³² Thanissaro, "The Path of Concentration & Mindfulness" (adapted from the course *The Role of the Four Noble Truths*, Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, 1996).

explains: “choose a secluded lodging in a forest, at the root of a tree, on a mountain slope, in a gorge, a hill cave, a charnel-ground, a jungle-thicket, in the open air or on a heap of straw.”¹³³ Indeed, isolation from noise is an important issue for meditators, especially beginners, who want to progress in mental development. From a different viewpoint, the *Upālisutta* takes issue with Venerable Upāli’s request to the Buddha for a remote lodging in a forest. The Buddha, in contrast, did not allow him to go and responded by saying: “It is hard to maintain seclusion; it is hard to delight in being alone.”¹³⁴

It would appear, then, that the necessity for a secluded place must be considered in relation to the individual’s personality in order to choose the perfect living area for *samatha* practice. The argument for the importance of individual personality is found in the *Sevanāsutta*, which remarks on the personal result of mental development that the choice of dwelling place depends on the decreasing of unwholesome mental states and increasing of wholesome states.¹³⁵ The *Visuddhimagga* comments on the solitary places that, if held with attachment, can become an impediment as the attachment tends toward a distracted mind. Just as meditators themselves excessively participate with maintenance works or with the belongings they have stored there, so all their dwelling places, secluded or not secluded, are to be rejected.¹³⁶ Likewise, U Pandita interprets this consideration as regarding mental development through the aspects of concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*).¹³⁷ That is, if one meditates in a secluded place and *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* are progressing, then one should stay there. If not, then the meditator should move and find a more appropriate place for one’s temperament. Hence, although a remote place can

¹³³ M.III.3: “vivittam senāsanaṃ bhaja araññaṃ rukkhamaḷaṃ pabbataṃ kandaraṃ giriguhaṃ susānaṃ vanapatthaṃ abbhokāsaṃ palāpuñjan.”

¹³⁴ A.V.202: “Dukkaraṃ pavivekaṃ durabhiramaṃ ekatte.”

¹³⁵ A.IV.366.

¹³⁶ *Vism.* 90 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 91).

¹³⁷ Sayadaw U Pandita, *On the Path to Freedom*, trans. Mya Thauung (Selangor Malaysia: Buddhist Wisdom Centre, 1987), pp. 360-361.

be a useful factor in choosing a suitable dwelling place, the resolution of individual concentrative experience is a predominant factor to consider.

The success of *samatha* depends on the attainment of the preliminary requirements. For the foundation of all good qualities including *samatha*, *sīla* is the first essential requirement to discipline in speech and action before embarking on the process of *samatha*. Furthermore, the three exercises-guarding the sense doors, moderation in eating, and dwelling intent on vigilance- are prerequisite practices for the moral preparation of *samatha*. These practices satisfy the fulfilment of concentration by gradual development, which is more effective than natural concentration. The next foundations of *samatha* are awareness and mindfulness; in addition, the synthetic process of these three qualities advances simultaneously. All these preceding exercises of *samatha* have to be performed at the dwelling place appropriate for the fulfilment of concentration. Although there are various viewpoints of mental development, this structure of moral preparation proceeding to *samatha* is indispensable in cultivating the mind.

Entrance to *Jhāna*

After having considered the preliminary requirements for *samatha*, it is now necessary to discuss the path to cultivate *samatha* from the beginning. How *samatha* starts and progresses into the mental states, which are arranged in a set of concentrative attainments, namely the *jhānas*, is important in obtaining a complete understanding of the practice. According to the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta*,¹³⁸ *jhānas* are the consequences of *samatha* development, in the right mode, into the structure of deep states of mental unification. Indeed, there are two overlapping themes of concentrative practice that leads to the arising of *jhāna*; they include mental images and degrees of

¹³⁸ D.II.313.

concentration. In order to cultivate *vipassanā*, the meditator needs to enhance inward calmness through the simultaneous advancement of both themes. This should occur until the preceding stable state of an acquired image¹³⁹ is advanced into, or at least, until absorption concentration¹⁴⁰ is reached instead of merely momentary concentration. This section will discuss the role of concentration including subjects of mental images¹⁴¹ and the degree of concentration as well as the relationship between them. Firstly, the evaluation of an acquired image will be considered, then the correct methodology of mental image development, next the discussion of the concentrative levels, and lastly the proper stage of concentration for *vipassanā* development.

The evaluation of the *samatha* process through the aspect of mental images requires that the characteristics of the acquired image are stable and clear rather than unreliable. In fact, the mode of mental images can be arranged as a consequence of *samatha* practice; these include the preparatory image (*parikammanimitta*), the acquired image (*uggahanimitta*), and the counterpart image (*paṭibhāganimitta*).¹⁴² In the preliminary work of locating attention on a single object, such as soil, water or light, the original object employed for meditation is defined as the preparatory image (*parikammanimitta*).¹⁴³ Subsequently the second mental image obtained during *samatha* practice will appear in the mind when a certain level of mental unification is attained. This acquired image will then appear clearly whether the eyes were opened or closed. After continued *samatha* practice, the power of concentration will

¹³⁹ Acquired image (*uggahanimitta*) is the ability to consistently maintain a mental image as the subject of Concentration (Abhi-s.IX.5 and Guide to 5).

¹⁴⁰ Absorption concentration (*appanāsamādhi*) is full absorption in meditation to the exclusion of all senses and perceptions (Abhi-s.IV.14).

¹⁴¹ Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines*, p. 107.

¹⁴² Abhi-s.IX.5.

¹⁴³ Abhi-s.IX.17.

develop an acquired image, progressing into a purified, subtle and radiant reproduction of itself that is the counterpart image.¹⁴⁴

Buddhaghosa describes the appearance of an acquired image (*uggahanimitta*) as apparently seen by means of the physical eyes.¹⁴⁵ Besides this, Ācariya Anuruddha states that mental development becomes concentrated during the recognition of *uggahanimitta* (acquired image).¹⁴⁶ This qualified term ‘concentrated,’ of course, refers to the meaning of steadiness, firmness and clarity. Moreover, Vajirañāṇa makes the following comment about *uggahanimitta*: “When this image is once established in the mind of the aspirant, he is able to visualize it whenever he wishes.”¹⁴⁷ This ability to reach visualization of *uggahanimitta* according to one’s wish seems to correspond with a stable state of concentration rather than an unstable and unclear state. However, Nyanatiloka disregards it as an unstable and unclear image relating to a weak degree of concentration.¹⁴⁸ He points to the next stage of concentrative practice, which is *paṭibhāganimitta*, as the clear and stable image.¹⁴⁹ Although the appearance of *uggahanimitta* refers to the lower stage of concentration than of *paṭibhāganimitta*, there is substantial concentration to be gained when the visualized object of *uggahanimitta* clearly appears to the mind even with closed eyes. In that case, *uggahanimitta* implies the steady state of the appearance of a clear mental image.

The right mental development needs to be clarified in order to protect against the potentially defective mental image that arises from the wrong practice of

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ *Vism.* 125 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 130).

¹⁴⁶ *Abhi-s.* IX.17.

¹⁴⁷ Vajirañāṇa Paravahera Mahathera, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

¹⁴⁸ Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines*, (Singapore: Singapore Buddhist Meditation Centre, 1991), p. 107.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

samatha,¹⁵⁰ as some scholars, such as Nyanatiloka,¹⁵¹ highlights. Although the development of the mental image facilitates the potentiality of psychic power,¹⁵² Desaraṅsī suggests that some mental images are not reliable or real.¹⁵³ These unreliable mental images are symbolic representing some truth, but the meditator interprets them incorrectly. In addition, Nyanatiloka remarks that dangerous mental images, such as the outward mental image,¹⁵⁴ can arise from incorrect development. To avoid this wrong method, he suggests that the meditator protects the mind from all outside impressions.¹⁵⁵ His argument agrees with Vimalo's interpretation of *samatha* as 'inner stillness.'¹⁵⁶ Their view of concentrative practice coincides with the term 'mental tranquillity (*samatha*) within oneself,' which the Buddha describes as the essential quality or necessity for getting rid of all cankers.¹⁵⁷

Therefore, the meditator should maintain the whole of attention on the inner mental image without paying attention to any external image; otherwise disturbing and dangerous mental images may arise. For instance, when Acharn Mun decided to fix his attention on an image (*nimitta*) in front of him, he found the image transformed into a variety of objects and scenes as if he is watching an endless panorama. He then continued his contemplation on these images for three months with a distracted mind. He eventually concluded that: "directing the attention toward external images is in contrast to the principle of mental

¹⁵⁰ Wrong concentration is concentration associated with all unwholesome consciousness (Nyanatiloka: *Buddhist Dictionary*, p. 156).

¹⁵¹ Nyanatiloka, *The Buddha's Path to Deliverance in Its Threefold Division and Seven Stages of Purity*, 5th ed., (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1952), p. 77.

¹⁵² *Vism.* 111 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 114).

¹⁵³ Desaraṅsī, *Dhamma in Practice* (Bangkok, Thailand: Bangkok Printing Press, 1977), p. 35.

¹⁵⁴ Outward mental image refers to the means whereby the meditator focuses the continuous attention outwardly or to the mental image arising externally.

¹⁵⁵ Nyanatiloka, *The Buddha's Path to Deliverance in Its Threefold Division and Seven Stages of Purity*, op. cit., p. 77.

¹⁵⁶ Vimalo, op. cit., p. 61.

¹⁵⁷ A.II.93.

development.”¹⁵⁸ For this reason, attention directed to internal images is appropriate for the correct path of *samatha* practice.

Although the intensive analysis of concentrative development comprises two overlapping categories: the two concentrative levels and the three levels, the latter category is more suitable to represent the concentrative practice. That is to say, the first category is generally arranged into two basic levels which are access concentration (*upacārasamādhī*) and absorption concentration (*appanāsamādhī*). The second category is the arrangement of the three concentrative levels, which are access (*upacāra*), and absorption (*appanā*) and their preceding so-called preliminary concentration (*parikammasamādhī*). In this process of mental development, the focusing of the mental attention onto any meditation object, even though intermittent, produces preliminary concentration (*parikammasamādhī*). Now, while continuing to focus progressively on the object, the mental attention becomes steady and intense with the disappearance of the mental hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*),¹⁵⁹ at which point it turns into the second stage called ‘access concentration (*upacārasamādhī*).’¹⁶⁰ Subsequently, by becoming fully absorbed in the meditation, the mind is entirely united, and, due to the exclusion of all other thoughts or perceptions, this subsequent concentration in the last stage is called absorption concentration (*appanāsamādhī*).

There are two groups of scholars who classify the levels of concentration into two or three levels depending on whether or not the preliminary stage is

¹⁵⁸ Boowa Nyanasampanno, *The Venerable Phra Acharn Mun Bhuridatta Thera Meditation Master*, trans. Siri Buddhasukh (Udon Thani, Thailand: Funny Publishing Limited Partnership, 1982), pp. 4-5.

¹⁵⁹ Five qualities namely: sensual desire (*kāmachanda*), ill-will (*byāpāda*), sloth and torpor (*thīna-middha*), restlessness and worry (*uddhaccakukkucca*), doubt (*vicikicchā*) are obstacles to the mind and blind our mental vision (Nyanatiloka: *Buddhist Dictionary*, p. 110).

¹⁶⁰ *Vism.* 126 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 131).

included. For example, Gunaratana,¹⁶¹ Mererk,¹⁶² and Cousins¹⁶³ share the opinion of two degrees of concentration, whereas Nyanatiloka,¹⁶⁴ Solé-leris,¹⁶⁵ and Sangharakshita¹⁶⁶ distinguish the concentrative development into three levels. Further investigation of the classification of concentration is found in the work entitled ‘*Visuddhimagga*,’ which concurs with the two levels of concentration.¹⁶⁷ In the *Visuddhimagga*, Buddhaghosa points to preliminary concentration as part of the mental development necessary for access and absorption consciousness.¹⁶⁸

This work, therefore, considers the three levels of concentration in terms of momentary, access and absorption that are the mental phenomena following the maturation of happiness (*sukha*).¹⁶⁹ This treatment is indeed surprising; for the momentary concentration as given by Buddhaghosa seems to involve the state of preliminary concentration. It would appear that his aspect of two concentrative levels distinguishes the particular process of profound and stable mental unification. However, the other aspect of three levels refers to a complete process of concentration including the first step of carrying out a concentrative process. For this reason, it is appropriate to categorize concentration into three levels. References supporting this categorization can be found in other commentaries entitled *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*.¹⁷⁰ In addition, after taking a different approach by comparing the mental images, Vajirañāṇa proposes this exact categorization. His statement indicates that the three stages

¹⁶¹ Henepola Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., p. 97.

¹⁶² Phramaha Prayoon Mererk, *Selflessness in Sartre's Existentialism and Early Buddhism* (Bangkok, Thailand: Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University, Wat Mahadhat, 1988), p. 123.

¹⁶³ L.S. Cousins, "Buddhist Jhana: Its Nature and Attainment According to the Pali Sources," *Religion* (1973), 115-131, 118.

¹⁶⁴ Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines*, op. cit., p. 156.

¹⁶⁵ Solé-Leris, op. cit., pp. 27-28.

¹⁶⁶ Sangharakshita, *A Survey of Buddhism*, 3rd ed. (Bangalore: Indian Institute of World Culture, 1966), p. 164.

¹⁶⁷ *Vism.* 126 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 131).

¹⁶⁸ *Vism.* 137-138 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 142).

¹⁶⁹ *Vism.* 144 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 150).

¹⁷⁰ *Abhi-s.* IX.4.

of intense concentration- preliminary, access and absorption- are attained according to the arising of mental images described as preparatory, acquired and counterpart respectively.¹⁷¹ Vajirañāṇa's idea is most suitable to provide the causal connection between the two subjects which present different aspects of one approach to *jhāna*.

An examination of how momentary concentration encourages *vipassanā*, reveals the significance of absorption concentration (*appanāsamādhi*) rather than momentary concentration (*khaṇikasamādhi*) as the basis of *vipassanā*. Indeed, many scholars such as Yupho,¹⁷² Ñāṇārāma¹⁷³ and Pandita,¹⁷⁴ also propose the three levels, but imply the first concentrative state as momentary concentration rather than preliminary. Among these scholars, for example, Ñāṇārāma regards momentary concentration as mental unification arising through the process of *vipassanā* and disregards the other two as arising through the process of *samatha*.¹⁷⁵ Pandita attempts further to emphasize momentary concentration as an original teaching of the Buddha through the *Pāli* term '*khaṇikacittakaggatā*.'¹⁷⁶

Through an examination of the *Pāli* discourses, though momentary concentration is confirmed as arising during the process of *vipassanā*, the concept is taken from the commentaries of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*,¹⁷⁷ rather than from the Buddha's teaching in canonical texts. In fact the Buddha regards absorption concentration of the four *jhānas*, excluding momentary

¹⁷¹ Vajirañāṇa Paravahera Mahathera, op. cit., p. 33.

¹⁷² Dhanit Yupho, *Vipassanā-Bhāvanā Advance Self-Study Practical Insight Meditation Method for Self-Testing and Realization of Consequences*, 4 ed. (Bangkok: Siva Phorn Limited Partnership, 1988), p. 29.

¹⁷³ Matara Sri Ñāṇārāma, *The Seven Stages of Purification and the Insight Knowledges* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1983), p. 15.

¹⁷⁴ Sayadaw U Pandita, op. cit., p. 180.

¹⁷⁵ Matara Sri Ñāṇārāma, loc. cit.

¹⁷⁶ Sayadaw U Pandita, op. cit., p. 181.

¹⁷⁷ Sdp.II. 503.

concentration, as perfect concentration (*sammāsamādhi*).¹⁷⁸ Further evidence shows that the expression to “develop unlimited concentration,”¹⁷⁹ stated by the Buddha, seems to differ from the circle of arising and falling of concentration defined by the term ‘momentary (*khaṇika*).’ Similarly, when the Buddha points out the particular cultivation of concentration as leading to the benefits of direct intuition and insight and the destruction of cankers, he employs the term ‘*bahulīkatā*’¹⁸⁰ that means ‘enlarged’ or ‘increased,’ not just arising ‘only in some moment.’ This theme of the enlargement of concentration is also suggested in the work entitled the *Sāketasutta*. In this *sutta*, it is stated that one can comprehend deliverance by cultivating, and making much of, the five controlling faculties (*indriyāni*), including concentration.¹⁸¹ There is not sufficient supportive evidence in the canonical texts for an assertion that momentary concentration is sufficient for the establishment of the process of *vipassanā*. However, it is certainly true that concentrative development has to be continually performed at the concentrative level of absorption in order to fulfil the establishment of *vipassanā*.

Clearly the interpretation of both concentration and the production of mental image in achievement of the *jhāna* state can be seen as two distinct subjects, but they are essentially complementary to a single approach to *jhāna*. The subject of concentration has three levels, each achieving a more intense level of concentration, but with absorption concentration being the most profound and stable state of concentration. Absorption concentration is necessary as a prelude to the commencement of *vipassanā*. The production of mental images also has three levels, with each level progressively leading to a more reliable image. It

¹⁷⁸ D.II.313, “*Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sammāsamādhi? Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekajaṃ pītisukhaṃ paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati. ...dutiyaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati. ...tatiyaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati....catutthaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.*”

¹⁷⁹ A.III.24: “*Samādhiṃ bhikkhave bhāvētha appamāṇaṃ....*”

¹⁸⁰ D.III.223.

¹⁸¹ S.V.220.

has been argued that an evaluation of acquired image is necessary to ensure that it possesses a stable state, and to evaluate its needs for further advancement in order to achieve *vipassanā*. The study of concentrative levels and mental images concludes that they tend to correspond with each other, at each level, as processes of *samatha*. Before the commencement of *vipassanā*, the process of *samatha* must be fully developed through both subjects, advancing beyond the momentary concentration through to the robust concentration level of absorption. For this reason, this advanced level of absorption has to be discussed by means of an analytical study of a set of concentrative attainments called the *jhānas*.¹⁸²

Discussion of the concentrative states of *jhāna*

The study of *samatha* practice, relying on the absorption (*appanā*) level, approaches perhaps the most important aspect of Buddhist meditation, namely *jhānas*. The intensity of *samatha* at the absorption level is classified into eight attainments, the four *rūpajjhānas* and the four *arūpajjhānas*, each marked by greater purity and subtlety than its predecessor. In fact, this advanced concentrative level of *jhāna* constitutes the instrumental process in the Buddha's own achievement of enlightenment as a preparatory path for proceeding to the three knowledges¹⁸³ (*vijjā*).¹⁸⁴ Accordingly, the precise role played by the *jhānas* in the spiritual development of Buddhism involves the path of deliverance from suffering. The analysis of the *jhānas* reveals that the gradual development of *samatha* into the entire process of *jhānas* is essentially

¹⁸² The *jhāna* (Sanskrit: 'dhyāna') attainments are the progressive states of absorption meditation where the mind is free from the five hindrances, namely, sensual desire (*kāmachanda*), ill will (*byāpāda*), sloth and torpor (*thīnamiddha*), restlessness and worry (*uddhaccakukkucca*) and doubt (*vicikicchā*) (D.I.71-76).

¹⁸³ The three knowledges comprise the knowledge of recollection of former lives (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāna*), the knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of beings (*cutūpapātāñāna*), and the knowledge of the destruction of the cankers (*āsavakkhayañāna*) (M.I.22-23).

¹⁸⁴ M.I.247-249.

a path leading to the ultimate Buddhist goal. An analytical study of the *jhānas* will survey their roles in relating to the Buddhist spiritual discipline involving three perspectives; the overview of *jhānas*, discussion on the four *rūpajjhānas*, and the four *arūpajjhānas*.

Overview of the Jhānas

The term ‘*jhāna* (Sanskrit *dhyāna*)’ appears frequently across the scriptural texts of early Buddhism. An understanding of the *jhānas* contributes to a correct practice of *samatha* in the profound states, and to its relationship with the ultimate goal. The study of their general characteristics reveals that no appropriate English word could be found to fulfil the interpretation of *jhāna* as a mental unification and purification which demonstrate its relationship with the ultimate goal of Buddhism. Our dealing with the general characteristics of the term ‘*jhāna*’ will be confined to its semantic analysis and its interpretation or translation.

By employing the techniques of etymology, *jhānas* could be interpreted as mental unification and purification and as providing the opportunity to realize full insight knowledge. The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* defines the term *jhāna* in the sense of “to burn” by employing the verb *jhāpeti*: “*Ajātaṃ jhāpeti jātena, jhānaṃ tena pavuccati* (One burns the unborn (defilement) through the born (*jhāna*), therefore it is called *jhāna*).”¹⁸⁵ The purport of this definition of *jhāna* is that it burns up or gets rid of the hindrances. Alternatively, the term *jhāna* in the sense of “to meditate,” which is related to the verb *jhāyati*, occurs in the *Aggaññasutta*.

¹⁸⁵ Paṭis.67 (Burmese script), Thai script has “*Ajātaṃ jhāpeti jātena, jhānantena pavuccati* (p.101).” PTS. (p. 70) has “*Ajātaṃ ñāpeti jātena ñānan tena pavuccati*.” The statement in Burmese script matches that of in Thai script.

Having obtained food, they meditate again in their leaf-huts in the forest place. “They meditate,” Vāseṭṭha, is the meaning of *jhāyakā*.¹⁸⁶

The definition of *jhāna* as “to meditate” relates *jhāna* to the ability of bringing the mind to the concentration. That one comes to understand the link between spiritual progress and the two definitions of *jhāna* is exemplified in a passage in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*: “*evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte...ṭhite āneñjappatte* (When his heart was thus concentrated, purified, bright,..., steady, and attained to imperturbability).”¹⁸⁷ This mention of a serene and pure heart makes it clear that purification and unification play a prominent role in the significance of the *jhānas* and that they are essential attributes of supernatural knowledge (*abhiññā*).

In agreement with these canonical texts, Buddhaghosa proposes the two etymological interpretations of the *Pāli* term *jhāna*. One is the verb *jhāpeti*, to burn defilement, and the other is *jhāyati*, to meditate.¹⁸⁸ *Jhāpeti* relates to overcoming the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) and eliminating the gross factors, such as *vitakka* (initial application) and *vicāra* (sustained application), which are prejudicial to higher progress. In contrast, Buddhaghosa suggests that the term *jhāna* derives from the verb *jhāyanti* which means ‘to meditate,’ implying that *jhāna* involves dealing with a given object as an object of meditation. These derivations can be further characterized through considering the issue of ‘mental purification’¹⁸⁹ and mental unification.¹⁹⁰ Thus, the relationship between the two interpretations of *jhāna*, as burning and as meditation, can be characterized as a relationship between mental purification and unification.

¹⁸⁶ D.III.94: “*Te ghāsaṃ paṭilabhitvā punadeva araññāyatane paṇṇakuṭṭisu jhāyanti. jhāyantīti kho pana, Vāseṭṭha, jhāyakā,*” the action noun *jhāyakā* means “one who attains *jhāna*.”

¹⁸⁷ D.I.76.

¹⁸⁸ Sp.I.145.

¹⁸⁹ Henepola Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., p.15.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Nevertheless, some scholars disagree with the importance placed on tranquillity meditation techniques in relation to the two terms ‘*samatha* and *jhāna*.’ For example, Rahula considers *jhāna* as simply referring to peaceful living.¹⁹¹ Burns agrees and adds: “there is the danger of one becoming enamoured with them (*jhānas*) and not striving for further progress.”¹⁹² Although the Buddha himself accepts this (peaceful) aspect of the term, he points out that indulgence in the pleasure of *jhānas* could also lead to supernatural knowledge, enlightenment and *nibbāna*.¹⁹³ So long as indulgence in the *jhānas* does not disturb further progress, they are an extremely important part of meditation practice. Hence, opposing the assertions of Rahula and Burns in ignoring the (*jhāna*) aspects of mental purification and unification is necessary. It is clear from the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* that the *jhāna* attainment produces a progressive purification and unification of mind in order to contribute to the ultimate goal of meditation practice.¹⁹⁴

After the examination of the various ways in which the term ‘*jhāna*’ has been translated, the characteristics of *jhāna* can be clarified. K.R. Norman who interprets it as ‘meditation,’ suggests a broad application of the term over the entire process of mental development.¹⁹⁵ I.B. Horner’s interpretation of *jhāna* as ‘musing’ is inappropriate as it signifies thoughtfulness, the opposite to the sense of ‘letting go’ which is a central characteristic of *jhāna*.¹⁹⁶ In his translation of the *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Rhys Davids proposes ‘rapture,’ which points to the emotional consequence of *jhāna* which cannot be considered as a

¹⁹¹ Walpola Rahula, op. cit., p. 68.

¹⁹² Douglas M. Burns, *Buddhist Meditation and Depth Psychology*, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1994), p. 42.

¹⁹³ D.III.131-132.

¹⁹⁴ D.I.76.

¹⁹⁵ K. R. Norman, *The Word of the Doctrine (Dhammapada), Translation Series (London, England); No. 46.* (Oxford: The Pali Text Society, 1997), p. 53.

¹⁹⁶ I. B. Horner, *The Early Buddhist Theory of Man Perfected : A Study of the Arahant Concept and of the Implications of the Aim to Perfection in Religious Life, Traced in Early Canonical and Post- Canonical Pali Literature* (Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1975), p. 121.

predominant characteristic.¹⁹⁷ Edward Conze¹⁹⁸ and Mererk¹⁹⁹ introduce the equally misleading of the translation of the term as ‘trance,’ which implies a cataleptic or hypnotic state. The term ‘trance,’ in fact, suggests a weak and dull state of mindfulness, which is firmly distinct from the semantic interpretations of *jhāna* as mental unification and purification. Therefore ‘trance’ is an unsuitable interpretation of ‘*jhāna*.’ The word ‘absorption’²⁰⁰ used by Ñāṇamoli covers the sense of ‘mental unification,’ but excludes the complementary sense of ‘mental purification,’ discussed above. Due to the complexity of translations and the absence of a standard English translation, the term *jhāna* will be employed untranslated throughout this thesis.

The present study argues that a survey of the term *jhāna* shows that *jhāna* can be generally characterized as mental ‘purification’ and ‘unification.’ These two characteristics contribute to an overcoming of the defiling mental factors (*nīvaraṇa*) and to a focussing of the mind onto the object of concentration, which constitute significant attributes for absolute realization. Next, the term ‘trance,’ a common translation of *jhāna*, conflicts with both characteristics of *jhāna* because it introduces the suggestion of a weak and dull state of mindfulness. Thus, as was stated above, the term ‘*jhāna*’ is to be left untranslated. After brief understanding of *jhāna*, its development will be clarified through the analysis of the four concentrative states, namely, *rūpajjhānas*.

The four Rūpajjhānas²⁰¹

The *samatha* process is not attained all at once but develops in a graded sequence of *jhānas*. In every state of concentrative development, the

¹⁹⁷ T.W. Rhys Davids, (tr.) *Dialogues of the Buddha*, v 1, (London: Pali Text Society, 1899), p. 248.

¹⁹⁸ Edward Conze, *The Way of Wisdom the Five Spiritual Faculties* (Colombo: Felix Printers, 1993), p. 17.

¹⁹⁹ Phramaha Prayoon Mererk, op. cit., p. 123.

²⁰⁰ Ñāṇamoli, *The Four Sublime States* (Colombo: Karunaratne & Sons, 1998), p. 5.

²⁰¹ The four *rūpajjhānas* or simply the four *jhānas*, refer to the set of concentrative attainments: the first, second, third and fourth *jhānas*.

determination of the intensification of mental factors can clarify the characteristics of each *jhāna*. A textual analysis of the *jhānas* from two separate sources, *sutta* and *Abhidhamma*, in which the stereotype formulas of *jhānas* are listed, gives different interpretations of their characteristics.

Sutta sources usually provide textual descriptions of the four *jhānas*:

Jhāna 1: Quite secluded from sense pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental qualities, I entered and remained in the first *jhāna*, which is accompanied by initial and sustained application with joy and happiness born of seclusion.

Jhāna 2: With the settling of initial and sustained application, I entered and remained in the second *jhāna*, which has internal confidence and one-pointedness of mind without initial and sustained application, with joy and happiness born of concentration.

Jhāna 3: With the fading of joy, I remained in equanimity, mindful and aware, and I experienced with my body that happiness of which the nobles say: “happily remained he who has equanimity and is mindful,” and so I entered and remained in the third *jhāna*.

Jhāna 4: With the abandoning of happiness and pain and with the earlier disappearance of pleasures and sorrows, I entered and remained in the fourth *jhāna*, which has neither pain nor happiness and has purity of mindfulness due to equanimity.

M.I.21-22

The Buddha repeatedly applies the above description of the four *jhānas* throughout the four *Nikāyas*. Here the four *jhānas* are characterized in terms of meditative experience such that their attributes are not described explicitly.

Another interpretation comes from the *Abhidhamma* sources, which present the constitution of *jhānas* individually through an expression of their factors.

Jhāna 1: *vitakka* (initial application), *vicāra* (sustained application), *pīti* (joy), *sukha* (happiness), *cittassekaggatā* (one-pointedness of mind)

Jhāna 2: *pīti*, *sukha*, *cittassekaggatā*

Jhāna 3: *sukha*, *cittassekaggatā*

Jhāna 4: *upekkhā*, *cittassekaggatā*

Vibh.263-264

This interpretation in the *Abhidhamma* shows a process of progressive elimination and refinement of *jhāna* factors, hence, allows the *jhānas* to be presented explicitly. The implicit expression of the characteristics of *jhānas* in the *Nikāyas* is understood as different and quite distinct from their expression in the *Abhidhamma*.²⁰² An investigation of the different interpretations of *jhānas*, and a focussed the individual analysis of each *jhāna* follows.

The first *rūpajjhāna*

The initial state of absorption called the first *jhāna* arises from the cultivation of the five wholesome factors and the absence of five hindrances.²⁰³ The former is composed of five mental components: *vitakka* (initial application), *vicāra* (sustained application), *pīti* (joy), *sukha* (happiness), *cittassekaggatā* (one-pointedness of mind). The latter group comprises unwholesome states, namely, sensual desire (*kāmachanda*), ill will (*byāpāda*), sloth and torpor (*thīnamiddha*), restlessness and worry (*uddhaccakukkucca*) and doubt (*vicikicchā*). Although the first *jhāna* involves both arising and fading away, these phenomena are the consequence of the one-pointedness of mind (*cittassekaggatā*), which is the predominant factor of the first *jhāna*. This section aims to support notion that the mental one-pointedness is the predominant factor for the arising of the first *jhāna* and for eliminating all hindrances. This hypothesis will be explored through the detailed examination of the means, by which the five hindrances are eliminated, and the existence of one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*) in the first *jhāna* in terms of the four inquiries: the textual evidence, the characteristics of *vitakka-vicāra*, the meaning of the term ‘*jhāna*’ and the development of the first *jhāna*.

²⁰² R. Bucknell, "Reinterpreting the *Jhānas*," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 16, no. 2 (1993), 374-409, 376.

²⁰³ M.I.294-295.

During the development of the first *jhāna*, the two overlapping techniques are presented to abolish the five hindrances. On the one hand, in the chapter of ‘*Abandoning the Hindrances*’ in the *Aṅguttaranikāya*, the Buddha provides the ways and means by which one can abolish the five hindrances as follows:

1. Discernment of repulsiveness (*asubhanimitta*) contributes to the abandonment of sensual desire (*kāmachanda*).
2. Freedom of mind through loving-kindness (*mettācetovimutti*) contributes to the abandonment of ill will (*byāpāda*).
3. Effort (*virīya*) contributes to the abandonment of sloth and torpor (*thīnamiddha*).
4. Tranquillity of mind (*vūpasantacitta*) contributes to the abandonment of restlessness and worry (*uddhaccakukkucca*).
5. Right attitude of attention (*yoniso manasikāra*) contributes to the abandonment of doubt (*vicikicchā*).

A.I.4-5

This passage from the *Nīvaraṇapahānavagga* underlines the importance of the five meditation practices for a proper elimination of the five hindrances. On the other hand, it is found in the *Visuddhimagga* that the five factors of the first *jhāna* arise and counteract the five hindrances one by one. Buddhaghosa states that each *jhāna* factor is responsible for the elimination of a particular hindrance. *Vitakka*, through its role of lifting the mind up to the object, inhibits sloth and torpor (*thīnamiddha*). *Vicāra*, by keeping the mind on the object, temporarily dispels doubt (*vicikicchā*), *pīti* keeps out ill will (*byāpāda*), *sukha* excludes restlessness and worry (*uddhaccakukkucca*), and *ekaggatā* counters sensual desire (*kāmachanda*).²⁰⁴ He further concludes: “...the *jhāna* factors are incompatible with them (hindrances), eliminate them, abolish them.”²⁰⁵

The examination of the two techniques found in the *suttas* and discussed in commentaries shows that the five practices are the predominant technique to overcome the five hindrances in relating to four reasons. First, they are clearly

²⁰⁴ *Vism.* 141 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 147).

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

mentioned in the canonical text, whereas the functions of the five factors as abandoning the five hindrances one by one are stated in commentaries. Second, it should be noted that, if each *jhāna* factor individually causes the corresponding hindrance to fade away, then, due to the absence of *vitakka* and *vicāra* in the second *jhāna*, there is a risk that sloth, torpor and doubt may arise in that *jhāna*. This risk however is non-existent since the second *jhāna* is more profound than the first *jhāna* and far removed from the five hindrances.²⁰⁶ Third, the factor of mental unification (one-pointedness of mind) participates in all of the *jhāna* states and becomes more intense in the higher states. The ascendant states of *jhāna* are progressively remote from the hindrances. It would be a reasonable assumption that mental unification entirely plays a crucial role in overcoming the five hindrances. Mererk shares this sentiment: “In the state of concentration, the mind is freed from five hindrances.”²⁰⁷ Beyer proposes the suppression of hindrances through the development of mental focusing upon the representational sign that echoes Mererk’s opinion.²⁰⁸ Lastly, the five practices have the benefit of being more accessible to meditators who are not yet at the absorption concentration level. From these reasons, the two differing perspectives, the above five practices and the unification of mind, are directed towards the one purpose of dispelling the hindrances. The two perspectives can be reconciled since the five practices are the most appropriate meditative techniques of concentrative development. For this reason, it can be concluded that the unification of mind, developed through any meditation practice which corresponds with a particular hindrance, is the key factor in overcoming the five hindrances.

Attention must now be directed to the often argued question “Does *cittassekaggatā* (one-pointedness of mind) exist in the first *jhāna*, or not?” This

²⁰⁶ *Vism.* 155 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 161).

²⁰⁷ Phramaha Prayoon Mererk, op. cit., p. 121.

²⁰⁸ Beyer, Stephan V. "The Doctrine of Meditation in the Hīnayāna" In Charles S. Prebish ed. *Buddhism: A Modern Perspective*, University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975, pp. 137-147, p. 142.

question arises from the term *ekaggatā*, which is a well established factor of the first *jhāna* according to the *Abhidhamma*. However, *ekaggatā* is not specifically mentioned in the general stereotype formula of the first *jhāna* in the *suttas*. Certainly, commentators and modern scholars have consistently preferred the listing of *jhāna* factors in the *Abhidhamma*. For example, Buddhaghosa, clearly confirming the absence of *ekaggatā* from the first *jhāna* in the *sutta*, still selects the *Abhidhamma*, where *ekaggatā* in the first *jhāna* factors is included.²⁰⁹ According to the *Vimuttimaggā*, the inclusion of *ekaggatā* in first *jhāna* is also rendered as the consequent factor following the first four factors (*vitakka*, *vicāra*, *pīti*, *sukha*): “With these four qualities the mind becomes peaceful.”²¹⁰ Khantipalo also directly adds *ekaggatā* to the first four factors in the *suttas*: “Now some explanation should be given to the four factors in italics above (*initial* and *sustained application*, *rapture* and *bliss*), plus the fifth one which is one-pointedness of mind.”²¹¹ Moreover, Gunaratana claims that *ekaggatā* is the prominent factor for the development of *jhāna* states, so that it is therefore not necessary to mention this factor explicitly.²¹² It can be argued that, although the term ‘*ekaggatā*’ is not found in the standard description of the first *jhāna* in the *suttas*, the *Abhidhamma* inclusion of this *jhāna* factor is a sufficient reason to include it in the list.

Nevertheless, having investigated the compatibility between *ekaggatā* and the first *jhāna*, some scholars argue that *ekaggatā* does not exist in the account of the first *jhāna*. For instance, Stuart-Fox points out the absence of *ekaggatā* in the stereotype formula of the first *jhāna*: “First *jhāna* in the *sutta* account is the stage before mental one-pointedness is established.”²¹³ Throughout the

²⁰⁹ *Vism.* 147 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 153).

²¹⁰ Upatissa, op. cit., p. 93.

²¹¹ Bhikkhu Khantipalo, *Calm and Insight : A Buddhist Manual for Meditators* (London and Dublin: Curzon Press Ltd, 1981), p. 57.

²¹² Henepola Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., p. 89.

²¹³ Martin Stuart-Fox, "Jhana and Buddhist Scholasticism," *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* (1989), 79-110, 94.

discussion on the relation between *ekaggatā* and *vitakka-vicāra*, he firmly contradicts the coexistence of *ekaggatā* and *vitakka-vicāra*.²¹⁴ Bucknell also supports this viewpoint of disregarding *ekaggatā* in the first *jhāna* according to the *sutta*.

The *jhāna* 1 of the *Nikāya* account is a rather preliminary stage in which mental onepointedness has not yet been established. The condition attained by the meditator who has mastered *appanā-samādhi* cannot be identical with the stage which the *Nikāyas* call ‘the first *jhāna*.’²¹⁵

Furthermore, Bucknell recognizes the first *jhāna* as the distracted mental state associated with the flow of thought.²¹⁶ Still relying on the inconsistency of *ekaggatā* in the first *jhāna*, Griffiths also suggests that the full mental operation of basic cognitive functions continue in the first *jhāna*.²¹⁷ Though these scholars consider that there is a degree of incompatibility between *ekaggatā* and the first *jhāna*, the reconciliation of *ekaggatā* and the first *jhāna* can be investigated through four aspects: textual evidence, the characteristics of *vitakka-vicāra*, the meaning of *jhāna* and the development of the first *jhāna*.

Even though *ekaggatā* is not mentioned explicitly in the general formula identifying the first *jhāna* in the *sutta*, three references to the appearance of *ekaggatā* in the first *jhāna* are referred to as follows. The first reference is found in the *Mahāvedallasutta* where Sāriputta says:

Friend, the first *jhāna* has five factors. Here friend, for the monk who attains the first *jhāna*, there are initial and sustained application, joy, happiness and one-pointedness of mind.²¹⁸

Sāriputta’s description of the first *jhāna* clearly expresses the existence of *ekaggatā* as one factor of the first *jhāna*. In this discourse, Sāriputta, while asked what the first *jhāna* is, gives his answer according to its stereotype

²¹⁴ Ibid., p. 96.

²¹⁵ R. Bucknell, "Reinterpreting the *Jhanas*," op. cit., p. 389.

²¹⁶ Ibid., p. 396.

²¹⁷ Paul Griffiths, "Buddhist Jhana: A Form-Critical Study," *Religion* 13 (1983), 55-68, 60.

²¹⁸ M.I.294: “*Paṭhamam kho, āvuso, jhānam pañcaṅgikam: Idh’āvuso, paṭhamam jhānam samāpannassa bhikkhuno vitakko ca vattati vicāro ca pīti ca sukhañ-ca cित्तेkaggatā ca.*”

formula in the *sutta*. But, when asked how many factors there are in the first *jhāna*, he speaks of the five factors as shown above. Due to Sāriputta's answer, Stuart-Fox argues that Sāriputta's description contains an inconsistency in that Sāriputta's answer could be the influence of early *Abhidhammic* texts.²¹⁹

Nonetheless, it should be considered that Sāriputta's answer arises from his direct realization of first *jhāna* experience, where he recognizes the coexistence of *ekaggatā* and the mental state of the first *jhāna*. The second reference occurs in the *Paṭhamajhānapañhāsutta*, in which the Buddha states the repetition of identical statements for each *jhāna* in order to advocate his disciple, Moggallāna, to develop the unification of mind. He gives a valuable suggestion for the first *jhāna* in stating that: "Moggallāna, Moggallāna, do not be careless, Brahmin, regarding the first *jhāna*. Steady your mind in the first *jhāna*, make your mind one-pointed in the first *jhāna*, and compose your mind in the first *jhāna*."²²⁰ Thus, this identical set of statements for every *jhāna* implies that there is certainly the occurrence of *ekaggatā* in the first *jhāna* and in the rest as well. Third, the existence of *ekaggatā* in the first *jhāna* is attributed in the *Anupadasutta* to the Buddha.²²¹ There the Buddha clearly lists the sixteen characteristics including the presence of *ekaggatā* in the first *jhāna*. According to this textual evidence in the *sutta*, the importance of *ekaggatā* in the attainment of *jhānas* is so apparent that it is unnecessary to make explicit mention of it in the stereotype formula.

By investigating the characteristics of *vitakka* and *vicāra*, the existence of *ekaggatā* in the first *jhāna* can be further clarified. This investigation is to provide an answer to the question of "whether or not *ekaggatā* can possibly

²¹⁹ Martin Stuart-Fox, op. cit., p. 89.

²²⁰ S.IV.263: "moggallāna moggallāna Mā brāhmaṇa paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ pamādo paṭhame jhāne cittaṃ sañthapehi paṭhame jhāne cittaṃ ekodikarohi, paṭhame jhāne cittaṃ samādahāti."

²²¹ M.III.25

coexist with *vitakka-vicāra* in the first *jhāna*?” When considering the meaning of *vitakka* and *vicāra*, it can be categorized into two groups; 1) general meaning and 2) specific meaning. The *PTS Pali-English Dictionary* notes that, in considering both *vitakka* and *vicāra* together, the meaning should be read as “just thought or thinking.” Alternatively, regarding the specific meaning, it analyzes *vitakka* and *vicāra* individually. It renders *vitakka* as “directing of concomitant properties towards the object” and *vicāra* as “continued exercise of the mind on that object.”²²² Two groups of scholars are divided in their analysis of *vitakka* and *vicāra*.

Among the first group, for instance, Stuart-Fox interprets the combination of *vitakka* and *vicāra* as “all varieties of thinking, including sustained and focused thought” that is suppressed through concentrative practice.²²³ Bucknell also shares this interpretation: “*vitakka-vicāra* simply denotes the normal flow of thought, the stream of imagery and verbalizing which, like a television program that is rarely switched off.” While he interprets *vitakka-vicāra* as the thought-stream, *ekaggatā* was interpreted as continued freedom from thought, which then made it impossible for *ekaggatā* to coexist with *vitakka-vicāra*.²²⁴ While interpreting *vitakka* as linear thinking and *vicāra* as rational thinking, Beyer also classifies *vitakka* and *vicāra* into the systematic thinking.²²⁵ Varma obviously agrees: “In the first *jhāna* the Yogi concentrates his mind on reasoning (*vitakka*) and investigation (*vicāra*).”²²⁶ Subsequently, their approach to the meaning of *vitakka-vicāra* in the general way contradicts the approach to achieving the mental state of one-pointedness. If *vitakka-vicāra* refers to mental

²²² T. W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, op. cit., p. 620.

²²³ Martin Stuart-Fox, op. cit., p. 82.

²²⁴ R. Bucknell, “Reinterpreting the *Jhanas*,” op. cit., p. 397.

²²⁵ Beyer, Stephan V., op. cit., p. 142.

²²⁶ Vishwanath Prasad Varma, *Early Buddhism and Its Origins* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publ., 1973), p. 289.

activity in the general meaning, we can assume that they have no connection to *ekaggatā*.

On the contrary, the other group of scholars assigns specific meaning to *vitakka-vicāra*, which complements the state of mental unification. For example, Ṭhitavaṇṇo defines *vitakka* as a mental state which is in secure contact with the object of meditation, and involves the absence of ordinary thought. According to him, *vitakka* facilitates the mind directing its attention to the object, while *vicāra* supports and keeps *vitakka* functioning uninterrupted. Therefore, he regards *vitakka-vicāra* as the essential factors for mental development in support of a state of unification.²²⁷ In addition, Brahmavamso clearly negates the first group: “In fact, thinking ceases a long time prior to *jhāna*. In *jhāna*, *vitakka* and *vicāra* are both sub-verbal and so are not acceptable to thought.”²²⁸ Khantipalo’s interpretation of *vitakka-vicāra* also disagrees with the first group:

Although in other contexts *vitakka* can mean ‘thinking’ it is misleading to translate it in the *jhāna*-formula in this way...It is certainly very wrong to translate this (*vicāra*) ‘discursive thinking,’ as some authors have done.²²⁹

If *vitakka-vicāra* do not convey a general pattern of thinking, it is important to discover their true meaning, which will have implications for how they can coexist with *ekaggatā*. Khantipalo defines *vitakka* as the fine and soft constant attention to focus the mind pointed on the object, and *vicāra* as the following attention to sustain the focus of mind on the object.²³⁰ According to Gunaratana’s clarification of *vitakka*, it always plays a role in directing the mind onto the object; in the *jhāna* state, this role becomes more reliable and

²²⁷ Ṭhitavaṇṇo, *Mind Development*, third ed. 1999, (Bangkok: Mahamakut Rajavidyalaya (Royal Academy) Foundation, 1st publ., 1988), p. 127.

²²⁸ Brahmavamso, “The Jhanas,” in *The Basic Method of Meditation and the Jhanas* (Singapore: Buddhist Fellowship Singapore, 2005), Part Three pp. 41-65, p. 44.

²²⁹ Bhikkhu Khantipalo, op. cit., p. 57.

²³⁰ Ibid.

gentle.²³¹ He distinguishes the characteristics of *vitakka* in relating to the two occasions by the following comparison. In general, *vitakka* can be compared to a hollow ball held down under the water by external force, while *vitakka* at the *jhāna* state can be compared to a solid body sinking into the bottom of water and remaining there without any external force.²³² Gunaratana's explanation of the characteristic of *vitakka* in the *jhāna* state agrees with the book entitled the *Milindapañha*, in which the role of *vitakka* is compared to the action of fixing an accurately cut tenon into a mortice of the carpenter.²³³ Concerning *vitakka* in the *jhāna* state, he points out not only the characteristic of *vitakka*, but also the object of *vitakka*, that is the counterpart sign (*paṭibhāganimitta*).

Investigation of the meaning of *vitakka-vicāra* indicates that *vitakka-vicāra*, while qualifying the fine and soft constant attention, keeps the mind firmly and naturally on the mental object of the counterpart sign (*paṭibhāganimitta*). According to the evaluation of *vitakka* in reference to the development of *ekaggatā*, both groups of scholars agree that thought cannot simultaneously exist with *ekaggatā*. It seems a suitable judgement because the term 'thought' implies the process of thinking which tends to be the multitude pointedness of mental activities, while *ekaggatā* implies only one-ness of mental activity or freedom from thought. What distinguishes both groups is the interpretation of *vitakka-vicāra*. The first group interprets *vitakka-vicāra* as thought, whereas the second interprets it as the refinement and formation of profound yet subtle attention that keeps the mind united uninterruptedly with the object of meditation. Consequently, the first group contradicts the collaboration of *vitakka-vicāra* and *ekaggatā*, while the second points out *vitakka-vicāra* as the basic process for the development of *ekaggatā*, hence their coexistence. The

²³¹ Henepola Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., p. 76.

²³² *Ibid.*, p. 77.

²³³ Mil.62: "Yathā mahārāja vaḍḍhakī suparikammakatam dāruṃ sandhismiṃ appeti, evameva kho mahārāja appaṇālakkhano vitakko."

second opinion can reconcile the inconsistency arisen from the description of the first *jhāna* between the stereotype formula in the *sutta* and its constitution in the *Abhidhamma*. Moreover, it provides the answer to the question of “how *ekaggatā* can be developed.” If *ekaggatā* means one-pointedness, there has to be a mental factor in the first *jhāna*. Thitavaṇṇo’s statement is acceptable when he says *vitakka* as an essential mental factor for the arising of *ekaggatā*.

If *vitakka* does not function at all, the mind will draw back to what is called the *bhavaṅga*, the condition of unconsciousness, resulting in the mind being drifted to slumber. Such is how *vitakka* in this sense is indispensable in the development of mind to the level of *jhāna*.²³⁴

Of course, *vitakka-vicāra* are the predominant factors intensifying the cognitive act of focusing on the mental image. Furthermore Gunaratana describes the process of mental development through *vitakka-vicāra*, by which the meditator cultivates the mental image in the progression from *parikammanimitta* (preparatory image), *uggahanimitta* (acquired image) and *paṭibhāganimitta* (counterpart image) respectively.²³⁵ It is clear that *vitakka-vicāra* are the essential factors to thrust the mind onto a mental image, keep it fixed and focused until the arising of a full one-pointedness in the first *jhāna*. Therefore, while the first group of scholars disagrees with the coexistence of *vitakka-vicāra* and *ekaggatā*, the view of their coexistence as expressed by the second group is more applicable in clarifying the process of mental development in progression through each mental image (*nimitta*) for attaining complete one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*) in the first *jhāna*.

Since the term ‘*jhāna*’ itself is generally accepted as being the one-pointedness of mind, it is then unnecessary to mention *ekaggatā* again in the stereotype formula of the first *jhāna* in the *suttas*. Indeed in the discourse entitled the *Cūḷavedallasutta*, *Bhikkhunī* Dhammadinnā identifies the term ‘*samādhi*’ with

²³⁴ Thitavaṇṇo, op. cit., p. 127.

²³⁵ Henepola Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., pp. 77-78.

‘*cittassa ekaggatā* (the one-pointedness of mind).’²³⁶ This identification corresponds with the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*, where *samādhi* is interpreted as: “the stability, solidity, absorbed steadfastness of *mind (citta)*.”²³⁷ Regarding the canonical texts and Buddhist scholars, *samādhi* is identical to not only *ekaggatā* but also the attainment of the four *jhānas*. For instance, in the discourse entitled the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta*, the Buddha employs the stereotype formula of the four *jhānas* to refer to perfect concentration, namely, *sammāsamādhi*.²³⁸ A similar interpretation of *jhāna* as *samādhi* is also proposed by Desaraṅsī.²³⁹ This relation between *samādhi* and *jhāna* could be seen in the progression of the three kinds of *samādhi*: *parikkamasamādhi*, *upacārasamādhi* and *appanāsamādhi*. The absorption state of *appanāsamādhi* is related to the intensification of mental factors of the first *jhāna* and its advancement.²⁴⁰

The term ‘*jhāna*’ is relevant to a high degree to *samādhi*. Therefore, it exclusively signifies one-pointedness of mind without the direct statement of one-pointedness in the first *jhāna* formula. If one-pointedness of mind and the first *jhāna* refer to two different levels of concentration, then there is inconsistency in the textual evidence of the meaning of *jhāna* and *samādhi*. Nevertheless, Stuart-Fox mentions that *ekaggatā* is not present as a factor of the first *jhāna* in the *sutta*.²⁴¹ His opinion is convincing as far as the textual analysis of the stereotype formula of the first *jhāna*; but according to other *suttas*, the detailed examination of the term ‘*jhāna*’ confirms the presence there of *ekaggatā*. Further evidence from meditative experience, as Brahmavamso describes, shows that in the *jhāna* states, there is no possibility of thought, there is no perception of time, and consciousness is non-dual.²⁴² Consequently while

²³⁶ M.I.301

²³⁷ Dhs.11.

²³⁸ D.II.313.

²³⁹ Desaraṅsī, op. cit., p. 8.

²⁴⁰ Henepola Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., p. 21.

²⁴¹ Martin Stuart-Fox, op. cit., pp. 96-97.

²⁴² Brahmavamso, op. cit., pp. 41-42.

the *jhāna* states are the stages of letting go of the process of thinking, the profound sustained attention on the subject of concentration is necessary for the development of *jhānas*. It could be that, although the term ‘*ekaggatā*’ is not present in the standard formula of the first *jhāna*, its typical aspect is already known within the first *jhāna* through its meaning.

Examination of the characteristics of the first *jhāna* during its development emphasizes the quality of one-pointedness within it. Indeed, during this process of concentrative development, the five hindrances are explicitly stated to be removed prior to the arising of the first *jhāna*. It is found that the tranquillity of mind (*vūpasantacitta*), widely stated throughout the *sutta*, precedes the first *jhāna* in order to erase one hindrance, namely, restlessness and worry (*uddhaccakukkucca*).²⁴³ If the tranquillity of mind does not arise yet, the first *jhāna* cannot come into existence. Considering the above evidence, this study proposes that the strong connection between *ekaggatā* and the tranquil mind is profound. *Ekaggatā* is the principle mental factor in keeping the mind still and rested, and this exists prior to the arising of the first *jhāna*.

The next characteristic of the first *jhāna* is *vivekajaṃ* (born from seclusion). It is to be analysed with reference to the presence of *ekaggatā* in the first *jhāna*. The analysis of the term ‘*viveka*’ demonstrates that there are three kinds of seclusion: bodily seclusion (*kāyaviveka*), mental seclusion (*cittaviveka*) and seclusion from the substrata of existence (*upadhiviveka*).²⁴⁴ Bodily seclusion refers to the physical withdrawal from the society for the purpose of devoting oneself to mental development. Mental seclusion means the mental withdrawal from its entanglement with distracted thought; it is recognized as the mental unification of the level of access concentration (*upacārasamādhi*) and above.

²⁴³ A.I.4.

²⁴⁴ Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines*, op. cit., p. 205.

The last type of seclusion refers to the complete liberation from all defilements.²⁴⁵ It appears that the mental seclusion, helping to drive away all distracted thoughts, implies mental stillness or *ekaggatā*. Sangharakshita also shares the same sentiment by identifying the term ‘*viveka* (seclusion)’ as *samādhi* or the unification of mind.²⁴⁶ Nevertheless, Griffiths regards the first *jhāna* in the stereotype formula as seclusion from contact with *kāma* or worldly pleasure and *akusaladhamma* or negative mental states exclusively.²⁴⁷ But it is unclear whether that characteristic of *viveka* is able to overcome restlessness and achieve mental seclusion. Moreover, Solé-Leris, while considering the stereotype formula of the second *jhāna*, confirms this view. In its stereotype formula, *samādhijaṃ* (born out of concentration) implies that the second *jhāna* arises from the degree of concentration that already exists in the first *jhāna*.²⁴⁸ Hence a close determination of the characteristics of the first *jhāna* shows that *ekaggatā* is its main factor in maintaining the mind in a tranquil and secluded state, and a foundation for the arising of the second *jhāna*.

In summary, the two principal themes have been discussed. Firstly, this section has introduced the five meditation practices; discernment of repulsiveness (*asubhanimitta*); freedom of mind through loving-kindness (*mettācetovimutti*); effort (*virīya*); tranquillity of mind (*vūpasantacitta*) and right attitude of attention (*yoniso manasikāra*). These practices are considered the appropriate meditative techniques to eliminate the five hindrances. Consequently, mental unification, arising through any meditative method, is the predominant factor in overcoming all hindrances. Secondly, an analysis of the first *jhāna* based on four aspects suggests that *ekaggatā* exists in the first *jhāna*. The first aspect evaluates the three references in the *suttas* that reveals the validity of *ekaggatā*

²⁴⁵ Henepola Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., p. 49.

²⁴⁶ Sangharakshita, op. cit., p. 165.

²⁴⁷ Paul J. Griffiths, *Indian Buddhist Meditation-Theory: History, Development and Systematization*, (Thesis (Ph.D.) - University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1983., UMI Dissertation Services, 1997), p. 80.

²⁴⁸ Solé-Leris, op. cit., p. 63.

in the first *jhāna*. The second aspect investigates the characteristics of *vitakka* and *vicāra* to support the coexistence of *ekaggatā* and *vitakka-vicāra* in the first *jhāna*. The third aspect interprets the term ‘*jhāna*’ as the one-pointedness of mind by emphasizing the comprehensiveness of *ekaggatā* in the first *jhāna* such that it is not required to mention *ekaggatā* anymore. The fourth aspect is to determine how to overcome restlessness and examine the characteristics of *vivekajaṃ*. This confirms the existence of *ekaggatā* and its indispensability within the first *jhāna*. Although some scholars, such as Bucknell and Stuart-Fox, reject the notion of *ekaggatā* coexisting with the first *jhāna*, an examination of the above four aspects has shown that it is reasonable to argue that a thorough one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*) does arise in the first *jhāna*. This concludes the detailed examination of the first *jhāna*. Clarification of the process of *samatha* by the analysis of the second *jhāna* follows.

The Second Rūpajjhāna

The development of *jhānas* is a process in which the gross factors are successively eliminated and the subtler ones are brought to greater prominence. In the second *jhāna*, *vitakka* and *vicāra* are abandoned and the three factors, *pīti*, *sukha* and *ekaggatā* still remain. By attaining these profound factors, the mental state of the second *jhāna* becomes more tranquil and more thoroughly unified. The purpose of this section is to substantiate the arising of the second *jhāna* through the five kinds of mastery only whilst excluding a review of the defective features of the first *jhāna*, and to point out the collaboration of its two factors; *pīti* and *ekaggatā*. The discussion of the second *jhāna* will aim at establishing the method by which the second *jhāna* is attained and to clarify how *pīti* relates to *ekaggatā*.

In particular this research argues that Buddhaghosa's first method²⁴⁹ provides sufficient techniques to develop the second *jhāna*, whilst his second technique²⁵⁰ is unnecessary as well as being insufficient. This is despite of Buddhaghosa's claim that the two methods, which include the five kinds of mastery and the contemplation of the defective features of the first *jhāna*, are required to attain the second *jhāna*. Indeed, in the *Visuddhimagga*, Buddhaghosa suggests the meditator to achieve the five kinds of mastery in order to be skillful in the first *jhāna*. These include mastery in adverting (*āvajjana*), mastery in attaining (*samāpajjana*), mastery in resolving (*adhiṭṭhāna*), mastery in emerging (*vuṭṭhāna*), and mastery in reviewing (*paccavekkhaṇa*).²⁵¹ To master the first *jhāna* it is required that the meditator enters it repeatedly and skilfully until the meditator can attain it, remain in it, emerge from it, and review it without any trouble or difficulty. After having achieved such mastery, Buddhaghosa suggests that the meditator should emerge from the first *jhāna* and contemplate its defective features. These imperfect or defective features are composed of two aspects: first this attainment has a risk of nearness of the five hindrances, and second, the grossness of *vitakka* and *vicāra* weakens the factors of the first *jhāna*.²⁵² In a contribution to the *Vimuttimaggā*, Upatissa concurs with this two-stepped process of attaining the second *jhāna*.²⁵³

Considering the two aspects, the contemplation of the defective features of the first *jhāna* is inessential for the development of the second *jhāna*; rather it is the five kinds of mastery. Firstly, the examination of the *Gāvīsutta*²⁵⁴ reveals that

²⁴⁹ The meditator who has just attained the first *jhāna* practices to reflect upon the first *jhāna*, wherever one pleases, whenever one pleases, and for so long as one pleases, without sluggishness in reflecting (*Vism.* 154 tr. Ñāṇamoli p.160).

²⁵⁰ Having mastered in the first *jhāna*, the meditator emerges from it and contemplates its defective features (*Vism.* 155 tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 161).

²⁵¹ *Vism.* 154 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p.160).

²⁵² *Vism.* 155 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 161).

²⁵³ Upatissa, op. cit., p. 100.

²⁵⁴ A.IV.418-422.

the viewpoint of these scholars on the method for mastering the first *jhāna* as preparation for the attainment of the second *jhāna* sounds reasonable. In this discourse, the Buddha recommends monks to become skilled in entering and abiding in the first *jhāna* before proceeding to the second. The Buddha compares the unskilled monks of the two *jhānas* with a foolish cow that, without knowledge of field and skill in roaming on the rugged mountains, would neither go to the new place nor get back to its own place. Lastly, the second method of contemplating the defective features of the first *jhāna* seems contradictory as it does not support the psychological application of the meditator during the attainment of the second *jhāna*, and would cause further psychological withdrawal from the first *jhāna* back to normal thought processes. According to Buddhaghosa and Upatissa, the meditator has to review the imperfect features of the level of *jhāna* he has just mastered before proceeding to the next *jhāna*.

The contemplation of the defective features of the first *jhāna* is inappropriate for the initiation of the second *jhāna*, because this reviewing and assessing of the *jhāna* experience that the meditator has just emerged from indicates the *jhāna* approach of mental development as an interrupted process.²⁵⁵ Contrary to this practice, canonical texts show how the Buddha interprets the mental development of *jhānas* as a smooth and continuous mode of progress. For instance in the canonical text entitled the *Poṭṭhapādasutta*, the Buddha describes the particular theme of ascending to the higher state of *jhāna* as follows:

So from the time, Poṭṭhapāda, that monk has gained this own (controlled) perception, he proceeds from one stage to the next, and from that to the next until he gradually touches the summit of perception.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁵ Solé-Leris, op. cit., p. 61.

²⁵⁶ D.I.184: “*Yato kho poṭṭhapāda bhikkhu idha saka-saññī hoti, so tato amutra tato amutra anupubbena saññaggam phusati.*”

This discourse portrays the *jhāna* approach of mental development from the first *jhāna* up until the concentrative state termed ‘summit of perception (*saññagga*),’ which Buddhaghosa²⁵⁷ interprets as the *arūpajjhāna* state called ‘*ākāṅkacāṅkāyatana* (the sphere of no-thing-ness).’ Obviously, the Buddha is describing how the gradual development is central to the *jhānas* practice until the sphere of no-thing-ness is achieved. Another illustration of this gradual development is found in the discourse entitled the *Gaṇakamoggallānasutta*, in which the Buddha mentions the concept of his teaching including the four *jhānas* as a matter of gradual training, gradual doing and gradual practice.²⁵⁸ In spite of this, one might argue that *samatha* has nothing to do with the gradual process, because they are distinct stages as indicated; the first *jhāna*, the second *jhāna* etc. and not a continuum. In response to this argument, according to the psychological characteristics of *samatha*, the mental unification and purification are gradually developed, while the mental distinguishing sign of each *jhāna* manifests on the progressive path of *samatha*. Thus it is evident that, although the great commentators mention the surveying process of imperfections in the first *jhāna* as a significant factor for the arising of the second *jhāna*, all four *jhānas* have to be attained through gradual development. That is, each subsequent *jhāna* is continuously cultivated out of mastery of the immediately preceding level.

Even though some scholars, such as Griffiths, disregard *pīti* (joy) as a diminishing factor to *ekaggatā*, the detailed examination of *pīti* and *ekaggatā* indicates that they encourage each other during the *samatha* process of the second *jhāna*. Their causal relationship is described in the *Upanisasutta*. The description points out that *pīti* leads to *passaddhi* (rapture), *passaddhi* to *sukha*, and *sukha* to *sammāsamādhi* (perfect concentration).²⁵⁹ Thus we can see that

²⁵⁷ Sv.II.373.

²⁵⁸ M.III.2-4.

²⁵⁹ A.V.4-5.

pīti precedes the arising of *ekaggatā*. In turn, the stereotype formula of the second *jhāna* refers to *pīti* and *sukha* (happiness) as born from concentration (*samādhijam*).²⁶⁰ Thitavanno agrees: “This (*pīti*) is one of the beneficial results occurring when the mind is calmed down.”²⁶¹ At this point, *pīti* and *ekaggatā* link together in a very close relationship, so that it may be difficult to distinguish them. Therefore, there is certainly no reason to suppose that *pīti* and *ekaggatā* refer to different qualities of *jhāna* factors.

Nevertheless Griffiths argues for the incompatibility between *pīti* and *ekaggatā* through the marginalization of *pīti*, as shown in the following quotation:

Even the fairly restrained affective experiences of joy (*pīti*) and happiness, while still present, are toned down and begin to shade into equanimity and internal tranquillity; factors which we shall see become more important.²⁶²

Among the three factors of the second *jhāna*, Griffiths regards *ekaggatā* as the important factor to proceed through the *jhānas*, but disregards *pīti* as a diminishing factor to *ekaggatā*. This work agrees with him about the importance of *ekaggatā* because only *ekaggatā* can initiate each and every *jhāna* state. However, his interpretation of *pīti* as a distinctive factor from *ekaggatā* is questionable when we examine the description of the seven factors²⁶³ of awakening (*bojjhaṅga*). In this description, the Buddha states that *pīti* leads to *passaddhi* (rapture), *passaddhi* to *samādhī* (concentration).²⁶⁴

As *ekaggatā* is associated causally with *pīti*, it is clear that the distinction of *pīti* from *ekaggatā* is not warranted according to Buddhist sources. Griffiths’ marginalization of *pīti* is perhaps borne out by a misunderstanding of *pīti*.

²⁶⁰ M.I.22.

²⁶¹ Thitavanno, op. cit., p. 128.

²⁶² Griffiths, “Buddhist Jhana: A Form-Critical Study,” op. cit., p. 61.

²⁶³ The seven factors of awakening are: mindfulness (*sati*), investigation of *dhamma* (*dhammavicaya*), effort (*virīya*), joy (*pīti*), rapture (*passaddhi*), concentration (*samādhī*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*).

²⁶⁴ A.V.1-2.

According to the *Visuddhimagga*, *pīti* is graded into five categories as follows:²⁶⁵

1. *Khuddikā pīti* (the small joy): It appears in various ways such as hair rising, tears streaming down. It is the preceding mental phenomena appearing in the progressive development of meditation.
2. *Khaṇikā pīti* (the momentary joy): It is like momentary flashes of lightning arising and disappearing.
3. *Okkantikā pīti* (the showering joy): It appears in (to) the body like waves beating on the shore.
4. *Ubbegā pīti* (the uplifting joy): It has enough power to cause the body to spring up into the air and levitate.
5. *Pharaṇā pīti* (the pervading joy): It is the inner joy pervading every part of the body. Buddhaghosa states that what is meant in the stereotype formula of *jhāna* is this pervading joy: “which is the root of absorption and comes by growth into association with absorption.”²⁶⁶

Among the five categories of *pīti*, Griffiths seems to imply the first four types as *pīti* in the second *jhāna*. Bucknell too seems to imply *pīti* as the first type: “Concentration-born *pīti*, the phenomenon of trembling, gooseflesh.”²⁶⁷ Of course, their interpretation of *pīti* can lead to an erroneous understanding of the relation between *pīti* and *ekaggatā*. Therefore, an examination of *pīti* in the *Pāli* canon and commentaries suggests that the correct interpretation of *pīti* in the second *jhāna* would be that of a subtle and broad pervading joy, which is compatible with *ekaggatā*.

The interpretation of the Buddhist criteria for mental development has led to the conclusion that *jhāna* development is achieved from a process of gradual training and practice. In this sense, the second *jhāna* can be cultivated once the proficiency in the first *jhāna* has been attained without the interruption of reflecting on the imperfection features of the first *jhāna*. Next the aspects of *pīti*

²⁶⁵ *Vism.* 143-144 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 149-151).

²⁶⁶ *Vism.* 144 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 151).

²⁶⁷ R. Bucknell, “Reinterpreting the *Jhanas*,” op. cit., p. 398.

as concentration-born and as the precursor to concentration confirm the compatibility between *pīti* and *ekaggatā* in the second *jhāna*. The analysis of the levels of intensity of *pīti* shows that subtle and broad pervading joy is most conducive to deepening concentration.

The Third *Rūpajjhāna*

After the mastery of the second *jhāna*, the meditator can focus his mind on cultivating the third *jhāna*. Having abandoned one factor, *pīti*, one subsequently enters the third *jhāna* in which only two factors, *sukha* (happiness) and *ekaggatā* (mental unification), remain. Further details and elements are revealed by the *suttas*:

With the fading of joy, I remained in equanimity, mindful and aware, and I experienced with my body that happiness of which the nobles say: “happily remained he who has equanimity and is mindful,” and so I entered and remained in the third *jhāna*.²⁶⁸

The formula expresses, besides the *jhāna* factors, three additional mental properties: equanimity (*upekkhā*), mindfulness (*sati*) and awareness (*sampajañña*). This section aims to clarify the meaning of the passage “I experienced with my body that happiness (*sukhañca kāyena paṭisaṃvedesiṃ*).” This clarification relies on the exegetical issues of which type of happiness, and then whether or not this *sukha* (happiness) obstructs further mental development.

Although the literal translation of this passage is “I experienced with my body that happiness,” the happiness belonging to the third *jhāna* is a pleasant mental feeling rather than physical feeling. In the *Bahuvedanīyasutta*, the Buddha distinguishes the happiness belonging to the third *jhāna* from the happiness associated with the sense pleasures, since the former is more excellent and more

²⁶⁸ M.I.22: “*Pītiyā ca virāgā upekkhako ca vihāsiṃ sato ca sampajāno sukhañ-ca kāyena paṭisaṃvedesiṃ yantaṃ ariyā ācikkhanti: upekkhako satimā sukhavihārī ti tatiyaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja vihāsiṃ.*”

sublime than the latter.²⁶⁹ Moreover, the *Pāsādikasutta* points to the happiness arising from the third *jhāna* as a spiritual happiness born of the detachment from sense-desires without any indulgence in the pleasures of the five senses.²⁷⁰ On these discourses, the happiness in the passage “I experienced with my body that happiness” is mental happiness born of mental contact rather than of physical feeling. According to the later canonical *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, it is explicitly defined in this sense in the *Vibhaṅga*: “That mental concomitant which is ease, mental concomitant which is happiness, the felt ease and happiness born of mental contact, easeful and happy feeling born of mental contact. This is called happiness”²⁷¹ The misinterpretation of the term “*kāya* (body)” could lead to the wrong conclusion that the happiness arising from the third *jhāna* is born of sense pleasures. In the *Visuddhimagga*, Buddhaghosa interprets the term ‘*kāya*’ here as a mental body (*nāmakāya*): “he would feel the bliss associated with his mental body” and then specifies a pleasant mental feeling in the third *jhāna*.²⁷² Upatissa agrees with him through the explanation of *kāya* as perception (*saññā*), mental-formation (*saṅkhāra*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*), which are the constituents of the mind.²⁷³ Gunaratana not only claims that the term ‘*sukha*’ refers to mental happiness, rather than physical, but he further remarks that the exceedingly mental happiness causes physical happiness to arise.²⁷⁴ Solé-Leris, while explicitly interpreting *kāya* as physical body, also proposes that happiness of the third *jhāna* existing at the mental level comprises of a pleasant feeling at the physical level.²⁷⁵ We can see here that the canonical texts and the commentaries coincide with the nature of *jhāna* attainment, which is inaccessible by the five senses: eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body.

²⁶⁹ M.I.398-399.

²⁷⁰ D.III.131.

²⁷¹ Vibh.259: “*Yaṃ cetasikaṃ sātāṃ cetasikaṃ sukhaṃ cetosamphassaṃ sātāṃ sukhaṃ vedayitaṃ cetosamphassajā sātā sukhā vedanā: idaṃ vuccati sukhaṃ.*”

²⁷² *Vism.* 163 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 169).

²⁷³ Upatissa, op. cit., p. 107.

²⁷⁴ Henepola Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., p. 117.

²⁷⁵ Solé-Leris, op. cit., p. 64.

Nonetheless, after saying that *sukha* is felt with the body, and is the meditator's experience of delightful bodily feelings, Bucknell interprets the happiness in the third *jhāna* as physical feeling rather than pleasant mental feeling.²⁷⁶ Varma shares this opinion.²⁷⁷ Their viewpoint shows that they interpret the passage "I experienced with my body that happiness" as always perceiving happiness with the physical body. Instead of perceiving bodily feeling, Brahmavamso argues that all five senses are totally shut off within all *jhāna* states.²⁷⁸ His assessment of *jhāna*'s characteristic is reasonable because it concurs with the two qualities of the third *jhāna* which are one-pointedness of mind (*cittassekaggatā*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*). These characteristics of the *jhānas* and *sukha* are also compatible with Gunaratana's statement: "The happiness of *jhāna* is a spiritual happiness born of seclusion from sense pleasures and the hindrances."²⁷⁹ Therefore, it is evident that *sukha* in the third *jhāna* is mental happiness isolated from sense pleasures.

This evaluation of *sukha* in the third *jhāna* indicates that the happiness arising from the process of *samatha* signifies the correct path of mental development. According to the discourse entitled the *Laṭṭikopamasutta*, the Buddha classifies two types of happiness as happiness of sense pleasure and happiness of its renunciation. He disregards the former as fearful and unsuitable but regards the latter, which is linked to the four *jhānas* as happiness of self-awakening and as suitable to be involved in and developed.²⁸⁰ That the happiness of the four *jhānas* contributes to the soteriological goal is similarly reflected in the *Pāsādikasutta*.²⁸¹ Some scholars, in contrast, argue that the happiness of *jhānas* obstructs the ultimate truth or misleads. For instance,

²⁷⁶ R. Bucknell, "Reinterpreting the *Jhanas*," op. cit., p. 399.

²⁷⁷ Vishwanath Prasad Varma, op. cit., p. 289.

²⁷⁸ Brahmavamso, op. cit., p. 42.

²⁷⁹ Henepola Gunaratana, op. cit., p. 85.

²⁸⁰ M.I.454.

²⁸¹ D.III.131-132.

Rahula argues that the *jhāna* states have nothing to do with reality and that they are involved only with happy living.²⁸² Besides this, Khantipalo interprets the happiness in the third *jhāna* as leading to attachment to happiness, without progression to higher states.²⁸³

It would appear from the above viewpoints that happiness in the *jhāna* does not entail the soteriological goal and is a potential object of attachment. However, if the meditator should fear the grasping of happiness in the *jhānas*, why then would the Buddha offer the following statement on the first *jhāna*:

I am not afraid of that happiness, which has nothing to do with other than sense pleasures, and nothing to do with unwholesome states of mind.²⁸⁴

He not only rejects the fear of happiness in the *jhāna*, but further proclaims that this happiness is the way to awakening.²⁸⁵ From the Buddha's words, we can see that the fearful attachment refers to the comfort and pleasure perceived through the five senses, but not to the wholesome phenomena that *jhānas* offer. This aspect of happiness in *jhānas* is explained by Brahmavamsa: “*Jhāna* states are stages of letting go. One cannot be attached ‘to letting go;’ just as one cannot be imprisoned by freedom”²⁸⁶ Thus the meditator should not fear the happiness arising from the process of ‘letting go’ in *samatha*. As *nibbāna*, the ultimate goal of Buddhism, is the best happiness,²⁸⁷ during the process wherein *samatha* is accompanied by *vipassanā*, this happiness will impel the meditator along the path to enlightenment.

Finally, there are some issues involved in the term ‘*sukha* (happiness)’ when it is used in relation to the third *jhāna*. This type of happiness, of course, is a

²⁸² Walpola Rahula, op. cit., p. 68.

²⁸³ Bhikkhu Khantipalo, op. cit., p. 59.

²⁸⁴ M.I.247: “*na kho ahaṃ tassa sukhassa bhāyāmi yan-taṃ sukhaṃ aññatr’eva kāmehi aññatra akusalehi dhammehīti.*”

²⁸⁵ M.I.247.

²⁸⁶ Brahmavamsa, op. cit., p. 8.

²⁸⁷ Dh 203.

mental feeling born of seclusion from pleasures of the senses and unwholesome states. As this happiness arises from the stage of letting go involved in *samatha*, the meditator should not fear any attachment to it. Moreover, not only does this type of happiness serve as a good indicator of the proper method of mental development but also needs to be accumulated through the process of *samatha* and *vipassanā* in order to attain *nibbāna*.

The fourth *Rūpajjhāna*

Having achieved the fivefold mastery in the third *jhāna*, the meditator will continue with the process of *samatha* to cultivate the more profound peaceful state of the fourth *jhāna*. After giving up all happiness and pain to realize the state beyond pleasure and sorrow, the progress of mental development which leads from the third to the fourth *jhāna* is accomplished. While concentration advances with a higher intensity, the one factor, namely *sukha*, is abandoned with the concomitant occurrence of neither-pain-nor-happiness feeling (*adukkhamasukha-vedanā*). Simultaneously; there are only two distinctive factors remaining: equanimity (*upekkhā*) and mental unification (*ekaggatā*).

The standard formula of the fourth *jhāna* is as follows:

With the abandoning of happiness and pain and with the earlier disappearance of pleasures and sorrows, I entered and remained in the fourth *jhāna*, which has neither pain nor happiness and has purity of mindfulness due to equanimity.²⁸⁸

Concurrently, considering the phrase “has purity of mindfulness due to equanimity,” this formula announces collaboration between *samatha* and *sati*. The goal of the appraisal of the fourth *jhāna* is to inquire into the relationship between the two meditative practices, *samatha* and *satipaṭṭhāna*, and into the existence of *sukha* within the fourth *jhāna*. This issue can be examined through

²⁸⁸ M.I.22: “*Sukhassa ca pahānā dukkhassa ca pahānā pubbeva somanassadomanassānaṃ atthaṅgamā adukkhamasukhaṃ upekkhāsatipārisuddhiṃ catutthaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja vihāsim.*”

the exegetical account of the two *Pāli* terms, *upekkhāsatipārisuddhi*²⁸⁹ and *adukkhāmasukha* (neither-pain-nor-happiness).

According to an analysis of the term ‘*upekkhāsatipārisuddhi*,’ the processes of *samatha* at the state of fourth *jhāna* is compatible with the *satipaṭṭhāna* practice. Before commencing the analysis, the two terms, *satipaṭṭhāna* and *upekkhāsatipārisuddhi* need to be explained. First, the term ‘*satipaṭṭhāna*’ involves the meditative practice mentioned in the discourse entitled the *Satipaṭṭhānasutta*, in which the Buddha describes the four foundations of mindfulness as contemplation of body (*kāyānupassanā*), feeling (*vedanānupassanā*), mind (*cittānupassanā*) and *dhamma* (*dhammānupassanā*). Second, the term ‘*upekkhāsatipārisuddhi*’ deals with the grammatical link between *upekkhā* (equanimity) and *sati* (mindfulness). The *Vibhaṅga* interprets their relationship as a causal connection: “This mindfulness, because of this equanimity, is cleared, purified and clarified. Therefore, this is called the purity of mindfulness due to equanimity.”²⁹⁰ Buddhaghosa accepts this interpretation and renders *upekkhāsatipārisuddhi* as “having purity of mindfulness due to equanimity;” that this is an attribute of the fourth *jhāna*.²⁹¹ Horner employs a *tappurisa* compound²⁹² to render *upekkhāsatipārisuddhi* “purified by equanimity and mindfulness.”²⁹³ These interpretations of *upekkhāsatipārisuddhi* share the viewpoint that the fourth *jhāna* and mindfulness are mutually dependent. Indeed, the right mindfulness is always identified with the four foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*).²⁹⁴

²⁸⁹ *Upekkhāsatipārisuddhi*, one element in the fourth *jhāna*, means the purity of mindfulness due to equanimity.

²⁹⁰ *Vibh.*261: “*Ayaṃ sati imāya upekkhāya vivaṭā hoti parisuddhā pariyodātā, tena vuccati Upekkhāsatipārisuddhin ti.*”

²⁹¹ *Vism.*167 (tr. Nāṇamoli p. 174).

²⁹² *Tappurisa* compounds are those in which the first member of the compound is in some case relationship with the second member (Warder, pp. 77-78).

²⁹³ I.B. Horner, (tr.) *The Collection of Middle Length Sayings*, vol. 1 of 3 vols., (London: Pali Text Society, 1954, 1957, 1959), p. 28.

²⁹⁴ D.II.313.

By means of these interpretations of the term ‘*upekkhāsatipārisuddhi*,’ we can see the phenomenological link between the process of *samatha* and *satipaṭṭhāna* in the fourth *jhāna*. Nonetheless, some scholars interpret *samatha* to be less important and separate from *satipaṭṭhāna*. For example, Nyanaponika classifies *satipaṭṭhāna* in the category of bare insight (*sukkha-vipassanā*), which is the meditative practice exclusive of attainment of any level of *jhāna*.²⁹⁵ Likewise, in *The Light of Wisdom*, Ruberu differentiates *satipaṭṭhāna* from the attainment of *jhāna* as an independent course of meditation for the sole purpose of developing *paññā bhāvanā*.²⁹⁶ But these opinions do not agree with what the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta* conveys. In this discourse, the section that explains the preparatory exercise of the four foundations of mindfulness concludes with the expression “having removed craving and aversion towards the world (*vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ*).”²⁹⁷ In the clarification of the term ‘*abhijjhādomanassaṃ*,’ Buddhaghosa interprets *abhijjhā* as *kāmachanda* (sensual desire) and *domanassaṃ* as *byāpāda* (ill will), which are two of the five hindrances. He then goes further in this preparatory exercise to identify *abhijjhādomanassaṃ* with the removal of the entire set of the five hindrances.²⁹⁸ Indeed, as explained earlier, the removal of the five hindrances can be fulfilled through the process of *samatha* at the level of the first *jhāna*. Therefore, Buddhaghosa’s interpretation of the term ‘*abhijjhādomanassaṃ*’ highlights the relation between *satipaṭṭhāna* and *samatha*.

Further examination of the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta*, in the light of the six sections of the observation of body reveals that the process of *samatha* agrees with *satipaṭṭhāna* practice. The six sections²⁹⁹ the Buddha proclaims in the

²⁹⁵ Nyanaponika, op. cit., p. 103.

²⁹⁶ Jayantha Ruberu, *The Light of Wisdom or Emancipation through Right Understanding*, 1st vol. (Dehiwala: Sridevi, 2002), pp. 265-266.

²⁹⁷ D.II.290.

²⁹⁸ Sv.III.759.

²⁹⁹ The six sections are: section on respiration (*ānāpānāpabba*), section on postures (*iriyāpathapabba*), section on awareness (*sampajānāpabba*), section on reflections on repulsiveness (*paṭikūlamanasikārapabba*),

*Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta*³⁰⁰ match with the meditative practice of mindfulness of body described in the *Kāyagatāsatisutta*.³⁰¹ In this discourse, it is found that this meditative practice regarding the mindfulness of body results in the attainment of the four *jhānas*.³⁰² If *samatha* and *satipaṭṭhāna* are totally different from each other, there would be no causal link between the practices of observing the body in meditation and the development of the four *jhānas*. Further consideration of their relation is revealed by the discourse pertaining to the *Great Forty (Mahācattārīsakasutta)* which specifies perfect mindfulness (*sammāsati*) as a prerequisite to perfect concentration (*sammāsamādhi*):

And what, monks, is noble perfect concentration with its causes and its requisites? That is, perfect view, perfect intention, perfect speech, perfect action, perfect livelihood, perfect effort and perfect mindfulness. Whatever one-pointedness of mind, monks, is equipped with these seven factors. This, monks, is called noble perfect concentration with its causes and its requisites.³⁰³

This relationship between *satipaṭṭhāna* and *samatha*, in the *Mahācattārīsakasutta* discourse, indicates that *satipaṭṭhāna*, as perfect mindfulness (*sati*), plays a pre-conditional role to *samatha*. Thus, an examination of the *satipaṭṭhāna* discourse accompanied by textual evidence collaborate the relation between *samatha* and *satipaṭṭhāna*, as does the evaluation of the term ‘*upekkhāsatipārisuddhi*’ in the fourth *jhāna*.

The detailed examination of the term ‘*adukkhamasukha* (neither-pain-nor-happiness)’ reveals that *samatha*, the process of achieving absorbed concentration, is also the process that gives rise to spiritual happiness. Although the factor of happiness (*sukha*) is abandoned in the fourth *jhāna*, the canonical

section on the reflections on the material elements (*dhātumanasikārapabba*) and section on nine types of corpse (*navasivathikapabba*) (D.II.292-298).

³⁰⁰ D.II.290-298.

³⁰¹ M.III.89-92.

³⁰² M.III.97-98.

³⁰³ M.III.71: “*Katamo ca, bhikkhave, ariyo sammāsamādhi sa-upaniso sapaṛikkhāro? Seyyathīdam: sammādiṭṭhi, sammāsaṅkappo, sammāvācā, sammākammanto, sammā-ājīvo, sammāvāyāmo, sammāsati. Yā kho, bhikkhave, imehi sattahaṅgehi cittassa ekaggatā paṛikkhatā, ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, ariyo sammāsamādhi sa-upaniso iti pi, sapaṛikkhāro iti pi.*”

texts through their interpretation of the term ‘*adukkhamasukha*’ substantiate the presence of happiness peculiar to the fourth *jhāna*. It is clear in the classification of concentration that all four *jhānas* represent the category of concentration and, when practiced and expanded, that leads simultaneously to happiness.³⁰⁴ Likewise, in the *Bahuvedanīyasutta*, the Buddha states that the ascent from *jhāna* to *jhāna* coincides with the progressive experience of happiness.³⁰⁵ Based on the Buddha’s teaching, it is obvious that happiness exists in the attainment of the fourth *jhāna*. In contrast, Rhys Davids points out the absence of happiness there as indicated by the term ‘*adukkhamasukha*’ which means ‘without pain and without ease.’³⁰⁶ In the *Middle Length Sayings*, I.B. Horner seconds this sentiment when she refers to: “the fourth meditation (*jhāna*) which has neither anguish nor joy.”³⁰⁷

If their interpretation of *adukkhamasukha* is correct, the argument for the absence of *sukha* in the fourth *jhāna* would agree with the Buddha’s statement. An assertion is given in the translation of *Pāsādikasutta* that a type of *sukha* is perpetuated despite the removal of *sukha* and *dukkha vedanā* (feeling) as expressed in the following statement “Monk enters and remains in the fourth *jhāna*, which has neither pain nor *happiness* and has purity of mindfulness due to equanimity (the stereotype formula of the fourth *jhāna*). These are the four kinds of beings addicted and devoted to *happiness* (*Ayaṃ catuttho sukhallikānuyogo*).”³⁰⁸ These dichotomous viewpoints can be reconciled through the evaluation of *adukkhamasukha*. The *Saṅgītisutta* classifies *adukkhamasukha* into one of the threefold division of *vedanā* (feeling).³⁰⁹ The *Vibhaṅga* qualifies the Sāriputta’s statement further and explains

³⁰⁴ D.III.222-223.

³⁰⁵ M.I.398-400.

³⁰⁶ T.W. Rhys Davids, (tr.) *Dialogues of the Buddha*, v 1, (London: Pali Text Society, 1899), p. 86.

³⁰⁷ I.B. Horner, (tr.), op. cit., p. 28.

³⁰⁸ D.III.131-132.

³⁰⁹ D.III.216.

adukkhamasukha as: “That mental concomitant which is neither ease nor unease, the felt neither-pain-nor-happiness born of mental contact, neither-pain-nor-happiness feeling born of mental contact – therefore, this is called *adukkhamasukha*.”³¹⁰ In collaboration with these canonical texts, the *Visuddhimagga* interprets *adukkhamasukha* as the equanimous feeling (*upekkhāvedanā*) that is opposed to pain (*dukkha*) and to happiness (*sukha*). It should be noted here that the term *adukkhamasukha* does not signify the mere absence of *dukkha* and *sukha*. This feeling is called ‘neither-pain-nor-happiness (*adukkhamasukha*),’ whose role is the experience of the neutral feeling.³¹¹ Gunaratana agrees with this interpretation of *adukkhamasukha*: “This is the feeling of neither-pain-nor-pleasure (*adukkhamasukha*).” Gunaratana also proposes an important point that *adukkhamasukha* figures as a factor of the fourth *jhāna* and substitutes the factor of *sukha*.³¹² This substitution corresponds with the substitution of perception of happiness with that of the perception of *adukkhamasukha* as shown in the *Poṭṭhapādasutta*

His earlier perception of a refined truth of happiness born from equanimity ceases, and on that occasion there is a perception of refined truth of neither-pain-nor-happiness.³¹³

In the fourth *jhāna*, the perception of *sukha* passes away but not *sukha* itself. Moreover, *upekkhāvedanā* (equanimous feeling) in terms of *adukkhamasukha* performs the abandonment of *sukha* through its predominant feature of perceiving neutrality. Therefore the interpretation of *adukkhamasukha* as equanimity provides validity to the existence of *sukha* and the absence of the perception of happiness (*sukhavedanā*) in the fourth *jhāna*.

³¹⁰ Vibh.261: “*yaṃ cetasikaṃ neva sātaṃ nāsātaṃ cetosamphassaṃ adukkhamasukhaṃ vedayitaṃ cetosamphassajā adukkhamasukhā vedanā, Tena vuccati adukkhamasukhan ti.*”

³¹¹ *Vism.* 167 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 174).

³¹² Henepola Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., p. 122.

³¹³ D.I.183: “*Tassa yā purimā upekkhā-sukha-sukhuma-sacca-saññā, sā nirujjhati. Adukkha-m-asukha-sukhuma-sacca-saññā tasmim samaye hoti*”

In conclusion, a detailed study of the term ‘*upekkhāsatipārisuddhi*’ in the fourth *jhāna* provides evidence for the development of *samatha* in association with the process of *satipaṭṭhāna*. In addition, these two rather distinct qualities of *samatha* and *satipaṭṭhāna* were to be harmonized by examining the preparatory exercise and the six sections of the observation of body in the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta*. In the fourth *jhāna*, while the factor of happiness is abandoned, the detailed study of the term ‘*adukkhamasukha*’ indicates the existence of *sukha* therein. Indeed *sukha* advances into the subtle state influenced by the perfect peace of equanimity; that is, it seems to disappear because the perception of *sukha* is dominated by the perception of equanimity

The Four Arūpajjhānas (Non-rūpajjhānas)

Beyond the four *rūpajjhānas* lie the four higher attainments, namely, *arūpajjhānas*, attained by replacing a relatively gross object with a subtler one. The term ‘*arūpajjhāna*’ is commonly rendered as ‘immaterial’³¹⁴ or ‘formless’³¹⁵ *jhāna*. Despite this, in the following section, the psychological and terminological analysis of the term ‘*arūpajjhāna*’ points to ‘non-*rūpajjhāna*’ as its appropriate translation. These four attainments can be individually designated by way of their respective objects: the sphere of infinite space (*ākāśānañcāyatana*), the sphere of infinite consciousness (*viññānañcāyatana*), the sphere of no-thing-ness (*ākīñcaññāyatana*), and the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*). While the *rūpajjhānas* progress by the elimination of mental factors, the two factors of the *arūpajjhānas*, equanimity and one-pointedness of mind, remain constant, but the factors in each higher attainment become subtler and more peaceful than those in its preceding states. The determination of the characteristics of the *arūpajjhānas* reveals the existence of their purified and subtle mental factors gradually advancing from the fourth *rūpajjhāna* and providing the Buddhist

³¹⁴ Henepola Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., p. 129.

³¹⁵ Solé-Leris, op. cit., p. 67.

deliverance. The characteristics of *arūpajjhānas* come to light by considering the translation of the term ‘*arūpajjhāna*,’ the development of the first *arūpajjhāna*, the implication of the term ‘*ākiñcaññāyatana*’ and their relationship with the path of liberation.

The implication of the technical terminology of the term ‘*arūpajjhāna*’ points out that ‘formless’ or ‘immaterial’ is not an appropriate translation for the meaning of *arūpa*; rather ‘non-*rūpa*’ is a suitable translation. Most scholars tend to translate *arūpa* as ‘formless or immaterial.’ For instance, Gunaratana give two reasons for referring to it as ‘immaterial.’ The first reason is that it surmounts all perception of material forms including the concentrative object of the *rūpajjhānas*. The second reason is that after passing away, the meditator, who can attain the *arūpajjhānas*, is reborn in the realm of the immaterial.³¹⁶ Solé-Leris supports the first reason: “...considers the precarious and unsatisfactory nature of physical matter in all its forms (the concentrative object of the *rūpajjhānas*), and of the perceptions relating thereto and, in order to transcend this situation.”³¹⁷ Likewise, Bhikkhu Bodhi renders it as ‘immaterial’ through the interpretation of the term ‘*rūpa*’ as perception of visualized images: “in which the mind transcends even the subtlest perception of visualized images still sometimes persisting in the *jhānas*.”³¹⁸ Indeed, all emotional and intellectual contact with the material form has already been withdrawn at the preceding states of *rūpajjhāna*.³¹⁹ Accordingly, the translation of *arūpajjhāna* as ‘formless’ due to its surmounting of all material forms appears to be redundant. In addition, if *rūpa* means the subtle material form of the concentrative object, the question arises as to how formless attainment depends on the perception of

³¹⁶ Henepola Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., p. 129.

³¹⁷ Solé-Leris, op. cit., p. 68.

³¹⁸ Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Noble Eightfold Path- The Way to the End of Suffering* (Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1994), p.51.

³¹⁹ Paul Griffiths, "Buddhist Jhana: A Form-Critical Study," op. cit., p. 62.

the concentrative object. The study argues that the classification of the *arūpajjhānas* relies on their mental object of concentration.³²⁰

It may be that the discrepancy between formless attainments and their object of concentration should be reconciled through the other semantic feature of the term ‘*arūpa*.’ The semantic application of compounds comprises two main approaches to the meaning of *arūpa*: one, by analysing it as a *bahubbīhi* compound,³²¹ the other as a *kammadhāraya* compound.³²² Most scholars, of course, employ the first type of compound to interpret it as ‘formless’ or ‘immaterial,’ which seems to express the vacuity of a mind passing into a confused state of unconscious exaltation. By contrast, there is a very peaceful perception in the *arūpajjhānas* because they induce a greater depth of happiness.

The happiness which has *rūpajjhāna* as an object and the happiness which has *arūpajjhāna* as an object. These, monks, are the two happiness. Of these two happiness, monks, the happiness, which has *arūpajjhāna* as an object, is the best.³²³

This discourse in the *Sukhavagga* reflects the existence of a mental object of concentration in the *arūpajjhāna*, which is more subtle than the *rūpajjhāna*. It is therefore more reasonable to employ the second type of compound to render *arūpajjhāna* as non-*rūpajjhāna* because *arūpajjhāna* employs objects of concentration that are more subtle and distinctly separate from the *rūpajjhāna*. Besides this, the distinction between the two concentrative attainments is clearly stated in the *Poṭṭhapādasutta*, where the Buddha describes the concentrative practice which leads to the graded series of perception (*saññā*). During the progression of concentration, the refined perception of the first

³²⁰ Edward Fitzpatrick Crangle, op. cit., p. 196.

³²¹ *Bahubbīhi* compound is a class of compounds, which function as adjectives. The meanings of words are more specific than their members. Prefix *a* of *arūpa* means ‘less.’ (Warder, p. 137)

³²² *Kammadhāraya* compound is a class of compounds which the first member is an attribute of the second. For the word *arūpa*, prefix *a* acts as the negative formation of *rūpa*. (Warder, p. 108)

³²³ A.I.82: “*Rūpārammaṇaṇca sukhaṃ arūpārammaṇaṇca sukhaṃ. Imāni kho bhikkhave dve sukhāni. Etadaggaṃ bhikkhave imesaṃ dvinnāṃ sukhānaṃ yadidaṃ arūpārammaṇaṃ sukhāni ti.*”

arūpajjhāna arises as a result of the cessation of the perception of the fourth *rūpajjhāna*.³²⁴ Since *arūpajjhāna* has a subtle and actual ‘object’ of perception which is separate from the *rūpajjhāna*, it is therefore appropriate to define *arūpajjhāna* as non-*rūpajjhāna*.

Regarding the continual progress of *samatha* in the *jhānas*, the first *arūpajjhāna* should be directly developed from the fourth *rūpajjhāna* without being limited by the type of the object of meditation. Indeed, Buddhaghosa proposes two concentrative techniques that could be used to attain the first *arūpajjhāna*. These include mastery over the fourth *rūpajjhāna* and the contemplation of the defective features of the fourth *rūpajjhāna*.³²⁵ After having mastered of the fourth *rūpajjhāna*, Buddhaghosa suggests that the meditator consequently emerge from the fourth *rūpajjhāna* and contemplate on its defective features. On the one hand, this work agrees with him in the first concentrative technique because the first *arūpajjhāna* and the fourth *rūpajjhāna* share the same two factors, namely, equanimity and one-pointedness, but these factors are more subtle in the former. On the other hand, the second technique implies that it is apparently not possible to go directly from the fourth *rūpajjhāna* to the first *arūpajjhāna*. In order to review the imperfect features of the fourth *rūpajjhāna*, the meditator needs to return to the normal state of consciousness, and go through the usual concentrative stages of acquired image, counterpart image and access concentration. This technique of reviewing imperfect features causes the process of *samatha* to be discontinued, and the course of concentration to be retrograded. In addition, this review process disagrees with the viewpoint of gradual mode of spiritual progress without abruptness as proclaimed by the Buddha in the *Pahārādasutta*:

Pahārāda, just as the great ocean has a gradual incline, a gradual leading, a gradual slope, not in an abrupt way like a precipice; even so, Pahārāda, in

³²⁴ D.I.183.

³²⁵ *Vism.*327 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 355).

this dhamma and discipline there is a gradual training, a gradual practice, a gradual mode of progress; there is no penetrated final knowledge in an abrupt way.³²⁶

It appears from the above statement that the first *arūpajjhāna* has to be directly developed from the fourth *rūpajjhāna* without the retrogressive practice of the contemplation of the defective features of the fourth *rūpajjhāna*. Also according to Kamalashila, Buddhist concentrative practice does not involve any manipulating techniques:

Getting into *dhyānas* (*jhānas*), remaining in it, and moving ‘up’ into higher *dhyānas*, is not only a matter of manipulating techniques like recognizing sinking and drifting. The *dhyāna* state is best not regarded as something you ‘get into.’ It is more like something that you are.³²⁷

The ascent from the fourth *rūpajjhāna* to the first *arūpajjhāna*, as Kamalashila’s statement illustrates, is brought about by a natural mental development into a more subtle, less difficult and less troublesome state, and not by manipulating techniques such as considering or reviewing the imperfect features of fourth *rūpajjhāna*.

Now that the concentrative technique of reviewing has been evaluated, the appropriate object of concentration that this concentrative technique refers to needs to be evaluated as well. For the development of the first *arūpajjhāna*, Buddhaghosa suggests that the meditator has to employ any of the nine *kasīnas*³²⁸- earth, water, fire, wind, blue, yellow, red, white and light- except limited space (*paricchinnākāsa*) as the object of concentration for the attainment of the fourth *jhāna*.³²⁹ Gunaratana agrees with him and further explains: “the limited space *kasīna* is unsuitable because it does not allow for a

³²⁶ A.IV.200-201: “*Seyyathā pi pahārāda mahāsamuddo anupubbaninno anupubbapoṇo anupubbapabbhāro, na āyataken’ eva papāto, evam eva kho pahārāda imasmim dhammavināye anupubbāsikkhā anupubbakiriyā anupubbapaṭipadā, na āyataken’ eva aññāpaṭivedho.*”

³²⁷ Kamalashila, *Meditation : The Buddhist Way of Tranquillity and Insight* (Glasgow: Windhorse Publications, 1992), p. 176.

³²⁸ *Kasīna* is device used as an initial subject of concentration.

³²⁹ *Vism.*326 (tr. Nāṇamoli p. 354).

separation between the *kaṣiṇa* itself and the space it covers.”³³⁰ However, Goleman is not concerned with the limitation of the limited space *kaṣiṇa* and proposes the development of the fourth *rūpajjhāna* through any type of *kaṣiṇa*.³³¹

In both cases, if the review of the defective features of the fourth *rūpajjhāna* is the prerequisite process for the development of the first *arūpajjhāna*, the meditator requires a form of *kaṣiṇa* to contemplate for surmounting the materiality of *kaṣiṇa* and entering into the first *arūpajjhāna*. It can be concluded that the first *arūpajjhāna* should be approached directly from the fourth *rūpajjhāna* without the interruption of the reviewing process. Moreover, since the selection of a concentrative object is effective at the basic step of preparatory image (*parikammanimitta*), such selection does not facilitate the arising of the very profound state of the first *arūpajjhāna*. Therefore, the meditator should cultivate the first *arūpajjhāna* directly from the fourth *rūpajjhāna* through any type of object of concentration initially.

The third *arūpajjhāna* (*ākiñcaññāyatana*) can be understood as the sphere consisting of no-thing-ness (*ākiñcañña*), whereas *ākiñcaññāyatana* signifies the very subtle state of perception. The reference to perception in *ākiñcaññāyatana* is found in the discourse entitled the *Poṭṭhapādasutta*, where the Buddha indicates the arising of a perception of the refined truth of *ākiñcaññāyatana* during the attainment of the third *arūpajjhāna*.³³² In this discourse, the term ‘*ākiñcaññāyatana*’ represents something like a refined perception. Other support for this idea comes from the *Bahuvedanīyasutta* that expresses the

³³⁰ Henepola Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., p. 131.

³³¹ Daniel Goleman, “Buddha on Meditation and States of Consciousness Part I,” in *Meditation Classic and Contemporary perspective*, eds. Deane H. Shapiro and Roger N. Walsh, New York: Aldine Pub. Co., pp. 317-359, p. 330.

³³² D.I.184.

sublime happiness of entering and abiding in the third *arūpajjhāna*.³³³ The next reference is found in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*:

Having surpassed completely the sphere of infinite consciousness, one enters and remains in the fourth *jhāna* which is accompanied by the perception of a sphere of nothingness....³³⁴

The attainment of the third *arūpajjhāna* appears to rely on focusing upon the perception of a sphere of nothingness. However, most scholars, for example Gunaratana,³³⁵ Nyanatiloka³³⁶ and Rhys Davids,³³⁷ translate *ākiñcaññāyatana* as the ‘base of nothingness’ or ‘sphere of nothingness,’ which seems to imply the state of ‘nothing-at-all.’ Likewise, Beyer renders it as the ‘realm of nothing-at-all.’³³⁸ Varma shares this approach with his translation of *ākiñcaññāyatana* as ‘no-thing-ness.’³³⁹ Goleman, in addition, interprets it as the ‘non-existence of any object.’ “that is, consciousness has as its object the awareness of absence of any object.”³⁴⁰ They seem to reject any perception or consciousness in the stage of no-thing-ness. Desaraṅsī also promotes this sentiment: “no perception appears to exist.”³⁴¹

Nevertheless, this interpretation of *ākiñcaññāyatana* as non-existence of any object could still be questioned on the grounds that the refined perception actually exists therein. If there is nothing at all in the state of *ākiñcaññāyatana*, it would be inexplicable why the canonical texts explicitly mention happiness and perception (*saññā*) in this state. The *Jhānasutta*, expresses not only perception (*saññā*) but also feeling (*vedanā*), mental-formations (*saṅkhāra*) and

³³³ M.I.399.

³³⁴ Dhs.56: “*Sabbaso viññāṇaṅcāyatanaṃ samatikkamma ākiñcaññāyatanaṃ saññāsaṅgataṃ...catutthaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.*”

³³⁵ Henepola Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., p. 136.

³³⁶ Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines*, op. cit., p. 71.

³³⁷ Caroline A. F. Rhys Davids, *Compendium of States of Phenomena*, 3rd ed., (London: Pali Text Society; 1974), p. 67.

³³⁸ Beyer, Stephan V., op. cit., p. 143.

³³⁹ Vishwanath Prasad Varma, op. cit., p. 272.

³⁴⁰ Daniel Goleman, op. cit., p. 330.

³⁴¹ Desaraṅsī, op. cit., p. 30.

consciousness (*viññāṇa*) arising with this state.³⁴² Similarly, Gunaratana suggests the very subtle state of consciousness in it that the third *arūpajjhāna* possesses the two profound mental factors, equanimity (*upekkhā*) and one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*), as well as one objective sphere, the sphere of no-thingness (*ākiñcaññāyatana*).³⁴³ His viewpoint is reasonable in that the other three *arūpajjhānas* also possess these factors and objective sphere. Therefore, the term ‘*ākiñcaññāyatana*’ implies an immensely subtle consciousness, which seems to be characterized by no-thingness because there exists no discrimination between subject and object.

The emphatic aim of *samatha* development into the mode of *arūpajjhānas* is a spiritual unification and purification which approaches the ultimate goal. This aim can be fulfilled by verifying “whether or not the meditator can achieve the Buddhist liberation through the concentrative path of *arūpajjhānas*.” Having regarded all *jhānic* processes, including the *arūpajjhānas*, as prior conditions to the destruction of the cankers, the *Jhānasutta* indicates the requirement of *arūpajjhānas* for the ultimate goal.³⁴⁴ Furthermore, Vajirañāṇa gives an explanation that the attainment of *arūpajjhāna* leads to supernatural knowledge (*abhiññā*), and that all is subsumed into the one single process which induces the eternal peace of *nibbāna*.³⁴⁵ This explanation is acceptable because the mind, progressing into the *arūpajjhāna* states, becomes intense and gets rid of all defiling factors.³⁴⁶

However, some scholars contest the relationship between *arūpajjhāna* and the path of liberation. For instance, Gunaratana writes: “the attainment of the immaterial *jhānas* and the exercise of supernormal powers (*iddhi*) are not

³⁴² A.IV.425-426.

³⁴³ Henepola Gunaratana, op. cit., pp. 129-130.

³⁴⁴ A.IV.425-426.

³⁴⁵ Vajirañāṇa Paravahera Mahathera, op. cit., p. 336.

³⁴⁶ Prakash Pathak, op. cit., p. 144.

essential to achieving the ultimate Buddhist goal.”³⁴⁷ Besides, Bhikkhu Bodhi also disregards the *arūpajjhāna* as lacking in wisdom: “these absorptions reached by the path of serenity meditation, as exalted as they are, still lack the wisdom of insight, and so are not yet sufficient for gaining deliverance.”³⁴⁸ This marginalization of *arūpajjhānas* is questionable when you analyze the list of eight liberations (*vimokkha*) and of the seven stations of consciousness (*viññāṇaṭṭhiti*).

The examination of the two groups of meditative practices demonstrates that *arūpajjhānas* are of crucial importance in the Buddhist liberating path. The graded exercises of eight liberations are described as follows:

- 1). Whilst remaining in the fine-material sphere (*rūpī*), one perceives corporeal forms.
- 2). Not perceiving corporeal forms on one’s own person, one perceives corporeal forms externally.
- 3). By thinking of the beautiful, one is filled with confidence.
- 4). The sphere of infinite space (*ākāsānañcāyatana*).
- 5). The sphere of infinite consciousness (*viññāṇaṇcāyatana*).
- 6). The sphere of no-thing-ness (*ākiñcaññāyatana*).
- 7). The sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*nevasaññā-nāsaññāyatana*).

³⁴⁷ Henepola Gunaratana, op. cit., p. 129.

³⁴⁸ Bhikkhu Bodhi, op. cit., p. 51.

8). The cessation of perception and feeling (*saññāvedayitanirodha*).³⁴⁹

In the *Mahānidānasutta*, the Buddha lists these eight liberations including the four *arūpajjhānas*, and suggests that it is necessary to master and perfect them in order to achieve Buddhist liberation.

Now, Ānanda, when a monk attains these eight liberations in forward order, and attains in reverse order, and attains in both orders consecutively, attaining them and emerging from them wherever he wishes, however he wishes, and for as long as he wishes, through his own supernatural knowledge in here and now and through the destruction of canker, he realizes, enters into and remains in the canker-free freedom of mind and freedom through wisdom.³⁵⁰

The eight liberations including the four *arūpajjhānas* convey the process of mental unification and purification until the cessation of perception and feeling (*saññāvedayitanirodha*) is attained. This leads to the invariable conclusion that in the Buddhist scheme of salvation, the proficiency in the eight liberations turns out to be the most efficient tool. The four *arūpajjhānas* are admittedly not an ultimate goal in itself, but the one and reliable means for the achievement of the ultimate goal. Moreover in the *Mahānidānasutta*, the Buddha lists the seven stations of consciousness (*viññāṇaṭṭhiti*) and two spheres (*āyatana*). The seven stations of consciousness are as follows:³⁵¹

- 1). There are beings, which are different in body, and different in perception.
- 2). There are beings, which are different in body, but equal in perception.
- 3). There are beings, which are equal in body, but different in perception.
- 4). There are beings, which are equal in body, and equal in perception.

³⁴⁹ Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines*, op. cit., p. 192.

³⁵⁰ D.II.71: “*Yato kho ānanda bhikkhu ime aṭṭha vimokkhe anulomam pi samāpajjati, paṭilomam pi samāpajjati, anuloma paṭilomam pi samāpajjati, yatth’ icchakaṃ yad icchakaṃ yāvad icchakaṃ samāpajjati pi vuṭṭhāti pi, āsavānaṅca khayā anāsavaṃ cetovimuttiṃ paññā-vimuttiṃ diṭṭheva dhamme sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharati.*”

³⁵¹ D.II.69-70.

5). There are beings, which are reborn in the sphere of infinite space (*ākāsānañcāyatana*).

6). There are beings, which are reborn in the sphere of infinite consciousness (*viññāṇañcāyatana*).

7). There are beings, which are reborn in the sphere of no-thing-ness (*ākīñcaññāyatana*).

The two spheres are; the sphere of beings without consciousness (*asaññīsattā*) and the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*). It is the comprehension of origination, passing away, advantages, disadvantages, and exit of the seven stations of consciousness and the two spheres induces the Buddhist liberation.

Now, Ānanda, when a monk, having known as they really are, the origination, the passing away, the pleasures, the miseries of, and the way of escape from, these seven stations of consciousness and two spheres, is freed through lack of attachment, he is, Ānanda, said to be a monk freed through wisdom.³⁵²

This passage leaves no doubt that the meditator needs to perform the mastery of the four *arūpajjhānas* in order to achieve the freedom through wisdom. So at least, looking from this aspect of the Buddha's teachings, the mastery of the four *arūpajjhānas* is one of the meditative exercises leading the meditator into the path of Buddhist deliverance.

This research has introduced and related the four aspects of the *arūpajjhānas*. Firstly, *arūpa* does not mean 'formless' or 'immaterial,' but implies 'non-*rūpa*' according to the semantic aspect of a *kammadhāraya* compound. The

³⁵² D.II.70: "Yato kho Ānanda bhikkhu imāsañ ca sattannaṃ viññāṇaṃtthitīnaṃ imesañ ca dvinnaṃ āyatanānaṃ Samudayañ ca atthaṅgamañ ca assādañ ca ādīnavañ ca nissaraṇaṃ ca yathābhūtaṃ veditvā anupādā vimutto hoti, Ayaṃ vuccati Ānanda bhikkhu paññā-vimutto."

interpretation of non-*rūpa* demonstrates that the *arūpajjhānas* are distinctly separate from the *rūpajjhānas* because of the sequential occurrence and refinement of objects. Secondly, the development of the first *arūpajjhāna* relies on the mastery of the fourth *rūpajjhāna*, but not on the contemplation of the defective features of the fourth *rūpajjhāna*. Consistent with the process of *samatha*, this advancement does not relate to any manipulating techniques, or to the limitation of the type of concentrative objects. Thirdly, the term ‘*ākiñcaññāyatana*’ implies the immensely subtle consciousness endowed with the two profound mental factors, equanimity (*upekkhā*) and one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*). This can be suggested to be no-thing-ness because it does not perform the discrimination between subject and object. Finally, the development of *samatha* into the mode of the four *arūpajjhānas* is the correct path leading to Buddhist liberation.

This chapter has so far considered *samatha* through three prominent features of the *jhānas*: an overview, the *rūpajjhānas* and the *arūpajjhānas*. Firstly, a semantic study of the term ‘*jhāna*’ reveals that the cultivation of *jhānas* gives rise to the progression of mental unification and purification, as does the process of *samatha*. Next, the process of *samatha*, understood through an examination of the *rūpajjhānas*, is a gradual and continual development into the more immense and subtle states of *ekaggatā* (one-pointedness) and *sukha* (happiness). And lastly, the development of *samatha* into the mode of the *arūpajjhānas* is an extremely pure and subtle perceptual structure and not the absence of any mental form, for the purpose of reaching the Buddhist ultimate goal.

Here the process of *samatha* becomes clear within the framework of the concentrative stages: *rūpajjhānas* and *arūpajjhānas*. Considering this, it would

be appropriate to further examine the process of *samatha* in terms of subjects of concentration.

Forty Concentrative Subjects

The *Pāli* canonical texts widely present various techniques whereby the process of *samatha* can be developed. For instance, in the *Mahāsakuludāyisutta*, the Buddha indicates the contemplation of ten spheres of *kaṣiṇas*³⁵³ for the consummation of supernatural knowledge.³⁵⁴ These are earth-*kaṣiṇa*, water-*kaṣiṇa*, fire-*kaṣiṇa*, air-*kaṣiṇa*, blue-*kaṣiṇa*, yellow-*kaṣiṇa*, red-*kaṣiṇa*, white-*kaṣiṇa*, space-*kaṣiṇa*, and consciousness-*kaṣiṇa*.

Again, Udāyi, I have declared the path whereby my disciples develop the ten spheres of *kaṣiṇa*. One perceives the earth-*kaṣiṇa* above, below, across, undivided and immeasurable. Another perceives the water-*kaṣiṇa*... And thereby many of my disciples remain having reached the perfection and consummation of supernatural knowledge.³⁵⁵

The *sutta* points to the contemplation of ten spheres of *kaṣiṇas* as support for the whole meditative process. The *Kāḷīsutta*³⁵⁶ points to the specific relationship between *kaṣiṇas* and *samatha*. In the discourse, Kāḷī, a female devotee, asks the *Bhikkhu* Mahākaccāna about the *jhāna* attainment of the Buddha. In his replies, the Buddha realized the origination, the danger, the escape, and the intuition and vision with regard to the right path and the wrong path, of these ten *kaṣiṇas*.

Having supernaturally known that (utmost attainment of the earth-*kaṣiṇa*), the Blessed One saw the origination, saw the miseries, saw the way of escape from and saw intuition and vision of what is path and not-path. As a cause of seeing the origination, a cause of seeing the miseries of, a cause of seeing the way of escape from and a cause of seeing intuition and vision of what is path and not-path, the accomplishment of goodness was known by the Buddha as peace of heart.³⁵⁷

³⁵³ *Kaṣiṇa* is a material object used as the physical basis to develop mental concentration (Nyanatiloka: *Buddhist Dictionary*, p. 80). It is a technical term and best left untranslated.

³⁵⁴ M.II.14-15.

³⁵⁵ M.II.14-15: “*Puna ca paraṃ, Udāyi, akkhātā mayā sāvakaṇaṃ paṭipadā, yathā paṭipannā me sāvakā dasa kaṣiṇāyatanāni bhāventi. Pathavīkaṣiṇaṃ eko sañjānāti uddhaṃ adho tiriyaṃ advayaṃ appamāṇaṃ, āokaṣiṇaṃ eko sañjānāti... Tatra ca pana me sāvakā bahū abhiññāvosaṇapāramippattā viharanti.*”

³⁵⁶ A.V.46-48.

³⁵⁷ A.V.47: “*Tad abhiññāya bhagavā ādim addasa ādīnavam addasa nissaraṇaṃ addasa*

From this realization, the Buddha attained peace of heart.

The next set of techniques³⁵⁸ concerns the impurities (*asubha*), which the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta* explains as nine stages of the decay of corpses.³⁵⁹ The greater number of ten stages is given in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* in relation to the first *jhāna*.³⁶⁰ Next, the six recollections³⁶¹ are grouped in the *Saṅgītisutta*.³⁶² Thus we can see the various techniques of concentration are found collectively and briefly in the canon.

The *Visuddhimagga* and the *Abhidhammaṭṭhasaṅgaha* appear to arrange these techniques via drawing out the implication of various canonical texts. This later Theravāda Buddhist tradition calls for forty specific subjects divided into seven categories enumerating the various concentrative subjects. These are the ten *kasiṇas*, the ten impurities (*asubha*), the ten recollections (*anussati*), the four divine abodes (*brahmavihāra*), the perception of repulsiveness of food (*āhārepaṭikūlasaññā*), one analysis of the four elements (*catudhātuvavatthāna*) and the four non-*rūpa* states.³⁶³

First, the ten *kasiṇas* consist of the four elements (earth, water, fire and air), the four colours (blue, yellow, red and white), light and limited space. Each *kasiṇa* is either a natural appearance of the element or a colour chosen, or a produced object such a coloured or elemental disk that the meditator uses for convenience

maggāmaggañānadassanam addasa. Tassa ādidassanahetu ādīnavadassanahetu nissaraṇadassanahetu maggāmaggañānadassanahetu atthassa patti hadayassa santi viditā hoti."

³⁵⁸ the dead body has been left for one, two or three days, 2) being devoured by animals, 3) a skeleton with flesh and blood, 4) a fleshless skeleton smeared with blood, 5) a skeleton without flesh and blood, 6) disconnected bones scattered in all directions, 7) bones bleached white, 8) year-old bones heaped up, 9) bones having rotted away to powder.

³⁵⁹ D.II.295-298.

³⁶⁰ Dhs.55.

³⁶¹ the recollections of Buddha (*buddhānussati*), the recollections of Dhamma (*dhammānussati*), the recollections of Saṅgha (*saṅghānussati*), the recollections of virtue (*sīlānussati*), the recollections of generosity (*cāgānussati*), and the recollections of the deities (*devatānussati*).

³⁶² D.III.250.

³⁶³ *Vism.*110-111 (tr. Ñāṇamoli pp. 112-113), Abhi-s.IX.6-12.

during the concentrative practice. As mentioned above, both Buddhaghosa and Anuruddha appear to replace the space-*kaṣiṇa* and consciousness-*kaṣiṇa* of the *Mahāsakuludāyisutta* and the *Kālīsutta* with the limited space-*kaṣiṇa* and light-*kaṣiṇa*. Although the limited space-*kaṣiṇa* refers to the boundaries of the mental object of the space-*kaṣiṇa*, both *kaṣiṇas* are relevant to the same meditation object. It should be noted that the light-*kaṣiṇa* here is different from the consciousness-*kaṣiṇa* in the *suttas*. The light-*kaṣiṇa* pertains to the senses of sight and touch, while consciousness-*kaṣiṇa* is related to that of the mind.

Second, the ten impurities are the ten stages of the decay of corpses: the bloated, the livid, the festering, the cut-up, the gnawed, the scattered, the hacked and scattered, the bleeding, the worm-infested, and a skeleton. These stages of the decaying process of corpses serve to reduce the sensual pleasures derived from the appearance and wellbeing of one's own body. A similar form of meditative subjects appears in the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta* where the ensuing decomposition in nine stages, mentioned above, is described. Rather than drawing the method from the *sutta*, the commentators seem to draw these meditative subjects from the later canonical *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* which connects them with attainment of the first *jhāna*.³⁶⁴ These two texts may provide the different stages of practice but their discernment of the body's anatomical constitution correspondingly counteracts the sensual desires.

Third, the ten recollections (*anussati*) are: the recollections of Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha, virtue (*sīla*), generosity (*cāga*), and the deities (*devatā*), as well as mindfulness of death (*maraṇānussati*), mindfulness of the body (*kāyagatāsati*), mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*), and the recollection of peace (*upāsamānussati*). The *Saṅgītisutta*,³⁶⁵ the *Dasuttarasutta*³⁶⁶ and the

³⁶⁴ Dhs. 55

³⁶⁵ D.III.250.

*Anussatiṭṭhānasutta*³⁶⁷ list a set of the first six recollections. Other discourses³⁶⁸ provide an ample discussion of the practices associated with them, as well as listing their consequential advantages. The *Aṭṭhānavagga*³⁶⁹ places all ten recollections into the same category including the highest goal, that of *nibbāna*. The later commentaries, the *Visuddhimagga* and the *Abhidhammaṭṭhasaṅgaha*, take the ten recollections as the set of means for developing faith and concentration.

Fourth, the four divine abodes (*brahmavihāra*) are the development of outwardly directed social attitudes: loving kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathy (*muditā*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*). These subjects are also referred to as immeasurable (*appamaññā*)³⁷⁰ because they are to be gradually extended in range until they encompass all living beings without qualification or exclusiveness. The methods and purposes of these meditative techniques appear throughout the *Pāli* canonical texts.³⁷¹ The *Visuddhimagga* seems to broaden these methods and purposes within the contexts of meditative subjects and of the moral values required for the maintenance of a harmonious society.³⁷²

Fifth, the perception of repulsiveness of food (*āhārepaṭikūlasaññā*) is the perceptual and reflective mode to contemplate on the disagreeable and repulsive aspects of food in order to avoid attachment. The *Dutiyasaññāsutta* states that *āhārepaṭikūlasaññā*, when developed, causes the goal of the deathless (*amata*) state to arise.³⁷³ The *Visuddhimagga* presents *āhārepaṭikūlasaññā* as an

³⁶⁶ D.III.280.

³⁶⁷ A.III.284.

³⁶⁸ The *Mahānāmasutta* (A.III.284-288) and the *Anussatiṭṭhānasutta* (A.III.312).

³⁶⁹ A.I.30.

³⁷⁰ *Vism.*321 (tr. Nāṇamoli p. 347).

³⁷¹ M.II.76, D.I.250-251, S.V.115-116, A.II.130.

³⁷² *Vism.*295-320 (tr. Nāṇamoli p. 321-347).

³⁷³ A.IV.49-50.

individual meditative subject of perception that arises as a means of reflecting on the repulsiveness of food.

Sixth, the analysis of the four elements (*catudhātuvavatthāna*) is the contemplation on the various parts of the body so as to reflect them as composed of four primary elements: earth, water, fire and air. The *Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta* briefly explains it in this way:

Again, monks, a monk considers this body, however it is placed, however disposed, as consisting of elements: ‘In this body, there are the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element.’³⁷⁴

A detailed account of each element is found in the *Mahāhatthipadopamasutta*,³⁷⁵ the *Dhātuvibhaṅgasutta*³⁷⁶ and the *Mahārāhulovādasutta*.³⁷⁷ Buddhaghosa vividly draws out and explores the method and technique of the contemplation of *catudhātuvavatthāna* from these discourses.³⁷⁸

Lastly, the four non-*rūpa* states are the objective bases for deep levels of concentration, namely, the sphere of infinite space (*ākāśānañcāyatana*), the sphere of infinite consciousness (*viññāṇañcāyatana*), the sphere of no-thingness (*ākiñcaññāyatana*), and the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*nevasaññā-nāsaññāyatana*). Their standard formulas of attainment appear throughout the *suttas*.³⁷⁹ The explanation found in the *Vibhaṅga*³⁸⁰ apparently belongs to the later canonical texts. In the *Visuddhimagga*, the formulas of the four non-*rūpa* states, as presented in the *suttas*, are further

³⁷⁴ D.II.294: “*Puna ca paraṃ bhikkhave bhikkhu imam eva kāyaṃ yathā-ṭhitaṃ yathā-pañihitaṃ dhātuso paccavekkhati: ‘Atthi imasmiṃ kāye paṭhavī-dhātu āpo-dhātu tejo-dhātu vāyo-dhātūti.’*”

³⁷⁵ M.I.185-188.

³⁷⁶ M.III.240-241.

³⁷⁷ M.I.421-422.

³⁷⁸ *Vism.* 347-348 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 380-382).

³⁷⁹ D.II.112, D.III.224, D.III.262, M.I.159.

³⁸⁰ *Vibh.*261-163.

explained.³⁸¹ Indeed, the forty subjects are always employed in reference to two aspects- their ability to effectuate the different by-products of concentration and their suitability for different personality types.

Before the commencement of *vipassanā*, *samatha* needs to be cultivated into a profound state through any subjects of concentration which are selected according to one's personality type. In order to evaluate subjects of concentration in relation to *samatha* and *vipassanā*, this section will explore their potentiality for the quality of concentration, the determination of the subjects of *arūpas* and the relation between the type of subjects and the commencement of *vipassanā*.

The purpose of selecting the type of subjects is to promote a stilling of the thought process according to different personality types, but it is not conducive to the quality of concentration. In the *Visuddhimagga*, Buddhaghosa classifies the forty subjects according to their ability to lead to a definite level of concentration. Of them, eight recollections excepting mindfulness of the body (*kāyagatāsati*) and mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*) plus perception of repulsiveness of food (*āhārepaṭikūlasaññā*) and analysis of four elements (*catudhātuvavatthāna*) lead only to access concentration (*upacārasamādhi*). The ten impurities (*asubha*) together with mindfulness of the body yield the first *jhāna*. The first three divine abodes lead to the lower three *jhānas*, whereas the divine abode of equanimity (*upekkhā*) will lead to the fourth *jhāna*. The ten *kaṣiṇa* and mindfulness of breathing can induce all four *jhānas*. The four *arūpa* themes are characteristics of four *arūpajjhānas* only.³⁸²

³⁸¹ *Vism.*326-340 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 354-371).

³⁸² *Vism.*111 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 113).

Buddhaghosa's classification of the subjects of concentration through consideration of their ability to lead to the quality of concentration, however, appears to be problematic in regard to consideration of two themes: the mental characteristics of *jhāna* and the development of mental images. First, regarding the development of *samatha*, the mental characteristics of the *jhānas* seems to leave out the external objects as Bhikkhu Bodhi states: “*samādhi*, as wholesome concentration, collects together the ordinarily dispersed and dissipated stream of mental states to induce an inner unification.”³⁸³ Moreover, Gunaratana rejects the perception of sense objects: “the mind entering upon the *jhānas* draws inwardly more deeply into itself – away from the sense objects.”³⁸⁴ It should be noticed that the mind, while entering the *jhānas*, rids itself of paying attention to all external objects. This idea would fit in with the second theme of the development of mental images. To approach the arising of the first *jhāna*, the meditator should cultivate the acquired image (*uggahanimitta*), which is the metallized *kaṣiṇa* disk produced and seen only through the mind independent of the sense activity of the eyes.³⁸⁵ This metallized *kaṣiṇa* disk would be the cooperative effect of all subjects, progressing into a higher level. Therefore, due to the concentrative states produced by a given subject, the different techniques of the forty subjects are distinguished at the concentrative state prior to the state of acquired image.

From this state, the quality of concentration depends on the conversion of the mental image into more profound, steadier and purer states, but not on the reflection of any type of subject. It can be concluded that the subjects of concentration, excepting the four *arūpa* states which lead to the four *arūpajjhānas*, play a role in inducing the level of concentration upon the

³⁸³ Bhikkhu Bodhi, op. cit., p. 46.

³⁸⁴ Henepola Gunaratana, op. cit., p. 13.

³⁸⁵ Nyanatiloka, *The Buddha's Path to Deliverance in Its Threefold Division and Seven Stages of Purity*, op. cit., p. 77.

acquired image; while in the higher stages of concentration, the meditator needs to develop the mental image into a more profound state without directing concentration toward any subject.

Even though the selection of the type of concentrative subjects is not necessary at a high quality of concentration, it might be necessary according to the consideration of different personality types. Of course, the meditator who possesses any one of the six temperaments; the greedy, the hating, the deluded, the faithful, the intelligent and the speculative can benefit from a subject that is suitable for promoting a slowing down and stilling of the thought process. These subjects of concentration are assigned as pragmatic guidelines to bring about the appropriate temperament for the development of *samatha*. Thus, the ten impurities and the mindfulness of the body are most suitable for the greedy type. The four divine abodes and four colour *kasīṇas* are best for the hating type. The first six recollections are most effective for the faithful type. Mindfulness of breathing is one recollection suitable for both the deluded and speculative types. The four subjects, mindfulness of death, recollection of peace, analysis of the four elements and perception of repulsiveness of food, are especially efficient for the intelligent type. The remaining six *kasīṇas* and the non-*rūpa* states are the proper subjects for all types of temperaments.³⁸⁶

According to a psychological analysis of the term ‘*rūpasāññā* (perception of matter),’ the subjects of *arūpa* states are immensely profound perceptions arising from the fourth *rūpajjhāna*. In the *Sallekhasutta*, the passing entirely beyond *rūpasāññā* indicates a progression from the fourth *rūpajjhāna* to the first *arūpajjhāna*.³⁸⁷ The term *rūpasāññā* means both *rūpajjhānas* and their objects as identified in the *Vibhaṅga*.

³⁸⁶ *Vism.* 114 (tr. Ñānamoli p. 117).

³⁸⁷ M.I.41.

Therein, what are *rūpasaññās*? The perception, perceiving and perceivedness of one who has attained a fine-material-sphere attainment or of one who has been reborn there or of one who is dwelling in happiness in this present life. These are called *rūpasaññās*.³⁸⁸

The passage brings to mind the perceiving quality of *rūpasaññā* in relation to the object of attainment of the *rūpajjhānas*. Buddhaghosa recommends the four *arūpa* states as suitable subjects for the arising of the four *arūpajjhānas*. In a detailed examination of the phrase “with the complete surmounting of perceptions of matter,” he interprets the terms ‘perceptions of matter’ as the concentrative states of the *rūpajjhānas* which have the refined matter of the *kaṣiṇas* for their objects.³⁸⁹ His interpretation of the *arūpajjhānas* as the advancement of concentration from the foundation of the *rūpajjhānas* coincides with the list of meditative stages stated in the *Anupubbavīhārasutta*.³⁹⁰ Thus, according to the *suttas*, the *Vibhaṅga* and the commentarial interpretation, the subjects of *arūpa* states can be understood to imply the profound state advancing from the fourth *rūpajjhāna*.

Nonetheless, Bucknell, while rejecting the arising of *arūpa* states from the fourth *jhāna*, interprets ‘*rūpa*’ as “with the complete surmounting of perceptions of matter.” For example, a physical object such as an actual *kaṣiṇa* disk, the breathing, or a chanted *mantra*.³⁹¹ Then he further states that the transition to *arūpajjhāna* is fulfilled through the arising of mental image, namely *uggahanimitta* (acquired image).³⁹² If *rūpa* means a physical object only, it is appropriate to interpret the subject of sphere of infinite space (*ākāśānañcāyatana*) as an acquired image. But this meaning of *rūpa* causes the interpretation of the sphere of infinite space to contradict the early Buddhist

³⁸⁸ Vibh.261: “*tattha katamā rūpasaññāyo? Rūpāvacarasamāpatti samāpannessa vā upapannassa vā diṭṭhadhammasukhavīhārissa vā saññā sañjānanā sañjānitattam: imā vuccanti rūpasaññāyo.*”

³⁸⁹ *Vism.*329 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 357-358).

³⁹⁰ A.IV.410.

³⁹¹ *Mantra* is one of the subjects of concentration in relation to the voice repetition.

³⁹² R. Bucknell, “Reinterpreting the *Jhanas*,” op. cit., p. 395.

texts. For instance, the *Poṭṭhapādasutta* clearly represents the arising of the perception of the sphere of infinite space (*ākāsānañcāyatana-sukhumasaccasaññā*) as a consequence of the perception of the fourth *rūpajjhāna*. Because the mind is ceased from all physical objects at the state of *rūpajjhāna*,³⁹³ the Buddha does not need to suggest surmounting them again in the state of the *arūpajjhānas*. Therefore, the four subjects of *arūpa* states are not the acquired images but are the refined objective spheres advancing from the fourth *rūpajjhāna*.

On a close investigation of the *Satipaṭṭhānasutta*, the arising of *vipassanā* relies on the deep state of concentration produced through any subjects of concentration. The relation between the intensity of concentration and the cultivation of intuition and vision is found in the *Saṅgītisutta*: “Here, friends, concentrative meditation, when developed and made much of, conduces to obtaining intuition and vision.”³⁹⁴ This relationship between *samādhi* and *ñāṇadassana* shows that the deep state of concentration developed through any subject of concentration is the predominant factor for the commencement of *vipassanā*. However, Dhammavisuddhikavi regards the mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*) as the effective subject for both *samatha* and *vipassanā*.³⁹⁵ Vajirañāṇa agrees: “Unlike other subjects of meditation *ānāpānasati* comprises both the *samādhi* and *vipassanā* methods.”³⁹⁶ In addition, he regards the subject of impurities as a suitable object for both *samatha* and *vipassanā*.³⁹⁷ He employs the two subjects only leading to *vipassanā* because they appear in the *Satipaṭṭhānasutta*.³⁹⁸ If the descriptions of

³⁹³ Brahmavaṃso, *The Jhānas*, p. 43

³⁹⁴ D.III.222: “*Atth’ āvuso samādhi-bhāvanā bhāvitā bahulī-katā ñāṇa-dassana-paṭṭilābhāyā saṃvattati.*”

³⁹⁵ Ven. Phra Dhammavisuddhikavi, *A Buddhist Way of Mental Training* (Bangkok: Chuan Printing Press, 2001), p. 98.

³⁹⁶ Vajirañāṇa Paravahera Mahathera, op. cit., p. 227.

³⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 169.

³⁹⁸ M.I.56.

*ānāpānasati*³⁹⁹ and the impurities (*asubha*)⁴⁰⁰ are completely consistent with the same sequence of the contemplation of the body in the *Satipaṭṭhānasutta*, both subjects would easily lead to the development of *samatha* and *vipassanā*. There is, however, a notable difference between the descriptions of both subjects and the mode of practice of *satipaṭṭhāna*. This mode of practice occurs after each of the meditation exercises described in the discourse as forming a necessary background for meditation techniques as shown:

Thus he remains experiencing body in the body internally, or externally, or both internally and externally. He remains experiencing origination-factors in the body, or he remains experiencing dissolution-factors in the body, or he remains experiencing both origination- and dissolution-factors in the body.⁴⁰¹

The mode of practice indicates that the scope of *satipaṭṭhāna* practice includes the state of deep concentration, which has the ability to contemplate the nature of the arising and passing away of the body.

Therefore, rather than typical concentration, the ability for deep concentration is of central importance in the development of *vipassanā*. This demonstrates that the mode of practice which is consequential of deep concentration performs the process of *vipassanā*, while the meditative exercises related to the subjects of *ānāpānasati* and impurities (*asubha*) cultivate the process of *samatha*. It has been shown that the intense level of concentration is the true factor for the arising of *vipassanā*, but the type of subject of concentration is not.

This conclusion suggests that, firstly, the choice of the appropriate types of concentrative subjects is due to one's temperament rather than to the limits of their concentrative effects. As a consequence, the concentrative experience

³⁹⁹ *Vism.*267 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 286).

⁴⁰⁰ *Vism.*178-179 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 185-186).

⁴⁰¹ M.I.56: “*Iti ajjhataṃ vā kāye kāyānupassī viharati, bahiddhā vā kāye kāyānupassī viharati, ajjhatabahiddhā vā kāye kāyānupassī viharati; samudayadhammānupassī vā kāyasmim viharati, vayadhammānupassī vā kāyasmim viharati, samudayavayadhammānupassī vā kāyasmim viharati.*”

according to personal types merges at the concentrative state of the acquired image and progresses through the development of mental image without being concerned with any physical subjects. Next, the subjects of the *arūpa* states are not acquired images, but very profound perceptions arising from the advancement of *samatha* until ascending beyond the fourth *rūpajjhāna*. Lastly, this section has argued that the commencement of *vipassanā* depends on a sufficiently profound level of concentration, cultivated through the process of *samatha* instead of through the particular type of concentrative subjects.

Conclusion

It has been argued in this chapter that *samatha* is related to one particular aspect of *samādhi* which is inner calmness. While some scholars distinguish it from mindfulness (*sati*), actually *samatha* is more closely associated with mindfulness because mindfulness is its prerequisite process and contributes to the attainment of the second and third *jhānas*. During the process of *samatha*, *vipassanā*, arising on the basis of *samatha*, has a crucial role to fulfil in the attainment of the profound state of supernatural knowledge and in Buddhist liberation. Both processes require antecedent practices that are: Buddhist moral habit (*sīla*), the three exercises- guarding the sense doors (*indriyasamvara*), moderation in eating (*bhojane mattaññutā*), and a habit of vigilance (*jāgariyānuyoga*)-, awareness (*sampajañña*) and mindfulness (*sati*), and dwelling in a secluded place (*viveka*). In this light, awareness (*sampajañña*) and mindfulness (*sati*) are not distinctly separate from *samatha*; rather these three qualities advance simultaneously, and are subsumed into one synthetic process. Consequently, *samatha* is developed through a relationship between two complementary subjects, the degree of concentration and the mental image, which correspond with one another at each level. Prior to the establishment of *vipassanā*, *samatha* needs to be cultivated through the conversion of the inward mental image into the set of advanced levels of absorption called *jhānas*, rather

than momentary concentration. The derivation of the term ‘*jhāna*’ implies the mental unification and purification that facilitate the development of full insight.

The arguments put forward in chapter two in regard to the *rūpajjhānas* can be summarized as follows. Even though one-pointedness is absent from the description of the first *jhāna* in the *sutta*, a detailed examination of the first *jhāna* shows that it is implicit there. During the development of the first *jhāna*, the following are the proper meditative techniques for the elimination of the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*), rather than the five factors: 1) discernment of repulsiveness (*asubhanimitta*), 2) mind’s release through loving-kindness (*mettācetovimutti*), 3) effort (*virīya*), 4) tranquillity of mind (*vūpasantacitta*), and 5) right attitude of attention (*yoniso manasikāra*) that are the proper meditative techniques for the elimination of the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*). Consequently, mental one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*), through whatever meditative method it arises, is the predominant factor in overcoming all hindrances. Since *samatha* is a gradual and uninterrupted process, then the ascent from *jhāna* to *jhāna* is fulfilled through the fivefold mastery of the preceding state, but not through reflection on the imperfection of its predecessor. An analysis of the third *jhāna* reveals that happiness born from the stage of letting go in *samatha* is the essential effect of proper meditative practice and needs to be accumulated through a process entailing both *samatha* and *vipassanā* in order to attain *nibbāna*. An examination of the term ‘*upekkhāsatipārisuddhi* (have purity of mindfulness due to equanimity)’ that is an attribute of the fourth *jhāna* suggests that these two rather distinct qualities of *samatha* and *satipaṭṭhāna* are harmonized.

Four issues have been discussed in the section on the *arūpajjhāna*. The first issue is to render *arūpa* as non-*rūpa* instead of saying formless or immaterial. The second is to develop the first *arūpajjhāna* through the mastery of the fourth *rūpajjhāna* without the manipulating technique of contemplating the defective features of the fourth *rūpajjhāna*. The third is to imply the term ‘*ākiñcaññāyatana*’ to be the immensely subtle consciousness rather than nothingness. In fact, it seems to be ‘no-thing-ness’ because it neglects the discrimination between subject and object. The last issue is a presentation of the evidence for the essence of the four *arūpajjhānas* in the attainment of the Buddhist liberation.

A study of the subjects of concentration has demonstrated that the concentrative subjects are all equally effective in inducing a deeper level of concentration. Hence, the appropriate type of concentrative subject is selected according to one’s own temperament. Next, the subjects of the four *arūpa* states are the very subtle perceptions which issue from the fourth *jhāna*. Lastly, the predominant factor for the commencement of *vipassanā* is a sufficiently profound level of concentration which is cultivated through any type of concentrative subject. Therefore, the development of *samatha* facilitates the arising of *vipassanā* and increases its potential for realizing the ultimate goal. In this chapter, an analytical and psychological approach to *samatha* has been explored in accordance to meditative practice and a clarification of its characteristics and its development into the structure of the *jhānas*. To clarify the path of complete realization, an analysis of not only *samatha*- as has been accomplished in this chapter- but also of *vipassanā*, is necessary. This thesis will therefore focus on *vipassanā* in the next chapter.

Chapter 3 *Vipassanā*

Introduction

While some related aspects of *vipassanā* were introduced in the previous chapter, in regard to the role and significance of *samatha*, this chapter is devoted to a detailed examination of the second meditative practice, *vipassanā*. The aim of this examination is to clarify the term ‘*vipassanā*,’ its effects, and its relationship with the other mental qualities, especially *samatha*.

Before embarking on a closer investigation of the process of *vipassanā*, the first section will examine *vipassanā* through its etymological characteristics. The study of the etymology focuses on the different semantic interpretations of *vipassanā* and the etymological analysis of the two terms: ‘*vi*’ and ‘*passanā*.’ The next section explores the significance of *vipassanā* by presenting its benefits in regard to three aspects: 1) the *jhānas*, 2) the cultivation of fivefold supernatural power (*abhiññā*) and 3) the so-called two Buddhist meditation paths leading to deliverance: the vehicle of serenity (*samathayāna*) and the vehicle of insight (*vipassanāyāna*).

Next, an investigation of the role of *samatha* in the context of *vipassanā* meditation and a survey of the level of *samatha* needed for the initiation of *vipassanā* are performed. This investigation involves two issues; 1) whether *samatha* is required at the beginning, the middle or the final stage of the process of *vipassanā*, and 2) which specific level of *samatha* operates at that state. This chapter continues to examine the general contribution of *samatha* to the development of *vipassanā* by means of an evaluation of five central features of *samatha*: 1) unsettled state of concentration, 2) momentary concentration, 3) access concentration, 4) deep concentration on *jhānas*, and 5) the ‘beyond’ mode of the *jhānas*. The study of the commencement of *vipassanā* in relation to

the four noble truths refers to the instructions drawn out from the *Dhammacakkappavattanasutta* (*Setting in Motion the Wheel of Truth*) which originates from the Buddha's own experience and that he taught a method he himself had just discovered and employed.

Then, this chapter will explore a product of *samatha* which must be developed in order to realize the four noble truths, which comprises the five instrumental factors of insight and that can be described as transcendental knowledge. These five factors are: 1) vision (*cakkhu*), 2) intuition (*ñāṇa*), 3) wisdom (*paññā*), 4) knowledge (*vijjā*) and 5) light (*āloka*). The analysis of vision (*cakkhu*) is based on three aspects: the analytical and psychological approach to the term 'cakkhu,' its relationship with the process of *samatha*, and the proper type of *cakkhu* for the arising of *vipassanā*. The term 'ñāṇa' will be examined in order to determine its implication, and whether or not it obstructs *vipassanā*. Its two aspects that relate to the *vipassanā-ñāṇa* and the fivefold supernatural knowledge (*abhiññā*) will also be discussed. An analysis of wisdom (*paññā*) will be performed by means of a phenomenological approach, together with an evaluation of the appropriate type of wisdom for *vipassanā* and then in regard to its relationship with *samatha*. Subsequently, the term 'vijjā' will be examined in regard to four issues: 1) the verification of the Buddhist threefold knowledge, 2) whether or not the *jhānas* are essential for the development of *vijjā*, 3) whether or not the Buddha is omniscient, and 4) according to an individual evaluation of each threefold *vijjā*. This work aims to explore some ideas and perspectives relating to the last instrumental factor, *āloka*, in regard to two topics: its contribution to the attainment of *vipassanā* and its characteristics during the process of *vipassanā*.

Finally, this chapter attempts to determine the true obstruction of *vipassanā* and then evaluates the three groups of mental factors: the ten imperfections of

vipassanā (*vipassanūpakkilesa*),⁴⁰² the five hindrances, and the eleven defilements (*upakkilesa*).⁴⁰³ The last section is devoted to an examination of the main functions of *vipassanā* and an analysis of two of its central aspects, that is, of the mental illumination and of meditation on the three characteristics of the five aggregates.

The Main Characteristic of *Vipassanā*

Vipassanā is a perfect realization of objective psychological reality which leads to a process of continually reflecting on phenomena as they really are; based on the three characteristics: impermanence (*anicca*), unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*) and not-self (*anattā*). The correct understanding and practice of *vipassanā* aims to gain perfect understanding of the real nature of phenomena and thus the end of suffering. Schools of *vipassanā* meditation teach different methods.⁴⁰⁴ Accordingly, clarification of the main characteristic of *vipassanā* can lead to the correct meditative practice. Unlike most scholars' interpretation of *vipassanā* as the process of perception, an etymological examination of the term *vipassanā* leads to the interpretation of its main characteristic as visual intuition.⁴⁰⁵ This examination will proceed to investigate the overview of scholars' opinions, the root meaning of the terms '*passanā*' and '*vi*,' and the translation of *vipassanā*.

An investigation of Buddhist psychology shows that *vipassanā* is a process involving mental vision, not a perceptual process as identified by some scholars, such as Goenka and Janakabhivamsa.⁴⁰⁶ Regarding Buddhist

⁴⁰² the ten imperfections of *vipassanā* are; illumination (*obhāsa*), intuition (*ñāṇa*), joy (*pīti*), rapture (*passaddhi*), happiness (*sukha*), resolution (*adhimokkha*), exertion (*paggāha*), assurance (*upaṭṭhāna*), equanimity (*upekkhā*), and attachment (*nikanti*). (*Vism.*633 (tr. Nāṇamoli p. 739))

⁴⁰³ the eleven defilements are; doubt (*vicikicchā*), lack of proper attention (*amanasikāra*), sloth and torpor (*thinamiddha*), consternation (*chambhitatta*), elation (*uppāla*), distress (*duṭṭhulla*), too much energy (*accāraddhāviriya*), too feeble an energy (*atīlānaviriya*), longing (*abhijappā*), perception of diversity (*nānattasaññā*), state of being too intent (*rūpa-atinijjhāyitatta*). (M.III.158-161.)

⁴⁰⁴ Vimalo, op. cit., p. 60.

⁴⁰⁵ Visual intuition refers to the ability of mind for perceiving the internal profound knowledge and vision.

⁴⁰⁶ S.N. Goenka, "Moral Conduct, Concentration, and Wisdom," in *An Introduction to the Buddha and His Teachings Entering the Stream*, ed. Samuel and Sherab Bercholz (Boston USA: Shambhala Publications,

psychological approach, the knowledge penetrating through illusion and misconception mainly takes the form of profound visual images. In fact, visual intuition seems to be the representative sense of the Buddhist prominent symbol of unmediated access to the ultimate truth. A good representation of this spacious mental ‘seeing’ of reality as a whole, from the vantage point of ‘sighted’ people, can be found in the discourse entitled the *Pāsarāsisutta* where *Brahma* Sahampati says:

Like one, who stands on top of a rocky mountain, would see the people on all around. O Wise One, All-seeing Sage, the comparison is that; do ascend the palace of the *dhamma*. Let you, whose grief is removed, look down upon mankind sunken in grief, overcome by birth and old age.⁴⁰⁷

The profound extravisual discernment gained through meditative experiences is the most important means for the acquisition of ultimate knowledge. Likewise, Thrangu interprets *vipassanā* as looking at phenomena in an especially clear way with the eye of wisdom.⁴⁰⁸ He not only agrees that *vipassanā* is a process of excellent ‘visual’ perception, but further recommends the eye of wisdom as the proper experiential device for the profound consciousness of internal vision. Similarly, in a passage from the *Dutiyanidānasutta*, the profound consciousness of internal vision arises through the acquisition of wisdom (*paññā*).⁴⁰⁹ Alternatively, visual consciousness, which makes sense of objects through recognition of colour, shape, and size, arises because of physical eyes and material shapes. In this sense, the profound consciousness of internal vision, which fully discerns and penetrates *dhamma*, arises because of the eye of wisdom (*paññā*) and mental objects (*dhamma*). The visual consciousness performs the extent of sensual perception, while the profound consciousness of

1994), pp. 96-121, p. 114, Sayadaw U Janakabhivamsa, *Vipassana Meditation* (Yangon, Myanmar: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, 1997), p. 23.

⁴⁰⁷ M.I.168: “*Sele yathā pabbatamuddhani-ṭṭhito yathāpi passe janataṃ samantato, tathūpamaṃ dhammamayaṃ sumedha pāsādam-āruya samantacakkhu sokāvatiṇṇaṃ janatam-apetasoko avekkhassu jātijarābhibhūtaṃ.*”

⁴⁰⁸ Rinpoche Thrangu, *The Practice of Tranquillity and Insight : A Guide to Tibetan Buddhist Meditation*, (Boston New York: Shambhala ; Distributed in the U.S. by Random House, 1993), p. 12.

⁴⁰⁹ A.I.265, “*cetasā abhinivijjhivā paññāya ativijjha passati* (having dispelled by mind, he penetratively sees through wisdom.)”

mental vision leads to the perfect comprehension and realization. Since *paññā* is a significant tool for internal vision, it is noteworthy that the deep concentrative states of the *jhānas* are of central importance for the development of *vipassanā*, as the Buddha says:

There is no *jhāna* for one who is without wisdom. There is no wisdom for one who does not attain *jhāna*.⁴¹⁰

Further consideration of the modern English shows that vision is strongly associated with knowledge and intellect. The term ‘vision’ is always rendered as the synonymous term ‘knowing.’ For example: “I see what you mean,” or “I see your point of view.” It is apparent that this linkage of knowledge and vision, generally accepted by modern English speakers is also accepted for the interpretation of meditative experience.

Bucknell also justifies *vipassanā* contemplation as the process of ‘seeing’ the mind and its mental process. He then interprets this visual process as the moving of awareness with the flow of thought.⁴¹¹ This study agrees with him that *vipassanā* is the process of looking at the mind. Nonetheless, the theme that of “awareness of the flow of thought implies the process of seeing the mind” seems to contradict the theme of seeing with the eye of *paññā* (wisdom). Since *paññā* closely associates with the thoughtless states of *jhāna*, the awareness of the flow of thought appears unable to signify the characteristics of *vipassanā*, unless awareness has been cultivated into the profound state in accompaniment with the *jhānas*. Elsewhere, some scholars interpret *vipassanā* as the process of perceiving phenomena through any of the sense faculties; eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body. For instance, Goenka states that *vipassanā* is the process of directing attention to one’s own physical sensations.⁴¹² Janakabhivamsa agrees with him by interpreting *vipassanā* as the observation of every bodily and

⁴¹⁰ Dhṛ.372: “N’atthi *jhānaṃ* *apaññassa* *paññā* n’atthi *ajhāyato*.”

⁴¹¹ Roderick S. Bucknell and Martin Stuart-Fox, op. cit., pp. 70-71.

⁴¹² S.N. Goenka, op. cit., p. 114.

mental process starting with the notion of the sensual body through observation of the abdominal movements.⁴¹³ Tatia supports this theme of *vipassanā* as the perception of altered states of body and mind.⁴¹⁴ Nyanaponika also agrees with this theme, that the perception of one's own bodily and mental processes is the prominent aspect of insight meditation (*vipassanābhāvanā*).⁴¹⁵ He suggests that the meditative exercise of bare attention, which is the key to the perceptual process, refers to a clear perception through the six senses, without judgement or reflection.⁴¹⁶ Without the limitation of contemplating one's own body and mind, Anālayo points out the prominent aspect of *vipassanā* as contemplating *all* phenomena. He further describes how mindfulness (*sati*) performs in the process of *vipassanā*: "the task of *sati* is to penetrate beyond the surface appearance of the object under observation and to lay bare the characteristics it shares with all conditioned phenomena."⁴¹⁷ His idea seems to be that awareness through sensual perception is applied together with the conceptual process of the nature of reality,⁴¹⁸ in *vipassanā* contemplation.

However, the interpretation of *vipassanā* can be found in the Theravāda Buddhist canon that inner vision, rather than sensual perception, plays the crucial role in Buddhist realization. For instance, the *Dhammacakkappavattanasutta* demonstrates the role of inner vision in support of the path of realization and states that the Buddha became an awakened person as a consequence of the development of purified (*suvisuddhi*) intuition (*ñāṇa*) and vision (*dassana*) of the four noble truths (*ariyasacca*).

As long as, monks, my intuition and vision as they really are, in these three aspects, in these twelve ways, regarding the four noble truths, was

⁴¹³ Sayadaw U Janakabhivamsa, op. cit., p. 23.

⁴¹⁴ Nathmal Tatia, "Samatha and Vipassana," in *Vipassanā : The Buddhist Way*, ed. Harcharn Singh Sobti (Delhi: Eastern Book Linkers, 2003), pp. 84-92, p. 87.

⁴¹⁵ Nyanaponika, op. cit., p. 59.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁴¹⁷ Anālayo, op. cit., pp. 93-94.

⁴¹⁸ The conceptual process of nature of reality is the contemplation on the natural concept of phenomena, which comprises the three characteristics: impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and not-self.

not fully purified in this way. I did not claim to have awakened to the unsurpassed perfect enlightenment...⁴¹⁹

It can be concluded that the process of mental vision, in relating to deep concentration rather than to the process of sensual perception, is the main characteristic of *vipassanā*. Now this main characteristic is further clarified through the etymological analysis of the term ‘*vipassanā*’ itself.

The etymological determination of the root meaning of the term ‘*passanā*’ reveals that the main characteristic of *vipassanā* is the mental vision. *Vipassanā* is a term of Buddhist meditation synthesizing a prefix ‘*vi* (superior)’ and an action noun ‘*passanā* (seeing),’ which is derived from the verb ‘*passati* (one sees).’ While the term ‘*passati*’ represents ‘seeing’ or ‘vision,’ the prefix ‘*vi*’ is always interpreted as ‘two aspects,’ ‘diverse ways’ or ‘superior process.’ An examination of the term ‘*passati* (seeing),’ based on the Buddhist meditative experiences, provides the understanding of the characteristics of *vipassanā*. In fact, without inner visual awakening, direct extrasensory knowledge, such as the four noble truths, can cause mistaken views on aspects such as their characteristic or relationships between them, among meditators. This can be verified through the parable of the blind men, which the Buddha announces to illustrate the dangers of relying entirely on one’s own rational thought without mental vision. Here, a king had several blind men each come in contact with each part of an elephant. When the king asked about the nature of the elephant, each blind man provided an entirely different statement as the only right and true representation of an elephant.⁴²⁰ Although what each of the blind men recognized was experientially true, each direct acknowledgement without vision had made clear in some degree only. This parable goes to show that the direct

⁴¹⁹ S.V.422-423: “*Yāva kīvañca me bhikkhave imesu catusu ariyasaccesu evaṃ tiparivaṭṭaṃ dvādasākāraṃ yathābhūtaṃ ñānadassanaṃ na suvisuddham ahosi... anuttaraṃ sammāsambodhim abhisambuddho ti paccaññāsim*”

⁴²⁰ Ud.68-69.

recognition, without knowledge of inner vision, should not be realized as a necessary basis for the perfect knowledge.

The next evidence that *vipassanā* refers to is the process of inner vision as it appears in the *Mahāassapurasutta* which compares the process of perfect understanding with the comprehension of picturesque images:

This might occur to him: this lake of water is clear, limpid, and undisturbed. There are these oysters and shells, pebbles and gravel, and shoals of fish moving about and resting. Even so, Monks, a monk understands as they really are: This is suffering...: this is the path leading to the cessation of the cankers.⁴²¹

In this passage, we see that perfect realization can be known in mental pictorial form. Hence, through the root meaning of ‘*passanā*’ together with the interpretation of the Buddhist texts discussed above, *vipassanā* can be interpreted as the means of cultivation of visual intuition in order to realize the ultimate truth.

As well as the examination of the term ‘*passanā*,’ the clarification of the root meaning of the prefix ‘*vi*’ specifies the main characteristic of *vipassanā* as superior vision of mind. Indeed, the prefix ‘*vi*’ is generally interpreted as referring to the two aspects: diverse ways, or to the superior process. The first aspect is derived from the *Pāli* term ‘*vividha*’ meaning ‘divers’ or ‘manifold,’⁴²² whereas the second is from the term ‘*visesa*’ meaning ‘excellence’ or ‘extraordinary.’⁴²³ It is useful to categorize expressions of the interpretation of *vipassanā* into two groups regarding the etymological approach to the term ‘*vi*.’ The first group implies that *vipassanā* is based on the consideration of the meaning of ‘*vi*’ as diverse ways (*vividha*). For example, the commentaries of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* clearly employ *vividha* to interpret *vipassanā* in relation to

⁴²¹ M.I.279-280: “*Tassa evam-assa: ayaṃ kho udakarahado accho vippasanno anāvilo, tatr’ime sippisambukā pi sakkharakathalā pi macchagumbā pi caranti pi tiṭṭhanti pīti; evam-eva kho bhikkhave bhikkhu: idaṃ dukkhan-ti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti ...ayaṃ āsavanirodhagāminī paṭipadā ti.*”

⁴²² T. W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, op. cit., p. 638.

⁴²³ Ibid., p. 641.

the three characteristics (impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and not-self) as seeing in many ways.⁴²⁴ The meaning of ‘diverse ways’ leads to the conceptual contemplation of phenomena according to the doctrine of three characteristics: impermanence (*anicca*), unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*) and not-self (*anattā*). In addition, Vajirañña renders *vipassanā* as “to see in many ways” which means “to penetrate an object thoroughly.”⁴²⁵ This interpretation of *vipassanā* is in accordance with Nārada: “*vipassanā* literally means perceiving in diverse ways.”⁴²⁶ According to the interpretation of ‘*vi*’ as ‘diverse ways,’ if the conceptual contemplation involves meditative practice, the process of *vipassanā* would be an analytical process rather than a profound process of mental vision.

Having employed the term ‘*visesa* (excellence)’ to represent the abbreviated term ‘*vi*,’ the second group of expressions confirms the interpretation of *vipassanā* as the process of superior mental vision. For instance, in the *Sandakasutta*, Ānanda’s statement that the meditative practice leads to the mental ability of internal vision can claim to promote the derivation of ‘*vi*’ as referring to superior mental vision. He remarks that knowing (*jānatā*), and seeing (*passatā*), teachers are the omniscient (*sabbaññū*) persons who possess superior internal vision and clearly know everything they want.⁴²⁷ His assertion suggests the meditative process of *vipassanā* as the exercise of internal vision. This connotation of *vipassanā* as visual intuition also appears in the *Mahāpadānasutta*.⁴²⁸ In this discourse, the divine eye (*dibbacakkhu*) manifested to the Prince Vipassī, allowed him to see for a league, all around, both day and night. When he was young and seated on his father’s lap, having used the ability of his divine eye, he drew a conclusion regarding a legal case. So Prince Vipassī was all the more appropriately called ‘vipassī (one who possesses the

⁴²⁴ As.53.

⁴²⁵ Vajirañña Paravahera Mahathera, op. cit., p. 22.

⁴²⁶ Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, op. cit., p. 394.

⁴²⁷ M.I.519.

⁴²⁸ D.II.20-21.

superior vision).’ We thus find an association between *vipassanā* and internal vision, since both can be developed through the ability of the divine eye. This association can be sustained through the scholars’ interpretation of the abbreviated term ‘*vi*’ as *visesa*. Thrangu uses the meaning of ‘special,’ ‘superior’ or ‘particular’ for the abbreviated term ‘*vi*.’⁴²⁹ In addition, Gunaratana states that the term ‘*vi*’ implies the meaning of ‘in a special way.’⁴³⁰ This study agrees with him in regard to the textual transformation of *visesa*, but disagrees in regard to his interpretation of *visesa* as ‘including clarity and precision.’ This is because this interpretation of *visesa* expresses a meaning of ‘careful supervision through the physical senses.’ Dhammavaro argues in a similar way to Thrangu, while saying: “*vipassanā* means seeing beyond what is ordinary, clear vision.”⁴³¹ He further explains that *vipassanā* is not seeing mere appearance, but seeing things as they really are through the conscious awareness of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and not-self.

This makes it clear that the prefix ‘*vi*’ of *vipassanā* is the abbreviated term of *visesa*, which is thus rendered as ‘superior’ or ‘excellent,’ further denoting the visual sense of the subtle perception. The connotation of ‘*vi*’ as excellent or superior is particularly prominent in the process of visual intuition of *vipassanā* and contributes to inwardly seeing in many ways, i.e. according to the Buddhist metaphysic; impermanence (*anicca*), unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*) and not-self (*anattā*). In fact, *vividha* does not correspond to the main characteristic of *vipassanā* directly, but represents *vipassanā* in a secondary role. As a consequence, it does not refer to the object that makes it *vipassanā* meditation, but refers to the profound state of mind that attains the visual intuition of seeing the reality of phenomena in manifold ways.

⁴²⁹ Rinpoche Thrangu, op. cit., p. 12.

⁴³⁰ Henepola Gunaratana, "Vipassana Meditation," in *Radiant Mind Essential Buddhist Teachings and Texts* ed. Jean Smith (Hudson street, New York: Berkley Publishing Group, 1999), pp. 151-157, p. 154.

⁴³¹ Phra Saneh Dhammavaro, *Buddhism: Ethics and the Path to Peace* (Chiangmai, Thailand: Academic Affairs Mahachulalongkorn Rajavidyalaya, 2001), p. 171.

After briefly surveying some of its translations, the main characteristic of *vipassanā* can be conveniently illustrated. Translators have rendered the *Pāli* word *vipassanā* into English in various ways. Although the *PTS Pali-English Dictionary*⁴³² gives several meanings; e.g. inward vision, insight, intuition and introspection, most scholars, such as Gunaratana,⁴³³ Vajirañāṇa,⁴³⁴ Nyanatiloka,⁴³⁵ use ‘insight.’ The general term ‘insight’ suggests that the meaning of intuitive meditation approaches the characteristics of *vipassanā*. Representing *vipassanā* in the *Ākaṅkheyyasutta*,⁴³⁶ Sister Upalavanna employs ‘wisdom,’ which corresponds closely to *vipassanā*, but that is used for the *Pāli paññā*. As the term ‘paññā’ is generally used to define *vipassanā*, they can be interpreted interchangeably. Woodward, while rendering *paññā* as insight, applies the other term ‘introspection’ for *vipassanā* which implies thoughtful observation.⁴³⁷ Horner’s vision refers to the perceptual experience of seeing.⁴³⁸ Gimello uses the word ‘discernment’⁴³⁹ expressing an inappropriate sentiment toward the ability of intuitive vision. These translations of *vipassanā* are the features of the interpretation of *vipassanā* relating to their own peculiar understanding of different canonical parts. By adopting an etymological approach to *vipassanā*, it seems reasonable to define the word as *insight*, though this is perhaps limited in meaning. It is still virtually impossible to find an appropriate English term which captures the intrinsic value of *vipassanā*. For this reason, it is preferred to leave the *Pāli vipassanā* untranslated⁴⁴⁰ in an

⁴³² T. W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, op. cit., p. 627.

⁴³³ Henepola Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., p. 17.

⁴³⁴ Vajirañāṇa Paravahera Mahathera, op. cit., p. 22.

⁴³⁵ Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines*, op. cit., p. 197.

⁴³⁶ Sister Upalavanna, 2005. “*The Ākaṅkheyyasutta*” Last updated 11/06/2005. URL: <http://www.metta.lk/tipitaka/2Sutta-Pitaka/2Majjhima-Nikaya/Majjhima1/006-akankheyya-sutta-e1.html>. Date of access: 10/09/2006.

⁴³⁷ F.L. Woodward, (tr.) *The Book of Gradual Sayings*, vol. 1, (London: Pali Text Society, 1936), p. 55.

⁴³⁸ I.B. Horner, (tr.) *The Collection of Middle Length Sayings*, vol. 1 of 3 vols., (London: Pali Text Society, 1954, 1957, 1959), p. 353.

⁴³⁹ Robert M Gimello, op. cit., p. 180.

⁴⁴⁰ Except for author’s own translation of *Pāli* passages, the *Pāli vipassanā* is translated as insight.

attempt to remind the reader that it is a complex technical term without a precise English equivalent.

The above way of considering the main characteristic of *vipassanā* is related to the various interpretations of *vipassanā* and the implication of Buddhist canons in relation to meditative practice. Most scholars,⁴⁴¹ of course, imply that *vipassanā* is a process of sensual perception. Despite this, considering the idea of some scholars and the traditional Buddhist texts, its interpretation as ‘visual intuition’ is more suitable. The main characteristic of *vipassanā* can be explored through investigating the definition of *vi* and *passanā*. Certainly *vi* is conspicuously signified as ‘excellent’ rather than as its aspect of ‘in diverse ways,’ whilst *passanā* always refers to ‘seeing.’ During the process of *vipassanā*, the path of perfect realization essentially connects with the visual activity of mind rather than with sensual perception. Therefore, the mental process of visual intuition plays an important part in the characteristics of *vipassanā*. In this section, the critique of the characteristics of *vipassanā* is none other than to verify the nature of *vipassanā* through its linguistic analysis combined with its various interpretations. Below, it will be presented how the successive development of *vipassanā* is advantageous for the understanding of the relation between the *vipassanā* process and the path of enlightenment.

Benefits of *Vipassanā*

The Buddha emphasizes that mental development makes a most important contribution to great benefit.⁴⁴² Indeed, the Buddha’s clarification of the importance of the well-trained mind and the benefits of mental development in the process of *vipassanā* are differently presented. During *vipassanā* meditation, the mind is developed through the process of visual intuition in

⁴⁴¹ See, for example, S.N. Goenka, op. cit., p. 114, Sayadaw U Janakabhivamsa, op. cit., p. 23, Nyanaponika, op. cit., p. 59.

⁴⁴² A.I.5.

order to disperse ignorance and to penetrate and overcome the residual contaminants, such as conceit. These developed mental states, in fact, play a crucial role in attaining several advantages, including the ultimate truth that cannot be attained through simple *vipassanā*, since it requires the collaboration of *samatha*. This section discusses the three main benefits of *vipassanā*. Firstly, it will explore its advantage for the peaceful mental states of the *jhānas*. Secondly, it will examine how *vipassanā* relates to and benefits the fivefold supernatural knowledge.⁴⁴³ The third benefit of *vipassanā* is due to the examination of whether or not the path of enlightenment can be attained through the single process of *vipassanā*.

Although there is evidence that *vipassanā* can develop *jhānas*, some scholars deny this. The *Samathasutta* reveals that *vipassanā* possesses a chance of producing *jhāna*.

A monk while considering knows thus: ‘I have gained insight into dhamma through higher wisdom, but have not gained the tranquillity of heart within oneself.’ Then, Monks, he should apply himself to establish insight into dhamma through higher wisdom and to the tranquillity of heart within oneself.⁴⁴⁴

The precise denotation of the relation between *samatha* and *vipassanā* can be found in this discourse, suggesting that both processes can promote each other. Some scholars agree. For instance, U Pandita proposes that *vipassanā*, practiced through characterizing *nāma-rūpa* (mentality and materiality) objects attributing impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and not-self, leads to one kind of *jhāna*, *vipassanājhāna*.⁴⁴⁵ He totally distinguishes *vipassanājhāna*⁴⁴⁶ from the *samathajhāna*.

⁴⁴³ The fivefold supernatural knowledge comprises of supernormal power (*iddhividha*), divine ear-element (*dibbasotadhātu*), knowledge of the others’ minds (*cetopariyañāna*), knowledge of recollection of former lives (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāna*) and divine eye (*dibbacakkhu*).

⁴⁴⁴ A.V.99.

⁴⁴⁵ Sayadaw U Pandita, op. cit., p. 182.

⁴⁴⁶ *Vipassanājhāna* refers to the collaborative state between *samatha* and *vipassanā*.

...though *samatha jhāna* will bring concentration and peace of mind and serve as a precursor to higher spiritual power, it is a mundane achievement and is inferior, though it lends support to *vipassanā jhāna*. The *jhāna sammādiṭṭhi*, which arises in *samatha jhāna*, is unable to *nāma-rūpa* phenomena.⁴⁴⁷

Sujato also points out that the emotional qualities of *jhāna* such as rapture (*pīti*), serenity and bliss (*sukha*) occurring in the process of *vipassanā*, which are known as *vipassanājhāna*.⁴⁴⁸ However, he equates it with the *jhāna* arising in the process of *samatha*. While answering Silva, Premaratne agrees with Sujato: “*samatha* and *vipassanā* are two different pathways leading to the same stage of concentration.”⁴⁴⁹ Since the prominent aspect of each *jhāna* is their constituents rather than their causal meditative process, the *jhāna* states arising from *vipassanā* or *samatha* comprise the same constituents. The point here is that there is calm and integrated mind of the *jhāna* states to be gained when *vipassanā* is developed.

Nevertheless, after contradicting their correspondence, some scholars reject the benefit of *vipassanā* for the development of *jhānas*. As Sumedho puts it: “Thus *samatha* and *vipassanā* are the two divisions in meditation”⁴⁵⁰ Besides this, Griffiths states that the aims and results of *vipassanā* are radically opposed to those of *samatha*.⁴⁵¹ Janakabhivamsa agrees with Sumedho and Griffiths: “*Samatha* meditation is different from *vipassanā* meditation in both the purpose and result.”⁴⁵² He further says that the attainment of deep concentration, *jhāna* states, is the benefit of *samatha* exclusively. To set *vipassanā* apart from *samatha*, nonetheless, is problematic. According to the discourse entitled the

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 189.

⁴⁴⁸ Bhikkhu Sujato, *A Swift Pair of Messengers*, op.cit., p. 20.

⁴⁴⁹ Kumar de Silva and Bogoda Premaratne, *Dialogues on Dhamma* (Tharanga Dharshana Perera, 2004), p. 350.

⁴⁵⁰ Venerable Ajahn Sumedho, *The Four Noble Truths* (Hertfordshire England: Amaravati Publications, 1992), p. 63.

⁴⁵¹ Paul Griffiths, "Concentration or Insight: The Problematic of Theravada Buddhist Meditation-Theory," op. cit., p. 614.

⁴⁵² Sayadaw U Janakabhivamsa, op. cit., p. 21.

Yuganaddhasutta, *samatha* and *vipassanā* are bound in a pair, going together and occurring simultaneously.⁴⁵³ Indeed, Crangle argues for the synthesis of *samatha* and *vipassanā*.⁴⁵⁴ Consequently, the meditator can fulfil Buddhist deliverance from yoking *samatha* and *vipassanā* together so that they pull evenly. In addition, Brahmavamsa repeats the statement of Ajahn Chah, the great modern meditator, for supporting the collaboration between *samatha* and *vipassanā* by comparing them to the two faces of a coin.⁴⁵⁵ In sum, then, both *samatha* and *vipassanā* should be developed in skilful cooperation. Moreover, Nāṇasampanno states that the presence of wisdom facilitates deeper levels of concentration.⁴⁵⁶ So, there are grounds to demonstrate that the visual intuitive process of *vipassanā* is beneficial for the development of altered states of mind, which lead to the deep concentration structure, namely the *jhānas*.

In addition to the *jhānas*, this section argues that *vipassanā* is beneficial for the cultivation of the fivefold supernatural knowledge (*abhiññā*), whereas most scholars classify the fivefold *abhiññā* into the mode of *samatha* alone. References to the canonical texts of the *Sutta Piṭaka* throw some interesting light on the reconciliation between *vipassanā* and the fivefold *abhiññā*. The first reference in the discourse entitled the *Mahāsaḷāyatanikasutta* exhibits their harmony: “Tranquillity and insight - these are the things that should be developed by supernatural knowledge.”⁴⁵⁷ The second reference is portrayed in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* in which the eightfold knowledge (*vijjā*) is listed; the knowledge arising through insight (*vipassanāñāṇa*), the psychic power of the mind (*manomayiddhi*), the supernormal power (*iddhividha*), the divine eye (*dibbacakkhu*), the divine ear-element (*dibbasotadhātu*), the knowledge of

⁴⁵³ A.II.157.

⁴⁵⁴ Edward Fitzpatrick Crangle, op. cit., p. 250.

⁴⁵⁵ Venerable Ajahn Brahmavamsa, "Satipatthana the Fourfold Focus of Mindfulness," *Buddhist Society of Western Australia*, Newsletter, July-October 1997.

⁴⁵⁶ Acariya Maha Boowa Nanasampanno, *Wisdom Develops Samadhi*, trans. Bhikkhu Pannavaddho (Udorn Thani, Thailand: Wat Pa Baan Taad, 1980), p. 24.

⁴⁵⁷ M.III.289: “*samatho ca vipassanā ca, ime dhammā abhiññā bhāvetabbā.*”

others' minds (*cetopariyañāṇa*), the knowledge of recollection of former lives (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*), and the knowledge of destruction of cankers (*āsavakkhayañāṇa*).⁴⁵⁸ The following passage referring to *vipassanāñāṇa* shows that *samatha* is the necessary prelude to a mental vision exercise of *vipassanā*.

When his mind was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, free from imperfection, malleable, workable, steady, and attained to imperturbability, he applies and bends down his mind towards intuition and vision.⁴⁵⁹

Still in the context of the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*, the Buddha specifies the fivefold *abhiññā* as being arisen in the consequence of *vipassanāñāṇa* (knowledge arising through insight).⁴⁶⁰

The ascent from *vipassanāñāṇa* to the fivefold *abhiññā* signifies that the development of fivefold *abhiññā* is one of the advantages of *vipassanā*. Modern scholars, in contrast, have tended to state that the fivefold *abhiññā* must be undertaken through the foundation of the fourth *jhāna*. For example, Gunaratana proposes the four *rūpajjhānas* and four *arūpajjhānas* instead of *vipassanā* as the prerequisites of the fivefold *abhiññā*.⁴⁶¹ Similarly, Nāgasena denies any relationship between *vipassanā* and the fivefold *abhiññā*.⁴⁶² Goleman not only declares the fivefold *abhiññā* to be the consequent mental states of *samatha*, but he further disregards the fivefold *abhiññā* as the impediment of *vipassanā*.⁴⁶³ We can see that most scholars argue for the irreconcilability between *vipassanā* and the fivefold *abhiññā*. Nonetheless, this theme of meditative phenomena is incompatible with the Buddha's teaching in

⁴⁵⁸ The eightfold knowledge is the profound spiritual powers arising from psychic insight. For example, the divine eye is the ability to perceive objects at remote distances or to see beings passing away and being reborn again. The divine ear is the ability to hear the sounds of deities, and to hear sounds that are far off.

⁴⁵⁹ D.I.76: "So evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgaṇe vigatūpakkilese mudubhūte kammaniye thite āneñjappatte ñāṇadassanāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti."

⁴⁶⁰ D.I.76-83.

⁴⁶¹ Henepola Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., p. 143.

⁴⁶² Bhikkhu Nāgasena, "Insight (*Vipassanā*)," in *Vipassanā the Buddhist Way*, ed. Harcharn Singh Sobti (Delhi: Eastern Book Linkers, 2003), pp. 99-119, p. 101.

⁴⁶³ Daniel Goleman, op. cit., p. 332.

the *Mahāvaccasutta*.⁴⁶⁴ In this discourse, the Buddha suggests that *Bhikkhu* Vacchagotta cultivates both *samatha* and *vipassanā* for the fulfilment of the fivefold *abhiññā*. Likewise, Buddhaghosa regards *vipassanā* as reinforcing the process of the fivefold *abhiññā*: “And if he has had no practice in insight (*vipassanā*), his direct-knowledge (*abhiññā*) is sluggish. If he has, it is swift.”⁴⁶⁵ As a consequence, the process of *vipassanā* is the essential meditative approach to the arising of the fivefold *abhiññā*. Regarding this implication of the canonical texts and commentaries, it is reasonable to conclude that *vipassanā* is advantageous for the development of the fivefold *abhiññā*.

The third benefit of *vipassanā* is that it contributes to the perfect outcome of Buddhist meditation through the vehicle of serenity (*samathayāna*), which involves the collaboration between *vipassanā* and *samatha*. A support of this collaboration comes from the strong tension between *paññā* and the *jhānas* in the *Dhammapada*:

There is no *jhāna* for one who is without wisdom. There is no wisdom for one who does not attain *jhāna*. He, in whom there are *jhāna* and wisdom, is indeed close to *nibbāna*.⁴⁶⁶

It appears that *samathayāna* is appropriate to practice for attainment of the ultimate goal. Moreover, the *Pāli* literature on the discourses of the Buddha shows the indispensable role of the *jhānas*. For instance, the *Mahāsatipatṭhānasutta* points to the four *jhānas* as the definition of the perfect concentration (*sammāsamādhi*) in the noble eightfold path.⁴⁶⁷ Some scholars agree that *nibbāna* is achieved through the joint operation of *vipassanā* and *samatha*, rather than only through *vipassanā* in case of the vehicle of insight (*vipassanāyāna*). One such scholar is Jhanananda: “It is clear to me that the

⁴⁶⁴ M.I.494-496.

⁴⁶⁵ *Vism.* 87 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 88).

⁴⁶⁶ Dh.p.372: “N’atthi jhānaṃ apaññassa paññā n’atthi ajhāyato, yamhi jhānañca paññā ca sa ve nibbānasantike.”

⁴⁶⁷ D.II.313.

Buddha taught neither absorption nor insight as distinct practice paths.”⁴⁶⁸ Furthermore, Sujato proposes that *samatha* and *vipassanā* are seen as a complementary pair from the preliminary mental training to the end of liberation.⁴⁶⁹ It is evident that the meditator must develop the collaboration between *vipassanā* and *samatha*, to arrive at the supramundane path (*lokuttaramagga*).

While this evidence suggests that *vipassanā* is beneficial to enlightenment only through the *samathayāna*, other scholars believe that the pure *vipassanā* can lead to supramundane path. Most scholars speak of the meditator who follows the vehicle of insight (*vipassanāyāna*), namely, *vipassanāyānika* or *sukkhavipassaka* (a dry insight worker),⁴⁷⁰ and thus does not need to attain any *jhānas* prior to practicing *vipassanā*. For example, Vajirañāṇa disregards *samatha*: “The process of *samatha*, therefore, seems to be optional,” and then says that *vipassanā* is the significant practice for the attainment of *nibbāna*.⁴⁷¹ His disregarding of *samatha* can be questioned. Gunaratana also endorses the meditative path of *sukkhavipassaka*: “The *vipassanāyānika*, in contrast, skips over mundane *jhāna* and goes directly into insight-contemplation.”⁴⁷² Solé-Leris agrees with the viewpoint of *sukkhavipassaka*: “... certain meditators soon started practicing pure insight (*sukkhavipassanā*), i.e. pursuing the development of insight without the parallel development of the advanced stages of tranquillity.”⁴⁷³ It is contended that the meditator should skip over *samatha* and direct to *vipassanā*.

⁴⁶⁸ Jhanananda. 2005. "The Lack of Evidence in Support of a Dry Insight Practice" Last updated 28/02/05 URL: <http://www.greatwesternvehicle.org/nodryinsight.htm>. Date of access: 11/09/06.

⁴⁶⁹ Bhikkhu Sujato, *A Swift Pair of Messengers*, op. cit., p. 27.

⁴⁷⁰ Vajirañāṇa Paravahera Mahathera, op. cit., p. 141.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., p. 343.

⁴⁷² Henepola Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., p. 169.

⁴⁷³ Solé-Leris, op. cit., p. 24.

On the contrary, *vipassanā* alone cannot lead to Buddhist ultimate goal, because the canonical texts never distinguish the themes of meditation into either *samatha* or *vipassanā*.⁴⁷⁴ Kheminda does not accept the practice of pure insight and points to the attainment of eight *jhānas* as the prerequisite of *vipassanā* practice.⁴⁷⁵ His viewpoint relies on the *Sumāṅgalavilasini*, which interprets the purification of mind as the attainment of eight *jhānas*.⁴⁷⁶ Consequently, there is the substantial relationship between the purified mind resulting from the *jhāna* attainments and the superior mental vision of *vipassanā*. Both *samatha* and *vipassanā* need to be developed to support perfect view for final liberation.

Friend, if perfect view is assisted by five factors there comes to be the fruit of freedom of mind, freedom of mind for its fruit and advantage, the fruit of freedom through wisdom, freedom through wisdom for its fruit and advantage. Here, friend, perfect view is assisted by virtue, and it is assisted by hearing, and it is assisted by discussion, and it is assisted by tranquillity and it is assisted by insight.⁴⁷⁷

Here we see the full impact not only of *vipassanā* but also of *samatha* on the meditative goal. Therefore, all accounts which are critical of the meditative path of *sukkhavipassaka* suggest that *vipassanā* is beneficial to Buddhist liberation since it requires the collaboration of other meditative processes especially *samatha*.

From the discussion above, we can see the three main benefits of *vipassanā* as evident in the Buddhist scriptures and modern research. Indeed, according to the interpretation of most scholars, *vipassanā* is distinguished from the

⁴⁷⁴ Bhikkhu Sujato, *A History of Mindfulness: How Insight Worsted Tranquillity in the Satipatthana Sutta*, p. 82.

⁴⁷⁵ Kheminda Thera, "Momentary Concentration: Reply to Rejoinder II-I," in *Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā Meditation Criticism and Replies*, et al. Mahasi Sayadaw (Rangoon, Burma: Buddha Sasana Nuggaha Organization, pp. 63-75), pp. 63-64.

⁴⁷⁶ Sv.III.1062, "*Cittavisuddhīti vipassanāya padaṭṭhānabhūtā aṭṭha paṇṇasamāpattiyo.*"

⁴⁷⁷ M.I.294: "*Pañcahi kho āvuso aṅgehi anuggahitā sammādiṭṭhi cetovimuttiphala ca hoti cetovimuttiphalaṇisaṃsā ca paññāvimuttiphala ca hoti paññāvimuttiphalaṇisaṃsā ca: Idh'āvuso sammādiṭṭhi silānuggahitā ca hoti sutānuggahitā ca hoti sākacchānuggahitā ca hoti samathānuggahitā ca hoti vipassanānuggahitā ca hoti.*"

development of the *jhānas*. Despite this interpretation, a closer analysis reveals that the first benefit of *vipassanā* is the ability for developing the profound states of *samatha* practice, the *jhānas*. Whereas the fivefold *abhiññā* is a product of *samatha*, the arising of their profound states is closely related to *vipassanā*. Accordingly, the second benefit of *vipassanā* is the development of these *abhiññās*. Since early Theravāda Buddhist texts do not point to the meditator who practices pure *vipassanā* for the fulfilment of the path of enlightenment, the third benefit of *vipassanā* is that it, in collaboration with *samatha*, conduces to the Buddhist ultimate goal. Although many scholars do not share this view of the crucial role of *vipassanā* in attaining these benefits, the above investigation substantiates the role of *vipassanā* in achieving these benefits. After the determination of its advantages, the next section discusses the issue of how *vipassanā* begins.

The Commencement of *Vipassanā*

The discussion in the previous chapter clarifies that the meditator can begin the process of *samatha* through the development of the concentrative levels or the progression of the mental images, and that *vipassanā* requires *samatha* for the attainment of enlightenment. At this point, it is important to further clarify two issues; 1) whether *samatha* is required at the beginning or the middle or the final state of the process of *vipassanā*, and 2) which certain level of *samatha* operates at that state. This chapter continues the examination of the relationship between *samatha* and *vipassanā* and argues that the development of *samatha* into the very profound consciousness of the fourth *arūpajjhāna* and beyond is required for the commencement of *vipassanā*. The section will survey this examination through the discrepancies between the viewpoints of several scholars in the issues of whether or not *samatha* is essential and which level of *samatha* is necessary for the commencement of *vipassanā*.

The Essence of Samatha

The two main branches of Buddhist meditation techniques, *samatha* and *vipassanā*, are essential for mental purification. The previous chapter examined the gradual conversion of consciousness advancing along the mode of *samatha*. To clarify the enlightenment path, this chapter will investigate *vipassanā* in comparison with the process of *samatha*. This investigation continues with the inquiry of how *samatha* is essential for the initiation of *vipassanā*. This inquiry relates to the two viewpoints of many scholars, such as U Ba Khin and Gimello: 1) the essence of *samatha*, or 2) its non-essence, for the commencement of *vipassanā*.

The concerns of this discussion are to strengthen some scholars' viewpoint that *samatha* is significant at the beginning state of *vipassanā*. Among these scholars, U Ba Khin states that the practice of *vipassanā* can begin only after the development of concentration to a proper level.⁴⁷⁸ He explains simply that excellent concentration leads to the excellent awareness of *aniccā* (impermanence).⁴⁷⁹ Similarly, Gimello characterizes the beginning of the reviewing process of *vipassanā* as the adequate stillness of mind.⁴⁸⁰ Story echoes Gimello's opinion: "When concentration has been attained and is fully under the control of the meditator, it becomes possible to advance to the next exercise, that of *vipassanā*."⁴⁸¹ Piyadassi not only agrees with them, but further includes moral habit (*sīla*): "So the meditator training himself in virtue and concentration, develops *vipassanā*." The development of concentration is never

⁴⁷⁸ U Ba Khin, "The Essentials of Buddha-Dhamma in Meditative Practice," in *Vipassana Journal*, ed. S.N. Goenka (Vipassana International Meditation Centre, 1983), pp. 1-6, p. 3.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴⁸⁰ Robert M Gimello, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

⁴⁸¹ Francis Story, *The Buddhist Outlook Essays Dialogues Poems* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1973), p. 144.

an end in itself, he claims, because it is only a means to a more sublime process, *vipassanā*.⁴⁸²

This view is justifiable because the process of mental vision of *vipassanā* needs the clear consciousness and mindfulness arising from the process of *samatha*. Additionally, concentration seems to be employed instrumentally to improve the mind. Kamalashila clarifies the objective of concentration as the elimination of dullness and excitement for the development of *vipassanā*:

Therefore, to actualize that special insight realizing ultimate reality, you must first become proficient in calm abiding meditation. Since this single-pointed concentration is a positive thought, subtle mental dullness and excitement must be abandoned.⁴⁸³

Goenka confirms this tension between *vipassanā* and *samatha* by the simile which compares *vipassanā* to an activity of seeing into a deep pool and *samatha* to undisturbed and clean water. Since it is impossible to see into the depths of a pool when the water is turbulent and contaminated, then it is inconceivable to gain insight into the depths of our reality with agitated mind.⁴⁸⁴ As the Buddha says:

Monks, develop concentration. A monk, who is concentrated, monks, understands things as they really are.⁴⁸⁵

It can thus be shown that the role of *samatha* in bringing about mental unification and purification is the condition required for starting *vipassanā* practice.

On the basis of a detailed examination of the psychological relationship between *samatha* and *vipassanā*, it should be argued that many scholars' idea of marginalizing *samatha* in the initiation of *vipassanā* has far reaching and

⁴⁸² Piyadassi, *The Spectrum of Buddhism : Writings of Piyadassi* (Staten Island, N.Y.: J. de Silva, 1991), p. 228.

⁴⁸³ Dalai Lama, root text by Kamalashila, *Stages of Meditation*, (London: Rider, 2001), p. 90.

⁴⁸⁴ S.N. Goenka, op. cit., p. 98.

⁴⁸⁵ S.III.13: “*samādhim bhikkhave bhāvētha samāhito bhikkhave bhikkhu yathābhūtam pajānāti.*”

controversial implications. First of all, it is useful to categorize those scholars who have written on the independency of *samatha* and the beginning of *vipassanā* into three groups. This categorization relies on their interpretation of how *samatha* and *vipassanā* interact: independently, supportively or counteractively. The first group of scholars attempts to distinguish clearly between *samatha* and *vipassanā* in relation to the Buddhist soteriology and Buddhist philosophical theory. For instance, Griffiths speaks of the independency of these two meditative techniques as a result of their different soteriological methods and goals. On the one hand, he says about *vipassanā*: “Those who follow and advocate the analytical techniques tend to perceive the basic human problem as one of ignorance, an inaccurate understanding of the way things are.”⁴⁸⁶ His idea is acceptable that, if the problem is ignorance, the solution must be knowledge. On the other hand, this is what he says about *samatha*: “the practitioners of the enstatic techniques aimed at tranquillity tend to perceive basic human error as one of attitude rather than cognition; the key Buddhist term here is ‘thirst’ (*taṇhā*), a term that denotes all types of passionate desire and attachment.”⁴⁸⁷ This idea is also reasonable in that, if the attitude arising from thirst causes suffering, then we must tranquilize our thirst with mental stillness.

Although Griffiths suggests an inconsistency between the process of *samatha* and *vipassanā*, close investigation confirms a relation between them. In the *Brāhmaṇasutta*, the goal of getting rid of ignorance appears to be relevant to *samatha*.

Perfect concentration, Ānanda, when developed and made much of, has as its final goal the removal of desire, the removal of anger, and the removal of delusion.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁶ Paul J. Griffiths, *On Being Mindless : Buddhist Meditation and the Mind-Body Problem*, op. cit., p. 14.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁸ S.V.5-6: “*Sammāsamādhi Ānando bhāvito bahulīkato rāgavinayapariyosāno hoti dosa... mohavinayapariyosāno hoti.*”

Apart from the destruction of ignorance, the role of understanding the way things are appears to involve the process of *samatha*: “Monks, develop concentration. A monk, who is concentrated, monks, understands things as they really are.”⁴⁸⁹ It is found that, the meditator needs to cultivate both *samatha* and *vipassanā* in order to disperse ignorance.

Among the second group of scholars, Sujato specifically addresses the consistency between *samatha* and *vipassanā*. As he says: “*samatha* is like the left foot, *vipassanā* like the right foot - one can only move one foot forward by leaning on the other.”⁴⁹⁰ He, while seeking to portray *samatha* and *vipassanā* as requiring each other’s support, further describes them as a pair of meditative processes which can be developed from the beginning independently. As he claims: “Thus *samatha* and *vipassanā* function as a pair, not only in the preliminary training, but also right up to the ultimate liberation.”⁴⁹¹ This statement signifies that the meditator can begin *vipassanā* without any basis of *samatha*. Magness echoes this sentiment: “*Samatha* and *vipassanā*, although they may be practiced in isolation, do not prosper without each other’s support.”⁴⁹² Likewise, Dhammavuddho, while speaking of the cooperation between *samatha* and *vipassanā* for the final liberation, proposes their individual commencement: “Both *samatha* and *vipassanā* are needed for final liberation. But the order of practice is not important. One can either practise *samatha* first or *vipassanā* first.”⁴⁹³ However, if *samatha* and *vipassanā* perform like walking with both feet, it should be born in mind that while standing on the other foot, one foot has to step first. It would seem that the first step should be *samatha* in order to develop the mental function of visual intuition up to the appropriate state for commencing the process of *vipassanā*.

⁴⁸⁹ S.III.13.

⁴⁹⁰ Bhikkhu Sujato, *A Swift Pair of Messengers*, op. cit., p. 28.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁴⁹² Terry Magness. 2002. “*Samatha-Vipassana (Tranquillized-Penetrative Insight)*.” Last updated: 2002. URL: <http://www.mkds.org/vistas3.html>. Date of access: 12/09/06.

⁴⁹³ Ven. Dhammavuddho Thero, op. cit., p. 76.

The third group of scholars interprets both meditative processes as the counterbalancing application. Ruegg, one of them, concerns *samatha* and *vipassanā* as complementing functions:

If *samatha* is in excess, the mind of the meditator will be blunted and dull and *paññā* will then have to be especially cultivated. But if *paññā* is in excess, his mind will be agitated and *samatha* will then have to be cultivated in particular.⁴⁹⁴

Whereas *samatha* and *paññā* are opposite characteristics, Ruegg finds the yoking practice of *samatha* and *vipassanā* to be in balance. As he proposes: “when *samatha* and *vipassanā* are on the contrary in balance, the mind is in equilibrium.”⁴⁹⁵ His treatment of the imperfection of excessive *samatha* and *paññā* appears to be questionable according to the perspective found in *Pāli* canonical texts.⁴⁹⁶ An examination of the *Gaṅgāpeyyālavagga* recommends the development of *samādhi* and *paññā* into the unlimited degree for the nullification of all cankers (*āsavas*).⁴⁹⁷

In considering that the counterbalancing functions of *samādhi* and *paññā* may possess the opposite characteristics, they then should be cultivated together in balance. However, the *Samādhībhāvanāsutta* supports the development of a particular type of *samādhi* to an unlimited degree to achieve the neutralization of cankers (*āsavas*): “There is, Monks, concentrative meditation, when developed and made much of, conduces to the destruction of the cankers.”⁴⁹⁸ Ruegg has created the philosophical problems of implicating both *samādhi* and *paññā* as opposite processes. According to the perspective found in *Pāli* canonical texts, his statement that “if *paññā* is in excess, his mind will be

⁴⁹⁴ David Seyfort Ruegg, *Buddha-Nature, Mind and the Problem of Gradualism in a Comparative Perspective : On the Transmission and Reception of Buddhism in India and Tibet* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1989), p. 183.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁶ It may be that Ruegg’s statement is based on non-*Pāli* sources.

⁴⁹⁷ S.V.249.

⁴⁹⁸ A.II.44: “*atthi bhikkhave samādhībhāvanā bhāvitā bahulīkatā āsavānaṃ khayāya saṃvattati.*”

agitated” expresses the contrary attributes of *samādhi* and *paññā*. In agreement with Ruegg’s viewpoint, Keown states:

...central to *samatha* practice are the *jhānas* and immersion in the *jhānas* leads directly to the elimination of discursive thought. In this the technique contrasts sharply with *vipassanā* where discriminating awareness is a *sine qua non* for propositional knowledge of the *paññā* kind.⁴⁹⁹

Their opinion regarding irreconcilability between *samādhi* and *paññā* proposes a contradiction with the *Pāli* canonical texts. For example, the *Dhammapada* clearly states the need for collaboration between *paññā* and *jhāna*: “There is no *jhāna* for one who is without wisdom. There is no wisdom for one who does not attain *jhāna*.”⁵⁰⁰ Ruegg’s term ‘excessive *paññā*’ does not appear to make sense. Perhaps he is interpreting *paññā* as intellectual, discursive or analytical knowledge. If the light of *paññā* is developed then the darkness of ignorance is abandoned comparatively. It is generally accepted that *paññā* possesses a superior power essentially directed towards freedom from the circle of existence (*samsāra*) without any negative feature.⁵⁰¹ Thus, *samādhi* and *paññā*, performing reconcilable processes, have to be developed and made much of according to the fact that the former is the basis of the latter.

Now we have come so far with the three groups of scholars who speak of the development of *vipassanā* directly without the basis of concentration. Even if these scholars’ interpretation of the interaction between *samatha* and *vipassanā* can be categorized into independent, supportive or counteractive processes, this section has argued for the requirement of *samatha* in order to begin the process of *vipassanā*. As shown in the description of the exercise of *vipassanāñāṇa* (knowledge arising through insight), the Buddha suggests the preliminary exercise of *samatha* before this exercise: “when his heart was thus

⁴⁹⁹ Damien Keown, op. cit., p. 77.

⁵⁰⁰ Dh.p.372.

⁵⁰¹ Jayantha Ruberu, op. cit., p. 254.

concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, free from imperfection, malleable, workable, steady, and attained to imperturbability.”⁵⁰² It can be concluded that *vipassanā* and *samatha* are developed with each other’s support on the condition that the commencement of *vipassanā* needs the basis of *samatha* to initiate the process of profound mental vision.

We can infer from the discussion above that, even though there are two groups of scholars writing on the inquiry “Is *samatha* necessary to initiate *vipassanā*?” the theme that *samatha* is justifiable appears to be more reasonable. For the process of special mental vision to come about, the meditator must first become proficient in *samatha* in order to abandon subtle dullness and excitement. Therefore, the interpretation of the relationship between *samatha* and *vipassanā* as opposite or autonomous characteristics is unjustified. Although both *samatha* and *vipassanā* contribute to the progression of each other, the former needs to be primarily cultivated in order to induce the visual intuition of mind into the appropriate state for commencing the latter.

The Necessary Level of Samatha

The discussion on the essence of *samatha* notes that the process of *vipassanā* cannot be carried on by those whose minds and bodies are constantly set upon by agitation from within and distraction from without. For this reason, it is important to investigate which level of *samatha* is exactly needed for the beginning of *vipassanā*. In order to help the development of *vipassanā*, a specific level of *samatha* is required and this is fostered through momentary and access concentration until the beyond mode of *jhānas* is reached. This necessary level of *samatha* will be explored through the examination of the relationship between *vipassanā* and the five features of *samatha*; unsettled state

⁵⁰² D.I.76.

of concentration, momentary concentration, access concentration, deep concentration of *jhānas* and the ‘beyond’ mode of *jhānas*.

Now this will focus on the question of why is it necessary to identify a specific level of *samatha* at which it supports the initiation of *vipassanā*. Some scholars, attempting to propose the significance of *samatha* for *vipassanā* exercise, do not specify the minimum level of concentration for starting *vipassanā*. For instance, Ranasinghe points out the essence of *samatha*, not its specific level, for the development of *vipassanā*: “It is when the mind is so settled and pacified that the more significant and far more important *vipassanā* meditation can be effectively attempted.”⁵⁰³ That the minimum level of *samatha* is changeable may depend on individual personality. Thus Gimello states: “the ideal is a combination of the two members, a judicious balance of quiescence and insight. The exact proportion depends largely on the temperament or aptitude of the individual meditator.”⁵⁰⁴ If *samatha* and *vipassanā* perform as parts of a yoking process with opposite characteristics, personal temperament should be concerned with determining the ideal proportion between them.

But, in fact, both of them promote each other and *vipassanā* requires the mental visual ability arising from the minimum requirement of *samatha*. For this arising of mental vision, Buddhādāsa refers to various states of concentration: “Each of the various states of concentration is a basis for insight (*vipassanā*), that is, seeing impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-selfhood.”⁵⁰⁵ His idea that *vipassanā* can be based on any level of concentration seems to equate *vipassanā* with mental noting, or, conceptual thought,⁵⁰⁶ without any ability of

⁵⁰³ Dayaratne Ranasinghe, *Deliverance through Buddhism (Buddhist Concepts That Illuminate Life's Journey)*, trans. L M V de Silva (Nawinna-Maharagama: Tharanjee Prints, 1995), p. 75.

⁵⁰⁴ Robert M Gimello, op. cit., p. 187.

⁵⁰⁵ Bhikkhu Buddhādāsa, op. cit., pp. 79-80.

⁵⁰⁶ Conceptual thought is thinking of any phenomena, the thinking having the three characteristics. That is, that the object thought about is impermanent, that the object can not therefore completely satisfy, and that the object thought about has no inherent existence.

profound mental vision. However, from the etymological analysis of the term ‘*vipassanā*,’ it is clear that it implies more. It is the state of profound mental vision, beyond just mental noting, or conceptual thinking. The initiation of mental vision corresponds with a certain level of *samatha*. This argument is recorded in the *Vimuttimaggā*, where Upatissa points out the concentrative level of the fourth *jhāna* as the basis for the development of the mental vision of divine eye (*dibbacakkhu*).⁵⁰⁷ This theme coincides with the *Bhayabheravasutta*.⁵⁰⁸ Therefore, rather than uncertain intensity, a definite degree of *samatha* initiates and sustains the process of visual intuition of *vipassanā*.

A *samatha* level of momentary concentration can fulfil the process of changing attention through the physical senses, but not the *vipassanā* process of mental vision. Momentary concentration does not refer to a single moment of concentration. Rather, it denotes the dynamic concentration which flows from object to object of phenomena, while retaining a sufficient level of *samatha* for mental purification. In fact, many scholars state that the momentary concentration is necessary for the commencement of *vipassanā*. For instance, Payutto refers to the concentrative basis of *vipassanā* as *vipassanāsamādhi*, which is the very first level of concentration. He compares this *vipassanāsamādhi* with the concentrative level between *khaṇikasamādhi* (momentary concentration) and *upacārasamādhi* (access concentration).⁵⁰⁹ This concentrative level is not specified directly as momentary concentration but is very close to it. In addition, U Pandita refers to the appropriate concentrative level for *vipassanā* as *vipassanājhāna* which he compares with momentary concentration. As the mind should move from one sense object to another that arises during the *vipassanā* process, then U Pandita employs the term

⁵⁰⁷ Upatissa, op. cit., p. 244.

⁵⁰⁸ M.I.22-23.

⁵⁰⁹ Phra Prayudh Payutto, *Natural Laws and Values for Life* (State University of New York Press, 1995), p. 271.

‘momentary concentration’ for *vipassanājhāna*.⁵¹⁰ Many scholars, such as Ussivakul,⁵¹¹ Thirasacco,⁵¹² and Bhikkhu Bodhi,⁵¹³ consider the idea that the momentary concentration is the prior condition to the development of *vipassanā*. It is found that the theme of momentary concentration relies on the interpretation of *vipassanā* as the process of changing attention through the fivefold physical senses; eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body. According to these scholars’ interpretation of *vipassanā*, the main characteristic of *vipassanā* should comprise the process of changing attention rather than a particular state of mental vision.

This process of changing attention influences the mind to move from object to object, which is just the untrained mind. Of course, this process is in direct conflict with the abilities of knowing and seeing in the process of *vipassanā* as it influences the mind to move from object to object, as an untrained mind would. In the *Chappānakopamasutta*,⁵¹⁴ the Buddha uses the parable of a hunter who catches six animals: a snake, crocodile, bird, dog, jackal and monkey, to illustrate how to train the mind. The hunter ties each to a rope and then ties the six ropes together before releasing them. Those animals, of course, would pull toward their home grounds in six different directions. This is similar to the six different sense objects pulling the untrained mind. However, if the end of each rope was tied to a solid pole, then these animals could only wander around the post until they became exhausted. Subsequently, they would remain near the post. Similarly, if the meditator practises concentrating on only one object; the trained mind will not be distracted because of the sense objects. This parable shows that the trained mind is the result of tying it to one subject of concentration so that one-pointedness of mind occurs.

⁵¹⁰ Sayadaw U Pandita, op. cit., p. 202.

⁵¹¹ Archan Vinai Ussivakul, *An Introduction to Buddhist Meditation for Results* (Bangkok, Thailand: Tipayawisuit Ltd, 2003), pp. 93-94.

⁵¹² Bhikkhu Thirasacco, *The Principles of Happiness* (Penang: Sammatta Bhala Dragon Publication, 1997), p. 108.

⁵¹³ Bhikkhu Bodhi, op. cit., p. 51.

⁵¹⁴ S.IV.200.

Even though the restraining of mind on a single object encourages the internal vision process of *vipassanā*, one might assert that its absorbed state disagrees with the secular world process of paying attention to sensory data. The secluded mind seems to involve a complete withdrawal from the daily life of activity. This work proposes that the more the mind is concentrated; the more the sensory data are recognized. Indeed the simile of the spider illustrates the collaboration between the focused mind and sense perception. The spider hunts by remaining at the centre of its web and waiting for insects to become entangled. Remaining motionless at the centre is the best location for anticipating the movements of its prey. If the spider wanders around, it cannot successfully monitor the movements of the insect. In this simile, the spider corresponds to the mind, and its observation of the movements of the insect signifies the perception of the different sense objects. Therefore, the tranquilized mind is the best state in which to recognize the sense objects and for reinforcing the perception of sensory data. Turning to its benefit for meditation, when the Buddha suggests the particular cultivation of concentration as leading to intuition and vision (*ñāṇadassana*), he employs the term ‘*bahulīkatā*’ which means ‘made much of,’ not just superficial concentration as momentary concentration.⁵¹⁵ Besides this, the *Dussīlasutta* recommends the concentrative development into the state of perfect concentration, which consists of the four *jhānas*, as a significant factor for ‘intuition and vision of things as they really are (*yathābhūtañāṇadassana*).’

When there is no perfect concentration, then the cause for intuition and vision of things as they really are is destroyed for one who lacks perfect concentration.⁵¹⁶

That the sufficing condition of *yathābhūtañāṇadassana* is the profound unified and firm mental states of the four *jhānas*, rather than changing attention. Therefore, momentary concentration, moving attention from the sense object to

⁵¹⁵ D.III.222.

⁵¹⁶ A.III.19: “*sammāsamādhimhi asati sammāsamādhivipannassa hatūpanisaṃ hoti yathābhūtañāṇadassanaṃ.*”

another object, can be deemed inappropriate to the developing the mind and to inducing the process of *vipassanā*.

The progression of *samatha* into the unreliable state of access concentration is still insufficient to encourage the process of *vipassanā*. Indeed, access concentration is the concentrative state at the intermediate stage between normal consciousness and full concentration, and is sufficient to suppress the hindrances. Mererk disregards the full concentration of the *jhānas* as the mental states beyond fivefold sense-activity, lacking reflection upon the five physical senses. Then he proposes access concentration as suitable for facilitating the arising of *vipassanā*.⁵¹⁷ U Ba Khin echoes this idea: “When the student has reached a certain level of *samādhi*, preferably *upacārasamādhi*, the course of training is changed to *vipassanā* or insight.”⁵¹⁸ Nyanaponika also prefers access concentration since it possesses the full strength of thought-conception and discursive thinking in collaboration with mental concentration.⁵¹⁹ The concept of access concentration (*upacārasamādhi*) is presented in both the *Abhidhamma* and in the Buddhist commentaries; however, it can be suggested it is most probably not part of the Buddha's original discourses.⁵²⁰ In addition, Buddhaghosa compares the unreliability of access concentration as the young child who tries to stand but repeatedly falls down on the ground.⁵²¹

This unstable state of access concentration seems to be unable to support the persistent mental vision of *vipassanā*. Moreover, the selection of the undependable state of the momentary or access concentration for initiating *vipassanā* relates to the interpretation of *vipassanā* as the perceptual process

⁵¹⁷ Phramaha Prayoon Mererk, op. cit., p. 124.

⁵¹⁸ Sayagyi U Ba Khin, "On the Path," in *Vipassana a Universal Buddhist Technique of Meditation*, ed. D.C. Ahir (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1999), Chapter 3, pp. 14-21, p. 18.

⁵¹⁹ Nyanaponika, op. cit., p. 103.

⁵²⁰ Jhanananda. 2005. "A Proposed Unifying Theory for the Experience of Gnosis," Last updated: 25/10/2005. URL: <http://www.greatwesternvehicle.org/transitionalabsorption.htm>. Date of access: 11/09/06.

⁵²¹ *Vism.* 126 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 131).

through observation of five senses and the analytical process of the three characteristics: impermanence (*anicca*), unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*) and not-self (*anattā*). If *vipassanā* is this fivefold perceptual process, to confine concentration to momentary or access concentration is appropriate. But *vipassanā* is the mental process of superior vision, which requires a very profound state of concentration. As the Buddha says:

Four concentrative meditations. This concentrative meditation, friend, when developed and made much of, conduces to 1) happiness here and now; ...2) gaining intuition and vision; ...3) mindfulness and well-awareness; ...4) the destruction of the cankers.⁵²²

This discourse shows that intuition and vision (*ñāṇadassana*) is based on the progression of mental development into the profound attainment of concentration, namely, the *jhānas*. Moreover, the Buddha regards the exclusive concentrative levels of the four *jhānas* as perfect concentration (*sammāsamādhi*).⁵²³ Therefore, the canonical *sutta* texts clearly give considerable importance to *jhānas*. Further evidence in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* explains that the transcendental path must be of at least the degree of the first *jhāna*.⁵²⁴ Kheminda agrees:

...the development of insight requires previous development of the eight attainments with first *jhāna* as a minimum. Without even this minimal requirement satisfied, purification of mind is not fulfilled and no true insight is possible.⁵²⁵

This makes it clear that the meditator requires the level of *samatha*, ascending beyond access concentration into the mode of *jhāna*, in order to begin *vipassanā*.

⁵²² D.III.222: “*Catasso samādhi-bhāvanā. Atth’āvuso samādhi-bhāvanā bhāvitā bahulī-katā diṭṭhadhamma-sukhavihārāya saṃvattati. ...ñāṇa-dassana-paṭilābhāya saṃvattati. ...sati-sampajaññāya saṃvattati. ...āsavānaṃ khayāya saṃvattati.*”

⁵²³ D.II.313.

⁵²⁴ Dhs.60.

⁵²⁵ Kheminda Thera, *The Way of Buddhist Meditation*, second ed. 1982 (Colombo: Lake House Printers & Publishers, 1st 1980), p. 25.

The evaluation of the relation between *vipassanā* and *jhāna* suggests that the profound states of the *jhānas* are inappropriate to stimulate the process of *vipassanā*. Many scholars investigate the connection between both terms in various ways. For example, Jhanananda treats *jhāna* as an equivalent meditation state to *vipassanā*. He claims both meditation exercises to be different aspects of the same meditative process.⁵²⁶ However, as *vipassanā* and *jhāna* are closely related, it could be considered that *vipassanā* is the meditative process itself, or *samatha* is included in *vipassanā*, while the *jhānas* are the reference points of the concentrative process. That is, *vipassanā* is one thing while the *jhānas* are another, referring specifically to the commencement of *vipassanā*. In this regard, the other Buddhist scholars state that the concentrative levels of the *jhānas* are associated with the commencement of *vipassanā*. Soma, among these scholars, clearly specifies the first *jhāna* as the lowest concentration level needed for the application of *vipassanā*. His claim relies on the consideration of the five hindrances:

Of no state before the first *jhāna* has it been said by the blessed one that it is separate from sense-desires and separate from other evil states, that is to say, aloof from the hindrances that obstruct clear vision,....⁵²⁷

Just as the clouded sun cannot illuminate the world, the mind clothed and clouded by hindrances, cannot see the truth. Indeed, the five hindrances obstruct the mind from seeing and understanding things clearly.⁵²⁸ The abolishment of this major obstacle makes the mind clear and allows it to perform the process of visual intuition. In addition, Brahmavamso states that the meditative practice leading to enlightenment begins by suppressing the five hindrances temporarily in order to experience *vipassanā*.⁵²⁹

⁵²⁶ Jhanananda. "The Lack of Evidence in Support of a Dry Insight Practice," op. cit.

⁵²⁷ Thera Soma, op. cit., p. 359.

⁵²⁸ Solé-Leris, op. cit., p. 94.

⁵²⁹ Venerable Ajahn Brahmavamso, "The Five Hindrances (*Nivarana*)," newsletter April 1999.

Nonetheless, some scholars disregard the *jhānas* as lacking the support of *vipassanā*. For instance, Goenka says: “Such concentration, even if not developed to the level of the trance (*jhāna*) states, is very helpful.”⁵³⁰ Gunaratana indicates: “Insight cannot be practiced while absorbed in *jhāna*.”⁵³¹ This viewpoint of disregarding the *jhānas* as interfering with *vipassanā* is incompatible with the Buddha’s teaching in the *Samādhisutta*. This discourse reveals that the meditator cannot enter and abide in freedom of mind (*cetovimutti*) or freedom through wisdom (*paññāvimutti*) without the peace of concentration at a high degree, and without the accomplishment of one-pointedness of mind.⁵³² We can see that the accomplishment of the first *jhāna* is significant in not only disposing of the five hindrances, but also in entering the path leading to enlightenment. So, in order to begin *vipassanā*, at least the hindrances must be eliminated through the first *jhāna*. It is an occasion for a further investigation into whether or not the higher *jhānas* need to be developed. The relation between the *jhānas* and *vipassanā* is found in the *Mahāyāna Buddhist Meditation* where Sopa says: “higher vision is only possible through recourse to some mentality belonging to one of the four trances or the four formless absorptions.”⁵³³ Even if he gives a choice for all *jhāna* states, the fourth *jhāna* is the most valuable for *vipassanā* because it is free from the gross factors of the first three *jhānas* and it is not as refined as the factors belonging to the four *arūpajjhānas*.⁵³⁴ His opinion, consequently, seems to regard *rūpajjhānas* as more excellent than *arūpajjhānas*.

Of course, according to the more refined in quality of the *arūpajjhānas*, they should be more appropriate than the *rūpajjhānas* in promoting the profound

⁵³⁰ Goenka, “*Moral Conduct, Concentration, and Wisdom*,” op. cit., p. 109.

⁵³¹ Henepola Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., p. 170.

⁵³² A.III. 425-426.

⁵³³ Geshe Sopa, “*Śamathavipaśyanāyuganaddha: The Two Leading Principles of Buddhist Meditation*,” in *Mahayana Buddhist Meditation: Theory and Practice*, ed. Minoru Kiyota (Hawaii: The University Press of Hawaii, 1978), pp. 46-65, p. 56.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*

mental vision process of *vipassanā*. The greater advantage of the *arūpajjhānas* is clearly expressed in the *Nivāpasutta* where the Buddha describes all eight *jhānas*. In this discourse, the eight *jhānas* induce the destruction of cankers by seeing with wisdom (*paññācakkhu*) and by blinding *Māra*.⁵³⁵ The Buddha explains how to achieve the ultimate goal in a practice sequence from each state of *rūpajjhānas* to each of the *arūpajjhānas*. This progress of mental development shows that the more profound and peaceful states of the *arūpajjhānas* produce deeper states of visual intuition.

However, Buddhādāsa disregards the right mental development of the *arūpajjhānas* as a different meditative path from *vipassanā*.⁵³⁶ In addition, Bhikkhu Bodhi, while regarding the *arūpajjhānas* as the most exalted state of consciousness, does not accept them as the basis of *vipassanā* and for gaining the Buddhist deliverance.⁵³⁷ That is because he considers the meditative technique rather than mental quality for *vipassanā* development, and then he rejects the very profound states of the *arūpajjhānas*. If the *arūpajjhānas* do not relate to *vipassanā*, one might wonder why the Buddha arranges them into the path leading to freedom through wisdom (*paññāvimutti*).⁵³⁸ So, in his *Early Buddhism and its Origins*, Varma points out the relationship between the *arūpajjhānas* and mental vision: “the four process stages of *arūpajjhānas* are stages when supramental vision dawns on the *Bhikkhu*.”⁵³⁹ The ascent from *rūpajjhānas* to *arūpajjhānas* signifies the progress of visual ability of mind in order to perfectly realize the more profound object.

It is speculated that for the commencement of *vipassanā*, the *arūpajjhānas* provide a greater ability of mental vision than the *rūpajjhānas*. Despite this,

⁵³⁵ M.I.159-160.

⁵³⁶ Bhikkhu Buddhādāsa, op. cit., p. 89.

⁵³⁷ Bhikkhu Bodhi, op. cit., p. 51.

⁵³⁸ D.II.70.

⁵³⁹ Vishwanath Prasad Varma, op. cit., p. 272.

they appear to lack the ability to establish the process of *vipassanā*. What is referred to is an evaluation of the Buddha to the fourth *arūpajjhāna*: “this Dhamma does not lead to giving up, detachment, cessation, appeasement, knowledge enlightenment and extinction: it leads up to the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception only.”⁵⁴⁰ If the intensified consciousness of the fourth *arūpajjhāna* can establish the process of *vipassanā*, it is not difficult for Uddaka Rāmaputta, one of the teachers of prince Siddhattha, to experience the process of *vipassanā*. Since it is generally known that *vipassanā* is a specifically Buddhist method, then the level of *samatha* required for the arising of *vipassanā* would also be unique to Buddhism. Before his enlightenment, the Buddha studied *yoga* under different teachers and attained the fourth *arūpajjhāna*, but it did not provide the complete liberation. He later discovered *vipassanā*, which is the appropriate meditative method leading to complete cessation of suffering. It appears that *vipassanā* is a method unique to Buddhism.⁵⁴¹ Thus, for the commencement of *vipassanā*, first of all the level of *samatha* that is unique to Buddhism and more profound than the *yoga* practice of the fourth *arūpajjhāna* has to be developed. It is evident that the mind needs to be further cultivated into a more profound state than the fourth *arūpajjhāna* in order to achieve sufficient ability of mental vision for *vipassanā*.

At this point, one might suggest looking at what follows the attainment of the fourth *arūpajjhāna*, which is the cessation of perception and feeling. This cessation, regarded as the ninth *jhāna*,⁵⁴² refers to the process of *vipassanā*. Nonetheless, it is unsuitable as a concentrative level supporting the initiation of *vipassanā* because it arises from the synthetic practice of *samatha* and

⁵⁴⁰ M.I.166.

⁵⁴¹ Mererk, op. cit., p. 123.

⁵⁴² S.II.222.

vipassanā.⁵⁴³ A detailed examination of the cessation of perception and feeling will be presented in chapter four.

In regard to an evaluation of the *Dhammacakkappavattanasutta* (*Setting in Motion the Wheel of Truth*), the level of *samatha* which is the basis of the four noble truths tends to be effective in initiating an exercise of *vipassanā*. In this discourse, the Buddha regards a series of experiences as the prerequisites for the process of insight into the four noble truths and then enlightenment.

This is the Noble Truth of Suffering: thus, Monks, such was the vision, the intuition, the wisdom, the knowledge, the light, that arose in me in regard to things unheard before.⁵⁴⁴

The five instrumental factors of insight, vision (*cakkhu*), intuition (*ñāṇa*), wisdom (*paññā*), knowledge (*vijjā*) and light (*āloka*), arise along with every step of realization of the four noble truths. In this passage, the phrase ‘unheard before’ indicates that the Buddha did not enter these five instrumental factors of insight before his enlightenment.

A further examination of *vipassanā* reveals that the development of *samatha* ascending into the “series of experiences” that accompanied the Buddha’s mental orientation “to each of the noble truths;”⁵⁴⁵ vision (*cakkhu*), intuition (*ñāṇa*), wisdom (*paññā*), knowledge (*vijjā*) and light (*āloka*), are the minimum requirement for the arising of the *vipassanā* process. This research will refer to this series of experiences as the “instrumental factors” of *vipassanā*. It might be argued that these five factors are merely synonyms for insight and then enlightenment. This may be so because the five factors and insight are closely related to each other. However, in the *Dhammacakkappavattanasutta*, *cakkhu*,

⁵⁴³ Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., p. 203.

⁵⁴⁴ S.V.422: “*Idaṃ dukkham ariyasaccan ti me bhikkhave pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhum udapādi ñāṇam udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi.*”

⁵⁴⁵ Alex Wayman, *Buddhist Insight : Essays*, edited and introduced by George R. Elder, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, 1984, p.153.

ñāṇa, *paññā*, *vijjā* and *āloka* are actually instrumental in bringing about *vipassanā* or insight. This can be stated for the following reasons.

Firstly, these five instrumental factors generate the mental activities of profound vision which together constitute the process of insight. The Buddha stresses these five factors repeatedly in this *sutta*, stating that these things are being heard for the first time. Thus these mental phenomena, unique to Buddhism, appear to be of more importance than a simple list of synonyms.

Secondly, the continual arising of the five instruments strengthens the process of insight. This can be seen in the *Dhammacakkappavattanasutta* where the graded series of understanding of the four noble truths is intensified as the five instruments are employed over and over again.⁵⁴⁶ Simultaneously, the effects of the five instruments become stronger as insight grows. In other words, there is a mutual strengthening between the five instruments and the process of *vipassanā*.

So what is this relationship between insight or *vipassanā* and the four noble truths?

- a) The four noble truths are objects of insight (along with the five aggregates, the twelve *āyatana*s or sense spheres, the eighteen elements, the twenty two *indriya*s, and the twelve *nidāna*s or causes that constitute the process of *paṭiccasamuppāda*).⁵⁴⁷ In the *sutta* in question, however, the particular object referred to is that of the four noble truths.
- b) As stated above, there is a gradual intensification of insight as the instrumental factors are employed in the process of realisation of the four noble truths (in the *Dhammacakkappavattanasutta*).

⁵⁴⁶ S.V.422-423.

⁵⁴⁷ Nyanatiloka, *The Buddha's Path to Deliverance in Its Threefold Division and Seven Stages of Purity*, op. cit., p. 150.

- c) There are twelve steps in all to this process of intensification. Each noble truth has three steps; each step brings about a deeper degree of insight. Each begins with “this is the noble truth of ...” (the first step). That is, the statement about the first noble truth says “this is the noble truth of suffering”; the statement about the second truth says “this is the noble truth about the origin of suffering” the third says “this is the noble truth about the cessation of suffering”, and the fourth says “this is the noble truth about the path leading to the cessation of suffering. Then: “this noble truth ... is to be fully understood (“abandoned” for the second truth, “realized” for the third and “cultivated” for the fourth).” This is the second step. Then: “this noble truth ... has been understood” (“abandoned” for the second truth, “realized” for the third and “cultivated” for the fourth)”. This is the third step. Thus there is a gradual intensification during the three steps of each truth;
- d) There is also a gradual intensification of insight as one moves from the first truth to the second truth, to the third truth and to the fourth truth. That is, the degree of insight increases as one progresses from the recognition that suffering exists, to the recognition that the suffering has a cause. Then there is a further intensification as it is recognised that the suffering can cease and, finally that there is a path leading to the cessation.

The modern commentaries agree that there is a relationship between *vipassanā* and the four noble truths. For example, Nyanatiloka suggests that the four noble truths are objects of insight-wisdom (*vipassanāpaññā*).⁵⁴⁸ Vanarat states that the four noble truths are the ground of *vipassanā*.⁵⁴⁹ The meaning of ground

⁵⁴⁸ Nyanatiloka, *The Buddha's Path to Deliverance in Its Threefold Division and Seven Stages of Purity*, op. cit., p. 150.

⁵⁴⁹ Somdet Phra Vanarat, *Insight Meditation*, trans. Ven. Phra Dhammavisuddhikavi, fourth ed., 1 vols. (Bangkok: Mahamakuta Rajavidyalaya, 2001), p. 2.

(*bhūmi*) refers to one of the objects of *vipassanā* practice. What he means is that an understanding of the four noble truths can strengthen the internal vision of *vipassanā* and vice versa. Story also proposes an association between *vipassanā* and the four noble truths: “It is in the latter form of meditation (*vipassanā-bhāvanā*) that the mind finally penetrates the four noble truths.”⁵⁵⁰ In addition, Ussivakul speaks of their association by indicating the profound level of wisdom that *vipassanā* is concerned with, and by means of which the four noble truths are realized.⁵⁵¹ These modern scholars appear to agree, in their own ways, that the perfect intuitive realization of the four noble truths is somehow cultivated during the process of *vipassanā*.

Thus, the arising of the five instrumental factors is a meditative experience unique to Buddhism and the means by which the four noble truths can be realized. This demonstrates that the five factors, which are the transcendental knowledge product of *samatha*⁵⁵² developed in order to realize the four noble truths, are also the predominant factors for inducing the process of *vipassanā*. For the commencement of *vipassanā*, the meditator has to develop mental purification and unification advancing from the fourth *arūpajjhāna*. Consequently, the progression into the very profound state of the arising of the five instrumental factors, unique to Buddhism, is significant for the realization of the four noble truths and the commencement of *vipassanā*.

Once this is done, the degree of *samatha* needed for the arising of *vipassanā* is determined. In regard to mental vision rather than individual personality, this definite level of *samatha* is necessary. A specified level of momentary concentration is suitable for the process of changing attention through the fivefold physical senses; eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body, but not for the

⁵⁵⁰ Francis Story, op. cit., p. 52.

⁵⁵¹ Ussivakul, op. cit., p. 95.

⁵⁵² Desaraṅsī, op. cit., p. 86.

particular state of mental vision. This changing attention causes the mind to move from object to object inducing the mind to revert to its untrained form. Although the mind is trained into the state of access concentration, it cannot fulfil the development of *vipassanā*. An ascent from access concentration to the *rūpajjhānas* is still ineffective for inducing *vipassanā*. According to modern scholarship, *arūpajjhānas* seem to be less effective than *rūpajjhānas* in supporting *vipassanā*. Despite this theme, the detailed consideration of the eight *jhānas* reveals that the deeper equanimity of *arūpajjhānas* produces the more refined visual intuition. Indeed, even the attainment of a high level of *arūpajjhānas* is insufficient for *vipassanā* since it does not lead to enlightenment. Admittedly, the meditator requires the development of *samatha* beyond the *arūpajjhānas* into the meditative state unique to Buddhism. That is a very profound and subtle state of mental purification and unification from which the five instrumental factors, vision (*cakkhu*), intuition (*ñāṇa*), wisdom (*paññā*), knowledge (*vijjā*) and light (*āloka*), arise in order to completely realize the four noble truths and thus initiate the process of *vipassanā*.

To summarize the discussion on the commencement of *vipassanā*, this section of the study has dealt with the two issues; “Is *samatha* essential or not” and “Which level of *samatha* is required.” Proficiency in the calm abiding of *samatha* is consistently appraised as the fundamental component from which *vipassanā* is begun. The process of *vipassanā* needs the support of *samatha* in order to achieve a very stable and profound state. The appropriate level of *samatha* for the commencement of *vipassanā* is drawn from the study of the relation between *vipassanā* and the four noble truths. The study has shown that the ascent of *samatha* from the *arūpajjhānas* to the arising of the five instrumental factors, vision (*cakkhu*), intuition (*ñāṇa*), wisdom (*paññā*), knowledge (*vijjā*) and light (*āloka*), is the prerequisite for the commencement

of *vipassanā*. In the next section, discussion of these five factors is important in order to clarify how *vipassanā* operates.

An Evaluation of Five Instrumental Factors

This section continues to evaluate the relationship between the five instrumental factors and the process of mental vision of *vipassanā*. In Buddhist psychology, understanding mainly takes the form of visual images. To ‘see and understand’ is a very common in *Pāli*: “*Bhagavatā jānatā passatā ... bhāsitaṃ* (it was said by the master who knows and sees).”⁵⁵³ The performing of both psychological aspects depends on the instrumental factor of insight, namely *paññā*, as can be seen in the expression: ‘*paññāya passati* (he sees by *paññā*).’⁵⁵⁴ Accordingly, the *vipassanā* process of superior and particular seeing is not implemented by means of the physical eyes, but by means of *paññā*. This instrumental factor, namely, *paññā* comes into existence along with the simultaneous occurrence of the other four instrumental factors, vision (*cakkhu*), intuition (*ñāṇa*), knowledge (*vijjā*) and light (*āloka*). Therefore, these five instrumental factors of insight are acquired for the spiritual insight. The detailed investigation of the psychological qualities of these five factors explores the essential aspects of *vipassanā* practice and therefore forms a key to understanding the operation of five instrumental factors in the process of *vipassanā*. This investigation will be pursued through the individual analysis of each term.

Vision (Cakkhu)

The first instrumental factor of insight is vision (*cakkhu*), which is embedded in relation to the philosophical and mythological discourses. The central truths of the discourses are ‘seen,’ as for example in the *Ratanasutta* of the *Suttanipāta*⁵⁵⁵ and *Khuddakapāṭha*⁵⁵⁶ it is said that “one comprehends the noble

⁵⁵³ M.II.110.

⁵⁵⁴ M.II.112.

⁵⁵⁵ Sn. 229.

truths and sees them (*ariyasaccāni avecca passati*).” In order to see the truths, the eye (*cakkhu*), which is multivalent in meditative practice, should be developed. So, the profound levels based on the cultivation of the internal vision are an essential part of early Buddhist meditation. Incidentally, *cakkhu* can be clarified by examining the term ‘*dassana*’ which is used interchangeably. By the examination of both terms, *cakkhu* is not mere observational analysis but a particular mode of supernormal power based on *samatha* in which the mode of *dhamma-cakkhu* is cultivated for the experience of *vipassanā*. The examination will proceed according to the three issues: its implication, whether or not *samatha* is essential for its development, and which type of *cakkhu* is applied in the process of *vipassanā*.

The term ‘*cakkhu*’ implies the supernormal mental vision, but not the observational analysis. The example of the implication of *cakkhu* as supernormal mental vision occurs in the *Bhūmicālavagga* in the *Aṅguttaranikāya*:

Monks, before my enlightenment, while I was an unenlightened Bodhisatta, I perceived light but did not see forms. Monks, it occurred to me, “If I were both to perceive light and to see forms, in that case my intuition and vision would be better purified.”⁵⁵⁷

It is quite clear that ‘intuition’ goes with the perception (*saññā*) of the profound light and that ‘vision’ goes with the seeing of the refined forms. Admittedly, the vision (*cakkhu*) means, as Rhys Davids and Stede note, “The eye as the instrument of supersensuous perception, "clear" sight, clairvoyance.”⁵⁵⁸ The epithet of the Buddha, *Buddha-cakkhu*, also illustrates the association of vision with wisdom. The *Buddha-cakkhu* is an essential symbol of his compassion for other beings. One episode in the legend of the Buddha’s life relates that after his

⁵⁵⁶ Khp. p.4.

⁵⁵⁷ A.IV.302: “*pubbāhaṃ bhikkhave sambodhā anabhisambuddho bodhisattova samāno obhāsaṃ hi kho sañjānāmi, no ca rūpāni passāmi. Tassa mayhaṃ bhikkhave etad ahoṣi ‘sace kho ahaṃ obhāsañ c’eva sañjāneyyaṃ rūpāni ca passeyyaṃ, evaṃ me idaṃ ñānadassanaṃ parisuddhataṃ assā’ti.*”

⁵⁵⁸ T. W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, op. cit., p. 259.

awakening, he compassionately surveyed the world with his Buddha eye.⁵⁵⁹ Using his spiritual abilities, he would then manifest himself in the appropriate location to expound the *dhamma* to those who had the potential for immediate enlightenment. It could be seen that the meditative process and its effects involve the experiences of superior mental vision.

Nevertheless, Dhammananda interprets the supernormal mental vision of *cakkhu* as sensual perception, before suggesting that experiencing the eye (*cakkhu*) of the Buddha is neither a supernatural power nor mystical experience.⁵⁶⁰ He further implies that meditative experience of *cakkhu* constitutes effective sensual perception.⁵⁶¹ His marginalization of the mental ability of the Buddha leads to a misunderstanding of the characteristics of the Buddha. In fact, the Buddha is generally considered as possessing omniscient knowledge (*sabbaññutañāna*). After achieving enlightenment, he immediately gains the eight kinds of spiritual power, which are the fruit of perfect ordination.⁵⁶² Thus, Dhammananda's viewpoint appears to contradict the meaning of vision which arises from mental development. Having interpreted *ñānadassana* as the "forms of observational analysis," Griffiths echoes Dhammananda's viewpoint.⁵⁶³ Anālayo also shares this sentiment: "It might not be too far-fetched to relate the accompanying aspect of vision (*dassana*) to the activity of watching represented by mindfulness (*sati*)."⁵⁶⁴ Furthermore, Varma interprets *dassana* as the rational process of philosophic insight.⁵⁶⁵ This implication of *dassana* would represent only its superficial meaning. The profound meaning of *dassana* is found in the *Mahāsīhanādasutta*,⁵⁶⁶ where the

⁵⁵⁹ Mp.I.67.

⁵⁶⁰ Sri Dhammananda, *Why Buddhism*, ed. first (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Laser Press Sdn Bhd, 1997), p. 9.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁵⁶² D.I.76-85.

⁵⁶³ Paul Griffiths, "Indian Buddhist Meditation," in *Buddhist Spirituality Indian, Southeast Asian, Tibetan, Early Chinese* ed. Takeuchi Yoshinori (New York: World Spirituality, 1995), pp. 34-66, p. 46.

⁵⁶⁴ Anālayo, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

⁵⁶⁵ Varma, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

⁵⁶⁶ M.I.69-71.

Buddha explains his ten kinds of supernormal power. He identifies the experiences of these ten kinds of supernormal power, which are superior intuition and vision worthy of the noble one, as the process of knowing and seeing. Buddhadāsa also confirms the association between *ñānadassana* (intuition and vision) and the supernormal power of divine ear and divine eye.⁵⁶⁷ Hence, it is concluded that the mental quality of *cakkhu* for the initiation of *vipassanā* is not the superficial meaning of observational analysis, but involves the experiences of supernormal power.

The examination of various Buddhist texts⁵⁶⁸ reveals that the acquisition of *cakkhu* is founded on the process of *samatha*. For instance, the description of *vipassanāñāṇa* expresses the essence of *samatha* in relation to the arising of *cakkhu*:

When his heart was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, free from imperfection, malleable, workable, steady, and attained to imperturbability, he applies and bends down his mind towards intuition and vision.⁵⁶⁹

Although this statement of the Buddha clearly demonstrates the consistency between the tranquillity process and the experiences of intuition and vision (*ñānadassana*), Griffiths does not accept the appearance of the stereotyped description of the four *jhānas* in the discourses through proposing its redactional addition.⁵⁷⁰ His justification of the incompatibility between concentration and the perceptual processes of seeing (*dassana*) seems to produce controversial implications.

The first one is that concentration and the perceptual process tend to promote each other. In fact, we still our mind so that we can sense clearly. We perceive

⁵⁶⁷ Buddhadāsa, op. cit., pp. 89-90.

⁵⁶⁸ D.I.76, A.III.20, M.I.203.

⁵⁶⁹ D.I.76.

⁵⁷⁰ Paul J. Griffiths, *Indian Buddhist Meditation-Theory: History, Development and Systematization*, op. cit., pp. 82-83.

clearly so that we can better understand why we should still the mind. Like Griffiths, FronsdaI interprets the Buddhist experience of seeing as the sensual perception process. But, in regard to the relation between concentration and seeing, he emphasises their consistency: “Stopping (concentration) supports seeing and seeing supports stopping.”⁵⁷¹ The second implication is that seeing should not be interpreted as understanding in the general way of speaking: as in the phrase “you see what I mean.” In regard to Buddhist meditation, the process of seeing involves supernormal power such as seeing through a mountain or seeing long distance without any obstructions in between.⁵⁷² As these forms of extravisual experience arise from deep concentration, then *samatha* is essential for the extravisual experiences of *cakkhu*. The third implication is that having disregarded the canonical texts of the four *jhānas* stereotyped as additional revision, Griffiths rejects the consistency between *samatha* and *ñāṇadassana*. From this, it can be argued that many other discourses point out the collaboration between *ñāṇadassana* and *samatha*. For example in the *Pañcaṅgikavagga* in the *Āṅguttaranikāya*, the Buddha demonstrates the association between concentration and mental vision:

When there is no perfect concentration, then the cause for intuition and vision of things as they really are is destroyed for one who lacks perfect concentration.⁵⁷³

The next discourse is the *Cūlasāropamasutta* in which the Buddha indicates *ñāṇadassana* as the consequent meditative experience of *samatha*:

He, because of this attainment of concentration, does not praise himself nor disparage others. And he arouses a desire for and endeavours for the realization of those other states which are higher and more sublime than the attainment of concentration. He is neither infatuated nor lethargic. He accomplishes intuition and vision.⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁷¹ Gil FronsdaI. 2003. “*Stopping and Seeing*” Last updated: 01/04/03. URL:

<http://www.insightmeditationcenter.org/articles/stoppingandseeing.html>. Date of access: 11/09/06.

⁵⁷² U Thittila. 2002. “*Essential Themes of Buddhists Lectures*” Last updated: 01/08/02. URL:

<http://www.buddhanet.net/budsas/ebud/estm/estm03.htm>. Date of access: 11/09/06.

⁵⁷³ A.III.19.

⁵⁷⁴ M.I.203: “*So tāya samādhisampadāya na attān’ukkamseti, na paraṃ vambheti, samādhisampadāya ca ye aññe dhammā uttaritarā ca pañītarā ca tesaṃ dhammānaṃ sacchikiriyaṃ chandaṃ janeti vāyamati, anolīnavuttiko ca hoti asāthaliko. So ñāṇadassanaṃ ārādheti.*”

If the stereotyped formula of *samatha* (*so evaṃ samāhite cite...*) is presented exclusively in the *Dīgha Nikāya*,⁵⁷⁵ it is possible that this is an additional revision to the original texts. However, since the different *nikāyas* and doctrinal structures assert throughout the consistency between *samatha* and *ñāṇadassana*, the stereotyped formula of *samatha* seems to be far from additional revision. Therefore, not only the superficial level of *cakkhu* as the observational analysis, but also its profound state of superior mental seeing are based on the process of *samatha*.

The evaluation of various modes of *cakkhu* indicates that the mode of *dhamma-cakkhu* is the proper quality for experiencing *vipassanā*. Indeed, the Buddha is said to be endowed with five kinds of eye (*cakkhu*): physical eye (*maṃsa-cakkhu*), divine eye (*dibba-cakkhu*), wisdom eye (*paññā-cakkhu*), the Buddha eye (*buddha-cakkhu*) and eye of all round knowledge (*samanta-cakkhu*).⁵⁷⁶ In applying to all meditators, the Buddha classifies *cakkhu* into three types: namely, physical eye (*maṃsa-cakkhu*), divine eye (*dibba-cakkhu*) and wisdom eye (*paññā-cakkhu*).⁵⁷⁷ The physical eye consists of the constituent parts of the eye (*sasambhāra-cakkhu*) and the sensitive eye (*pasāda-cakkhu*).⁵⁷⁸ Through the material receptacle of *sasambhāra-cakkhu*, the visual consciousness having the sensitive eye as its basis constitutes the instrument of physical seeing. The physical eye supports mere seeing, but not the special mental seeing involved in the process of *vipassanā*. The second type, namely, divine eye is explained as knowledge gained by a pervading light (*āloka*).⁵⁷⁹ It is similar to the vision of the deities in its ability to perceive objects at remote distances and to see objects

⁵⁷⁵ D.I.76, D.I.173.

⁵⁷⁶ Nid.II.448.

⁵⁷⁷ It.52.

⁵⁷⁸ It.-a.I.99-100.

⁵⁷⁹ It.-a.II.27.

hidden behind walls, etc. Although the divine eye possesses extravisual power, this power seems unable to perfectly intuit the four noble truths.

The clarification of the third type of *cakkhu*, namely, *paññā-cakkhu* shows that it refers to *vipassanā* because of its knowledge leading to the perfect realization of the four noble truths according to the vision (*cakkhu*) of the five instrumental factors.⁵⁸⁰ According to the commentator's opinion, this type of *cakkhu*, described as *cakkhu* arising in the process of realizing the four noble truths, is the proper mental quality for the acquisition of *vipassanā*. *Paññā-cakkhu* is further divided into five types; Buddha-eye, eye of all round knowledge (*samanta-cakkhu*), knowledge eye (*ñāṇa-cakkhu*), divine eye, and eye of the *dhamma* (*dhamma-cakkhu*).⁵⁸¹

The evaluation of each type of *paññā-cakkhu* contributes to the determination of a particular type for initiating *vipassanā*. First, the Buddha eye is defined as the 'knowledge of inclinations and dispositions (*āsayānusayañāṇa*)' and the 'knowledge of the senses and inclinations of others (*indriyaparopariyattiñāṇa*).'⁵⁸² Since it is said, the commentary reads, that the Buddha surveys the world with this *cakkhu*, the fact that this characteristic is confined to the Buddha shows that it is inaccessible for the general meditator. Second, the eye of all round knowledge (*samanta-cakkhu*) is described as omniscient knowledge (*sabbaññutañāṇa*). The confined characteristic to the Buddha is generally understood as including omniscient knowledge; consequently *samanta-cakkhu* cannot be widely employed. The next type is *ñāṇa-cakkhu*, which is identified with *paññā-cakkhu*; that is, they are

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁸¹ It.-a.I.99.

⁵⁸² Spk.I.200.

interchangeable.⁵⁸³ When *ñāṇa-cakkhu* is mentioned, can be read as a synonym for *paññā-cakkhu*.

The discussion of the fourth type of *paññā-cakkhu*, divine eye, concludes that it lacks the mental vision for realization of the four noble truths and of *vipassanā*. Buddhādāsa, of course, disregards the divine eye as dissociated with the path to enlightenment: “but not the second (knowledge and vision of the sort called divine ear and divine eye), which has in any case nothing at all to do with the overcoming of suffering.”⁵⁸⁴ However, if the divine eye does not involve the path of enlightenment, one might be confused as to why it is one of the threefold knowledge (*vijjā*) that the Buddha achieved during the process of enlightenment.⁵⁸⁵ According to the threefold knowledge (*vijjā*), the divine eye is called *cutūpapātañāṇa* implying the insight by which the deaths and births of sentient beings are realized in various planes of existence. Perhaps the divine eye of the three types of *cakkhu* is the superficial level based on mere *samatha*, while that of the five types of *paññā-cakkhu* is the profound state based on both *samatha* and *vipassanā* and influenced by the next type, namely, *dharmacakkhu*.

The fifth type of *paññā-cakkhu* is the *dharmacakkhu* which leads the meditator to the complete internal vision applied in the process of *vipassanā*. For instance, Yasa’s mother is described as one “who had seen *dharmā*, mastered *dharmā*, known *dharmā*, was immersed in *dharmā*, who was free from doubt, who had dispelled uncertainty, and who had gained complete confidence, not dependent upon others for the teachings of the teacher.”⁵⁸⁶ The *dharmā* that Yasa’s mother saw is understood in the commentaries as the *dharmā* which is known by means of hearing the four noble truths.

⁵⁸³ Spk.III.90.

⁵⁸⁴ Buddhādāsa, op. cit., pp. 89-90.

⁵⁸⁵ M.I.248-249.

⁵⁸⁶ Vin.I.18.

Buddhaghosa interprets *dhamma-cakkhu* as seeing into *dhamma* or the eye made of *dhamma*.⁵⁸⁷ As mentioned above, *dhamma-cakkhu* is included in the list of five eyes of the Buddha. However, according to both canonical and commentarial traditions, it can be shared by anyone, and thus cannot be confined to being a quality of the Buddha alone. Moreover, *dhamma-cakkhu* appears to be the essential means by which the meditator can know and see things as they really are according to the three characteristics; impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and not-self. In the *Dhammacakkappavattanasutta*, Koṇḍañña with the aid of the *dhamma-cakkhu* can realize completely that “Whatever is of a nature of origination, all that is of a nature of cessation.”⁵⁸⁸ This means that *dhamma-cakkhu* is the proper type of *cakkhu* to provide superior mental vision by which the process of *vipassanā* can be commenced.

In conclusion, a critique of *cakkhu* reveals a relationship between *cakkhu* and both *samatha* and *vipassanā*. Observational analysis is only the superficial level of *cakkhu*, whereas its more profound level involves the supernormal power of mental vision. It is evident from the psychological and doctrinal analysis of *cakkhu* that both levels require the unification of mind in the process of *samatha*. The gradual improvement of *cakkhu* into the mode of *dhamma-cakkhu* denotes a sufficient power of mental vision to activate the process of *vipassanā*.

Intuition (Ñāṇa)

The second instrumental factor of insight is ‘*ñāṇa*,’ which means “knowledge, intelligence, insight, conviction and recognition.”⁵⁸⁹ In the discourses, *ñāṇa* occurs in intensive couple compounds with terms for ‘sight’ such as ‘*cakkhu*’ and ‘*dassana*.’ This is to say that the realization of meditative knowledge is the

⁵⁸⁷ Sv.I.237.

⁵⁸⁸ S.V.423: “*yaṃ kiñci samudayadhammaṃ sabbaṃ taṃ nirodhadhammaṃ ti.*”

⁵⁸⁹ T. W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, op. cit., p. 287.

consequence of the mental qualities of knowing and seeing. In the *Madhupiṇḍikasutta*, Mahākaccāna Bhikkhu describes the Buddha as one who “knows what should be known, sees what should be seen, having come to have vision and intuition.”⁵⁹⁰ Moreover, ‘the knowing and seeing one’ is a characteristic description of the Buddha,⁵⁹¹ and it is usually said of what he claims to know that he both ‘knows and sees.’⁵⁹² *Ñāṇa*, and its meditative experiences based on the profound state of *samatha*, is not the impediment of *vipassanā*, rather its ten kinds of *vipassanā-ñāṇa* and five kinds of *abhiññā* are essential to *vipassanā* and the path of enlightenment. In this section, the term ‘*ñāṇa*’ will be clarified through the four aspects; its implication, its viewpoint of imperfection of *vipassanā*, the *vipassanā-ñāṇa* and the fivefold *abhiññā*.

Ñāṇa implies the development of profound spiritual experiences of *abhiññā* (supernatural knowledge) based on the process of *samatha*, but not mere the perceptual process of awareness (*sampajañña*). *Ñāṇa* and the three knowledges (*vijjās*) are linguistically connected through the *Pāli* definition; the knowledge of recollection of former lives (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*), the knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of beings (*cutūpapātañāṇa*), and the knowledge of the destruction of the cankers (*āsavakkhayañāṇa*).⁵⁹³ In addition to the three *vijjās*, some *suttas*⁵⁹⁴ mention *ñāṇa* as six kinds of *abhiññā* by adding the knowledge of supernormal power (*iddhividhañāṇa*), the knowledge of divine ear-element (*dibbasotadhātuñāṇa*) and the knowledge of others’ minds (*cetopariyañāṇa*). In some canonical texts, there are two kinds of *ñāṇa*, knowledge arising through insight (*vipassanāñāṇa*) and the psychic power of the mind (*manomayiddhi*), preceding the six *abhiññās*.⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁹⁰ M.I.111: “So h’āvuso Bhagavā jānaṃ jānāti passam passati, cakkhubhūto ñāṇabhūto.”

⁵⁹¹ M.II.111.

⁵⁹² M.I.329.

⁵⁹³ A.I.163-165.

⁵⁹⁴ D.III.281.

⁵⁹⁵ D.I.76-77, M.II.17-18.

When his mind was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, free from imperfection, malleable, workable, steady, and attained to imperturbability, he applies and bends down his mind towards intuition and vision... He applies and bends down his mind towards the creation of mind-made body.... He enjoys the various supernormal powers - being one, he becomes many, or being many, he becomes one... he applies and bends down his mind to the divine ear-element... he applies and bends down his mind to the knowledge of the others' minds ... to the knowledge of the recollection of former lives... and to the knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of beings. With the divine eye, purified and surpassing that of men, he sees beings passing away....⁵⁹⁶

These various kinds of *ñāṇa* in these canonical descriptions appear to indicate the phenomenological experiences of *ñāṇa* attainment as the creative power of the mind resulting from the fourth *jhāna*. Incidentally, Ānanda proposes the relationship between *ñāṇa* and the profound spiritual experiences by saying that knowing and seeing teachers are the omniscient persons who possess profound consciousness and clearly know everything they want.⁵⁹⁷

Therefore, the meditative experiential structure of *ñāṇa* is not mere intellectual knowledge but contains the various kinds of profound spiritual experience. However, this description seems to contradict the general interpretation of *ñāṇa* as T.W. Davids and Stede refer to it as the theory of recognition.⁵⁹⁸ Pio agrees with them: “in application it (*ñāṇa*) is knowledge or reason which comes to an individual.”⁵⁹⁹ Some scholars relate *ñāṇa* to the perceptual process of *sampajañña* (awareness) and *sati* (mindfulness). For instance, Nyanaponika says: “Clear comprehension is right knowledge (*ñāṇa*) or wisdom (*paññā*),

⁵⁹⁶ *So evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgaṇe vigatūpakkilese mudubhūte kammaniye ṭhite āneṅjappatte ñāṇadassanāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti mano-mayaṃ kāyaṃ abhinimmānāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti. So anekavihitaṃ iddhividhaṃ paccanubhoti-ekopi hutvā bahudhā hoti, bahudhāpi hutvā eko hoti...dibbāya sotadhātuyā cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti... cetopariyañāṇāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti ...pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇāya...sattānaṃ cutūpapātañāṇāya... So dibbena cakkhunā visuddhena atikkantamānusakena satte passati cavamāne...*

⁵⁹⁷ M.I.519.

⁵⁹⁸ T. W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, op. cit., 287 f.

⁵⁹⁹ Edwina Pio, *Buddhist Psychology : A Modern Perspective* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1988), p. 78.

based on right attentiveness (*sati*).”⁶⁰⁰ Meanwhile Anālayo suggests that: “It might not be too far-fetched to relate such growth of knowledge (*ñāṇa*) to the quality of clearly knowing (*sampajāna*).”⁶⁰¹ According to these scholars, the Buddhist knowledge appears to pertain to the psychological result of perception, learning and reasoning. Nevertheless, it is found in the texts of the classical canon that *ñāṇa* relies on the process of *samatha*:

When his heart was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, free from imperfection, malleable, workable, steady, and attained to imperturbability, he applies and bends down his mind towards intuition and vision.⁶⁰²

Ṭhitavaṇṇo further specifies the level of *samatha* with the attainment of *jhānas*.⁶⁰³ Moreover, in the *Samādhībhāvanāsutta*, the profound state of concentration conduces to gaining *ñāṇa*.⁶⁰⁴ Sayadaw also speaks of the close relationship between *ñāṇa* and the profound spiritual experiences of *abhiññā* (supernatural knowledge).⁶⁰⁵ Therefore, it is evident that *ñāṇa* is only available through the profound state of *samatha* in terms of the *jhānas* and the profound spiritual experiences.

Although some scholars, such as Buddhaghosa, and Gunaratana, disregard *ñāṇa* as an obstruction of the process of *vipassanā*, this section aims to argue that *ñāṇa* is the essential factor for *vipassanā* and its completion. In fact, in the *Dhammacakkappavattanasutta*, an expression ‘intuition arose (*ñāṇaṃ udapādi*)’ is mentioned twelve times during the process of realizing the four noble truths.⁶⁰⁶ We can see that the cultivation of *ñāṇa* is involved with the progression of *vipassanā* in which the four noble truths are realized. *Ñāṇa* does

⁶⁰⁰ Nyanaponika, op. cit., p. 46.

⁶⁰¹ Anālayo, op. cit., p. 42.

⁶⁰² D.I.76: “So evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgaṇe vigatūpakkilese mudubhūte kammaniye ṭhite āneṅjappatte ñāṇadassanāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti.”

⁶⁰³ Ṭhitavaṇṇo, op. cit., p. 132.

⁶⁰⁴ A.II.44.

⁶⁰⁵ Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta the Great Discourse on the Wheel of Dhamma*, trans. U Ko Lay (Selangor, Malaysia: Sukhi Hotu Dhamma Publication, 1998), p. 99.

⁶⁰⁶ S.V.422.

not only contribute to *vipassanā* but also its culmination as shown in the stereotyped formula of the knowledge of the destruction of the cankers (*āsavakkhayañāṇa*).

When my mind was freed, there came the intuition: I am freed; and I understood: Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing more for any state of thus.⁶⁰⁷

Ñāṇa is even considered one of the great achievements of the Buddha that is omniscient knowledge (*sabbaññutañāṇa*).

Ñāṇa is the essential factor for meditative practice; some scholars, however, consider it to be one of the imperfections of *vipassanā*. For example, Buddhaghosa states that at the state of tender insight (*taruṇavipassanā*), the ten unprecedented experiences are likely to arise in the meditator. Because they can impede his progress, these are called the ten imperfections of insight (*vipassanūpakkilesa*). The ten are: illumination (*obhāsa*), intuition (*ñāṇa*), joy (*pīti*), rapture (*passaddhi*), happiness (*sukha*), resolution (*adhimokkha*), exertion (*paggāha*), assurance (*upaṭṭhāna*), equanimity (*upekkhā*), and attachment (*nikanti*).⁶⁰⁸ If the meditator does not cautiously attend, he can misinterpret these occurrences and think that he has reached the supramundane path. Modern scholars, such as Ñāṇārāma,⁶⁰⁹ and Gunaratana,⁶¹⁰ have tended to follow Buddhaghosa. Moreover Thavaro compares these ten qualities as the hindrances of *vipassanā*.⁶¹¹ Vanarat calls them as the defilements of *vipassanā*.⁶¹² These scholars appear to agree that the ten qualities including *ñāṇa* are the base of corruption of *vipassanā*. We noted above that *ñāṇa* corresponds to meditational attainments and then links to the process of

⁶⁰⁷ M.I.23: “*vimuttasmiṃ vimuttam-iti ñāṇaṃ ahoṣi; khīṇā jāti, vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ, kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ nāparaṃ itthattāyāti abbhaññāsiṃ.*”

⁶⁰⁸ *Vism.* 633 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 739).

⁶⁰⁹ Matara Sri Ñāṇārāma, op. cit., p. 36.

⁶¹⁰ Henepola Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., pp. 177-178.

⁶¹¹ Phra Maha Vira Thavaro, *Sarocha the Buddhist Meditation*, trans. Vanna Gojaseni Phra Noppadon Thammarato, Dr. Phaitun Gojaseni, Yupa Soomsawadi (Siam Printing Supplies, 1985), p. 91.

⁶¹² Somdet Phra Vanarat, *Insight Meditation*, pp. 37-39.

vipassanā as concomitant. The *Milindapañha* states that *ñāṇa* is the useful quality for getting rid of darkness: “Great king, from the moment when intuition arises, delusion ceases.”⁶¹³

This passage shows that, if the meditators gain a more profound level of *ñāṇa*, the less misinterpretation and misunderstanding they will deal with. Furthermore, the profound state of *ñāṇa*, called ‘reviewing knowledge’ (*paccavekkhaṇañāṇa*), leads to Buddhist liberation.⁶¹⁴ There can be little doubt that *ñāṇa* is not the imperfection of *vipassanā*, but a key element in the process of *vipassanā* and its culmination.

The *vipassanā-ñāṇa* comprises of the ten graded series through which the *vipassanā*-practitioner has to pass, since it can be classified in different quantities. The *vipassanā-ñāṇa* is the structure of *ñāṇas* leading the meditator to attainment of the first path (*magga*),⁶¹⁵ and to experience the real fruition of spiritual achievement.⁶¹⁶ From this point of view, *vipassanā-ñāṇa* is the structure of *ñāṇas* which are mundane. The arising of *vipassanā-ñāṇa* signifies the correct practice of *vipassanā*, as Dhammananda says: “if the meditator does not realize these insights (*ñāṇas*), either the method of meditation or the meditator is at fault.”⁶¹⁷ The psychological analysis of *vipassanā-ñāṇa* comprises three overlapping compositions of mode of intuitions (*ñāṇas*). The first composition, indicated by Buddhaghosa, is comprised of nine types of *ñāṇa*:⁶¹⁸

1. The knowledge of arising and falling (*udayabbaya-ñāṇa*)

⁶¹³ Mil.42: “*Moho kho mahārāja ñāṇe uppannamatte tattheva nirujjhatī ti.*”

⁶¹⁴ Bhikshu Sumedho, *The Practice of Dhamma* (Thailand: The Buddhist Association of Thailand, 1958), p. 53.

⁶¹⁵ *Magga* composes of the four supramundane paths leading to the extinction of suffering.

⁶¹⁶ K. Sri Dhammananda, *Meditation the Only Way* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Publication of the Buddhist Missionary Society, 1987), p. 104.

⁶¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁸ *Vism.* 639 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 745).

2. The knowledge of dissolution (*bhaṅga-ñāṇa*)
3. The knowledge that is awareness of fearfulness (*bhayatupaṭṭhāna-ñāṇa*)
4. The knowledge of misery (*ādīnava-ñāṇa*)
5. The knowledge that is turning away (*nibbidā-ñāṇa*)
6. The knowledge that is desire for deliverance (*muccitukamyatā-ñāṇa*)
7. The knowledge that is reflecting contemplation (*paṭisaṅkhā-ñāṇa*)
8. The knowledge that is equanimity for all formations (*saṅkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa*)
9. The knowledge that is adaptation (*anuloma-ñāṇa*)

Sumedho,⁶¹⁹ Thavaro⁶²⁰ and Desaraṅsi⁶²¹ agree with Buddhaghosa for the necessity of this mode of *ñāṇa* on account of the cultivation of *vipassanā*. The second composition is composed of the nine *ñāṇas* of the first composition including the tenth, namely, the knowledge by comprehension (*sammasana-ñāṇa*). It is held that the system of ten kinds of intuition is first set out in the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*.⁶²² Magness also proposes these ten kinds of intuition.⁶²³ The third composition comprises of sixteen types of *ñāṇa* which are all constituents of the second composition in accompaniment with the other six constituents:⁶²⁴

1. The analytical knowledge of mind and body (*nāmarūpapariccheda-ñāṇa*)
2. The knowledge by discerning conditionality (*paccayapariggaha-ñāṇa*)
3. The change-of-lineage knowledge (*gotrabhū-ñāṇa*)
4. The path knowledge (*magga-ñāṇa*)
5. The Fruition knowledge (*phala-ñāṇa*)
6. The knowledge of reviewing (*paccavekkhaṇa-ñāṇa*)

⁶¹⁹ Bhikshu Sumedho, op. cit., pp. 72-73.

⁶²⁰ Phra Maha Vira Thavaro, op. cit., pp. 95-98.

⁶²¹ Desaraṅsi, op. cit., p. 87.

⁶²² Abhi-s.IX.25.

⁶²³ Terry Magness. 2002. "Samatha-Vipassana (Tranquillized-Penetrative Insight)." Last updated: 2002. URL: <http://www.mkds.org/vistas3.html>. Date of access: 12/09/06.

⁶²⁴ Dhanit Yupho, op. cit., pp. 9-13.

The examination of the three compositions of mode of intuitions (*ñāṇas*) reveals that rather than the first and the third compositions, the second composition of ten *ñāṇas* is the most suitable to represent the mode of *vipassanā-ñāṇas*. This classification of the successive stages of the sixteen *vipassanā-ñāṇas* is described in the *Visuddhimagga* in considerable detail.⁶²⁵ According to the *Visuddhimagga*, all the constituents of the sixteen *vipassanā-ñāṇas* are arranged into five kinds of purification: purification of view (*diṭṭhi-visuddhi*), purification by overcoming doubt (*kankhāvitaraṇa-visuddhi*), purification by intuition and vision of what is path and not-path (*maggāmagga-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*), purification by intuition and vision of the course of practice (*paṭipadā-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*) and purification by intuition and vision (*ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*). Yupho agrees and illustrates this arrangement.⁶²⁶ The practices of these sixteen *vipassanā-ñāṇas* cover the process of *vipassanā* from the very beginning till the end of supramundane path.⁶²⁷ Therefore, the third composition appears to go beyond the definition of the *vipassanā-ñāṇas*, which is the entire mundane path. Similarly, Dhammananda supports this theme by saying that *vipassanā-ñāṇas* are different from the *Gotrabhū-ñāṇa*, *Magga-ñāṇa*, and *Phala-ñāṇa*.⁶²⁸ Considering the first and second compositions, both are distinctive features because *Sammasana-ñāṇa* is added in the second. This *ñāṇa* involves defining all phenomena in terms of the three characteristics: impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and not-self. From its definition, *Sammasana-ñāṇa* seems to be accepted as a profound visual intuition arising in the process of *vipassanā*. Then rather than nine and sixteen kinds, the ten kinds of *ñāṇas* in the second

⁶²⁵ L. S. Cousins, "The Origins of Insight Meditation," in *The Buddhist Forum Volume*, ed. Tadeusz Skorupski (Southampton: Hobbs the printers, 1996), p. 50.

⁶²⁶ Dhanit Yupho, op. cit., pp. 9-13.

⁶²⁷ Sudarat Bantaokul, *Solasana in Theravada Buddhism* (Bangkok: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 2003), p. 124.

⁶²⁸ K. Sri Dhammananda, *Meditation the Only Way*, op. cit., p. 124.

composition are most suitable for representing the mode of *vipassanā-ñāṇas*, which the *vipassanā*-practitioner has to pass in the mundane path.

The arrangement of *ñāṇas* into a mode of the fivefold *abhiññā* relates to *vipassanā* and its culmination as encouragement instead of obstruction. *Ñāṇas*, of course, can be arranged into the five kinds of *abhiññā*; the knowledge of supernormal power (*iddhividhañāṇa*), the knowledge of divine ear-element (*dibbasotadhātuñāṇa*), the knowledge of others' minds (*cetopariyañāṇa*), the knowledge of recollection of former lives (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*), the knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of beings (*cutūpapātañāṇa*). Indeed, the *Mahāsaḷāyatānikasutta* demonstrates the supernatural knowledge (*abhiññā*) by which *samatha* and *vipassanā* are to be developed.⁶²⁹ In addition, the supernatural knowledge is the resultant set of experiences of attaining the predominant factor of the enlightenment path- the noble eightfold path.⁶³⁰ Several *Pāli* discourses group *abhiññā*, *sambodha* (perfect enlightenment) and *nibbāna* together as a result and culmination of meditative practice.⁶³¹ It is at this point that the central importance of *abhiññā* takes place, and then the Buddha states that he preaches *dhamma* for supernatural knowledge.⁶³² The contention of these Buddhist texts is that these kinds of *abhiññā* deal successfully with the correct meditative practice leading to the ultimate goal of Buddhism.

But against this, many scholars disregard the fivefold *abhiññā*, which is essential for *vipassanā* as an impediment to meditation or as a mere psychic gift. For instance Horner says: “the first five (*abhiññā*) constitute five psychic gifts.”⁶³³ She further distinguishes it from the significant process for the end of

⁶²⁹ M.III.289.

⁶³⁰ S.V.421.

⁶³¹ D.I.189, D.II.251, D.III.130, M.I.431.

⁶³² M.II.9: “*abhiññāya samaṇo gotamo dhammaṃ deseti.*”

⁶³³ I. B. Horner, *The Early Buddhist Theory of Man Perfected : A Study of the Arahan Concept and of the*

suffering: “the knowledge of the destruction of the *āsavas* is not psychic at all.”⁶³⁴ Gunaratana also disregards it as only ornaments of the meditator.⁶³⁵ Moreover, Burns points out that the fivefold *abhiññā* can be obstructive for the ultimate goal.⁶³⁶ Consequently, the fivefold *abhiññā* seems to have nothing in common with *vipassanā* or with the Buddhist ultimate goal. On the contrary, Dhammadharo speaks of the association between the fivefold *abhiññā* and the destruction of cankers.⁶³⁷ From the *Mahāvaccasutta*, we also find that the arising of the fivefold *abhiññā* is based on both meditative processes of *samatha* and *vipassanā*.⁶³⁸ Since the Buddha advises his disciples to develop the fivefold *abhiññā* through the prior processes of *samatha* and *vipassanā*, it is irrational to interpret them as impediments. Much more important is their consistency with the ultimate goal of Buddhism.

It should be noted that the interpretation of *ñāṇa* developed in this section has important consequences for our understanding of *vipassanā* and its final stage. First, *ñāṇa* should not be implied to be the intellectual process or the awareness (*sampajañña*). It is, of course, only accessible through the *jhāna* states. Second, widespread opinion based on the *Visuddhimagga* states that *ñāṇa* can impede the progress of *vipassanā*. But it is true that the cultivation of *ñāṇa* is a requirement for *vipassanā* and full awakening. Third, the system of *ñāṇas* arising in the process of *vipassanā* is assigned a proper name to *vipassanā-ñāṇa*, which is the entire mundane path. Then the composition of ten kinds of *ñāṇas* is the proper classification of *vipassanā-ñāṇas*. The last aspect of *ñāṇa* deals with the arrangement of *ñāṇas* into a mode of the fivefold *abhiññā*. The examination of the fivefold *abhiññā* shows that it is not a mere by-product of

Implications of the Aim to Perfection in Religious Life, op. cit., p. 122.

⁶³⁴ Ibid.

⁶³⁵ Henepola Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., p. 156.

⁶³⁶ Douglas M. Burns, op. cit., pp. 43-44.

⁶³⁷ Ajaan Lee Dhammadharo. 1997. “*Knowledge*,” trans. Thanissaro Bhikkhu, Last updated: 18/06/06.

URL: <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/thai/lee/knowledge.html>. Date of access: 12/09/06.

⁶³⁸ M.I.494-496.

samatha, but the essential factor by which *samatha* and *vipassanā* are to be cultivated.

Wisdom (Paññā)

The third instrumental factor of insight, *paññā* (wisdom), is an essential mental trait for *vipassanā* contemplation. Many scholars agree that it is the ability to understand and comprehend, in its entirety, the exact or true nature of life and the world. For instance, in the *Mahāvedallasutta*, Sāriputta defines *paññā* as understanding: “One understands, One understands, friend, that is why it is called ‘one who has wisdom.’”⁶³⁹ This definition of the term ‘*paññā*’ is seen to be composed of the prefix ‘*pa*’ and the verbal noun ‘*jānana*’ which is derived from the root *ñā*. Buddhaghosa agrees: “It is called *paññā* in the sense of understanding.”⁶⁴⁰ Moreover, he elaborates *paññā* in relation to *vipassanā*: “wisdom is knowledge arising through insight, associated with the wholesome thought.”⁶⁴¹ According to the *Pali-English Dictionary*, *paññā* connote intelligence, reason, wisdom, insight, knowledge and recognition.⁶⁴² Furthermore, Nārada, in *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, explains the term ‘*paññā*’ as follows:

Its chief characteristic is understanding as it really is or irresistible understanding, i.e., penetrative knowledge. As *Paññā* dominates in understanding the real nature and as it overcomes ignorance, it is called a controlling faculty (*Indriya*). In *Abhidhamma Āṅga*, *Paññā*, and *Amoha* are used as interchangeable terms. In types of consciousness connected with knowledge (*ñāṇasampayutta*) the reference is to this *paññā*... When purified by *samādhi* *paññā* assumes the honourable role of *abhiññā* (higher knowledge).⁶⁴³

From this sense of the term, he defines *paññā* as seeing things as they truly are, in the light of impermanence (*anicca*), unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*), and not-self (*anattā*). This is achieved by reasoning, by learning and by meditation. During

⁶³⁹ M.I.292: “*Pajānāti pajānātīti kho āvuso, tasmā paññavā ti vuccati.*”

⁶⁴⁰ *Vism.* 436., “*pajānanaṭṭhena paññā.*”

⁶⁴¹ *Ibid.*, “*Kusalacittasampayuttaṃ vipassanāñāṇaṃ paññā.*”

⁶⁴² T. W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, *op. cit.*, p. 390.

⁶⁴³ Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

the process of *vipassanā*, *paññā*, based on mental development in the mode of concentration, plays the role of profound internal vision. This hypothesis will be explored through the detailed examination of the implication of *paññā*, the evaluation of its three kinds and its connection with *samādhi*.

The term ‘*paññā*’ implies profound mental vision rather than the intellectual understanding of rational process. The relationship between *paññā* and the profound spiritual experiences of *abhiññā* is referred to in the *Poṭṭhapādasutta*, where the Buddha states:

One enters into and remains in the purity and perfection of wisdom here and now, having realized it through his own supernatural knowledge in here and now.⁶⁴⁴

From the statement, *paññā* relies on the cultivation of concentration into the profound spiritual experiences. This finds support in the *Mahāparinibbānasutta*: “Wisdom, when fully developed by concentration, brings great fruit and profit.”⁶⁴⁵ *Paññā* seems to be the superior mental quality resulting from mental purification and unification of *samatha*. Therefore, its characteristic is more refined than perceptual experience or intellectual understanding. Buddhaghosa supports this. Distinguishing *paññā* from *saññā* (perception) and *viññāṇa* (consciousness), he considers *paññā* characteristics.⁶⁴⁶ *Saññā* is like the mere perception of a rupee coin by a child. By its colour, shape and form it merely recognizes the coin as a rupee, utterly ignorant of the potential value and usage of the people. A country villager, for instance, discerns its intrinsic values, but is not aware of which are genuine, which are false, and which only half-values are. *Viññāṇa* is comparable to the country villager’s knowledge of the rupee. *Paññā* is like the experiential knowledge of

⁶⁴⁴ D.I.197: “*paññā-pāripūriṃ vepullattaṃ ca diṭṭhe va dhamme sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharissathāti.*”

⁶⁴⁵ D.II.98: “*samādhi-paribhāvītā paññā mahapphalā hoti mahānisamsā.*”

⁶⁴⁶ *Vism.*437 (tr. Nāṇamoli p. 480-481).

a professional moneychanger who knows that the coin was made in a certain village or town or city, or by a certain master.

The implication of *paññā* as the profound mental vision leading to the destruction of cankers (*āsavas*) is found in the *Debate of King Milinda*. For the functions of *paññā*, *Bhikkhu* Nāgasena, in response to the questions of King Milinda, compares them with the two similes. First, *paññā* cuts off the defilements (*kilesas*) from the mind, in the same way that a barley-reaper uses a scythe to sever a handful of barley from the earth.⁶⁴⁷ Second, *paññā* illuminates, banishing the darkness of ignorance (*avijjā*) from the mind thus causing internal vision to arise to produce the light of understanding. It is compared to the dispersion of darkness from inside a closed room when a lamp is lit therein.⁶⁴⁸ The two functions of *paññā* simply describe different aspects of what is basically profound spiritual experience approaching the destruction of cankers.

In the *Nandakovādasutta*, the monk Nandaka defines *paññā* as a refined mental instrument to eradicate defilements.⁶⁴⁹ Instructing a group of nuns (*bhikkhunis*), he compares wisdom (*paññā*) to a well-sharpened knife for the cutting of defilements (*kilesas*). Suppose a master butcher were to dissect a cow and, with a sharp knife, skilfully remove the skin from the muscle by cutting off the connecting sinews, blood-vessels, etc. without damaging either the skin or the muscle underneath. This scenario illustrates the following: the muscle inside the cow represents the six internal sense organs (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body

⁶⁴⁷ Mil.32-33: “*Chedanalakkhaṇā paññā... Yathā mahārāja yavalāvako vāmena hatthena yavakalāpaṃ gahetvā dakkhiṇena hatthena dāttaṃ gahetvā dāttena jindati, evameva kho mahārāja yogāvacaro manasikārena mānasam gahetvā paññāya kilese jindati.*”

⁶⁴⁸ Mil.39: “*Yathā mahārāja puriso andhakāre gehe padīpaṃ paveseyya, pavittho padīpo andhakāraṃ vidhameti, obhāsaṃ janeti, alokaṃ vidamseti, rūpāni pākāṭāni karoti, evameva kho mahārāja paññā uppajjamānā avijjandhakāraṃ vidhameti, vijjohāsaṃ janeti, ñāṇālokaṃ vidamseti, ariyasaccāni pākāṭāni karoti. Tato yogāvacaro aniccanti vā dukkhanti vā anattā'ti vā sammappaññāya passati. Evaṃ kho mahārāja obhāsanalakkhaṇā paññā.*”

⁶⁴⁹ M.III.277.

and mind). The skin outside represents the six external sense objects (visual objects, sound, smell, taste, tactile objects and thoughts). The connecting components such as the sinews, blood vessels, etc. represent the craving that arises through sensation or feeling. The sharp cutting knife corresponds to the noble wisdom (*ariya paññā*) by which the meditator cuts out all the defilements (*kilesas*) and fetters (*samyojana*) that exist between the internal sense organs of an individual and the external sense objects.

In addition, concerning the profound mental vision of *paññā*, Sayadaw states that *paññā* constitutes *vijjā*.⁶⁵⁰ *Paññā* on the solid foundation of *sīla* (virtue) assisted by the power of *samādhi* (concentration) signifies the spiritual wisdom enhancing the psychic potency for the comprehension of true nature of life. Regarding the threefold *vijjā*, *paññā* implies the essential factor of the means for not only destroying the defilements, but also the way to recollect one's past lives and other beings' past lives. While *paññā* seems to relate to the contemplative element in Theravāda Buddhism, some present scholars imply that it is merely a rational or comprehensive process. For instance, Vetter renders *paññā* as discriminating insight by which the meditator perceives the five constituents of one's person as impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self.⁶⁵¹ He further states that the achievement of the culmination of *paññā* is the consequence of the process of listening and understanding.⁶⁵² Griffiths also implies that *paññā* is the rational process: "it is an awareness which can be contained within a *ti* clause, a discursive and intellectual understanding. That wisdom is discursive in this sense."⁶⁵³ McMahan agrees with him:

⁶⁵⁰ Venerable Ledi Sayadaw, *The Requisites of Enlightenment* (Kandy, Sri Lanka: BUddhist Publication Society, 1971), p. 13.

⁶⁵¹ Tilmann Vetter, *The Ideas and Meditative Practices of Early Buddhism* (Leiden ; New York: E.J. Brill, 1988), p. xxiii.

⁶⁵² *Ibid.*, p. xxxiv.

⁶⁵³ Paul Griffiths, "Concentration or Insight: The Problematic of Theravada Buddhist Meditation-Theory," *op. cit.*, p. 612.

Wisdom (*paññā*) begins with analysis and observation that lead to direct understanding. Learning to categorize events within experience based on listening to the teachings sharpens the effectiveness of observation.⁶⁵⁴

This means that *paññā* refers to the sphere of analytical understanding. In other words, *paññā* is the comprehensive process, as Keown writes: “*Paññā* is essentially the knowledge of facts.”⁶⁵⁵ Moreover, Nyanaponika equates *paññā* with awareness (*sampajañña*).⁶⁵⁶

According to these scholars, we can assume that *paññā* involves only the intellectual techniques or analytical knowledge rather than profound mental vision. This viewpoint is somewhat limited, nonetheless, and cannot cover the intrinsic value of *paññā*. Certainly, the intellectual component of *paññā* refers to ecstatic mental vision, but not to the rational or comprehensive process only. Although *paññā* can exist in accompaniment with all perception and knowledge, they are not necessarily associated with others.⁶⁵⁷ It implies the contemplative process, which is based on spiritual development as, Varma says:

The *prajñā* (*paññā*) which is attained as a consequence of the culmination of the spiritual and moral efforts of a Bhikkhu is not the result of any more rational enquiry.⁶⁵⁸

The detail of this spiritual development is apparent in the *Discourse to Soṇadaṇḍa*,⁶⁵⁹ where the Buddha regards *paññā* as the attainment of the four *jhānas* and supernatural knowledge (*abhiññā*). Therefore, *paññā* does not only stand for the bare mental process of a certain degree of complexity, but also implies the cultivation of mental processes applied to the mode of profound visual intuition.

⁶⁵⁴ David L. McMahan, *Empty Vision : Metaphor and Visionary Imagery in Mahayana Buddhism* (London: Curzon, 2002), p. 91.

⁶⁵⁵ Damien Keown, op. cit., p. 80.

⁶⁵⁶ Nyanaponika, op. cit., p. 46.

⁶⁵⁷ Stephan V. Beyer, *The Buddhist Experience; Sources and Interpretations* (Encino, Calif.: Dickenson Pub. Co., 1974), p. 198.

⁶⁵⁸ Varma, op. cit, p. 268.

⁶⁵⁹ D.I.124.

The evaluation of the three kinds of *paññā* indicates the significance of *bhāvanāmayapaññā* only for the process of *vipassanā*. In the *Saṅgītisutta*, *paññā* is distinguished into three kinds: wisdom that is thought out (*cintāmayapaññā*), wisdom that is learned (from another) (*sutamayapaññā*), and wisdom that is gained by development (*bhāvanāmayapaññā*).⁶⁶⁰ The first one, *cintāmayapaññā*, which one acquires through one's own intellection is the wisdom that *kamma* is the property of each person. It is also the wisdom that arises through exposure to the truths of the vocational and scientific world. The wisdom that one acquires through learning from others is called "wisdom that is learned from another." Attaining concentration, one develops all wisdom that is gained by development.⁶⁶¹

According to Johansson's explanation, the wisdom gained by development seems to support *vipassanā*: "...this (*bhāvanāmayapaññā*) can, as we have seen, result in both personal experience of the truth of the Buddhist teaching, and in liberating effects."⁶⁶² For the development of *vipassanā*, Goenka points to *bhāvanāmayapaññā* as well.⁶⁶³ While considering the first two types as not peculiar to the teaching of the Buddha, he regards *bhāvanāmayapaññā* as the means of achieving direct realization of truth that is the technique of the process of *vipassanā*. Besides this, Harvey indicates that the perfection of wisdom results from *bhāvanāmayapaññā* only.⁶⁶⁴ Panth also disagrees with the first two types and supports the third:

Similarly, a non-*vipassanā* meditator may develop *paññā* but it may only be *sutamayapaññā* or *cintāmayapaññā*, leading one to accept the truth only at the devotional or intellectual level respectively. But a

⁶⁶⁰ D.III.219.

⁶⁶¹ Upatissa, op. cit., p. 231.

⁶⁶² Rune Edvin Anders Johansson, *The Dynamic Psychology of Early Buddhism* (London: Curzon Press, 1979), p. 213.

⁶⁶³ S.N. Goenka, op. cit., p. 114.

⁶⁶⁴ Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism : Teachings, History, and Practices* (Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 244.

vipassanā meditator by his very experience develops *bhāvanāmayapaññā*.⁶⁶⁵

It is shown that, rather than *sutamayapaññā* or *cintāmayapaññā*, *bhāvanāmayapaññā* is the key factor to perform the visual intuition which is central to the process of *vipassanā*. Nevertheless, the *Vibhaṅga* tends to prefer *cintāmayapaññā* for initiating *vipassanā*. In this text, *cintāmayapaññā*, which is produced by one's own reasoning, is expanded from the worldly state of knowledge up to the state of knowledge that is in conformity with truth.⁶⁶⁶ Furthermore, the commentary on the *Vibhaṅga* explains that the knowledge that is in conformity with truth is knowledge arising through insight (*vipassanāñāṇa*).⁶⁶⁷ This is of considerable importance, but the term '*cintāmayapaññā*' relies on the function of consciousness and understanding through thinking. Indeed, the state of knowledge endowed with the capacity to reason probably obtains right or wrong information. This is because truth is knowledge that is difficult to realize, tranquilizing and not to be grasped by mere logic, as the Buddha's teaching in *Brahmajālasutta* demonstrates:

These, monks, are those things, profound, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, sublime, unattainable by mere reasoning, subtle, to be experienced by the wise, which the Tathāgata, having realized them through his own supernatural knowledge, proclaims them.⁶⁶⁸

Because of the difficulty of penetrating truth by reasoning or logic, *cintāmayapaññā* is only knowledge in respect to vocational works or works of science, as is described in the *Vimuttimagga*.⁶⁶⁹ Closely related to *cintāmayapaññā*, *sutamayapaññā* deals mainly with language-based and conceptually oriented knowledge, mere theoretical or abstract knowledge. This

⁶⁶⁵ Ravindra Panth, "Vipassana: The Buddha's Unique Contribution to the Human Civilization," in *Buddhism in India and Abroad an Integrating Influence in Vedic and Post-Vedic Perspective*, ed. Kalpakam Sankaranarayanan (Mumbai, New delhi: Somaiya Publications, 1996), pp. 48-53, p. 52.

⁶⁶⁶ Vibh.324-325.

⁶⁶⁷ Vibh.-a.411.

⁶⁶⁸ D.I.17: "Ime kho te bhikkhave dhammā gambhīrā duddasā duranubodhā santā paṇīṭā atakkāvacarā nipuṇā paṇḍitavedanīyā ye Tathāgato sayam abhiññā sacchi-katvā pavedeti."

⁶⁶⁹ Upatissa, op. cit., p. 231.

is not very helpful in penetrating reality. Moreover, the third type of wisdom, *bhāvanāmayapaññā*, which is based on concentration (*samādhi*), gives a great advantage that leads to freedom from the cankers (*āsavas*).

Wisdom, when fully developed by concentration, brings great fruit and profit. The mind, when fully developed by wisdom, becomes completely free from cankers.⁶⁷⁰

Hence, among the three kinds of *paññā*, *bhāvanāmayapaññā* is entirely wisdom-developed and really assists the *vipassanā* process.

The psychological analysis of *paññā* in relation to *samādhi* shows that *paññā* requires the cooperation of *samādhi* in order to stimulate *vipassanā*. In many discourses, the fourth *jhāna* conduces to the purified, malleable, and workable mind so that the meditator can develop *paññā* in order to see things as they really are.⁶⁷¹ Moreover, the deep concentration provides an intense happiness and joy, which are essential factors to serve *paññā* for overcoming sensuality.⁶⁷² Clearly, there are substantial advantages of *paññā* when it is supported by *samādhi*. Buddhaghosa, of course, states that the proximate cause of *paññā* is *samādhi*.⁶⁷³ Most scholars have tended to follow him for the association of both terms. For instance, Keith writes: “intuition pervaded by concentration is fruitful.”⁶⁷⁴ As Sangharakshita quotes “he who is concentrated sees things as they really are,” he then points to the strong relationship between *paññā* and *samādhi*.⁶⁷⁵ Sujato supports this sentiment: “...sometimes *jhāna* is classified under wisdom, or one in *jhāna* is said to ‘know and see.’”⁶⁷⁶ Furthermore, Dhammavuddho claims that *samādhi* is the precondition that

⁶⁷⁰ D.II.81: “*Samādhi-paribhāvītā paññā mahapphalā hoti mahānisamsā, paññā-paribhāvitaṃ cittaṃ sammad eva āsavehi vimuccati.*”

⁶⁷¹ D.I.75-76, D.I.100, D.I.147.

⁶⁷² M.I.91.

⁶⁷³ *Vism.*438 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 481).

⁶⁷⁴ Arthur Berriedale Keith, *Buddhist Philosophy in India and Ceylon* (Oxf.: Clarendon Press, 1923), p.115.

⁶⁷⁵ Sangharakshita, op. cit., p.171.

⁶⁷⁶ Bhikkhu Sujato, *A History of Mindfulness: How Insight Worsted Tranquillity*, op. cit., p. 121.

enables *paññā* to arise.⁶⁷⁷ His opinion is reasonable because the process of mental development is divided into three successive steps; *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*, which progress as a matter of linear sequence.⁶⁷⁸ This makes sense. If the mind has become steadied, made lucent and firm, mental power will be strengthened into a suitable state for the process of visual intuition.

However, some scholars attempt to break the relationship between *paññā* and *samādhi*. For example, Ruberu says: “*paññā-bhāvanā*, practised whichever way, performs a totally different and a much more valuable task than mere tranquillity or calm (*samatha*) meditation.”⁶⁷⁹ Vetter also shows that *paññā* is the predominant factor for perceiving the five constituents of one’s person as being transient, unsatisfactoriness and not-self, that is nothing to say of *samādhi*.⁶⁸⁰ Griffiths agrees: “there are two different types of meditative practice available to the Buddhist. On the one hand, there is *samādhi/samatha bhāvanā*, and on the other, *vipassanā/paññā bhāvanā*.”⁶⁸¹

According to these scholars, *paññā* and *samādhi* would be radically at odds, and it is difficult to see how they can be reconciled. But this viewpoint contradicts what Puṇṇa explains in the *Rathavinītasutta*.⁶⁸² He compares each stage of the seven stages of purification (*visuddhi*) to a single chariot in a chariot relay connecting two cities. The meditator has to develop these seven stages of purification in logical sequence. In this sequential development, ethical conduct occupies the first position. Purification of mind is the next stage, followed by purification of view. The fact that purification of mind precedes purification of view implies that *samādhi* is a necessary basis for

⁶⁷⁷ Venerable Dhammavuddho, op. cit., p.68.

⁶⁷⁸ Thitavanno, op. cit., p. 26.

⁶⁷⁹ Jayantha Ruberu, op. cit., p. 271.

⁶⁸⁰ Tilmann Vetter, op. cit., p. xxiii.

⁶⁸¹ Paul Griffiths, "Concentration or Insight: The Problematic of Theravada Buddhist Meditation-Theory," op. cit., p. 606.

⁶⁸² M.I.149.

paññā. This is to say that *paññā*, which arises during the process of *vipassanā*, is closely related to proficiency in *samādhi*.

From our inquiry, three important points emerge concerning the intrinsic value of *paññā* in relation to *vipassanā*. First, *paññā* implies profound mental vision, not merely rational or comprehensive processes. Second, *cintāmayapaññā* and *sutamayapaññā* depend heavily on theoretical and abstract knowledge, which is different from the ultimate truth. Despite this, *bhāvanāmayapaññā* provides the ability of visual intuition that induces the process of *vipassanā*. The third point is that, although on approximative examination, *paññā* and *samādhi* might appear different, on detailed examination and actual practice they are both parts of a single whole.

Knowledge (Vijjā)

Vijjā is the fourth instrumental factor arising and developing together with the *vipassanā* contemplation. Some *suttas* mention its three kinds called the threefold knowledge.⁶⁸³ These are: the knowledge of recollection of former lives (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*), the knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of beings (*cutūpapātañāṇa*), and the knowledge of the destruction of the *āsavas* (*āsavakkhayañāṇa*). Some *suttas* mention the eightfold knowledge (*aṭṭhavijjā*): (1) the knowledge arising through insight (*vipassanāñāṇa*), (2) the knowledge of psychic power of the mind (*manomayiddhiñāṇa*),⁶⁸⁴ (3) the knowledge of supernormal power (*iddhividhañāṇa*),⁶⁸⁵ (4) the knowledge of divine ear-element (*dibbasotadhātuñāṇa*), (5) the knowledge of others' minds (*cetopariyañāṇa*), (6) the knowledge of recollection of former lives (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*), (7) the knowledge of divine eye

⁶⁸³ M.I.22-23.

⁶⁸⁴ *Manomayiddhiñāṇa* is the psychic ability to create one or more bodies from the original body and draw them out like a sword from its scabbard.

⁶⁸⁵ *Iddhividhañāṇa* is the psychic ability to walk through walls, walk on water, dive into the earth, levitate and fly, and so on.

(*dibbacakkhuñāṇa*), (8) the knowledge of the destruction of the cankers or *āsavas* (*āsavakkhayañāṇa*).⁶⁸⁶ The sixth, seventh and eighth stages of the eightfold knowledge are the same as the threefold knowledge (*vijjā*). Both classifications of *vijjā* are the progress of the stages leading by degrees to the attainment of the highest knowledge. Buddhaghosa agrees with both categories of *vijjā* and its process.⁶⁸⁷

According to the *Bhayabheravasutta*, the cultivation of three *vijjās* gains the termination of the darkness of *avijjā* and the perfect realization.⁶⁸⁸ In collaboration with the discourse, the commentaries of the *Saṅgītisutta* define the two meanings of *vijjā* as penetration through the darkness of *avijjā*, and causing realization.⁶⁸⁹ The connotation of *vijjā* as realization is associated with the increasing of *vijjā* and the reducing of *avijjā*. Vajirañāṇa also defines *vijjā* as; breaking and comprehending.

These different types of knowledge are called “*Vijja* in the sense of “breaking” (*vida—vidāraṇe*, *vida*, to break) of ignorance (*avijjā*), of “comprehending” (*vida—ñāṇe*, *vida*, to comprehend) of the nature of phenomenal existence, or of experiencing” (*vida—vede*, *vida*, to experience) the happiness of *Nirvāṇa*.⁶⁹⁰

The evidence seems to indicate that the ways of defining *vijjā* relate to a single process of perfect realization.

⁶⁸⁶ D.I.76-84: “*So evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgaṇe vigatūpakkilese mudubhūte kammaniye ṭhite āneñjappatte nāṇadassanāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti mano-mayaṃ kāyaṃ abhinimmānāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti. So anekavihitaṃ iddhividhaṃ paccanubhoti—ekopi hutvā bahudhā hoti, bahudhāpi hutvā eko hoti...dibbāya sotadhātuyā cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti... cetopariyañāṇāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti ...pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇāya ...sattānaṃ cutūpapātañāṇāya... So dibbena cakkhunā visuddhena atikkantamānusakena satte passati cavamāne* (When his mind was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, free from imperfection, malleable, workable, steady, and attained to imperturbability, he applies and bends down his mind towards intuition and vision...He applies and bends down his mind towards the creation of mind-made body...He enjoys the various supernormal power- being one, he becomes many, or being many, he becomes one... he applies and bends down his mind to the divine ear-element... he applies and bends down his mind to the knowledge of the others’ minds... to the knowledge of the recollection of former lives... to the knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of beings. With the divine eye, purified and surpassing that of men, he sees beings passing away.)”

⁶⁸⁷ *Vism.*202 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p.213) “*Tattha vijjāti tissopi vijjā aṭṭhapi vijjā* (Herein, as to *vijjā*: there are three kinds of *vijjā* and eight kinds of *vijjā*.)”

⁶⁸⁸ M.I.22-23.

⁶⁸⁹ Sv.III.1006.

⁶⁹⁰ Vajirañāṇa Paravahera Mahathera, op. cit., p. 189.

The Buddha can be called omniscient because of his accessibility to the threefold *vijjā*, which is comprised of the visual intuition based solely on deep concentration. An evaluation of *vijjā* will portray these exegetical issues as follows: an analysis of the threefold Buddhist *vijjā*; whether or not the *jhānas* are essential for the development of *vijjā*; whether or not the Buddha is omniscient; and an individual evaluation of each of the threefold *vijjā*.

The threefold *vijjā* which is developed from mental unification and purification relates to genuine knowledge, but is far removed from the threefold knowledge of the brāhmin.⁶⁹¹ The threefold *vijjā* refers to the genuine knowledge of Buddhism because the Buddha attained the three *vijjās* in succession, one in each of the three watches of the night. The first *vijjā* arises from sending the memory back prior to the moment of birth to one's succession of former births, and then, by applying the appropriate mental power, recalling back through innumerable former lives, and even through the many previous aeons of the universe. This is the same as if recalling the towns and regions one has visited during a journey.⁶⁹²

The second *vijjā* comprises the death and rebirth of sentient beings according to their wholesome and unwholesome conduct of body, speech and mind. The knowledge acquired by virtue of the divine-eye is similar to that of a person who, from a high tower, watches people entering and leaving a building.⁶⁹³ The third *vijjā* is that of the destruction of the *āsavas* (cankers); *kāmāsava* (canker of sense-pleasures), *bhavāsava* (canker of becoming) and *avijjāsava* (canker of ignorance). Beginning with an understanding of the four noble truths as they

⁶⁹¹ A brāhmin is a member of Brāhman caste; one who prays or chants hymns.

⁶⁹² M.I.22.

⁶⁹³ M.I.22-23.

really are, the knowledge attained through the perfect realization of the *āsavas* then leads the mind to be free from all of the cankers (*āsavas*).⁶⁹⁴

Possession of these three *vijjās*, in particular the third (*āsavakkhayañāṇa*), is the mark of an enlightened being. However, some scholars such as Pio⁶⁹⁵ believe that early Buddhists adapted the term ‘*vijjā*’ from the Brahmanic doctrine to their own usage. It is accepted that the meaning of *vijjā* as knowledge is related to the meaning of *Veda* of pre-Buddhist texts. Nonetheless, the various discourses point out that the experience of *vijjā* refers to the spiritual attainment that the Buddha had not heard before.⁶⁹⁶ This means that before his enlightenment, the Buddha studied *yoga* under different teachers and attained the fourth *arūpajjhāna*. These forms of knowledge and experience are not relevant to his experiences of *vijjā*. According to the *Pāli* canon, the arising of *vijjā*, an instrumental factor of *vipassanā*, is the exclusive experience for Buddhist meditation. The threefold knowledge of Buddhism is distinctly separate from the threefold knowledge of Brāhmaṇism as the explanation of Tikaṇṇa the brāhmin in the *Tikaṇṇasutta* demonstrates.

In this case, master Gotama, a brāhmin is well born on both the mother’s and father’s side, of pure descent back through seven generations, unblamed and irreproachable in respect of birth, a scholar, knowing the verses by heart, mastered in the three Vedas with the indices, the ritual, the phonology and the oral tradition as a fifth: he is a man learned in the words and in the grammar, versed in natural philosophy and the signs of the great man. That, master Gotama, is how the Brāhmins describe a brāhmin who has the threefold knowledge.⁶⁹⁷

The threefold knowledge of Brāhmaṇism depends heavily on the one’s own lineage and on mastery of the contents of the rituals, especially in relation to the three *Vedas*. The various hymns in these three Vedic literatures contain a

⁶⁹⁴ M.I.23.

⁶⁹⁵ Edwina Pio, op. cit., p. 80.

⁶⁹⁶ D.II.33, S.II.7, S.IV.233-234, S.V.179, 258, 422: *ananussutesu dhammesu...vijjā udapādi*.

⁶⁹⁷ A.I.163: “*Idha bho Gotama brāhmaṇo ubhato sujāto hoti mātito ca pitito ca saṃsuddhagahaṇiko yāva sattamā pitāmahāyugā akkhitto anupakkuṭṭho jātivādena ajjhāyako mantadharo tiṇṇaṃ vedānaṃ pāragū sanighaṇḍukeṭubhānaṃ sākharappabhedānaṃ itihāsapañcamānaṃ padako veyyākaraṇo lokāyatamahāpurisalakkhaṇesu anavayo ti. Evaṃ kho bho Gotama brāhmaṇā tevijjaṃ paññāpentī ti.*”

variety of information about the social, political, and religious life of common people in Vedic time.⁶⁹⁸ According to Buddhaghosa's explanation, the three *Vedas* are *Iruveda* (Skt. *Ṛg Veda*), *Yajuveda* (Skt. *Yajur Veda*) and *Sāmaveda* (Skt. *Sāma Veda*).⁶⁹⁹ The *Ṛg Veda* contains hymns that offer praises and prayers to various deities for different favours such as long life and material blessings. The *Yajur Veda* is the collection of the books of prayers and the *Sāma Veda* is the collection of the books of chants. Both collections aim to show the rituals used in the context of sacrifice (*yajña*).⁷⁰⁰

The Buddha replies to Tikaṇṇa the brāhmin that these three *Vedas* are different from the threefold *vijjā* in the discipline of noble one.⁷⁰¹ In the *Ānāpānasatisutta*, the fulfillment of *vijjā* appears to be derived from the cultivation of the seven factors of awakening which are mindfulness (*sati*), investigation of dhamma (*dhammavicaya*), effort (*virīya*), joy (*pīti*), rapture (*passaddhi*), concentration (*samādhi*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*).⁷⁰² This passage indicates that the threefold *vijjā* of the Buddhist relies on mental development, which is based on the tranquilizing process of *samatha*. It can be concluded that the threefold knowledge (*vijjā*) of Buddhism is in disagreement with that of Brāhmaṇism, which is quoted above.

The determination of the prerequisite of the eightfold knowledge supports an understanding of the four *jhānas* as the basis of *vijjā*. The *Sāmaññaphalasutta* clearly expresses the eightfold knowledge as the consequent psychological state of the four *jhānas*.⁷⁰³ After emerging from the fourth *jhāna*, the meditator directs attention to his or her own body and mind for the establishment of the first *vijjā*. Similarly, while pointing to the textual description of the first *vijjā*,

⁶⁹⁸ Edward Fitzpatrick Crangle, op. cit., p. 21.

⁶⁹⁹ Ps.III.362.

⁷⁰⁰ Crangle, op. cit., pp. 16-18.

⁷⁰¹ A.I.163.

⁷⁰² M.III.82.

⁷⁰³ D.I.73-84.

Gimello states that concentration is really only the necessary prelude to an analytical discernment of the truths of dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*).⁷⁰⁴ It is probable that the mental unification promotes the penetration of truths.

In contrast, Griffiths contradicts the progression from the four *jhānas* to the first *vijjā*, which provides the ability to see clearly into the way things are.⁷⁰⁵ He seems to attempt to distinguish the key term ‘intuition and vision’ (*ñāṇadassana*) of the first of eightfold *vijjā* from the preliminary concentration and purification of the mind. He proposes instead the redactional addition of a concentrative technique into what were original contents of the eightfold knowledge (*vijjā*).⁷⁰⁶ It may be that the *Pāli* passage,⁷⁰⁷ related to concentration, is repeatedly added to original contents of each kind of knowledge for whatever reason. However, the other discourses regard the association between concentration and the ability to see things as they really are as the important concept of spiritual development. For instance, the *Discourse on Concentration* (*Samādhisutta*) states:

Monks, develop concentration. A monk, who is concentrated, monks, understands things as they really are.⁷⁰⁸

In addition, the *Discourse on the Unvirtuous* (*Dussīlasutta*) regards concentration as the preceding state of *yathābhūtañāṇadassana* (intuition and vision of things as they really are).

When there is perfect concentration, then there is the cause for intuition and vision of things as they really are for one who has perfect concentration.⁷⁰⁹

⁷⁰⁴ Robert M Gimello, op. cit., p. 181.

⁷⁰⁵ Paul J. Griffiths, *Indian Buddhist Meditation-Theory: History, Development and Systematization*, op. cit., p. 82.

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁷ *So evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgaṇe vigaṭūpakkilese mudubhūte kammaniye ṭhite āneñjappatte.*

⁷⁰⁸ S.IV.80: “*samādhim bhikkhave bhāvētha samāhito bhikkhave bhikkhu yathābhūtam pajānāti.*”

⁷⁰⁹ A.III.20: “*sammāsamādhimhi sati sammāsamādhisampannassa upanīsasampannaṃ hoti yathābhūtañāṇadassanaṃ.*”

The more evidence of the relationship between concentration and *vijjā* is found in the *Mahāvaccasutta*, where there is spiritual power of *vijjā* to be gained when *vipassanā* and *samatha* are developed in skillful cooperation.⁷¹⁰ When these discourses are considered, it is difficult to conclude that the concentrative technique is added to the original contents of *vijjās*. The development of *vijjā* is not possible unless and until the meditator develops the perfect concentration, which is the attainment of four *jhānas*. Therefore, there is cogent reason to conclude that concentration is conducive to the structure of Buddhist knowledge (*vijjā*).

An evaluation of the threefold *vijjā* will refer to “whether or not the Buddha is omniscient.” It is generally accepted that the Buddha possesses the two profound spiritual experiences: *vijjā* and *caraṇa* (conduct). Consequently, the fulfilment of *vijjā* causes the Buddha to be regarded as an omniscient person.⁷¹¹ Nonetheless, in the *Discourse on the Three Knowledges to Vacchagotta* (*Tevijjavaccasutta*), the ascetic named Vaccha requests verification of rumours he has heard about the Buddha:

Venerable sir, those, who say this: The recluse Gotama is all-knowing and all-seeing and acknowledges remainderless intuition and vision thus: ‘while I am walking, standing, sleeping or awake, intuition and vision present to me continually and uninterruptedly’⁷¹²

This statement addresses the Buddha as all-knowing (*sabbaññū*) which is of semantic relevance to having unlimited knowledge of omniscience. The Buddha informs Vaccha that this statement falsely represents him, rejecting the notion that he is literally omniscient. He states that rather than this omniscience, he possesses the threefold knowledge which is essential for his enlightenment.

⁷¹⁰ M.I.494-496.

⁷¹¹ Vajirañāṇa Paravahera Mahathera, op. cit., pp. 189-190.

⁷¹² M.I.482: “*Ye te bhante evam-āhamsu: samaṇo Gotamo sabbaññū sabbadassāvī, aparisesaṃ ñāṇadassanaṃ paṭijānāti: carato ca me tiṭṭhato ca suttassa ca jāgarassa ca satataṃ samitaṃ ñāṇadassanaṃ paccupaṭṭhitanti.*”

That is to say, a study of the threefold knowledge can clarify the distinction between *sabbaññū* and this omniscience.

In a remarkable contribution to this discourse, Bucknell and Stuart-Fox imply that the Buddha is not omniscient or is less than perfect due to the inconsistent appearance of the first and second knowledges.⁷¹³ They perhaps see fault in the Buddha's enlightenment because of his discontinuous ability for mental perception and vision. In the *Tevijjavacchasutta*, it is said that the Buddha can employ the first two knowledges whenever he chooses, but they do not operate all the time. Throughout this discourse, according to the interpretation of Bucknell and Stuart-Fox, the Buddha appears not to be omniscient.

In contrast, a detailed examination of the threefold knowledge reveals that the Buddha is characterised by omniscience. In fact, omniscience and *sabbaññū* may not be present at all times, but may be available whenever one chooses. The proper attainment of the first and second knowledges should rely on their profound states but not their incessant characteristics. This theme is found in the *Mahāgosīngasutta*,⁷¹⁴ where the nature of abiding in attainment (*samāpatti*) appears to be an intermittent abiding because the meditators can obtain any attainment they want. In the discourse, Sāriputta defines the nature of monks who have well-trained minds as the ability to obtain any attainment (*samāpatti*) whenever they wish at any time of the morning, afternoon and evening. He gives an example of the nature of achieving only one *samāpatti* in a moment via the simile of a king who has a wardrobe containing differently dyed clothes. The king can don only one garment at a time according to his pleasure. According to the ascetic named Vaccha's statement on omniscience, monks who have well-trained minds should abide in *samāpattis* all the time. Because the king believes that he increases the value of wearing one garment by wearing

⁷¹³ Roderick S. Bucknell and Martin Stuart-Fox, op. cit., p. 80.

⁷¹⁴ M.I.214-215.

ten, he puts on all the garments at the same time. Thus, the proper way to achieve the first two knowledges is to perform them one at a time. Moreover, Bucknell and Stuart-Fox clearly understand the attainment of the *jhānas* as prerequisite to attainment of the threefold knowledge.⁷¹⁵ This means that the unification of mind is the essential factor in attaining omniscience and, therefore, only one attainment can be achieved at one time. Their idea that the first and second knowledges involve incessant processes seems to contrast with the notion of mental unification as the basis of the threefold knowledge. Therefore, even though an intermittent achievement of the first two knowledges of the Buddha is not the same as omniscience in relation to the statement of Vaccha the ascetic, this does not affect the claim to omniscience in regard to its intrinsic value because he can attain them according to his will. The meaning of *sabbaññū* as all-knowing seems compatible with the state of having unlimited knowledge of omniscience. According to the above discussion of the *Pāli* canon, the interpretation of *sabbaññū* as knowing everything whenever one chooses is different from omniscience in the sense of knowing everything all of the time.

The first knowledge is the process of visual intuition based on the fourth *jhāna*, which recollects the specific mental and physical conditions undergone in one's continuum of previous existences. In the *Bhayabheravasutta*, the Buddha, of course, indicates that the four *jhānas* are the foundations of the first knowledge of recollection of former lives (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇa*) and clarifies that the former lives have continued through a hundred thousand births and through many aeons. He further organises his former lives into various categories such as name, clan, colour, nourishment and feeling.⁷¹⁶ The recollection of former lives is intimately related to the doctrine of the circle of existence (*saṃsāra*),

⁷¹⁵ Roderick S. Bucknell and Martin Stuart-Fox, op. cit., p. 78.

⁷¹⁶ M.I.22.

which is the principal doctrine of Buddhism. In the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha describes his former deaths and rebirths as ‘a process of running through the journeying-on’ of numerous births until attainment of the termination of cravings (*taṇhā*).⁷¹⁷

While the Buddhist canons particularly express the substance of rebirth in the description of the first knowledge, Bucknell and Stuart-Fox tend to negate the circle of existences. They propose the first knowledge of recollection of former lives as recollection of the constantly repeating arising and ceasing of momentary mental stages. They then identify this knowledge with the retracing of image sequences.⁷¹⁸ According to their analysis, this process of retracing of the thought sequences contrasts with the mental unification of the concentration practice.⁷¹⁹

However, this interpretation of the retracing of image sequences appears to deviate from the textual analysis of the first knowledge related to the Buddhist early texts. According to the conventional pattern of the first knowledge in the *suttas*, the four *jhānas* are fundamental to the first knowledge; in contrast, retracing of image sequences does not involve any deep level of concentration. Further evidence is found in the *Vimuttimaggā*, where Upatissa elucidates the meditative approach of recollection of former lives based on the fourth *jhāna*. Meditators accomplish control of mind and recollect on what they have done during a day, during two days and thus backward to a month, a year and a hundred years up to their last birth. They can recollect their past lives; one life, two lives, three lives and so forth by means of the purified mind. For

⁷¹⁷ Dh.p. 153-154.

⁷¹⁸ Roderick S. Bucknell and Martin Stuart-Fox, op. cit., pp. 80-85.

⁷¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 55-56.

purification of mind, Upatissa proposes the repeated development of *jhāna* as that of burnishing a mirror.⁷²⁰

According to this interpretation of the canon and *Vimuttimagga*, the mind performs like a video recorder in collecting every event during the circle of existences. Since all the memory of past lives is in there, the meditator does not need to create or bring about any mental objects. While the mind purifies and comes to a standstill in a certain state, meditators realize their preceding existences in *saṃsāra* by deeply penetrating their own minds. The mind is like a deep pool of water. If the water is unpurified and its surface is constantly rippled by the wind, one cannot see what lies beneath the surface. Once the surface movement subsides and the water is purified, then the whole pool becomes visible. The mind's hidden existence in *saṃsāra* will be revealed once the mind has been stilled and purified through concentration practice. The purification and one-pointedness of mind brought about through the fourth *jhāna* constitute the most essential approach to the first knowledge.

Furthermore, the Buddhist canon and commentaries clearly illustrate the prerequisite (the fourth *jhāna*), process and description of recollection of previous lives. After deliberation, the *arahant* brothers and sisters in the *Apadānapāli* also describe their past lives beyond the moment of birth to their preceding existence in *saṃsāra*.⁷²¹ Instead of following the discourse of the Buddha and *arahant* disciples in the canons and commentaries, Bucknell and Stuart-Fox interpret the births and deaths of *saṃsāra* as the frequently repeated arising and ceasing of thoughts only. This mentalistic interpretation of *saṃsāra*, which contradicts most orthodox interpretations, seems to be an example of wrong view (*micchādiṭṭhi*). The interpretation of *saṃsāra* as former lives appears to link *vijjās* with *samatha* and *vipassanā*. In the *Āgantukasutta*, the

⁷²⁰ Upatissa, op. cit., p. 222.

⁷²¹ Mary E. Lilley, *The Apadāna of the Khuddaka Nikāya*, (London: Pali Text Society, 1925), vol 1, 2.

Buddha recommends the developments of *samatha* and *vipassanā* through the supernatural knowledge (*abhiññā*) as follows:

Monks, what things should be developed through supernatural knowledge? Tranquillity and insight-these are the things that should be developed through supernatural knowledge.⁷²²

The supernatural knowledge consists of six knowledges, which already include the three knowledges. They rely on deep concentration progressing to the skilfulness of the fourth *jhāna* contemplation.⁷²³ Therefore, it is concluded that *vipassanā* collaborates with the three knowledges on the basis of attainment of *jhānas*, but not on the basis of retracing thought sequences.

The second knowledge is acquired by means of mental vision purified through the fourth *jhāna*, rather than by means of observation of the ceasing and arising of images. As his general explanation, the Buddha clearly defines the second knowledge as the knowledge of the death and rebirth of beings in different aspects according to their actions by deed, word and thought, that is, *kamma*.⁷²⁴ Moreover, he illustrates the second knowledge as observing beings as they pass away from one form of existence and come into another form in relation to their own actions. To perceive in this way is to be like the man who stands on a tower in the midst of where four roads meet and who thus easily watches the people wandering around the village.

However, in *The Twilight Language*, the second knowledge is the knowledge of the death and rebirth of beings, according to their *kamma*, interpreted as observation of the ceasing and arising of images according to previous emotional involvement.⁷²⁵ Here, nothing is said of *jhāna* or any other form of concentration. Indeed, Bucknell and Stuart-Fox refer to the Buddha's statement

⁷²² S.V.52: “*Katame ca bhikkhave dhammā abhiññā bhāvetabbā samatho ca vipassanā ca ime bhikkhave dhammā abhiññā bhāvetabbā.*”

⁷²³ Upatissa, op. cit., p. 209.

⁷²⁴ D.I.82-83.

⁷²⁵ Roderick S. Bucknell and Martin Stuart-Fox, op. cit., pp. 85-89.

of calling volition (*cetanā*) as *kamma* to identify *kamma* as emotional involvement in the mental contents. They imply that the second knowledge is observation of the ceasing and arising of images. If this is correct, we can infer that the fulfilment of the second knowledge does not require any fundamental constituents. In contrast, in the *Vimuttimaggā*,⁷²⁶ Upatissa proposes that the development of the second knowledge starts from a suppression of the eleven defilements (*upakkilesa*)⁷²⁷ and an employment of the light *kaṣiṇa* to the fourth *jhāna* contemplation. The meditator strengthens the mind and increases the light until surpassing the sun in splendour.

Upatissa clarifies how to develop the mental vision of the divine eye in order to obtain the second knowledge of passing away and the arising of beings and knowledge of their *kamma*. An analytical evaluation of the canon and commentaries reveals that Bucknell and Stuart-Fox's idea of the observation of the ceasing and arising of images according to previous emotional involvement deviates from the orthodox meditative approach of the second knowledge based on the development of the fourth *jhāna*. It is conceivable from early Buddhist texts that the second knowledge relies on the ability of profound mental vision, which is based on the fourth *jhāna* rather than on the mere observation of the ceasing and arising of images.

The third knowledge of destroying all cankers is based on the development of awareness and concentration into the profound contemplative experiences rather than a superficial level of awareness. According to the stereotyped formula of the third knowledge, it is nothing less than knowledge of the destruction of the cankers by means of the serene, pure, translucent and firm

⁷²⁶ Upatissa, op. cit., p. 224.

⁷²⁷ The eleven *upakkilesas* comprise doubt (*vicikicchā*), lack of proper attention (*amanasikāra*), sloth and torpor (*thīnamiddha*), consternation (*chambhitatta*), elation (*uppāla*), distress (*duṭṭhulla*), too much energy (*accāradhāviriya*), too feeble an energy (*atīlānaviriya*), longing (*abhijappā*), perception of diversity (*nānattasaññā*), state of being too intent (*rūpa-atinijjhāyitatta*).

mind. The meditative approach of the third knowledge is the realization of the four noble truths, cankers, origin of the cankers, cessation of the cankers and the path that leads to the cessation of the cankers. After knowing and seeing in this way, the mind is set free from all cankers and *ñāṇa* (intuition) arises to support recognition of the disappearance of the cankers.⁷²⁸

Though it is contended that this path of salvation is derived from the path of concentration plus complete realization of the first two knowledges, Bucknell and Stuart-Fox propose a correspondence between the third knowledge and awareness only.⁷²⁹ They arrive at this conclusion through the analysis of the term ‘canker (*āsava*)’ into three categories: *kāmāsava* (canker of sense pleasure), *bhavāsava* (canker of becoming) and *avijjāsava* (canker of ignorance). Accordingly, they give the definition of *bhava* (existence) as an affective involvement in the content of the thought-stream, based on the identification of *samsāra* as the stream of images. They combine the first two *āsavas* and then interpret *āsavas* into two categories: (1) ignorance, which is failure to perceive the true nature of images and the mechanism of linking, and (2) emotional involvement in sense objects and images. According to their proposal, awareness corresponds to the third knowledge because it is incompatible with ‘ignorance’ regarding the nature of the mental contents, and with emotional involvement of any kind.

Therefore, this interpretation of the third knowledge corresponds to an exercising of awareness. Nonetheless, this interpretation does not convey a clear idea of the early Buddhist texts as the following *suttas* extract shows:

- (1) The *Tipiṭaka* illustrates the four *jhānas* as the foundation for the development of the three knowledges (*vijjās*), whereas awareness alone is the preceding meditative step before the development of

⁷²⁸ D.I.83-84.

⁷²⁹ Roderick S. Bucknell and Martin Stuart-Fox, op. cit., pp. 88-89.

the first *jhāna* in gradual training according to the *Gaṇakamoggallānasutta*.⁷³⁰

- (2) The interpretation of *samsāra* as the thought-stream (*javanacitta*) is a wrong view (*micchādiṭṭhi*) leading to wrong knowledge and limiting ultimate knowledge to the superficial level of awareness.
- (3) The realization of the *āsavas* is based on the development of profound internal vision but not mere observation of thoughts. After the destruction of all *āsavas*, *ñāṇa* arises to acknowledge the absence of the *āsavas*.⁷³¹

In the sequence of practices relating to the third knowledge, the meditator needs to realize the four noble truths before realization of the cankers, origin of the cankers, cessation of the cankers and the path that leads to the cessation of the cankers. Since the five instrumental factors of insight, *cakkhu*, *ñāṇa*, *paññā*, *vijjā* and *āloka*, arise twelve times during the process of realization of the four noble truths in the *Dhammacakkappavattanasutta*, they are the main factors for the realization of the four noble truths and the process of destroying the cankers. The arising of five instrumental factors based on the development of the *jhānas* is the main process involved in recognition through knowing and seeing. The meditator should develop these five factors by advancing along the path of contemplation of the three knowledges until a sufficiently intensive *ñāṇa* arises to support recognition of the disappearance of the cankers. Finally, rather than the superficial level of awareness, the five instrumental factors of insight are the common factors of the development of the three knowledges and *vipassanā* contemplation.

From this discussion of *vijjā*, an evaluation has emerged which involves six important aspects. First, the threefold knowledge (*vijjā*) of the Buddhist, differing from that of the Brāhmin through a reliance on mental development, is

⁷³⁰M.III.3-4.

⁷³¹D.I.84.

the genuine knowledge of Buddhism. Second, the ability to see things as they really are depends on the degree of mental unification which has been attained. The advanced stage of this ability contributes to the progress of *vijjā*. Third, the Buddha is not omniscient in the sense of that he lacks the ability to see everything *all the time* and only intermittently achieves the first two knowledges. Despite this, a closer analysis of the threefold knowledge reveals that the ability to attain these knowledges according to his will is more than enough for him to be called an ‘omniscient person.’ Fourth, modern psychology regards the recollection of former lives (*pubbenivāsānussati*) as the retracing of image sequences.⁷³² In contrast to this psychological interpretation, the textual analysis of early Buddhist texts and commentaries regards it as a process of visual intuition based on the fourth *jhāna*, which recollects the mental and physical aggregates experienced in one’s own personal continuum of former rebirths. While the mind purifies and comes to a standstill after attaining the fourth *jhāna*, in penetrating their own minds, meditators realize their preceding existences in *samsāra*. Fifth, the second knowledge presented in the early Buddhist texts is clearly grounded in profound mental vision, which is based on the fourth *jhāna* rather than on mere observation of the ceasing and arising of images. Therefore, it is the knowledge of the death and rebirth of beings in various manifestations according to their deeds, words and thoughts. Lastly, it is accepted that the meditative practice of awareness leads to the third knowledge. However, the profound spiritual experience of this knowledge is much more advanced than the superficial level of awareness. The third knowledge, of course, relies on the development of the five instrumental factors of insight; *cakkhu*, *ñāṇa*, *paññā*, *vijjā* and *āloka*, which are based on the development of awareness and concentration until their sufficiently intensive level arises to support recognition of the disappearance of the cankers.

⁷³² Roderick S. Bucknell and Martin Stuart-Fox, op. cit., pp. 80-85.

Light (Āloka)

Āloka is the final instrumental factor of insight, which arises with the first four instrumental factors during the development of *vipassanā*. Its translation as light is used widely to refer to mental understanding as an enlightening experience, for example: “They achieve the light of spiritual experience.” In the *Pubbasutta*, a more specific application of light to the enlightenment path becomes apparent during the contemplation of the bases for supernormal power (*iddhipādas*).⁷³³ Here the Buddha proclaims that the collective purpose of developing the *iddhipādas* is the imbuing of opened mind with luminosity and then the attainment of sixfold *abhiññā*. Another evidence of a direct application of light can be found in the *Mahāsaccakasutta*, which states the arising of light together with the spiritual progress in mode of *vijjā*.⁷³⁴ Moreover, light appears to be the essential factor for superior mental vision, since Buddhaghosa insists that the light *kaṣiṇa* is the best object of the *jhāna* to initiate the arising of divine eye knowledge (*dibbacakkhuñāṇa*).⁷³⁵ For the development of divine eye, Upatissa also proposes the contemplation of the light *kaṣiṇa* in order to obtain the fourth *jhāna*.⁷³⁶ *Āloka*, being the essential factor of vision, can be developed to sustain the main characteristics of particular and special seeing of *vipassanā*. The cooperation of the five instrumental factors suggests that the cultivation of uninterrupted and strong mental illumination of *āloka* comprises in collaboration with the whole process of *vipassanā*. This suggestion will be considered in accordance with the two aspects of *āloka*; the imperfection of *vipassanā* and its essential attributes for the commencement of *vipassanā*.

Āloka is not the imperfection of *vipassanā*; instead, it contributes to the progresses of not only *vipassanā*, but also the other skillful (*kusala*) *dhammas*.

⁷³³ S.V.263-265.

⁷³⁴ M.I.247-249.

⁷³⁵ *Vism.*427-428 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 469-470).

⁷³⁶ Upatissa, op. cit., p. 224.

It is well known that in every version of the first sermon, “*Setting in Motion the Wheel of Truth (Dhammacakkappavattanasutta)*,”⁷³⁷ carries the Buddha’s explanation, that when he directed his mind to each of the four noble truths, internal light (*āloka*)⁷³⁸ occurred twelve times. The four noble truths seem to be the particular type of *dhamma*, which can be seen internally, as stated by Gavampati;

Friends, in the presence of the Blessed One, I have heard and learnt this: “Monks, one who sees suffering sees also the origin of suffering, sees also the cessation of suffering and sees also the path leading to the cessation of suffering.”⁷³⁹

Indeed, the consciousness of light enables the meditator to obtain the intuition and vision (*ñāṇadassana*) as following;

Monks, how does concentrative meditation, when developed and made much of, conduces to gaining intuition and vision?
Here, Monks, monk pays attention to the perception of light, he remains his mind firm in the perception of daylight, by night as by day, by day as by night. In this way, with clear and unclouded mind, he develops the mind to brilliance.⁷⁴⁰

Ñāṇadassana is the essential factor for supporting the function of visual intuition of *vipassanā*. From the definition of *vipassanāñāṇa*, *ñāṇadassana* is the predominant factor to initiate *vipassanāñāṇa*.

He applies and bends down his mind towards intuition and vision. He understands this: “This my body has form, it is composed of the four great elements, born of father and mother...”⁷⁴¹

In introducing the link between *āloka* and *vipassanā*, these passages show that *āloka* causes the arising of *ñāṇadassana* and subsequently *vipassanāñāṇa*.

⁷³⁷ S.V.422.

⁷³⁸ Perhaps, internal light, *āloka*, can be compared to external light. Since visual consciousness arises because of physical eyes, material shapes and external light, the profound consciousness of internal vision arises because of the eye of wisdom (*paññā*), mental objects (*dhamma*) and internal light (*āloka*).

⁷³⁹ S.V.436-437: “*Sammukhā me tam āvuso Bhagavato sutam sammukhā paṭiggahītam—yo bhikkhave dukkhampassati dukkhasamudayam pi so passati dukkhanirodham pi passati dukkhanirodhagamini-paṭipadam pi passati.*”

⁷⁴⁰ A.II.45: “*Katamā ca bhikkhave samādhībhāvanā bhāvitā bahulikatā ñāṇadassanapaṭilābhāya samvattati? Idha bhikkhave bhikkhu ālokaañāṇam manasikaroti divāsañāṇam adhiṭṭhāti yathā divā tathā rattiṃ yathā Rattiṃ tathā divā. Iti vivaṭena cetasā aparīyonaddhena sappabhāsam cittaṃ bhāveti.*”

⁷⁴¹ D.I.76: “*ñāṇa-dassanāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti. So evaṃ pajānāti: ‘Ayaṃ kho me kāyo rūpī Cātum-mahā-bhūṭiko mātā-pettika-sambhavo...’*”

While the above evidence contributes to the essence of *āloka* for *vipassanā* contemplation, Buddhaghosa disregards *āloka* as the imperfection of *vipassanā*.

When man is bringing (formations) to mind as impermanent, illumination (*āloka*) arises in him. He adverts to the illumination thus “Illumination is a (noble one’s) state.” The distraction due to that is agitation.⁷⁴²

Many scholars have attempted to follow him. For instance, Gunaratana says: “ten unprecedented experiences (including *āloka*) are likely to arise in him. Because they can impede his progress”⁷⁴³ Fuller,⁷⁴⁴ Thavaro⁷⁴⁵ and Vanarat⁷⁴⁶ agree. In spite of this consideration, it is not plausible that *āloka*, which promotes the process of mental vision, will be the defilement of *vipassanā*. It is not only *vipassanā*; *āloka* is one component inducing the other *Dhamma* states, as shown in the *Mahantattasutta*.

Monks, being endowed with six things, a monk attains greatness and expansiveness in *dhammas* in no long time. What six? Here, monks, a monk has great light...⁷⁴⁷

In this case, *āloka* is regarded as some form of intellectual insight perfectly realizing the mental objects (*dhamma*). These *dhamma* states also include *paññā*: “There is no radiance like wisdom (*natthi paññāsamā ābhā*)”⁷⁴⁸ Furthermore, in regard to the threefold knowledge contemplation, *āloka* arises in collaboration with each *vijjā* until the highest *vijjā*, which is the knowledge of destruction of cankers.⁷⁴⁹ It is clear that *āloka* provides the ability of

⁷⁴² *Vism.*633 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 739).

⁷⁴³ Henepola Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., pp. 177-178.

⁷⁴⁴ Paul Fuller, *The Notion of Dīṭṭhi in Theravāda Buddhism : The Point of View* (London ; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), p. 76.

⁷⁴⁵ Phra Maha Vira Thavaro, op. cit., p. 91.

⁷⁴⁶ Somdet Phra Vanarat, op. cit., p. 37.

⁷⁴⁷ A.III.432: “*Chahi bhikkhave dhammehi samannāgato bhikkhu na cirass’eva mahantattaṃ vepullattaṃ pāpuṇāti dhammesu. Katamehi chahi? Idha bhikkhave bhikkhu āloka bahulo ca hoti,...*”

⁷⁴⁸ S.I.6.

⁷⁴⁹ M.I.247-249.

profound mental vision, which is the essential factor for the development of *vipassanā*. Therefore, it should not be called the imperfection of *vipassanā*.

During the process of *vipassanā*, *āloka* is the continual and strong radiance of mind rather than the flashing of a light. A consideration of the wider definition of the English term, of course, shows that light is associated with understanding, or with an enlightening experience. It is recognised also in common parlance that there is a relationship between light and understanding, for example: “I finally saw the light,” or “Can you shed light on this problem.” The comprehensive meaning of light is like the radiance of mind dispelling the mental obstruction, which is darkness. In Buddhist psychology, many scholars tend to interpret *vipassanā* as the comprehensive meaning of light. For instance, Nyanatiloka assigns a meaning to *vipassanā*: “Insight is the intuitive light flashing forth and exposing the truth of the impermanency, the suffering and the impersonal.”⁷⁵⁰ Pio writes in the similar way: “It (*vipassanā*) was the mental flash and sure knowledge that one had found the answer.”⁷⁵¹

If a light flashing signifies the process of *vipassanā*, one might suspect why the Buddha suggests the continual development of *āloka* for *ñāṇadassana*: “Here, Monks, monk pays attention to the perception of light; he remains his mind firm in the perception of daylight, by night as by day, by day as by night.”⁷⁵² In place of light flashing, Sangharakshita interprets *vipassanā* as a discrete series of flashes coming with increasing frequency. This series gradually merges into the sustained emissions of radiance and then into the unbroken transcendental illumination of perfect wisdom.⁷⁵³ His rendition agrees with the Buddhist

⁷⁵⁰ Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines*, op. cit., p. 197.

⁷⁵¹ Edwina Pio, op. cit., p. 80.

⁷⁵² A.II.45.

⁷⁵³ Sangharakshita, op. cit., p.180.

viewpoint of a gradual mode of spiritual progress without abruptness, as proclaimed by the Buddha in the *Pahārādasutta*:

Pahārāda, just as the great ocean has a gradual incline, a gradual leading, a gradual slope, not in an abrupt way like a precipice; even so, Pahārāda, in this dhamma and discipline there is a gradual training, a gradual practice, a gradual mode of progress; there is no penetrated final knowledge in an abrupt way.⁷⁵⁴

It appears from the above statement that *āloka* gradually progresses along with the process of *vipassanā*, rather than being the mere flashing of light. Incidentally, Sangharakshita's viewpoint can be seen as problematic in regard to the initial state of *vipassanā*. During the commencement of *vipassanā*, *āloka* arises in collaboration with *cakkhu*, *ñāṇa*, *paññā* and *vijjā*. From their cooperation, the instrumental factor of *āloka* can be considered in relation with the four latter instrumental factors. Comparing *paññā* and *vijjā* to *āloka*, the radiance of mind which is suitable to penetrate the truth as the function of *paññā* and to recollect the former lives as the function of the first *vijjā* seems to be profound, reinforced and incessant. Besides this, the Buddha clearly states in his account of his enlightenment that the fourth *jhāna* is the basis of the threefold knowledge.⁷⁵⁵ Consequently, the radiance of mind which arises in collaboration with the deep and profound concentration of the fourth *jhāna* seems to be uninterrupted and securely established rather than a mere mental flashing of light. Even though the meditator cultivates the radiance of mind from its intermittent and weak beginnings, it needs to be reinforced and constant before the process of superior mental vision of *vipassanā* can arise.

In this section, the characteristics of *āloka* which arise and progress in accompaniment with the process of *vipassanā* have been examined. Unfortunately, most scholars tend to disregard *āloka* as just an impediment of

⁷⁵⁴ A.IV.200-201.

⁷⁵⁵ M.I.21-22.

vipassanā. Despite this, it is found in the above examination that *āloka* plays a pivotal role with respect to *vipassanā* practice. Next, the flashing of light cannot represent the superior mental vision of *vipassanā*. Accordingly, it needs to be cultivated into an uninterrupted and profound state in order to facilitate the process of *vipassanā*.

This work has so far assessed the practical implication of *vipassanā* through its predominant factors in relation to the five instrumental factors of insight: vision (*cakkhu*), intuition (*ñāṇa*), wisdom (*paññā*), knowledge (*vijjā*) and light (*āloka*). An examination of *cakkhu* and its interchangeable term, *dassana*, reveals that a mode of profound mental vision- in terms of ‘*dhamma-cakkhu*’ based on deep concentration- is of considerable relevance and participates in the development of *vipassanā*. The advanced stages of *vipassanā* rely on the profound visual intuition in term of *ñāṇa*, which involves the ascent of ten *vipassanā-ñāṇas* and of six kinds of supernatural knowledge (*abhiññā*). *Paññā*, which is based on mental development in the experience of deep concentration, plays the role of visual intuition that is the main characteristic of *vipassanā*. With the process of visual intuition based on deep concentration, instead of the retracing image sequences, the mind can be directed towards the development of *vipassanā* and then *vijjā*. Although the Buddha cannot attain the threefold *vijjā* all the time, he is omniscient because he can access the threefold *vijjā* according to his will. Lastly, the process of *vipassanā* needs to be initiated and cultivated through the ascending of uninterrupted and profound mental illumination of *āloka*.

Obstruction of *Vipassanā*

Having discussed the obstruction of *vipassanā* in relation to *ñāṇa* and *āloka*, this work will attempt now to determine the actual obstruction of *vipassanā*. The progress of *vipassanā* comes about through a two-sided process of

development. On one side is the development of five instrumental factors discussed above; on the other is the elimination of the obstruction of *vipassanā*, which needs to be understood and acknowledged. This work has identified the opinion of most scholars- that the ten mental qualities⁷⁵⁶ are the imperfections of insight (*vipassanūpakkilesa*) - and has then clarified the perfection of two qualities, illumination (*obhāsa*) and intuition (*ñāṇa*). This section will argue that the obstructions of *vipassanā* are actually the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) and eleven defilements (*upakkilesa*), but not the ten imperfections of insight (*vipassanūpakkilesa*). This argument will focus on the eight mental qualities⁷⁵⁷ which remain unclarified, and the determination of the true obstruction of *vipassanā*.

The evaluation of the eight last mental qualities reveals that they actually promote the process of *vipassanā*. In fact, four of them, joy (*pīti*), rapture (*passaddhi*), happiness (*sukha*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*), are the constituents of the seven essential factors leading to enlightenment (*bojjhaṅga*).⁷⁵⁸ In the discourse called *Mahāsaḷāyatanikasutta* (*On the Great Sixfold Sense-field*), the Buddha also lists these seven factors as the preceding process to the cooperation of *samatha* and *vipassanā*.⁷⁵⁹ The meaning of ‘factors of enlightenment’ clearly does not fit with ‘obstruction of *vipassanā*,’ and alternatively seems to encourage *vipassanā*.

Next, resolution (*adhimokkha*) means strong faith arising in association with *vipassanā*, and which has an exceedingly serene effect on the mind.⁷⁶⁰ Faith, of course, is a significant mental quality in meditation and must be in balance with

⁷⁵⁶ illumination (*obhāsa*), intuition (*ñāṇa*), joy (*pīti*), rapture (*passaddhi*), happiness (*sukha*), resolution (*adhimokkha*), exertion (*paggāha*), assurance (*upaṭṭhāna*), equanimity (*upekkhā*), and attachment (*nikanti*).

⁷⁵⁷ joy (*pīti*), rapture (*passaddhi*), happiness (*sukha*), resolution (*adhimokkha*), exertion (*paggāha*), assurance (*upaṭṭhāna*), equanimity (*upekkhā*), and attachment (*nikanti*).

⁷⁵⁸ S.V.126.

⁷⁵⁹ M.III.289.

⁷⁶⁰ *Vism.*636 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 742).

paññā.⁷⁶¹ In regard to Buddhist philosophy, faith is not mere confidence; rather it is a confidence born out of understanding of the four noble truths.⁷⁶² This means that faith requires the collaboration of *paññā* or *vipassanā*. Accordingly, resolution (*adhimokkha*), which appears to refer to the association between faith and *paññā*, should support rather than obstruct *vipassanā*. Incidentally, Buddhaghosa speaks of exertion (*paggāha*) as energy (*virīya*), which is associated with *vipassanā* and is neither too lax nor extremely strenuous, but upright and well established.⁷⁶³ Indeed, energy (*virīya*) is an impediment to mental vision and unification because of its deficiency and excessiveness, and due to the fact that it is not well established.⁷⁶⁴ In the *Soṇasutta*, the Buddha compares the balanced energy needed for mental development to the tuning of a violin, whose strings should be neither too tight nor too loose.⁷⁶⁵ This comparison demonstrates the well established energy required for mental development and, subsequently, for *vipassanā*. Of course, it appears impossible that the well balanced energy, which avoids the extremes of excessive and insufficient effort of exertion (*paggāha*), should be the obstruction of *vipassanā*. Besides this, the exertion is the important factor for the cultivation of *vipassanā*.

The next mental quality is assurance (*upaṭṭhāna*), which Buddhaghosa identifies as mindfulness (*sati*) associated with *vipassanā*.⁷⁶⁶ Mindfulness is the obvious mental quality in the process of *vipassanā*.⁷⁶⁷ For the realization of mind and body (*nāma-rūpa*), the meditator must be mindful of each and every mental and physical action until mindfulness becomes sustained and uninterrupted. Therefore, assurance (*upaṭṭhāna*), as the identity of mindfulness,

⁷⁶¹ Sayadaw U Janakabhivamsa, op. cit., pp. 97-98.

⁷⁶² H. Saddhātissa, "The Saddhā Concept in Buddhism," *The Eastern Buddhist* 11, no. 2 (1978), 137-142, 137.

⁷⁶³ *Vism.* 636 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 742).

⁷⁶⁴ *M.* III. 159.

⁷⁶⁵ *A.* III. 375.

⁷⁶⁶ *Vism.* 636 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 742).

⁷⁶⁷ Henepola Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., p. 115.

does not obstruct *vipassanā* at all; instead, it is the predominant factor of *vipassanā*.

The last mental quality is attachment (*nikanti*), which is the desire arising along with the love of knowledge of *vipassanā*.⁷⁶⁸ If we see desire in Buddhism as a single aspect of clinging, it is, of course, an obstruction of *vipassanā*. However, the other aspect of subtle desire should be developed in order to get rid of desire, as Ānanda says: “Nun, this body has come into being through craving; by depending on craving, craving is to be abandoned.”⁷⁶⁹ In the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha also speaks of both aspects of desire, in which the subtle is the excellent mental quality for meditation: “delight in the dhamma surpasses every delight”⁷⁷⁰ In response to the Buddha and Ānanda’s statements, the desire to ‘letting go’ is an important factor in meditation and needs to be developed in order to eradicate desires.

Now we have seen so far that the ten imperfections are actually not obstructions of *vipassanā*. In addition, they support the development of *vipassanā* and closely progress along with it on the enlightenment path.

The detailed examination of the Buddhaghosa’s interpretation of the ten imperfections can clarify the true obstruction of *vipassanā*. His interpretation of illumination (*obhāsa*) shows that, when the meditator deliberates over the nature of impermanence, mental illumination arises. In adverting to illumination as the path (*magga*) or fruit (*phala*), the meditator gets mental disturbance and instability. Then the meditator does not recognize the arising phenomenon as impermanent as it should really be. Thus, the meditator takes up the wrong path as the right one, and the mistaken fruit as the correct one. Thereby, the process

⁷⁶⁸ *Vism.* 636 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 742-743).

⁷⁶⁹ A.II.145: “*taṅhāsambhūto ayaṃ bhagīni kāyo taṅhaṃ nissāya taṅhā pahātabbā.*”

⁷⁷⁰ Dh.p.354: “*sabbam ratim dhammaratī jināti.*”

of *vipassanā* usually gets diverted. And, as in the case of illumination, so too in the case of the other imperfections, the meditator assumes the wrong path and fruit as the right ones.⁷⁷¹ It is contended that Buddhaghosa's interpretation of the ten imperfections (*vipassanūpakkilesa*) gives a certain impression of all the ten imperfections to be an obstruction to *vipassanā* contemplation. Through deep concern, the distinctly individual imperfection does not obstruct *vipassanā* for the following reasons;

1. Meditators do not obtain any path (*magga*) or fruit (*phala*); however they contemplate *vipassanā* in the correct course and devote themselves continuously.
2. The ten imperfections result in the correct discernment of meditators through their deliberation on the *nature* of impermanence.
3. Buddhaghosa disregards the ten imperfections because the meditator is unwary and overcome by the wrong view, which is grasping the wrong path and fruit as the right ones.

Accordingly, wrong view is the true obstruction of the progress of *vipassanā* contemplation. In commentaries on *Kammāpathavagga*,⁷⁷² Buddhaghosa defines greed (*lobha*) and delusion (*moha*) as the root of wrong view. Therefore, greed and delusion are the actual limiting agents of either concentration or insight.

According to this determination of the true obstruction of *vipassanā*, this section interprets various scholars' opinions as corroborating the Buddhist canonical texts by suggesting a relationship with the five hindrances and eleven defilements. Among these scholars, U Janakābhivamsa proposes the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*); sense desire (*kāmachanda*), ill-will (*vyāpāda*), sloth and torpor (*thīnamiddha*), restlessness and worry (*uddhaccakukkucca*) and doubts (*vicikicchā*) as the defilements of mind. The five hindrances obstruct the

⁷⁷¹ *Vism.* 633-637 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 739-743).

⁷⁷² Spk.II.149.

meditator from full realization of any mental or physical process.⁷⁷³ Since Gunaratana also considers the five hindrances as the first obstruction of *vipassanā* contemplation, he then clarifies the mind-state which is free of the five hindrances for the commencement of *vipassanā*.⁷⁷⁴ Likewise, Solé-Leris suggests the functions of the five hindrances as confusing the mind, and making the mind sluggish and overexcited. They cause the mind to be unable to see and understand things clearly.⁷⁷⁵ This argument is justifiable because, if the mind is in the weak, deluded, agitated state that the five hindrances have brought about, then the meditator cannot develop visual intuition. Moreover, the Buddha denotes the five hindrances as the cause of blindness, loss of vision (*cakkhu*), loss of intuition (*ñāṇa*) and the obstructions to wisdom (*paññā*), because they consort with pain and conduce not to Nibbāna.⁷⁷⁶ Therefore, due to the cause of the loss of the three essential instrumental factors of insight; *cakkhu*, *ñāṇa* and *paññā*, for initiating *vipassanā*, the meditator must eliminate the five hindrances before *vipassanā* contemplation.

A further determination of the obstruction of *vipassanā* indicates that the eleven defilements, which might occur in the process of *vipassanā*, are considerably important obstructions. Indeed, the eleven defilements comprise:

1. doubt (*vicikicchā*)
2. lack of proper attention (*amanasikāra*)
3. sloth and torpor (*thīnamiddha*)
4. consternation (*chambhitatta*)
5. elation (*uppāla*)
6. distress (*duṭṭhulla*)
7. too much energy (*accāraddhāviriya*)
8. too feeble an energy (*atīlānaviriya*)

⁷⁷³ Sayadaw U Janakabhivamsa, op. cit., pp. 76-77.

⁷⁷⁴ Henepola Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., p. 57.

⁷⁷⁵ Solé-Leris, op. cit., p. 94.

⁷⁷⁶ S.V.97.

9. longing (*abhijappā*)
10. perception of diversity (*nānattasaññā*)
11. state of being too intent (*rūpa-atinijjhāyitatta*)

The discourse on the *Minor Defilements (Upakkilesasutta)*⁷⁷⁷ points to these eleven mental qualities as the agents effecting the vanishing of concentration, illumination (*obhāsa*)⁷⁷⁸ and divine form (*rūpa*) appearance (*dassana*).⁷⁷⁹ In the discourse, the Buddha gives a detailed account of his own struggle to attain light-manifestation and divine form appearance. Since his mental illumination, vision and unification become invisible;⁷⁸⁰ he realizes the causes of vanishing which are the eleven defilements. In addition, Pradhan indicates the actual impediments of *vipassanā* to be the eleven defilements rather than the five hindrances that are often mentioned in connection with the first *rūpajjhāna*.⁷⁸¹ As the requirement of termination of the five hindrances before the arising of the first *jhāna*, which appears frequently in the canonical texts,⁷⁸² his comment about the five hindrances being related to first *jhāna* is accurate. So, during the process of *vipassanā*, the major obstacles to successful meditation take the form of one or more of the eleven defilements.

In summary, in regard to the obstruction of *vipassanā*, most scholars such as Buddhaghosa, Gunaratana and Vajirañāṇa, disregard the ten mental qualities: illumination (*obhāsa*), intuition (*ñāṇa*), joy (*pīti*), rapture (*passaddhi*), happiness (*sukha*), resolution (*adhimokkha*), exertion (*paggāha*), assurance (*upaṭṭhāna*), equanimity (*upekkhā*), and attachment (*nikanti*), as the imperfections of insight (*vipassanūpakkilesa*).⁷⁸³ In contrast, the progress of

⁷⁷⁷ M.III.158-161.

⁷⁷⁸ Light-manifestation is the essential mental quality for achieving true knowledge and mental vision. It can arise from the internal light, which is *āloka*, or the illumination of divine beings.

⁷⁷⁹ Divine form appearance is the ability of mental vision arising from the deep concentration in order to fully see the divine beings.

⁷⁸⁰ This means his mind is distracted, and then, his mental illumination and vision diminish and are gone.

⁷⁸¹ Ayodhya Prasad Pradhan, *The Buddha's System of Meditation* (New Delhi: Sterling, 1986), p. 437.

⁷⁸² D.I.73, D.I.207, M.I.181, M.I.270.

⁷⁸³ *Vism.*633 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 739).

vipassanā requires the ability to develop all ten mental qualities. Actually, the wrong view arising from greed (*lobha*) and delusion (*moha*) causes deviation from the right path of *vipassanā*. Since the five hindrances are the causes of blindness, loss of mental vision and loss of perfect knowledge, they have to be eliminated prior to the process of *vipassanā*. Subsequently, the meditator must be aware of the eleven defilements and is thus able to spot their approach and take evasive action during *vipassanā* contemplation.

Functions of *Vipassanā*

Having seen that the five instrumental factors of insight- *cakkhu*, *ñāṇa*, *paññā*, *vijjā* and *āloka*- arise and progress along with the process of *vipassanā*, this work continues to investigate the main functions of *vipassanā*. This investigation involves, in part, the specific examination of the two associated instrumental factors, *paññā* and *āloka*. However, the main task of this section is to explore the main functions of *vipassanā* in order to facilitate a clear understanding of its processes and the nature of its culmination. This section argues that the principal roles of *vipassanā* are in supporting the cultivation of mental illumination (*pabhā*) and the comparative realization of the three characteristics (*tilakkhaṇa*) of the five aggregates. The argument will survey the important roles of *vipassanā* in reference to two aspects; that is, to *paññā* in relation to its particular mode of mental illumination, and in regard to the issue of how to comparatively realize the five aggregates.

An examination of the relation between *paññā* and mental light reveals that one significant function of *vipassanā* is to intensify mental illumination. The *Bālavagga* clarifies that the main function of *vipassanā* is to cultivate *paññā* and to abolish *avijjā* (ignorance):

Monks, if insight is developed, what profit does it receive? Wisdom becomes developed. If wisdom is developed, what profit does it receive? All ignorance is abandoned.⁷⁸⁴

As presented in the *Atthasālinī*, the term ‘*paññā*’ possesses the two related definitions, illumination (*obhāsana*) and understanding (*pajānana*).⁷⁸⁵ Consequently, the arising of *paññā* affects two aspects of the one process; that is a dispelling of the darkness of ignorance (*avijjā*) and the production of the light of understanding. In addition, the Buddha compares *paññā* to mental illumination: “There is no radiance like wisdom.”⁷⁸⁶ Therefore, the mental state in which *vipassanā* is well established can be characterized as the cultivation of mental illumination.

Nonetheless, some scholars regard the function of *vipassanā* as the cultivation of intellectual knowledge rather than mental illumination. For example, Pio says: “It was the mental flash, and sure knowledge that one had found the answer, and the questing mind was stilled.”⁷⁸⁷ Gimello also points to the function of *vipassanā* as the analytical review of the meaning of the Buddha’s fundamental teachings.⁷⁸⁸ Saddhatissa agrees:

Vipassanā meditation demands a much more analytical and probing approach. Here, the mind is not encouraged to bathe in the bliss of quiet concentration on a stable object but is driven to question more deeply and observe more closely.⁷⁸⁹

According to these scholars, *vipassanā* seems to depend heavily on abstract and inferential knowledge. This intellectual understanding is not very helpful in penetrating through ‘reality,’ as the *Brahmajālasutta* states that the truth is

⁷⁸⁴ A.I.61: “*Vipassanā bhikkhave bhāvitā kam atthaṃ anubhoti? Paññā bhāvīyati. Paññā bhāvitā kam atthaṃ anubhoti? Yā avijjā sā pahīyati.*”

⁷⁸⁵ As.122: “*Paññāva indriyaṃ paññīndriyaṃ, sā panesā obhāsanalakkhaṇā ca paññā pajānanalakkhaṇā ca.*”

⁷⁸⁶ S.I.6.

⁷⁸⁷ Edwina Pio, op. cit., p. 80.

⁷⁸⁸ Robert M Gimello, op. cit., p. 181.

⁷⁸⁹ H. Saddhatissa, *The Buddha’s Way*, (London:George Allen & Unwin, 1971), pp. 81-82.

knowledge, which is difficult to realize, tranquilizing, and not to be grasped by mere logic;

These, monks, are those things, profound, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, sublime, unattainable by mere reasoning, subtle, to be experienced by the wise, which the Tathāgata, having realized them through his own supernatural knowledge, proclaims them.⁷⁹⁰

This passage leaves no doubt that *paññā* is not merely a word for an intellectual function. Moreover in the *Ābhāvagga*, *paññā* refers to mental illumination as one of the four ‘lamps’ (*pajjota*), together with the moon, the sun and the fire, and is the most important of them.⁷⁹¹ Sujato agrees as he writes: “Intellectual knowledge, due to the ripples in awareness stirred up by the activity of thinking, must disturb clarity of understanding, and deep insight arises only when the mind is still and silent.”⁷⁹² Hence, an examination of the outcome of *vipassanā*, namely *paññā*, shows that the main function of *vipassanā* is to increase mental illumination (*pabhā*).

The function of *vipassanā* involves the comparative realization of the three characteristics: 1) impermanence (*anicca*), 2) unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*) and 3) not-self (*anattā*), of the five aggregates, which is the process of withdrawal from attachment to sensory experience. This research argues that this realization is based on discerning directly the three unconditioned characteristics: 1) permanence (*nicca*), 2) happiness (*sukha*) and 3) unconditioned nature (*asaṅkhata*), of the ultimate truth, rather than recognizing directly the conditioned characteristics of the five aggregates. The direct approach of contemplation of the unconditioned characteristics, of the ultimate truth, seems to be relevant to the non-rational dimension of mind after attaining *jhānas*. Indeed, deep concentration is a means of penetrating the deeper layers of consciousness and restructuring them until all traces of self-identification are

⁷⁹⁰ D.I.17.

⁷⁹¹ A.II.140.

⁷⁹² Bhikkhu Sujato, *A History of Mindfulness: How Insight Worsted Tranquillity*, op. cit., p. 9.

gone, and the ultimate reality remains. The strong relationship between the deep concentration of all eight *jhānas* and the perfect realization of the ultimate truth is found in the *Jhānasutta* as follows:

Here, Monks, monk ... enters and remains in the first *jhāna*: whatever exists therein comprised by form, feeling, perception, mental formation or consciousness, he perceives those states as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien, as integrating, as void, as not self. He turns his mind away from those states and, having done so, directs the mind towards the deathless element thus: “This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the tranquillity of all mental formations, the relinquishment of all substrata of existence, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, *nibbāna*”⁷⁹³

According to this passage, the term ‘deathless element’ (*amatadhātu*) is equivalent to ultimate truth, possessing the characteristics of peaceful (*santa*) and sublime (*paṇīta*). The word ‘deathless’ (*amata*), with its characteristics of peaceful and sublime, expresses the literal meaning of permanence (*nicca*) and is utterly incompatible with the unsettled quality of unsatisfactoriness and not-self. This perfect realization of the ultimate truth of the deathless element comprises the positive metaphysical contemplation of the empirical truth of the five aggregates as impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and not-self without the analytical thinking of the five aggregates.

Vipassanā’s main function of the positive metaphysical contemplation, based on the reference to the opposite features of the other, can be exemplified by the simile of two men, where a short, dark and thin man stands together with a tall, fair and fat man. A direct analysis of the former involves measurements of height, weight and degree of colour in comparison with the standard formula. But when we see him standing side by side with the other man, the nature of the

⁷⁹³ A.IV.422-423: “*Idha bhikkhave bhikkhu...pe...paṭhamam jhānam upasampajja viharati. So yad eva tattha hoti rūpagataṃ vedanāgataṃ saññāgataṃ saṅkhāragataṃ viññāgataṃ, te dhamme aniccato dukkhato rogato gaṇḍato sallato aghato ābādhato parato palokato suññato anattato samanupassati. So tehi dhammehi cittaṃ paṭivāpeti, so tehi dhammehi cittaṃ paṭivāpetvā amatāya dhātuyā cittaṃ upasaṃharati ‘etaṃ santam etaṃ paṇītam, yad idam sabbasaṅkhārasamatho sabbūpadhipaṭinissaggo taṇhakkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānan’ti.*”

first man can be grasped immediately without the need for any measurement. This second method of classification of the simile is an example of the positive metaphysical contemplation. The first man is a metaphor for the five aggregates, whereas the second is a metaphor for the deathless element (*amatadhātu*).

A further understanding of the functions of *vipassanā* is clarified through the description of the characteristic of ultimate truth in the *Pāsarāsisutta*.⁷⁹⁴ In the discourse, the Buddha said that *nibbāna* has distinctive qualities in common with *amatadhātu*. Before his enlightenment, the Buddha was trying to gain release from *saṃsāra* with its endless series of death and rebirth. For that, he was trying to find “the unborn, supreme and security from the bonds” and finally he could realize *nibbāna*.⁷⁹⁵ After enlightenment, the Buddha thought about the *Dhamma* that he had already realized and which is deep, difficult to see, difficult to understand, tranquil, excellent, beyond dialectic and subtle. We can see that these attributes are the opposites of the characteristics of the five aggregates, which are impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien, as integrating, as void, as not self (*anattā*). According to the *Pāsarāsisutta*, the five aggregates and the *Dhamma* possess opposite characteristics. Responses to these opposing characteristics have spanned the two means: direct and comparative, by which the meditator can realize the three characteristics of the five aggregates. Thus, the main function of *vipassanā* is enabled and fulfilled through the comparative analysis, which allows for the perfect realization of the deathless element.

While this example suggests that *vipassanā* is a process of positive metaphysical contemplation of the five aggregates through an attainment of ultimate reality, other scholars have tended to interpret *vipassanā* as a process

⁷⁹⁴ M.I.167.

⁷⁹⁵ Ibid.

of negative comprehension of the nature of the five aggregates. Among these scholars, Nyanatiloka states that *vipassanā* refers to a penetrative understanding of impermanence (*anicca*), unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*), and not-self (*anattā*) of all corporeal and mental phenomena of existence.⁷⁹⁶ Story agrees: “the object of which (*vipassanā*) is to gain direct intuitive perception of the nature of being through the contemplation of the process of arising and passing away.”⁷⁹⁷ In the same way, Anālayo claims the relationship between direct experience and wisdom (*paññā*): “Thus the direct experience of impermanence represents indeed the power aspect of meditative wisdom.”⁷⁹⁸ The process of negative comprehension seems to involve the meditative activity of awareness or mindfulness, as Burns says: “*vipassanā* means full awareness of the three characteristics of existence, i.e. impermanence, suffering (*dukkha*), and impersonality.”⁷⁹⁹ Furthermore, Rahula implies that *vipassanā* is an activity of awareness or mindfulness: “It (*vipassanā*) is an analytical method based on mindfulness, awareness, vigilance, observation.”⁸⁰⁰ These scholars’ opinion that the function of *vipassanā* is to realize the nature of the three characteristics of five aggregates is reasonable. However, a process of direct experience, awareness or mindfulness, through sense perception on which the meditative path of this realization is based, would not involve the deep concentration or mental vision which has already been discussed. The additional relevance of the relationship between the deep concentration and meditation on the phenomena of the five aggregates is shown in the *Samādhisutta*:

Monks, develop concentration. A monk, who is concentrated, monks, understands things as they really are. And what does he understand things as they really are? The arising and passing away of form, the arising and passing away of feeling, the arising and passing away of

⁷⁹⁶ Nyanatiloka, *The Buddha's Path to Deliverance in Its Threefold Division and Seven Stages of Purity*, op. cit., p. 74.

⁷⁹⁷ Francis Story, op. cit., p. 145.

⁷⁹⁸ Anālayo, op. cit., p. 103.

⁷⁹⁹ Douglas M. Burns, op. cit., p. 6.

⁸⁰⁰ Walpola Rahula, op. cit., p. 69.

perception, the arising and passing away of mental formation, the arising and passing away of consciousness.⁸⁰¹

Without a sufficient degree of concentration, it is impossible to achieve the functions of *vipassanā* characterized as seeing the five aggregates as they really are. Moreover, the Buddha regards the deep concentration in terms of ‘perfect concentration (*sammāsamādhi*)’ as the predominant factor of the intuition and vision as they really are (*yathābhūtañānadassana*): “When there is perfect concentration, then there is the cause for intuition and vision of things as they really are for one who has perfect concentration”⁸⁰² In the *Saccavibhaṅgasutta*, Sāriputta equates *sammāsamādhi* with the profound concentrative structure of the four *rūpajjhānas*.⁸⁰³ This implies that the meditator needs to strengthen the awareness and mindfulness into the profound level through the attainment of deep concentration in order to perform the process of *vipassanā*. Due to sense perception rather than to deep concentration, the negative contemplation of the three characteristics of the five aggregates seems to become dissociated from the function of *vipassanā*. Therefore, *vipassanā* is not a metaphysical process; instead, its function is based on penetrating the deep layers of consciousness and restructuring them into an increasingly profound state through the process of *samatha* until the darkness of ignorance (*avijjā*) is eradicated. Consequently, intrinsic or essential reality is revealed in order to positively contemplate the three characteristics of the five aggregates. During the process of *vipassanā*, the meditator continues to transcend the conventional self of the five aggregates through the attainment of the unconditioned nature, until the duality of self and not-self gradually dissolves into a final profound and complete unity of liberation from any self.

⁸⁰¹ S.III.13-14: “*samādhim bhikkhave bhāvētha samāhito bhikkhave bhikkhu yathābhūta pajānāti. Kiñca yathābhūtam pajānāti? Rūpassa samudayañca atthaṅgamañ ca vedanāya samudayañca atthaṅgamañ ca saññāya samudayañca atthaṅgamañ ca saṅkhārāṇaṃ samudayañca atthaṅgamañ ca viññāṇassa samudayañca atthaṅgamañ ca.*”

⁸⁰² A.III.20.

⁸⁰³ M.III.252.

The main concern raised by the above discussion is that of the principal roles of *vipassanā* in Buddhist spiritual discipline. The process of *vipassanā* involves the two overlapping profound spiritual achievements. Firstly, the main function of *vipassanā* is to cultivate *paññā*, which refers to ‘mental illumination,’ but not to mere intellectual understanding. Thus the development of mental illumination proceeds along with the process of *vipassanā*. Secondly, the intensification of mental illumination promotes the perfect realization of the deathless element or *Dhamma* whose characteristics of permanence, happiness and unconditioned nature are opposite to those of the five aggregates. This perfect realization is the predominant factor for the positive metaphysical contemplation of the empirical truth of the five aggregates as impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and not-self, without the analytical thinking of the five aggregates. Despite this, most scholars attempt to employ the superficial level of awareness and mindfulness through sense perception as a mean of metaphysical contemplation on the five aggregates. In fact, it is conceivable that one could achieve the knowledge of seeing the five aggregates as they really are by means of the profound level of awareness and mindfulness, which is relevant to the deep concentration. In conclusion, it can be said that *vipassanā* is not a negative metaphysical contemplation; instead, it functions as a positive metaphysical contemplation of the three characteristics of the five aggregates through the profound spiritual achievement of the intrinsic reality.

Conclusion

We have seen throughout this chapter the notion that the main characteristic of *vipassanā*, which is derived from investigating the definition of *vi* (excellence) and *passanā* (seeing), is the intense visual intuition rather than the process of sensual perception. The ability of excellent mental vision characteristic of *vipassanā* contributes to the development of the *jhānas* and to the profound state of the supernatural knowledges. *Vipassanā* can induce the path leading to

enlightenment, but the fact that *samatha* has the sole purpose of enhancing *vipassanā* points to an importance of their collaboration for the attainment of the ultimate goal. Although the interpretations of the interaction between *samatha* and *vipassanā* can be classified into three groups: independent, supportive or counteractive processes; they are, in fact, supportive of each other. Moreover, *samatha* is a significant factor for the commencement of *vipassanā*.

In order to begin the process of *vipassanā*, the meditator has to attain a certain state of *samatha*, being relevant to the mental quality, but not to the meditative subject. Once this is done, the degree of *samatha* needed for the arising of *vipassanā* must be determined. According to a phenomenological and psychological analysis, the mental unification needs to be fostered through momentary and access concentration until the beyond mode of the *jhānas* is reached. Subsequently, the meditator requires a very profound and subtle state of mental purification and unification from which the five instrumental factors of insight, vision (*cakkhu*), intuition (*ñāṇa*), wisdom (*paññā*), knowledge (*vijjā*) and light (*āloka*), can arise. This is neatly abstracted from the *Dhammacakkappavattanasutta* (*Setting in Motion the Wheel of Truth*), which emphasizes the importance of these instrumental factors for the complete realization of the four noble truths and thus for initiating the process of *vipassanā*.

In order to understand both *samatha* and *vipassanā*, an epistemological analysis of each instrumental factor has been discussed. Firstly, *cakkhu*, which arises in the process of *vipassanā*, involves the supernormal power of mental vision but not mere observational analysis. The development of *cakkhu* into the mode of *dhamma-cakkhu* is of considerable importance for the process of *vipassanā*. Secondly, *ñāṇa* is neither the intellectual process nor the impediment of

vipassanā. In fact, the ten kinds of *vipassanā-ñāṇa* and five kinds of *ñāṇa*, in the mode of *abhiññā*, serve as a basis for *vipassanā* and its culmination. Thirdly, *paññā* undertaken as part of the concentrative process rather than the rational process, has the sole purpose of enhancing *vipassanā*. Next, the Buddhist threefold *vijjā* is the visual intuition based on deep concentration, but is different from the one's own lineage and acuteness in the ritual contents of the three Vedas. Because of the accessibility of the threefold *vijjā* according to his will, the Buddha is omniscient. The threefold process of *vijjā* involves a recollection of the mental and physical aggregates experienced in one's own personal and all being continuum in former rebirths rather than a mere observation of the ceasing and arising of images. Lastly, *āloka* is not an impediment to *vipassanā*. Furthermore, *āloka* and *vipassanā* are supplementary and convergent with each other.

In order to reveal the intrinsic obstruction of *vipassanā*, we have found that all the ten mental qualities; illumination (*obhāsa*), intuition (*ñāṇa*), joy (*pīti*), rapture (*passaddhi*), happiness (*sukha*), resolution (*adhimokkha*), exertion (*paggāha*), assurance (*upaṭṭhāna*), equanimity (*upekkhā*), and attachment (*nikanti*), which are generally interpreted as the imperfections of insight (*vipassanūpakkilesa*), do not obstruct *vipassanā*. Rather, they support the development of *vipassanā*. Subsequently, during the manifestation of these mental qualities, the wrong view arising from greed (*lobha*) and delusion (*moha*) obstructs the progress of *vipassanā*. Moreover, while the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) block the beginning of *vipassanā*, the eleven defilements (*upakkilesa*) interfere with the process of *vipassanā*.

It has been demonstrated here that the crucial roles of *vipassanā* are firstly, that it cultivates profound mental illumination. Secondly, the intensification of mental illumination fulfils the perfect realization of the deathless element or

Dhamma whose characteristics- permanence, happiness and unconditioned nature- are opposite to those of the five aggregates. Because of this realization of the ultimate truth of the deathless element, the meditator can comparatively meditate on the three characteristics; impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and not-self, of the five aggregates without any analytical thinking.

This chapter has considered the definition of, etymology and function of *vipassanā*. It has been concluded that *vipassanā* is a profound mental vision, arising from the advanced level of *samatha*, and that is the main characteristic of *vipassanā*. The next chapter will deal with how the two factors of *samatha* and *vipassanā* are used together in meditation to realize *nibbāna*.

Chapter 4 Re-evaluation of the Relationship Between *Samatha* and *Vipassanā*

Introduction

The previous chapters covered a detailed discussion of the meditative practices of *samatha* and *vipassanā*. Their mutual interdependence and complementarity were discussed briefly. This chapter is an attempt at further clarifying the relationship between them, how to use them together in meditation, and their precise complementary roles on the Buddhist path to liberation.

This will cover five major areas: first the clarification of how *samatha* and *vipassanā* are cultivated in collaboration, second an evaluation of the threefold training and its development, third the relationship between each foundation of *satipaṭṭhāna* and the cooperation of *samatha* and *vipassanā*. The fourth area pertains to an examination of the attainment of cessation (*nirodhasamāpatti*) in terms of its psychological aspects and its development, and the last area deals with the investigation of both types of freedom.

The first area is a discussion of whether or not *samatha* proceeds along with *vipassanā* in the entire enlightenment path. This aspect is based on the cooperation between *samatha* and *vipassanā* in relation to two philosophical aspects, their corresponding characteristics and their counterbalancing characteristics. Then the cognitive process of *vipassanā* will be discussed and compared with that of *samatha*.

The second area presents an evaluation of the threefold training in the following sequence: first an investigation of the dependent characteristics of the

threefold training, next a clarification of their progressive characteristics and finally an examination of the term ‘*vipassanājhāna*.’⁸⁰⁴

Regarding the third area, this research brings to light several significant aspects of the relationship between *satipaṭṭhāna* and the twofold meditation, *samatha* and *vipassanā*. Firstly, the question of whether or not the serene and pure state of the *jhānas* is necessary for the commencement of *satipaṭṭhāna* practice will be answered. Then the examination of the contemplation of body in body (*kāye kāyānupassī*) will proceed in relation to three steps: the examination of the phrase ‘*kāye kāyānupassī*,’ the investigation of the contemplation of inspiration and evaluating the contemplation of the nature of arising and passing away in the body. Next, the psychological state needed for the contemplation of body in body of *satipaṭṭhāna* practice will be determined. Lastly the contemplation of the other three foundations (feeling, mind and *dhamma*) will be investigated through a consideration of their basic mental qualities.

The fourth area begins with the reconciliation of two conflicting ideas. They are, the absence of the mental activities in the ninth *jhāna* which is the attainment of cessation (*nirodhasamāpatti*), and the Buddha’s announcement that the happiness of entering and abiding in the cessation of perception and feeling (*saññāvedayitanirodha*) is more excellent than the happiness of any earlier *jhāna* attainment.⁸⁰⁵ Subsequently, the issue of whether or not *vipassanā* is necessary to cooperate with *samatha* for the development of the attainment of cessation (*nirodhasamāpatti*) will be clarified.

The last area will first deal with a discussion of whether ignorance or craving is the predominant factor to be destroyed in the enlightenment path. Next it will

⁸⁰⁴ *Vipassanājhāna* refers to the cooperation between *samatha* and *vipassanā*.

⁸⁰⁵ M.I.398-400.

present an evaluation of the culminating result of both types of freedom, especially the freedom of mind (*cetovimutti*).

The Relationship between *Samatha* and *Vipassanā*

In the previous chapter, we concluded that *samatha* is a significant prerequisite for the commencement of *vipassanā* and the Buddhist ultimate goal. This section aims to clarify the issue of whether or not *samatha* needs to be strengthened during the process of *vipassanā*. This section will argue that the process of *samatha* is not only a fundamental stage of *vipassanā*, but also the concomitant development process of *vipassanā*. This section will portray the relationship between *samatha* and *vipassanā* in reference to two issues; firstly, whether or not *samatha* proceeds along with *vipassanā* and secondly, which type of the psychological process is operating in *vipassanā*.

In order to fulfil Buddhist liberation, it is essential that *samatha* is the basis of *vipassanā* and also that it proceeds alongside *vipassanā* throughout the contemplative process. To explain the meditative method of enlightenment, the *Yuganaddhasutta*⁸⁰⁶ illustrates the relation between *samatha* and *vipassanā*. According to Venerable Ānanda, four factors are relevant and these are listed below.

1. “The method of *vipassanā* development preceded by *samatha* induces the termination of fetters (*saṃyojana*) and proclivities (*anusaya*).”
2. “The method of *samatha* development preceded by *vipassanā* induces the termination of fetters (*saṃyojana*) and proclivities (*anusaya*).”
3. “The method of the coupled development of *samatha* and *vipassanā* induces the termination of fetters (*saṃyojana*) and proclivities (*anusaya*).”

⁸⁰⁶ A.II.156-157.

4. “The method of thought (*citta*) fixing, settling down and composing inside induces the termination of fetters (*saṃyojana*) and proclivities (*anusaya*).”

The first three methods clearly show the mutual relation between *samatha* and *vipassanā* processes. *Samatha* is not only an early fundamental stage of the *vipassanā* process but also constantly works alongside *vipassanā* to bring about the aim of that process.

In order to show that *samatha* proceeds along with *vipassanā*, it is also useful to refer to the scholars that support this view. These scholars fall into two different groups: one group that speaks of the correspondent characteristics of *samatha* and *vipassanā*, and a second group that considers the counterbalancing characteristics of these processes. For the sake of clarity, this work will refer to the first group as ‘correspondent yoking’ and the second group as ‘counterbalancing yoking’ and will discuss the two groups in this order.

In the view of the correspondent yoking group, the psychological processes of *samatha* and *vipassanā* are related. McDonald points to the complementary characteristics of *samatha* and *vipassanā*:

This method of combining the two kinds of meditation causes the mind literally to become one with the object of meditation. The stronger our concentration, the deeper our insight will be.⁸⁰⁷

Klostermaier echoes this contention: “...for some people *samatha* comes first, to be complemented by *vipassanā*, whereas with others *vipassanā* comes first, to be complemented by *samatha*.”⁸⁰⁸ Similarly, Beyer states that *samatha* and *vipassanā* are coordinated techniques of a single process.⁸⁰⁹ He further explains their yoking exercise:

⁸⁰⁷ Kathleen McDonald, "Tibetan Buddhist Meditation," in *Radiant Mind Essential Buddhist Teachings and Texts*, ed. Jean Smith (New York: Berkley Publishing Group, 1999), pp. 157-162, p. 162.

⁸⁰⁸ Klaus K. Klostermaier, *Buddhism; a Short Introduction* (England: Oneworld Publication, 1999), p. 134.

⁸⁰⁹ Stephan V. Beyer, op. cit., p. 89.

... *calm* is a process of enstatic withdrawal from sensory experience, while *insight* is an ecstatic penetration into the true nature of events. The first seems based on the premise that salvation is transcendent and apart from the world, while the second seems to assert the immanence of enlightenment within the world.⁸¹⁰

From this we can see that *samatha* and *vipassanā* reinforce each other and combine into an effective process for achieving the Buddhist enlightenment. Dhammavuddho agrees with this description of the correspondence between *samatha* and *vipassanā*, but appears to switch over their function in relation to Beyer's statement: "In other words, *samatha* meditation pulls one towards *nibbāna*, in contrast to *vipassanā* meditation, which pushes one away from the world."⁸¹¹ Regarding the functions of both processes, these themes may result from the different perspectives of the cooperation between *samatha* and *vipassanā*. In fact, both perspectives of pushing away from the world and pulling toward *nibbāna* represent the same path of enlightenment. This sentiment is illustrated in a way comparable to the half glass of water. The amount of water is illustrated through saying either 'half full' or 'half empty.' Similarly, *vipassanā* involves the process of mental vision which is based on *samatha*. Both *vipassanā* and *samatha* can be perceived to be different aspects of a single process, just as half a glass of water can be perceived differently. So both *samatha* and *vipassanā* perform the process of withdrawal from the world and pulling toward *nibbāna*. Moreover, *samatha* has to progress along with *vipassanā* into the final state of liberation as, Anālayo writes:

A practitioner might develop one or the other aspect to a higher degree at different times, but in the final stages of practice both calm and insight need to be combined in order to reach the final aim-full awakening—the destruction of both passion and ignorance.⁸¹²

⁸¹⁰ Ibid., p. 81.

⁸¹¹ Venerable Dhammavuddho, op. cit., p. 77.

⁸¹² Anālayo, op. cit., p. 91.

Further evidence in support of the correspondent yoking group is found in the *Kimsukopamasutta*⁸¹³ in which the Buddha illustrates their cooperation with the help of a parable. In this parable, a swift pair of messengers presents a message, in accordance with reality, to the lord of the city. This swift pair of messengers means *samatha* and *vipassanā*, a message in accordance with reality means *nibbāna* and lord of the city is a designation for consciousness. This parable goes to show that *samatha* and *vipassanā* operate as a mutual psychological support for the ultimate reality.

The view of correspondent yoking group is further clarified through the simplification of the process of walking. *Samatha* is like the left foot, *vipassanā* like the right foot – one can only move one foot forward by relying on the other. It is evident that the meditator must perform the synthesis of *samatha* and *vipassanā* on condition that each process supports the other in approaching the ultimate goal.

A slightly different and rather unsuitable viewpoint on the issue of correspondent yoking is expressed by Gimello; he points to the uncertainty of how long *samatha* needs to be developed before being directed into *vipassanā*.⁸¹⁴ The proportion of *samatha* and *vipassanā* depends on the individual personality of the meditator. He points out that *samatha* is limited and the progression of *vipassanā* entirely continues because he interprets *vipassanā* as analytically reviewing the meaning of the fundamental teaching of Buddhism.

The second group of scholars, the counterbalancing yoking group, points to the different psychological processes of *samatha* and *vipassanā*. Piyadassi states

⁸¹³ S.IV.194-195.

⁸¹⁴ Robert M Gimello, op. cit., p. 185.

that *samatha* and *vipassanā* progress simultaneously because of their opposite qualities: “Both (*samatha* and *vipassanā*) gain uniformity of force. Through the overdoing of analysis there can be flurry. And indolence creeps in through too much tranquillity.”⁸¹⁵ Ruegg agrees with Piyadassi about the excessive conditions of both processes and concludes: “when *samatha* and *vipassanā* are on the contrary in balance, the mind is in equilibrium.”⁸¹⁶

Although the view of the counterbalancing yoking group is correct in its support for the cooperation of *samatha* and *vipassanā*, the way it indicates the opposite characteristics of these processes is problematic. According to the *Samādhībhāvanāsutta*, the idea of the opposite characteristics of *samatha* and *vipassanā* is unreasonable:

Monks, how does concentrative meditation, when developed and made much of, conduces to gaining intuition and vision?

Here, Monks, monk pays attention to the perception of light, he remains his mind firm in the perception of daylight, by night as by day, by day as by night. In this way, with clear and unclouded mind, he develops the mind to brilliance.⁸¹⁷

In other words, when concentration has been developed, it becomes possible to advance to the process of mental vision, that of *vipassanā*. In addition, we see that the quality of *samatha* is consistent with the process of *vipassanā* because to gain insight into the depths of our reality requires the basis of the calmed mind as the Buddha says; “Monks, develop concentration. A monk, who is concentrated, Monks, understands things as they really are.”⁸¹⁸ Therefore, *samatha* techniques help develop qualities useful in *vipassanā* meditation.

To summarize the argument so far, according to the two yoking groups, *samatha* and *vipassanā* proceed simultaneously; however, the correspondent

⁸¹⁵ Thera Piyadassi, *The Buddha's Ancient Path*, op. cit., p. 204.

⁸¹⁶ David Seyfort Ruegg, op. cit., p. 183.

⁸¹⁷ A.II.45.

⁸¹⁸ S.IV.80.

yoking group is more plausible than the other group because it reveals how the characteristics of the two processes are identical. Unlike the argument of the two yoking groups, some scholars believe that *vipassanā* leads exclusively to enlightenment. For example, Mererk regards *samatha* as a mere foundation of *vipassanā*: “This is to say that concentration is a preparatory stage which sets the mind ready for the other form of meditation, i.e., *vipassanā* or insight.”⁸¹⁹ Nārada supports this sentiment: “Both discipline and concentration are helpful to clear the path of its obstacles but it is insight (*vipassanā*) alone which enable one to see things as they truly are, and consequently reach the ultimate goal”⁸²⁰ Nyanatiloka agrees: “Concentration, in fact, forms the necessary foundation and preliminary condition for insight by freeing the mind from impurities and mental obstacles.”⁸²¹ Moreover, Janakābhivamsa states his opinion in regard to the distinction between *samatha* and right understanding: “...it (*samatha*) does not enable us to rightly understand the mental and physical phenomena as they really are.”⁸²² His claim appears to disagree with the association between *sammāsamādhi* (perfect concentration) and *sammādiṭṭhi* (perfect view) as shown in the *Mahācattārīsakasutta*:

Now what, monks, is noble perfect concentration with its means and requisite conditions? Monks, one-pointedness of mind, equipped with these seven factors -- perfect view,..., perfect mindfulness -- is called noble perfect concentration with its means and requisite conditions.⁸²³

However, further evidence of the dual development of *samatha* and *vipassanā*, and hence the yoking groups’ interpretation most likely to be correct, is found in the *Mahāvaccasutta*,⁸²⁴ where the Buddha proclaims the synthesis of *samatha* and *vipassanā* processes as necessary for the fulfilment of six supernatural knowledges (*abhiññā*). According to the commentaries on the

⁸¹⁹ Phramaha Prayoon Mererk, op. cit., p. 121.

⁸²⁰ Nārada, *Buddhism in a Nutshell*, op. cit., p. 54.

⁸²¹ Nyanatiloka, *The Buddha's Path to Deliverance in Its Threefold Division and Seven Stages of Purity*, op. cit., p. 74.

⁸²² Sayadaw U Janakabhivamsa, op. cit., p. 19.

⁸²³ M.III.71.

⁸²⁴ M.I.494-496.

Mahāvaccasutta, Buddhaghosa interprets both processes and the six *abhiññās* as two separate sets of meditative practices leading to two separate goals. He comments explicitly that *samatha* accomplishes the first five *abhiññās*, whereas *vipassanā* fulfils the last *abhiññā* which destroys all of the cankers.⁸²⁵ This approach, which distinguishes *vipassanā* from *samatha*, is in contrast to the *Samathasutta* where the Buddha advises monks to put effort into both the *samatha* and *vipassanā* processes:

...a monk while considering knows thus: ‘I have gained the tranquillity of heart within oneself, but have not gained insight into dhamma through higher wisdom.’ Then, Monks, he should apply himself to establish the tranquillity of heart within oneself and to insight into dhamma through higher wisdom.
 ...a monk while considering knows thus: ‘I have gained insight into dhamma through higher wisdom, but have not gained the tranquillity of heart within oneself.’ Then, Monks, he should apply himself to establish insight into dhamma through higher wisdom and to the tranquillity of heart within oneself.⁸²⁶

This passage leaves no doubt in the fact that a more reinforced *vipassanā* requires the more purified and unified mental state arising from the progress of *samatha*. Stcherbatsky further explains the significance of the cultivation of *samatha* along the path of enlightenment in order to destroy a particular part of defilement.⁸²⁷ Therefore, it is reasonable to consider *samatha* as the stepping stone of *vipassanā*, but *samatha* must be further developed in order to achieve Buddhist liberation as the Buddha’s announcement; “Perfect concentration, Ānanda, when developed and made much of, has as its final goal the removal of desire, the removal of anger, the removal of delusion.”⁸²⁸

The connotation of *vipassanā* as a process of tranquillity points to the need to combine *vipassanā* with *samatha* along the path of enlightenment. Indeed, the process of *samatha* contributes to the progress of inner stillness and integration.

⁸²⁵ Ps.III.202.

⁸²⁶ A.V.99.

⁸²⁷ F. I. Stcherbatsky, *The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa* (Leningrad: Pub.Office of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR), 1927, p. 10.

⁸²⁸ S.V.5-6.

In this way, the experience of deep concentration fulfils a significant role in strengthening the ability of mental vision during the advanced stages of *vipassanā*. Potentially, *samatha* and *vipassanā* could be conceived as identical cognitive processes applied to different aspects. According to the *Rahogatasutta*, the progress of meditative practice relies on the gradual ceasing of activities (*sāṅkhāra*) such as speech, thought, breathing and apparently perception and feeling for the fulfilment of the soteriological goal.⁸²⁹ This means that the consistency between *samatha* and *vipassanā* is essential to the psychological process of establishing tranquillity.

However, most scholars have tended to distinguish *vipassanā* from the concentrative process. These scholars fall into two groups: one group that considers the psychological process of *vipassanā* as the observational process of mindfulness, and a second group that considers it an intellectual process. In the presentation of the issue referring to the first group, Venerable Sujiva regards *vipassanā* as the penetrative observation to realize the true nature of things as they really are.⁸³⁰ He further offers mindfulness (*sati*) as the main factor of *vipassanā*.⁸³¹ This opinion that mindfulness is the main function of *vipassanā* seems to be generally accepted. In *Mindfulness in Plain English*, Gunaratana also writes: “Mindfulness is the centre of *vipassanā* meditation and the key to the whole process. It is both the goal of this meditation and the means to that end.”⁸³² In regard to the development of *vipassanā*, he not only promotes mindfulness (*sati*), but also disregards *samatha*. In the publication entitled *A Critical Analysis of the Jhānas*, he argues that:

Insight (*vipassanā*) cannot be practiced while absorbed in *jhāna*, since insight-meditation requires analysis, investigation, and observation, all

⁸²⁹ S.IV.217-218.

⁸³⁰ Venerable Sujiva, *Essentials of Insight Meditation Practice*, 1 ed. (Selangor, Malaysia: Buddhist Wisdom Centre, 2000), p. 10.

⁸³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

⁸³² Henepola Gunaratana, *Mindfulness in Plain English*, op. cit., p. 151.

of which are impossible when the thought faculty is immersed in one-pointed absorption.⁸³³

Ruberu agrees with these scholars about the importance of mindfulness: “the key to insight or *vipassanā* is the development of mindfulness.”⁸³⁴ However, he still separates *vipassanā* from *samatha*: “Insight meditation (*paññā bhāvanā*), practiced whichever way, performs a totally different and a much more valuable task than mere tranquillity or calm (*samatha*).”⁸³⁵

We can see that the interpretation of the psychological process of *vipassanā* as an observational process leads to an incorrect practice of distinguishing *vipassanā* from *samatha*. It is acceptable to suggest that mindfulness is a significant factor in the practice of *vipassanā*. Nonetheless, the idea that there is no harmonious interactivity between mindfulness and *samatha* can be rejected. Anālayo provides the reason for the association between the two processes:

Although absorption abilities are not directly mentioned in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, the general picture provided by the discourses suggests that the ability to attain at least the first absorption is required for the higher two stages of awakening.⁸³⁶

His explanation coincides with the *Anupadasutta*,⁸³⁷ where the Buddha states that the continuous presence of a well-established mindfulness (*sati*) is necessary for the development of *samatha* from the first *jhāna* up to the third *arūpajjhāna*.⁸³⁸ Of further relevance to the association between mindfulness and *samatha* is a story in the *Bhikkhunupassayasutta*.⁸³⁹ In the discourse, when the meditator is distracted while practicing *satipaṭṭhāna*, the Buddha advises him to develop concentration on some pleasurable object. The meditator enhances

⁸³³ Henepola Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., p. 170.

⁸³⁴ Jayantha Ruberu, op. cit., p. 279.

⁸³⁵ Ibid., p. 271.

⁸³⁶ Anālayo, op. cit., p. 82.

⁸³⁷ M.III.25-28.

⁸³⁸ The Buddha does not state the presence of mindfulness in the fourth *arūpajjhāna* explicitly, still the contents of this discourse indicate its presence there.

⁸³⁹ S.V.155-156.

satipaṭṭhāna practice through the cultivation of concentration: thus, mindfulness is strengthened as a consequence of the arising of joy and happiness. According to the *Bhikkhunupassayasutta*, it is clear that the fulfilment of *satipaṭṭhāna* springs up in the realm of concentration. The relationship between *satipaṭṭhāna* and concentration in the discourse reflects that although mindfulness and *samatha* may be different at a superficial level, they must be merged into a psychological process of calmness in the profound state. Therefore, according to the interpretation of *vipassanā* as the penetrative observation of mindfulness, it is found that *vipassanā* is still the same psychological process as *samatha*, which is a process of tranquillity.

After presenting the evidence for the first group and evaluating it, the view of the second group, which is the interpretation of the psychological process of *vipassanā* as an intellectual process, will be evaluated consequently. Griffiths interprets *vipassanā* as a sensual, cognitive and intellectual process and then considers it as the opposite process of *samatha*.⁸⁴⁰ Gimello agrees with Griffiths in regard to the analytical process of *vipassanā*, but disagrees in regard to its differences from *samatha*.⁸⁴¹ Kamalashila shares this theme of *vipassanā* as an analytical process: “We use our thoughts in *vipassanā* practice.”⁸⁴² Consequently, he establishes the boundary between *samatha* and *vipassanā* up to the first *jhāna*, which comprises the factors of applied and sustained thought. Their opinions show that the analytical process of *vipassanā* influences the limitation of mental unification of *samatha*. Incidentally, Sujato speaks of *vipassanā* as an analytical process and how it requires the development of *samatha* in a balanced way to achieve liberation.⁸⁴³ If *vipassanā* is an analytical or intellectual process, there should be a reciprocal action between the rational

⁸⁴⁰ Paul Griffiths, "Concentration or Insight: The Problematic of Theravada Buddhist Meditation-Theory," op. cit., p. 614.

⁸⁴¹ Robert M Gimello, op. cit., p. 184.

⁸⁴² Kamalashila, op. cit., p. 89.

⁸⁴³ Sujato, *A Swift Pair of Messengers*, op. cit., pp. 27-28.

thinking of *vipassanā* and tranquillity process of *samatha*. Perhaps there is, but only in the earliest phrase of the process, where rational understanding is involved and initiates the path.

Nevertheless, according to the idea of these scholars, the interpretation of *vipassanā* as an intellectual process seems to contradict the characteristics of the ultimate reality as being beyond dialectic, as in the *Pāsarāsisutta*.

Monks, it occurred to me: “This thing, attained by me, is profound, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, sublime, unattainable by mere reasoning, subtle, to be experienced by the wise.”⁸⁴⁴

This passage clarifies the process of the penetrative realization of truth as subtle and beyond rationality. The term ‘hard to see’ interprets the comprehensible consciousness of ultimate reality as a process of visual intuition but not through an analytical process. The Buddha, furthermore, disregards some recluses or Brahmins who are addicted to logic and reasoning and who reach the eternal conclusion through rational thinking.

Here, Monks, a certain recluse or Brāhmin is logician and examiner. Hammering it out by logic, following his own line of inquiry as it occurs to him, he said this: “The self and the world are eternal, barren; standing like mountain peaks, standing like pillars.”⁸⁴⁵

It is notable that the analytical reasoning is acquired on the beginning of spiritual path and needs to be abandoned for progress into the profound spiritual attainment. This means of spiritual progress is confirmed in the *Kevaṭṭasutta*. The Buddha describes the pattern of wonderful instruction: “Consider in this way, do not consider in that, pay attention to this way, not that way, give up

⁸⁴⁴ M.I.167: “*Tassa mayhaṃ bhikkhave etad-ahosi: Adhigato kho me ayam dhammo gambhīro duddaso duranubodho santo paṇīto atakkāvacaro nipuṇo paṇḍitavedanīyo.*”

⁸⁴⁵ D.I.16: “*Idha bhikkhave ekacco samaṇo vā brāhmaṇo vā takkī hoti vīmaṇsī so takka-pariyāhataṃ vīmaṇsānucaritaṃ sayam-paṭibhānaṃ evam āha: ‘sassato attā ca loko ca vaṅgho kūṭaṭṭho esikaṭṭhāyīṭṭhito.*”

that, enter and remain in this.”⁸⁴⁶ In this meditation guide, the analytical thinking has a practical relevance for the beginning of the meditative process, whereas the penetration of mind into *dhamma* is attained at the soteriologically advanced stages along the path of meditation practice. The higher course of meditation practice does not rely on the activity of mind, but is related to the tranquilized mind in order to attain the direct knowledge. In the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha announces the harmonious uniformity between *paññā* and *jhānas*: “There is no *jhāna* for one who is without wisdom. There is no wisdom for one who does not attain *jhāna*.”⁸⁴⁷ Therefore, *vipassanā* proceeds along with the tranquillity process in the same manner as the temperature and illumination of a candle flame. The greater temperature perceived correlates with the increased number of lumens. *Vipassanā* and *samatha* are the two aspects of the one single psychological process of calmness.

The above discussion has shown that *samatha* must proceed along with *vipassanā*, through to the final stage of liberation. This is because, the stronger one’s concentration is, the deeper one’s insight will be. Both *samatha* and *vipassanā* reinforce each other along the enlightenment path because their characteristics are correspondent but not counterbalancing. After interpreting *vipassanā* as mindfulness, some scholars might distinguish *vipassanā* from *samatha*. Despite this, mindfulness and *samatha*, which are different at a superficial level, must be merged into a psychological process of calmness found in the more profound state. Moreover *vipassanā* is not an analytical process. In fact it is the same psychological process as *samatha*, which is a tranquillity process. The cooperation of both processes will be clarified through the study of the mutual relation among the three trainings.

⁸⁴⁶ D.I.214: “*evaṃ vitakketha mā evaṃ vitakkayittha, evaṃ manasikarotha mā evaṃ manasākattha, idaṃ pajahatha idaṃ upasampajja viharathāti.*”

⁸⁴⁷ Dh.p.372.

The Threefold Training

This twofold process of meditation, involving both *samatha* and *vipassanā*, is rarely found as a direct teaching of the Buddha as recorded in the *Tipiṭaka*. Within the framework of the Buddha's teachings, the twofold meditation is only one doctrine among many and is in relationship with the others. The development of *samatha* and *vipassanā* is associated with the threefold training (*sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*), which signifies the relation between *samatha* and *samādhi* and between *vipassanā* and *paññā*.

These two things, monks, are partaking of knowledge. What two? tranquillity and insight. Monks, if tranquillity is developed, what profit does it receive? The mind becomes developed. If mind is developed, what profit does it receive? All desire is abandoned. Monks, if insight is developed, what profit does it receive? Wisdom becomes developed. If wisdom is developed, what profit does it receive? All ignorance is abandoned.⁸⁴⁸

An advance in the threefold training coincides with progress in the twofold meditation process and encourages the comprehension of how *samatha* and *vipassanā* collaborate. An evaluation of the threefold training in relation to the twofold meditation reveals that the combined processes of *samatha* and *vipassanā*, which result in '*vipassanājhāna*,' arise from the inter-related and spiral development of the threefold training. This evaluation will continue in accordance with the following sequence: this section will discuss first the relation between the elements of the threefold training, next the clarification of its particular development and lastly the examination of the term '*vipassanājhāna*.'

The examination of the relationship between the components of the threefold training reveals that all of them are significant for mental development and for

⁸⁴⁸ A.I.61: "Dve me bhikkhave dhammā vijjābhāgiyā. Katame dve? Samatho ca vipassanā ca. Samatho bhikkhave bhāvito kaṃ atthaṃ anubhoti? Cittaṃ bhāvīyati. Cittaṃ bhāvitaṃ kaṃ atthaṃ anubhoti? Yo rāgo so pahīyati. Vipassanā bhikkhave bhāvitaṃ kaṃ atthaṃ anubhoti? Paññā bhāvīyati. Paññā bhāvitaṃ kaṃ atthaṃ anubhoti? Yā avijjā sā pahīyati."

both *samatha* and *vipassanā*. Referring to the relation of the threefold training; the Buddha appears to have constructed gradations of the relative progress in the threefold training in the *Mahāparinibbānasutta*.

Concentration, when fully developed by virtue, brings great fruit and profit. Wisdom, when fully developed by concentration, brings great fruit and profit.⁸⁴⁹

This passage illustrates a strong connection among *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* and the stepwise progression from *sīla* to *samādhi* and from *samādhi* to *paññā*. Kheminda agrees with this particular order of the threefold training: “virtue is the necessary condition for concentration ... concentration is the necessary condition for wisdom”⁸⁵⁰ Piyadassi also points to their collaboration: “virtue, concentration and wisdom are not isolated qualities but integral parts of the noble eightfold path.”⁸⁵¹ This opinion is justifiable. Even though *paññā* is the most significant factor for Buddhist liberation, it requires the prerequisite of physical, verbal and mental purification, which arises from virtue and concentration.

In contrast, some scholars have significantly different but questionable understandings of the relation between the parts of the threefold training. For instance, in spite of the fact that the Buddha comments on the necessity of *samādhi* for *paññā* development, Keown collapses the threefold training into a binary one of *sīla* and *paññā*.⁸⁵² He regards *samādhi* as a mere technique for the cultivation of the other mode of trainings. His disregard for *samādhi* implies an incomplete path of enlightenment as compared to the *Rathavinītasutta*. In the discourse, Puṇṇa compares a series of the seven stages of purification to a series of relay of chariots connecting two locations.⁸⁵³ In this sequence, *samādhi*, in the form of purification of mind, plays the crucial role of the

⁸⁴⁹ D.II.84.

⁸⁵⁰ Kheminda Thera, *The Way of Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., p. 11.

⁸⁵¹ Piyadassi, *The Spectrum of Buddhism : Writings of Piyadassi* (Staten Island, N.Y.: J. de Silva, 1991), p. 206.

⁸⁵² Damien Keown, op. cit., p. 38.

⁸⁵³ M.I.149-150.

second stage. Keown's marginalization of *samādhi* appears to obstruct the path of purification. Another problem with Keown's interpretation of *samādhi* is found in the *Dutiyasikkhāsutta*,⁸⁵⁴ where the Buddha regards the *arahant* (one who is liberated) as one who perfectly accomplishes the completeness of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. It is most likely that, to achieve full awakening, the meditator must develop the entire process of the threefold training.

While Keown neglects the training of *samādhi*, Griffiths rejects the important interconnection between the elements of the threefold training by marginalizing *sīla* in relation to *samādhi*: "Here the preliminary practice of correct morality is not significant and the soteriological goal aimed at is quite different."⁸⁵⁵ Yet, *sīla* and *samādhi* lead to different goals, one might ask why the Buddha regards *samādhi* as the result of *sīla*. In the *Ānisaṃsavagga*, the Buddha states that the correct practice of *sīla* is the preliminary condition necessary for attaining *samādhi*.⁸⁵⁶ Moreover, Sayadaw regards *sīla* as the prerequisite for the development of both *samatha* and *vipassanā*.⁸⁵⁷

In addition to marginalizing *sīla*, Griffiths also attempts to break the substantial relationship between *samādhi* and *paññā*. As he writes: "we find the distinction between concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*) made also at many points in the canon."⁸⁵⁸ He then interprets *samādhi* as a culminating process in the complete cessation of sensation, cognition and intellection, and *paññā* as the development of sensation, cognition and intellection.⁸⁵⁹

⁸⁵⁴ A.I.234.

⁸⁵⁵ Paul J. Griffiths, "Indian Buddhist Meditation-Theory : History, Development and Systematization" op. cit., p. 76.

⁸⁵⁶ A.V.1-2.

⁸⁵⁷ Venerable Ledi Sayadaw, op. cit., p. 21.

⁸⁵⁸ Paul Griffiths, "Concentration or Insight: The Problematic of Theravada Buddhist Meditation-Theory," op. cit., p. 606.

⁸⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 614.

Nonetheless, Griffiths' opinion that *samādhi* and *paññā* involve opposite qualities seems to cause a psychological problem. For instance, the Buddha says upon emerging from deep concentration that the mind is steady and prepared for the penetrative observation of truth. As the Buddha states: "Monks, develop concentration. A monk, who is concentrated, monks, understands things as they really are."⁸⁶⁰ Besides this, according to Nāṇasampanno, it is also possible to develop *samādhi* through *paññā*: "People of this type must therefore train the *citta* (mind) to attain *samādhi* by using wisdom, which may be called 'wisdom develops *samādhi*.'⁸⁶¹ His statement proposes precisely the reverse sequence to the stages of purification, where purification of the mind precedes purification of view. In fact, they, as well as *virīya*, *sati* and *saddhā*, are the essential factors for mental development; as Conze says: "Spiritual progress depends on the emergence of five cardinal virtues - faith, vigour, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom."⁸⁶² Janakābhivamsa also regards the collaboration of the five mental faculties as essential for mental development: "For meditation, these five mental faculties must be strong, powerful and balanced."⁸⁶³ It can therefore be suggested that the two overlapping themes, *samādhi* and *paññā*, merge and supplement each other. Therefore, the threefold training, *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*, are interdependent factors; each enhances and supports the other. To attain the fully awakened state, the meditator must develop all three factors until they have enough force to calm the mind and lead to cooperation between *samatha* and *vipassanā*.

The examination of the second aspect of the process examined in this section- the particular development of the components of the threefold training- shows that the threefold training must be particularly developed in concert in a spiral

⁸⁶⁰ S.IV.80.

⁸⁶¹ Acariya Maha Boowa Nanasampanno, op. cit., p. 24.

⁸⁶² Edward Conze, op. cit., p. 1.

⁸⁶³ Sayadaw U Janakabhivamsa, op. cit., p. 97.

fashion and so the twofold meditation. Before considering this particular development, some important remarks need to be made concerning the relationship among the twofold meditation, the threefold training and the noble eightfold path. The *Cūlavedallasutta*⁸⁶⁴ identifies the collaboration of all factors of the noble eightfold path as concomitant of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*. This seems based on the fact that right view and right thought being related to *paññā*. Right speech, right action and right mode of livelihood are related to *sīla*. Right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration are, in turn, related to *samādhi*. In the *Kimśukopamasutta*,⁸⁶⁵ the Buddha illustrates the correlation between the two principle meditation practices (*samatha* and *vipassanā*) with the threefold training in terms of the noble eightfold path by means of a simile concerning a pair of swift messengers. At a border-town, two swift messengers deliver unto the lord a message of truth, and then return by the same road. In this simile, *samatha* and *vipassanā* are the two messengers, *nibbāna* is the message of truth, and the noble eightfold path is the road by which the messengers arrive. The travelling of the messengers along the road signifies the same pattern of development between the twofold meditation and the noble eightfold path.

As the collaboration of the three discourses has now been asserted, it is time to further discuss the particular development of the three discourses. The threefold training appears to be arranged into various degrees. For example, the Buddha often suggests that lay people establish the threefold training by regarding it as the body (*khandha*).⁸⁶⁶ For the priests, he points to the implementation of the threefold training as the business of the recluse (*samaṇa*) in terms of the training in the higher virtue (*adhisīla*), higher mind (*adhicitta*) and higher wisdom (*adhipaññā*).⁸⁶⁷ Some scholars agree that *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* sustain each other by twisting together into one composition much like the

⁸⁶⁴ M.I.301.

⁸⁶⁵ S.IV.194-195.

⁸⁶⁶ D.I.206.

⁸⁶⁷ A.I.229.

three strands of a rope. For example, Harvey speaks of the development of the threefold training from the beginning all the way to the liberated state.

With each more refined development of the virtue-meditation-wisdom sequence, the path spirals up to a higher level, until the crucial transition of stream-entry is reached. The holy path then spirals up to Arahatship.⁸⁶⁸

This image of the spiralling development of the threefold training seems appropriate for representing the varying degrees; the three elements pass through, at every stage of the path toward enlightenment. Harvey classifies the levels of the threefold training in relation to the eightfold path as the ordinary level and the transcendent or holy levels.⁸⁶⁹ The form of the development should be that the wisdom of a lower level advances into the virtue of a higher level. Panth describes the process in the same way: “*Vipassanā* meditator practices *sīla* to strengthen and develop *samādhi* and *paññā*. He practices *samādhi* to strengthen *sīla* and *paññā* and practices *paññā* to strengthen *sīla* and *samādhi*.”⁸⁷⁰

Indeed, the analytical and psychological development of the threefold training reveals that accomplishments in one area will prove beneficial to the other related areas, which in turn will facilitate further accomplishments of the whole. Govinda agrees with this view through his explanation of the noble eightfold path:

Thus right concentration, again, becomes the basis of right views, right aspirations, and other steps of the noble eightfold path, which is now experienced on a higher level, and this spiral-like progression is continued until complete liberation is attained.⁸⁷¹

Further comparison of the development of the threefold training appears in *The Spectrum of Buddhism*. Piyadassi compares it with a tripod:

⁸⁶⁸ Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism : Teachings, History, and Practices* (Cambridge [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 70-71.

⁸⁶⁹ Peter Harvey, op. cit., p. 68.

⁸⁷⁰ Ravindra Panth, op. cit., p. 52.

⁸⁷¹ Govinda, *The Psychological Attitude of Early Buddhist Philosophy and Its Systematic Representation According to Abhidhamma Tradition* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1961), pp. 69-70.

None of them, however, is an end in itself; each is a means to an end. One cannot function independently of the others. As in the case of a tripod, which falls to the ground if even a single leg gives way, so here, one cannot function without the support of the others.⁸⁷²

Therefore, the progress through the three trainings is intended to be interdependent rather than linear. This progressive characteristic of the three trainings connotes the development of *samatha* and *vipassanā* processes as interdependent and interrelated characteristic. Strengthening any process helps to strengthen the other process.

However, some scholars have tended to ignore the spiral development of the three trainings through proposing the linear practice of the three trainings. For instance Goenka writes: “morality and concentration are valuable, but their real purpose is to lead to wisdom.”⁸⁷³ Ruberu agrees with Goenka about the linear development of the three trainings: “Being the final stage of the path, it is wisdom (*paññā*) that opens the door to *nibbāna*.”⁸⁷⁴ Nonetheless, the theme of linear practice seems to contradict the assertion of various degrees of the threefold training. This theme implies that *samatha* is an end to itself for the commencement of *vipassanā*. If this linear development is correct, one might wonder why some discourses mention the reverse sequence of the threefold training. The *Mahācattārīsakasutta* demonstrates that the other seven steps; right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort and right mindfulness, are occasionally listed as requisites for right concentration.⁸⁷⁵ Through the relationship between the noble eightfold path and the threefold training, *samādhi* is encouraged by *paññā* and *sīla*. The next relevant discourse is the *Soṇadaṇḍasutta* in which the Buddha announces that *sīla* develops *paññā* and *paññā* develops *sīla* just as the hands mutually wash

⁸⁷² Piyadassi, op. cit., p. 205.

⁸⁷³ S.N. Goenka, op. cit., p. 111.

⁸⁷⁴ Jayantha Ruberu, op. cit., p. 254.

⁸⁷⁵ M.III.71.

each other.⁸⁷⁶ Therefore, the advancement of any training in one area encourages the other two areas and the development of the threefold training proceeds like the three strand rope.

The interrelatedness of the threefold training development is such that it is impossible to develop each factor alone. It can be concluded, therefore, in terms of *samatha* and *vipassanā*, that *samatha* encourages *vipassanā*, and *vipassanā* develops *samatha*. Both processes are colligated in an upward movement at every advanced stage of their development until the soteriological goal is attained.

The third sequence of the analysis of the relationship between the twofold meditation and the threefold training shows that *vipassanājhāna* arising from the development of the threefold training involves the collaboration between the deep concentration of *samatha* and the perfect realization of the deathless element of *vipassanā*. The term ‘*vipassanājhāna*,’ of course, can be clarified by examining the supramundane *jhāna* which also refers to the cooperation between *samatha* and *vipassanā*. In the *Visuddhimagga*,⁸⁷⁷ Buddhaghosa describes the supramundane *jhāna* as a balanced state between *samatha* and *vipassanā*. In a state of equilibrium, both processes possess the cessation (*nirodha*) as their object. For the clarification of *nirodha*, he defines it as having four meanings; escape (*nissaraṇa*), seclusion (*viveka*), unconditioned (*asaṅkhata*) and deathlessness (*amata*).⁸⁷⁸ The *Aṭṭhakanāgarasutta* describes the supramundane *jhāna* as follows:

Here, householder, quite secluded from sense pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental qualities, monk enters and remains in the first *jhāna*, which is accompanied by initial and sustained application with joy and happiness born of seclusion. He reflects on this and understands thus: ‘This first *jhāna* is conditioned and intentionally produced;

⁸⁷⁶ D.I.124.

⁸⁷⁷ *Vism.*682 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 798).

⁸⁷⁸ *Vism.*494 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 563).

whatever is conditioned and intentionally produced is impermanent, subject to cessation.’ He is steady in that (*tattha*), he reaches the destruction of the cankers.⁸⁷⁹

The key term ‘*tattha*’ is the indeclinable pronoun used for the locative case and used in the impersonal sense of ‘that.’ In the commentaries, namely, the *Papañcasūdanī*, Buddhaghosa defines the term ‘*tattha*’ as ‘that *samatha* and *vipassanā*’⁸⁸⁰

It can be noted from the *Aṭṭhakanāgarasutta* that the psychological states of *vipassanājhāna* differs from the stereotype of the first *jhāna* by adding the consciousness activities of reflection on and comprehension of the process of the three characteristics of existence. Buddhaghosa interprets this meditative step as the process of *samatha* combining with *vipassanā*. On the one hand, the interpretation of *vipassanā* corresponds with meditation on the three characteristics of existence. On the other hand, the interpretation of *samatha* corresponds with the stereotype of the first *jhāna*. Consequently, the combined psychological process of reflecting on (*paṭisañcikkhati*) and comprehending the *jhāna* corresponds with the mode of supramundane *jhāna*.

In the *Mahāmālunḅyasutta*,⁸⁸¹ further clarification of the nature of *vipassanājhāna* is evident. It is the form of the correspondence between *samatha* and *vipassanā* in relation to the perfect realization of the deathless element. It is indubitably clear in this discourse that the process of *vipassanā* has a crucial role to fulfil in the realm of the *jhāna* states. After proclaiming the collaboration between *samatha* and *vipassanā*, the Buddha indicates the distinguishing mark of their collaboration which is the meditation on the

⁸⁷⁹ M.I.350: “*Idha gahapati bhikkhu vivicca’ eva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekajaṃ pītisukhaṃ paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati. So iti paṭisañcikkhati: Idam pi paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ abhisāṅkhatam abhisāñcetayitam, yaṃ kho pana kiñci abhisāṅkhatam abhisāñcetayitam tad-aniccaṃ nirodhadhamman-ti pajānāti. So tattha ṭhito āsavānaṃ khayam pāpuṇāti.*”

⁸⁸⁰ Ps.III.13.

⁸⁸¹ M.I.435-436.

deathless element (*amatadhātu*) leading to the state of destruction of the cankers (*arahant*) or the state of non-returner (*anāgāmi*).

...When he has turned his mind away from those states, he directs the mind towards the deathless element thus: “This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the tranquillity of all mental formations, the relinquishment of all substrata of existence, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, and *nibbāna*.”⁸⁸²

According to this passage in the *Mahāmālunḅyasutta*, the perfect realization of the deathless element (*amatadhātu*) arises during the exercise of *vipassanā*, which is concerned with seeing things in terms of the three characteristics based on *samatha*. The Buddha clarifies the characteristics of the deathless element as peace (*santa*), sublime (*paṇīta*) and the tranquillity of all mental formations (*sabbasaṅkhārasamatha*), coinciding with the state of enlightenment. Regarding the commentaries of the *Papañcasūdanī*, Buddhaghosa interprets the term ‘*tattha*’ in the passage as “into *vipassanā* endowed with the three characteristics as object (*ārammaṇa*)”⁸⁸³ The relationship between the deathless element and the threefold training is found in the *Dutiya-aññatarabhikkhusutta*.⁸⁸⁴ Of particular importance here is that the deathless element is perfectly realized through the development of the noble eightfold path (*ariya-aṭṭhaṅgikamagga*). Considered from this perspective, meditation on the deathless element arising from the spiral development of the threefold training is a prominent process for *vipassanā* contemplation due to the implication of seeing things clearly as they really are according to the three characteristics.

The term ‘*Vipassanājhāna*’ signifies the united operation between the transcendent process from the world and the pulling process toward *nibbāna*. If

⁸⁸² M.I.435-436: “...so tehi dhammehi cittaṃ paṭivāpetvā amatāya dhātuyā cittaṃ upasaṅharati: etaṃ santaṃ etaṃ paṇītaṃ yadidaṃ sabbasaṅkhārasamatho sabbūpadhipaṭinissaggo taṅhakkhayo virāgo nirodho *nibbānan-ti*.”

⁸⁸³ Ps.III.146.

⁸⁸⁴ S.V.8.

the meditator is unable to realize the absolute qualities of *nibbāna* or the deathless element, then the psychological goal of attaining *nibbāna* will not be fulfilled. This theme is simplified through a simile of a land-discovering process. When a ship gets blown off by gales and goes adrift, with no land in sight, sailors release a bird. It takes off in all directions to look for land. If it sees land, it flies straight to it and does not return. If not, it returns and perches on the mast-head. The bird signifies the meditator. The land signifies the deathless element, while the ship signifies the five aggregates. The simile suggests that, if meditators realize the deathless element or *nibbāna*, they will detach from the world. If not, they will remain attached to the world, which is their object (*ārammaṇa*). The evaluation of the supramundane *jhāna* or *vipassanājhāna* has now reached its extent here. Since these two words have been used interchangeably, they signify the well-established relationship between *samatha* and *vipassanā*, which is based on the spiral development of the threefold training until the realization of the deathless element is fulfilled.

In spite of the interpretation of *vipassanājhāna* as a profound mental quality resulting from the cooperation of *samatha* and *vipassanā*, some scholars still interpret it as an entirely contemplation method. For instance, U Pandita interprets it as *khaṇikasamādhi* (momentary concentration): “in *vipassanājhāna*, one does not fix attention on one object alone, but moves from one sense object (*paramattha*) to another as they arise, and the concentration is *khaṇikasamādhi*.”⁸⁸⁵ Similarly, Premaratne explains the meaning of *vipassanājhāna*: “*vipassanājhāna* is gained by the focusing of the mind, on ultimate realities, just the things we can experience directly through the six sense-doors without the medium of conceptualization.”⁸⁸⁶ The momentary concentration through the six sense-doors seems to be unrelated to the meaning

⁸⁸⁵ Sayadaw U Pandita, op. cit., p. 202.

⁸⁸⁶ Kumar de Silva and Bogoda Premaratne, op. cit., p. 349.

of ‘letting go’ of all sensual perception of *jhāna*. Moreover, the restricted concentration of *khaṇikasamādhi* and free development of *vipassanā* cannot present the cooperation between *samatha* and *vipassanā* in the process of *vipassanājhāna*. In order to avoid the term ‘*jhāna*,’ Payutto employs the term ‘*vipassanāsamādhi*’ for the commencement of *vipassanā*.⁸⁸⁷ He interprets this term as the concentrative level between the levels of momentary concentration and access concentration. This interpretation of *vipassanāsamādhi* as unreliable concentration appears to lack the ability to initiate the process of mental vision characteristic of *vipassanā*, let alone cultivating *vipassanā*. For the signification of *lokuttara-jhānas*, Goenka, of course, specifies the addition of *sampajañña* (awareness) to a set of concentrative attainments, *jhānas*.⁸⁸⁸ It appears in the *Gaṇakamoggallānasutta* that the development of awareness is a mere prior preparation for the attainment of the first *jhāna*.⁸⁸⁹

Despite the interpretation of *vipassanājhāna* as a meditative method of the above scholars, it actually refers to the mental unification of *samatha* perceived at the consequence of the commencement of *vipassanā*. Sujato interprets *vipassanājhāna* as the attainment of the *jhānas* in pure *samatha*.⁸⁹⁰ He equates the emotional qualities, such as rapture, serenity and bliss, arising in the process of *samatha* as that of *vipassanā*. It is feasible that these emotional qualities of *samatha* and *vipassanājhāna* are the same. But those of *vipassanājhāna* would be in more profound states because they are supplemented through the process of *vipassanā*. In summary, *vipassanājhāna* is the reappearing of the eight *jhānas* at a later stage, when they are directly associated with meditation on the deathless element of *vipassanā*.

⁸⁸⁷ Phra Prayudh Payutto, op. cit., p. 271.

⁸⁸⁸ S.N Goenka, *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta Discourses* (Seattle: Vipassana Research Publication, 1998), p. 52.

⁸⁸⁹ M.III.3-4.

⁸⁹⁰ Sujato, *A Swift Pair of Messengers*, op. cit., p. 20.

In the light of the above discussion, an elaboration of the threefold training can be summarized in three aspects. Firstly, some scholars, such as Griffiths and Keown, indeed, tend to disregard any combined training or promote only one type of training for the attainment of Buddhist enlightenment. Despite this, the threefold training, *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*, are inter-dependent factors; each supplements the other. And so the meditator must develop all three factors until they have enough force to calm the mind and lead it toward the cooperation of *samatha* and *vipassanā*. Secondly, since accomplishment in training in one area will prove beneficial in the other areas, the progress through the training in all three areas is intended to be an interdependent instead of a linear process. This progress signifies the relationship between *samatha* and *vipassanā* in that *samatha* encourages *vipassanā*, and that *vipassanā* develops *samatha*. Both processes are associated through every progressive stage of their development until the end of the enlightenment path. Thirdly, *vipassanājhāna* and its principle equivalent term ‘supramundane *jhāna*’ can be reached from the spiral development of the threefold training. The two terms refer to a combined operation, which involves the withdrawal process from sensual perception and the pulling process toward *nibbāna*. In the state of *vipassanājhāna*, the eight *jhānas* are cultivated into a more profound stage which is coupled with the perfect realization of the deathless element. The evaluation of the development of the threefold training clarifies the particular development of the twofold meditation.

Relationship between *Satipaṭṭhāna* and the Twofold Meditation

The course of meditative practice of both *samatha* and *vipassanā* will be further clarified through the psychological analysis of the *satipaṭṭhāna*. The Buddha announces the four foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) as the “one and only path leading to the purification of beings and to the ultimate goal

of realization of *Nibbāna*”⁸⁹¹ This meditative method comprises four subjects of contemplation; contemplation of body (*kāyānupassanā*), contemplation of feeling (*vedanānupassanā*), contemplation of mind (*cittānupassanā*) and contemplation of mental object (*dhammānupassanā*). These four subjects of contemplation in the *Satipaṭṭhānasutta* generally represent the practice of *vipassanā*. In the *Heart of Buddhist Meditation*,⁸⁹² Nyanaponika provides a history of the specific interpretation of *vipassanā*. While Venerable U Narada was searching eagerly for a direct practice approaching the highest goal, one forest monk suggested that he study the *Satipaṭṭhānasutta*. Subsequently, he developed the principles and details of insight meditation from the discourse. The detailed examination of *satipaṭṭhāna* reveals a connection to *samatha* and *vipassanā*. The perfect realization of mental bodies in accompaniment with the arising of the five instrumental factors of insight; *cakkhu*, *ñāṇa*, *paññā*, *vijjā* and *āloka*, based on deep concentration, are of central importance to the development of *satipaṭṭhāna*, and also *vipassanā*. This examination will proceed in the following sequence: first the evaluation of the relation between *satipaṭṭhāna* and *jhānas*, then the clarification of the contemplation of body (*kāyānupassanā*), next the discussion of *satipaṭṭhāna* in relation to these five factors and the deathless element, and lastly, the examination of the contemplation of the other three foundations (feeling, mind and *dhamma*) in terms of their basic mental qualities.

The Relationship between Satipaṭṭhāna and the Jhānas

Before the commencement of *satipaṭṭhāna* practice, the meditator needs to develop the mind into the serene and pure state of the *jhānas*. According to the *Sūdasutta*, the Buddha specifies the calming and concentrating of the mind as a result of the successful practice of *satipaṭṭhāna*.

⁸⁹¹ D.II.290.

⁸⁹² Nyanaponika, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

In this way, monks, here a certain wise, learned and skillful monk remains ardent with awareness and mindfulness, experiencing body in the body, having removed craving and aversion towards the world. While he remains experiencing body in the body, his mind becomes concentrated, his defilements are abandoned.⁸⁹³

The next occurrence of the relationship between *satipaṭṭhāna* practice and concentration appears in the *Dantabhūmisutta*, where the meditative practice of the four *satipaṭṭhānas* requires the preliminary step of abandoning the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*).

Having abandoned these five hindrances which are defilements of the mind and weakening to wisdom, he remains ardent with awareness and mindfulness, experiencing body in the body, having removed craving and aversion towards the world.⁸⁹⁴

Then the meditative process of *kāyānupassanā*,⁸⁹⁵ *vedanānupassanā*,⁸⁹⁶ *cittānupassanā*⁸⁹⁷ and *dhammānupassanā*⁸⁹⁸ must be associated initially with the first *jhāna* in order to eliminate the five hindrances. Keminda agrees on the strong relationship between the first *jhāna* and *satipaṭṭhāna* practice. He refers to the Buddha's attainment of the first *jhāna* before his enlightenment under the Banyan tree.⁸⁹⁹ Similarly, Brahmavamso regards the *jhāna* states as the prerequisite for *satipaṭṭhāna* practice.⁹⁰⁰ He recommends the removal of these hindrances before starting *satipaṭṭhāna* practice according to the examination of the initial stage of *satipaṭṭhāna* that is "having put away covetousness and grief for the world (*vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ*).” He claims from the

⁸⁹³ S.V.151-152: “*Evam eva kho bhikkhave idhekacco paṇḍito byatto kusalo bhikkhu kāye kāyānupassī Viharati. ātāpī sampajāno satimā. vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ. Tassa kāye kāyānupassino viharato cittaṃ samādhiyati upakkilesā pahiyanti.*”

⁸⁹⁴ M.III.136: “*So ime pañca nīvaraṇe pahāya cetaso upakkilese paññāya dubbalīkaraṇe kāye kāyānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā, vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ.*”

⁸⁹⁵ Contemplation of the body (*kāyānupassanā*) consists of mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*), considering the four postures (*iriyāpatha*), mindfulness and awareness (*sati-sampajañña*), mindfulness of the body (*kāyagatāsati*), the analysis of the four elements (*catudhātuvavatthāna*) and the ten impurities (*asubha*).

⁸⁹⁶ Contemplation of all feelings (*vedanānupassanā*) concerns the clear perception of the various agreeable, disagreeable, and indifferent feelings of both body and mind.

⁸⁹⁷ Contemplation of the state of mind (*cittānupassanā*) employs the clear perception of the consciousness, whether it is greedy or not, hateful or not, deluded or not,

⁸⁹⁸ Contemplation of mental objects (*dhammānupassanā*) concerns the five hindrance (*nīvaraṇa*), the five aggregates (*khandha*), the twelve bases of sense (*āyatana*), the seven factors of enlightenment (*bojjhaṅga*) and the four noble truths (*ariyasacca*).

⁸⁹⁹ Kheminda Thera, *Path Fruit & Nibbāna*, op. cit., p. 19.

⁹⁰⁰ Venerable Ajahn Brahmavamso, "Satipatthana the Fourfold Focus of Mindfulness," op. cit.

commentaries to the *satipaṭṭhānasutta*⁹⁰¹ that covetousness and grief subsume the five hindrances. Before the contemplation of any subject of mindfulness practice, these hindrances have to be abandoned through the *jhāna* practice. It is clear that the meditative process of *satipaṭṭhāna* can only be performed through the tranquilizing of the distracted mind until mental stillness and calmness are obtained.

In contrast to this theme, many scholars refuse to accept the association between *satipaṭṭhāna* practice and mental stillness of the *jhāna* attainment. For example, Ruberu indicates the incompatibility between *satipaṭṭhāna* practice and *jhānas*: “...*satipaṭṭhāna* provides an assured, direct access called “pure insight” (*sukkha vipassanā*), for those who have not attained to any absorptions (*jhāna*).”⁹⁰² The next scholar is Nyanaponika when he identifies *satipaṭṭhāna* practices as the practice of bare insight (*sukkha-vipassanā*) which is developed without any basis of absorption (*jhāna*).⁹⁰³ Moreover, having differentiated the *jhānas* from the path of enlightenment, Burns distinguishes *satipaṭṭhāna* from the *jhānas*: “Yet, unlike *satipaṭṭhāna*, the *jhānas* are not a prerequisite to enlightenment.”⁹⁰⁴ From these scholars’ view, it would appear that *satipaṭṭhāna* practice does not collaborate with the advanced stages of concentration in terms of *jhānas*.

No doubt, some practitioners have had successful results by practising *vipassanā* meditation techniques without the prior preparation of *samatha* or *jhāna* practices. However, a detailed examination of the passage “*vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassam*” in the *Satipaṭṭhānasutta* confirms the importance of the attainment of *jhānas* for the initiation of *satipaṭṭhāna* practice. This research

⁹⁰¹ Ps.I.244.

⁹⁰² Jayantha Ruberu, op. cit., p. 287.

⁹⁰³ Nyanaponika, op. cit., p. 103.

⁹⁰⁴ Douglas M. Burns, op. cit., p. 42.

will argue that the preparation provided by initial tranquillity techniques improves the eventual outcome of insight meditation. Although the attainment of the *jhānas* is not directly mentioned in the *Satipaṭṭhāna* discourse, if we consider the textual evidence in the *sutta*, the *jhāna* attainment is implied. Nevertheless, Anālayo focuses on the successful *satipaṭṭhāna* practice that is the realization of the two stages of awakening, full awakening or non-returning.⁹⁰⁵ He refers to the *Mahāmālunkyasutta*, which explicitly states that at least the first *jhāna* needs to be undertaken in order to overcome the five lower fetters and thus attain the two stages of awakening.⁹⁰⁶ His view coincides with the Buddha's statement that the noble eightfold path leads to full awakening. The analysis of the noble eightfold path shows that one factor, *sammāsamādhi*, comprises of the four *rūpajjhānas*.

Moreover, after a detailed examination of the seven enlightenment factors, Sujato demonstrates the association between *satipaṭṭhāna* practice and the *jhānas*.⁹⁰⁷ Regarding the seven factors- mindfulness (*sati*), investigation of *dhammas* (*dhammavicaya*), energy (*virīya*), joy (*pīti*), rapture (*passaddhi*), concentration (*samādhi*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*)- he interprets the combination of *pīti* and *samādhi* as a psychological state endowed with the attainment of the *jhānas*. This seems reasonable because *pīti* is one factor of the first and second *jhānas*, whereas concentration is the predominant factor for the attainment of all *jhānas*. He further argues that equanimity (*upekkhā*) is the essential factor for reaching perfection in the fourth *jhāna*. According to his viewpoint of these seven factors, mindfulness requires the collaboration of the process of *samatha*, in the *jhāna* states, for the perfection of the enlightenment path. The significance of the *jhānas* for the enlightenment path is also found in the *Ākaṅkheyyasutta*:

⁹⁰⁵ Anālayo, op. cit., p. 82.

⁹⁰⁶ M.I.434.

⁹⁰⁷ Sujato, *A Swift Pair of Messengers*, op. cit., pp. 70-71.

Monks, if a monk should wish: ‘May I, through my own supernatural knowledge in here and now and through the destruction of canker, realize, enter into and remain in the canker-free freedom of mind and freedom through wisdom,’ he should be one who fulfils the precepts, be devoted to the tranquillity of heart within oneself, not neglect *jhāna*, be endowed with *vipassanā*, and dwell in empty huts.⁹⁰⁸

The passage shows that meditative practice based on *jhāna* attainment is indispensable for both freedom of mind (*cetovimutti*) and freedom through wisdom (*paññāvimutti*). It is therefore reasonable to suppose that the meditator needs to develop the mind into the serene and pure state of the *jhānas*, in accompaniment with the development of mindfulness, in order to fulfil the enlightenment path. We can see that the meditator can practice *satipaṭṭhāna* through mindfulness practice alone, while mindfulness, strengthened by *jhāna* attainment, can attain a more profound practice of *satipaṭṭhāna*.

Analysis of the contemplation of Body in Body (Kāye Kāyānupassī)

An examination of the *satipaṭṭhāna* practice and its relationship with the *jhānas* establishes the nature of the association between *samatha* and a profound state of clear mindfulness and awareness. The initial practice of mindful attention to the body is clarified through a psychological and etymological analysis of the phrase ‘*kāye kāyānupassī*.’ The Buddha announces the phrase ‘*kāye kāyānupassī*’ twenty-one times throughout the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta*,⁹⁰⁹ with variations according to which section of the four *satipaṭṭhānas* one has reached: body, feelings, mind or *dhamma*. Looking through the whole *sutta*, the formulaic pattern ‘body in body (*kāye kāyānupassī*)’ appears again and again with variations according to which section of the four *satipaṭṭhānas*; body in body (*kāye kāyānupassī*), feeling in feeling (*vedanāsu vedanānupassī*), mind in

⁹⁰⁸ M.I.35-36: “*Ākañkheyya ce bhikkhave bhikkhu: āsavānaṃ khayā anāsavaṃ cetovimuttiṃ paññāvimuttiṃ diṭṭhe va dhamme sayamañ abhiññāya sacchikatvā upasampajja vihareyyan-ti, sīlesv-ev’assa pariṭurakārī ajjhataṃ cetosamatham-anuyutto anirākatajjhāno vipassanāya samannāgato brūhetā suññāgārānaṃ.*”

⁹⁰⁹ D.II.290-304.

mind (*citte cittānupassī*), and *dhamma* in *dhamma* (*dhammesu dhammānupassī*) is involved. In the case of the first *satipaṭṭhāna*, the formulaic pattern reads:

Thus he remains contemplating body in body internally, or remains contemplating body in body externally, or remains contemplating body in body both internally and externally. Or else he remains contemplating the nature of arising in the body, or he remains contemplating the nature of passing away in the body, or he remains contemplating the nature of arising and passing away in the body; or else, mindfulness that ‘There is the body,’ is simply established to him just to the extent necessary for intuition and mindfulness. And he remains independent, not grasping anything in the world. This is how, monks, remains contemplating body in body.⁹¹⁰

This thesis will argue that the contemplation of body in body (*kāye kāyānupassī*) can be accomplished through the perfect recognition of mental bodies⁹¹¹ rather than by means of contemplation of the physical body or the bodily postures. This argument will proceed in relation to three steps, the examination of the phrase ‘*kāye kāyānupassī*,’ the investigation of the section on contemplation of inspiration, and the evaluation of contemplating the nature of arising and passing away in the body.

An examination of the phrase ‘*kāye kāyānupassī*’ reveals that the perfect realization of internal mental bodies, mentioned above, is the predominant factor in the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna*. In her interpretation of the term ‘*kāye*,’ I.B. Horner uses the common meaning of the locative case, expressing ‘the place where,’ thus translating the expression as ‘in the body.’⁹¹² In agreement with Horner, Goenka renders ‘*kāye*’ as ‘in the body:’ so that “*kāye kāyānupassī viharati:*” means “to live witnessing the reality of the body in the body.”⁹¹³ This

⁹¹⁰ D.II.292: “*Iti ajjhataṃ vā kāye kāyānupassī viharati, bahiddhā vā kāye kāyānupassī viharati, ajjhata-bahiddhā vā kāye kāyānupassī viharati. Samudaya-dhammānupassī vā kāyasmim viharati, vaya-dhammānupassī vā kāyasmim viharati, samudaya-vaya-dhammānupassī vā kāyasmim viharati. ‘Atthi kāyo’ ti vā pan’assa sati paccupaṭṭhitā hoti yāvad eva ñāṇa-mattāya paṭissati-mattāya. anissito ca viharati na ca kiñci loke upādiyati. Evam pi kho bhikkhave bhikkhu kāye kāyānupassī viharati.*”

⁹¹¹ Mental bodies are the refined bodies within the physical body, composing of the refined form, feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), mental-formation (*saṅkhāra*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*).

⁹¹² I.B. Horner, (tr.) *The Collection of Middle Length Sayings*, vol. 1 of 3 vols., (London: Pali Text Society, 1954, 1957, 1959), p. 56.

⁹¹³ S.N Goenka, *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta Discourses*, op. cit., p. 22.

thesis agrees with Horner and Goenka in interpreting ‘*kāye*’ as ‘within the body’ because the common meaning of the locative case seems more appropriate in this context.

While this interpretation suggests that the phrase ‘*kāye kāyānupassī*’ is related to the perfect realization of mental bodies, some scholars interpret the phrase ‘*kāye kāyānupassī*’ as contemplation of the entire physical body. For instance, T.W. and C.A.F. Rhys Davids render ‘*kāye kāyānupassī*’ as “as to the body, continue to consider the body.”⁹¹⁴ This translation is not satisfactory. In this translation, *kāye* is understood as the locative case expressing reference, which is an uncommon function. The *PTS Pali-English dictionary* corroborates this interpretation by rendering it as “contemplating body as an accumulation.”⁹¹⁵ T.W. Rhys Davids and Stede declares *kāya* as having five meanings; group, heap, collection, aggregate, and body. To interpret the phrase ‘*kāye kāyānupassī*,’ they interpret ‘*kāye*’ as ‘collection’ and *kāya* as ‘body.’ From these two interpretations of *kāya*, it seems inconsistent to render the meaning of the word ‘*kāya*’ in two different ways in the same phrase as they do. It is inappropriate for the same root word to represent two different meanings in the same phrase. In addition, according to their interpretation of *kāya*, the aggregate of a multiplicity of body parts such as hair, nails, and skin represents the meaning of *kāya* in its physical aspect. Therefore, the meditator sees that the body is clothed in skin, full of all kinds of dirty matter, and that in this body there are thirty-two parts such as hair nails and teeth, and so on.⁹¹⁶ According to this interpretation of ‘*kāye*,’ the purpose of the formulaic pattern is to bring the unattractive aspects to the forefront of one’s attention. The locative of reference, employed for the function of *kāye*, appears to ignore the existence of the subtle form of body. This form is found in the *Ayogūlasutta* where the

⁹¹⁴ T.W. and C.A.F Rhys Davids, (tr.) *Dialogues of the Buddha*, v 2, (London: Pali Text Society, 1899), p 328.

⁹¹⁵ T. W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, op. cit., p. 207.

⁹¹⁶ Ibid.

Buddha states that he can reach the *brahma* realm in his physical body and in the subtle form of the mind-made (*manomaya*) body.

I directly know, Ānanda, having approached the *brahma* realm by means of supernormal power with a mind-made body...with this body composed of the four great elements.⁹¹⁷

The discourse indicates that the Buddha can intentionally employ spiritual power to control his physical body and the subtle body which is created by the power of mind. Although the term “*kāye*” can be rendered as the locative case expressing reference, the common meaning of the locative case seems to indicate an interpretation in terms of the subtle body.

The analysis of the term ‘*kāya*’ further clarifies the characteristics of the mental body, which are necessary for the contemplation of body in body. In this phrase ‘body in body,’ it is necessary to clarify what is the outside body and what is the inside body. The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* declares that there are two bodies - the mental body (*nāmakāya*) and the material body (*rūpakāya*). The former includes feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), volition (*cetanā*), contact (*phassa*), attention (*manasikāra*) and cognizance formations (*cittasaṅkhāra*).⁹¹⁸ The material body includes the four principle elements (soil element, water element, wind element and fire element), breathing, characteristics (*nimitta*) and body formations (*kāyasaṅkhāra*).⁹¹⁹ Regarding the two types of body, let us continue to scrutinize that of the inside body.

If the material body is the proper object of study for medical science, then the mental body is the appropriate object of meditative study. From the point of view of meditation technique, the mental body is the proper interpretation of the inside body. The mental body is the refined form dwelling within the physical

⁹¹⁷ S.V.282: “*Abhijānāmi khvāham Ānanda iddhiyā manomayena kāyena brahmalokam upasaṅkamitā... iminā cātumahābhūtikena kāyena*”

⁹¹⁸ *Paṭis.I.183.*

⁹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

body. The relationship between the mental body and meditation practice is found in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta*.

When his mind was thus concentrated, purified, bright, unblemished, free from defilement, malleable, workable, steady, and attained to imperturbability, he applies and bends down his mind towards the creation of a mind-made body. He creates from this body another body having form, mind-made, with all its limbs and faculties.⁹²⁰

After having attained the concentrative level of the fourth *jhāna*, a monk progressively acquires insight into the creation of the mind-made body (*manomaya kāya*). He is able to utilize this power intentionally: he “applies and bends down the mind (*cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti*)” thus creating a mind-made body and illustrating the purity and creative power of the mind. In this discourse, the three analogies of pulling a reed from its sheath, drawing a sword from a scabbard and pulling the snake from its skin demonstrate that the mind-made body differs in nature from the physical body but that they look identical. Because of this creation of the subtle body by means of the power of the mind, the mind-made body can be identified as the mental body. Therefore, during the sublising process of *samatha*, the meditator attains the subtle and inward state of the mental body.

A further clarification of the mental body is found in the *Ayogūlasutta* where the Buddha describes the method of the journey to the *brahma* realm.

Ānanda, on an occasion when the Tathāgata composes the body in the mind and composes the mind in the body and remains having entered upon the perceptions of bliss and lightness in the body, on that occasion the body of the Tathāgata becomes lighter, softer, more utilitarian and more radiant.⁹²¹

⁹²⁰ D.I.77: “So evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgaṇe vigatūpakkilese mudu-bhūte kammaniye ṭhite āneñjappatte mano-mayaṃ kāyaṃ abhinimmānāya cittaṃ abhinīharati abhininnāmeti. So imamhā kāyā aññaṃ kāyaṃ abhinimmināti rūpiṃ manomayaṃ sabbaṅga-paccaṅgiṃ ahīndriyaṃ.”

⁹²¹ S.V.283: “Yasmiṃ Ānanda samaye Tathāgato kāyaṃ pi citte samādahati cittaṃ pi kāye samādahati sukhasaññaṅca lahusaññaṅca kāye okkamitvā viharati; tasmīṃ Ānanda samaye Tathāgatassa kāyo lahutarō ceva hoti mudutarō ca kammaniataro ca pabhassarataro ca.”

It requires the concentration of the body in the mind and concentration of the mind in the body. He dwells entering the perceptions of bliss and lightness in the body so that his body becomes lighter, softer, more utilitarian and more radiant. This method deals with the mental body in terms of body because its nature is the same as mind and also the manipulations of body and mind are presented in the same way. The textual evidence for the refined form as the inside body appears in the commentaries⁹²² to the interesting passage “*sukhañca kāyena paṭisaṃvedeti*” (experience happiness by means of the body) which accompanies the formulaic pattern of the third *jhāna*. Since happiness (*sukha*) is a mental quality and can be experienced by the mind only, then the term ‘*kāya*,’ here, implies some state which is not a normal body. For an explanation of the term ‘*kāya*’ in the third *jhāna*, Buddhaghosa proposes the exceedingly superior form (*atipaṇītarūpa*) arising from the association of mental body and bliss (*sukha*);

He would feel the bliss associated with his mental body (*nāmakāya*), and after emerging from the *jhāna* he would also feel bliss since his material body (*rūpakāya*) would have been affected by the exceedingly superior (*atipaṇīta*) matter (*rūpa*) originated by that bliss associated with the mental body (*nāmakāya*).⁹²³

In reference to this quotation, the term ‘*kāya*’ in the third *jhāna* implies the terms ‘*nāmakāya*’ and ‘*atipaṇītarūpa*’ which correspond with the basic formula ‘contemplation of body in body’ of the *Satipaṭṭhānasutta*. Nārada agrees that there is a correlation between the mental body and *jhāna* attainment: “It is stated that *Jhāna* factors are essential to produce mind-born *rūpa*.”⁹²⁴ Regarding the mind-made body (*manomaya kāya*), Hamilton points to the characteristics of the mental body as being more subtle than that of the physical body: “Our ‘normal’ bodies are gross *rūpa* (matter), whereas the mind-made body is subtle

⁹²² *Vism.* 163 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 169).

⁹²³ *Ibid.*

⁹²⁴ Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, op. cit., p. 305.

rūpa.”⁹²⁵ The investigation of the notion of the mental body reveals that this subtle body, which results from *jhāna* attainment, is that which is referred to by the contemplation of body in body (*kāye kāyānupassī*).

The next examination of the phrase ‘*kāye kāyānupassī*’ will demonstrate the notion of a successful development of mental bodies in the *Rohitassasutta*.⁹²⁶ Indeed, an examination of the *Rohitassasutta* reveals a direct association between the mental bodies and the end of the circle of existence. In this discourse, a son of the *devas*, namely Rohitassa, comes to the Buddha and asks about the location of the end of the world was and how to get there. The Buddha replies by identifying the end of the world with the end of the circle of existence, which one cannot attain by merely travelling.

Friend, I do not say that the end of the world, where one is not born, does not decay, does not die, is not reborn, and does not arise, can be known, seen, or reached by travelling.⁹²⁷

According to this discourse, the end of the world is not to be arrived at by travelling to the end of the physical universe, but by introspection, that is, by looking within the physical body. The Buddha, of course, declared the world, the cause of the world, the cessation of the world, and the course of action that leads to the cessation of the world to be lying in the fathom-long body with its perception and mind. His answer thus implies that the end of the circle of existence is relevant to the perfect realization of the exceedingly superior forms of the inside bodies, which lie within the physical body. It is contended that the realization of the mental bodies within the physical body, which are related to deep concentration, are of central importance for *satipaṭṭhāna* practice and its culmination.

⁹²⁵ Sue Hamilton, *Identity and Experience : The Constitution of the Human Being According to Early Buddhism*, Luzac Oriental: London, 1996, p. 163.

⁹²⁶ S.I.61-62.

⁹²⁷ S.I.61: “*Yattha kho āvuso na jāyati na jīyati na mīyati na cavati na uppajjati, nāhaṃ taṃ gamanena lokassa antaṃ ñāteyyaṃ daṭṭheyyaṃ patteyyan-ti vadāmi.*”

Having examined the phrase ‘*kāye kāyānupassī*,’ we now turn to an investigation of the section on contemplation of respiration in the part on the contemplation of the body. This section also specifies the significance of the realization of the mental bodies (*nāmakāya*). According to the discourse, the contemplation of respiration can be undertaken in the following way:

Mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out. Breathing in deep, he understands: ‘I breathe in deep’; or breathing out deep, he understands: ‘I breathe out deep.’ Breathing in shallowly, he understands: ‘I breathe in shallowly’; or breathing out shallowly, he understands: ‘I breathe out shallowly.’ He trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in experiencing every body’; he trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out experiencing every body.’ He trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in calming the bodily formation’; he trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out calming the bodily formation.’⁹²⁸

The passage introduces the phrase ‘*sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī*’ which strongly relates to the perfect realization of mental bodies in the contemplation of body in body as described in the following paragraphs.

A terminological analysis of the phrase ‘*sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī*’ shows that a firm grounding in experiencing mental bodies provides an important basis for the development of the contemplation of respiration and that of body in body. A detailed examination of the term ‘*sabba*’ in this phrase reveals a strong connection between the perfect realization of mental bodies (*nāmakāya*) and the contemplation of body in body (*kāye kāyānupassī*). The *PTS Pali-English Dictionary* gives four meanings for *sabba*; ‘whole,’ ‘entire,’ ‘all’ and ‘every.’⁹²⁹ For ‘*sabba*’ in the phrase ‘*sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī*,’ both Rhys Davids and I.B. Horner select the meaning of ‘whole.’⁹³⁰ According to this viewpoint, the term

⁹²⁸ D.II.291: “*so sato va assasati, sato passasati. Dīghaṃ vā assasanto ‘Dīghaṃ assasāmīti’ pajānāti, dīghaṃ vā passasanto ‘Dīghaṃ passasāmīti’ pajānāti. Rassaṃ vā assasanto ‘Rassaṃ assasāmīti’ pajānāti, rassaṃ vā passasanto ‘rassaṃ passasāmīti’ pajānāti. ‘Sabba-kāya-paṭisaṃvedī assasissāmīti’ sikkhati, ‘Sabba-kāya-paṭisaṃvedī passasissāmīti’ sikkhati. ‘Passambhayaṃ kāya-saṅkhāraṃ assasissāmīti’ sikkhati, ‘Passambhayaṃ kāya-saṅkhāraṃ passasissāmīti’ sikkhati.*”

⁹²⁹ T. W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, op. cit., p. 680.

⁹³⁰ T.W. and C.A.F. Rhys Davids, (tr.) *Dialogues of the Buddha*, v 2, (London: Pali Text Society, 1899), p. 328, I.B. Horner, (tr.) *The Collection of Middle Length Sayings*, vol. 1 of 3 vols., (London: Pali Text Society,

‘*sabbakāya*’ signifies all the components of one body; it is a meaning which challenges the usual interpretation of ‘*kāye kāyānupassī*’ as ‘contemplation of body in body’ by suggesting that it refers to the subtle body *within* the physical body. In addition, the English word ‘whole’ tends to correspond with the word ‘*sakala*’ or ‘*kevala*’ in *Pāli*.⁹³¹ Thus, a more appropriate interpretation of ‘*sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī*’ by translating ‘*sabba*’ as ‘every’ is, ‘experiencing every body.’

In contrast, in the *Visuddhimagga*, Buddhaghosa renders ‘*sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī*’ as “making known, making plain, the beginning, middle and end of the entire breathing body.” He further explains *sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī* as meaning “both breathing in and breathing out with consciousness (*citta*) associated with knowledge (*ñāṇa*)” and in order to imply the aspect of arousing knowledge (*ñāṇa*).⁹³² Buddhaghosa’s translation of ‘*sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī*’ seems to contain a misleading expression of *sabbakāya* (every body) as the entirety of the breathing. His interpretation of *sabba* as *sakala* (entire) appears to support the interpretation of *kāya* as breathing. While breathing is a highly significant factor of the physical body, it seems to be irrelevant to the mental body. Furthermore, Buddhaghosa’s interpretation of *kāya* as breathing contradicts the benefit of the mindfulness of breathing. He points to the culmination of its benefit as the attainment of the fourth *jhāna*.⁹³³ The *Rahogatasutta* states that the inhalation and exhalation completely stop during this attainment: “For one who attains the fourth *jhāna*, in-breaths and out-breaths have ceased.”⁹³⁴ Buddhaghosa’s interpretation of ‘*sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī*’ as “making known, making plain, the beginning,

1954, 1957, 1959), p. 72.

⁹³¹ A. P. Buddhadatta, *Concise Pāli-English Dictionary*, 2d. ed. (Colombo: Colombo Apothecaries' Co., 1968), p. 580.

⁹³² *Vism.* 273 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 294-295).

⁹³³ *Vism.* 111 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 113).

⁹³⁴ S.IV.217: “*catuttham jhānaṃ samāpanna assāsapassā niruddhā honti.*”

middle and end of the entire breathing body” cannot be reconciled with the ceasing of breathing which is the ultimate outcome of the contemplation of respiration. During the ceasing of breathing at the fourth *jhāna* attainment, the interpretation of *kāya* as mental body makes more sense if the meditator still performs the contemplation of respiration by experiencing the mental bodies. Thus this interpretation of *kāya* provides a proper application of the contemplation of respiration and facilitates the contemplation of body in body as well.

Some modern scholars do not accept the connection between the mental body (*nāmakāya*) and the contemplation of body in body (*kāye kāyānupassī*) because they interpret the phrase ‘*sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī*’ as the experience of the physical body, rather than the perfect realization of the mental bodies. For instance, Rhys Davids renders it as “conscious of my whole body.”⁹³⁵ I.B. Horner renders it in a similar way as “experiencing the whole body.”⁹³⁶ Anālayo also interprets it as “experiencing the whole physical body.”⁹³⁷ However, from this interpretation, *satipaṭṭhāna* practice does not fit well with the deep concentration, but seems rather to be the initiation of *sati* and *sampajañña* practices. The contemplation of body in body is found to be relevant to the deep concentration. It illustrates the pattern of meditative practices, which are the same sequence of practices of mindfulness of the body (*kāyagatāsati*) stated in the *Kāyagatāsatisutta*. In this discourse, the attainment of the four *jhānas* appears to be object and benefit of the *kāyagatāsati* practices.

Monks, when mindfulness of the body has been practiced, developed, made much of, made as a vehicle, made as a basis, established, consolidated, and well undertaken, these ten profits may be expected... One gains at will, without trouble or difficulty, the four *jhānas* that

⁹³⁵ T.W. and C.A.F. Rhys Davids, (tr.) *Dialogues of the Buddha*, v 2, (London: Pali Text Society, 1899), p. 328.

⁹³⁶ I.B. Horner, (tr.) *The Collection of Middle Length Sayings*, vol. 1 of 3 vols., (London: Pali Text Society, 1954, 1957, 1959), p. 72.

⁹³⁷ Anālayo, op. cit., p. 131.

constitute the higher mind and provide dwelling in happiness here and now.⁹³⁸

The positioning of the four *jhānas* in the *Kāyagatāsatisutta* is linked to the interpretation of ‘*sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī*’ as ‘experiencing every body’ including mental body or mind-made body. The discussion above clearly indicates the link between the four *jhānas* and perfect realization of mental body or mind-made body. Therefore, the analysis of the term ‘*sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī*,’ in the section on contemplation of respiration, indicates preliminary states where numerous mental bodies are experienced proceeding to the profound level of the contemplation of body in body.

Considering the nature of the arising and passing away in the body, the last aspect of the contemplation of body in body involves the movement from any mental body to its refined state. This movement is the process of the passing away of the relatively coarse mental body in meditation, and the arising of the subsequent more peaceful and more sublime mental body. The particular nature of arising and passing away is shown in the formulaic pattern:

He remains contemplating the nature of arising in the body, or he remains contemplating the nature of passing away in the body, or he remains contemplating the nature of arising and passing away in the body.⁹³⁹

This interpretation of contemplation of body in body expands the scope of the *satipaṭṭhāna* exercise into a contemplation of the impermanent nature which occurs from the process of passing away and arising. This contemplation of the impermanent nature is related to the attainment of *jhānas* in the *Mahāmālunḅyasutta*.

⁹³⁸ M.III.97-98: “*Kāyagatāya, bhikkhave, satiyā āsevitāya bhāvitāya bahulikatāya yānikatāya vathukatāya anuṭṭhitāya paricitāya susamāradhāya ime das’ ānisaṃsā pāṭikāṅkhā... Catunnaṃ jhānānaṃ abhicetasikānaṃ diṭṭhadhammasukhavihārānaṃ nikāmalābhī hoti akicchālābhī akasiralābhī.*”

⁹³⁹ D.II.292.

Here, Ānanda, with seclusion from the substrata of existence, with the abandoning of unwholesome mental qualities, with the complete tranquillization of wicked body, quite secluded from sense pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental qualities, monk enters and remains in the first *jhāna*, which is accompanied by initial and sustained application with joy and happiness born of seclusion. Whatever exists therein comprised by form, feeling, perception, mental formation or consciousness, he perceives those states as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien, as integrating, as void, as not self.⁹⁴⁰

In this *sutta*, the ascent from *jhāna* to *jhāna* signals the arising of more refined *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa* and passing away of these of preceding state. During meditation, the advancement of *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa* of mental body, we can assume, involves concurrently an intensification of concentration. The spontaneous arising of more refined bodies incorporates with the contemplation of the impermanent nature along the *jhāna* development. Therefore, the *satipaṭṭhāna* exercise and the process of *vipassanā* concur in the perfect realization of mental bodies rather than in the rational process of the physical body.

However, to perform the contemplation of body in body, some scholars do not consider the meditation path through mental bodies; rather, concern the rational thinking of phenomena as the main concept of *satipaṭṭhāna* exercise. For instance, Anālayo regards the arising and passing away of phenomena as the essential factor for *satipaṭṭhāna* exercise and *vipassanā*:

The same is reflected in the commentarial scheme of the insight knowledge, which details key experiences to be encountered during the path to realization, where the stage of apprehending the arising and passing away of phenomena is of central importance.⁹⁴¹

⁹⁴⁰ M.I.435: “*Idh’ānanda bhikkhu upadhivivekā akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ pahānā sabbaso kāyaduṭṭhullānaṃ paṭippassaddhiyā vivicca’eva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekajaṃ pītisukhaṃ paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati. So yad-eva tatha hoti rūpagataṃ vedanāgataṃ saññāgataṃ saṅkhāragataṃ viññāṇagataṃ te dhamme aniccato dukkhato rogato gaṇḍato sallato aghato ābādhato parato palokato suññato anattato samanupassati.*”

⁹⁴¹ Anālayo, op. cit., p. 103.

His proposal seems to link *satipaṭṭhāna* exercise with rational thinking rather than with deep concentration because the meditator must observe the changeability of phenomena. Since the process of rational thought does not involve the basic step of concentration, Ruberu neglects the basis of *satipaṭṭhāna* exercise: “Practising *satipaṭṭhāna* may commence with any physical or mental activity of the day. It needs no prior preparation except a desire for starting on it”⁹⁴²

But it is remarkable that the meditator needs to realize the mental bodies, which result from the development of a certain level of concentration before commencing *satipaṭṭhāna* exercise. In the *Satipaṭṭhānasutta*, it is implicit that the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* requires the establishment of four particular mental qualities: diligence (*ātāpī*), bare attention (*sampajāna*), mindfulness (*sati*) and freedom from desires and discontent (*vineyya abhijjhādomanassa*).⁹⁴³ Brahmavamso suggests that these desires and discontent refer precisely to the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*).⁹⁴⁴ To remove the five hindrances, the meditator must attain at least the first *jhāna*. Consequently, Practising *satipaṭṭhāna* has to commence with the basis of deep concentration. Thus, it becomes clear that the contemplation of impermanent nature arising from the perfect realization of mental bodies is a significant factor for *satipaṭṭhāna* exercise and *vipassanā*.

From this discussion of the contemplation of body in body, it emerges that the term ‘*kāye*,’ in the phrase ‘*kāye kāyānupassī*,’ does not refer to the meaning of a collection. Indeed, it involves the common meaning of locative case that is ‘in the body.’ From this connotation of ‘*kāye*,’ the phrase ‘*kāye kāyānupassī*’ would be rendered as the contemplation of inside mental bodies within the physical body. Regarding the phrase ‘*sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī*,’ the definition of

⁹⁴² Jayantha Ruberu, op. cit., p. 296.

⁹⁴³ M.I.56.

⁹⁴⁴ Brahmavamso, *Satipatthana The Fourfold Focus of Mindfulness*. op. cit.

the term ‘*sabba*’ would be ‘every’ rather than ‘whole.’ Subsequently, the term ‘*kāya*’ would be rendered as ‘body’ rather than as ‘breathing.’ Thus, the term ‘*sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī*’ indicates preliminary states where numerous mental bodies are experienced before proceeding to the next part of the contemplation of body in body. The above way of considering the nature of arising and passing away in the body is related to the resultant process of the passing away of the coarse mental body and the arising of the more peaceful, and more sublime mental body. The *satipaṭṭhāna* exercise and the process of *vipassanā* concur in the perfect realization of impermanent nature arising from the perfect intuitive realization of mental bodies in meditation rather than from the rational process of the physical body.

A Discussion of Satipaṭṭhāna Practice in relation to the Five

Instrumental Factors and the Deathless Element

The next discussion of *satipaṭṭhāna* in relation to the five instrumental factors of insight and the deathless element reveals that the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* and the development of *vipassanā* concur in the arising of the five instrumental factors of insight; *cakkhu*, *ñāṇa*, *paññā*, *vijjā* and *āloka*, and in the perfect realization of the deathless element (*amatadhātu*). Indeed, we have seen so far that *satipaṭṭhāna* practice is based on the direct experience of the mental bodies. For the development of this experience, the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* expresses the notion that the meditator ascertains them by mindfulness (*sati*) and intuition (*ñāṇa*), which are established through an understanding of the unification of mind.⁹⁴⁵ The discourse shows that the direct experience of the mental bodies is based on *samādhi*, *sati*, and *ñāṇa*. This research proposes that the contemplation of body in body (*kāye kāyānupassī*) is based on, not only *ñāṇa*, but also *cakkhu*, *paññā*, *vijjā* and *āloka* arising and advancing together. The proposal agrees with the *Ananussutasutta* as follows;

⁹⁴⁵ Paṭis.I.183.

This is the contemplation of body in body: thus, Monks, such was the vision, the intuition, the wisdom, the knowledge, the light, that arose in me in regard to things unheard before.⁹⁴⁶

According to the discourse, the arising and progressing of these five instrumental factors of insight constitute the important *satipaṭṭhāna* practice of the contemplation of body in body and most prominently fulfil the role of providing a firm grounding for the process of *vipassanā*.

Now that the significance of the five factors for *satipaṭṭhāna* practice has been discussed, an inquiry into the significance of the deathless element (*amatadhātu*) is timely. The deathless element is a particular consciousness state of the Buddhist meditator during his mental development. It is known that the Buddha is the giver of the deathless.⁹⁴⁷ In the *Mahāpadānasutta*, the Buddha is the first to reveal the meditative technique of realizing the deathless element (*amatadhātu*).⁹⁴⁸ Buddhaghosa defines the deathless element in his commentaries as the ultimate goal called *nibbāna*.⁹⁴⁹ The relationship between the deathless element and the mental body (*nāmakāya*) is found in the *Mahācundasutta*⁹⁵⁰ in which venerable Mahācunda explains the characteristics of the *jhāyin* monks.

Friend, this should be trained by you: ‘Though, being dhamma-devotee, we will praise those monks who attain *jhānas*.’ What is the reason? Friends, it is surprising and rare to find these persons in the world, who remain touching the deathless element with the body.⁹⁵¹

According to venerable Mahācunda’s explanation, the *jhāyin* monks are the wondrous persons who live having touched the deathless element with the

⁹⁴⁶ S.V.178-179: “*Ayaṃ kāye kāyānupassanā ti me bhikkhave pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṃ udapādi nānaṃ udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi.*”

⁹⁴⁷ M.I.111.

⁹⁴⁸ D.II.39.

⁹⁴⁹ Sv.II.471, “*So hi amatasāṅkhātassa nibbānassa dvāraṃ.*”

⁹⁵⁰ A.III.356.

⁹⁵¹ A.III.356: “*Dhammayogā samānā jhāyīnaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ vaṇṇaṃ bhāsissāmā ti. Evaṃ hi vo āvuso sikkhitabbaṃ. Taṃ kissa hetu? Acchariyā h’ete āvuso puggalā dullabhā lokasmiṃ, ye amataṃ dhātuṃ kāyena phusitvā viharanti.*”

body. However, the physical body cannot touch or even recognize any psychological state intimately related to the deathless element. The commentaries, of course, clarify the term ‘body (*kāya*)’ as the mental body (*nāmakāya*), which performs realization, vision, understanding and attainment of the deathless element (*amatadhātu*).⁹⁵² Since the distinguishing mark of the collaboration between *samatha* and *vipassanā* in the mode of the supramundane *jhāna* is the meditation on the deathless element (*amatadhātu*), the term ‘*jhāyin*,’ as interpreted by the venerable Mahācunda, relates to the meditative state of supramundane *jhāna*. This involves the realization of *amatadhātu* through the mental body (*nāmakāya*). The relationship between *amatadhātu* and the mental body signifies a connection between *amatadhātu* and the contemplation of body in body (*kāye kāyānupassī*).

Moreover, the *Chandasutta*⁹⁵³ confirms this connection through the relationship between meditation on the four foundations of mindfulness and the realization of deathlessness. According to this discourse, when the meditator contemplates the body in body and abandons the desire (*chanda*) of the body, the meditator will realize the deathless (*amata*) state. By means of abandoning the desire of feeling (*vedanā*), mind (*citta*) and *dhamma*, the meditator also realizes the deathless (*amata*) state.⁹⁵⁴ Nonetheless, in the *Amatasutta*, the meditator should dwell with the mind well established in the four foundations of mindfulness in order to realize the deathless (*amata*) state.⁹⁵⁵ It should be noted that, to abandon the desire of the four foundations of mindfulness; body, feeling, mind and *dhamma*, seems to be incompatible with the consciousness state of being well established in the four foundations. Considering meditation on the four

⁹⁵² Mp.III.379.

⁹⁵³ S.V.181-182.

⁹⁵⁴ S.V.181-182.

⁹⁵⁵ S.V.184.

foundations of mindfulness, the process involves the penetration of numerous profound psychological states of mental bodies, feelings, minds and *dhammas*.

If the meditator desires the particular state of the mental body during the *satipaṭṭhāna* practice, the meditator is, in fact, unable to attain the more advanced states of the mental bodies followed by the perfect realization of the deathless element. This can be likened to how a monkey grips a piece of fruit. It needs to release the fruit before gripping a new one. This simile of the monkey suggests that the meditative process progresses to an advanced state by abandoning desire for the four foundations of mindfulness. Accordingly, establishment of the four foundations of mindfulness implies the advancement of the psychological states of the mental bodies until deathlessness is attained. This work proposes that the final stage of the development of the mental body is identical with the deathless state. It could be seen that the contemplation of body in body (*kāye kāyānupassī*) of *satipaṭṭhāna* practice can be fulfilled on condition that the meditator completely realizes the advanced state of the mental body (*nāmakāya*) that is the deathless element (*amata dhātu*).

While the above evidence suggests that the arising of the five instrumental factors of insight and the perfect realization of the deathless state are the prerequisites for the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* and the development of *vipassanā*, other scholars have proposed the particular types of meditation subjects. For instance, Solé-Leris indicates fourteen subjects which are; mindfulness of the body, mindfulness of breathing, the analysis of the four elements, the perception of the repulsiveness of food and the ten impurities as a suitable method for the practice of *vipassanā*.⁹⁵⁶ Ruberu suggests the twenty-one subjects of *samatha* development as the sufficient methods for *satipaṭṭhāna*

⁹⁵⁶ Solé-Leris, op. cit., pp. 74-75.

practice.⁹⁵⁷ Likewise, Vajirañāṇa points to the ten impurities (*asubha*)⁹⁵⁸ and mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*).⁹⁵⁹ According to these scholars, it seems possible to practice *satipaṭṭhāna* without any concentrative attainment of the *jhānas*. If this is correct, the question arises as to why the *jhānas* are called the “footprints of the Buddha” and the “dwelling of the Buddha” in the *Cūḷahatthipadopamasutta*.⁹⁶⁰ The *jhānas* are of particular importance because, rather than being mere meditation techniques, the profound mental quality of the *jhānas* would cause the meditation practice to progress to *vipassanā* meditation. As Jagaro says:

It is not the object or the technique that makes it insight meditation. What makes it insight meditation is this passive, alert, clear state of mind that reflects its presence to see the beginning and the end.⁹⁶¹

So the *jhāna* attainment leads one to let go of the grosser level of mundane nature, impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and not-self. After withdrawing from sensory experience, the meditator focuses equanimity on the more peaceful and refined object of the deathless element. The process of Buddhist liberation needs both the contemplation on the negative nature of mundane characteristics and the perfect recognition of the positive nature of the supramundane state of the deathless element. Schmithausen agrees with this theme:

...the intellectual process effectuating the vanishing of the cankers (*āsava*) implies two phrases: not only the realization of the negative nature of mundane existence...but also a realization of the positive nature of the supramundane state of *nirvāṇa*.⁹⁶²

To summarize, *satipaṭṭhāna*, the direct path for the realization of *nibbāna*, involves the collaboration between *samatha* (which abandons sensory experience) and *vipassanā*, which is the visual intuition of the five instrumental

⁹⁵⁷ Jayantha Ruberu, op. cit., p. 266.

⁹⁵⁸ Vajirañāṇa Paravahera Mahathera, op. cit., p. 169.

⁹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 227.

⁹⁶⁰ M.I.181-182.

⁹⁶¹ Ajahn Jagaro, *Samatha and Vipassana Meditation*, talk on 1988.

⁹⁶² L. Schmithausen, "On Some Aspects of Descriptions or Theories of 'Liberating Insight' and 'Enlightenment' in Early Buddhism," in *Studien Zum Jainismus Und Buddhismus : Gedenkschrift F'ur Ludwig Alsdorf*, ed. Klaus Bruhn, *Alt- Und Neu-Indische Studien ; 23* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1981), pp. 199-250, p. 226.

factors- *cakkhu*, *ñāṇa*, *paññā*, *vijjā* and *āloka*- into the subtle and peaceful state of the deathless element.

An Examination of the Contemplation of Feeling, Mind and

Dhamma

Turning now to the final aspect of the relationship between the *satipaṭṭhāna* practice and the twofold meditation, the examination of the other three foundations of mindfulness reveals that the four foundations of mindfulness are based on the same basic mental qualities. The practice of the second *satipaṭṭhāna* (*vedanānupassanā*) deals with the contemplation of nine types of feeling⁹⁶³ based on the basic three pleasant (*sukha*), unpleasant (*dukkha*) and neither-pain-nor-happiness (*adukkhamasukha*) along with their worldly (*sāmisā*) or unworldly (*nirāmisā*) nature. Next, the practice of *cittānupassanā* (contemplation of mind) deals with the sixteen states of the mind according to the presence or absence of the eight states of the mind which are desire (*rāga*), anger (*dosa*), delusion (*moha*), distraction (*vikkhitta*), great (*mahaggata*), surpassable (*uttara*), concentrated (*samāhita*) and freed (*vimutta*). Lastly, the practice of *dhammānupassanā* (contemplation of *dhamma*) proceeds from the five sections; the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*),⁹⁶⁴ the five aggregates of grasping (*upādāna-kkhandha*),⁹⁶⁵ the six sense-spheres (*āyatana*),⁹⁶⁶ the seven factors of awakening (*bojjhaṅga*),⁹⁶⁷ and the four noble truths (*ariya-sacca*).⁹⁶⁸

⁹⁶³ Nine types of feeling are- pleasant, unpleasant, neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant, worldly pleasant, worldly unpleasant, worldly neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant, unworldly pleasant, unworldly unpleasant, unworldly neither-unpleasant-nor-pleasant.

⁹⁶⁴ The five hindrances are- sensual desire (*kāmachanda*), ill will (*byāpādo*), sloth and torpor (*thīnamidda*), restlessness and worry (*uddhaccakukkucca*), and doubt (*vicikicchā*).

⁹⁶⁵ The five aggregates of grasping are the arising and passing away of- form (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), mental formation (*saṅkhāra*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*).

⁹⁶⁶ The six sense-spheres are- eye (*cakkhu*), ear (*sota*), nose (*ghāṇa*), tongue (*jivhā*), body (*kāya*), and mind (*mana*).

⁹⁶⁷ The seven factors of awakening are- mindfulness (*sati*), investigation of dhamma (*dhammavicaya*), effort (*viriyā*), joy (*pīti*), rapture (*passaddhi*), concentration (*samādhi*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*).

⁹⁶⁸ The four noble truths are- suffering (*dukkha*), cause of suffering (*dukkhasamudayo*), cessation of suffering (*dukkhanirodha*), and the path leading to the cessation of suffering (*dukkhanirodhagāminīpaṭipadā*).

The practices of four *satipaṭṭhānas* are based on the same basic mental quality. They can then subsume into single process as shown in the *Satipaṭṭhānasutta*. This introduces the four *satipaṭṭhānas* with the only one path to *nibbāna*.⁹⁶⁹ The term ‘only one path’ also appears in a simile in the *Mahāsīhanādasutta*⁹⁷⁰ where the Buddha compares the path of freedom to a single path leading to a pond. From this it emerges that *satipaṭṭhāna* practice does not involve a separate perception of each contemplative practice; instead, it is based on the sufficient mental quality. This particular mental factor in the initiation of *satipaṭṭhāna* contemplation is demonstrated in the *Ananussutasutta*. The discourse illustrates the arising of the five instrumental factors of insight, *cakkhu*, *ñāṇa*, *paññā*, *vijjā* and *āloka*, as important factors in the contemplation of the four foundations:

This is the contemplation of body in body: thus, Monks, such was the vision, the intuition, the wisdom, the knowledge, the light, that arose in me in regard to things unheard before....The contemplation of feelings in feelings (*vedanāsu vedanānupassī*)...The contemplation of mind in mind (*citte cittānupassī*) ...The contemplation of *dhamma* in *dhamma* (*dhammesu dhammānupassī*)....⁹⁷¹

The arising of the five instrumental factors induces the exercise of the four concurrent foundations and these instrumental factors progress to more profound states during the *satipaṭṭhāna* contemplation.

However, most scholars have attempted to distinguish the contemplation of four foundations. For instance, Brahmavamso says: “the meditator sustains their mindfulness on one of the four focuses: their own body, the pleasure and pain associated with each sense, the mind consciousness and, fourthly, the objects of mind.”⁹⁷² Moreover, Sujato suggests one foundation at a time: “One is obviously supposed, in some sense or another, to choose one of these four as

⁹⁶⁹ M.I.56.

⁹⁷⁰ M.I.76-77.

⁹⁷¹ S.V.178-179.

⁹⁷² Brahmavamso, *Satipatthana The Fourfold Focus of Mindfulness*. op. cit.

a framework for meditation.”⁹⁷³ While Sujato suggests that any of the four foundations is equally suitable to begin, Nyanaponika regards the body as the principal foundation of mindfulness:

The bodily processes selected here as principal object of mindfulness serve for the systematic development of insight throughout the whole practice. The other three of contemplation of *satipaṭṭhāna* are not taken up in a systematic way but are attended to whenever their objects occur.⁹⁷⁴

Nonetheless, Goenka regards feeling as the principal foundation: “All four *satipaṭṭhānas* can be practiced only with the base of *vedanā* (feeling).”⁹⁷⁵ From these viewpoints, it can be assumed that a consideration of each foundation’s features induces the various interpretations of *satipaṭṭhāna* practice. In considering the contemplation of four foundations of mindfulness, Anālayo mentions a progressive pattern. After examining each section of the four foundations, he classifies the contemplation of body, feeling, mind and *dhamma* as a linear progressive pattern developed in the sequence of body, feeling, mind and *dhamma*.⁹⁷⁶ In his arrangement, the contemplation of body is the fundamental exercise, while the successful implementation of *satipaṭṭhāna* is attained through the contemplation of the last section of *dhamma* which is the four noble truths.

These scholars appear to focus on the detailed exposition of *satipaṭṭhāna*, but not on the formulaic pattern of the contemplation of body-in-body (*kāya*), feeling-in-feeling (*vedanā*), mind-in-mind (*citta*) and *dhamma*-in-*dhamma*. According to the contemplation of the formulaic pattern, the meditator requires the prerequisite of sufficient mental quality in order to attain the profound states of refined and peaceful bodies, feelings, minds and *dhammas*. It is therefore necessary to determine which level of concentration is appropriate for

⁹⁷³ Bhikkhu Sujato, *A History of Mindfulness: How Insight Worked Tranquillity*, op. cit., p. 86.

⁹⁷⁴ Nyanaponika, op. cit., p. 105.

⁹⁷⁵ S.N Goenka, *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta Discourses*, p. 27.

⁹⁷⁶ Anālayo, op. cit., p. 20.

the prerequisite of the contemplation of the last three foundations of mindfulness.

Turning to the second foundation of mindfulness- “the observation of feeling (*vedanānupassanā*)-,” its examination points to the essence of the five instrumental factors of insight as the common means whereby the four *satipaṭṭhānas* are accomplished simultaneously. Indeed, we can interpret the contemplation of feeling in feeling in the same way as the contemplation of body in body. So the meaning of ‘feeling in feeling’ is ‘subtle feeling in gross feeling’ just as the subtle element of air permeates through the particles of sand. The *Jhānasutta*⁹⁷⁷ announces an association between the assortment of subtle and gross feelings and the eight *jhānas*. Indeed, each of these *jhānas* possesses an object of concentration that is finer than the preceding state; simultaneously, feeling occurs at whatever *jhāna* state is attained. Since each higher state of *jhāna* is more subtle than the preceding state, the feeling achieved in the higher state is also more subtle than in the preceding state. With each progressively higher *jhāna* state, the *vedanā* experience becomes more refined, more internal; this is the meaning of feeling in feeling, i.e., refined feeling within coarse feeling. That is, the feelings of the mental bodies (*nāmakāya*) are more refined than the feeling of the coarse (physical) body. In the formulaic pattern of *vedanānupassanā*,⁹⁷⁸ the meditator requires a perfect recognition of the nature of the arising and passing away of feelings. This requirement is referred to in the *Ñānasutta* where the Buddha recommends observation of the arising of the five factors; *cakkhu*, *ñāṇa*, *paññā*, *vijjā* and *āloka*, during the perfect recognition of feelings, the arising of feeling, the ceasing of feeling and the way leading to the ceasing of feeling.⁹⁷⁹ Thus, these five factors arising from deep concentration are the predominant factor for establishing the contemplation of

⁹⁷⁷ S.IV.422-426.

⁹⁷⁸ M.I.59.

⁹⁷⁹ S.IV.233-234.

feeling in feeling because they are the most appropriate instrument for recognizing the nature of the arising and passing away of feelings.

The examination of the third foundation of mindfulness, observation of the mind, suggests that the deep concentration is the central importance for all the *satipaṭṭhāna* practices. In fact, this third foundation of mindfulness divides the mental qualities into sixteen states, as already discussed. These sixteen states of the mind are identified with the template of the third supernatural knowledge (*abhiññā*), which is the knowledge of others' minds (*cetopariyañāṇa*); the third foundation of mindfulness refers to one's own mind, but *cetopariyañāṇa* refers to that of others. In order to develop *cetopariyañāṇa*, Upatissa suggests contemplation on the light *kasiṇa* during the fourth *jhāna* as the basis for experiencing one's own mind and the other's mind.⁹⁸⁰ This proposal of Upatissa is consistent with the conventional formula of *cetopariyañāṇa*, which is based on the concentration of mind at the fourth *jhāna*.⁹⁸¹ Therefore, it is compulsory to develop concentration into the deep state of, at least, the fourth *jhāna* before advancing to the observation of the mind.

The examination of the last segment of *satipaṭṭhāna*, the observation of *dhamma* (*dhammānupassanā*), asserts for the central importance of the five instrumental factors of insight for all the *satipaṭṭhāna* practices. The basic requirement for the observation of *dhamma* will be determined through an interpretation of the key expression '*dhammesu dhammānupassī* (contemplation of *dhamma* in *dhamma*).' The contemplation involves movement from any mental object to its refined mental object. The advancement into more refined mental object depends on the intensification of mental qualities. The term '*anupassī*' could literally be 'continue to see,' which

⁹⁸⁰ Upatissa, op. cit., p. 220.

⁹⁸¹ D.I.75-80.

combined with the noun ‘*dhamma*,’ results in ‘continue to see *dhamma*.’ Regarding the words ‘see’ and ‘*dhamma*,’ the term ‘*dhammacakkhu*’ is important to clarify. Buddhaghosa interprets *dhammacakkhu* to mean insight into *dhammas* or “the eye made of *dhamma*.”⁹⁸² The second meaning reveals that the internal vision characteristic of *dhammacakkhu*, developed through the profound states of meditation practice, involves the ability of visual intuition applied to *dhamma*. Therefore, in order to perform ‘*dhammesu dhammānupassī* (contemplation of *dhamma* in *dhamma*),’ the meditator needs to attain the superior mental vision of *dhammacakkhu*. There it is stated that not only *cakkhu* in the special form of *dhammacakkhu*, but also the other four instrumental factors of insight, *ñāṇa*, *paññā*, *vijjā* and *āloka*, are the predominant factor for the contemplation of *dhamma* in *dhamma*.

The preceding section supports that the contemplation of the four foundations of mindfulness coincidentally plays a crucial role in the realm of deep concentration presented in the five meditation terms *cakkhu*, *ñāṇa*, *paññā*, *vijjā* and *āloka*. All *satipaṭṭhānas* are realized through these five instrumental factors based on *jhānas*, and the integrity of style of cognition is interpreted as the only one way of meditative practice. Just as one can see many things such as a house, a car, people and a sign post at the same time, the five instrumental factors have visual ability to penetrate all *dhammas* without the analytical thinking of notional thought. In this way, all four aspects of the *satipaṭṭhānas* receive mindful attention as a by-product of the arising of the five instrumental factors. Moreover, in a passage in the *Kimilasutta*,⁹⁸³ the Buddha suggests the essential unity of the four *satipaṭṭhānas* in terms of the simile of four chariots. At an intersection the chariots come from four directions, each drives through and thereby destroying a heap of dust in the middle. This simile shows that a

⁹⁸² Sv.I.237.

⁹⁸³ S.V.325.

monk can overcome the unwholesome states by dwelling in contemplation of each foundation of mindfulness. In all this, the deep concentration which initiates the contemplation of any foundation of mindfulness actually subsumes the initiation of the contemplation of the other three foundations of mindfulness. Therefore, while the Buddha suggests the four foundations of mindfulness as the various systematic methods, he also describes them as the only way (*ekāyano maggo*). The contemplation of any foundation of mindfulness taken to its own culmination actually subsumes the contemplation of the other three foundations of mindfulness.

In summary, it becomes clear that even though some scholars distinguish *satipaṭṭhāna* from the *jhānas*, in the analysis of *satipaṭṭhāna* practice, *jhāna* attainment turns out to be the most efficient tool. Admittedly, the meditative process of the four *satipaṭṭhānas* must be associated initially with the first *jhāna* in order to eliminate the five hindrances. Next, the contemplation of body in body (*kāye kāyānupassī*) does not involve experiencing the physical body or the bodily postures; instead, it needs to be developed on the basis of the perfect recognition of mental bodies (*nāmakāya*). Its ascent is signalled through the resultant process of the passing away of the coarse mental body (*nāmakāya*) and the arising of the more peaceful and more sublime mental body (*nāmakāya*). There also exists a widespread practice of employing particular types of meditation subjects for *satipaṭṭhāna* exercise. Despite this practice, a closer analysis reveals that the firm establishment of *satipaṭṭhāna* exercise implies the advancement of the psychological states of the mental bodies until the final stage of deathlessness is attained. Lastly, the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* needs both *samatha* and *vipassanā* for the abandonment of sensory experience and the attainment of visual intuition of the five instrumental factors of insight, *cakkhu*, *ñāṇa*, *paññā*, *vijjā* and *āloka* respectively. Rather than analytical thinking of notional thought, these five factors are the central characteristics of

all four *satipaṭṭhāna* practices. Although the cognitive process of each contemplative practice seems to distinguish the contemplation of the four foundations, these instrumental factors provide the ability to attain the profound states of refined and peaceful bodies, feelings, minds and *dhammas* simultaneously. Through the five instrumental factors based on deep concentration, all *satipaṭṭhānas* are of continual relevance along the path toward enlightenment. Therefore even though the four foundations of mindfulness seem to represent distinct systematic methods, they constitute an essential unity of meditative experience. Hence, the four foundations of mindfulness clarify the meditative exercises of *samatha* and *vipassanā*. The following section will analyse the twofold meditation following the determination of the cessation of feeling and perception (*saññāvedayitanirodha*). This will contribute further to the clarification of the true essence of *samatha* and *vipassanā* in regard to the cessation of feeling and perception (*saññāvedayitanirodha*).

Determination of the Cessation of Perception and Feeling

(*saññāvedayitanirodha*) in Regard to *Samatha* and *Vipassanā*

The cessation of feeling and perception (*saññāvedayitanirodha*), also called the attainment of cessation (*nirodhasamāpatti*), is the stage immediately following the fourth *arūpajjhāna* (sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception). The essential prerequisites for the achievement of this stage are the attainment of the eight *jhānas* accompanied with the state of non-returner (*anāgāmi*) or *arahat*.⁹⁸⁴ It involves the cessation of all mental defilements together with the cessation of feeling (*vedanā*) and perception (*saññā*) for a considerable period of up to seven days. This study aims to reveal that the cooperation of *samatha* and *vipassanā* culminates in the attainment of cessation (*nirodhasamāpatti*), and that very subtle degrees of perception (*saññā*) and feeling (*vedanā*) remain

⁹⁸⁴ *Vism.* 702 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 824).

when this occurs. This examination of the attainment of cessation, therefore, follows by drawing from the two exegetical issues. First, whether or not the feeling of happiness exists therein? Second, how the attainment of cessation is developed?

That is to say, the work explores the relationship between the cessation of feeling and the existence of happiness during the process. In order to explore that relationship, this section investigates contrary themes in reference to the interpretation of the cessation of perception and feeling: the existence of happiness and the ceasing of mental activity. Of particular relevance to the first theme is the *Bahuvedaniyasutta* in which the Buddha announces that the happiness of entering and abiding in the cessation of perception and feeling is more excellent than the happiness of any *jhāna* attainment.

And what, Ānanda, is this other happiness loftier and more sublime than that happiness? Here, Ānanda, having surpassed completely the sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, a monk enters into and remains in the cessation of perception and feeling. This, Ānanda, is the other happiness that is loftier and more sublime than that happiness.⁹⁸⁵

This passage points out the cessation of perception and feeling (*saññāvedayitanirodha*) as the highest state of the structured series of altered states of consciousness in the quiescent process. A rather different context for the attainment of cessation is that one might regard the complete absence of mental activities as its characteristic; nevertheless, the Buddha still emphasizes happiness (*sukha*). Thus, there is an analytical problem of its definition of bringing to a halt all feeling and the refined happiness in the attainment of cessation.

⁹⁸⁵ M.I.400: “*katamañ-c’Ānanda etamhā sukhā aññaṃ sukhaṃ abhikkantatarañ-ca pañītatarañ-ca: Idh’Ānanda bhikkhu sabbaso nevasaññānāsaññāyatanaṃ samatikkamma saññāvedayitanirodhaṃ upasampajja viharati. Idaṃ kho Ānanda etamhā sukhā aññaṃ sukhaṃ abhikkantatarañ-ca pañītatarañ-ca.*”

The general point here is that ‘happiness (*sukha*)’ can be declared as an attribute of the attainment of cessation even though the *suttas* present the second theme, which is the non-existence of any kind of sensation during the attainment. For instance, the *Anupubbanirodhasutta* states the ceasing of perception and feeling: “Of one who attains to the cessation of perceptions and feelings, perceptions and feelings cease.”⁹⁸⁶ The next discourse is the *Great Discourse of the Miscellany* (*Mahāvedallasutta*), where the two prominent disciples of the Buddha, Sāriputta and Koṭṭhita, discuss the situation of a monk who has attained the cessation of perception and feeling as follows:

And that monk who has attained to the cessation of perception and feeling, his bodily formations have ceased and subsided, his verbal formations have ceased and subsided, his mental formations have ceased and subsided, his life span is not entirely exhausted, his heat is not extinguished, his faculties become exceptionally clear.⁹⁸⁷

This passage leaves no doubt that the suspension and standstill of bodily, verbal and mental functions signify the ceasing of consciousness, perception and feeling. Sāriputta points to the cessation of mental activities as the constituent of the attainment of cessation. Likewise, while answering the question “Sister, of monk attaining to the cessation of perception and feeling, which *dhammas* cease first? (*Saññāvedayitanirodham samāpajjantassa pan’ayye bhikkhuno katame dhammā paṭhamam nirujjhanti*),” *Bhikkhunī* Dhammadinnā says: “Friend Visākha, of monk attaining to the cessation of perception and feeling, verbal formation ceases first, then bodily formation, then mental formation (*Saññāvedayitanirodham samāpajjantassa kho āvuso Visākha bhikkhuno paṭhamam nirujjhati vacīsaṅkhāro, tato kāyasaṅkhāro, tato cittasaṅkhāro ti*).”⁹⁸⁸ The cessation of mental process is the last step of cessation achievements; her statement still indicates the absence of mental function. Buddhaghosa, furthermore, says in the corresponding explanation:

⁹⁸⁶ A.IV.409: “*saññāvedayitanirodham samāpanassa saññā ca vedanā ca niruddhā honti.*”

⁹⁸⁷ M.I.296: “*yo cāyaṃ bhikkhu saññāvedayitanirodham samāpanno, tassa pi kāyasaṅkhārā niruddhā paṭippassaddhā, vacīsaṅkhārā niruddhā paṭippassaddhā, cittasaṅkhārā niruddhā paṭippassaddhā, āyu aparikkhīṇo, usmā avūpasantā, indriyāni vipasannāni.*”

⁹⁸⁸ M.I.301-302.

What is the attainment of cessation? It is the non-occurrence of mind and mental concomitants as a result of their successive cessation.⁹⁸⁹

Having considered the cessation of perception and feeling, most scholars attempt to restate its second theme, which specifies the ending of mental activity. For example, Narāsabho writes: "...at this stage (*saññāvedayitanirodha*) all activities of mind subside into cessation."⁹⁹⁰ Schmithausen agrees: "...*saññāvedayitanirodha* has come to be regarded as a completely non-conscious state"⁹⁹¹ Nārada also mentions that the attainment of cessation is a state of the temporary ceasing of all mental activities.⁹⁹² It is true that one cannot experience happiness if the mental activities cease. Griffiths directly points to the ending of sensual perception in that it is completely without physical, verbal and mental functions. In other words, this means that consciousness does not exist and that the processes of sensation have come to a complete halt.⁹⁹³

This is a questionable opinion of the complete absence of mental activities, regarded as a principle factor for the attainment of cessation. The opinion contradicts the Buddha's statement of the existence of happiness in this attainment. It is thus necessary to investigate the genuine characteristic of happiness. Griffiths argues that the happiness in the Buddha's statement about the attainment of cessation means the absence of pain (*dukkha*).⁹⁹⁴ It is certainly true that the mental activity of pain is not possible in the state of attainment of cessation because the Buddha indicates the superior happiness therein. Griffiths' consideration of feelings of happiness and pain relies on a dual opposition between pleasant and unpleasant feelings, in the same way that cold and hot can be said to be in opposition. If the temperature goes down, it implies

⁹⁸⁹ *Vism.* 702 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 824).

⁹⁹⁰ Phra Singhathon Narāsabho, op. cit., p. 52.

⁹⁹¹ L. Schmithausen, op. cit., p. 242.

⁹⁹² Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, op. cit., p. 227.

⁹⁹³ Paul J. Griffiths, *On Being Mindless : Buddhist Meditation and the Mind-Body Problem*, op. cit, pp. 8-9.

⁹⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 21.

more coldness and less heat. On the contrary, the increasing of temperature implies less coldness and more heat. If feelings are composed of two components, then the dual opposition between happiness and pain seems to be appropriate.

However, the study of categorization of feelings contradicts Griffiths' argument and indicates the possibility of the existence of happiness in the attainment of cessation as well. The Buddha usually arranges feeling into three categories: happiness (*sukha*), pain (*dukkha*) and neither-pain-nor-happiness feeling (*adukkhamasukha*).⁹⁹⁵ The third category of feeling, neither-pain-nor-happiness feeling (*adukkhamasukha*), refers to one kind of equanimity which is called equanimity as a feeling (*upekkhā vedanā*). The mental state of the absence of pain can be classified into the category of neither-pain-nor-happiness feeling rather than that of happiness. The Buddha, furthermore, appears to oppose the feeling of happiness to the feeling of pain.

Ānanda, on an occasion when one feels a happy feeling, on that occasion one does not feel a painful feeling, one does not feel a neither-pain-nor-happiness feeling; one feels just a happy feeling.⁹⁹⁶

The absence of pain does not mean a happy feeling because of the differentiation between the two feelings. It thus appears that Griffiths' proposal of dual opposition between the two feelings does not satisfy the requirements of Buddha's categorization of feeling into three parts. An important aspect of happiness is found in the *Jhānasutta* where the arising of the structure of feelings (*vedanā*) corresponds with the consciousness states of the *jhānas*.⁹⁹⁷ This discourse implies that the more the *jhāna* state progresses, the more subtle and refined the feeling becomes. The result is that an intensification of concentration involves a concurrent increase in the depth and intensity of the

⁹⁹⁵ D.II.66.

⁹⁹⁶ D.II.66: “*Yasmim̐ Ānanda samaye sukhaṃ vedanaṃ vedeti, n'eva tasmim̐ samaye dukkhaṃ vedanaṃ vedeti, na adukkhamasukhaṃ vedanaṃ vedeti; sukhaṃ yeva tasmim̐ samaye vedanaṃ vedeti.*”

⁹⁹⁷ A.IV.422-426.

feeling. Moreover, in the *Poṭṭhapādasutta*, while the more profound perception (*saññā*) arises together with the *jhāna* state, the preceding coarse perception ceases.⁹⁹⁸ The refined feeling also arises in accompaniment with the advancement of the *jhāna* and with the passing away of the preceding feeling.

Therefore, the argument of the *Poṭṭhapādasutta*, in regard to feeling, can be interpreted to mean that the forward movement of the *jhāna* states causes the existing feeling to cease and an ascending feeling to appear. That is, with the attainment of cessation, the perception and feeling of mental states in the attainment of the lower *jhānas* ceases and a most refined feeling of spiritual happiness arises. The attainment lacks gross perceptions and feelings, but retains very subtle degrees of perception and feeling. This profound feeling of spiritual happiness accompanies the attainment of cessation in apparent contradiction to the fact that the attainment is called *saññāvedayitanirodha* (the cessation of perception and feeling). An explanation for the ambiguous naming of this attainment can be illustrated through the following anecdote. A novice smeared a bowl with oil and a monk asked him to bring a bowl to serve gruel. The novice replied, “Venerable Sir, there is oil in the bowl.” Then the monk told him, “Bring the oil, novice, I shall fill the oil tube.” Thereupon the novice said, “There is no oil, Venerable Sir.” What the novice said is true in both cases: there is no oil since there is not enough to fill the tube yet there is some oil remaining at the base of the bowl. Similarly, the attainment of cessation cannot be said to be present to perception and feeling since they are so subtle that they cannot perform the decisive function of perceiving an object. To summarize, the term ‘cessation (*nirodha*) of feeling (*vedanā*)’ implies the cessation of gross feelings, while the very profound and intense feeling of spiritual happiness still exists within the attainment of cessation. Perhaps the

⁹⁹⁸ D.I.182-184.

cessation of perception and feeling can be attained through the non-attachment to any perception and feeling.

Besides considering the characteristics of the attainment of cessation, its development will now be discussed according to the criteria of *samatha* and *vipassanā*. In the *Kāmahūsutta*, Kāmahū emphasizes that the attainment of cessation needs to be developed on the basis of tranquillity and insight.

For the attainment of the cessation of perception and feeling, householder, two things are very helpful; tranquillity and insight.⁹⁹⁹

Buddhaghosa supports this viewpoint. He states that both *samatha* and *vipassanā* are the necessary conditions for cultivating the attainment of cessation. The meditator who endeavours only with tranquillity can reach the meditative state of the fourth *arūpajjhāna* (the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception) and one who endeavours only with insight can reach the attainment of fruit (*phala*).¹⁰⁰⁰ In Buddhaghosa's opinion, it is necessary that *vipassanā* cooperate with *samatha* in order to develop the attainment of cessation.

Nevertheless, Griffiths argues for the dissociation between the attainment of cessation and *vipassanā* and then arranges this attainment, along with four *rūpajjhānas* and four *arūpajjhānas*, into a group of tranquillity techniques. The arrangement of these nine altered states of consciousness is described as the 'nine successive attainments (*anupubbanirodha*).'¹⁰⁰¹ The aim of these attainments is to cause practitioners to withdraw from emotional attachments to external phenomena and then progressively lead to a complete ceasing of all

⁹⁹⁹ S.IV.295: "Saññāvedayitanirodhasamāpattiyā kho gahapati dve dhammā bahūpakārā samatho ca vipassanā ca."

¹⁰⁰⁰ *Vism.* 705 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 828).

¹⁰⁰¹ Paul J. Griffiths, *On Being Mindless: Buddhist Meditation and the Mind-Body Problem*, op. cit., p. 20.

mental activity.¹⁰⁰² Therefore, he classifies the attainment of cessation as the result of cultivating a process concerned entirely with tranquillity, namely *samatha*.¹⁰⁰³ He then differentiates the attainment of cessation from *vipassanā* because the intellectual analysis associated with *vipassanā* is incompatible with the absence of mental activity in the attainment of cessation. If this differentiation is correct, it might reasonably be asked why the Buddha speaks of the consistency between the attainment of cessation and wisdom, as follows:

Ānanda, having surpassed completely the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception, I enter and remain in the cessation of perception and feeling and by seeing with wisdom, my cankers became completely destroyed.¹⁰⁰⁴

Of interest here is that *paññā* is not only an essential mental property for the development of attainment of cessation, but also for the mental process of visual intuition, which collaborates with the attainment of cessation in bringing about the destruction of all cankers. Furthermore, in the process of the unification of the mind, *paññā* often arises to assist in seeing things as they really are, as stated in the *Jīvakambavanesutta*:

Monks, develop concentration. Monks, things manifest as they really are to a monk who is concentrated.¹⁰⁰⁵

It thus appears that the meditator cannot cultivate a completely tranquillity process for the purpose of entering the attainment of cessation without the arising of *paññā* or *vipassanā*, in which the meditator can see things as they really are. In addition, Anālayo states that the tension between *samatha* and *vipassanā*, their mutual convergence and supplementation, is realized in actual practice.¹⁰⁰⁶ Therefore, both *samatha* and *vipassanā* are the prerequisite meditative processes for cultivating the attainment of cessation.

¹⁰⁰² Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁰⁰³ Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁰⁰⁴ A.IV.448: “*So kho ahaṃ Ānanda sabbaso nevasaññānāsaññāyatanaṃ samatikkamma Saññāvedayitanirodhaṃ upasampajja viharāmi, paññāya ca me disvā āsavā parikkhayaṃ agamaṃsu.*”

¹⁰⁰⁵ S.IV.143-144: “*samādhiṃ bhikkhave bhāvētha, samāhitassa bhikkhave bhikkhuno yathābhūtaṃ okkhāyati.*”

¹⁰⁰⁶ Anālayo, op. cit., p. 91.

It should become clear from the foregoing analysis of the attainment of cessation that it usually signifies a complete halt of mental activities. Despite this interpretation, the happiness of entering and abiding in the attainment of cessation is more excellent than the happiness of any *jhāna* attainment. Consequently, the term ‘cessation of perception and feeling’ implies a cessation of all gross feelings, but the very profound and intense state of happy feeling still exists. Subsequently, the Buddha arranges the attainment of cessation together with the concentrative attainments- the four *rūpajjhānas* and the four *arūpajjhānas*- into one structure of attainment which is known as the ‘nine successive attainments (*anupubbanirodha*).’ Nevertheless, the attainment of cessation needs to be developed on the foundation of the essential mental property of *paññā*. The meditator cannot cultivate a completely tranquil process for entering the attainment of cessation without the arising of *paññā* or *vipassanā*. The study of the collaboration between *samatha* and *vipassanā* will focus on the clarification of Buddhist ultimate goal: the destruction of cankers.

Determination of the Ceasing of Cankers Regarding *Samatha* and *Vipassanā*

The knowledge of the destruction of cankers is an essential component of the enlightened beings. The study of the relation between the achievement of this knowledge and the two meditative principles, *samatha* and *vipassanā*, facilitates the correct practice of the meditator. This thesis has analyzed *samatha* and *vipassanā* processes, and will now assess them in terms of a complete liberation of consciousness states from all cankers and in regard to the attainment of the supremely spiritual happiness which leaves no trace of unsatisfactoriness. This work ascertains that the freedom of mind (*cetovimutti*) and freedom through wisdom (*paññāvimutti*) are two aspects of a single process which leads to the eradication of both ignorance and craving. This section will first discuss whether ignorance or craving is the predominant factor to be

nullified in the enlightenment path. Second, it will examine both types of freedom according to the criteria of *samatha* and *vipassanā*.

In the enlightenment path, both *samatha* and *vipassanā* need to be developed for the simultaneous removal of ignorance and craving. Indeed, the *Āpaṇasutta* illustrates the cooperation between craving and ignorance which prevents beings from achieving enlightenment:

The continued existence is without discoverable beginning. A first point is not apparent to beings hindered by ignorance, fettered by craving, who roam and wander on.¹⁰⁰⁷

Ignorance and craving are the most powerful factors obstructing and tying down beings to the continued existence (*saṃsāra*). The meditator should get rid of both ignorance and craving by means of supernatural knowledge (*abhiññā*).¹⁰⁰⁸ Schmithausen agrees with this notion: “the cause of bondage to be destroyed by liberating insight is clearly a psychological factor: either craving (*taṇhā*) or the cankers interpreted as including both craving and ignorance (*avidyā*).”¹⁰⁰⁹ In the case of the truth of suffering, Nanayakkara states that craving alone is not a sufficient factor for the cause of suffering. He further suggests ignorance (*avijjā*) as a further ground of craving.¹⁰¹⁰ Bhavana shares this viewpoint: “A high level of success in insight meditation results in the complete eradication of ignorance, the cause of cravings.”¹⁰¹¹ Ratnam speaks of their association: “one is essentially associated with the other, and the two can never be separated.”¹⁰¹² Yet clearly this sounds reasonable. The completed removal of craving does not lead directly to enlightenment because the meditator has to destroy it at its roots, as shown in the *Catucakkasutta*.

¹⁰⁰⁷ S.V.226: “*Anamataggo kho saṃsāro pubbā koṭi na paññāyati avijjānīvaraṇaṃ sattānaṃ taṇhāsamyojanānaṃ sandhāvataṃ saṃsaratam.*”

¹⁰⁰⁸ M.III.289: “*Avijjā ca bhavataṇhā ca, ime dhammā abhiññā pahātabbā.*”

¹⁰⁰⁹ L. Schmithausen, op. cit., p. 208.

¹⁰¹⁰ Percy Nanayakkara, *Path to Freedom* (Singapore: Singapore Buddhist Meditation Centre), p. 75.

¹⁰¹¹ Bhavana, *Practical Buddhist Meditation for Beginners* (Kuala Lumpur: Syarikat Dharma, 1981), p. 12.

¹⁰¹² M. V. Ram Kumar Ratnam and Digumarti Bhaskara Rao, *Dukkha : Suffering in Early Buddhism*, (New Delhi: Discovery Pub. House, 2003), p. 85.

Having completely drawn out craving with its root, thus one will escape from it.¹⁰¹³

The root of craving is defilement, which is abandoned as a result of the abandonment of craving. Buddhaghosa proposes that the root of craving is ignorance.¹⁰¹⁴ Although it seems that ignorance is being portrayed as more primary than craving, the meditator requires the eradication of the mutually conditioning cankers, craving and ignorance.

However, some scholars refer to a different scheme which concerns ignorance alone as to be destroyed. For instance, Gunaratana points to ignorance alone as the main bondage: “the key to liberation lies in the eradication of ignorance by developing its direct opposite, namely wisdom (*paññā*).”¹⁰¹⁵ Piyadassi agrees: “Ignorance is the crowning corruption. Our greeds, hates, conceits and a host of other defilements go hand in hand with our ignorance.”¹⁰¹⁶ Ignorance is the cause for the origin and existence of all defilements because ignorance represents the predominant constituent of cankers according to the Buddha’s statement in the *Nibbedhikasutta*.

And what, monks, is the conditioned source of cankers? Ignorance, monks, is the conditioned source of cankers...
And what, monks, is the cessation of cankers? The cessation of ignorance, monks, is the cessation of cankers.¹⁰¹⁷

According to this view, the cessation of ignorance brings about complete cessation of the cankers. Further evidence for the importance of ignorance is found in the formula of dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), which establishes a set of causal relations. The arising and cessation of elements relate to other elements through their conditioned responses, therefore the cessation of

¹⁰¹³ S.I.16: “*samūlaṃ taṇham abbuyha, evaṃ yātrā bhavissatī ti.*”

¹⁰¹⁴ Spk.I.53.

¹⁰¹⁵ Henepola Gunaratana, *A Critical Analysis of the Jhanas in Theravada Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., p.163.

¹⁰¹⁶ Piyadassi, *The Spectrum of Buddhism : Writings of Piyadassi*, op. cit., p.198.

¹⁰¹⁷ A.III.414: “*Katamo ca bhikkhave āsavānaṃ nidānasambhavo? Avijjā bhikkhave āsavānaṃ nidānasambhavo... Katamo ca bhikkhave āsavanirodho? Avijjānirodho bhikkhave āsavanirodho.*”

the first element, ignorance, establishes a series of conditioned responses to the cessation of birth, old age, dying, grief, sorrow and suffering.¹⁰¹⁸ So ignorance is the primary root-cause of all unwholesome states (*akusaladhamma*).¹⁰¹⁹

Although ignorance is a significant cause of cankers, a detailed examination of the notion of ignorance shows the related significance of the eradication of craving for achieving enlightenment. Of course, a thorough comprehension of the four noble truths can destroy ignorance, because, as we have seen, one of the four noble truths is that craving is the cause of suffering. Hence, the comprehension of craving can destroy ignorance as demonstrated in the *Vibhaṅgasutta*:

And what, monks, is ignorance? Not knowing about suffering, not knowing about the origin of suffering, not knowing about the cessation of suffering, not knowing about the path leading to the cessation of suffering. This, monks, is called ignorance.¹⁰²⁰

The quotation illustrates that cessation of ignorance is born as a condition of the eradication of craving. Further evidence, that both of these mental defilements must be eliminated, is found in the statement in the *Dasuttarasutta*. As the Buddha announces: “Which two things are to be abandoned? Ignorance and the craving for existence.”¹⁰²¹ Regarding the three cankers i.e., *kāmāsava* canker of sense-pleasures, *bhavāsava* canker of becoming, and *avijjāsava* canker of ignorance which have to be neutralized in the enlightenment path, one might see some potential problem here ‘how can three cankers be related to ignorance and craving’, and ‘how can ignorance be both a cause of cankers and one of them.’ In the development of the third *vijjā*, the mind is freed from the three cankers.¹⁰²² The term “*kāmāsava*,” which is interpreted as desire for the sense

¹⁰¹⁸ M.III.63-64.

¹⁰¹⁹ S.II.263.

¹⁰²⁰ S.II.4: “*Katamā ca bhikkhave avijjā? Yaṃ kho bhikkhave dukkhe aññāṇaṃ dukkhasamudaye aññāṇaṃ dukkhanirodhe aññāṇaṃ dukkhanirodhagāminiyā paṭipadāya aññāṇaṃ. Ayaṃ vuccati bhikkhave avijjā.*”

¹⁰²¹ D.III.274: “*Katame dve dhammā pahātabbā? Avijjā ca bhavataṅhā ca.*”

¹⁰²² M.I.23.

objects, is referred to craving. Most scholars generally render the second canker, *bhavāsava*, as desire for continued existence.¹⁰²³ According to these interpretations of the two *āsavas*, they can be classified with craving.

Let us turn to the second question concerning ignorance and the three *āsavas*. The basic point introduced in the description of the third *vijjā* is the classification of *āsavas* into three types. Furthermore, the description places emphasis on the destructive arrangement to *āsavas* during the process of third *vijjā*. The prominent process of the third *vijjā* is that the eradication of *āsavas-kāmāsava*, *bhavāsava* and *avijjāsava*- becomes subtler and more significant than the eradication of the preceding *āsava*. The extinction of all *āsavas* and their cause, which is the last step, is of central importance. This finds support in the *Ājīvakaśutta* in which Ānanda proclaims the elimination of defilements together with their root cause:

What do you think, householder? They whose desire is abandoned, has cut off at the root . . . whose anger is abandoned, has cut off at the root . . . whose delusion is abandoned, has cut off at the root.¹⁰²⁴

The various *suttas*¹⁰²⁵ point to the extinguishable pattern of mental defilements as relating to the *Pāli* word “*ucchinnaṃūla* (cut off at the root). Thus this pattern refers to cutting the root cause of all cankers, which is ignorance, as well as cutting them off individually.

While the above evidence confirms the necessity of destroying both bondages-ignorance and craving, Griffiths proposes that these bondages can be separately destroyed. In Griffiths’ view, there are two distinguishing bondages- the root cause of suffering which is craving (*taṇhā*), on the one hand, and the root cause

¹⁰²³ Roderick S. Bucknell and Martin Stuart-Fox, op. cit., p. 88, Richard F. Gombrich, *How Buddhism Began : The Conditioned Genesis of the Early Teachings, Jordan Lectures in Comparative Religion ; 17.* (London ; Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Athlone Press, 1996), p. 117, Sue Hamilton, op. cit., p. 162.

¹⁰²⁴ A.I.218: “*Taṃ kiṃ maññasi gaḥapati-- yesaṃ rāgo paḥīno ucchinnaṃūlo...yesaṃ doṣo paḥīno ucchinnaṃūlo...yesaṃ moho paḥīno ucchinnaṃūlo.*”

¹⁰²⁵ M.I.139-140, D.III.270-271, S.IV.252-253, A.II.41.

of the dependent origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) which is ignorance (*avijjā*), on the other.¹⁰²⁶ This radical tension between ignorance and craving is related to the different meditation techniques, *samatha* and *vipassanā*. Griffiths states that the meditation technique of *samatha* aims to eradicate craving and that of *vipassanā* aims to eradicate ignorance. His viewpoint seems to imply that there are two completely separate goals which are directly related to these radically different types of meditative practice. This tension between craving (*taṇhā*) and *samatha* on the one hand and ignorance (*avijjā*) and *vipassanā* on the other is referred to in a passage in the *Bālavagga*.

Monks, if tranquillity is developed, what profit does it receive? The mind becomes developed. If mind is developed, what profit does it receive? All desire (*rāga*)¹⁰²⁷ is abandoned.
Monks, if insight is developed, what profit does it receive? Wisdom becomes developed. If wisdom is developed, what profit does it receive? All ignorance is abandoned.¹⁰²⁸

According to textual analysis, *samatha* leads to the abandonment of desire or craving but not of ignorance. The process of *samatha* seems to be distinguished from the process of *vipassanā* in regard to the cultivation of *paññā* and the destruction of ignorance.

Nevertheless, it can be argued that a detailed examination of the Buddha's other discourses tends to confirm a mutual dependency between *samatha* and *vipassanā* in order to get rid of both ignorance and craving. For example, the *Dhammapada* illustrates the strong relationship between *samatha* and *paññā*: "There is no *jhāna* for one who is without wisdom. There is no wisdom for one who does not attain *jhāna*."¹⁰²⁹ In addition, the *Mahāparinibbānasutta* characterizes *samatha* in terms of *samādhi* as the fundamental quality for the development of *vipassanā* in terms of *paññā*.

¹⁰²⁶ Paul Griffiths, "Concentration or Insight: The Problematic of Theravada Buddhist Meditation-Theory," op. cit., p. 619.

¹⁰²⁷ *Rāga* is the synonymous term of *taṇhā* (Nyanatiloka: *Buddhist Dictionary*, p. 148).

¹⁰²⁸ A.I.61.

¹⁰²⁹ Dhp.372.

Wisdom, when fully developed by concentration, brings great fruit and profit.¹⁰³⁰

A further relevance of the association between *samatha* and *vipassanā* is found in the *Samathasutta*.

...a monk while considering knows thus: 'I have gained the tranquillity of heart within oneself, but have not gained insight into dhamma through higher wisdom.' Then, Monks, he should apply himself to establish the tranquillity of heart within oneself and to insight into dhamma through higher wisdom.

...a monk while considering knows thus: 'I have gained insight into dhamma through higher wisdom, but have not gained the tranquillity of heart within oneself.' Then, Monks, he should apply himself to establish insight into dhamma through higher wisdom and to the tranquillity of heart within oneself.¹⁰³¹

Since ignorance and craving are essentially associated with one another, then *samatha* and *vipassanā* are to be cultivated together to remove both ignorance and craving. This association is also found in the *Bālapaṇḍitasutta*:

Monks, for the fool hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving, then this body has been originated.¹⁰³²

Of particular significance here is that these two defilements can be distinguished in relation to their functions only, but can never be separated in regard to the enlightenment path.

Regarding the issue of the knowledge of destruction of cankers (*āsavakkhayañāṇa*), this section will argue that the two kinds of freedom-freedom of mind (*cetovimutti*) and freedom through wisdom (*paññāvimutti*) -¹⁰³³ are simultaneously required for the complete Buddhist deliverance because they are linked to both *samatha* and *vipassanā*. Indeed, these two types of freedom are the synonymous terms in reference to their culminating result. The collaboration of both freedoms with *samatha* and *vipassanā* is presented in the *Bālavagga*.

¹⁰³⁰ D.II.81.

¹⁰³¹ A.V.99.

¹⁰³² S.II.23-24: "Avijjānīvaraṇassa bhikkhave bālassa taṇhāya sampayuttassa evam ayaṃ kāyo samudāgato."

¹⁰³³ Nyanatiloka, op. cit., p. 193.

These two things, monks, are partaking of knowledge. What two? tranquillity and insight. Monks, if tranquillity is developed, what profit does it receive? The mind becomes developed. If mind is developed, what profit does it receive? All desire is abandoned.

Monks, if insight is developed, what profit does it receive? Wisdom becomes developed. If wisdom is developed, what profit does it receive? All ignorance is abandoned.

A mind defiled by desire, monks, is not freed; nor is wisdom defiled by ignorance developed. Monks, through the fading away of desire, there is freedom of mind; through the fading away of ignorance, there is freedom through wisdom.¹⁰³⁴

This passage shows that the two overlapping processes cannot be separated; together they support each other for the perfect knowledge (*vijjā*). On the one hand, the development of *samatha* leads to the abandonment of *rāga*, which is interpreted as freedom of mind. On the other, the development of *vipassanā* leads to the abandonment of *avijjā*, which is an interpretation of the process of freedom through wisdom. Actually, both freedoms lead to the same culminating result of the ultimate goal, whereas their predominant faculties are different, as the discussion between the Buddha and Ānanda demonstrates:¹⁰³⁵

Ānanda asks:

...then how is it that some monks here are said to gain freedom of mind while others are said to gain freedom through wisdom?

The Buddha replies:

As to this, I, Ānanda, speak of the difference in their faculties.

The meditator has to perform the synthesis of both freedoms as well as of *samatha* and *vipassanā* for the fulfilment of the ceasing of cankers. The *Paññāvimuttasutta* implies that the advance of freedom of mind (*cetovimutti*) in terms of *jhāna* attainments should be accompanied by *paññā* as freedom through wisdom (*paññāvimutti*).

¹⁰³⁴ A.I.61: “Dve me bhikkhave dhammā vijjābhāgiyā. Katame dve? Samatho ca vipassanā ca. Samatho bhikkhave bhāvito kaṃ atthaṃ anubhoti? Cittaṃ bhāvīyati. Cittaṃ bhāvitaṃ kaṃ atthaṃ anubhoti? Yo rāgo so pahīyati. Vipassanā bhikkhave bhāvitaṃ kaṃ atthaṃ anubhoti? Paññā bhāvīyati. Paññā bhāvitaṃ kaṃ atthaṃ anubhoti? Yā avijjā sā pahīyati: rāgupakkiliṭṭhaṃ vā bhikkhave cittaṃ na vimuccati avijjupakkiliṭṭhā vā paññā bhāvīyati. Imā kho bhikkhave rāgavirāgā cetovimutti avijjāvirāgā paññāvimutti”

¹⁰³⁵ M.I.437: “...atha kiñ-carahi idh’ekacce bhikkhū cetovimuttino ekacce bhikkhū paññāvimuttino ti? Ettha kho tesāhaṃ Ānanda indriyavemattataṃ vadāmīti.”

Here, friend, the monk who secludes from sense pleasures,..., enters and remains in the first *jhāna* and understands by wisdom. In this way, friend, the freedom through wisdom has been declared by the blessed one...¹⁰³⁶

The cooperation of *cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti* is beneficial for getting rid of craving and ignorance. The expression ‘*paññāvimutti*’ in terms of *vipassanā* could hardly be interpreted as not involving some degree of concentration of mind. Kheminda echoes this sentiment: “...*paññāvimutta* is a *jhāna*-attainer whether considered relatively or absolutely.”¹⁰³⁷ Jhanananda also supports this cooperation: “Through experience it has become clear that insight and absorption are simply two sides of the same coin.”¹⁰³⁸ Anālayo agrees: “Although on theoretical examination these two aspects of the path (*samatha* and *vipassanā*) might appear different, in actual practice they tend to converge and supplement each other”¹⁰³⁹

Thus the collaboration between both kinds of freedom is significant for the development of the enlightenment path until the end of path is achieved. In the *Pahārādasutta*, we find that both freedoms tend to merge into one taste of freedom:

Pahārāda, just as the great ocean has but one taste, the taste of salt; even so, Pahārāda, this dhamma and discipline has but one taste, the taste of freedom.¹⁰⁴⁰

The passage points to the freed state that is entirely different from the double practice strategy of the path to freedom. Gombrich shares this sentiment: “there is no contrast between *ceto-vimutti* and *paññā-vimutti*.”¹⁰⁴¹ He refers to the passage in the *Paṭhamacetovimuttiphalaṣutta*:

¹⁰³⁶ A.IV.452: “*Idhāvuso bhikkhu vivicc’eva kāmehi...pe... paṭhamam jhānam upasampajja viharati, paññāya ca nam pajānāti. Ettāvataṃ pi kho āvuso paññāvimutto vutto bhagavatā pariyāyena.*”

¹⁰³⁷ Kheminda Thera, *The Way of Buddhist Meditation*, op. cit., p. 71.

¹⁰³⁸ Jhanananda. 2005. "The Lack of Evidence in Support of a Dry Insight Practice" Last updated 28/02/05 URL: <http://www.greatwesternvehicle.org/nodryinsight.htm>. Date of access: 11/09/06

¹⁰³⁹ Anālayo, op. cit., p. 91.

¹⁰⁴⁰ A.IV.203: “*Seyyathā pi pahārāda mahāsamuddo ekaraso loṇaraso, evam eva kho pahārāda ayam dhammavinayo ekaraso vimuttirasō.*”

¹⁰⁴¹ Richard F. Gombrich, op. cit., p. 120.

Monks, when these five things are developed and made much, there comes to be the fruit of freedom of mind, freedom of mind for its fruit and advantage, the fruit of freedom through wisdom, freedom through wisdom for its fruit and advantage.¹⁰⁴²

The five things include perception of the impurity of the body, of the repulsiveness of food, of the unsatisfying character of everything in the world, of the impermanence of all compounded things, and of one's own impending death.¹⁰⁴³ One might argue that although both freedoms are arranged in the same group of benefits as these five meditation techniques, *paññāvimutti* refers to the ultimate goal but *cetovimutti* does not. Gombrich points to the cooperation of *cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti* as assisting in the elimination of all cankers and in the comprehension of the enlightenment through the passage in the third knowledge (destruction of cankers):

When he knows and sees thus, his mind is freed from the canker of sense-pleasures and his mind is freed from the canker of becoming and his mind is freed from the canker of ignorance. When it is freed, the intuition comes to be: "I am freed;" and he understands: Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing more for any state of thus.¹⁰⁴⁴

The statement "his mind is freed from the canker of sense-pleasures" obviates the possibility of reaching *nibbāna* by ignoring the freedom of mind. In addition, since *ceto* can be transformed with *citta* and *vimutti* with *vimuccati*, the term 'his mind is freed' expresses the process of *cetovimutti*. Furthermore the word 'understands (*pajānāti*)' is related to the noun '*paññā*.'¹⁰⁴⁵ The freedom from cankers, as depicted in this passage, requires the process of mental purification of *cetovimutti* in combination with full knowledge of *paññā*.

¹⁰⁴² A.III.84: "Pañc'ime bhikkhave dhammā bhāvitā bahulikatā cetovimuttiphālā ca honti cetovimutti-phalānisamsā ca paññāvimuttiphālā ca honti paññāvimuttiphalānisamsā ca."

¹⁰⁴³ A.III.84.

¹⁰⁴⁴ M.I.348: "Tassa evaṃ jānato evaṃ passato kāmāsavā pi cittaṃ vimuccati, bhavāsavā pi cittaṃ vimuccati, avijjāsavā pi cittaṃ vimuccati, vimuttasmiṃ vimuttam-iti ñāṇaṃ hoti; khīṇā jāti, vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ, kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ nāparaṃ itthattāyāti pajānāti."

¹⁰⁴⁵ Richard F. Gombrich, op. cit., p. 117.

So as well as the collaboration between *samatha* and *vipassanā*, the collaboration between both freedoms in terms of the freed-both-ways (*ubhatobhāgavimutti*) brings about the complete aspect of the supreme refined state of freedom. According to the freed-both-ways, the meditator experiences the peaceful liberations of *arūpajjhānas* and the visual intuition of wisdom.

And which, monks, is the person who is freed both ways? Here, monks, some person remains touching, with the body, those peaceful liberations, which are *arūpajjhānas* surpassing *rūpajjhānas*, and his cankers are entirely exhausted by his seeing with wisdom. This, monks, is called the person who is freed both ways.¹⁰⁴⁶

The further interpretation of the freed-both-ways as a single approach to freedom by combining of *samatha* and *vipassanā* is found in the *Mahānidānasutta*. This discourse contains an interesting discussion on the relationship between the freed-both-ways and the eight peaceful states of liberation. This relationship can be further understood from the excerpt below.

Now, Ānanda, when a monk attains these eight liberations in forward order, and attains in reverse order, and attains in both orders consecutively, attaining them and emerging from them wherever he wishes, however he wishes, and for as long as he wishes, through his own supernatural knowledge in here and now and through the destruction of canker, he realizes, enters into and remains in the canker-free freedom of mind and freedom through wisdom. This, Ānanda, is called the monk who is freed both ways. And, Ānanda, there is no other freed-both-ways that is higher and more sublime than this freed-both-ways.¹⁰⁴⁷

As discussed in the section of the attainment of cessation, the cooperation between *samatha* and *vipassanā* is the prerequisite for the development of this attainment. Therefore, when *cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti* are joined together in terms of *ubhatobhāgavimutti*, they are taken to indicate the two perfect aspects

¹⁰⁴⁶ M.I.477: “*Katamo ca bhikkhave puggalo ubhatobhāgavimutto: Idha bhikkhave ekacco puggalo ye te santā vimokkhā atikkamma rūpe āruppā te kāyena phusitvā viharati, paññāya c’assa disvā āsavā parikkhīṇā honti. Ayaṃ vuccati bhikkhave puggalo ubhatobhāgavimutto.*”

¹⁰⁴⁷ D.II.71: “*Yato kho Ānanda bhikkhu ime aṭṭha vimokkhe anulomam pi samāpajjati, paṭilomam pi samāpajjati, anuloma-paṭilomam pi samāpajjati, yatth’icchakaṃ yad icchakaṃ yāvad icchakaṃ samāpajjati pi vuṭṭhāti pi, āsavānaṃ ca khayā anāsavaṃ cetovimuttiṃ paññāvimuttiṃ diṭṭhe va dhamme sayamaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharati, ayaṃ vuccati Ānanda bhikkhu ubhatobhāgavimutto, imāya ca Ānanda ubhatobhāgavimuttiyā aññā ubhatobhāgavimutti uttaritarā vā paññatarā vā n’atthīti.*”

of meditation, the perfect meditative practice, which is the collaboration of *samatha* and *vipassanā*, on the one hand, and the perfect release from all cankers, on the other.

Despite evidence of the necessary collaboration between *cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti*, some scholars regard *paññāvimutti* as the predominant factor for the destruction of cankers, and attempt to diminish the significance of *cetovimutti* and also *samatha*. For example, Schmithausen states that the attainment of the *jhānas* is unnecessary for bringing about the liberating insight.¹⁰⁴⁸ He argues that the realization of the negative nature of mundane existence- impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and not-self- does not need the basis of deep concentration. If this realization were a rational process, this would make sense. But it is a realization, which seems to be related to the process of tranquillity. The *Samādhisutta* demonstrates the consistency between concentration and the realization of the three characteristics, impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and not-self.

Monks, develop concentration. A monk, who is concentrated, monks, understands things as they really are. And what does he understand things as they really are? The arising and passing away of form, the arising and passing away of feeling, the arising and passing away of perception, the arising and passing away of mental formation, the arising and passing away of consciousness.¹⁰⁴⁹

Likewise, Buddhaghosa regards the *rūpajjhānas* and *arūpajjhānas* as prerequisites for the contemplation of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and not-self.¹⁰⁵⁰

While it should be adequately clear that *cetovimutti* involves *paññā* and then *paññāvimutti*, Saddhatissa attempts to separate both kinds of freedom: “The assumption that ‘*ceto-vimutti*’ and ‘*paññā-vimutti*’ are synonymous is

¹⁰⁴⁸ L. Schmithausen, op. cit., p. 222.

¹⁰⁴⁹ S.III.13-14.

¹⁰⁵⁰ *Vism.*628-629 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 732).

incorrect.”¹⁰⁵¹ According to his explanation, the culminating result of the development of *cetovimutti* is all four *Brahmavihāras*, *mettā* (loving-kindness), *karuṇā* (compassion), *muditā* (sympathy) and *upekkhā* (equanimity), but not *paññā*. Saddhatissa tends to focus on the examination of the *Tevijjasutta*¹⁰⁵² alone. If, instead, we survey the several discourses, we see that the term ‘*cetovimutti*’ is inclined to be relevant to *paññāvimutti* and *paññā*. For instance, the *Cūlasaccakasutta* shows that mental release refers to the fruit (*phala*) of enlightenment.

In this way, Aggivessana, a monk becomes a perfected one with the cankers destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, the burden laid down, his own goal reached, the fetter of becoming entirely exhausted, and is freed through perfect intuition. Aggivessana, monk, whose mind is thus freed, is endowed with three unsurpassable qualities: unsurpassable vision, unsurpassable path, and unsurpassable freedom.¹⁰⁵³

In the next discourse, the *Meghiyasutta*, the Buddha regards wisdom (*paññā*) as the essential factor for the development of *cetovimutti* into its mature state.

Again, Meghiya, a monk has wisdom, endowed with wisdom regarding rise and fall that is noble and penetrative and leads to the perfect destruction of suffering. Meghiya, for the immature freedom of mind, this is the fifth thing conducing to maturity.¹⁰⁵⁴

Moreover, when *cetovimutti* is qualified by the adjective *akuppā* (unshakeable), it refers to the perfect liberation: “And it is this, monks, unshakeable freedom of mind that is the goal of this holy life, its essence and its end.”¹⁰⁵⁵ Consequently, it appears from these discourses that the benefit of *cetovimutti* is broadened into the attainment of the ultimate goal, which is generally accepted

¹⁰⁵¹ H. Saddhatissa, *Buddhist Ethics: The Path to Nirvana* (London: Wisdom, 1987), p. 165.

¹⁰⁵² D.I.250-251.

¹⁰⁵³ M.I.235: “*Ettāvatā kho aggivessana bhikkhu araham hoti khīṇāsavo vusitavā katakaraṇīyo ohitabhāro anuppattasadattho parikkhīṇabhavasamyojano samma-d-aññā vimutto. Evaṃ vimuttacitto kho aggivessana bhikkhu tīhi anuttariyehi samannāgato hoti: dassanānuttariyena paṭipadānuttariyena vimuttānuttariyena.*”

¹⁰⁵⁴ A.IV.357: “*Puna ca param meghiya bhikkhu paññavā hoti, udayatthagāminiyā paññāya samannāgato ariyāya nibbedhikāya sammādukkhakkhayagāminiyā. Aparipakkāya meghiya cetovimuttiyā ayam pañcamo dhammo paripakkāya samvattati.*”

¹⁰⁵⁵ M.I.197: “*yā ca kho ayam bhikkhave akuppā cetovimutti, etadattham-idaṃ bhikkhave brahmacariyam etaṃsāraṃ etaṃpariyosānan-ti.*”

as the benefit of *paññāvimutti*. They can be taken to indicate the two aspects of the *arahat*'s deliverance.

In conclusion, many scholars disregard *cetovimutti* as insufficient to achieve the ultimate goal; there is evidence in the *suttas* that *cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti* involve the synonymous culmination of the destruction of all cankers. While *cetovimutti* refers to *samatha* and *paññāvimutti* to *vipassanā*, we find that the collaboration between *cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti* signifies the perfect cooperation of *samatha* and *vipassanā*.

Throughout this section, the destruction of cankers has been discussed in terms of the two aspects. Firstly, ignorance is the cause of the origin and existence of all cankers. Besides ignorance, craving is the other powerful canker, which obstructs beings and ties them down to the circle of existence. Thus, the meditator must overcome ignorance and craving through the development of *samatha* and *vipassanā*. Secondly, the term '*paññāvimutti*' is almost invariably employed in relation to the Buddhist deliverance, whereas the term '*cetovimutti*' may have a broader meaning on occasion. They, in fact, involve the synonymous culmination of the destruction of all cankers. Of course, their collaboration in terms of 'freed-both-ways' (*ubhatobhāgavimutti*) indicates two perfect aspects of a single process of liberation.

Conclusion

It has been argued in this chapter that both *samatha* and *vipassanā* supplement each other along the path of enlightenment to perform the process of withdrawal from the world and the pulling toward *nibbāna* respectively. In fact, *vipassanā* is not distinctly separate from *samatha*; rather both meditative processes are subsumed into the psychological process of calmness. Both processes arise from the spiral development of the threefold training, *sīla*,

samādhi, and *paññā*. The meditator must develop all three interdependent factors until they have enough power to calm the mind and lead it toward the cooperation of *samatha* and *vipassanā*, a process which is characterized as *vipassanājhāna* or supramundane *jhāna*.

The argument related to the practice of *satipaṭṭhāna* that this work has given will be summarized as follows. Even though some scholars radically separate *satipaṭṭhāna* from the *jhānas*, in a thorough analysis of *satipaṭṭhāna* practice, *jhāna* attainment turns out to be a most efficient tool. Next, the contemplation of body in body does not involve experiencing the physical body or the bodily postures; instead, it is developed through a process which involves the passing away of the coarse mental body and the arising of the more peaceful and more sublime mental body. This process allows the advancement of the psychological states of the various mental bodies (*nāmakāya*) until the final stage of deathlessness is attained. It is a process that implies a firm establishment of the *satipaṭṭhāna* exercise. Subsequently, the five instrumental factors of insight, *cakkhu*, *ñāṇa*, *paññā*, *vijjā* and *āloka*, which are central to all four *satipaṭṭhāna* practices, are immediately then drawn in as the appropriate psychological state for the perfect realization of all mental bodies. These instrumental factors are the most reliable means for the achievement of the refined and peaceful bodies, as well as the feelings, minds and *dhammas* simultaneously. Therefore, even though the four foundations of mindfulness (*sati*) seem to imply various systematic methods, they constitute essentially a unity of meditative experience, which involves the arising and advancing of all these instrumental factors.

It becomes clear from an analysis of the attainment of cessation that, while it usually signifies a complete halt of all mental activities, there is an agreement between the cessation of feeling and the existence of profound happiness

therein. In fact, it needs to be developed through a process of mutual meditative practices, *samatha* and *vipassanā*.

There are two main components, which the study of the destruction of cankers deals with. The first component is the implication that both ignorance and craving are the predominant factors to be destroyed during the path toward enlightenment. The second is a presentation of the evidence, which makes possible an interpretation of the culminating result of *cetovimutti* as the destruction of cankers. This evidence demonstrates a synonymous culmination between *cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti*.

In conclusion, this chapter shows the importance of the combined and interdependent practice of *samatha* and *vipassanā*. *Samatha* practiced initially, and later augmented with the profound inner vision of *vipassanā*, together are necessary for the successful practice of meditation along the path to enlightenment. Accomplishment in *samatha* relies on the attainment of the *jhānas*, while attainment in *vipassanā* relies on the arising of the five instrumental factors. The skilful use of these two meditative practices together leads to the supramundane *jhāna*, or *lokuttara-jhāna*.¹⁰⁵⁶ Following is a summation of the conclusions drawn from this research.

¹⁰⁵⁶ *Vism.* 682 (tr. Ñāṇamoli p. 798).

Chapter 5 Conclusion

This work has examined the issue of the use of *samatha* and *vipassanā* as practices on the Buddhist path to *nibbāna* or liberation. The meanings of these terms and the three common views of the relationship between *samatha* and *vipassanā* have been evaluated. The examination and evaluation of both contemplative practices rely primarily on an analysis of materials derived from the *Sutta Piṭaka*. Further analysis of the source texts is provided from the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, the *Visuddhimagga*, the *Vimuttimaggā* and modern commentaries and is supplementary to the primary research. The analysis concludes that, based on an initial foundation of *samatha*, they can be used together and that they are in fact indispensable and interdependent facets of meditation practice. This chapter aims to reinforce the significance of *samatha*, the main characteristic of the profound internal vision of *vipassanā*, and their collaborative practice as one synthetic process.

The concept of *samatha*, which is inner calmness, and is delineated as one particular aspect of *samādhi*, is very important to meditation practice and experience. At the beginning of meditation practice, *samatha* and *sati* (mindfulness) appear to be in opposition, whereas at the advanced stages of the practice, *sati* in collaboration with *sampajañña* (awareness) is relevant to the process of *samatha*. Subsequently, the more profound states of *samatha* are brought into close relationship with the intensified *sati* and *sampajañña*, providing a solid foundation for the development of *vipassanā*. The apparent opposition is thus resolved.

An extension of the significance of *samatha* practice is that it provides a stable state of mind for the arising of the fivefold supernatural knowledge (*abhiññā*).

Practicing *samatha* alone causes *abhiññā* to arise and be cultivated. However, in order to achieve profound states and *nibbāna*, *samatha* and *vipassanā* need to be used together.

Another element of the importance of *samatha* has emerged from the investigation of the tension between the *jhāna* attainments and *vipassanā*. That is, if *vipassanā* is considered only as changing attention to arising sense objects, the psychological state of *samatha* at the momentary concentration (*khaṇikasamādhi*) might be sufficient to initiate *vipassanā*. In fact, the meditator has to develop the profound mental vision of *vipassanā* via the advanced levels of absorption called *jhānas*.

An etymological analysis of the term ‘*jhāna*’ indicates two main advantages of *samatha* practice which are mental ‘unification’ and ‘purification.’ These mental qualities progress together and supplement each other until a more profound psychological state arises in which the meditator can develop the full insight and then overcome cankers (*āsava*).

An examination of *jhāna* factors shows that one-pointedness of mind and happiness -born from the stage of letting go of *samatha*- are the essential qualities for *jhāna* attainment and consequently for Buddhist liberation. Although happiness appears to be abandoned during the process of letting go in the path of *samatha* development, the psychological factor of happiness is sublimated into the more profound state of equanimity, which results from a fusion of *samatha* and *vipassanā* and through which *nibbāna* is attained eventually. The role and import of *samatha* has also been noted in an evaluation of the high *jhāna* attainments, *arūpajjhānas*. The characteristics of *samatha* do not progressively bring about the complete elimination of the concentrative object; rather, its characteristics are recognised as the refined perceptions of the

concentrative object which have advanced along with the process of *samatha*. Of central importance here is that the gradual transformation of *samatha* process into the *arūpajjhānas* is required to empower the perfect insight of *vipassanā* and to bring about liberation from all mental defilements.

The central point of the importance of *samatha* for the initiation of *vipassanā* is the need for the sufficient level of *samatha* arising from any subjects of concentration, but not limited to a particular subject. Many scholars, such as Buddhaghosa, maintain that practicing with the forty subjects of concentration leads to particular attainments, depending on the subject chosen. The present study concludes that this is not the case. Rather, the choice of a suitable concentration subject depends on one's own individual temperament. Therefore, the transition from the *samatha* process into the *vipassanā* process is based on a sufficiently profound level of *samatha*, cultivated from any of the forty concentrative subjects, not just from one particular subject.

In the discussion of the phenomenological and psychological characteristics of *vipassanā*, its main characteristic is that of profound mental vision arising from the mental stillness of *samatha*. This can be observed in an examination of its etymological constituents, *vi* (excellence) and *passanā* (seeing).

This examination of the main characteristic of *vipassanā* demonstrates that *samatha* is indeed indispensable to the operation of *vipassanā* and, that specific level of *samatha* is needed. That is, before starting *vipassanā*, it is best to first bring about mental unification, passing initially through practices like, momentary (*khaṇika*) and access (*upacāra*) concentration, on through all of the *jhānas*. As the *Dhammacakkappavattanasutta* (*Setting in Motion the Wheel of Truth*) emphasizes, the five instrumental factors, vision (*cakkhu*), intuition (*ñāna*), wisdom (*paññā*), knowledge (*viññā*) and light (*āloka*) are central

thorough appreciation of the four noble truths. Therefore, it is necessary that the meditator should first establish a subtle and profound state of mental purification and unification so that these instrumental factors can arise, thus facilitating the superior functioning of *vipassanā*.

These higher functions can be brought about through an implication of the main characteristic of *vipassanā* as the profound mental vision (*cakkhu*), which can be clarified, in turn, through an epistemological evaluation of its relationship with each of these instrumental factors. During *vipassanā* meditation, the mental vision of *cakkhu* needs to be strengthened into the superior mode of *dhamma-cakkhu*, which denotes the sufficient power of mental vision to activate the *vipassanā* process. The direct intuition of *ñāṇa* does not obstruct the progress of *vipassanā*; rather, the ten kinds of *ñāṇas*, which are of central significance in representing the mode of the *vipassanā-ñāṇas*, must be developed. The role of *paññā* in the development of *vipassanā* serves to further demonstrate the association between the psychological characteristics of *samatha* and *vipassanā*. That is, *paññā*, arising from the deep concentration of *samatha*, can enhance the process of *vipassanā*, while *paññā* developed through thinking and learning cannot. The investigation of *vijjā* argues that the recollection of one's own personal past lives is to be undertaken through the process of *vipassanā*. Once the mind has been stilled and purified at this profound level of *samatha*, the ability to attain the mental vision of *vipassanā* will penetratively realize one's preceding existences in *samsāra*. An examination of *āloka* points to this psychological characteristic of internal illumination as an important factor in the process of *vipassanā*. Indeed, *āloka* does not work against *vipassanā*; rather, it promotes the development of *vipassanā*.

The emergence of these five instrumental factors is the basis for ultimate internal vision of *vipassanā* and leads to the perfect realization of the deathless element (*amatadhātu*). This realization of the positive nature of supramundane states, permanence, happiness and unconditioned nature, is an essential factor in the process of *vipassanā* and also induces a comparative realization of the three characteristics of the five aggregates: impermanence (*anicca*), unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*) and not-self (*anattā*).

An analytical and psychological study of both collaborative practices, *samatha* and *vipassanā*, reveals that the progress of any practice relies on the basis of the other. Both processes contribute to the spiritual process of withdrawal from *samsāra* and advancing toward *nibbāna*. That is, on the path towards enlightenment, *samatha* and *vipassanā*, both of which arise from the spiral development of the threefold training, *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*, simultaneously support and allow each other to progress. Moreover, the meditator must develop all three aspects of the training to initiate the combined operation between *samatha* and *vipassanā*, *vipassanājhāna*.

An exploration of *satipaṭṭhāna* practice indicates its practical relevance to the synthetic contemplative practice of *samatha* and *vipassanā*. This relevance is substantiated through the attainment of the psychological states which accompany experiential knowledge of the mental bodies and the subsequent attainment of deathlessness. The *satipaṭṭhāna* exercises were seen as related to the synthesis between *samatha* and *vipassanā* because they are founded on the achievement of refined and peaceful bodies, feelings, minds and *dhammas*, which accompany them, and which are coincident with the arising of the five instrumental factors.

An analysis of the cessation of perception and feeling strengthens the collaboration between *samatha* and *vipassanā*. This cessation seems to belong exclusively to *samatha* practices. But, a closer analysis shows that the cessation of perception and feeling, as well as the *satipaṭṭhāna* exercise, is accomplished on the basis of the collaboration between *samatha* and *vipassanā*. Despite the fact that the cessation of perception and feeling is usually explained by means of a complete halt of mental activities, a detailed examination reveals that the existence of a superior state of profound happiness contributes to the process. Thus, it can be said, a state of refined spiritual happiness coexists with, and advances along with, the synthetic processes of *samatha* and *vipassanā*.

An examination of the two kinds of freedom that are closely related to the destruction of cankers (*āsava*) argues that *samatha* and *vipassanā* are complementary practices and should not be distinguished. Achievement of the ultimate goal of the destruction of cankers depends on the neutralization of the two main cankers, ignorance (*avijjā*) and craving (*taṇhā*), by means of the synthesis of *samatha* and *vipassanā*. The state of the destruction of cankers (*āsava*) is related to both types of freedom, *cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti* which correspond respectively with *samatha* and *vipassanā*. Even though the result of *cetovimutti* is sometimes restricted to a temporary release of the mind from the cankers (*āsavas*), the present study argues that it ultimately results in the psychological effect of a thorough nullification of the cankers. Therefore, *cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti* are synonymous expressions for this ultimate state of affairs. The fact that *cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti* present an instance of *ubhatobhāgavimutti* (freed-both-ways) in their mutual activity of getting rid of cankers provides yet another example of the cooperative nature of the relationship between *samatha* and *vipassanā*.

The possible applications of the methodological approach presented here contain possibilities for a better understanding of the psychological interaction between *samatha* and *vipassanā*. The relationship between the two processes can be clarified through an expansion of the etymological and contextual analysis of the prominent aspects of *samatha* and *vipassanā*, which has been initiated here. It has been argued in this study that to present definitions of this analysis in terms of only one particular type of meditative subject is too narrow. It is predicted that further study of the psychological characteristics of *vipassanā* and *samatha* will illuminate the wider theoretical issues surrounding the notion of mental qualities. When *samatha* is considered in its role as a preparatory element of *vipassanā*, it becomes clear that, not only does it activate the exercise of *vipassanā*, but also strengthens *vipassanā* throughout the entire process leading to Buddhist deliverance. They are to be taken as an interdependent pair of meditative processes leading to the ultimate goal of Buddhist practice, which is the complete eradication of the defilements and corruptions, and the subsequent state of enlightenment.

There are some significant issues this research has not dealt with. Examples include: does the practice of *samatha* and *vipassanā* lead to the profound attainment of emptiness (*suññatā*)? Or, can the practice of *samatha* and *vipassanā* eliminate the causes of conditionality, *paṭiccasamuppāda* (dependent origination), and if so how? Other important issues include, what roles do *samatha* and *vipassanā* play in other Buddhist traditions, and how are *samatha* and *vipassanā* practiced, particularly in the *Mahāyāna* and *Vajrayāna* traditions. A detailed examination of these issues would be valuable further research.

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