

On the Meaning of the First *Jhāna* in *Nikāyas*

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I . Introduction

How can we describe the mental state of *vipassanā*(insight)? In connection with this question, I believe that it is possible for *vipassanā* to be performed in the first *jhāna*(contemplation) and to last up to the plane of nothing(*ākīñcaññāyatanaśamāpatti*).(Seung-taek Lim, 2002: 247-277; 2003: 341-344). On the other hand, *vipassanā* cannot be performed in the plane of neither perception nor nonperception (*nevasaññānāsaññāyatanaśamāpatti*) and the plane of extinction of perception and feeling(*saññāvedayitanirodha*). This claim is based on references in *Majjhimanikāya*'s *Anupadasutta*.

In dealing with the problem of *samatha*(serenity) and *vipassanā*(insight),¹ it is important to throw some light on *samatha*

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International Journal of Buddhist Thought & Culture February 2004, Vol. 4, pp. 107~126.

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1 On the meaning of *samatha*(serenity) and *vipassanā*(insight), *Paṭisambhidāmagga* explains as follows: "It is unshakable, immovable and cannot be shifted by agitation and by the

accompanying *vipassanā*. Further, discussion about this point will make clear whether the relationship between the two is simultaneous or sequential. With regard to the view that *vipassanā* can be performed only after completing *samatha*, this can be condensed into the formula *samatha*⇒*vipassanā*, whereas the view that *vipassanā* can be performed in preparation for *jhāna* or *samādhi* can be formulated as *samatha*⇔*vipassanā*, that is, occurring simultaneously. Previously, I have written *A Study on Jhānas* based on the latter point of view.

Briefly speaking, my thoughts in *A Study on Jhānas* about *samatha* and *vipassanā* are of alternative view, that is, *vipassanā* can be performed most properly in the first *jhāna* which is accompanied by reasoning(*vitakka*). I intend to go a step further in this paper, from this viewpoint, focusing on the first *jhāna*, and examine its significance and value.²

defilements and aggregates that accompany agitation, thus *samatha* is a power.... It is unshakable, immovable and cannot be shifted by ignorance and by the defilements and aggregates that accompany ignorance, thus *vipassanā* is a power.(uddhacce ca uddhaccasahagatakilese ca khandhe ca na kampati na calati na vedhatiti samathabalaṃ..... avijjāya ca avijjāsahagatakilese ca khandhe ca na kampati na calati na vedhatiti vipassanābalaṃ.)” Ps. vol.1. p.98.

Therefore I regard *samatha* as serenity which is contrary to agitation(*uddhacca*), *vipassanā* as insight contrary to ignorance(*avijjā*). In addition, *Paṭisambhidāmagga* explains that *samatha* includes *jhāna*(=*samādhi*) and *samāpatti*(concentration). So I think of the concept of *samatha* as embracing the meaning of *jhāna*, *samādhi*, *samāpatti*, etc. A quotation on it is as follows. “In what sense is *samatha*(serenity) a power? Through the first *jhāna* it is unshakable by hindrances, thus *samatha* is a power. Through the second *jhāna*.... Through the third *jhāna*... Through the fourth *jhāna*... Through the plane of infinite ether.... Through the plane of infinite consciousness.... Through the plane of nothing.... Through the plane of neither perception nor nonperception it is unshakable by perception of nothing, thus *samatha* is a power.(samathabalaṃ ti. ken’ aṭṭhena samathabalaṃ? paṭhamajjhānena nivarane na kampatiti samathabalaṃ, dutiyajjhānena.... tatiyajjhānena.... catutthajjhānena.... ākāsañācāyatanasamāpattiyā.... viññāṇañcāyatanasamāpattiyā.... ākiñcaññāyatanasamāpattiyā.... nevasaññāsaññāyatanasamāpattiyā ākiñcaññāyatanasaññāya na kampatitī’ samathabalaṃ.)” Ps. vol.1. p.98.

- 2 There are many previous researches about *samatha* and *vipassanā*. See Bronkhost, *The Two Traditions of Meditation in Ancient India*; and Cousins, “Buddhist Jhāna: Its Nature and Attainment According to The Pāli Sources”; and “*samatha-yāna* and *Vipassanā-yāna*”; and “The Origins of Insight Meditation”; and Griffiths, “Concentration or insight: The Problematic of Therevāda Buddhist Meditation Theory”; and Schmithausen, “On Some Aspects of Descriptions or Theories of ‘Liberating insight’ and ‘Enlightenment’ in Early Buddhism”; and Vetter, *The Ideas and Meditative Practices of Early Buddhism*. Yet, none of them do not emphasize the fact that the first *jhāna* has a particular meaning in Early Buddhist practice. This point has motivated me to write this paper focusing on the first *jhāna*.

II. The System and Significance of *Samādhi*

As is well known, *samādhi*(concentration) is primarily necessary so that one can know ‘things as they really are(*yathābhūtaṃ*)’. That is why we need to have an experience of *samādhi* or *jhāna* in the ascetic practices, so that the wisdom(*paññā*) of *vipassanā*, ‘things as they really are’, arises. *Nikāya* describes this as follows.

Practice *samādhi*(concentration), *bhikkhu*. A *bhikkhu* of concentrated mind knows things as they really are. And how does he so know? He knows, as it really is, that the eye is impermanent as it really is, that eye-consciousness is impermanent as it really is, that eye-contact is impermanent as it really is, the weal or woe or neutral state experienced, which arises owing to eye-contact,- that also he knows, as it really is, to be impermanent.³

This quotation can be understood as identical with the teaching in *Dhammapada*⁴ which I examined for *A Study on Jhānas*.(Seung-taek Lim, 2002: 247). That is “someone without wisdom(*paññā*) not can achieve *jhāna*(contemplation), and someone who does not practice contemplation can not attain wisdom”.⁵

This confirms the viewpoint that wisdom(*paññā*) should be accompanied by a state of *samādhi* or *jhāna*. For that reason, the theme of *samādhi* or *jhāna* is not limited to the field of *samatha*. This wisdom is none other than *vipassanā*. Therefore, understanding of *samādhi* should be regarded as an important subject, which is connected with the understanding of *vipassanā* itself.

Let us now examine *samādhi* or *jhāna*. In *Nikāya*, there are various classifications ; ‘three *samādhis*(*tayo samadhī*)’, ‘four *jhānas*(*cattāri jhānāni*)’,

3 “Samādhiṃ bhikkhave bhāvētha, samāhito bhikkhave bhikkhu yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti. Kiñca yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti? Cakkhuṃ aniccanti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti, rūpā aniccāti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti, cakkhuvīññāṇaṃ aniccanti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti, cakkhusamphasso aniccoti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti, yampidaṃ cakkhusamphassapaccayā uppajjati vedayitaṃ sukhaṃ vā dukkhaṃ vā adukkhamasukhaṃ vā tampi aniccanti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti...” SN. vol.4. pp.80, 144; MN. vol.1. pp.61cf.; MN. vol.3. pp.114-115 cf.; SN. vol.5. p.414 cf.

4 “Natthi jhānaṃ apaññassa paññā natthi ajhāyato(372).” Dhp, p.105.

5 “Natthi jhānaṃ apaññassa paññā natthi ajhāyato(372).” *Dhammapada*, p.105.

‘eight *jhānas*(*aṭṭha jhānāni*)’ and ‘nine successive stages of meditation(*nava anupubbavīhārā*)’. All of these are arranged in a series according to the depth of *samatha*(serenity). My focus will be on ‘three *samādhis*’ and ‘four *jhānas*’ and I will begin with ‘three *samādhis*’. Early Buddhist literature, *Saṅgītisuttanta* and *Upakkilesasutta*, etc., speaks of ‘three *samādhis*’ as below.

Three species of *samādhi*(concentration): *samādhi* with reasoning(*vitakka*) and investigation(*vicāra*), *samādhi* with only investigation and without reasoning, *samādhi* without either.⁶

The system of three *samādhis* focuses on ‘*vitakka*’ and ‘*vicāra*’. They have been explained in various ways since early Buddhism, however, there does not appear any more specific explanation about *vitakka* and *vicāra* in *Nikāya*.(L.S. Cousins, 1992: 139). I understand the former as ‘reasoning’ or ‘thought’ and the latter as ‘investigation’ or ‘consideration’ in view of their general usages.⁷

Nārada told us that reasoning(*vitakka*) is one of the specific terms related to factors in *jhāna*, which has been mixed with the meaning of ‘making in the mind(*manasikāra*)’ in the later *Abhidhamma* period; while investigation(*vicāra*) is also a term for *jhāna* in *Abhidhamma* texts, which means ‘a continued exercise of mind on the object’.(Nārada Thera Vāḷirārāma, 1996: 88-90).

However, as with the above quotation from *Saṅgītisuttanta* and *Upakkilesasutta*, etc., from early Buddhism, both reasoning and investigation have served as a standard for classifying the depth of *samādhi* or *jhāna*. Besides which, in the *Mahāvedallasutta* they were referred to directly as ‘factors existing in *jhāna*’, as follows.

6 “Tayo samādhi: savitakkasavicāro samādhi, avitakkavicāramatto samādhi, avitakkaavicāro sāmādhi.” DN. vol.3. pp.219; DN. vol.3. pp.274; MN. vol.3. pp.162 cf; SN. vol.4. pp.360-362cf., etc.

7 On the meaning of *vitakka*(reasoning) and *vicāra*(investigation), The *Saddhammapakkāsini* explains as follows: “To reason(*vitakketi*) is reasoning(*vitakka*), to think(*vitakkana*) is reasoning, to reason logically(*ūhana*) is reasoning, by which the mind to consider(*vicarati*) on the object is investigation(*vicāra*), to investigate(*vicaraṇa*) is investigation, with exercise(*anusaṅcaraṇa*) is investigation.(*vitakketi vitakko, vitakkanaṃ vā vitakko, ūhananti vuttaṃ hoti. ārammaṇe tena cittaṃ vicaratīti vicāro, vicaraṇaṃ vā vicāro, anusaṅcaraṇanti vuttaṃ hoti.*)” PsA. p.80.

Your reverence, the first *jhāna*(contemplation) is five factored: if a *bhikkhu* has entered on the first *jhāna* there is reasoning(*vitakka*) and investigation(*vicāra*) and rapture(*pīti*) and joy(*sukha*) and one pointedness of mind(*cittakaggatā*). Thus, your reverence, is the first *jhāna* five factored.⁸

Therefore, we can see that reasoning and investigation have existed as special terms for *samādhi* or *jhāna* since early Buddhism.

In the *Nikāyas*, reasoning(*vitakka*) and investigation(*vicāra*) are quite often used in relation to ‘activity of speech(*vacīsaiṅkhāra*)’,⁹ and the activity of speech is also one of the special terms about *jhāna*. The following is a typical epigram.

In one who has attained the second *jhāna*, activity of speech(*vacīsaiṅkhāra*) consisting in reasoning and investigation, are quite tranquillized. In one who has attained the fourth *jhāna*, activity of body(*kāyasaiṅkhāra*) consisting in in-breathing and out-breathing, are quite tranquillized. In one who has attained cessation of perception and feeling, activity of mind(*cittasaiṅkhāra*) are quite tranquillized.¹⁰

According to the *Nikāya*'s explanation, reasoning(*vitakka*) and investigation(*vicāra*) do not exist any more beyond the first *jhāna*. In fact, they are transitional mental states, which become extinct at the very deep levels of *samādhi*, despite their importance. Nevertheless, in the *Nikāya* reasoning and investigation appear to have great value in the understanding of *samādhi*, that is to say, the state of *samādhi* does not exclude ‘logical reasoning(*ūhana*)’ and ‘the linguistic thought(*vitakkana*)’. Thus it is apparent that, of the three *samādhis*,

8 “Paṭhamam kho āvuso jhānam pañcaṅgikam: idhāvuso paṭhamam jhānam samāpannassa bhikkhuno vitakko ca vattati vicāro ca. Pīti ca sukhaṅca cītekkaggatā ca. Paṭhamam kho āvuso jhānam evam pañcaṅgikanti.” MN. vol.1. pp.294. etc.

9 “Assāsapassāsā kho āvuso visākha kāyasaiṅkhāro. Vitakkavicārā vacīsaiṅkhāro. Saññā ca vedanā ca cittasaiṅkhāroti.” MN. vol.1. p.301; MN. vol.1. 296cf.; SN. vol.4. pp.217-218, 220, 227, 228 cf., etc.

10 “dutiyañjhanam samāpannassa vitakkavicārā vacīsaiṅkhārā paṭippassaddhā honti, catutthajjhānam samāpannassa assāsapassāsā kāyasaiṅkhārā paṭippassaddhā honti, saññāvedayitanirodham samāpannassa saññā ca vedanā ca cittasaiṅkhārā paṭippassaddhā honti.” Ps. vol.1. p.99; MN. vol.1. 296cf.; SN. vol.4. pp.217-218, 220, 227, 228 cf.

‘*samādhi* with reasoning and investigation’ contains a logical activity of mind in its own sphere.

In *Nikāya*, the system of ‘four *jhānas*(*cattāri jhānāni*)’ is more frequently mentioned than three *samādhis*. The following is an explanation about the ‘right *samādhi*(*sammāsamādhi*)’ of the eight fold path(*aṭṭhaṅgikamagga*).

Herein, what is right concentration(*sammāsamādhi*)? Here quiet secluded from sensual-desires, secluded from unprofitable ideas a *bhikkhu* enters upon and abides in the first *jhāna*, which is accompanied by reasoning and investigation with rapture and joy born of seclusion. With the stillness of reasoning and investigation he enters upon and abides in the second *jhāna*, which has internal confidence and one pointedness of mind without reasoning, without investigation, with rapture and joy born of concentration. With the fading as well of rapture he abides in equanimity, and mindful and fully aware, feeling joy with the body, he enters upon and dwells in the third *jhāna*, on account of which the Noble Ones announce: ‘He abides in joy who has equanimity and is mindful’. With the abandoning of joy and pain, and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief he enters upon and abides in the fourth *jhāna*, which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and has purity of mindfulness due to equanimity. This is what is called right concentration.¹¹

According to the quotation, ‘right *samādhi*’ refers to the ‘four *jhānas*’, and reasoning(*vitakka*) and investigation(*vicāra*) are mental elements which exist only in the first *jhāna* because they become extinct from the second *jhāna* upwards. Therefore, the system of ‘four *jhānas*’ is

11 “tatta katamo sammāsamādhi? idha bhikkhu vivicc’ eva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekaṃ pītisukhaṃ paṭhamajjhānaṃ upasampajja viharati, vitakkavicārānaṃ vūpasamā ajjhattaṃ sampasādanaṃ cetaso ekodibhāvaṃ avitakkaṃ avicāraṃ samādhijaṃ pītisukhaṃ dutiyajjhānaṃ upasampajja viharati, pītiyā ca virāgā upekkhako ca viharati sato ca sampajāno sukhaṃ ca kāyena paṭisaṃvedeti, yaṃ taṃ ariyā ācikkhanti ‘upekkhako satimā sukhavihāri’ ti tatiyajjhānaṃ upasampajja viharati, sukhasa ca pahānā dukkhassa ca pahānā pubbe va somanassadomanassānaṃ aṭṭhaṅgamā adukkhamasukhaṃ upekkhāsati pārisuddhiṃ catutthajjhānaṃ upasampajja viharati; ayam vuccati sammāsamādhi.” Ps. vol.1. pp.41-42; MN. vol.3. p.252; SN. vol.5. pp9-10; DN. vol.2. p.313, etc.

a classification of the mental state after reasoning and investigation disappear.

A comparison of three *samādhis* (*tayo samadhī*) with four *jhānas* (*cattāri jhānāni*) is as follows. First, 'samādhi with both reasoning and investigation' corresponds to the first *jhāna*, then, 'samādhi without either' relates to the second *jhāna* upwards, and lastly, 'samādhi with only investigation' corresponds to the in-between state of the first and second *jhāna*.

Later *Abhidhamma* texts insisted on 'five *jhānas* (*pañca jhānāni*)', in that the first *jhāna* is 'the state where reasoning and investigation exist simultaneously', the second *jhāna* is the state with investigation only, and the third *jhāna* upwards is revised as the extinction of both.¹² The *Abhidhamma*'s 'five *jhānas*' makes it possible to reach a compromise between the three *samādhis* and four *jhānas* in the *Nikāya*.

So far, we have examined the significance and system of *samādhi*. Summing up the preceding and returning to the question posed at the outset of this paper, it seems appropriate to state the following. ① *Samādhi* is required to know 'things as they really are (*yathābhūtaṃ*)'. ② *Samādhi* and *jhāna* can reach a compromise between them. ③ In 'three *samādhis*' and 'four *jhānas*', reasoning (*vitakka*) and investigation (*vicāra*) belong to the lowest stage. ④ Reasoning and investigation are transitional in that they become extinct at the deeper levels of *samādhi* or *jhāna*. ⑤ Yet, they are both mental factors (*cetasika*) which really function in *samādhi* or *jhāna*.

12 "First *jhāna* resultant consciousness together with reasoning, investigation, rapture, joy, and one pointedness. Second *jhāna* resultant consciousness together with investigation, rapture, joy, and one pointedness. Third *jhāna* resultant consciousness together with rapture, joy, and one pointedness. Fourth *jhāna* resultant consciousness together with joy and one-pointedness. Fifth *jhāna* of skilful consciousness together with equanimity and one-pointedness. These are the five types of fine-material-sphere resultant consciousness.

(*vitakkavicārapīṭisukkekaggatāsahitaṃ paṭhamajjhānakusalacittaṃ, vicārapīṭisukkekaggatāsahitaṃ dutiyajjhānakusalacittaṃ, pīṭisukkekaggatāsahitaṃ tatiyajjhānakusalacittaṃ, sukkekaggatāsahitaṃ catutthajjhānakusalacittaṃ, upekkhekaggatāsahitaṃ pañcamajjhānakusalacittaṃ.*)" *Abhi-s*, p.3.

III. The Significance of the First *Jhāna*

Previously, I have looked at the significance of *samādhi* and its system. At this point I will limit myself to the first *jhāna* and examine its main idea more specifically. In *Majjhimanikāya's Mahāsaccakasutta*, there is a serious passage which shows the significance of the first *jhāna* as follows.

I know that while my father, the *Sakyan*, was ploughing, and I was sitting in the cool shade of a rose-apple tree, aloof from sensual-desires, secluded from unprofitable ideas, entering on the first *jhāna*, which is accompanied by reasoning and investigation, is born of seclusion, and is rapturous and joyful, and while abiding therein, I thought: 'Now could this be a way to awakening?' Then, following on my mindfulness, *Aggivesana*, there was the consciousness: This is itself the Way to awakening.¹³

This quotation portrays *Sakyamuni's* thoughts before his enlightenment when he had once ceased the practices of extreme asceticism. What is important to note is the comment that 'This is itself the Way to awakening(*esova maggo bodhāya*)'. It tells us that, at this time, Buddha became conscious of his own way of practice, as distinct from his former way of practice.

Following the above, there is reference to three kinds of wisdom(*tisso vijjā*) which manifest themselves in experiencing four *jhānas*(*cattāri jhānāni*) in regular order. So, from this it is possible to understand that enlightenment was attained after experiencing all four *jhānas* including the first stage. However, throughout the whole *Mahāsaccakasutta*, the first *jhāna*, is the only case followed by the modification 'This is itself the Way to awakening'.

Then, what is the basis on which 'Enlightenment arises in the first *jhāna*'? With regard to this problem, I present the following quotations

13 "abhiñānāmi kho paṇāhaṃ pitusakkassa kammante sītāya jambucchāyāya nisinnō vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekajaṃ pītisukhaṃ paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharitā. Siyā nu kho eso maggo bodhāyāti. Tassa mayhaṃ aggivesana satānusāriṇiññaṃ ahoṣi: esova maggo bodhāyāti." MN. vol.1. p.246.

from *Saṅgītisuttanta*, etc., which focus on the practice of *vipassanā* by mindfulness(*sati*) and awareness(*sampajāna*).

Your reverence, what sort of *samadhi*(concentration) which, when developed and made much of, conduces to [*vipassanā* by] mindfulness(*sati*) and awareness(*sampajāna*)? Herein, your reverence, to a *bhikkhu*, recognized feelings(*vedanā*) arise, recognized they persist, and recognized they disappear. Recognized perceptions(*saññā*) arise, recognized they persist, and recognized they disappear. Recognized [activities of] reasoning(*vitakkā*) arise, recognized they persist, and recognized they disappear.¹⁴

In this quotation, mindfulness(*sati*) and awareness(*sampajāna*) mean nothing less than *vipassanā*(insight).¹⁵ This passage describes a situation where feeling(*vedanā*), perception(*saññā*), or reasoning(*vitakka*) are recognized(*viditā*) in the process of *vipassanā*. Moreover, it can be considered to be a description of *samādhi*(concentration).

In chapter II I have already confirmed that reasoning(*vitakka*) belongs to the lowest stage of *jhāna* or *samādhi*. Therefore, reference to

14 “Katamā cāvuso samādhībhāvanā bhāvitā bahulikāṭā satisampajāññāya saṃvattati? Idhāvuso bhikkhuno viditā vedanā uppajjanti. Viditā upaṭṭhahanti, viditā abbattham gacchanti, viditā saññā uppajjanti, viditā upaṭṭhahanti, viditā abbattham gacchanti. Ayaṃ āvuso samādhībhāvanā bhāvitā bahulikāṭā satisampajāññāya saṃvattati.” DN. vol.3. p.223; AN. vol.2. p.45; AN. vol.4. p.168 cf.; SN. vol.5. pp. 180-181 cf.; Ps. vol.1. pp.178-179 cf., etc.

15 The practices of mindfulness(*sati*) and awareness(*sampajāna*) means *vipassanā*(insight) which is called *cattāro satipaṭṭhānā* in *Nikāyas*. The following is a quotation from it. “The Exalted One said: A *bhikkhu* should dwell with mindfulness and awareness. This is our instruction to you. And how does a *bhikkhu* dwell with mindfulness? Herein a *bhikkhu* dwells, as regards body, considering body [as transient], ardent, aware, mindful, by having restrained the dejection in the world arising from coveting. He dwells, as regards feelings, considering feelings [as transient], ardent, aware, mindful, by having restrained the dejection in the world arising from coveting. He dwells, as regards mind, considering mind [as transient], ardent, aware, mindful, by having restrained the dejection in the world arising from coveting. He dwells, as regards mind-states, considering mind-states [as transient], ardent, aware, mindful, by having restrained the dejection in the world arising from coveting.(Bhagavā etadavoca. Sato bhikkhave, bhikkhu vihareyya sampajāno. Ayaṃ vo amhākaṃ anusāsani. Kathaṅca bhikkhave, bhikkhu sato hoti: idha bhikkhave, bhikkhu kāye kāyānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ. Vedanāsu vedānānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ. Citta cittaṇupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ. Dhammesu dhammānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ.)” SN. vol.5. p.142.

reasoning in the above quotation, indicates that *vipassanā* can be performed in the lowest stage of *jhāna* or *samādhi*. This doctrine brings me to belief that *vipassanā* can be practiced most properly in the first *jhāna*, and it should be accompanied by *samatha*(serenity).

It is noticeable that these kinds of references appear in typical texts on *vipassanā* related to ‘four foundations of sati practice(cattāro satipaṭṭhānā)’. An example from the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhana-Suttana* follows.

... He keeps on considering how the phenomena of the body arise, or again he keeps on considering how the phenomena of the body disappear, or again he keeps on considering how the phenomena of the body arise and disappear.”¹⁶

There is a similarity between the above quotation and those from the *Saṅgītisuttanta* as stated previously. In particular, ‘the phenomena of the body’ which arise and disappear, can be compared with ‘recognized things(*viditā*)’ which arise and persist and disappear.

Likewise, this is connected with what was mentioned in the *Anupadasutta* as it relates to the *vipassanā* of *Sāriputta*.

For half a month, *bhikkhu*, *Sāriputta* had uninterrupted *vipassanā* into things. This, *bhikkhu*, is due to *Sāriputta*'s uninterrupted *vipassanā* into things: as to this, *bhikkhu* *Sāriputta* secluded from sensual-desires, secluded from unprofitable ideas, enters upon and abides in the first *jhāna*, which is accompanied by reasoning and investigation with rapture and joy born of seclusion. And those things which belong to the first *jhāna*: reasoning(*vitakko*) and investigation(*vicāra*) and rapture(*pīti*) and joy(*sukha*) and one pointedness of mind(*cittakaggatā*), impingement(*phasso*), feeling(*vedanā*), perception(*saññā*), will(*cetanā*), thought(*citta*), desire(*chando*), determination(*adhimokkha*), energy(*virīya*), mindfulness(*sati*), equanimity(*uppkhā*), attention(*manasikāro*) are uninterruptedly set up by him; recognized by him these things arise, recognized they persist, recognized they disappear. He considers thus: “Thus indeed things that have not been in me

16 “... samudayadhammānupassī vā kāyasmim viharati, vayadhammānupassī vā kāyasmim viharati. samudaya vayadhammānupassī vā kāyasmim viharati..... ” DN. vol,2, pp.292.

come to be; having been they pass away.¹⁷

In this quotation, it is worthy of notice that many other things can be enumerated as recognized things(*viditā*) in addition to the three items of feelings, perceptions and reasoning referred in *Saṅgītisuttanta*. Needless to say, all these items are mental factors of the first *jhāna* which also function as subjects of consideration of *vipassanā*.

According to *Paṭisambhidamagga*, the recognized things(*viditā*) including feelings, perceptions, etc., and as subjects for consideration, serve as agencies to understanding the truth.

The arising of feeling(*vedanā*) is recognized(*viditā*) in the sense of conditioned arising(*paccayasamudaya*) thus: With the arising of ignorance(*avijjāsamudayā*) there is the arising of feeling.... The subsiding of feeling is recognized in the sense of conditioned cessation thus: With the cessation of ignorance there is the cessation of feeling.....¹⁸

This quotation, which describes a process of awareness of 'conditioned arising(*paccayasamudaya*) and disappearing, has great meaning in that it indicates the practical side of *vipassanā*, which interrelates with the development of wisdom(*paññā*).(Seung-taek, Lim, 2000: 93-103).

However, among these three, the psychological conditions for reasoning(*vitakkā*) is limited to 'samādhi with both reasoning and investigation' in 'three *samādhis*(*tayo samādhi*)', and in the case of 'four *jhānas*(*cattāri jhānāni*)', to the first *jhāna*. So, it seems reasonable that the condition in which feelings, perceptions and reasoning can all be the

17 "Sāriputto bhikkhave, addhamāsaṃ anupadadhammavipassanaṃ vipassati. Tatridaṃ bhikkhave, sāriputtassa anupadadhammavipassanāya hoti. Idha bhikkhave, sāriputto vivicca kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekajāṃ pītisukhaṃ paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ upasammajja viharati. Ye ca paṭhame jhāne dhammā vitakko ca vicāro ca pīti ca sukhaṃ ca cittekkaggatā ca phasso vedanā saññā cetanā cittaṃ chando adhimokkha viriyaṃ sati upekkhā manasikāro. Tyāssa dhammā anupadavavattitā honti, tyāssa dhammā viditā uppajjanti, viditā upaṭṭhahanti, viditā abbatthamaṃ gacchanti. So evaṃ pajānāti: evaṃ kira me dhammā ahutvā sambhonti, hutvā paṭiventī'ti.... " MN. vol.3. p.25.

18 "avijjāsamudayā vedanāsamudayo ti paccayasamudayaṭṭhena vedanāya uppādo vidito hoti... avijjānirodhā vedanānirodho ti paccayanirodhaṭṭhena vedanāya atthaṅgamo vidito hoti,... " Ps. vol.1. pp.178-179.

subject of *vipassanā* is the lowest stage of *samādhi* or *jhāna*.

As I have previously mentioned, reasoning(*vitakka*) and investigation(*vicāra*), constituting activity of speech(*vacīsankhāra*), become extinct above the second *jhāna*. This reference can also be seen in the *Anupadasutta*, where things other than reasoning and investigation can be recognized for the first time above the second *jhāna*.¹⁹ Consequently, the objects for consideration of *vipassanā* are decreased beyond the first *jhāna*, where only such things as rapture(*pīti*), joy(*sukha*), etc., can be recognized.

This is the reason why in my early studies I concluded that the first *jhāna* with reasoning and investigation is the most suitable mental state for *vipassanā* practice. As I have examined above, there are only two states of meditation which include reasoning and investigation throughout the whole *Nikāyas*. They are ‘*samādhi* with reasoning and investigation(*savitakkasavicāro samādhi*)’ and ‘the first *jhāna*(*pathamajjhāna*)’.

Thus, enough has been said to demonstrate that enlightenment of the truth can be performed in the first *jhāna*. However, it is not a recent claim and it is proposed by many researchers. The importance of the first *jhāna* is not exceptional in the *Visuddhimagga*, which describes how both the path(*magga*) obtained by pure *vipassanā*(*sukkhavipassanā*), and that obtained by other ways finally belong to the first *jhāna*.²⁰

19 A relevant passage is as follows. “With the stillness of reasoning and investigation, *Sāriputta* enters upon and abides in the second *jhāna*, which has internal confidence and one pointedness of mind without reasoning, without investigation, with rapture and joy born of concentration. And those things which belong to the second *jhāna*: internal confidence(*ajjhataṃ sampasādo*) rapture(*pīti*) and joy(*sukha*) and one pointedness of mind(*cittakaggatā*), impingement(*phasso*), feeling(*vedanā*), perception(*saññā*), will(*cetanā*), thought(*citta*), desire(*chando*), determination(*adhimokkho*), energy(*virīya*), mindfulness(*sati*), equanimity(*upekkhā*), attention(*manasikāro*) are uninterruptedly set up by him; recognized to him these things arise, recognized they persist, recognized they disappear. He considers thus: ‘Thus indeed things that have not been in me come to be; having been they pass away.(*Sāriputto vitakkavicārānaṃ vūpasamā ajjhataṃ sampasādanaṃ cetaso ekodibhavaṃ avitakkaṃ avicāraṃ samādhijaṃ pītisukhaṃ dutiyaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati. Ye ca dutiye jhāne dhammā ajjhataṃ sampasādo ca pīti ca sukhaṃ cittaṃ cittaṃ phasso vedanā saññā cetanā cittaṃ chando adhimokkho virīyaṃ sati upekkhā manasikāro, tyāssa dhammā anupadavavatthitā honti. Tyāssa dhammā viditā uppajanti, viditā upaṭṭhahanti, viditā abbattham gacchanti. So evaṃ pajānāti: 'evaṃ kira me dhammā ahutvā sambhonti. Hutvā paṭiventī'ti.)” MN. vol.3. pp.25-26.*

20 A relevant passage is as follows. “To deal with these in order: According to governance by *vipassanā*, the path arisen in a bare-*vipassanā* worker, and the path arisen in one who possesses a *jhāna* attainment but who has not made the *jhāna* the basis for *vipassanā*, and the

Likewise, Bhikkhu Bodhi has once referred to how the mental state of *vipassanā* is the same as that of the first *jhāna* when one reaches the ‘path and fruit(*magga-phala*)’.²¹(Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1993: 73) In the traditional systems of thought in *Abhidhamma*, it is said that the ‘path and fruit’ could possibly be completed through all stages from the first to the fifth *jhāna*.²² These explanations in later days confirm my opinion that *vipassanā* is important in the first *jhāna*.

IV. The First *Jhāna* and Destruction of Canker(*āsava*)

In this section I will examine how the first *jhāna* is related to ‘the destruction of cankers(*āsavakkhaya*)’. As we have observed, the first *jhāna* belongs to the lowest stage of *samādhi* or *jhāna*, although it is a proper mental condition for practicing of *vipassanā*(insight).

Stereotypically it may be assumed that the first *jhāna* has nothing to do with ‘the destruction of cankers’ and ‘the attainment of *nibbāna*’, regarding itself as an inferior stage of *samādhi*. However, I am certain

path made to arise by comprehending unrelated formations after using the first *jhāna* as the basis for *vipassanā*, are path of the first *jhāna* only.(*tatr' āyaṃ anupubbikathā-vipassanāniyamena hi sukkhavipassakassa uppannamaggo pi samāpattilābhino jhānaṃ pādakaṃ akatvā, uppannamaggo pi paṭhamajjhānaṃ pādakaṃ katvā, pakīṇṇakasaṅkhāre sammasitvā uppāditamaggo pi paṭhamajjhānikā va honti.*)” Vism. pp.666-667.

21 “Thoes who develop *vipassanā* without a basis of *jhāna* are called practitioners of bare *vipassanā*(*sukkhavipassaka*). When they reach the path and fruit, their path and fruition *cittas* occur at a level corresponding to the first *jhāna*....”

22 A relevant passage is as follows. “The first *jhāna* path consciousness of stream-entry together with reasoning, investigation, rapture, joy, and one pointedness. The second *jhāna* path consciousness of stream-entry together with investigation, rapture, joy, and one pointedness. The third *jhāna* path consciousness of stream-entry together with rapture, joy, and one pointedness. The fourth *jhāna* path consciousness of stream-entry together with joy and one-pointedness. The fifth *jhāna* path consciousness of stream-entry together with equanimity and one-pointedness. These are the five types of path consciousness of stream-entry. So too for the path consciousness of once-returning, of non-returning, and of Arahantship, making twenty types of path consciousness. Similarly, there are twenty types of fruition consciousness. Thus there are forty types of supramundane consciousness.

(*vitakkavicārapītisukhekaggatāsahitaṃ paṭhamajjhānasotāpattimaggacittaṃ, vicārapītisukhekaggatāsahitaṃ dutiyajjhānasotāpattimaggacittaṃ, pītisukhekaggatāsahitaṃ tatiyajjhānasotāpattimaggacittaṃ, sukhekaggatāsahitaṃ catutthajjhānasotāpattimaggacittaṃ, upekkhekaggatāsahitaṃ pañcamajjhānasotāpattimaggacittaṃ ceti imāni pañcapi sotāpattimaggacittāni nāma; tathā sakadāgāmi maggānāgāmi maggārahattamaggacittaṃ ceti samavīsati maggacittāni; tathā phalacittāni ceti samacattāliṣa lokuttaracittāni bhavanti.*)” *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, pp.4-5.

that it is possible for the destruction of cankers and the attainment of *nibbāna* to be executed in the first *jhāna*.

The quotation from *Mahāmāluṅkiyasutta* of *Majjhimanikāya* below illustrates this point.

Here, *Ānanda*, a *bhikkhu* by aloofness from ‘clinging’, by getting rid of an unskilled state of mind, by allaying every bodily impropriety, aloof from sensual-desires, secluded from unprofitable ideas, enters and abides in the first *jhāna*, which is accompanied by reasoning and investigation, is born of seclusion and is rapturous and joyful. Whatever is there of material shape, feeling, perception, the habitual tendencies, consciousness- he considers(*samanupassati*) these things as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as an imposthume, as a dart, as a misfortune, as an affliction, as other, as decay, empty, not-self. He turn his mind from these things; and when he has turned his mind from these things he focuses his mind on the deathless element, thinking: ‘This is the real, this the excellent, that is to say the tranquillising of all the activities, the casting out of all clinging, the destruction of craving, dispassion, stopping, *nibbāna*.’ If he is steadfast therein, he achieves destruction of the cankers; if he does not achieve destruction of the cankers, then through his attachment to *dhamma*, his delight in *dhamma*, through his utter destruction of five fetters binding to the lower [shore], he is of spontaneous uprising, one who attains *nibbāna* there, not liable to return from that world.....

And again, *Ānanda*, a *bhikkhu*..... enters and abides in the second *jhāna*..... enters and abides in the third *jhāna*.... enters and abides in the fourth *jhāna*.... enters and abides in the plane of infinite ether(*ākāsānañcāyatana*).... enters and abides in the plane of infinite consciousness(*viññānañcāyatana*).... enters and abides in the plane of nothing(*ākīñcaññāyatana*). Whatever is there of feeling, perception, the habitual tendencies, consciousness- he considers(*samanupassati*) these things as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as an imposthume, as a dart, as a misfortune, as an affliction, as other, as decay, empty, not-self. He turn his mind from these things; and when he has turned his mind from these things, he focuses his mind on the deathless element, thinking: ‘This is the real, this the excellent, that is to say the tranquillising of all the activities,

the casting out of all clinging, the destruction of craving, dispassion, stopping, *nibbāna*.' If he is steadfast therein, he achieves destruction of the cankers; if he does not achieve destruction of the cankers, then through his attachment to *dhamma*, his delight in *dhamma*, through his utter destruction of five fetters binding to the lower [shore], he is of spontaneous uprising, one who attains *nibbāna* there, not liable to return from that world.²³

Summing up the above quotation, the destruction of cankers(*āsava*) is obtained through the practice of considering(*samanupassati*) in seven *jhānas*, beginning with the first *jhāna*. In this sense, it seems that the first *jhāna* does not have any particular difference from the other *jhānas*.

The passage above points to the significance of the first *jhāna*, where it is possible to destroy the cankers and to attain *nibbāna*, and it supports my previous claim that *samatha*(serenity) and *vipassanā*(insight) can be performed not only consecutively but also simultaneously.

I have already insisted that *vipassanā* can be performed from the first *jhāna* to the plane of nothing(*ākāṅkhaññāyatanaśamāpatti*)(Seung-taek Lim, 2002: 247-277), while *vipassanā* cannot be performed in the plane of

23 "Idh' Ānanda bhikkhu upadhivivekā akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ pahānā sabbaso kāyaduṭṭhullānaṃ paṭipassaddhiyā viviceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekajāṃ pītisukhaṃ paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati. So yadeva 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 santaṃ etaṃ paṇitaṃ yadidaṃ sabbasaṅkhārasamatho sabbūpādhipaṭinissaggo taṇhakkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānanti. So tatthaṭṭhito āsavānaṃ khayāṃ pāpuṇāti. no ce āsavānaṃ khayāṃ pāpuṇāti. Teneva dhammarāgena tāya dhammanandiyā pañcannaṃ orambhāgiyānaṃ saññojanānaṃ parikkhayā opapātiko hoti tattha parinibbāyī anāvattidhammo tasmā lokā.....

Puna ca paraṃ ānanda bhikkhu.... dutiyaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati..... tatiyaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati..... catutthaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati..... akāśānañcāyatanaṃ upasampajja viharati..... viññānañcāyatanaṃ upasampajja viharati..... ākiñcaññāyatanaṃ upasampajja viharati. So yadeva tattha hoti 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 santaṃ etaṃ paṇitaṃ yadidaṃ sabbasaṅkhārasamatho sabbūpādhipaṭinissaggo taṇhakkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānanti. So tatthaṭṭhito āsavānaṃ khayāṃ pāpuṇāti. no ce āsavānaṃ khayāṃ pāpuṇāti. Teneva dhammarāgena tāya dhammanandiyā pañcannaṃ orambhāgiyānaṃ saññojanānaṃ parikkhayā opapātiko hoti tattha parinibbāyī anāvattidhammo tasmā lokā." MN. vol.1. pp.435-437.

neither perception nor nonperception(*nevasaññānāsaññāyatanaśamāpatti*), or in the extinction of perception and feeling(*saññāvedayitanirodha*), which are the last two stages of ‘nine successive stages of meditation(*nava anupubbavihārā*)’.

Only when one has mindfully emerged from those stages of meditation can one practice considering things that are past, stopped, changed, etc. In this sense, the above passage has something in common with the *Anupadasutta* as follows.

And again, bhikkhu, Sāriputta, by passing quite beyond the plane of no-thing(*ākīñcaññāyatanaśamāpatti*), enters on and abides in the plane of neither perception nor nonperception(*nevasaññānāsaññāyatanaśamāpatti*). Mindful, he emerges from that attainment. When he has emerged, mindful, from that attainment he considers(*samanupassati*) those things that are past, stopped, changed as: “Thus indeed things that have not been in me come to be; having been they pass away.... And again, bhikkhu, Sāriputta, by passing quite beyond the plane of neither perception nor nonperception, enters on and abides in the extinction of perception and feeling(*saññāvedayitanirodha*). And having seen by means of intuitive wisdom, his cankers utterly destroyed. Mindful, he emerges from that attainment. When he has emerged, mindful, from that attainment he considers those things that are past, stopped, changed as: “Thus indeed things that have not been in me come to be; having been they pass away.”²⁴

In *Mahāmālurkiyasutta*, there are seven kinds of *jhāna* in which it is possible to practice considering(*samanupassati*) things to be impermanent, a suffering, a disease, etc. But this practice stops at the plane of neither perception nor nonperception(*nevasaññānāsaññāyatanaśamāpatti*)

24 “Puna ca paraṃ bhikkhave, sāriputto sabbaso ākiñcaññāyatanaṃ samatikkamma nevasaññānāsaññāyatanaṃ upasampajja viharati, so tāya samāpattiyā sato vuṭṭhahati. So tāya samāpattiyā sato vuṭṭhahitvā ye te dhammā atitā niruddhā vipariṇatā, te dhamme samanupassati: ‘evaṃ kira me dhammā ahutvā sambhonti, hutvā paṭiventī’ti..... Puna ca paraṃ bhikkhave, sāriputto sabbaso nevasaññānāsaññāyatanaṃ samatikkamma saññāvedayitanirodhaṃ upasampajja viharati. Paññāya cassa disvā āsavā parikkhīṇā honti. So tāya samāpattiyā sato vuṭṭhahitvā ye te dhammā atitā niruddhā vipariṇatā, te dhamme samanupassati: ‘evaṃ kira me dhammā ahutvā sambhonti, hutvā paṭiventī’ti.” MN. vol.3. p.28.

and in the extinction of perception and feeling(*saññāvedayitanirodha*).

Yet, in this passage from *Anupadasutta* we can confirm the fact that practice of considering can be performed after emerging from the plane of neither perception nor nonperception and the extinction of perception and feeling. This means that the references from the *Anupadasutta* and the *Mahāmālun̄kyasutta* are complementary to each other. Thus, the two passages quoted in this chapter play an important role in strengthening the opinion, which I have insisted on so far.

V. Conclusion

In chapter II, I began with a reference to the fact that the state of *samādhi* is required in order to reveal the wisdom(*pañña*). Pointing to the first *jhāna* as such a state of *samādhi*, wisdom is developed as centered on reasoning(*vitakka*). Reasoning is a transitional feature in that it becomes extinct in the deep levels of *samādhi* or *jhāna*. But, it is the mental factor(*cetasika*) which functions in *samādhi* or *jhāna*.

In chapter III, I concentrated more on the meaning of the first *jhāna*, characterized by reasoning(*vitakka*). In this section, I observed the aspects of *vipassanā* which are practiced in the making of *samādhi*(*samādhi-bhāvanā*), and I also confirmed that this reasoning appears constantly in literature concerning the subject. As I have noted, throughout the whole *Nikāya*, it is only in the first *jhāna* that reasoning exists.

There is no other way to think that the first *jhāna* is the only state of *samādhi* where reasoning can be supposed as an object of *vipassanā*. Similar references on this subject can be found in the *Mahāmālun̄kyasutta*, the *Anupadasutta* and the *Paṭisambhidamagga*. Such references confirm my opinion more strongly as much as they are considered basic literature on *vipassanā*.

Chapter IV provides verification of the points of my arguments in this paper. Here, I make it clear by reference to the *Mahāmālun̄kyasutta*, that the destruction of cankers and the attainment of *nibbāna* can be achieved in the first *jhāna*. It seems certain that there is no reason why

the first *jhāna* should be considered inferior.

Samādhi or *jhāna* arranges its own system according to the depth of *samatha*. On the other hand, *vipassanā* means the wisdom of the truth. A specific mental state such as *samādhi* differs from *vipassanā* performed in that state. Eventually, even if they merge at times, both are essentially different from each other.

For instance, achieving serenity is helpful for *vipassanā*(insight) on things. Things can not be grasped thoroughly as they are until the mind can maintain serenity. Nevertheless, if the mind is too absorbed in serenity, it makes it difficult to apply keen awareness, because the usual mind does not appear in deep concentration.

Besides, it is easy to become attached to serenity. Therefore, usual state of awareness as well as experiences of *samādhi* will be an important object of *vipassanā*. This is the reason why I emphasize the first *jhāna*, regarding *vipassanā*.

In conclusion, I want to make it clear in this paper that I do not overlook the value of *samādhi* which are deeper than the first *jhāna*. Other *samādhis* will necessarily be active to eliminate cankers(*āsava*). But *vipassanā*, that is, insight into ‘now’ in ‘this moment’ is more essential than deep *samādhi* in Buddhist practice. That's what I have emphasized in this paper.

Abbreviation

AN	<i>Anguttara, Nikāya</i>	eds. R. Morris and E. Hardy, 6 vols. London: P. T. S., 1885-1910.
Abhi-s	<i>Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha</i>	ed. Hammalawa Saddhātissa, London: P. T. S., 1989.
Dhp	<i>Dhammapada</i>	ed. O. von Hinüber and K. R. Norman, London: P. T. S., 1994-1995.
DN	<i>Dīghā, Nikāya</i>	eds. T. W. Rhys Davids and J. E. Carpenter, 3 vols, P.T. S., 1889-1903.
MN	<i>Majjhima, Nikāya</i>	eds. V. Trenckner and R. Chelmers, 3 vols, London: P.T. S., 1888-1889.
Ps	<i>Paṭisambhidāmagga</i>	eds. A. C. Taylor, 2 vols, London: P.

		T. S., 1905-1907.
PsA	<i>Saddhammapakāsinī</i>	eds. C. V. Joshi, 3 vols, London: P. T. S., 1933-1947.
SN	<i>Samyutta, Nikāya</i>	eds. M. L. Feer, 5 vols, London: P. T. S., 1884-1898.
Vism	<i>Visuddhimagga</i>	ed. C. A. F. Rhys Davids, London: P. T. S., 1920-1921.

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