



The Buddhist Concept of Pereception (Sanna)
with Special Reference to Theravada Buddhism:
A Critical Study

Khin May Thi

A Thesis Submitted in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
The Degree of Master of Arts in Religious Studies

Graduate School of Philosophy and Religious Studies
Assumption University of Thailand

March 1999

M.A. (R.S.)

**ABAC
GRADUATE SCHOOL LIBRARY**

**The Buddhist Concept of Perception (*Sanna*)
with Special Reference to Theravada Buddhism:
A CRITICAL STUDY**

Khin May Thi

**A Thesis Submitted in
Partial Fulfilment of The Requirement for
The Degree of Master of Arts in Religious Studies**

Graduate School of Philosophy and Religious Studies

ASSUMPTION UNIVERSITY of THAILAND

MARCH 1999 .

THESIS TITLE : **The Buddhist Concept of Perception(Sanna) with
Special Reference to Theravada Buddhism :
A Critical Study**

RESEARCHER NAME : Ms.Khin May Thi

THESIS ADVISOR : Ven. Phrasudhivorayan,Ph.D.

ACADEMIC YEAR : 1998

The Graduate School of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Assumption University, has approved this thesis as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in **Religious Studies**.




(Asst. Prof. Warayutha Sriewarakul, Ph.D.)
Acting Dean of Graduate School of Philosophy
and Religious Studies

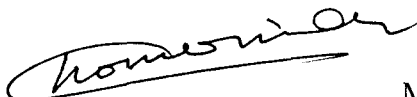
Approval Committee :



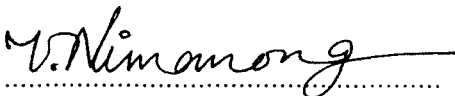
..... Chairman
(Asst.Prof. Warayutha Sriewarakul,Ph.D.)



..... Member
(Ven.Phrasudhivorayan,Ph.D.)



..... Member
((Dr. Chou Norindr)



..... Member
(Dr. Veerachart Nimanong)



..... Member
(Asst. Prof. Somparn Promta,Ph.D.)

The researcher will try to give a clear perspective about both the good effects as well as the problems caused by *perception* on Hinayana Buddhist meditation. She will also probe into the relation of *perception* to the development of absorptions (*Jhanas*).

A comparative study of some of the leading meditational schools of Myanmar and Thailand was made and it was found that all of these schools except one stress only on insight meditation (*vipassana bhavana*) without going through the stages of absorptions (*jhanas*). This means they only stress on dry insight (*sukkha vipassana*). Dhammakaya meditational school is the one exceptional school in Thailand practising Theravada Buddhism but its concepts are very different from the usual, authentic Theravada Buddhism. According to the facts written in the various Buddhist scriptures, the researcher found that the practice of Dhammakaya meditational school is that of perception of obsession (*papanca sanna*).

According to the various Buddhist Scriptures, perception leading to tranquil meditation (*samatha bhavana*) and leading to the various absorptions (*jhanas*) without the development of insight or wisdom (*vipassana*) will prevent one from attaining to *Nibbana*, and may pose a great danger as it can lead to perception of obsession (*papanca sanna*).

The researcher, in going through the various Buddhist Scriptures, finally, to her great surprise, found that logically insight is but a process of pure perception. Contemplation of the three characteristics of phenomenal existence on the pure perception of various sensations obtained through the six sensory organs is insight meditation. So this means that process of pure perception can lead one to *Nibbana*.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The thanks and gratitude felt by the researcher to the President of Assumption University, Dr. Brother Martin P. Komolmas, for establishing the Graduate School of Philosophy cannot be expressed in words. I implore my deep silence to speak for me, more than the sweetest notes.

The researcher would also like to acknowledge the fact that if it was not for the professor's zealous efforts, it would not have been possible for her to attend this course. The researcher is indebted to the professor and Dean of the Graduate School of Philosophy for his kindness in giving his expert opinion, advice and guidance on her thesis, and she will always remain grateful to him.

The researcher would like to express her thanks and gratitude towards her main advisor for his kindness and patience in instructing and guiding her to make this thesis a success. Great thanks to her co-advisor Dr. Veerachart for guiding, instructing, and correcting, her thesis, and all her ajarns, Dr. Warayut, Dr. Sebastian, Professor Chou, Dr. Magniola, Phra Metta Anando and Dr. Manasco for their patient advice and guidance. Thanks to the staff of the Graduate School of Philosophy, and to the typists who so patiently typed out her thesis for so many times. Last, but not the least, to all her family members and friends for their co-operation, moral support, and everything they have done for her.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Pages
Abstract	i
Acknowledgement	iii
 CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Background and Significance of research	1
1.2 The Research Question	5
1.3 Purposes	6
1.4 Objectives	6
1.5 Methodology	7
1.6 Limitations of the Paper	7
1.7 Expectations	7
 CHAPTER II: PERCEPTION ACCORDING TO THERAVADA BUDDHISM	 10
2.1 Kinds of Perception in Tipitaka	13
2.1.1 Perception as a Faculty of Sensual Judgement	14
2.1.2 Perception as a Kind of Wisdom	19
2.1.2.1 Perception in the Calmness Meditation	19
2.1.2.1.1 Perception in Tranquility meditation	19
2.1.2.1.2 The Nine Progressive Abidings	20
2.1.2.1.3 The Nine Spheres of Beings	22
2.1.2.2 Perception In the Insight Meditation	24
2.1.2.2.1 Perception As Mindfulness	24
2.1.2.2.2 Perception As Insight	25
2.2 The Process of Perception as Invalid Knowledge and Valid Knowledge	 29
2.2.1 Perception of Obsession (<i>papanca-sanna</i>)	29
2.2.2 Distortion of Perception (<i>sanna-vipallasa</i>)	32
2.2.3 Errors of Perception	33
2.2.4 Perception as a source of Valid Knowledge (<i>Pramana</i>)	34

	Pages
2.3 Perception According to Different Schools of Hinayana Buddhism	36
2.3.1 Perception in the Vaibhasika School	36
2.3.2 Perception in the Sautrantika School	39
CHAPTER III: THE RELATION OF PERCEPTION (<i>SANNA</i>) TO THE 'MEDITATION PRACTICES' (<i>KAMMATTHANA</i>)	44
3.1 The Relation of Perception to 'Tranquility Development' (<i>Samathabhavana</i>)	45
3.1.1 Perception as the Meditation Subjects	50
3.1.2 The classification of Perception according to Trances or Absorptions (<i>Jhanas</i>)	52
3.1.2.1 Absorption of The Form Sphere (<i>Rupa Jhana</i>)	52
3.1.2.2 Formless Absorptions (<i>Arupa Jhana</i>)	54
3.2 Relation of Perception to Insight Development	58
3.3 Seven Purities (<i>Visuddhi</i>) as a process leading to <i>Nibbana</i>	59
3.4 Similarities between Absorption, Perception and Concentration	86
3.4.1 Mindfulness (<i>Sati</i>)	91
3.4.2 Can perception lead to <i>Nibbana</i> ?	94
CRITICAL CONCLUSION	97
CHAPTER IV: A CRITICAL REFLECTION ON THE APPLICATIONS OF PERCEPTION	98
4.1 Comparison of bare insight with acquirement of insight through the practice of <i>Samadhi</i>	100
4.2 In terms of perception also concentration (<i>Samadhi</i>) and insight (<i>Vipassana</i>) differs	102
4.3 Perception as <i>Samadhi</i> , and E.S.P. (Extra-Sensory-perception)	104
4.4 Comparison of Perception in some schools of Theravada Buddhist Meditation	110
4.4.1 Ledi Sayadaw (1847-1924)	110
4.4.2 Sun Lunn Sayadaw (1878-1953)	111
4.4.3 Mahasi Sayadaw (1905-1983)	112
4.4.4 Goenka's Method	113
4.4.5 Critical Conclusion	114

	Pages
4.5 Comparison and Criticism of different meditation schools of Thailand	115
4.5.1 Suan Mokkh Buddhist Meditation Centre led by Buddhadasa	115
4.5.2 Satipathana Vipassana Meditation of Wat Mahadhatu	118
4.5.3 Dhammakaya Meditation	120
4.5.4 Critical Conclusion	124
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION	126
1. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	133
2. REFERENCES	134
3. APPENDIX	140
4. AUTOBIOGRAPHY	



ABBREVIATIONS

AN = Anguttaranikaya

Dhp = Dhammapada

Dhp A = Dhammapada - Atthakatha

Dhs = Dhammasangani

Dhs A = Dhammasangani Atthakatha

DN = Dighanikaya

MN = Majimanikaya

Pts = Patisambhidamagga

SN = Samyuttanikaya

Vbh = Vibhanga

Vin = Vinayapitaka

Vism = Visuddhi-magga

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Significance of Research

The researcher wrote this thesis due to her earnest desire to find the role played by perception towards meditation. In this age of globalization, people all over the world are living very busy and hectic lives, the majority not thinking much about religion. Almost the entire world is in trouble, people being led by greed and hatred, without any ethics. It was also found that some Buddhist monks in certain countries (the names of both the researcher does not wish to disclose) claim to possess some supernatural powers or to have attained a certain super-human stage in spiritual progress. It was also noticed that some of the Buddhists who are their followers seem to worship them rather than the true Dhamma laid down by Lord Buddha. They do so with the hope of attaining wealth, power, and fame, not only for this life, but also for the life beyond. People are blinded by lust and greed and are happy and overjoyous at obtaining these worldly riches at any cost, without pondering whether it is the authentic happiness according to reality (AHAR) or whether or not they will really give us enrichment of our lives.

Though people are living in the contemporary paradigm, the ideas and beliefs of the past paradigms (ancient, medieval) are still rooted in their conscience.

Clear knowledge about perception and its role on meditation, will be a very useful guide for the Buddhists to choose the type of meditation one wishes to follow. So, it will be beneficial to research the true nature of perception, its problems, and its role in meditation based on Theravada Buddhist scriptures.

What is the true nature of perception aroused the curiosity of the researcher to find the actual cause which could lead one to the attainment of supernatural powers and to investigate further whether these attainments will eventually lead to the final emancipation. In going through the Buddhist scriptures of Hinayana, Therevada Buddhism, it was found that perception forms the basis of all absorptions (*Jhanas*). The researcher also learned that the perception which forms the basis of these supernatural powers can also become a big problem if the aspirant is not mindful not to become obsessed to these supernatural powers.

All these factors led the researcher to probe deeply into what is meant by perception, the problems perception causes and to find the role perception plays in Theravada Buddhist meditation.

Last but not least is to find whether perception leading to concentration, absorptions, or *samadhibhavana* alone, can lead one to *Nibbana*, or whether concentration and absorption with morality is necessary. The final aim of the researcher is to find how perception can become a problem in

meditation according to Theravada Buddhism if one is not mindful, of the fact that these absorptions alone without insight meditation cannot lead to *Nibbana*. What kind of practice will allow for final liberation and whether pure perception (indeterminate) can lead one to *Nibbana*.

The researcher has come across many instances in her life wherein some people have had the capacity to perform things which could not have been achieved by a normal human being. She also observed that most of these achievements were performed by Buddhist monks and some by laymen practising Buddhist meditation. Some examples of these supernatural or superhuman powers are as follows.

- (1) One monk being accounted for in two places at the same time.
- (2) Precise and accurate foretelling of the future.
- (3) An influx of wealth to ordinary businessmen of average intelligence just by following the advice and guidance of these monks and lay people possessed with supernatural powers.

These instances made the researcher very curious and wanted to find how these people came to possess such supernatural powers. What are the factors that lead to these superhuman achievements?

This curiosity led the researcher to probe into this mystery verbally by questioning various Buddhist monks as well as lay people and came to find that the

main root to these supernatural or superhuman achievements is based on concentration; concentration or tranquility meditation is based on perception.

After this first clue she was curious to find whether it is true or not and whether perception really has any influence on Theravada Buddhist meditation. If so, how important is it? She also inquired whether it is a help or a hindrance towards one striving for *Nibbana* and whether pure perception can lead to *Nibbana*.

So further research was carried out by probing into various Buddhist scriptures mainly on Theravada Buddhism. To her great surprise she discovered that perception has a great influence on Buddhist meditation. It can be a great help as well as a great hindrance towards the goal of attaining *Nibbana* if one is not mindful of becoming obsessed to the various trances attained by perception and that insight is a process of pure perception.

She also came to find that there are many theories about perception even within the different schools of Hinayana Buddhism. There can also be many problems arising from perception once it becomes an obsession (*papanca sanna*).

All these factors stimulated the researcher to carry out further research and to choose this topic for her thesis.

The topic of perception is most disputed. There are many theories relating to the problem of perception. What perception is and how it is related to the conditions of knowledge have been problems for philosophers from the beginning of philosophical enquiry.

To the common man, it means awareness of objects through the senses. He feels that perception of an object is direct.

For a psychologist, perception is the cognition of objects through the interpretation of one or more sensations.

A philosopher would regard perception as essential to the foundations of knowledge especially “our knowledge of the external world” and of such things as physical objects. He is interested in the question of what is perceived, the reliability of perception, and the validity of the perceptual knowledge.

According to Bertrand Russel, perception lies between pure sensation and explicit judgement. While differing from both, it has something in common with each. Sensation is the lower limit of perception, and explicit judgement is the upper limit. According to him, one characteristic feature of *perception* is direct or immediate awareness. (Russel : 1984, 1 - 5).

Though Buddhism takes “*perception*” (*sanna*) as the valid source of knowledge, it is different according to the various schools of Hinayana Buddhism such as the Vaibhasika, Sautrantika, and Theravada. In this research, special emphasis is given to the School of Theravada Buddhism.

1.2 The Research Question:

According to the Theravada Buddhist tradition, perception is generally known to play an important role. Various sources on Theravada Buddhism state

that perception alone cannot lead to *Nibbāna*, but the researcher thinks she can prove by critical analysis of texts that pure perception actually can.

1.3 Purposes:

To satisfy the status of the questions, the researcher intends to study the following questions:

1. What is perception (*sāññā*) according to Theravada Buddhism and the other schools of Hinayana Buddhism, like Vaibhasika and Sautrantika?
2. What problems does it cause?
3. How does it play an important role in meditation? Does it have a positive or negative affect on insight meditation?

1.4 Objectives:

1. To find the nature of perception (*sanna*) according to the different contexts and as seen by different schools of Hinayana Buddhism, especially by Theravada Buddhism.
2. As perception (*sāññā*) is one of the Five Aggregates (*pañcakkhandhas*), to probe deeply into the nature of perception in relation to the Five Aggregates and to have a sound knowledge of their nature and significance.

3. To find the problem of perception (*sanna*) in meditation development (*samadhibhavana*), as a contextually critical study.

4. To find whether concentration meditation (*samadhibhavana*) and trance or absorption (*jhanas*), especially the ‘fourth absorptions of the formless sphere’ (*arupa jhanas*) which is based on neither perception nor non-perception, can lead to final emancipation?

If so why and if not why not? Is it a rational or practical discernment?

1.5 Methodology:

It is a documental research, based on various schools of Hinayana Buddhist scriptures. The documents are from both primary and secondary sources.

1.6 Limitations of the Paper:

The topic of this paper will be limited to perception according to Theravada Buddhism with relation to the points of view of other schools of Hinayana to some extent.

1.7 Expectations:

1. The nature of perception (*sanna*) as seen by Theravada and other different schools of Hinayana Buddhism only will be analysed and criticized systematically.
2. The role of perception on insight meditation (*vipassana*) will be clearly ascertained, and this will promote spiritual progress.

3. The researcher believes that it would be more advantageous to practise insight meditation only after having a thorough knowledge about perception.

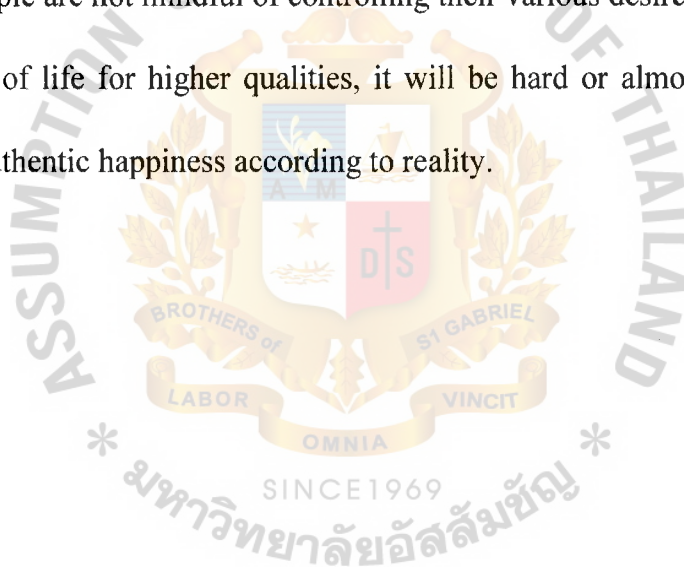
It can be seen that people of nowadays, living in this contemporary paradigm being driven by lust, greed, and hatred, are led to the commitment of various crimes such as sexual misconduct, murder, civil wars, child labour and so on. People worship the monks who show supernatural powers, and try to attain the powers themselves, if possible, with the hope of obtaining wealth and power in this life as well as in the life beyond. In many cases it was found that all the best was given up at the expense of one's own family's needs for their thirst and lust to achieve supernatural powers and to please the superhuman beings. From this it is obvious that, though people of nowadays are living in this contemporary paradigm, the ideas and beliefs of the past paradigms, ancient and medieval, are still rooted in their conscience. Blinded by lust and with thirst for fame and wealth, people are everjoyed to obtain worldly pleasures and riches at any cost. The end justifies the means. This led to many broken homes, child labour, forced prostitution, unfair and unnecessary poverty and so on. People do not stop to ponder whether their happiness of these worldly pleasures taken at the cost of causing such suffering to others is the authentic happiness, according to reality.

All Buddhists believe in the thirty-one worlds of existence (bhavas) which is the round of samsara, as this is the *dhama* taught by Buddha.

According to Buddha's teachings, good and bad karma are the result of one's good or bad volitions and actions and one will have to pay retribution for one's bad karma.

According to the *dharmas* laid down by Buddha one will have suffering as long as one is going around samsara. There will be an end to suffering only if one can attain the final emancipation.

From the social and practical point of view, as human greed has no limit, if people are not mindful of controlling their various desires, or care for the enrichment of life for higher qualities, it will be hard or almost impossible to enjoy the authentic happiness according to reality.



CHAPTER II

PERCEPTION ACCORDING TO THERAVADA BUDDHISM

Perception (*sanna*), according to Theravada Buddhism, is defined as the immediate knowledge which arises out of the contact of the object with its appropriate sense organ (AN: III, 413; DN: III, 243; 244). According to Theravada Buddhism there are six sense organs. They are the eyes, giving rise to the sense of sight, ears perceive the sense of hearing, senses of smell are obtained by the nose, taste by the tongue, touch by body and imagination by the mind, giving rise to mental perception (DN: II, 308;)

The unique characteristic of perceptual knowledge is that it cannot be communicated to others in its true form. At the second moment, when concepts (*Vikalpas*) come in, it is no more valid perception or pure perception.

According to Theravada Buddhism, a form has both its own-nature and a general nature. All things (both with or without forms) except *nirvana* are subject to the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and non-self (or non-substantiality). Non-substantiality also applies to *Nirvana*. Since these three characteristics are common to all phenomena (forms) and shared by all, they cannot be of an independent, or own-nature, but are of a general nature. So the object of a noble person's (*aryan*) perception is the general nature of the

phenomenon. Own-nature is defined as the unique characteristic of phenomenon (form, *etc.*).

Perception may be classified into two types: that of a noble person (*arya*) and conventional (that of a worldling). Conventional perception can have both own-nature and general nature of an object in such things as what is heard, seen, felt, and known.

A form is subject to disintegration and has no feeling. So these two characteristics are the own nature of form. In realising truth, the noble person (*arya*) perceives both the own-nature and the general nature of phenomena. In the perception of forms, there cannot be any similarity in view of characteristics between a noble person (*arya*) and a worldling. A noble person is mindful of the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and non-self. So he or she will not regard the objects of perception to be worthy of desire or craving whereas a worldling would. As the noble person is still existing in this world, he or she cannot totally avoid sense perceptions, but in being mindful of them, he will have no attachment. As he cannot avoid seeing, he will say what is seen is seen. This is the conventional perception of the noble person. In this respect, a worldling will also perceive forms in a similar way as the noble person, *e.g.* if there is a man on the road, both will have the conventional perception of a man.

So conventional perception will be the same between that of a worldling and a noble person but the noble person will have both *arya* perception as well as conventional perception.

According to the philosophy of Theravada Buddhism, a visual object is only a visible form, which means the sphere of form. The rest is invisible. The sphere of form has colour and shape. Colour and shape are seen through the mind and not through the eye. The mind also perceives thought objects. (viz: perception of what is known).

In perception, the general nature of the object is first perceived and this is followed by own-nature.

As perception (*sanna*) arises as the immediate knowledge from the contact of an object with its appropriate sense organ, this means perception is not limited only to visual objects. Perception can be obtained by all the five traditional sense organs and the mind (DN: III, 243; 244).

An example of immediate knowledge arising from perception of general nature and own nature of an object can be seen from the fact that a young child can recognize its mother from a crowd of other human beings. The humanness is the general nature, the specific femininity is the own-nature. To recognize its mother from other women shows that femininity then becomes the general nature and her “motherness” becomes the own-nature.

Another example about immediate knowledge arising from general nature and own-nature of perception may be seen from a person recognizing his favourite singer. In this case it is the sense perception of the organ of hearing and the mind. It may be called auditory perception. One is conscious of hearing some sound. The fact that it is a sound is the general nature. One also is aware that it is a sound belonging to a human being and not to other animals. This awareness arises in the mind. So the humanness is the own-nature. From the particular characteristic or uniqueness of the sound one recognizes in the mind that it is the voice of that particular singer. So the humanness now becomes the general nature and the knowledge which arises in his mind that it is the voice of that particular singer now becomes the own-nature.

2.1 Kinds of Perception in Tipitaka

In Tipitaka, perception is found to play different roles. Some times it is found as a faculty of sense judgement, meaning perception in the Five Aggregates. Perception also plays the role of wisdom leading to absorptions or trances (*jhanas*) in tranquility meditations. Perception can also lead to insight meditation directly without passing through absorptions (bare insight or *sukkha vipassana*) and insight obtained through the practice of absorptions (*jhanas*), or Jhanas Vipassana. (AN: II, 157).

2.1.1 Perception as a Faculty of Sensual Judgement.

Perception as a Faculty of Sensual Judgement means the knowledge obtained through consciousness which arises from perception of sensory stimulus, or of ideas. According to Theravada Buddhism, there are six sensory organs. They are the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. Perceptual knowledge is the immediate knowledge that arises from the contact of the external objects with its appropriate sense organ. Forms or objects give rise to visual perception, sounds, smells, tastes, and tangibles give rise to auditory, olfactory, gustatory and tactile perceptions. Phenomena or ideas have impacts on the mind giving rise to mental perception (DN: III, 244).

The Five Aggregates (*khandha*) are the Material Aggregate (*rupakkhandha*) the Feeling Aggregate (*vedanakkhandha*) the Perception Aggregate (*sannakkhandha*) the Formations Aggregate (*sankharakkhandha*) and the Consciousness Aggregate (*vinnanakkhandha*) (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 489).

The five Aggregates (*khandhas*) can be roughly classified into two types, *Nama* and *Rupa*. *Nama* means the mental constituents and *Rupa* includes all animate objects.

From this, it is clear that the aggregate of perception itself is one of the Five Aggregates. “All-body” or the bodymass is called the “body factor” and belongs to the Material Aggregate (*rupakkhandha*). Every feeling, perception, activities or formations and the consciousness is called the

“consciousness factor”. So all these four aggregates collectively are known as Consciousness Aggregate (SN: III, 48; Buddhaghosa: 1975, 506). So all these four aggregates are related to each other through the factor of consciousness.

Perception is always associated with consciousness. Therefore perception has the same number of divisions as consciousness, and that is eighty-nine divisions (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 520).

A being is composed of a body mass which is made up of these five factors, and all these five factors are based on grasping (SN: III, 47). The body mass of a being has six sensual organs, the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind, which give rise to the senses of sight, smell, taste, touch, and imagination respectively. Perception of things from these six sensory organs give rise to craving. The feeling of craving arises due to contact of the sensory organs with their respective sensory stimulus, combined with ignorance (SN: III, 47). Feeling (*Vedana*) is the bare sensation that arises whenever there is meeting of three factors - *i.e.* Sense-organ, object, and consciousness. The meeting of these three factors gives rise to a sense-impression or sensory perception. Feeling is a mental process or mental perception based on sensory perception obtained through the five sensory organs. It is obtained through the sixth sensory organ, the mind.

Feeling (*vedana*) is one of the five aggregates which makes up the person. It is one of the four mental aggregates and it arises in all states of

consciousness together with the other three, *i.e.* perception, mental formation, and consciousness (Nyanaponika: 1983, 7). Hence the feeling aggregate is related to perception not only through the factor of consciousness but also because it is a process of mental perception based on sensory perception obtained from various sense organs (SN: IV, 293; MN: I, 301).

The source of craving for the objects of perception obtained from the sense organs and sense desires arises from contact of the respective sense organ with the strands of sense-desires. There are five strands of sense-desires: perception of forms recognized by the eye, sounds by the ear, smell by nose, tastes by the tongue and touches by the body. Perception of ideas is the mental perception. The source of perception is also due to contacts (AN: III, 413; Vibhanga: I). Craving for anything such as the things perceived by the six sense organs, or the craving for becoming (renewed life) or for not becoming (for no rebirth) will give rise to rebirth (DN: II, 308). As long as there is rebirth there can be no emancipation.

The six kinds of perceptions arising from contact with the five sensory stimulus and the mental perception give rise to volitions (DN: III, 244). The source of volitions leading to actions is contact. Such as volitions associated with the visible object (*rupasancetana*), sound (*saddasancetana*) and so on (SN: III, 60; Vibhanga: 144). Since volitions (*cetas*) are associated with the visible object as mentioned above, aggregate of perception (*sannakkhandha*) is

also related to aggregate of form (*rupakkhandha*). As long as there is volition, it will lead to rebirths either in hell or in the worlds of animal, human, or the various devas (AN: III, 414). This means a being will be going through the round of rebirths in *samsara*.

Perception is not only related to formations aggregate (*sankharakkhandha*) through consciousness, but it also gives rise to formations or activities. There are three kinds of activities. Inhaling and exhaling are called “the activity of body.” Directed and sustained thoughts are called “the activity of speech.” Perception and feeling are mental processes dependent on the mind, and are therefore called “the activity of mind” (SN: IV, 293; MN: I, 301).

The main difference of *sankhara-khandha* from the other four kinds of khandhas, lies in its function of reconstructing them to determine their future form and quality. Feeling (*Vedana*), perception (*sañña*) and consciousness (*viññana*) do not set the mind into action but leave it to the forces (*sankharas*). It also determines one’s future life (*bhava*) as different kinds of volition lead to accumulation of different types of karma (Narasabho: 1975, 249). It may be quoted “Volition, monks, I declare, is *karma*” (AN: III, 415).

The unique function of *sankharas* is to put the mind into action, so as to engage it in the immediate object (SN: III, 87; SN: V, 449).

It is also known as functions aggregate. Whatever has the characteristic of forming is taken as functions aggregate, which also has the characteristic of agglomerating (Buddhaghosa : 1975, 521).

The characteristics of *viññāna* are its qualities of cognition, consciousness, or awareness. Since it is the awareness of objects, it is related to all the states of consciousness. It refers to the five or six cognitions that arose from the sense organs and their respective objects. Since it has consciousness as its main factor, and since it is the cognition or awareness that arises from the contact of the sense organ and its respective objects, it is related to perception as perception is also associated with consciousness.

So from this it is obvious that the perception aggregate is related to the aggregate of consciousness (*viññāna-khandha*). It may also be pointed out that though it is related, it is not the same. The aggregate of perception and the aggregate of consciousness, though related, are different. Consciousness (*viññāna*) has a deeper meaning; it is the process of cognition (understanding) that arises in a subject as a result of different kinds of perception.

Perception is just the passive reception of impressions without any understanding being imprinted on it.

Feeling for craving arises from sense desires resulting from contact of the respective sense organs with their appropriate external objects. Sensory perceptions give rise to volitions which in turn give rise to formations or

activities. As long as there are cravings and volitions, there will be rebirths. As long as there is rebirth, there can be no emancipation.

From this discussion, it can be seen clearly that the role of perception in the Five Aggregates cannot lead to *Nibbana*.

2.1.2 Perception as a Kind Of Wisdom.

2.1.2.1 Perception in Calmness Meditation

2.1.2.1.1 Perception in Tranquility Meditation.

Absorptions or trances (*jhanas*) are obtained from concentration. This is clearly written in Potthapada Sutta (DN: II, 178). Perception forms the basis of all absorptions, from the first to the seventh. The eighth absorption or the fourth absorption of the formless sphere (fourth *Arupa Jhana*) is exempted because in it, there is neither perception nor non-perception (Dialogue II, 251; DN: III, 224; SN: IV, 217).

Continuous, wilful, voluntary perception on the subjects of meditation leads to concentration (*samadhi*) e.g. proximate concentration (*upacara samadhi*) and ecstatic concentration (*appana samadhi*) or absorption (*jhana*). These stages of concentration arise from the perception of visual objects. Samadhi (*Ekkagata*) means one pointedness of mind or concentration upon a single object.

As one practices tranquility meditation one goes through the progressive abidings which are as follows.

2.1.2.1.2 The Nine Progressive Abidings.

1. The first absorption (*jhana*) of the form spheres. In this sensory perceptions cease.
 2. The second absorption eliminates applied thought and sustained thought.
 3. The third absorption eliminates zest.
 4. The fourth absorption eliminates ease and ill and is made up of only pure mindfulness and equanimity (AN: IV, 410). But in another nikaya it is mentioned that respiration ceases at the fourth absorption (DN: III, 265). After passing through the absorptions of forms (*rupajhanas*) the aspirant will attain the formless absorptions progressively.
 5. The fifth is the sphere of infinite space.
 6. The sixth is the sphere of infinite consciousness.
 7. The seventh is the sphere of nothingness.
 8. The eighth is the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception.
- These form the four formless absorptions (*Arupa Jhanas*) respectively.
9. The ninth of the progressive abidings is the ending of Perception and feeling. This is the attainment of extinction. (AN: IV, 410; DN: III, 265; DN: III, 290).

These states of gradual attainments are obtained from the progressive eight stages of release or deliverances.¹ After attaining the fourth deliverance, one abides in the sphere of infinite space. This is the sixth sphere of beings. The fifth deliverance will lead him to abide in the sphere of infinite consciousness. This is the seventh sphere of beings. After passing the fifth deliverance, one reaches the sphere of nothingness. This is the sixth deliverance and corresponds with the eighth sphere of beings. The seventh deliverance will enable him to abide at the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception. This is the ninth sphere of beings. Only at the eighth deliverance will there be complete extinction of perception and feeling. This is the attainment of extinction. (DN: III, 262; 288; AN: IV, 306).

Absorptions without wisdom (*panna*) obtained through insight meditation cannot lead one to *Nibbana* because absorption alone can only suppress the three unwholesome roots of greed, hatred, and delusion. It is only insight that can cut them off. For the attainment of ceasing of perception and

¹ The eight stages of release or deliverances. Conscious of body, he sees forms as they really are. This is the first deliverance. Unconscious of body, he sees forms exterior to himself. This is the second deliverance. He decides that it is beautiful. This is the third deliverance. Passing beyond all perception of form, and disappearance of perception of sensory reactions, he abides in the sphere of infinite space. This is the fourth deliverance. After passing beyond this sphere of infinite space, he enters the sphere of infinite consciousness. This is the fifth deliverance. After this, he reaches the sphere of nothingness. This is the sixth deliverance. Passing beyond this, he enters the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception. This is the seventh deliverance. After this he reaches the stage of complete extinction of perception and feeling. This is the eighth deliverance (AN: IV, 306; DN: III, 262; 288).

feeling, two states are required: calmness and insightfulness (SN: IV, 293). *Jhanas* is absorption concentration. Insight is access concentration. It is concentration by the abandonment of hindrances whereas absorption concentration is the attainment of *jhana* factors. Insight, according to *Visuddhimagga*, means concentration except in the sense of absorption concentration (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 131).

Craving forms the root of the following nine successive conditions. Craving leads to pursuit, followed by gain, decision, passion and desires, tenacity, possession, avarice, hoarding, finally ending in bad and wicked state of things (AN: IV, 400).

Since the role of perception in the Five Aggregates, in absorptions without wisdom, and in perception of obsession cannot lead to *Nibbana* as discussed above, beings will be trapped in *samsara*.

2.1.2.1.3 The Nine Spheres of Beings.

All together, there are nine spheres of beings (AN: IV, 401; DN: III, 263).

1. Beings differing in body and in perceptive power *e.g.* mankind, some devas and some in purgatory. This is the first sphere of beings.
2. Beings differing in body, but similar in perceptive power *e.g.* devas of the Brahma world, reborn there after attaining the first absorption. This is the second sphere of beings.

3. Beings similar in body but different in perceptive power *e.g.* the radiant devas. This is the third sphere of beings.
4. Beings similar in body and similar in perceptive power *e.g.* lustrous devas. This is the fourth sphere of beings. All these four spheres have consciousness.
5. Beings without perceptive power and without feeling *e.g.* unconscious devas. This is the fifth sphere of beings.
6. Beings after passing the perception of forms and having done away with the perception of sense-reactions, reaching the sphere of infinite space. This is the sixth sphere of beings.
7. Beings after passing the sphere of infinite space, attain the sphere of infinite consciousness. This is the seventh sphere of beings.
8. Attainment of the sphere of nothingness constitutes the eighth sphere of beings. Beings of the sixth, seventh, and eighth sphere have consciousness.
9. Attainment of the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception constitutes the ninth sphere of beings.

Out of these nine spheres of beings, only seven stations have consciousness (DN: III, 253; AN: IV, 39).

2.1.2.2 Perception In The Insight Meditation

2.1.2.2.1 Perception As Mindfulness.



Strong perception is the proximate cause of mindfulness (DSA: 1-171). Sometimes perception in Buddhism means mindfulness. As seen from the point of view of the seven links in awakening, when the link in awakening that is mindfulness is present internally, one is conscious of the fact that one has internally the link in awakening that is mindfulness. If mindfulness is not present internally, one is conscious of the fact that one internally has not , the link in awakening that is mindfulness. When there is an uprising of mindfulness that had not uprisen before, one is conscious of it. When there is completion of mindfulness by the mental development, one is conscious of it. The same process goes on for the link in awakening, that is investigation of mental objects, energy, rapture, serenity, concentration, and equanimity.

So in this way, he fares along contemplating mental objects in mental objects, both internally and externally. He may also contemplate origination -- things in mental objects -- or think "there are mental objects". His mindfulness is established and he does not hold on to anything in the world.

One may contemplate mental objects in mental objects from the point of view of the four ariyan truths. When there is anguish, he comprehends as it really is, "This is anguish." "This is the arising of anguish"; This is the stopping of anguish". "This is the course leading to the stopping of anguish". So he fares along contemplating mental objects in mental objects, internally, externally, and both internally and externally.

The same method of contemplation goes on for dissolution-things in mental objects, origination-things in mental objects, origination-things and dissolution-things in mental objects, and mental objects. Thus his mindfulness is fully established and he does not hold on to anything in the world. If these 4 applications of mindfulness are established for seven years, one can attain either profound knowledge (this is equivalent to attaining arahantship or liberation) now, or, if there is any residual grasping left, the state of non-returning (MN: I, 62).

2.1.2.2.2 Perception As Insight.

This means perception in insight development as a faculty in viewing things as they are as written in *Girimananda Sutta*.

1. Perception of all things such as form, feelings, ideas compounded things and consciousness as *impermanent*.
2. To contemplate the six sense organs and perception obtained from them on contact with their respective objects as *not-self*.
3. To view the body as a thing made up of many impurities and covered with skin or top. This is the perception of the *foul*.
4. To contemplate on the fact that having the body is a *disadvantage* as the body is a source of many sicknesses, diseases, and much suffering. This is the perception of the disadvantage.
5. The perception of *abandoning* is to abandon all sense thinking, malicious thinking, harmful thinking, and all unprofitable states, without giving them a chance to recur.
6. The perception of *revulsion* is to contemplate the destruction of craving, calming down all activities, to get rid of everything and to concentrate on *nibbana*.
7. The perception of *ending* is to put an end to all sorts of craving and to contemplate only on *nibbana*.
8. The idea of *distaste* is to abandon, not to delight in and not to cling to graspings of systems, dogmatic bias, and mental standpoints.
9. The perception of *impermanence* here is meant to be disgusted with all compounded things.

10. The perception of concentration on inhaling and exhaling. This means to breathe in and breathe out mindfully: to be mindful of every type of breathing, such as short breaths and long breaths, and also to be aware of the intention to breathe in and the intention to breathe out (AN: V, 109).

The ten perceptions can be put another way as:

Perception of ugliness, of death, revulsion from nutriment, (physical, sensory, mental), disaffection with everything worldly, impermanence, suffering in impermanence, no-soul in that which suffers, elimination, passionlessness, cessation (DN: III, 291).

Concluding Remarks:

Perception as insight means to contemplate all things resulting from the sensory perception of the six sense organs with the mindful awareness of the three characteristics of phenomenal existence. This means to regard every sensation from sensory perception and every feeling from mental perception objectively as impermanent, suffering and non-self. It means to regard the body not as “I” or “me” but as a combination of the Five Aggregates which are grouped under two types, *Nama* and *Rupa*, meaning all mental constituents, and all animate objects, respectively. It is to regard every feeling that arises as being felt not by the self. It is not the “I” who is having all these different types of sensory perceptions, but it is the body mass having these different feelings

following the sensory stimulus. It is to be mindfully aware that the body mass receiving the sensory perceptions, the sensory organs and their respective external objects giving rise to the sensory stimulus and the sensory perceptions are all subject to the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and non self. It means being mindfully aware of any action done and the intention that arises before doing it, while doing it, and after it is done. It means to look upon all types of sensory perceptions and all objects of matter objectively with a neutral or equanimous feeling (*uppekka*). By this one comes to have detachment from all things. In not having attachment to any thing one can overcome all sorts of cravings and desires to all objects of sensual perception. By regarding the body as a source of all types of diseases leading to suffering and as being made up of only impurities one comes to regard having the body as a disadvantage and will be able to denounce any attachment. Even if one comes to have visual perception of anything beautiful, he will not be attached to it in any way due to the mindfulness of seeing things as they are according to the three characteristics of phenomenal existence. By this one will come to have restraint on all his senses and gradually be able to control all sorts of cravings, malicious thinking, graspings, and be able to look upon all things with an equanimous feeling. Using mindfulness of breathing, one comes to have concentration and avoid other types of malicious thinking. This type of meditation (mindfulness of breathing) covers both tranquility meditation as well as insight.

So from these discussions, it can be seen that, according to the Buddhist doctrines perception has various meanings. Perception in five aggregates, Perception as a kind of wisdom, Perception in Tranquility Development Leading to the various absorptions (*jhanas*), perception as mindfulness and perception as insight. Only the last two types of perception, can lead to final emancipation or *Nibbana*.

2.2 The Process of Perception as Invalid Knowledge and Valid Knowledge (*Pramana*)

The types of perceptions which will give rise to invalid knowledge are Perception of Obsession (*papañca sanna*) (a determinate kind of perception), Distortion of Perception (*sanna vipallasa*) and Errors of Perception.

2.2.1 Perception of Obsession (*Pāpañca-Sañña*)

Perception of obsession is one kind of perception. Perception (*sañña*) can be a cause of desire, that is due to desire for the quality of beauty in the things perceived. As perception forms the basis of all absorptions and plays a very important role in meditation, a person can become attached only to perception without being mindful of concentrating his mind for insight meditation. When this happens it becomes a problem, because it becomes an obstacle towards attaining Nirvana in that with absorptions (*jhanas*) alone without insight meditation (*vipassana*) one cannot get liberation. This type of

perception is called the perception of obsession (*papañca-sañña*). It is always accompanied by desire (*tanha*), conceit (*mana*) and view (*ditthi*), all of which hinder spiritual progress. An example of *papañcasañña* with regard to view (*ditthi*) is “Those who do not understand, as they really are, the rise and fall of the view of becoming and the view of annihilation, they find pleasure in *papañca*, are devoted to *papañca*” (MN: I,65). Problems, such as problem of the world, soul, and *arahant* after death, are regarded as *papañca* (SN: IV, 203. AN: IV, 68. AN: II, 161). “Who is given to *papañca*, he will fail to reach *Nirvana*” (AN: III, 294).

The way to get rid of *papañca* is mentioned as follows. “By the passionless ending, without remainder of the six modes of contact, there is ending of *papañca* (AN: II, 162;169).

It is clearly written in the Kalahavivada Sutta that perception of obsession (*papanca sanna*) is directly related to the process of sense-perception, having their origin in sense-perception (SN: V, 874).

The Madhupindika Sutta also mentions perception of obsession (*papanca sanna*) being directly related to the process of sense perception, having their origin in sense perception. The main causes of *papanca* are craving (*tanha*), conceit (*mana*) and views (*ditthi*) (MN: I, IIIff).

If a worldling should become indulged in the perception of obsession (*papanca sanna*) it will lead to a hinderance in spiritual progress (AN: III, 292ff).

According to Budddhaghosa, *papanca* means an impediment or obstacle, a delay or diffuseness; it is due to craving, pride and views. It is due to those of the material supplied by perception and thought (1975, 578). So obsession of the achievements obtained by perception (*papanca*) means suffering, where as the absence of obsession (*Nippapanca*) means *nibbana* (ibid.).

Papancas are cravings, views, and conceits and whatever volitional activities are activated by them.

To put an end to perception of obsession (*papanca*) is to be mindful of the problem that can be caused by perception of obsession, (*papanca*), to destroy the roots of craving, views, and conceit by means of wisdom. (*panna*), not to dwell in and be joyful with the trances or absorptions (*jhanas*) but to be mindful and to practise insight meditation (*vipassasna*), and to try to attain the states of stream-enterer, once-returner, non-returner, or to reach the stage of the attainment of final and absolute emancipation (*an arahant*). Perception of obsession (*papancas*) lengthen the stay of beings in *samsara*.

2.2.2 Distortion of *perception* (*Saññavipallasa*)

Distortion of perception is another kind of perception. There are four kinds of distorted perceptions: regarding what is impermanent as permanent, by regarding what is painful as pleasant, regarding what is without self as a self, and regarding what is impure as pure (AN: II, 52).

The causes of the distorted perceptions are feeling (*Vedana*), desire (*tanha*) and attachment (*upadana*); the most important cause is desire, as it is said : “dependent on feeling arises desire, by the utter fading away and ceasing of desire, becoming ceases” (SN: II, 51; 73). According to Buddhism, if desire can be controlled, freedom is realized, then only perception becomes pure. It is stated “He sees a form without passion but with his mindfulness, he feels it with the non-attachment of mind, therefore, he is reduced not increased” (SN: IV, 44; 74).

If absorptions (*jhana*) is the cause of *sañña-vippallasa*, just like *papañca-sañña*, then it can be said that *sañña-vippallasa*, itself is caused by *papañca-sañña*. *Sañña-vippallasa*, is not only confined to visual perception but also covers other sense perceptions, like auditory perception, olfactory perception, and so on, just like the *papañca-sañña* (Ibid).

2.2.3 Errors of *Perception*.

So far, in discussing about perception it was assumed that the sense organs were functioning normally and the other organs of the body were also in normal condition. Thus knowledge obtained from the passive reception of the impressions is supposed to be the correct knowledge.

One should be mindful of the fact that the various organs of the body as well as the objects of perception belong to the aggregate of matter (*rupa-khandha*). “Rupa” means an aggregate of matter or a living organism which is subject to change or decay. Its unique character is impermanence.

It may be quoted “why monks, do you mean ‘Rupa’? Because it is affected (*ruppati*) by cold and heat, by hunger and thirst, by the touch of gnats, mosquitoes and reptiles by wind and sun” (SN: III, 86).

Since both the objects of perception and the organs of reception are subject to change, there can be many cases of errors in perception. If one is not mindful of the possibility of errors in perception, one will be led to incorrect conclusions.

Errors in perception may be caused by many factors, such as: some defect in the sense organ, the nature of the object, some external element, or some internal organic defect.

A man suffering from some type of eye disease cannot have a correct perception of an object. This is caused by an error in sense-organ.

Erroneous perception may also be due to the nature of the object. For example, a potter's wheel which is moving quickly gives rise to an illusory perception of a circle.

Regarding errors which may be caused by some external element, an example can be seen in the perception of a "moving tree", as seen by a man, travelling in a boat. In this case, the causal agent is external to both the sense organ and the object. Sometimes illusory perceptions arise due to some defect of the internal organs of the body, like the illusion of a burning pillar.

It will be of great benefit for people to be mindful of the possibility of these errors in perception, and to make sure that the perceptual knowledge one has obtained is free of such errors of perception.

2.2.4 Perception as a source of Valid Knowledge (*Pramana*)

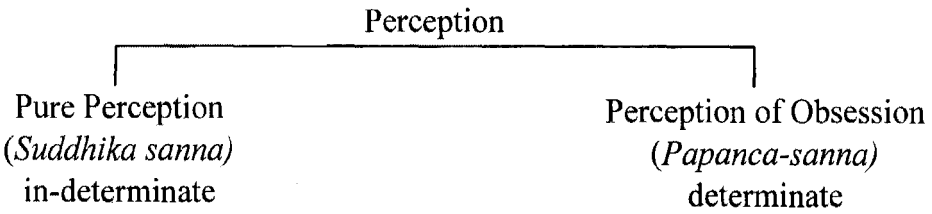
Perception is not a means of knowledge (*pramana*) if *pramana* is taken as a measure in obtaining the right knowledge for what needs to be measured is what is not perceived. Perception is a source of knowledge and also a *pramana* if *pramana* is taken in the sense of how the knowledge was obtained. Perceptual knowledge is a conceptual object which can be perceived by the mind. It means the absolute truth, which is *nirvana*. There are two ways of understanding the absolute truth - they are by vision and cultivation. The stream enterer knows it by vision. Once-returner, non-returner, and Arahant (one who has

attained the final emancipation) know it by cultivation. A noble person’s (*Aryan*) knowledge is from *perception* alone.

The state of consciousness arises first and is followed by knowledge: “*Nana* depends on *sanna*”. This means knowledge or wisdom depends on concentration obtained from perception (Dialogue II, 252).

The fact that Buddha accepts perception as an independent valid source of knowledge can be seen from the Kalama Suttas. Buddha told the Kalamas not to accept anything based on tradition, maintained by oral reports, or because it is taught by teachers, because the preachers say so, or because it is in conformity with the scriptures, etc. Buddha told the people not to believe him even, but that they have to find and search for the truth, to discover what he had discovered by themselves, to be called true Buddhists (AN:I, 170; AN: III, 65).

Perception may be pure perception, known as *Suddhika Sanna* (indeterminate), or perception of obsession (*papañca-sañña*) (determinate). Theravada Buddhism accepts only pure perception, *suddhika sanna* (indeterminate), as valid source of knowledge, and this type of perception belongs to Arahant (one who has attained *Nibbana*) (MN: I, III).



The determinate kind of perception *papañca-sanna* belongs to ordinary lay persons. Lay persons, after perceiving things, see the objects by considering and differentiating with their own ideas, whereas an Arahant (one who has attained *Nibbana*) sees things as they really are. “What ever he perceives (*sañjanati*), that he conceives (*vitakketi*), whatever he conceives that he differentiates (*papañceti*), and what he differentiates, by reason there of ideas and considerations of differentiation (*Papañca-sañña-sankha*) arise in him” (MN: I, III). Unlike the lay person, the Arahant sees things as they really are. “in what is seen, heard, imagined and cognized” (SN: IV, 72). His power of concentration is so strong, and his attainment of Samadhi is so perfect that “in this world he is unconscious of it, and yet at the same time he is conscious (*sañña*)” (AN: V, 7).

From this, it can be seen that, to have pure perception (*nippapañca*) as opposed to impure perception (*papañca*), one should use mindfulness if and when sense-information cannot be avoided.

2.3 Perception According to Different Schools of Hinayana Buddhism.

2.3.1 Perception in Vaibhasika School.

The Vaibhasika School is also known as the Sarvastivada. There are different opinions about the exact descension of this, but in any way they follow the Theravada concept. The Vaibhasika, like the Sarvastivada, admit the reality of both mind and external objects, which exist through the three periods of time: present, past, and future. So the Vaibhasika admit the universal reality of things, and that external objects are directly perceived by the mind. The Vaibhasika

theory of perception is that of direct realism (Chandkaew: 1979, 18; Nimanong: 1991, 175).

Rupa means matter. *Khandha* means heap. If one puts together all the *rupa* (past, present, future), one comes to have *rupakhandha* (Pruden; 1990, 63, 77). If *Khandhas* signify heap, they have only a nominal existence and not a real existence, for collections are not a thing. Vaibhasikas say no to this. Each real (atomic) element of the past *rupa*, future *rupa*, etc: is called *Khandha*. Therefore *Khandhas* have real existence and not merely nominal existence (Pruden: 1990, 79).

Knowledge (*Prajna*) arises with the five sense consciousness. e.g. sight is due to the visual consciousness supported by visual organ. If visible matter is obscured by any object, it is not seen. So this means the organ of sight sees the visible object when it is conjoined with visual consciousness (Pruden: 1990, 115). So the Vaibhasika admit the reality of both mind and external objects.

According to the Vaibhasika, there are two means of cognition (Singh: 1984, 76). The visible object is cognized by two consciousnesses from the six. First is the eye consciousness and this is followed by the mind consciousness. The five consciousnesses contribute to passion instead of not freedom from passion. Their function is only to perceive the external objects. They have no faculty of thought (Singh: 1984, 128).

The Vaibhasika admit three kinds of valid sensation (*pratyaksa*). Sensory (*indriya*) mental (*manasa*) and Yogi (*Yogin*). They do not recognize

self-consciousness (*svasanvedana*). Inference (*anumana*) is regarded as valid (Singh: 1984, 20). Mind is regarded not as a separate entity from the six consciousness (Singh: 1984, 39).

Vaibhasika are direct perceptionalists. They believe in direct cognition of the external world (Singh: 1984, 50; 88).

According to realism, the physical world exists independently of our awareness thereof (Maltlilal: 1986, 225). The Vaibhasika say that external objects exist, they are ultimately atomic (hence imperceptible), and the atoms come together to generate the gross expanse which we see (Maltlilal: 1986, 243; Singh: 1984, 120). Objects of external perception are non-mental phenomena (Maltlilal: 1986, 249).

The Vaibhasika divide reality into two *Paramartha*. *Svalaksana* (ultimate or visible object) and *samanya* (*phenomenal* or *universal*). The first is apprehended in the first moment of cognition directly, and the second, through a judgement (Singh: 1984, 120).

According to direct realists, the same material body can be grasped by both the sense of touch and that of vision: a chair can be seen and touched. The Vaibhasika hold that there is no real “shaped” body to be seen and touched. Just as there are colour atoms, there are also shape atoms or *Configuration atoms* which create the impressions of “long”, “short”, *etc*, when they are arranged in the relevant ways.

Whatever exists has eternal entities assuming three moments: origin, staying and decay. (Singh: 1984, III).

2.3.2 Perception in the Sautrantika School

The Sautrantika School rigidly follows the Suttapitaka and rejects the authority of the Vinayapitaka and the Abhidhammapitaka followed by the Sarvastivadins and the Vaibhasika. It accepts the reality of mind and external objects, like the Vaibhasikas. So the Sautrantika are also realists. Unlike the Vaibhasika, they accept the existence of things only in the present, and not in the past or future. Therefore, they reject the eternal aspect of elements or dharmas held by the Vaibhasikas.

Since the Sautrantika accept the existence of Dhammas only in the present and not in the past or future, they reject the characteristic of decay (*jarata*). An event arises just for one instant, and then passes away as soon as it has arisen, immediately after acquiring its being by spontaneous destination, requiring no additional cause. Whatever originates has no time to subsist or decay, but only to perish.

We know the external world only on the basis of our internal experiences. So we do not directly perceive it. Through its image on our mind we infer that the external object exists. The Sautrantika recognize the reality of external objects, but not that they are objects of perception. They are inferred from their cognitions. Cognitions are directly perceived and external objects are inferred from them as their causes. The Sautrantika deny the direct perception of all objects. So the Sautrantikas' theory of perception is called indirect realism or representationism (Sinha : 1972, 35-42).

They are also known as critical realists because of their partial denial of external objects (Singh: 1984, 75). Theory of reality of present-time only, and the past and future as not real, but conventional (Singh: 1984, 19). The Sautrantika also do not regard mind as a separate entity apart from the six consciousnesses (Singh: 1984, 39).

A Sautrantika follows the Hinayana line of thought -- recognized self cognition and external objects as existing in truth. Right cognition means right knowledge which is knowledge that leads to successful activity. Buddha himself indirectly indicated that right knowledge is meaningful and seen individually. In the Kalama Sutta, Buddha gave fruitful or successful activity as a criterion of truth. The origin of cognition, or the cause of cognition, is the object. Sensation or direct cognition (*Pratyaksa*) is the most important means of knowledge and the very ground of all valid cognition. It is the sole criterion of valid cognition; sensation is devoid of imagination and illusion (Singh: 1984, 100-105).

According to the Sautrantika, valid cognition depends on two factors: sensation (*pratyaksa*) and inference (*anumana*). The object of cognition is known through sensation and inference (*anumana*). The inference (*anumana*) is not completely separate from sensation (*pratyaksa*) and depends on successful activity (*arthakriyakaritva*) which is only possible through a particular sensory object (*svalaksana*) (Singh: 1984; 109).

Both Vaibhasikas and Santrantikas are realists in that they hold the reality of mind and external objects. The main conflict between the two is that the Vaibhasika hold that our consciousness of objects or the external world is direct

and immediate through perception, hence known as direct realism. According to the Sautrantikas, this consciousness is indirect and mediate, that is derivable from inference instead of from perception. Hence their theory of perception is called indirect realism or representationism (Nimanong: 1991, 172-175.)

The Sautrantikas theory of indirect realism is open to criticism by the Realists for the following four reasons.

- 1) If the external object does not exist in reality, but is just a mental projection, then the object can be perceived as existing in every place to which we direct our mind and not in a particular place. According to our sense experience, every object occupies a certain space. So the theory of external objects being just a mental projection is in contradiction to our sense experience.
- 2) An object can be perceived, only at a particular time, i.e. when we are looking at it, not away from it. If an object is perceived from mental projection, then it will be seen at all times whenever we concentrate on it. So this theory cannot explain the temporal determinations.
- 3) If an object is due to a mental projection, then the object will be seen by the stream of consciousness of that particular individual, but it may not be available to be perceived by the stream of consciousness of another individual. This means an object cannot serve as a common object of perception for several individuals. Since not every object is determined in this manner, there must be real external objects.

- 4) If the object is only a mental representation, fruitful activity (*Kṛtya-kriya*) caused by the object cannot be explained. Hunger, thirst, clothes, weapons, etc. cannot be satisfied or explained by imaginary objects.

Vasubandhu, a *yogacarist*, supports the theory of indirect realism of the *Sautrantikas* on the basis of dream experience and the experience of infernal beings.

- 1) In dreams, people experience the existence of objects at particular places, and not everywhere. This means that though dream objects are objects of mental fabrication and not something that really exists, they have spatial determination. So Vasubandhu asks why this could not be the case in ordinary sense experience.
- 2) A dream object is also only temporarily determined. It is perceived only at a particular time and not always so the same could be true, of ordinary everyday experience which may not have real objects.
- 3) The denizens of hell, including the infernal guards, perceive the river of pus, into which the evil-doers are thrown. According to Vasubandhu's assumption, hell, as well as the river of pus are just mental constructions and not existing in reality. Though these are just mental projections, they are objects of common experience, and not limited to one person.
- 4) According to Vasubandhu, fruitful activity can also result from, unreal dream objects; for example, the sight of a dream tiger causes real fear, and a bad dream can be followed by consequences which are physically real.

The net result of all these arguments, is that it is not possible to find any definite proof for the nonillusory or veridical nature of sense experience.

According to Vasubandhu the yogacarist, the view is that perceptions cannot guarantee the existence of external objects because the awareness of them does not seem to be very different from that of dream experience. According to Vasubandhu, we cannot know that dream objects are not real before we are fully awake. To a dreamer, things seen in a dream are as real as any object seen by a person who is fully awake.

The difference between dream consciousness and waking consciousness is that, in a dream, a person's mind is overwhelmed by torpor (*middha*). A waking person's consciousness may be compared to a person in the highest state of yogic concentration; while worldly people are slumbering in ignorance and as long as they remain in a state of ignorance, they will not realize that the world of sense experience does not really exist. This means Vasubandhu denies not only the validity and possibility of sense perception, but also of extrasensory perception (Kalupahana: 1933, 143-146).

The purpose of comparing the theory of perception according to different schools of Buddhism is to get different ideas from different schools of thought, to study in which ways they are different and how they are similar. Through a comparative study, the researcher believes that she will have more thorough knowledge about perception and the role it plays in Hinayana Buddhist meditation especially in the Theravada School of Buddhism.

This knowledge will be an invaluable information for her thesis and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER III

THE RELATION OF PERCEPTION (*SANNA*) TO THE 'MEDITATION PRACTICES' (*KAMMATTHANA*)

According to the Pali scriptures, Theravada Buddhist meditation can be divided into two interrelated systems. One is the development of concentration (*samathabhavana* or *samadhibhavana*). It is also known as Tranquil meditation or serenity meditation. This is recognized by both Buddhists and non-Buddhists. The other is the development of insight or the development of wisdom. This is called insight meditation (*vipassanabhavana* or *pannabhavana*). This is the unique discovery of the Buddha.

Bhavana means meditation, of which there are two kinds. Concentration (*samadhi*) and insight (*vipassana*) meditation (*bhavana*), concentration meditation (*Samatha Bhavana*) means meditation based on concentration obtained from perception of the forty subjects of meditation. *Samatha* means calmness or tranquility, and is gained by developing the absorptions (*Jhanas*). It is called Tranquility meditation or *samadhi Bhavana*. Absorptions (*Jhanas*) are helpful to a person in developing higher psychic powers (*Abhinna*). But it is only insight that leads to enlightenment. "Morality (*sila*) and concentration (*samadhi*) alone cannot disperse ignorance (*Avijja*) which is the root-

cause of miseries. It is insight that enables us to understand things according to reality" (SN: IV, 293; MN: I, 62).

Insight meditation aims at getting direct understanding of the real nature of phenomena and is the only way of getting liberation. The development of insight requires a certain degree of concentration. Serenity meditation serves to secure this concentration, and therefore the development of serenity has great importance in Buddhist meditation. The two types of meditation together make the mind fit to reach the stage of enlightenment. The mind is made calm, concentrated, and unified, by means of the development of serenity, made sharp and bright due to the development of insight, and the meditator then has minimum obstructions to his progress of emancipation.

These two systems are interdependent on each other because concentration is regarded as the basis of insight. Concentration meditation means meditation based on concentration obtained from perception of the forty subjects of meditation.

3.1 The Relation of Perception to 'Tranquility Development'

(*Samathabhavana*)

Development of concentration is based on moral conduct (*sila*). To have concentration, the mind must be calm and tranquil, and free from disturbances.

Cause of disturbances of mind are (1) sensations, (2) passions or desire, and (3) discursive thinking.

Morality (*sila*) controls actions and speeches in the proper and right way, but it cannot control the mind, which is controlled by concentration (*samadhi*). When and if the mind is disturbed there cannot be concentration. Non-distraction of the mind is the salient characteristic of *samadhi*. Morality is important for concentration because it is the antidote of the remorse and mental waverings which are opposite states of concentration. Therefore concentration is based on morality.

Absorptions or trances (*Jhanas*) are obtained from concentration. This is clearly written in Potthapada Sutta (DN: II, 178). According to this sutta there are four absorptions or trances of the form sphere and four of the formless sphere. The meditator passes on from one state of trance or absorption (*Jhana*) to the next by the practise of concentration.

So perception forms the basis of all absorptions from the first to the seventh. The eighth absorption or the fourth absorption of the formless sphere (*fourth Arupa Jhana*) is exempted because in this there is neither perception nor non-perception. There is cessation of consciousness (Dialogue II, 251).

Samadhi is regarded as the basis of insight (*vipassana* or *panna*).

Therefore, morality (*sila*) concentration (*samadhi*) and insight (*vipassana* or *panna*) are inter-dependent for achieving *Nibbana*.

The mundane absorptions are composed of four absorptions of form sphere (*rupa*) and four formless absorptions (*arupa*). These four absorptions of form sphere and four absorptions of formless sphere by themselves without the help of wisdom is not sufficient to give complete deliverance from suffering because they cannot cut off the defilements (*kilesas*) with their three roots of greed, hatred, and delusion (AN: IV, 410; DN: III, 265; 290).

So from the above discussions, it may be concluded that, those who practise only absorptions and not insight will be born after death only in form spheres (*Rupaloka*) and formless spheres (*Arupaloka*).

Jhana means wilful concentration on an object. Of the forty objects of concentration, the spiritual leader selects one for the aspirant which will be most suitable for his temperament. This object is called preliminary object (*Parikamma Nimitta*) and by continuous concentration on this preliminary object one will be able to visualize it with his eyes closed. This visualized image is called *Uggaha Nimitta*. This is the mental replica of the form. By continuous concentration on this visualized image (*Uggaha Nimitta*) one can develop it into a

conceptualised image called *Patibhaga -Nimitta*. The difference between the first image (*Uggaha-Nimitta*) and the conceptualized image (*Patibhaga-Nimitta*) is that, in the first, the fault of the device appears whereas the latter is cleared of all defects and it possesses neither colour nor form. This conceptualized image (*Patibhaga Nimitta*) is born out of perception, perception of the preliminary object (*Parikamma Nimitta*) (Naradha : 1980, 48).

By continuous concentration on the conceptualized image (*Patibhaga-Nimitta*) one comes to possess “proximate concentration” (*Upacara samadhi*) and the five hindrances to progress (*Nivarana*) are stopped temporarily. The five *Nivaranas* are sense desire (*Kamacchanda*), hatred (*Patigha*), sloth and torpor (*Thina-Middha*), restlessness and brooding (*Uddhacca Kukkucca*), and doubts (*Vicikiccha*).

By continuous concentration, one progresses to “ecstatic concentration” (*Appana Samadhi*) and finally attains the First Absorption of formed sphere (*Rupa Jhana*). From this it can be seen that perception forms the basis of this First Absorption of formed sphere (*Rupa Jhana*).

Ecstatic Concentration (*Appana Samadhi*) is identical with both absorptions of form sphere (*Rupa*) and absorptions of formless sphere (*Arupa Jhanas*) and may be called as absorption concentration (*Jhana Samadhi*). As one

continues his concentration, in the same manner one can attain higher absorptions such as the second, third, fourth, and fifth absorptions of form sphere of the five-fold system, or fourth absorption of the four-fold system as well as the four absorptions of formless spheres. So we may say that *perception* forms the basis of all absorptions from the first to the seventh. The eighth absorption (*Nevasannanasannayatana*) is exempted because in this there is neither perception nor non-perception (SN: IV, 227).

Concentration and absorptions are to some extent identical, but yet they differ, because there are various types and varying degrees of concentration (*samadhi*). As perception forms the basis of all absorptions, perception plays an important role in the development of concentration meditation (*Samadhi Bhavana*). Concentration and absorptions are helpful for the attainment of *Nirvana*. Where ever there is absorption, there is concentration. But it cannot be said that where ever there is concentration (*samadhi*) there is absorption (*Jhana*) or proximate concentration (*Upacara Samadhi*). Proximate concentration is a lower type of concentration compared to Ecstatic concentration (*Appana Samadhi*). Proximate concentration is achieved as soon as the five Hindrances (*Nirvarana*) are suppressed. *Upacara* means approaching, because it approaches the stage of absorption, without attaining it. At this stage one's concentration is not yet steady.

One will have to go on trying from this state by developing conceptualized image (*Patibhaga-Nimitta*) until the Ecstatic (*Appana*) stage is reached.

3.1.1 Perception as the Meditation Subjects.

By this is meant the forty subjects of meditation. Perception plays a very important role especially for concentration meditation or tranquility meditation. *Samadhi* means one pointedness of mind upon a single object or concentration (*Ekkagata*). *Samadhi* may be defined as follows, “Stability, steadiness, and absorbed steadfastness of mind, absence of scattering and distraction, imperturbed mental procedure, calm, the faculty and the power of concentration, Right concentration” (Vibhanga 1904, 217; Dhamma sangani : 1885, 10, 16, 11, 12, 61, 121).

Concentration itself is based on moral conduct (*Sila*) and concentration (*Samadhi*) is again regarded as the basis for insight (*Vipassana*). Therefore moral conduct, concentration and insight are interdependent on each other for the attainment of final emancipation (*Nibbana*) (AN: II, 44; DN: III, 222).

There are altogether forty subjects of meditation, known as *Kammatthana* (exercises of meditation) which are grouped under seven divisions (Buddhaghosa : 1975, 126, 177-372; Narada : 1980, 389).

The following is the list of forty subjects of meditation which are grouped under seven headings.

1. The ten *Kasinas* or ten perceptions of meditation devices.
2. The ten *Asubhas* or perceptions of putrescence.
3. The ten perceptions of *Anussatis* or Recollections.
4. The four perceptions of Brahma - *Viharas* or immeasurable thoughts.
5. The four perceptions of *Arupas* which are as follows.
 - (a) The perception of the Sphere of Space. (*Akasanancayatana*)
 - (b) The perception of the Sphere of Consciousness. (*Vinnanancayatana*)
 - (c) The perception of the Sphere of Nothingness (*Akincannayatana*)
 - (d) The perception of the Sphere of Neither Perception Nor Non-perception. (*Nevasannanasannayatana*)
6. Ahara patikula sanna - perception of foulness of food.
7. Catudhatuvavatthana - the perception of the Determining of the four elements.

The spiritual leader plays an important role in choosing the type of meditative subject for the aspirant. He must know the type of temperament of his aspirant and should be able to assign a suitable subject for meditation, so as to have the most fruitful result in as short a time as possible.

3.1.2 The classification of Perception according to Trances or

Absorptions(*Jhanas*)

According to Buddhism, one has to cultivate one’s mind for higher development and this is acquired by mental training known as “*samatha*” which covers both concentration (*samadhi*) and absorption (*jhana*). Concentration and absorptions are advanced forms of concentrations which can be attained by meditation upon the forty subjects of meditation formed for inducing absorption. This is done through visual perception of the objects. Ecstatic concentration (*Appana Samadhi*) is an advanced form of concentration that can only be attained by meditating on the forty subjects of meditation formed for inducing absorption through perception of the object. Ecstatic concentration is identical with absorption, either absorptions of the form sphere or formless absorptions.

The fact that concentration leads to the various absorptions is also written in the various Buddhist scriptures (AN: II, 44; DN: III, 222).

There are four absorptions of the form sphere according to the four-fold system and four of the formless spheres. Those of the form spheres (*Rupa jhanas*) will be first discussed.

3.1.2.1 Absorption of the Form Sphere (*Rupa Jhana*)

By attaining ecstatic concentration (*Appana Samadhi*) one is said to have attained the first absorption of the form sphere. This absorption gets rid of

sensual desires or lust, but has the five mental constituents which are applied thought (*Vitaka*), sustained thought (*Vicara*), zest or joy (*Piti*), bliss (*Sukha*) and one-pointedness of mind (*Ekkagata*). According to the four-fold system of absorptions, the second absorption gets rid of two factors: applied thought and sustained thought. The third absorption gets rid of only one factor, zest or joy. So the third absorption has only bliss (*sukha*) and concentration (*Ekkagata*). It may be quoted

Again with the fading away of joy, he dwells in equanimity, mindfulness and clearly conscious, experiencing bliss with his body; he enters and abides in the third *Jhana* on account of which the Ariyans declare “bliss is he who is evenminded and mindful” (*Vibhanga*: 245).

By continuing the meditation and concentration on the same object that is born of perception, one attains the fourth absorption as soon as bliss (*sukha*) is eliminated. This means both pleasure and pain are rejected. So the fourth absorption contains only concentration (*Ekkagata*) with the purest mindfulness through equanimity which means neutral feeling. At this stage of fourth absorption, concentration (*Ekkagata*) is perfect (SN: IV, 226; Buddhaghosa: 1975, 144; 161; 165; 171).

3.1.2.2 Formless Absorption (*Arupa-Jhana*)

After attaining the last state of either the fourfold or fivefold system of absorptions of the form sphere (*Rupa-Jhana*), one progresses on for the higher absorptions of the formless sphere (*Arupa-jhana*), also generally known as formless attainments or absorptions (*Arupa-Samapatti*). The same procedure as that in progressing from lower to higher absorptions of the form spheres (*rupa-jhanas*) is followed. There is some difference with respect to the subject of meditation used and the mental attitudes. The absorptions of form sphere is a state which belongs to the realm of form and is attained by meditation on a visible form or on a conceptual form which is derived from it. Absorptions of formless sphere is attained by meditating on the formless object. In absorptions of form spheres a higher absorption is attained by gradual step by step elimination of the psychic factors. But in formless absorptions, the next higher stage is attained by the complete removal of the present state (e.g. removal of conception of the infinite space, the conception of infinite consciousness is attained) (Dialogue: II, 248-251; DN: II, 182-184).

According to respective subjects of meditation, formless absorptions (*Arupa-Jhana*) are divided into four stages.

- (1) The base consisting of boundless space - or the conception of infinity of space.
- (2) The base consisting of boundless consciousness or the conception of the infinite consciousness.
- (3) The base consisting of nothingness or the conception of nothingness.
- (4) The base consisting of neither perception nor non-perception.

(Buddhaghosa : 1975, 354-365).

Passing beyond the perception of objects, after attaining the fourth absorption of the form sphere, the aspirator continues to meditate on any of the nine contemplation devices (*Kasinas*) with the exception of limited space, he concentrates on the concept of infinity of space and finally abides in it. This is the first absorption of the formless sphere (*Akasanancayatana*) (SN: IV, 227).

With the complete surmounting of the perceptions of form (*Rupasannanam sammatikamma*), with the disappearance of the reflex-perceptions (*Patighasannanam-atthangama*), with paying no attention to perceptions of variety, (*Ninatta Sannanam-amanasikara*) he becomes aware of infinite space (*anantokasoti*). He attains and remains in the sphere of infinite space (Vibhanga: 245; MN: I, 41)

In the same way, the meditator continues his concentration and passes on to realm of infinite consciousness. This is the second formless absorption (*Vinnanancayatana*) (SN: IV, 227).

It may be quoted thus:

“With the complete surmounting of the sphere of infinite space, he becomes aware of the concept of infinite consciousness. He attains and remains in the sphere of Infinite consciousness” (Vibhanga: 245; MN: I, 41).

After attaining the second formless absorption (*arupa-jhana*) the aspirant is aware that the concept of consciousness is a hindrance, and that the sphere of nothingness is calmer and better. So he concentrates his mind on the concept of nothingness in the same way as he had done for the previous stages. As soon as the concept of infinite consciousness is removed, he is absorbed in the sphere of nothingness. His mind is fully unified with full equanimity. It may be quoted, “With the complete surmounting of the sphere of infinite consciousness he becomes aware of the concept of nothingness; he attains and remains in the sphere of nothingness” (Vibhanga: 245; MN: I, 41). This is the Third Formless Absorption (*Arupa-Jhana*) (*Akincannayatana*).

After attaining the third formless absorption (*arupa-jhana*) the aspirant is aware that the next higher state, the state of neither perception nor non perception may be safer, because the sphere of nothingness has the risk of being overshadowed by the stage of infinite consciousness. So he continues to meditate on the concept of neither perception nor non perception until finally he becomes

absorbed in it. He feels a wonderful sensation of peace which cannot be expressed in words. This state has neither perception nor non-perception on account of the absence of gross-perception and presence of subtle perception. This state cannot be called non-perception, as some residual perception is still present. It cannot also be called as perception because, the perception that is present here is so very weak, that it is not capable of performing the function of perceiving (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 354-365). This is the fourth formless absorption (*Nevasannana sannayatana*).

After passing beyond the stage of fourth formless absorption, one abides in a state which is the cessation of perception and feeling (*sanna-vedayita-nirodha*) (SN: IV, 227; DN: III, 224).

These absorptions (*jhanas*) are helpful in paving the way to insight (*vipassana*) but they are not beneficial in all cases. If one is not mindful they may become a cause of craving or desire since perception (*sanna*) are a cause of desire. Desire is aroused from the beautiful quality of the things that are perceived (AN: I, 200). Absorptions are helpful to a person in developing higher psychic powers (*Abhinna*), but it is only insight that leads to enlightenment.

The absorptions belong to the tranquility meditation or *samadhibhavana*. A practitioner can develop insight meditation (*vipassana bhavana*) without going through the absorptions or tranquility meditation. This is

called Dry Insight, but this method is not easy. Going through the absorptions of the tranquility meditation and then practising insight (*vipassana*) seems to be more smoother and more pleasurable (AN: II, 150-52).

3.2 Relation of Perception to “Insight Development”

(*Vipassanabhavana*)

As already discussed in the previous chapter, insight is but a process of pure perception: mindful awareness of the three characteristics of phenomenal existence of every sensation that is obtained from the sensory perception of the six sensory organs; every sensation and feeling that arises from inside the body as a result of sensory perception as well as the sensations obtained from contact of the sensory organs with their respective external objects of perception; everything regarded with the mindful awareness of impermanence, suffering, and non-self; mindful awareness of everything we do, before doing it, while doing and after it has been done. Through these means, one gains concentration and restraint of his senses and will not be attached to anything in the world.

Continuous, strong and wilful perception on the objects of meditation will also gives us concentration which is necessary for insight. Insight means concentration but not absorption concentration. It is access concentration (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 131). Knowledge or wisdom depends on concentration obtained from perception. *Nana* depends on *sanna* (Dialogue: II, 252).

3.3 Seven Purities (*Visuddhi*) as a Process Leading to *Nibbana*.

Insight (*Vipassana*) is based on seven stages of purity and mental exercises for its development. In order to attain full liberation, the meditator has to pass through seven consecutive kinds of purification:² (1) purification of morality, (2) purification of mind, (3) purification of view, (4) purification by the overcoming of doubt, (5) purification by knowledge and vision of the right and wrong paths, (6) purification by knowledge and vision of the way, and (7) purification by knowledge and vision (MN: I, 149). Of the seven stages of purity, purity of morality (*Sila-Visuddhi*) and purity of mind (*citta-visuddhi*) are the essential requisites of insight (*Vipassana*) practice. In the *Visuddhimagga*, it is stated that purity of morality, and purity of mind are the roots of full knowledge (*Vipassana*), (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 488).

Purification of morality is the same with the training in the higher moral discipline (*adhisila sikkha*) and consists of four purifications of morality which are as follows. Restraint according to the rules of the *Patimokkha*, restraint of the senses, purity of livelihood, and purity in the use of requisites.³ This forms the foundation for the growth of insight as well as for the development of serenity (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 16). This means the different sensations such as desire, feelings and attachment obtained from the sensory

² In Pali: (1) *Sila Visuddhi*, (2) *Citta Visuddhi*, (3) *ditthi visuddhi*, (4) *Kankhavitarana visuddhi*, (5) *maggamaggananadassana visuddhi*, (6) *patipadanadassana visuddhi*, and (7) *nanadassana visuddhi*.

³ Detail of fourfold purification of morality see *Visuddhimagga*: 13-37; Path of purification 16.46.

perception of the six sense organs are kept under restraint. Purification of mind (*Citta Visuddhi*) consists of the seven attainments: four absorptions of the form sphere (four *Rupa-Jhanas*) and the three absorptions of the formless sphere (the three *Arupa-Jhanas*) as the fourth is exempted, together with Upacara Samadhi (access or proximate concentration). The *samathayanika* yogin obtains purification of mind by attaining access or full absorption in one or several *Jhanas*, after suppressing the five hindrances. The *Vippassanayanika* obtained it by means of momentary concentration, which can also overcome the hindrances (Ibid: 144-175; Gunaratana: 1985, 155). All these attainments are based on sensory perception. The strong and wilful concentration of the visual perception of the objects of meditation. The remaining five of the seven stages of purity form the "body" of *Vipassana*. They can be attained by understanding the true nature of the *three characteristics* of phenomenal existence (*Lakkhana*). These are impermanence (*Aniccata*), suffering (*Dukkata*) and non-self (*Anattata*). These three characteristics are the essential parts of insight (*Vipassana*) and they involve all the five stages of purities (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 488, 679.) This means the various types of sensory perception obtained from the sensory organs are to be viewed with mindfulness, which is mental perception.

What is that which is the cause of knowledge and insight of things as they really are? Concentration is the answer. Yes, I say that

concentration (*samadhi*) is causally associated with the knowledge and vision of things as they really are. (SN: IV, 30).

Again, concentration is said to be the cause of insight into the characteristics of impermanence of things: sense organs, sense objects, sense bases, sense-faculties, etc. (SN: IV, 80).

The first four of the above five belong to the mundane portion of the path, the wisdom of insight (*vipassana-nana*); the last belongs to the supramundane portion, the wisdom of the noble path (*magganana*). The purification of view gets rid of the self. There is no self-hood. The *samathayanika* and *vipassanayanika* approach this purification from different angles, but both achieve the same result. The former looks upon the *jhana* factors, according to their specific characteristics, functions, manifestations, and proximate causes. He grouped all these states under mentality (*nama*). The physical basis for these mental phenomena are grouped under materiality (*rupa*). He then looks upon the living being as a mixture of mentality and materiality, *namarupa*, without any self.

The *vipassanayanika* purifies his view by analysing the body into the four primary elements - solidity, fluidity, heat, and oscillation - regarding all of them as materiality. The states of consciousness are grouped under mentality. The final conclusion is that a living being is a compound of mental and physical phenomena, mutually supporting each other. There is no self, being, or person (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 687; Gunaratana: 1985, 156).

This shows the role of perception leading to wisdom through tranquility or calm meditation and through insight meditation. After overcoming the false view of self, the aspirant tries to overcome doubts regarding the self, by investigating the causes and conditions for that mentality, materialism. By contemplation on his mental perception he comes to realize that the body comes into being, due to four causes from the past — ignorance, craving, clinging, and kamma -- and sustained in the present by nutriment. He also realizes that the course of existence is a succession of active kammic processes and passive resultant processes; nothing is permanent passing through this procession (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 693-702).

After dispelling doubt and before the purification by knowledge and vision into the right and wrong paths can arise, the aspirator has to go through intermediate steps. This type of insight is called “comprehension by groups” (*kalapasammasana*), and involves classifying all phenomena into distinct categories and ascribing to them the three characteristics of phenomenal existence (Ibid: 704ff). Contemplation by means of mental perception, on the five aggregates which makes up the being are regarded as impermanent because they are subject to destruction (*Khayatthena*) suffering in the sense of being fearful (*bhayatthena*). All composite things, due to impermanence, cannot provide lasting contentment or security, and clinging to them is a potential source of suffering, to be regarded as harmful and fearful. They are selfless in the sense of being coreless (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 709-710).

When the meditator is capable of comprehending the various groups in terms of the three characteristics, he acquires comprehension-knowledge, *sammasananana*. This is the actual beginning of insight and is the first of the ten kinds of insight knowledge the vipassana-practitioner has to pass through (Gunaratana: 1985, 158). After acquiring comprehension-knowledge, one passes on to the next, the knowledge of contemplation of rise and fall (*udayabbayanupassana-nana*).

This knowledge is defined as the “understanding of contemplating present states change” (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 734), and is obtained by contemplating the presently existent Five Aggregates with the mindful awareness of the rise and fall. This means the role of perception as seen in the Five Aggregates is contemplated with mental perception leading to the knowledge of understanding of the rise and fall of the Five Aggregates.

Attainment of this initial understanding of rise and fall means that the meditator has now arrived at tender insight (*tarunavipassana*). At this stage, the meditator may come to experience the ten imperfections of insight (*vipassanupakkilesa*).

They are so called because they can impede his progress in insight meditation. The ten imperfections of insight are, illumination, knowledge, rapture, tranquility, happiness, resolution, exertion, mindfulness, equanimity and

attachment.⁴ In a way these are different forms of sensory and neutral perceptions of the different sense organs.

At this stage, it is very important for the meditator to be mindful of the fact that these ten states are not the path but distractions, the by-products of insight, and are not to be adhered to but to be contemplated as bare phenomena, being mindful of the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and non-self. This knowledge which enables him to distinguish the path from the distractions is the purification by knowledge and vision into the right and wrong paths.

After mindfully noting the ten imperfections of insight and attaining the knowledge to distinguish between what is Path and Not-Path, the meditator continues to progress through his insight meditation and reaches the stage of Purification by knowledge and vision of the way. This is the last of the mundane purifications and it comprises nine stages of knowledge (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 745).

1. knowledge of contemplation of Arising and Passing Away
(*Udayabbayanupassananana*).
2. knowledge of contemplation of Dissolution (*Bhāṅganupassananana*).
3. knowledge of appearance as Terror. (*Bhayatupatthanana*).
4. knowledge of contemplation of Danger (*Adinavanupassananana*).

⁴ In Pali, “*obhasa, nana, piti, passaddhi, sukha, adhimokha, paggaha, upatthana, upekkha, nikanti*.” (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 739ff; Vism: 544-45).

5. knowledge of contemplation of Disenchantment

(*Nibbidanupassananana*).

6. knowledge of Desire for Deliverance (*Muncitukamyatanana*).

7. knowledge of Contemplation of reflection

(*Patisankhanupassananana*).

8. knowledge of Equanimity about Formations

(*Sankharupekkhanana*).

9. knowledge in Conformity with Truth or Conformity Knowledge

(*anulomanana*).

This is the peak of mundane insight.

These nine stages together with comprehension-knowledge, (*sammasananana*) obtained by the previous purification makes a total of ten kinds of insight knowledge.

Knowledge of Contemplation of Arising and Passing Away constitutes the first step of the Knowledge and Vision of the Way. It is defined as “The wisdom in contemplating the change of present phenomena is the knowledge of contemplation of Arising and Passing Away” (Pts: I, 1).

Although, the meditator has already acquired comprehension knowledge (*sammasananana*) at the stage of the fifth purification viz: purification by knowledge and vision into the right and wrong paths, at that time, they were not so clear to him due to the influence of the imperfections.

Now in resuming the contemplation of rise and fall after distinguishing the right from the wrong path, and being capable of removing the imperfections, the three characteristics of existence — impermanence, suffering and non-self — become very clear. (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 746).

Insight knowledge begins with the knowledge of Arising and Passing Away. Attainment of this particular knowledge is by contemplating formations as present phenomena. It is concentrated only on the present and not also on past and future like before. This is a necessary step for seeing the change of formations *i.e.* alteration of the present conditions or impermanence. To see impermanence one has to perceive the characteristic of passing away; to see the passing away, one has to see both arising and dissolution.

Contemplation on impermanence shows that formations are constantly changing at every moment with great rapidity. Impermanence shows that beings are suffering due to the continuous oppression by rise and fall. Whatever is susceptible to change and suffering is insusceptible to the exercise of power or mastery, thus cannot be identified as a self or the belongings of a self.

Now the meditator sees that a being in existence is subject to the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and non-self. Each of these has two aspects.

1. That which is impermanent and the characteristics of impermanence.
2. That which is suffering and the characteristic of suffering.
3. That which is non-self and the characteristic of non-self.

The first part of these three characteristics viz: impermanence, suffering, and not-self is the five aggregates. The characteristic of impermanence is the mode of arising and passing away; the characteristic of suffering is the mode of being continually oppressed; characteristic of non-self occur because there is no power over these five aggregates to control them from changing or passing away.

The three characteristics are explained as: “(It is) impermanent in the sense of wearing away. (It is) suffering in the sense of bringing terror. (It is) non-self in the sense of corelessness (Pts: I, 53). All the three characteristics are to be found in the five aggregates and the meditator should contemplate (to understand them) within himself through mental perception based on pure sensory perceptions obtained through the six sense organs. Hence pure perception is a process of insight meditation.

By continuous contemplation of rise and fall it now becomes clear that all conditioned formations undergo three phases of becoming: a phase of arising (birth), a phase of presence or persistence (decay), and a phase of dissolution (death).⁵

Of these three stages, “arising” (birth) and “dissolution” (death) are apparent. The intermediate stage of “persistence” (decay) is not very clear. “Arising” is the beginning of impermanence, “persistence” it’s middle, and “dissolution” it’s end (Nanaroma: 1983, 48). When the meditator sees these

⁵ In Pali, *uppada*, *thiti* and *bhanga*.

phases clearly, he concentrates his awareness only on the final phase, dissolution or breaking up, but no longer on their arising or presence. He sees the continuous breaking up of formations "like fragile pottery being smashed, like fine dust being dispersed, like sesamum seeds being roasted" (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 748; Vism: 553).

The fact that all past formations dissolved, and that all future ones will dissolve dawns upon him. Dissolution is the highest point of impermanence, the most important aspect of suffering, and the strongest point for non-self; the three marks become more distinct than before. All conditionally formed things are looked upon as impermanent, suffering, and selfless. With this insight knowledge of things being in a state of continuous destruction, the meditator now attains the knowledge of contemplation of dissolution.

Critical Conclusion All the sensations obtained from pure perception of the six sense organs can be contemplated in the same way -- by the three phases of becoming. All sensations arise due to the presence of the material body (*rupa*) which is but a heap of formations consisting of the four primary elements of earth, water, fire and air. Sensation such as contact, feeling, taste, smell, sight, and hearing arises, persists, and dissolves, is a natural sequence of events which is under no one's control. By this one comes to realise impermanence and non-self. One also becomes aware that it is the material body that is bearing the sensation and the consciousness that arises in the mind is the mental constituent. So one comes to differentiate between matter (*rupa*) and

mind (*nama*). In the resistance to change one's posture to overcome sensation such as pain or to resist trying to get something one wants very much, one comes to understand suffering.

Hence one can contemplate on the various sensations obtained by pure perception of the six sensory organs in terms of impermanence, non-self, and suffering. One can also come to differentiate matter (*rupa*) and mind (*nama*).

Hence insight meditation is a process of pure perception and contemplation of pure perception obtained from the six sense organs can lead to *Nibbana*.

The aspirator continues his insight meditation concentrating on the destruction, fall, and breakup of formations, formations classed according to all kinds of becoming, generation, destiny, station, or abode of beings, appear to him in the form of a great terror, as lions, tigers, leopards, appear to a timid man who wants to live in peace (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 753; Vism: 554-55).

Seeing the cessation of past formations, the ceasing of the present ones, and the knowledge that future ones will cease, the knowledge of appearance as terror, born of the understanding that whatever is bound for destruction cannot be relied upon, and is therefore fearful. This shows the role of pure sensory perception and mental perception leading to knowledge.

The knowledge of terror gives rise to the awareness of the knowledge of danger. The meditator finds that there is no shelter, protection, or refuge, in any kind of becoming. He sees danger in all forms of existence, which may be compared to a man staying in a forest among wild beasts. This is the knowledge of contemplation of danger. "The three kinds of becoming appear like charcoal pits full of glowing coals, and all formations appear as a huge mass of dangers, destitute of satisfaction or substance" (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 755; Vism: 556). With the knowledge of danger, dispassion arises.

Disenchantment sets in due to perceiving the dangers in formation of all compounded things. He finds no delight in any state of worldly existence. Not only with the four lower planes, but with all the three realms of existence: the sense-sphere realm, the fine material realm, and the immaterial realm (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 758; 759). These last three insights, knowledge of terror, of danger, and of dispassion, represent phases of one kind of insight knowledge apprehending its object in three different ways (Pts: 259).

Due to disenchantment setting in towards all types of formations and all kinds of becoming, the meditator desires to be delivered from all the planes of becoming in all the three realms. The knowledge obtained from this desire, is knowledge of desire for deliverance. It can be seen clearly that the knowledge of terror, of danger, of dispassion and the desire for deliverance arises from mental perception resulting from sensory perception of sīgh: in seeing that all compounded things are susceptible to destruction, seeing danger in all forms of

existence, and this knowledge resulting in dispassion for existence in any state of worldly existence and desires to be delivered from all kinds of becoming (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 759).

Due to the desire to be released from all conditioned phenomena, the meditator again returns to the contemplation of formation, repeatedly comprehending the Five Aggregates of clinging as impermanent, suffering, and non-self. Impermanent because they are temporary, subject to change; suffering because they are being continuously oppressed, the basis of pain or disease; non-self because they are empty, void, and ownerless. This extended understanding of the three characteristics is the knowledge of contemplation of reflection (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 760; Vism: 559).

In order to understand selflessness more deeply, the meditator continues his contemplation on the void in various ways. He comes to realize further and more deeply that all compounded things and all formations have no “self”. So now he abandons both terror and attachment and develops detached equanimity. This knowledge of equanimity arises with the understanding of voidness (*sunyata*): that everything is void of self or what belongs to self (MN: II, 263).

“He abandons both terror and delight and becomes indifferent and neutral towards all formations” (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 765). At this stage one becomes indifferent towards either an attractive or a repulsive object. His mind is equal to both without developing greed or hatred. Equanimity develops in his

mind because he comes to understand objects in terms of the four elements. At this point, there is suppression of defilements but it is only temporary suppression (Nanarama: 1983, 57). He recoils from all planes of becoming, “just as a fowl’s feather, or a shred of sinew thrown on a fire retreats, retracts, and recoils, and does not spread out” (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 766; Vism: 564).

The knowledge of Equanimity about Formations is defined as “Wisdom consisting in desire for deliverance together with reflection and composure is knowledge of Equanimity about Formations” (Pts: I, 60 ff).

According to this definition, equanimity about formations has three stages, (1) desire for deliverance, (2) reflection, and (3) composure. Composure means the continuity of knowledge or the occurrence of series of knowledges as an unbroken process. This series cannot be interrupted by extraneous thoughts.

Some meditators cannot go beyond the knowledge of Equanimity about formations on account of the aspirations, they have made in the past such as for Buddhahood, Pacceka Buddhahood, chief disciple, *etc.* (Nanarama: 1983, 57).

On reaching this stage of equanimity of formations, if one should perceive *nibbana*, all formations would be rejected and the only resolution would be on *nibbana*. If one does not see *nibbana*, then, further contemplation in the knowledge of equanimity must be carried out to acquire further maturity. Then, on ripening of that knowledge, the supramundane path becomes imminent, insight will be in the form of one of the three contemplations of impermanence,

suffering, or non-self, depending on the individual’s mental inclination. These contemplations form the highest stage of insight, and will lead one to liberation by the noble path. They are called the three gateways to liberation (*tinivimokkhamukhāni*). The contemplation of impermanence becomes the gateway to the signless liberation (*animittavimokkha*) as it directs the mind to *Nibbāna* as the signless element; the contemplation of suffering forms the gateway to the desireless liberation (*appanihitavimokkha*) because it directs the mind to *nibbāna* as the desireless element; contemplation of non-self becomes the gateway to the void liberation (*suññāta-vimokkha*). It directs the mind to *nibbāna* as the void element. These gateways attained through the different types of contemplation lead to the liberation of the supramundane path. The path is only one path, though it has three names due to the different types of contemplations focused on *nibbāna*. The following explanation is made by Buddhaghosa.

And here the signless liberation should be understood as the noble path that has occurred by making *nibbāna* its object through the signless aspect. For that path is signless owing to the signless element having arisen, and it is a liberation owing to deliverance from defilements. In the same way the path that has occurred by making *nibbāna* its object through the desireless aspects is desireless. And the path that has occurred by making *nibbāna* its object through the void aspect is void (1975, 768).

The spiritual faculty, predominant in the meditator’s mental make up is the determining factor, as to which particular gate way will be chosen and which type of liberation will be attained. One with strong faith (*saddha*) tends to settle down in contemplation of impermanence, one with strong concentration (*samadhi*) in the contemplation of suffering, and one with strong wisdom (*panna*) in the contemplation of non-self. So each will attain the same path of liberation but in different ways corresponding to their specific contemplation.

When one who has great resolution brings (formations) to mind as impermanent, he acquires the signless liberation. When one who has great tranquility brings (them) to mind as painful, he acquires the desireless liberation. When one who has great wisdom brings (them) to mind as not-self, he acquires the void liberation (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 768; Pts: 254).

Insight knowledge that has reached the maximum level and is about to enter the supramundane path is also known as “insight leading to emergence.” (*Vutthanagamini-vipassana*) (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 772-75; Vism: 567-69). This knowledge consists of three types of knowledge: fully matured equanimity about formations, followed by conformity knowledge (*anuloma-nana*) which is followed by change-of-lineage knowledge (*gotrabu-nana*). The word “emergence” (*vutthana*) means the supramundane path, which is so called because externally it rises up from formations to *nibbana*, and internally it rises up from defilements and defiled conditions to a state of complete purity. These

last three kinds of mundane knowledge lead immediately to the path, hence, they are collectively named insight leading to emergence (Gunaratana: 1985, 165).

After Equanimity about Formations comes Conformity Knowledge. To gain this knowledge, the meditator has nothing more to do by way of meditation. This knowledge arises by itself when the knowledge of Equanimity about Formations become stronger and sharper. Comprehending formations through one of the three characteristics - as either impermanent, or suffering, or selfless. Then the mind sinks into the life-continuum (*bhavanga*). Following the life-continuum a mind-door adverting consciousness arises, (*manodvavajjana*) apprehending formations as impermanent or suffering, or selfless, according to the previous process of equanimity-knowledge. Immediately after the adversion, two or three impulsions occur, taking formations as their object, in terms of the same three characteristics. They are called “preliminary work” (*parikamma*), “access” (*upacara*), and “conformity” (*anuloma*) but usually, they are collectively known under one group as “conformity.” In very quick-witted meditators, the moment of preliminary work is passed over and only two moments of access and conformity occur. The function of conformity knowledge is to conform to the insights that had gone before, or to stabilize those gains by repeated practice. It is called conformity knowledge because it conforms to the functions of truth in the eight preceding kinds of insight knowledge, and as

conformity to the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment⁶ which would soon follow (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 782 ff). This is the last moment of insight-knowledge before the changeover to the supramundane path takes place. Knowledge of contemplation of reflection, Equanimity about formations, and conformity knowledge are again processes of mental perceptions arising from repeatedly seeing the five aggregates as impermanent, suffering, and non-self. These knowledges arise from mental perception by seeing things as they are and looking at things objectively without any subjective feeling or any bias.

The last purification is by knowledge and vision and consists of the knowledge of the four supramundane paths: the path of stream entry, the path of the once-returner, the path of the non-returner, and the path of *arahship* (full liberation). Immediately after conformity knowledge, and before the arising of the first path, there is a transitional period of one thought moment called “change of lineage” knowledge (*gotrabhunana*). Its function is adverting to the path. Since it occupies a transitional position, it cannot be said as belonging either to purification by knowledge and vision of the way or to purification by knowledge and vision. It is called change of lineage because on attaining this knowledge, the meditator passes out of the “lineage of the worldling” (*puthujjhanagotta*) and enters the “lineage of the noble ones” (*ariyagotta*) (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 785;

⁶ The thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment comprise: The four foundations of mindfulness, the four rightendeavours, the four bases of spiritual power, the five spiritual faculties, the five spiritual powers, the seven enlightenment factors, and the eight noble path factors. For details see Ledi Sayadaw, The Requisites of Enlightenment, The Wheel Nos. 171-174.

Vism: 577). Change of lineage is a very important and crucial moment of spiritual development since at this stage the meditator is completely changed from the state of a worldling to that of a noble person. Though conformity knowledge can dispel the delusion that conceals truth, it cannot penetrate it. To penetrate the truth, *nibbāna* must be realized as its object. Change of lineage knowledge is the first state of consciousness to make *nibbāna* its object. It is the proximate, immediate, and decision-supporting condition for the arising of the first path. It does not directly abandon defilements in any way, but it heralds the onset of the supramundane path, which cuts off the defilements permanently from their roots. When change of lineage occurs, one is sure to attain the supramundane path (Gunaratana: 1985, 166; Ñāṇārāma: 1983, 63-64).

Change of lineage knowledge perceives *nibbāna* but cannot destroy the defilements. All defilements are eradicated by the four supramundane paths (*lokuttaramagga*). The attainment of each path is a momentary experience, apprehending *nibbāna*, understanding the Four Noble Truths, and cutting off certain defilements. The first path arises immediately following the change of lineage.

... After, as it were, giving a sign to the path to come into being it (change-of-lineage) ceases. And without pausing after the sign given by that change-of-lineage knowledge the path follows upon it in uninterrupted continuity, and as it comes into being it pierces and explodes the mass of greed, the mass of hatred, and the mass

of delusion, never pierced and exploded before (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 787-88; Vism: 579).

The first path is called the path of stream entry (*sotapattimagga*). This means the disciple who has attained this path has entered the stream of the Dhamma (*dhammasota*), the Noble Eightfold Path, which will take him to Nibbana as sure as the waters of stream will flow into the ocean (SN: V, 347). On entering this path, a worldling is changed into an ariyan (a noble person). Each supramundane path cuts off specific defilements. The defilements cut off by the specific paths are collectively classified as a set of ten “fetters” (*samyojana*) because on account of them beings are kept chained to the round of existence. All ten fetters, arise out of the three unwholesome roots which are greed, hatred, and delusion (Gunaratana: 1985, 167). The ten fetters are (1) wrong views of personality, (2) doubt, (3) clinging to rites and rituals, (4) sense desire, (5) ill will, (6) lust for fine material existence, (7) lust for immaterial existence, (8) conceit, (9) restlessness, (10) ignorance.⁷ These ten are divided into two groups. The first five are called the fetters pertaining to the lower worlds (*orambhagiyani samyojanani*), because on account of them beings are kept tied to the sensory realms; the last five are called fetters pertaining to the higher worlds (*uddhambhagiyani samyojanani*) because they will remain operative even in the fine material and immaterial realms (AN: V, 17).

⁷ In Pali (1) *sakkayaditthi*, (2) *vicikiccha*, (3) *silabbataparamasa*, (4) *kammacchanda*, (5) *vyapada*, (6) *ruparaga*, (7) *aruparaga*, (8) *mana*, (9) *uddhacca*, and (10) *avijja*.

Some of these fetters, *e.g.* doubt, sensual desire, ill will, and restlessness, are identical with the five hindrances abandoned by *jhana*. The difference being that the mundane *jhana* can only suppress them, whereas the supramundane paths cut them off at their root. With the attainment of the fourth paths, all the fetters are eradicated. The arahat, (the fully liberated one), is described as “one who has eliminated the fetters of existence” (*parikkhinabhava-samyojana*) (MN: I, 4).

The path of stream-entry eradicates the first three fetters - the fetters of false views of personality, doubt, and clinging to rites and rituals. The first is the view in regarding the five aggregates as a self, or belonging to a self (MN: I, 300). “Doubt” is uncertainty with regard to the Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha, and the training; it is eliminated by seeing the truth of the Dhamma (MN: I, 101). “Clinging to rites and rituals” is the belief that one can attain liberation just by clinging to rites and rituals. The path of stream entry not only cuts off the fetters but also prevents the possibility of unfortunate rebirths in the four sub-human worlds, the four lower realms of hells, tormented spirits, animals, and titans (Dhs: 208).

The path of stream entry is always and immediately followed by the fruit of stream entry which is a supramundane experience (*sotapattiphala*). The function of the path is cutting off the defilements, the fruit enjoys the peace and bliss obtained by the work of the path. Both Path-knowledge and Fruit-knowledge take *Nibbana* as their object. The Path (*magga*) lasts only for a single moment of

consciousness, where as fruition (*phala*) occurs for two or three mind moments depending on the different types of individuals. For those who have sharp mental faculties, there will be three moments of fruition as the cognitive process of the path contains only two moments of conformity knowledge. For an ordinary meditator, there will be only two moments of fruition as there will be three moments of conformity knowledge.

The three moments of conformity knowledge and the moment of change of lineage are wholesome states of consciousness belonging to the sense sphere (*kamavacarakusalacitta*). The path consciousness and the fruition following it, are supramundane states of consciousness (*lokuttara citta*), the former wholesome (*kusala*) and the latter resultant (*vipaka*). The path and fruit occur at the level of one of the *jhanas* from the first to the fourth or fifth. They are similar to *jhanas* because they contain the *jhana*-factors corresponding to that of the fine material sphere *jhanas*. Unlike the mundane *jhanas*, the *jhanas* of the path and fruit are supramundane.

After the attainment of fruition, the stream enterer will review the path, fruition, and *nibbana*. He will also review the defilements that he has destroyed by the path, and the defilements remaining to be destroyed by the higher paths. But some meditators may not do this. The same types of reviewing will be done for the next two fruitions attained. So for each attainment, there will be a minimum of three and a maximum of five items to be reviewed. For the *arahat* (one who has attained liberation) there will be a maximum of four as

he has no more defilements to be eliminated. So there are a maximum of nineteen kinds of reviewing following the supramundane attainments. This reviewing knowledge (*paccavakkhananana*) takes formations as its object, not *Nibbana* as do the paths and fruits.

For each of the four stages of attainments, the same disciple may be classified as two types of noble persons. For each, the disciple at the path-moment is regarded as one type of noble person, and the same person from the moment of fruition onward, as another type of noble person; e.g. the disciple at the moment of the path of stream-entry is called “one standing on the path of stream entry” or the first noble person; from the moment of fruition up to the attainment of the next path, he is called a stream-enterer (*sotapanna*) and regarded as the second noble person. Actually, it is the same person at two different moments and the disciple stays at each stage for just one thought-moment.

The stream enterer is said to gain many benefits for his attainment. He will never be reborn in the woeful states of existence and can declare of himself

Destroyed for me is rebirth in the hells, in the animals kingdom, in the spirit realm, in the planes of misery, the bad destinations, the downfall. I am stream-enterer, no longer subject to decline, assured of and destined for full enlightenment (SN: 2, 68).

He can be certain of being released from five kinds of fear and hostility: the fear and hostility that come from taking life, from stealing, from

sexual misconduct, from false speech, and from consuming intoxicants. He is endowed with the four factors of stream entry (*sotapattiyangani*): unwavering confidence in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, and unblemished moral discipline. He has penetrated and seen the truth with correct understanding (SN: 2, 69-70). By penetrating truth, his future births are limited to a maximum of seven in the happy realms of the human and heaven worlds, drying up the great oceans of suffering that lay beyond this. Buddha says that for the stream-enterer who has seen the Dhamma, the amount of suffering that remains is like a pinch of dust on the finger nail, while the suffering that has been exhausted is like the dust on the mighty earth.⁸

In order to reach full purification and liberation, the disciple must pass through all the four supramundane Paths: the Path of Stream-entry, the Path of Once-return, the Path of Non-return, and the Path of Arahantship.⁹ All four paths have to be attained in an orderly sequence. All four can be attained in a single lifetime, or can be spread out over several lifetimes; Attainment of the first Path is assurance to the meditator that he will never fall away and is sure to reach the final Path and Fruit in at most seven lives. Each path arises only once and each has its own particular range of eliminating defilements *e.g.* the first Path,

⁸ Stream-enterers are divided into three kinds: assuming that they will not go further in the same life time, one with sluggish faculties will be reborn seven times in the happy destinations; one with medium faculties will be reborn an intermediary number of times; and one with keen faculties will be reborn once more in the human world and there make an end of suffering (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 833-34; Vism: 611-12).

⁹ *Sotapattimagga, sakadagamimagga, anagamimagga, arahattamagga.*

the Path of stream-entry breaks away the three fetters of personality: view, doubt, and clinging to rights and rituals.

The second Path, the Path of Once-return, does not eradicate any fetters completely but reduces the three unwholesome roots along with other fetters derived from them. They are the two fetters of sense desire and ill-will. The three roots are, greed, hatred, and delusion. A Once-returner (*sakadagami*) after death will be reborn in the human world just one more time before attaining deliverance. “With the destruction of the (first) three fetters, and the attenuation of greed, hate, and delusion, the monk becomes a once-returner, one who puts an end to suffering after returning to this world only one more time” (AN: 2, 238).

The disciple, in striving to progress from the stage of stream-entry to the stage of *once-return*, will again have to contemplate the whole range of formations included in the five aggregates with the awareness of impermanence, suffering, and non-self. As before, he will have to pass through the progressive series of insights, beginning with the knowledge of rise and fall, and ending in knowledge of equanimity about formations. If and when his faculties mature, he will pass through conformity knowledge and change of lineage knowledge and reach the second noble path, the path of the once-returner (Gunaratana: 1985, 172; Nanarama: 1983, 66-67).

Immediately following the path consciousness, there will be two or three moments of the fruit of the once-returner (*sakadagamiphala*). After fruition, he will follow the reviewing knowledge as mentioned before. The meditator at

the moment of the path is known as the third noble person, and from the moment of the fruit on as a once-returner (*sakadagami*), the fourth noble person (Gunaratana: 1985, 172).

“The understanding of the relaxation of endeavour is knowledge of Fruition” (Pts: I, 71). As the fruition-consciousness immediately follows the knowledge of the path without any lapse of time, the path-concentration is called “concentration with immediate result” (*anantarika samadhi*) (Nanarama: 1983, 68). “The understanding of the eradication of defilements owing to the purity of nondistractedness is knowledge of concentration with immediate result” (Pts: I, 2).

This is the path of non-return, (*Anagami-magga*) and it eliminates the two fetters weakened by the second path, sensual desire and ill will. The attainment of the third path will, as usual, be immediately followed by its fruition and later by reviewing the position as before. The meditator at the moment of the path is one standing on the path of a non-returner, and is known as the fifth noble person, and from the moment of fruition on, as a non-returner, the sixth noble person. A non-returner on death will no longer return to the realm of senses. If he does not penetrate further, he will have spontaneous rebirth in some higher realm, generally in the pure abodes (*suddhavasa*) of the fine material sphere viz: the Brahma worlds, wherefrom he will attain final deliverance (Gunaratana: 1985, 173; Nanarama: 1983, 67). “With the destruction of the five lower fetters, the monk is reborn spontaneously (in a higher world) and there attains *nibbana*, without returning from that world” (AN: 2, 238).

The Fourth Path and Fruit can be obtained in the same lifetime or in some future rebirths by contemplating the three characteristics of formations. He again passes progressively through the whole series of insights up to equanimity about formations. When his faculties mature, knowledge about conformity and change-of-lineage, followed by the fourth and final path, the path of arahatship (*Arahatta magga*). This path eradicates the remaining five fetters; desire for existence in the fine material realm, desire for existence in the immaterial realm, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance. The path is immediately followed by its fruition, the fruit of arahatship (*arahattaphala*) which again is followed by the reviewing of knowledge. “With the destruction of the cankers he here and now enters and dwells in the cankerless liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, realizing it for himself with direct knowledge” (AN: 2, 238).

At the moment of the path, the yogin is regarded, as the seventh noble person, one standing on the path of arahatship; At the moment of fruition, he becomes an arahat, the eighth noble person. An arahat has completed the development of the path and reached the goal of full liberation.

He is one of the Great Ones with cankers destroyed, he bears his last body, he has laid down the burden, reached his goal and destroyed the fetter of becoming, he is rightly liberated with (final) knowledge and worthy of the highest offerings of the world with its deities (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 792; Vism: 582).

The eight individuals, from the person standing on the path of stream-entry to the arahat, make up the ariyan Sangha, the community of noble persons forming the third refuge and third jewel of Buddhist veneration. As the Buddha says:

Bhikkhus, there are these eight persons worthy of offerings and hospitality, of gifts and homage, an incomparable field of merit to the world. The stream-enterer, he who has entered the path to the realization of the fruit of stream-entry, the once-returner, he who has entered the path to the realization of the fruit of once-returner, the non-returner, he who has entered the path to the realization of the fruit of non-returner, the arahat, and he who has entered the path to arahatship (AN: 4, 292-93).

3.4 Similarities between Absorption, Perception and Concentration.

1. Absorptions.

This means wilful concentration on an object. Out of the forty subjects of meditation, continuous voluntary wilful concentration on thirty can lead to the attainment of the absorption (*jhana*) factor (Naradha: 1980, 391). Continuous concentration on the preliminary object (*Parikama Nimitta*) will lead to the ability to produce a visualised image (*uggaha nimitta*) and finally a conceptualized image (*Patibhaga Nimitta*). This image is born out of the perception of the preliminary image. Continuous concentration on this conceptualized image will lead one to the attainment of proximate concentration (*upacara samadhi*) and finally to

ecstatic concentration (*appana samadhi*) or First absorption of the form sphere (*First Rupa Jhana*), (Naradha: 1980, 48).

So from this, it can be seen that mindfulness of various perceptions, *samadhi* and *jhanas* are similar as they all mean concentration, but yet there is still some difference due to varying degrees of concentration. Whenever there is absorption (*jhana*), there is concentration but it cannot be said that whenever there is concentration there is absorption, in the cases of access or proximate concentration (*upacara samadhi*).

Compared to proximate concentration, ecstatic concentration (*Appana Samadhi*) is higher and is identical to absorption (*jhanas*) of both form spheres (*Rupa*) and formless spheres (*Arupa*) (Naradho: 1980, 48-49).

2. Perception (*Sanna*)

According to Theravada Buddhism, perception (*sanna*) is defined as immediate knowledge which arises out of the contact of the object with its appropriate sense organ. It should be free from error, and ideation and also from illusion (Sarma: 1929, 215). Continuous, wilful, voluntary perception on the subjects of meditation leads to concentration, (*samadhi*) e.g. proximate concentration (*upacara samadhi*) and ecstatic concentration (*appana samadhi*) or absorption (*jhana*). These stages of concentration arise from perception of visual objects. *Samadhi* (*Ekaggata*) means one-pointedness of mind or concentration upon a single object. Perception forms the basis for all absorptions (*jhana*) from the first to the seventh. The eighth absorption (*jhana*) (*Nevasannanasannayatana*) is excluded because in this there is neither perception nor non-perception.

3. Concentration (*Samadhi*)

Therefore, since perception is the basis for all absorptions (*Jhanas*) and *Samadhi* means concentration, concentration forms the basis for wisdom. Both absorptions (*Jhanas*) and concentration (*Samadhi*) are very important factors in paving the way for insight (*vipassana*). So we can conclude that perception plays a very important role in preparing one for insight meditation.

“He who is concentrated knows and sees according to the truth.” (AN: V, 3; Narasabho: 1971, 80). From this passage it can be seen that concentration (*samadhi*) is a direct cause of insight (*vipassana*). “Concentration, brethren, should be practised. A brother who is concentrated, brethren, knows a thing as it really is” (S.N. II, 30). “A thing as it really is” means to know the rising and the falling away of the five aggregates. That is the unique essence of insight (*Vipassana*). “Concentration (*Samadhi*) is causally associated with the knowledge and vision of things as they really are” (S.N: II, 30).

It is not essential to develop concentration up to the stage of the four absorptions (*Jhanas*) in the mundane portion of the practice (Gunaratana: 1985, 13). Again, it is clear that the fourfold formless absorptions (*Arupa-Jhana*) will not directly lead to *Nirvana*. They are only its indirect or remote cause. They can only help the meditator in his progress towards emancipation. They are not essential for the realization of *Nirvana*. Wisdom plays the predominant role for

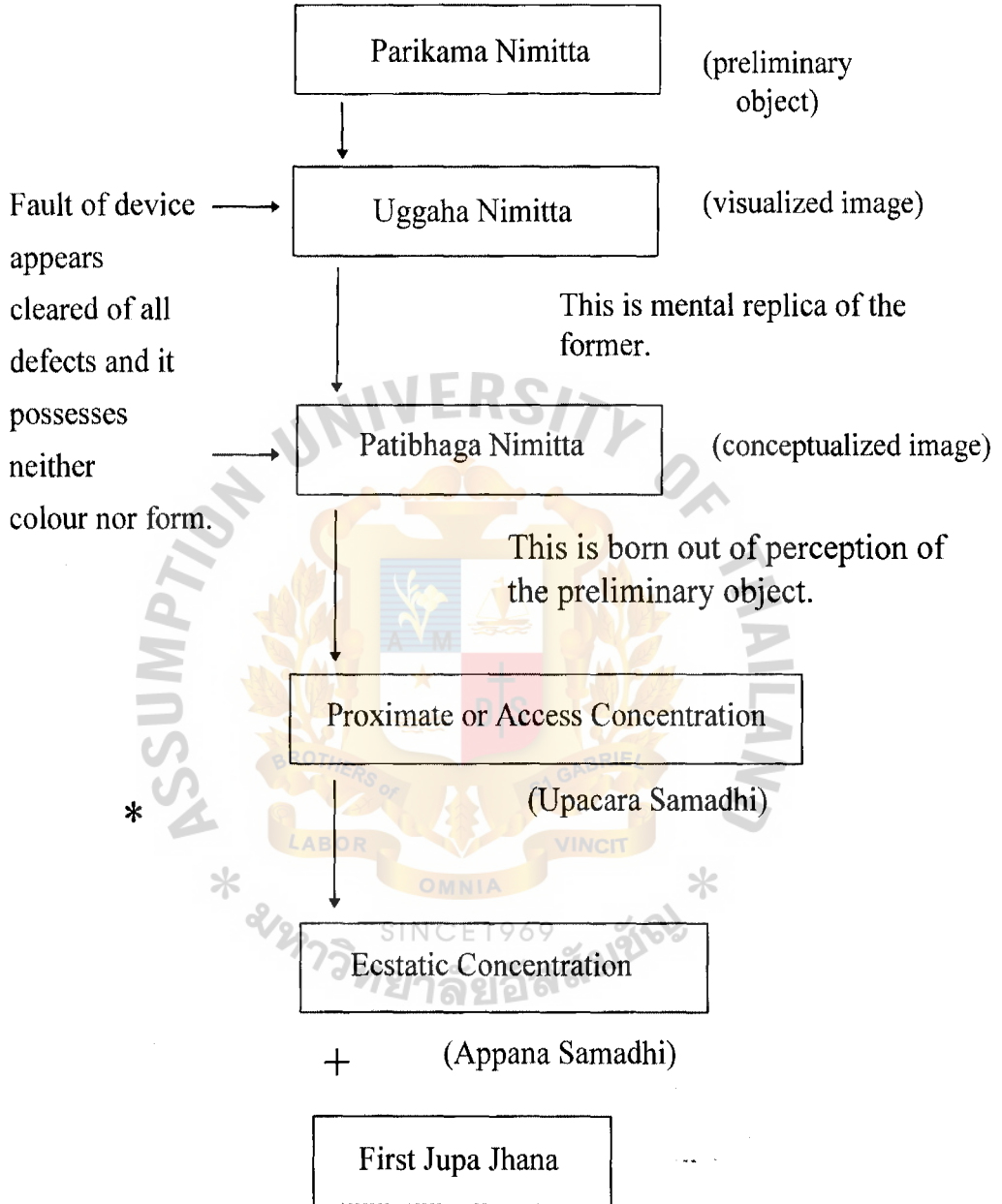
the development of insight (*vipassana*). A person who has wisdom as the predominant feature of his character may pass at once to insight (*Vipassana*) or may develop tranquility meditation up to the last stages of absorptions of the form sphere (*Rupa-jhana*) and then refer his mind to insight (*Vipassana*) to achieve the final emancipation. But proximate concentration (*upacara-samadhi*) is necessary for the development of Insight (*Vipassana*). No insight is possible without momentary concentration (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 2).

There have been cases where *Nirvana* is attained by a sudden understanding, like after listening to a sermon as seen in the case of sixty monks who were freed from the obsessions with no foundation left (MN: III, 20). Such cases are most commonly seen in monks, but could also happen to lay people as seen in the case of a rich merchant and his son Yasa who attained *nibbana*, only after a short instruction with no previous knowledge of meditation (Mahavagga: 16).

Pre-conditions and external conditions do not seem to be necessary for attaining *Nibbana*. Monkhood was considered to be very helpful, but no guarantee for gaining *nibbana*, and there was no discrimination of sex, race, colour, social status or personal appearance in one's progress to *Nibbana*. One of Buddha's most highly esteemed disciples was a dwarf. (Johansson: 1969, 85-86).

According to Visuddhimagga, *Samadhi* means profitable unification of the mind upon a single object, undistracted, and unscattered (Buddhaghosa:

1975, 84, 85). Absorption (Jhanas) means willful concentration on an object (Naradha : 1980, 47).



Insight or Vipassana can be classified into two kinds, namely,

1. Insight acquired through the practice of concentration and
2. Bare Insight. (AN: 11, 157).

The Vimuttimagga also gives two kinds of insight.

1. Insight obtained through the practice of absorptions (*Jhanas*)
- *Jhana Vipassana*. This means absorptions with insight.
2. Bare Insight - *Sukkha Vipassana* (Upatissa: 1977, 310).

3.4.1 Mindfulness (*Sati*)

Proper mindfulness (*sammasati*) means to reflect upon or bring to mind. *Sati* means to recollect, remember, and not to dissipate. Mindfulness means the *sati* that is a sense-faculty; *sati* that has power, *sammasati*; *sati* that is a factor of enlightenment’ (*bojjhanga*); mindfulness (*sati*) that is a factor of the path and is linked with the path (Vbh: 107, 238).

Proper mindfulness (*sammasati*) means, (1) To contemplate the body in the body with effort, clear comprehension, (*sampajanna*), and mindfulness (*sati*) to eliminate greed and grief related to the world. (2) It contemplates sensations in sensations with effort, clear comprehension and mindfulness, eliminating greed and grief related to the world. (3) It contemplates the mind in the mind with effort, clear comprehension, and mindfulness, eliminating greed and grief related to the world. (4) It contemplates dhammas in dhammas with effort, clear comprehension, and mindfulness, eliminating greed and grief related to the world (DN: II, 313; MN: I, 62; MN: III, 251).

1. Contemplation of the body.

This is mindfulness of Breathing. The inhalation and exhalation of breathing are done with great mindfulness, contemplating the origination-factors¹⁰ in the body, dissolution factors¹¹ in the body, and contemplating both origination and dissolution factors¹² in the body. With mindfulness of the thought that “the body exists”¹³ to the extent necessary just for knowledge and mindfulness, he lives detached¹⁴ and clings to naught in the world (Nanasatta: 1982, 12). The meditator knows when he is going, “I am going” or when he is standing, “I am standing”, or just as his body is disposed or whatever sensations that may arise in his body, he knows it. He contemplates on the origination factors, the dissolution factors, and both origination and dissolution factors in the body (Ibid: 13).

2. Contemplation of sensations in sensations.

By this is meant, contemplating all the different types of sensations that arise in the body. Whatever sensations may arise, whether they are painful, pleasant, or neither pleasant nor painful, he knows that he is experiencing such and such a sensation. He contemplates the feelings with the thought that feelings

¹⁰ Conditions of the origination of the breath-body; these are: the body in it's entirety, nasal aperture, and mind.

¹¹ The destruction of the body and of the nasal aperture, and the ceasing of mental activity.

¹² The contemplation of both alternately.

¹³ Only imperson bodily processes exists, without a self, soul, spirit, or abiding essence or substance.

¹⁴ Detached from craving and wrong view.

exist just for knowledge and mindfulness, and he lives detached, and clings to naught in the world (Ibid: 18).

3. Contemplation of the mind in the mind.

This means the contemplation of consciousness. One is mindful of the consciousness with lust, as with lust; if consciousness is without lust, one is mindful that it is without lust, the consciousness with hate as with hate, the consciousness with ignorance as with ignorance, the distracted state of consciousness,¹⁵ as the distracted state (Ibid).

4. Contemplation of *dhammas* in *dhammas*.

This means contemplating mental objects in the mental objects of the five hindrances. When sense-desire is present, one knows “There is sense-desire in me” or when it is not present also, he knows. “There is no sense-desire in me.” The same applies to other factors of the five hindrances such as anger, sloth and torpor, agitation and scruples, and doubt. He knows how the arising of the non-arisen factors comes to be, knows how the abandoning of the arisen factors comes to be, and he knows how the non-arising in the future of the abandoned factors comes to be.

So it can be seen the mindfulness is mental perception: the mindfulness and contemplation of the various sensations that arise in the body due

¹⁵ This refers to a restless mind.

to sensory perceptions obtained from the various sense organs. This means mindfulness is mental perception depending on sensory perception.

3.4.2 Can perception lead to *Nibbana*?

All the traditional Buddhist scriptures of Hinayana Buddhism mention that perception cannot lead to *Nibbana*. It is only insight -- either alone or with tranquility meditation obtained through perception -- that can lead to *Nibbana*. The researcher refutes this fact. As perception plays many different roles according to the Theravada Buddhist meditation, it was found that perception in some cases cannot only lead to *Nibbana* and may even become a hindrance, but actually in some cases, it can lead to *Nibbana*.

The role of perception in the Five Aggregates -- perception leading to the various absorptions — cannot lead to *Nibbana* as previously discussed. Beings will be reborn again and again in the nine sphere of beings. This shows perception that leads to craving, volitions, attachments, and perception becomes an obsession.

Role of perception leading to invalid knowledge such as perception of obsession (*papanca sanna*), distortion of perception (*sanna-vipallasa*) and errors of perception cannot lead to *Nibbana*. Attainment of the various absorptions is due to mere perception without the mindfulness of the three characteristics of phenomenal existence which are impermanence, suffering, and non-self.

Attainment of the state of various gods (*devas*) is due to mere perception, which is not permanent, and it should not be attached.

The researcher has found that pure and powerful perception with mindfulness of the three characteristics of phenomenal existence can lead to Nibbana, provided the perception is not distorted, has errors of perception, or becomes obsessive.

Insight is a process of pure perception. Insight meditation is to be aware of every feeling (*vedana*) or sensation that may arise. Whatever sensation that arises will be noted by its appropriate sense organ; the tastes of food will be noted by the tongue, gustatory perception; any form of smell will be noted by the nose, the olfactory perception. These are pure perception as they do not involve any other element save the direct contact of the object by the organ of sense.

From this we may draw a logical conclusion that insight is nothing but pure perception. So the researcher came to find that perception as mindfulness and as insight which are based on pure perception can lead to *Nibbana* as insight is a process of pure perception. The fact that insight is a process of pure perception can be seen from the following figure which shows the progressive attainments of the seven purities leading to *Nibbana* as explained already. All these progressive attainments are processes of pure sensory and mental perception.

WISDOM OF NOBLE PATH

Supramudane -- (4) Supra-mudane paths. Vissudhi No. 7

1. The path of stream entry
2. The path of once-returner
3. The path of non-returner
4. The path of Arahatship (Full Liberation)

Purification by Knowledge and Vision

Insight leading to emergence -The last 3 kinds of mudane knowledge conformity knowledge can dispel the delusion that conceals the truth, but it cannot penetrate them.

Change of lineage knowledge - (gotrabhunana) transitional period lasting one thought-moment perceives N but cannot destroy the defilements.

anulomañāna

- 9 Conformity knowledge
- 8 K of equanimity about formations
 - 7 K of contemplation of reflection
 - 6 K of desire for deliverance
 - 5 K of contemplation of disenchantment
 - 4 K of contemplation of danger
 - 3 K of contemplation of terror
 - 2 K of contemplation of dissolution
 - 1 K of contemplation of rise and fall.

9 insight knowledges

Visuddhi No. 6

Purification by knowledge and vision of the way of progress.

Purification by knowledge and

Visuddhi No. 5

Vision into the right and wrong paths

Classify all phenomena into distinct categories and ascribe to them the three characteristics of phenomenal existence

Comprehension knowledge
Beginning of insight (*samasanañāna*)
↓
Knowledge of contemplation of rise and fall (*uddayabbayañāna*)
* 10 imperfections of insight appear.

Intermediate steps.
(comprehension by groups)

Investigates the causes and conditions for materiality and mentality - i.e. contemplation on his mental perception.

Purity by overcoming doubts

Visuddhi No. 4

Purity of View

Visuddhi No. 3

Gets rid of self

Visuddhi No. 1

Visuddhi No. 2

- 4 Purifications of morality
1. Restraint according to the rules of the *Patimokkha*
 2. Restraint of senses.
 3. Purity of livelihood.
 4. Purity of the use of requisites.

Purity of Morality

roots of *Vipassana*

Purity of mind

7 attainment
and *upacara Samadhi*

Critical Conclusion

All the four supra-mundane paths are processes of mental perception. Mental perception arises from repeated contemplation, reflection, and understanding of the three characteristics of phenomenal existence, non-permanence, suffering and non-self. This mental perception of realising the truth of all compounded things is obtained from sensory perceptions and mindfully seeing things as they are. After obtaining knowledge from the mental perceptions, the meditator continues in his endeavour of practising insight meditation, developing his mind gradually, in ascending order of development.

All four supramundane paths and the fruits of practice are different but related aspects of a comprehensive whole. In summary, we can say that at first humans are ignorant thinking that the self “I” really exists. Being unaware of the truth, they cling to feelings, thoughts, desires, rites and rituals, etc. By gradual and progressive insight meditation, which is a progressive series of mental perception based on the findings of sensory perceptions from the various sensory organs, one comes to realise the objective truth of the three characteristics of phenomenal existence, losing interest in clinging to a notion of self.

If this insight, which is a process of mental perception, becomes fully matured, deep and clear, then one can cut away all the fetters which chained him to the round of rebirths (*samsara*) and then liberation is attained. This means perception with mindfulness can lead to *Nibbana* if it is pure and not distorted or obsessive.

Pure sensory perceptions alone leading to absorption (*Jhanas*) without the process of mental perception (which is a process of insight meditation) cannot lead to the final emancipation.

CHAPTER IV

A CRITICAL REFLECTION ON THE APPLICATIONS OF PERCEPTION

As previously discussed, perception plays a very important role in Buddhist Meditation. It was found that it can be a great help as well as a big hindrance towards the final emancipation.

One problem is that although we know that it can become a great hindrance towards spiritual progress if we are not mindful, we cannot totally do away with perception. It is clearly written that knowledge or wisdom depends on concentration obtained from perception (Dialogue: II, 252).

The fact that Buddha accepts pure perception (*suddhika sanna*) as a valid source of knowledge can also be seen from the Kalama Suttas (AN: III, 65; AN: I, 170).

According to Buddhism, there are three kinds of knowledge. *Sutamaya-pañña* is the kind of knowledge that is obtained systematically by learning in schools, colleges, and universities. This is the first degree of knowledge and is mainly dependent on others.

The second type of knowledge is the *Cinta maya-pañña*. This is acquired through systematic thinking. This kind of knowledge is developed

from research work in various fields and through science. These two types of knowledge belong to the realm of worldly knowledge.

The third type is called “*Bhavana-maya-pañña*”(knowledge acquired through meditation). This is comparable to perception (*pratyaksa-pramana*). It is a direct experience of pure perception. It is the direct awareness of reality and is the result of the practice of insight meditation (*Vipassana*). It arises as a result of mental culture, from which all valid knowledge arises through meditation and purification. This type of knowledge finally leads one to emancipation. It is a supramundane knowledge (*Visuddhimagga*: II, 439).

From this it can be seen that one cannot totally do away with perception as it gives rise to concentration. Though one does not need to develop concentration up to the stage of absorption, one still needs a certain amount of perception and concentration for the practice of insight. So it can be seen that perception is indispensable for the development of insight.

Another great problem of perception is that it forms the basis of all absorptions (*Jhanas*) from the first to the seventh. The eighth absorption — or the fourth formless absorption (*Fourth Arupa Jhana*) — is exempted because in this is there neither perception nor non-perception. These absorptions may become the cause of desire (*tanha*). The aspirant may become attached to them for their various psychic powers and the wonderful tranquilization and peace that one feels that cannot be described in words. If this occurs it will lead to

perception of obsession (*papanca-sanna*) and one will never attain emancipation (AN: III, 292, 294). The above discussions show that these absorptions which are directly based on perception are not beneficial in all cases as they may become a cause of desire (AN: I, 200).

These absorptions are very helpful in paving the way to insight because insight requires a certain amount of concentration; so the stronger the concentration, the firmer will be the foundation for insight.

So, it may be objectively criticised that perception plays a very important role in Buddhist meditation. If one is not mindful, it can become a great problem and a hindrance to spiritual progress and one will forever be going round in the round of rebirths (*samsara*) without reaching *Nirvana*. On the other hand, we cannot totally do away with it, as insight needs a certain amount of concentration.

4.1. Comparison of bare insight with acquirement of insight through the practice of *Samadhi*

Again, concentration (*Samadhi*) is said to be the cause of insight (*Vipassana*) into the characteristics of impermanence of things like sense organs, sense objects, sense bases, sense-faculties, *etc.* (SN: IV, 80). Insight may be obtained without the practice of concentration and that is known as “pure insight”. This type of aspirant is called “*Sukkha-vipassaka*” (the dry-visioned).

Thus,

Formations are all impermanent :

When he sees thus with understanding

And forms away from what is ill,

That is the path to purity.

(Dhammapada Verse 277).

From here one can see that concentration paves the way for insight; concentration leads to the development of absorptions (*Jhanas*), and as discussed earlier, perception forms the basis of all *Jhanas*. So perception plays an important role in paving the way for insight (*Vipassana*).

It was already mentioned that insight or *Vippasana* can be classified into two kinds, namely, insight acquired through the practice of concentration or absorptions (*Jhana-Vipassana*) and bare insight (*Sukkhavipassana*) (AN: II, 157; Upatissa: 1977, 310).

The function, method, and result, of *Samadhi* and *Vipassana* are different. Function of *Samadhi* is to tranquillize, where as function of *Vipassana* is to disperse ignorance (*Avijja*) and to penetrate. The function of *Samadhi* is to focus, or concentrate on an object without examining its characteristics of impermanence, suffering and non-self. *Vipassana* examines and scrutinizes an object so as to disperse ignorance and to penetrate into its real nature.

Samadhi is not at all concerned with examining the characteristic marks of a given object. Its sole aim is concentration of the mind on the subject of meditation so as to acquire serenity, calmness, and non-distraction of the mind. *Vipassana* aims not only at tranquility of the mind, but also at the knowledge of things as they are. This knowledge will destroy the human defilements (*Kilesa-anusasya*) and fetters (*Sanyojana*) leading the way to the attainment of final emancipation (*Arahattaship*). It therefore scrutinizes the salient characteristics of things, both conditioned and unconditioned (Narasabho : 1971, 78).

4.2 In terms of perception, concentration (*Samadhi*) and insight (*Vipassana*) also differ

Perception of the meditation subject means the strong and wilful voluntary concentration on the subject of meditation as seen through perception. By practising this type of concentration through perception, one attains mental development which forms the basis for concentration (*samadhi*) meditation or tranquility meditation. Perception leads to concentration.

Concentration obtained through perception leads to the gradual mental development up to the stage of absorption (*Jhana*). So it may be concluded that as perception forms the basis for concentration both *Samadhi* and *Jhana* mean concentration (SN: IV, 227; Naradha, 1980, 48).

Insight meditation also needs a certain amount of concentration. Concentration forms the basis for wisdom (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 2). The Buddha says “Develop Concentration: for one who has concentration understands things as they really are. He who is concentrated knows and sees according to the truth” (AN, V, 3). “Concentration, brethren, should be practised. A brother who is concentrated, brethren, knows a thing as it really is” (SN: II, 30). “A thing as it really is” means to know the rising and the falling away of the five aggregates which is the unique essence of insight (*Vipassana*). “Concentration (*samadhi*) is causally associated with the knowledge and vision of things as they really are” (SN: II, 30).

Therefore, in terms of perception, it may be concluded that perception directly gives rise to concentration (*Samadhi*) or it may be said that perception forms the basis for *Samadhi*.

As for insight, concentration forms the basis for insight but it is not absorption concentration (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 2). It may also be said that perception forms the basis for insight indirectly through concentration as it forms the basis for *samadhi*, and also directly as Insight as a process of pure perception.

As already discussed, all the various Theravada Buddhist scriptures mentioned the fact that it is only insight that can lead to Nibbana. Now the researcher has drawn the logical conclusion, that insight

is a process of pure perception and, as perception in mindfulness and insight, can lead to *Nibbana*.

4.3 Perception as *Samadhi* and E.S.P. (Extra-sensory-perceptions)

In Buddhism, perception as *Samadhi* is known as concentration and meditation developed by *Samadhi* is known as *Samatha-Bhavana* or *Samadhi-Bhavana*, (concentration development). According to the Western-world, it is known as E.S.P., which means extra-sensory perception. The western scientists accept only five senses: sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch. According to Buddhism there are six senses. In addition to these five senses, there is an extra sense, the mind. Mind is regarded as sixth sense.

E.S.P. does not support any one religion to the exclusion of all others. E.S.P. shows a belief in life after death and others and supports the validity of religious experience. The definition of extra sense is “knowledge of events or facts that is gained without recourse to the normal five senses, sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste, or when this knowledge is obtained in apparent disregard of the limitations of time and space.” (Holzer: 1966, 10).

E.S.P. is supposed to function best in times of emergency, especially when there is actual need for it. When ordinary communications fail, communication beyond the five senses is possible by E.S.P., which removes the barriers of time and space. This fact can be seen in the concentration meditation (*Samadhi-Bhavana*) of the Buddhists. The aspirant

who has achieved the last absorption (*Jhana*) of the form spheres, is supposed to gain super-intellectual power (*Abhinna*) which means super-normal accomplishments (*Iddhividdhi*) clairvoyance (*Dibbacakkhu*), clairauidience (*Dibbasota*), the super-normal knowledge of other minds (*Cetopariyanana*) and the supernormal power of recollecting the previous life (*Pubbenivasanussatinana*). Clairvoyance means one can perceive beings passing away and beings born as a result of their deeds. One is said to possess *Dibbacakkhunana* (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 409; 444; 446; 448; 451). Buddhaghosa uses *Cutupapatanana* for clairvoyance (1975, 464). The following lines can be seen to support this fact.

With his mind thus concentrated he applies and directs his mind to the knowledge of the passing away and reappearance of beings. With his divine vision (clairvoyance) purified and surpassing human sight, he sees beings passing away, and being reborn, inferior, or superior, good or bad, happy or unhappy in their destiny, according to their deeds (Kamma). (DN: I, 82).

There are many forms of E.S.P. They may be compared to the higher knowledges in Buddhism obtained through perception which leads to concentration and the development of absorptions (*Jhanas*) through concentration or tranquillity meditation. As discussed already in so far as perception forming the basis of these absorptions, it may be said that indirectly, perception forms the basis of these super-intellectual powers

(*Abhinna*) as they are accomplished after the attainment of the last absorption of the form spheres either of the four-fold or five-fold system.

The best known and the least understood form of E.S.P. is Telepathy. It is a Greek word meaning “impressions across a distance.” Another name for it is “thought transferences.” Telepathy is also defined as the communication of impressions of any kind from one mind to another, independently of the recognized channels of sense.

This may be compared to the higher knowledge of knowing others minds (*Cetopariyanana*). Practise of concentration in controlled breathing, such as mindfulness of breathings (*Anapanasati*) is very good or essential for telepathic communication.

Astral projection is also a strange form of E.S.P. It means the ability of one person to be at two places at the same time, or going places without body. These people can see through or pass through walls. They usually visit people or places that they have desired to see for sometime, either consciously or subconsciously. But sometimes they go to unfamiliar places.

From scientific point of view, astral projection is mainly a subjective experience, but there have been records where the astral traveller was actually seen, heard, or felt, by those at the other end of the trip. So there is a strange coincidence of subjective experience, with objective observation. There is an incidence of a young Japanese-American woman named Mai Yamaoka who is able to send herself off by astral projection.

She is propelled by an emotional personal need to meet her relatives whom she had not seen for so long (Hans : 1966, 55-56).

E.S.P. in the form of astral projections may be compared to the super-normal accomplishments (*Iddhividdha*). It is one of the five higher knowledges in Buddhism obtained through the tranquillity meditation (*samadhi bhavana*) after the attainment of the fourth absorption of the form spheres. It is based on perception. It is the power to perform many bodies from one and becoming one from many. These bodies can also travel to places they like.

Other forms of E.S.P. include *clairaudience*, *clairvoyance*, spiritualism, and cases of re-incarnation. *Clair audience* - is divine hearing. The arising of this divine hearing relies on the physical organ of hearing. Sounds far away, as well as sounds which are near can be heard by this divine hearing. Sounds which cannot be heard by the physical ear can be heard by divine hearing. This is one of the five forms of higher knowledge. *Spiritualism* is the belief that spirits of the dead can, under certain circumstances, send messages to living people and others.

The following case is an example of spiritualism. The incidence occurred at about 2 p.m. on July 1, 1951 to a certain Mrs. Frank Willis of Chicago. She was resting at her home on the couch waiting for her husband's return from his daily evening walk. All of a sudden she heard her husband screaming out to her "I'm dying, I'm dying". She at once know that her

husband was in some sort of danger and rushed off from her home towards the lake and found out to her horror that he had drowned (Smith: 1969, 22).

This may be compared to the divine hearing (clairaudience) which is one of the five forms of higher knowledge. It is obtained through the concentration meditation (*Samadhi Bhavana*) after the attainment of the fourth absorption of the form sphere. Since perception forms the basis of all absorption (*jhanas*), it may be said that, this divine hearing is based on perception. *Clairvoyance* also is one of the five higher knowledges in Buddhism obtained through the concentration meditation after the attainment of the fourth absorption. Here again perception forms the basis of this knowledge as perception forms the basis of all absorptions. It is also called divine sight. With this divine sight, one can see things which cannot be seen by the human eye. There are two kinds of divine sight. One kind is that which is born of Kamma. An example of this will be the ability to see whether there are jewels in a treasury or not. The other is produced by the practice of the four bases of supernormal power, the ability to see beings disappearing and reappearing according to their fate.

Spirit from Beyond the Grave.

This is a form of E.S.P. which was experienced by a travelling salesman Frank Goodwin at noon on March 15, 1876. All of a sudden he was aware that he has some one in his hotel room and was shocked to see his dead sister face to face. He was trembling and called out his sister's name. The

face disappeared Frank noticed a bright red line or a scratch on the right side of her face. He later found out from his mother that her face was scratched while they were preparing the body for burial (Smith: 1969, 13).

This may be compared to the divine eye (clairvoyance) of the five forms of higher Knowledge of Buddhism.

Re-incarnation. This is the recollection of past lives. There are cases where people can say who they were in the previous life. This may be compared to the achievement of the supernormal power of recollecting the previous life (*Pubbenivasanussatinana*). This is one of the five higher knowledge in Buddhism obtained through concentration or tranquillity meditation. Here again it may be said that perception forms the basis of this knowledge as the knowledge is obtained after the attainment of the fourth absorption (*Fourth Rupa Jhana*). As discussed already, perception forms the basis of all absorption, perception forms the basis of this knowledge of reincarnation.

From the above discussions, it is clear that E.S.P. really exists as there are evidences of real personal experiences." It is an involuntary occurrence and one does not know how or when it will occur. It especially happened in cases of emergency, when there is a real need for it, when all other types of ordinary communications fail. It removes the barriers of time and space. Its achievement depends to a great extent on the mental development born of concentration (*samadhi*). It is something which science

cannot yet explain though nowadays many schools and universities have research laboratories for E.S.P.

4.4 Comparison of Perception in some schools of Theravada Buddhist Meditation

The purpose of comparison is to find out the different methods of meditation carried out by the different meditational schools of Theravada Buddhism.

Secondly, it is to find out the role of perception in these different methods. Another reason is to investigate whether these schools stress tranquility meditation (*Samatha Bhavana*) or tranquility meditation together with insight meditation or whether the emphasis is mainly on insight meditation (dry vision vipassana). Last but not least is to find out whether the practices of these various schools leads to a process of pure perception. The researcher will first compare the different schools of meditation led by the famous great monks in Myanmar.

4.4.1 Ledi Sayadaw (1847-1924)

According to Ledi Sayadaw's method, the aspirator has to practise mindfulness (*sati*) of respiration (*anapanasati*) for the first three days. This is just to be mindful of breathing in and breathing out. The sensation produced by the inhalation and exhalation at the tip of nose is the sensory perception - of tactile sensation. The mindful noting is the mental perception

of the tactile sensation which is the sensory perception. So it is the process of mental perception based on sensory perception. This is practised to develop concentration (*samadhi*) which is necessary for the insight meditation. On the fourth day one has to concentrate and be mindfully aware of whatever sensations that may arise at an area at the middle of one's head, about the size of a thumb's nail (fontanelle). Then, the mindful consciousness of every sensation is slowly brought down from the head to the face, neck, and so on slowly, at a pace of about two inches at a time, till one's consciousness is focussed at the tip of the toes. Then from the toes the mindfulness (*sati*) of any and every sensation that may arise is gradually shifted back upwards till it reaches the head. This goes on to and fro noting with awareness of every feeling (*vedana*) that may arise. One should not keep one's attention at one spot for long. This is the insight meditation (*Vipassana*). So the method of insight meditation according to this school, is a process of mental perception based on pure perception of the various sensations that arise.

4.4.2 Sun Lunn Sayadaw (1878 - 1953)

Sun Lunn Sayadaw's method is also based on *sati* (mindfulness). The meditators have to start with mindfulness of breathing (*anapanasati*) for the first half of the meditation period which lasts for one hour at a time. For the second half, they have to be mindfully aware (*sati*) of whatever sensation that may arise. Just to be aware of it with an equanimous or neutral feeling. Mindfulness of breathing was practised for the first half of the period to

develop concentration (*samadhi*). The second half of the period is focused on *sati* (mindfulness) of whatever sensation that may arise inside the body. This is insight meditation (*vipassana*) based on concentration (*samadhi*) obtained from mindfulness (*sati*) of breathing.

His teaching was to be aware of anything of everything that we do, e.g. if one likes the taste of some food, this is the sensory perception of the gustatory sensation, one has to be mindfully aware (*sati*) of one's likeness and try to develop a neutral feeling towards it. One has to be mindful (*sati*) of one's various actions e.g. walking, eating, ploughing, working, etc.

In this school of meditation some meditation teachers make the meditators breathe heavier than normal with the belief that heavy breathing helps to promote more concentration on the breath.

4.4.3 Mahasi Sayadaw (1905-1983)⁶⁹

Mahasi Sayadaw's School of meditation is also based on mindfulness. The meditation lesson first begins with mindfulness (*sati*) of walking (*Iriyapatha*). One first become aware or mindful (*sati*) of the intention to walk. This intention brings about the actual walking which proceeds step by step. This intention is the mental element, mind (*nana*). This actual walking is the movement of the material element (*rupa*). The meditator is also aware of all the steps such as raising one's foot, thrusting it forward and then bringing it down. One's mind is totally concentrated

(*sati*) in the act of walking. If the mind wanders elsewhere, it is brought back to walking.

As the concentration becomes more and more established, the meditators came to gain enough knowledge which distinguishes material elements and properties (*Rupas*) from mental elements, mind (*nana*).

In the act of eating, the meditator has to eat with mindful awareness (*sati*) that the taste of the food (this is sensory perception -- the gustatory sensation) is only transitory, the donor of the food is not permanent (*anicca*) the receiver of the food, "I", also is not permanent. One also has to be mindful (*sati*) that there is no such thing as "I" (receiver of food) or the donor (*anatta*). This mindfulness is the mental perception based on the sensory perception received from the various sense organs.

In this method, the mindfulness of breathing (*anapanasatti*) is practised by one watching the rising and falling of the abdomen.

4.4.4 Goenka's Method

Goenka's method also stresses on mindfulness or awareness (*sati*) and equanimity towards sensation (*vedana*).

One course of meditation lasts for 10 days. For the first three days, one has to observe normal breathing mindfully, and be mindful or aware (*sati*) of inhaling and exhaling. On the fourth day the meditators have to practise insight meditation. This is done by putting full concentration on a small area on the top of one's head, the soft part of an infant's head (fontanelle), noting

all sensations that may arise with an equanimous feeling. Then one brings down the mindful (*sati*) consciousness or awareness of the sensations (*vedanā*) slowly, about two inches at a time to the face, neck, and down the whole body up to the toes, the back side, inside, outside. Then slowly, the mindful (*sati*) consciousness or awareness of the various feelings (*vedanā*) is brought up again up to the head. One should not keep one's attention at one spot for long and should not skip from one sensation to another sensation, which may be more gross or painful. One should keep equanimous mind on all types of sensations (Goenka: 1992, 22-23).

4.4.5 Critical Conclusion

It can be seen that all the above four great meditation schools of Myanmar practising Theravada Buddhist meditation are based on mindfulness. The method of approach is slightly different in each but the basic concept is the same. All of the schools stress the practise of insight meditation (*vipassanā*) based on concentration developed from mindfulness or awareness (*sati*).

The mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*) is first used as the initial step - as a means of developing concentration (*śamādhi*) before passing on to the practise of insight meditation (*vipassanā bhāvanā*). So insight meditation is based on concentration obtained from mindfulness of breathing.

So all these schools practise mindfulness of breathing as tranquil meditation just as a means of developing some amount of concentration to use as a foundation for insight meditation and then change over to insight

meditation. They do not go up to the stage of developing concentration for attaining absorption. So all of them focus only on insight meditation, *sukkha vipassana*, or bare insight.

Concentration obtained from mindfulness of breathing is used as a basis for the development of insight meditation. All four big schools of meditation practising Theravada Buddhism stress on insight meditation.

From the above discussions, it can be seen that the insight meditation practised is to be mindful (*sati*) of whatever sensation that arises inside the body with an equanimous feeling. Every sensation, whatever it may be that arises, means nothing but pure perception. So this means one must concentrate on the pure perception obtained through various sensory organs with mindfulness (*sati*) and equanimous feeling. To be mindful of the three characteristics of phenomenal existence - such as impermanence (*anicca*) suffering (*dukkha*) and non-self (*anatta*). So the methods used by all these four schools lead to pure perception, though the approach may be slightly different.

4.5 Comparison and criticism of different meditation schools of Thailand.

4.5.1 Suan Mokkh Buddhist Meditation Centre led by Buddhadasa.

According to Suan Mokkh Buddhist Meditation Centre school of meditation only mindfulness of breathing (*anapanasati*) is used throughout. Mental cultivation through concentration (*Samadhi-Bhavana*) is practised by the method of mindfulness of breathing. This same method of mindfulness of breathing is also used for insight meditation. So this school uses mindfulness of

breathing to cover both Calming Meditation or Tranquil meditation as well as Insight Meditation.

Mindfulness of breathing when fully practised leads to the fulfilment of mental-salvations by concentration and wisdom-salvation by insight. Mindfulness of breathing is to note with awareness the sensory perception obtained from inhaling and exhaling. This is the tactile sensation felt at the tip of the nose produced by the incoming and outgoing breaths. This is followed by the mental perception of noting the influence of the different breaths on the flesh body.

The full practice of the meditation by mindfulness of breathing may be done in four stages or sixteen steps. Each stage has four steps. According to Buddhadasa, mindfulness of breathing is a process of pure perception.

In the first stage, one discovers that awareness of breathing controls the body. In the second stage, one observes that feeling (*vedana*) is condition for the mind. By controlling feelings, one is able to control the mind.

The second stage of mindfulness of breathing can be developed by both methods, by the concentration method (*samadhi*) and by the wisdom method (*Panna* or *Vipassana*). The contemplation of mental activities and noting them as they occur.

The second stage starts with concentration on the different types of feelings (*vedana*) as they occur. As mentioned earlier, sensations arise as sensory perception and feeling is a mental perception based on sensory perception. This stage consists of three steps: (1) understanding the feelings themselves, (2) knowing the things that condition the feeling, (3) knowing how to control these things that condition the feelings -- this is the same as controlling the feelings themselves. These are all processes of mental perception (1988:8-12).

In the third stage (*cittanupassī*), the mind is the director and leader of life. The body is just the tool led by the mind. In this third stage of mindfulness of breathing (*Anapanasati Bhavana*) one has to learn about the mind and train the mind so that it can be liberated from the four attachments: sexuality, incorrect opinions and beliefs, superstitions and traditioned activities, and all the things to which we attach as “me” and “mine”.

Buddhadasa concluded in the third stage of mindfulness of breathing that “if, there is attachment, there is suffering. When the mind is empty of attachment, it experiences no suffering because there is no foundation for suffering . . .”

The fourth stage (*Dhammanupassati*) of *anapanasati* practice is the final stage of mindfulness of breathing. When there is no more attachment, one is liberated, one has attained “*emancipation*” or “*salvation*”.

So from practising mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*) one can fulfill the four comrades of Dhamma (doctrine) which are *satī* (mindfulness), *paññā* (wisdom), *sampajanna* (wisdom in action) and *saṁādhi* (concentration).

It should be noted that both the third and fourth stages also are processes of mental perception.

To know the mind, is to know it through its thoughts. One must observe until the *citta* is understood through all types of thought and then would be able to direct the mind as required.

The fourth stage is the study of Dhamma, nature in all its meanings. This stage studies the ultimate truth of all nature, the truth that controls life, the truth of impermanence (*aniccā*), suffering, (*Dukkha*), non-self (*Anattā*), that everything is void of selfhood (*suññāta*), of “I” and “mine” and knows the thusness and the suchness of all things (*Tathata*) (Buddhadasa: 1988, 7-16; 114-122; Cherdungnoen: 1993, 271-291).

4.5.2 Satipatthana Vipassana Meditation of Wat Mahadhatu

The pioneer meditation master of Satipatthana Vipassana Meditation of Wat Mahadhatu was the Mahasi Sayadaw or Sobhana Mahathera. This is the same Mahasi Sayadaw from Myanmar (1904-1982 AD).

As the name indicates, this school practises insight (*vipassanā*) meditation based on concentration obtained from mindfulness (*satī*). This method is *vipassanā yanika*; also known as *sukkhavipassanā* or bare insight. It doesn't go through the stages of absorption or trances (*jhānas*).

The practice of *satipatthana vipassana* meditation is of everything in general from the morning to night; it begins with the first thought and perception upon awakening, and ends with the last thought and perception when falling asleep. This general mindfulness starts with the awareness of the four postures: going, standing, sitting, and lying down. The main practice should be followed up with mindfulness of breathing in the rising and falling movements of the abdomen. The manner of breathing should be natural. According to Mahasi Sayadaw (Sobhana Mahathera), morality, concentration, and wisdom, in the mundane state cannot be freed from defilements (*Kilesa*) which will result in rebirth in lower sub-human states such as hell, animal, and ghosts. To be free from rebirths in such miserable existences, one needs to possess morality, concentration and wisdom in supramundane state or path or fruition (*magga and Phala*). To obtain supramundane wisdom, one should be capable of observing the activities of mind and matter separately, as they occur in the body. All things which possess consciousness belong to the group of mind. Mind knows the objects with its faculty of knowing. Matter means all things which lack consciousness, that do not have the faculty of knowing. Mind and matter are different things, and as such if one can be mindful of them separately in all the actions one performs, then one has developed supramundane wisdom (Cherdsungnoen: 1993, 291-313; Pru: 1998, 40-45).

As this school is led by the Mahasi Sayadaw (Sobhana Mahathera) of Myanmar, the method of meditation used in this school is the same as the method used in Myanmar.

Both of these meditation centres of Suan Mokh and Wat Mahadhatu show that insight meditation is a process of pure perception. As insight can lead to *Nibbana*, and insight being the process of pure perception, one may draw the logical conclusion that pure perception can lead to *Nibbana*.

4.5.3 Dhammakaya Meditation

The Dhammakaya school of meditation is a typical example of concentration meditation or tranquility meditation based on *perception*. It consists of two levels, the lower level and the high-level meditation.

The fact that it is based on perception, is similar to the tranquility meditation or the *Samatha Bhavana* of the Theravada Buddhism which is also based on perception and concentration obtained through perception and in which one is capable of visiting heavenly realms (Bowers: 1996, 22). But there are many differences in the ways it diverges from traditional tranquility meditation (*samatha bhavana*). For example, the supramundane body, the Dhammakaya encountered in Dhamakaya Meditation, is not subject to the three characteristics of impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*Dukkha*) and nonself (*anatta*) (Ibid).

Dhammakaya meditation is described as both tranquility and insight incorporating both types of meditation into one technique (Bowers: 1996, 29).

The basis of the low level Dhammakaya meditation system as developed by Laung Phor Sodh, is the attainment of the final level, the *ayatana-nibbana*. This is supposed to be equal to the level of “non-returner” or the Arahant of the traditional Theravada Buddhism. It is claimed that, at this place, all the arahants (one who has attained *Nibbana*) and Lord Buddha exist forever. This means that they are existing in forms which may be seen and visited during the high level Dhammakaya Meditation (Bowers: 1996, 23-24), so their existence is permanent. This is in contrast to the traditional teaching of Buddha which states that nothing is permanent and that everything is impermanent (*anicca*).

After the attainment of the highest form of low level Dhammakaya Meditation, one progresses on to the high level which stresses the performance of magical and supernatural powers (Ibid: 24). This is in great contrast to the traditional Theravada Buddhist concept. It shows desire or craving (*tanha*) and clinging (*upadan*) to these magical powers obtained by tranquility or concentration meditation through perception. It shows perception becoming an obsession (*papancasanna*).

The primary concern of this high level Dhammakaya Meditation is the battle of good over evil, the Wicha-rop. This is the battle to defeat mara, the leader of evil in the universe (Ibid). It shows volition and voluntary

active performance against another with the will to destroy the enemy. This is also against the traditional Buddhist teaching which emphasizes loving kindness and not revenge.

The superhuman powers obtained from this school of meditation are used in the elimination of various problems, most of which are medical in nature. These powers are also used in charging amulets (Bowers: 1996, 53, 89). An amulet is a thing worn as a charm against evil. This shows that the followers of this school have great desire and attachment to superhuman powers (*Abhinnya*). Dhammakaya meditation puts great importance on magical and superhuman powers. This is in contrast to the Theravada Buddhist Concept which prohibits the Buddhists to hold them with any importance or to cling on to the ability to perform them, as they will lead to desire (*tanha*). In that case, it would lead to perception becoming an obsession (*papanca*) and will be a hindrance to reaching *Nibbana*.

Another goal of Wat Dhammakaya is to make it the World's Buddhist center (Bowers: 1996, 62). This shows that the fetters (*samyojanas*) of craving or desire (*tanha*) and clinging (*upadan*) are still present. As long as they are present, it will be a hindrance towards emancipation.

This shows a clear example of perception becoming an obsession (*papancasanna*). Now this Dhammakaya School of meditation is heavily criticized and is under investigations regarding its method of teaching *Dhamma* and the alleged exploitations it makes on people in trying to attract them. This investigation is backed up by the present Crown Prince of Thailand, Prince

Maha Vajiralongkorn. It was also mentioned that the Crown Prince had “no connection with the temple whatsoever” (BKK Post: 2nd Feb. 99).

A member of the Royal Institute urged the Sangha council to investigate urgently whether the teachings of the Dhammakaya meditation school are unorthodox or not (BKK Post: 21st Jan. ‘99). One of the teachings of Wat Dhammakaya which claims that “*Nirvana* is a personal entity where the Lord Buddha and all saints dwell” was heavily criticized saying that it could jeopardise the stability and survival of Buddhism.

This issue of the Bangkok Post also mentioned that several peculiar activities of Wat Dhammakaya had led people to believe that *nirvana* could be passed on from one person to another who had attained it. The fact that the monks of Wat Dhammakaya are running businesses and asking donations from people by offering merit points was also revealed. This is in great contrast to the orthodox teaching of Theravada Buddhism which claims that one has to strive by himself to attain liberation. No one can help him. Only Buddha can guide us. According to Buddhism, we have no God in the sense of a creator or a saviour.

The fact that abbot Dhamachayo of Wat Dhammakaya had misled followers by claiming a state of existence in *nirvana* was also mentioned in the Nation newspaper of 22nd January 99. This paper mentioned an exdisciple of Wat Dhammakaya, Phra Metta Anantho revealing Dhammachayo, the meditation master of Dhammakaya. Phra Metta reported Dhammachayo’s boastings of achieving a very advanced stage of insight meditation so as to become “the source of all mundane things” implying that the state existed in the

ayatana nibhan. This fact is frowned upon by the Theravada Buddhists, though it is well accepted by Mahayana School.

Critics again pointed out that Dhammachayo's misguided discourse had encouraged his followers to become excessively attached to religious objects and making large donations. It had also mislead laymen into having false hopes for miracles to occur and to believe that they can attain salvation, just by meritorious acts. Dhammakaya's teaching of considering *Nibbana* to be a state of *atta* (self) and not *annata* (non-self) as considered by the Theravada followers was again mentioned, and whether it is appropriate to propagate Theravada Buddhism using Mahayana doctrines.

Dhammachayo's sermon about *ayatana nibhan* being in a state of *atta* (self) and as apposed to *annata* (non-self) was again criticized in the Nation of 12th February '99; an extract from a recorded sermon delivered in 1985 even went to the extent of saying "the true path to *nibhan* is through the realization of Dhammakaya".

4.5.4 Critical Conclusion.

The method used by Venerable Buddhadasa is mainly mindfulness of breathing (*anapanasati*) used for both calming meditation as well as insight meditation. He doesn't go through the state of attaining absorptions (*jhanas*) before practising insight meditation.

The method used by Wat Mahadhatu is the same as the Mahasi Sayadaw method of Myanmar since both are led by the same person. This method also stresses insight meditation based on concentration obtained

through mindfulness. This method does not go through the stages of absorptions. So both of these methods are *vipasanayanika*, *sukkhavipassana*, or bare insight.

Both of these meditation centres of Suan Mokh and Wat Mahadhatu show that insight meditation is a process of pure perception.

As insight can lead to *Nibbana*, and insight being the process of pure perception, we may draw the logical conclusion that pure perception can lead to *Nibbana*.

The school of Dhammakaya meditation is a type of tranquil meditation or calm meditation based on concentration obtained from perception. The same technique is used to cover both tranquility meditation (*samadhi bhavana*) as well as insight meditation (*vipassana bhavana*).

The aims and objects of this school put great importance, desire, and clinging to the achievements of supernatural powers. It also shows great volition followed by voluntary active attack against another (*Mara*) in the battle of wicha-rop.

All these facts show perception becoming an obsession (*papanca sanna*). This kind of perception is a great danger to the meditator as it will be a great hindrance towards the achievement of *Nibbana*. Buddha himself said to his disciples, “It is because I see danger in the practice of these psychic powers, that I loath and abhor them, and am ashamed of them” (DN: I, 213).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In preparing for this thesis about the problem of perception, the different concepts of *perception* according to various schools of thoughts have been investigated systematically. It has been shown that the concept varies even in the different schools of Buddhism, among Vaibhasikas, Sautrantikas, and Theravada.

It is very beneficial to know about perception role in the process of meditation in Theravada Buddhism. By having clear knowledge about the contribution of perception towards meditation, one can choose the type of meditation one wishes to follow and can be mindful to keep perception from becoming an obsession. This would help a lot towards one's spiritual progress. One can also impart knowledge about the perception's part in meditation and this knowledge could serve them as a guide as to what type of meditative procedure they wish to follow — whether to be a dry vision aspirant (*Sukkhā Vipassaka*) or to follow through concentration (*samadhi*) and absorptions (*jhanas*).

The facts written in this thesis have been accumulated from the knowledge obtained from some *Nikayas* and *Suttas* and also from various books written by famous authors, some of whom are venerables .

As discussed in previous chapters, perception, is found to be the direct basis of all *Jhanas* except the eighth absorption or the fourth formless

absorption (the fourth *Arupa Jhana* or *Nevasannanasannayatanna*) which are neither perception nor non-perception stages. So it is clear that perception plays a very important role in the development of concentration or tranquility meditation (*Samadhi Bhavana*) and that concentration (*Samadhi*) and insight (*Vipassana*) together pave the way to *Nibbana*. It was also found that concentration (*Samadhi*) and morality (*Sila*) together, or concentration (*samadhi*) or morality (*sila*) alone cannot lead to the final emancipation but that insight (*vipassana*) without concentration (*samadhi*) (dry vision *vipassana*) can lead to *Nirvana*. It can also be seen that wherever there is absorption (*Jhana*), there is concentration (*samadhi*), but the reverse (proximate concentration) does not hold true.

It is a great asset for us to learn about the difference between concentration (*samadhi*) and insight (*vipassana*). Concentration (*Samadhi*) aims at one-pointedness of mind (*ekkgata*) and its function is to tranquilize or to pacify the mind whereas the function of insight (*vipassana*) is to disperse, to remove, or to eradicate ignorance (*Avijja*) from the mind and to penetrate into the real nature of things. It aims not only at tranquility of the mind, but it also at the knowledge of things as they really are. This knowledge removes latent human defilements (*kilesanusayas*) and fetters (*samyojanas*) and leads to *Nibbana* (Narasabho: 1971, 404.) Therefore, we can say that perception is taken to be the direct basis for concentration (*samadhi*) and for insight (*vipassana*). It has also been shown that insight is a process of pure perception.

From the various data collected for the thesis we have learned that these two types of meditation are suitable for two kinds of personalities. *Samadhi* is convenient for those who have faith as the dominant faculty and *vipassana* is more suitable for those who have intellect as the dominant faculty, at the preliminary state of training. The method of tranquility (*Samatha-Yana*) and the method of insight (*Vipassana-Yana*) both lead to emancipation. People of passionate character use *Samadhi yana* and those of skeptical character use *Vipassana-Yana* from the very beginning (Ibid.). Both moral conduct and concentration are essential, but it is Insight that leads to emancipation, and concentration is very helpful for insight. As insight is a process of pure perception, we may conclude that contemplation with mindfulness on pure perception can also lead to emancipation directly. *Samadhi* meditation is based on perception and concentration of the forty subjects of meditation. Perception plays its role in both concentration meditation (*samadhi bhavana*) and insight meditation (*vipassana bhavana*).

As already discussed, concentration arises out of the perception of forty subjects of meditation giving rise to different degrees of concentration and the attainment of different stages of absorptions. Absorptions form the entire system of concentration meditation (*samadhi bhavana*). So perception plays a direct role on concentration meditation.

Concentration forms the basis for insight. As previously discussed, though concentration up through the stage of absorption (*jhana*) is not necessary for the development of insight, a certain amount of concentration up to the stage of proximate concentration (*upacara samadhi*) is necessary.

Since perception gives rise to concentration (*samadhi*) and *samadhi* forms the basis for insight we may conclude that perception plays its role indirectly on insight meditation as well as directly, since insight is a process of pure perception.

It has been seen that five kinds of supernormal power or higher knowledge (*Abhinna*) are the direct beneficiaries of concentration meditation. These are the ability to perform various kinds of psychical powers (*iddhi vidha*), the divine ear, knowledge of penetration into others' minds, the recollection of previous existences, the knowledge of passing away and rebirth of beings. In Pali they are known as *iddhi-vidha*, *dibbasota-nana*, *cetopariya-nana*, *pubbenivasanussati-nana*, and *cutupapata-nana*, also known as *Dibbacakkhu-nana* respectively. According to *Visuddhimagga* *Dibbacakkhu-nana* includes, another two *nanas*, called *anagatamsanana* (the knowledge of future existence) and *Yathakammu paga-nana* (Knowledge of the destiny of beings according to their Karma). *Yathakammupaga-nana* means "he sees beings passing according to their Karma." *Anagatamsa-nana* means one's own particular destiny, or the state of rebirth in the future. By including these two, the total number of *abhinna*s become seven and all are attained by *Samadhi* meditation. All are mundane. *Asavakkhaya-nana*, (the knowledge of destroying

the *Asavas*) generally known as the sixth, now becomes the eighth *Abhinna*, and can be obtained only with the help of insight (*Vipassana*) meditation. This knowledge is supermundane (Buddhaghosa: 1975, 409-471).

It should be noted that E.S.P., like astral projections, knowledge of reincarnation, and telepathy are all attained by concentration meditation.

As long as one remains in the round of rebirths (*samsara*) one will be facing the three characteristics of existence (*Lakhanas*) of non-permanence (*Anicca*), suffering (*Dukkha*) and non-self (*Anatta*), and there will be suffering. To be free from suffering, one must attain emancipation either by insight with concentration meditation or by insight meditation alone through the process of pure perception as it has logically been concluded that insight is the process of pure perception.

When one attains absorptions (*Jhanas*) and psychic powers, it is very likely that one may become attached to them and be happy to remain in the various absorptions. It is of great importance for one to be mindful not to become attached to them as it will lead to hindrance of spiritual progress. The benefits of these miraculous powers are only for bestowing happiness and advantage upon others. Buddha performed two thousand-five hundred miracles (*Patihariya*) at Gayasisa to convince the three brother ascetics who at first did not believe in his *Buddhahood* (Vin: I, 34). Buddha performed the “Twin-Miracle” (*yamaka-*

Patihariya) in *Savatthi* in order to refute the argument of the six famous teachers including Nigantha Nataputta (Dhp: A,199-230).

But for the ordinary disciples who are not yet free from defilements, the miraculous powers may prove dangerous. These powers have no spiritual value. They have no value in themselves for progress on the Path. So attachment to them could be a hindrance to further attainment in religious life. The psychic powers of one who has not yet attained the Path is not only regarded as inferior, but also as impediments to be avoided (DN: III, 112; AN: I, 93; Vin: II, 183).

Buddha himself told his disciples about the danger of these powers as follows: “It is because I see danger in the practice of these psychic powers that I loath and abhor them and am ashamed of them” (DN: I, 213). According to the Vinaya, performance of psychic powers before the laity is an offence (Vin: II, 112). A false claim to the owning of such powers would involve expulsion from the order (Vin: III, 91).

In Buddhism both learning (*Pariyatti*) and practice (*Patipatti*) should be supported. They depend on each other. One should also be mindful that the practice of insight or pure perception is the only way to *Nibbana*. It is said that a person who teaches without practising *Dhamma* is like an employee who looks after the cattle and return them to the owner (employer) without enjoying the products. He does not know the real taste of the *Dhamma*. It is the owner

(employer) who enjoys the rich products of the cattle. The owner is symbolic of the person practising Dhamma (*Paripatti*).

Last, but not the least, the thesis writer would like to say that one should strive for one's best to end the round of rebirths (*samsara*) and to achieve the final liberation. In so striving, one should be mindful not to be obsessed with the fine and pleasant absorptions (*Jhanas*), and psychic powers as they will hinder spiritual progress.

According to Buddhism, there is no God in the sense that God is a creator or protector. All Buddhists have to strive for themselves to gain emancipation. The researcher would like to express this point with the following lines.

No one saves us, but ourselves,

No one may, and no one can.

We ourselves must tread the Path,

Buddha merely shows the way.

May all beings be happy and may they reach *Nibbana* in as short a time as possible, and as easily as one possibly can.

Suggestions for further research.

1. Further research should be carried out about other schools of Theravada Buddhist meditation to see whether their method leads to pure perception of insight meditation or whether they stress on tranquility meditation leading to absorptions (*jhanas*).
2. Research should be carried out if and any when meditation masters are misleading their ignorant followers by impressing them with performances of superhuman powers. This will mislead and lure them away from the authentic teachings of Buddha. If they are found to be doing so, the board of sanghas should be informed to take proper action against them.
3. Further research should be carried out about the Dhammakaya School of meditation and solutions should be sought in a constructive manner.

REFERENCES

A. Primary Sources

Anguttara Nikaya, Vol. I, edited by the Rev. Richard Morris, London, 1885.

Anguttara Nikaya, Vol. II, edited by the Rev. Richard Morris, London, 1888.

Anguttara Nikaya, Vol. III, edited by E. Hardy, London, 1899.

Anguttara Nikaya, Vol. IV, edited by E. Hardy, London, 1899.

Anguttara Nikaya, Vol. V, edited by E. Hardy, London, 1900.

Dhammapada, edited by Suriyagoda Sumangala Thera, 1914.

Dhammapada, atthakatha, ed. H.C. Norman, 4 vols, 1914.

Dhamma, Sangani, ed. by Edward Muller, London, 1885.

Dhamma, Sangani Atthakatha, ed. by Edward Muller, London, 1987.

Dialogues of the Buddha, a translation of Digha Nikaya in 3 vols. by T.W. Rhys

Dauids, London, Vol. I, 1899, Vol. II, 1910, Vol. III, 1921.

Digha Nikaya, Vol, I, ed. by T.W. Rhys Davids and J. Estline Carpenter,
London, 1932.

Digha Nikaya, Vol, II, ed. by T.W. Rhys Davids and J. Estline Carpenter,
Ceylon, 1947.

Digha Nikaya, Vol, III, ed. by J. Estline Carpenter, London, 1947.

Gradual Sayings - Translation of Anguttara Nikaya by F.L. Woodward, London.

Kindred Sayings, a translation of Samyutta-Nikaya in 5 vols., by Mrs. Rhys
Dauids, Sumagala Thera, and F.L. Woodward, 1998-1990.

Mahavagga, ed. by M. Leon Feer, London, 1884-1904.

Majjhima Nikaya, Vol. 1, edited by Trenchkner, London, 1888.

Majjhima Nikaya, Vol. II, edited by Robert Chalmers, London, 1951.

Majjhima Nikaya, Vol. III, edited by Robert Chalmers, London, 1951.

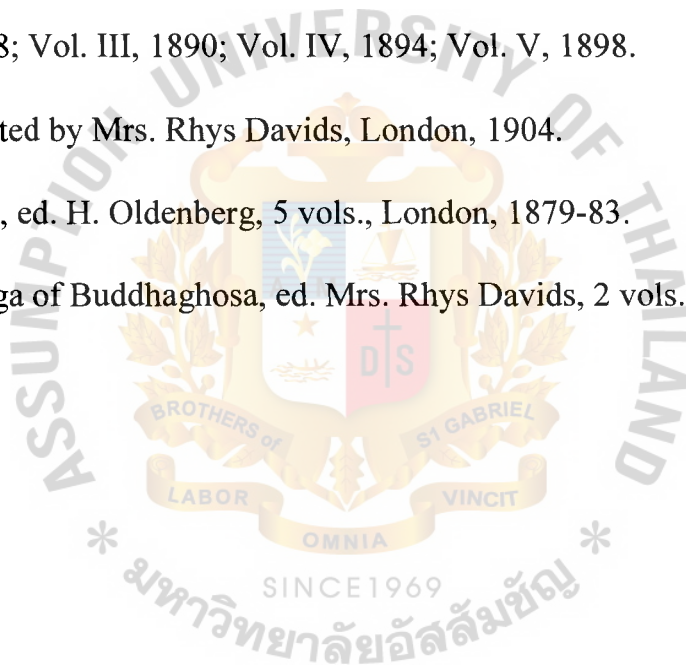
Patisambhida Magga, Vol. I, II, edited by Arnold C. Taylor, London, 1979.

Samyutta-Nikaya, in 5 vols: edited by M. Leon Feer, London. Vol. 1, 1884; Vol. II, 1888; Vol. III, 1890; Vol. IV, 1894; Vol. V, 1898.

Vibhanga, edited by Mrs. Rhys Davids, London, 1904.

Vinaya Pitaka, ed. H. Oldenberg, 5 vols., London, 1879-83.

Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosa, ed. Mrs. Rhys Davids, 2 vols., 1920-21.



B. Secondary Sources

Buddhaghosa, Bhadantacariya. *The Path of Purification*. Kandy, Srilanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1975.

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu. *Handbook For Mankind*. Bangkok, Thailand: Mahachula Buddhist University Press.

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu. *Anapanasati, Mindfulness With Breathing*. Bangkok, Thailand. Dhamma Sheddy-Practice Group Publication, 1988.

Bowers, Jeffrey, *Dhammakaya Meditation In Thai Society*. Bangkok, Thailand: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1996.

Chandkaew, Chinda, *Nibbana: 4th Edition*, Bangkok, Thailand: Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University, 1979.

Cherdsungnoen, Narong, Phramaha. *A Study of Sati (Mindfulness) In Buddhism: Theory And Practice In Thai Tradition*. Delhi: University of Delhi, 1993.

Goenka, S.N. *The Discourse Summaries*. India: Vipashyana Vishohan Vinyuas, 1992.

Gunaratana, Henepola. *The Path of Serenity and Insight*, Delhi, Patna, Madras: Motilal Banarsidass, 1985.

Holzer, Hans. *ESP and You*. New York, Ace Books INC, 1966.

Jayatilleke, K. N. *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980.

Johansson, Rune E.A. *The psychology of Nirvana*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd. 1969.

Kalupahana, David, J. Budhist Philosophy, A Historical Analysis. Honolulu, Hawaii: The University Press of Hawaii, 1933.

Khantipalo Bhikkhu. A criterion of True Religion. Lord Buddha's Discourse to the Kalama People. Bangkok, Thailand: Mahamakut Rajavidyalaya Press, 1986.

Khemananda, Hegoda, Ven. Logic and Epistemology In Theravada. Colombo, Srilanka: Karunaratne & Sons Ltd., 1993.

Maitilal, Bimal Krishna. Perception. New York, U.S.: Charendon Press, Oxford, 1986.

Nanananda Bhikkhu. Concept And Reality In Early Buddhist Thought. Kandy, Srilanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1971.

Nanarama, Matara Sri, Mahathera, Venerable. The Seven Stages of Purification and The Insight Knowledges. Kandy, Srilanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1983.

Narada, Maha Thera. A Manual of Abhidhamma. Kandy, Srilanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1980.

Narasabho, Phra Maha Singhathon. A Guide to a Happy Life, Bangkok, Thailand: Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University, 1971.

Nimanong, Veerachart Phramaha. A Study of the Theravada Buddhist Concepts of Man and Karma. Madras: Radhakrishnan Institute for advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, 1991.

- Nyanaponika, Thera. Contemplation of Feeling The Wheel Publication - Vol.: XVI. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1983.
- Nyanasatta, Thera. The Foundations of Mindfulness. The Wheel Publication-Vol.: 2. Kandy, Sri Lanka. Buddhist Publication Society, 1982.
- Payutto, Prayudh Phra. Buddhadhamma. Natural Laws and Values for Life. New York, U.S.A.: State University of New York Press, 1995.
- Pruden, Leo, M. A Translation of Abhidharmakosabhasyam, Vol. I. Berkeley, California: Asian Humanities Press, 1991.
- Pru, Sein Nu - The Concept of Mindfulness (sati) in the Meditation School of Goenka: An Analytical and Critical Study. Assumption University of Thailand, 1998.
- Russel's Bertrand. Philosophy of Sense Data. Madras, Ramakrishna mission, Vivekaananda College, 1984.
- Sarma, Rakesranjan. The Buddhist Theory of Perception: Philosophical Quarterly: Vol. V, No. 3. Dacca: Dacca University, 1929.
- Singh, Amar. The Heart of Buddhist Philosophy. Dinnaga and Dharmakirti. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1984.
- Singh, Santokh. Consciousness as Ultimate Principle, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1985.
- Sinha, Jadunath. Indian Realism, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1972.
- Smith, Warren. Strange ESP. New York: Popular Library, 1969.

Story, Francis. *Gods and the Universe. The Wheel Publication, Vol.: IX.*

Kandy, Srilanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1971.

Thera, Narada. *A Manual of Abhidhamma.* Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1980.

Upatissa, Arahant. *The Path of Freedom.* Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1977.



Appendix

The fact that according to Theravada Buddhism absorptions or trances (*jhanas*) are obtained from concentration is clearly written in Potthapada Sutta (DN: II).

There was much dispute about trance¹ and the question of how cessation of consciousness was brought about was discussed (DN: II, 180; Dialogue II, 246). There were many different theories. According to some, a man came to have Ideas without any reason or cause, and that these Ideas pass away in the same way, without any reason. When Ideas came in, he is conscious and when they pass away, he is unconscious. Some others say that Consciousness is a man's soul. When the soul comes into the man he is conscious and when the soul goes out of him he is unconscious. Another party said that the consciousness was infused into the man by certain Samaras and Brahmins, and as a result he became conscious. When they drew it out of him he became unconscious. So Potthapada approached the Buddha to give the final solution about how trance is brought about² and about how cessation of consciousness occurs?

Buddha replied that all those theories are wrong. That there is a definite reason and a cause for ideas to come and go. It is by training that some ideas arise and some pass away (DN: II, 181; Dialogue: II, 247).

¹ *Abhisanna-nirodha*, 'the cessation of consciousness'.

² *Sanna-nirodhassa pakatannu*. So Buddhaghosa compare Vin: II, 199.

Upon request by Potthapada, the Buddha explained about the first part of the system of self training for the Bhikkhus. Buddha mentioned that after conquering the five hindrances (*Nivarana*), the monk came to possess gladness and joy (DN: II, 182; Dialogue: II, 247). Estranged from lusts and aloof from evil dispositions, he enters the First *Jhana*. He has joy and ease born of detachment, and reasoning and investigation goes on the while. Then that idea, (that consciousness)³ of lusts, that he had before, passed away, but the actual consciousness of joy and peace resulting from detachment, arises. So, it is through training that one idea, one sort of consciousness arises, and another passed away.

In the same way, through training, the second absorption (*jhana*) arises. The joy and peace resulting from detachment that he just had, passed away, and the actual consciousness of joy and peace, born of the serenity of concentration arises. So again, it is through training that one idea, one sort of consciousness arises and another passed away (DN: II, 183; Dialogue: II, 248).

In the same way, the third absorption arises. Now the Bhikkhu becomes aloof from joy, and being mindful and self-possessed, becomes equable. Joy and peace born of concentration passed away, and consciousness of the bliss of equanimity arises.

³ *Sanna* which is used in a sense covering both 'idea' and 'consciousness'. *Ekasanna* is therefore rendered below, in the refrain, 'one idea, one sort of consciousness.'

In the same way, he attained the fourth absorption which gets rid of the bliss of equanimity and the consciousness of absence of pain and absence of ease arises.⁴

The same kind of training goes on for the absorptions of the formless spheres (*Arupa Jhanas*) (DN: II, 184; Dialogue II: 250). Buddha also mentioned that, the state of consciousness arises first, and after that knowledge. Knowledge is dependent on the state of consciousness. *Nana* depends on *sanna* (Dialogue: II, 252). This means knowledge or wisdom depends on concentration obtained from perception.

⁴ *Sukkhā and dukkhā*. Welfare and illfare, well-being and ill-being, ease and disease, uneasiness, discomfort.

Autobiography

Khin May Thi is from Myanmar. She attended Methodist English High School which is a missionary school at Yangon from which she passed her high school . She obtained her medical degree from the Rangoon University-Medical College in 1965. In the year 1978, she obtained a full registration with the General Medical Council London, as a registered medical practitioner. She had served the Myanmar government for twenty two years, during which time, she received two Medals issued by the government. One is Medal for Rule of Law and Order and the other is Medal for Public Service, given on the fourth of January 1984. Fourth of January is Myanmar's Independence day. At present, she has been working as a full time lecturer at Assumption University since 1993 teaching Environmental Science and has attended the course of M.A. in Philosophy, Religious studies, as a scholarship student of the university.

