

Analysis of Jhāna and Samādhi with reference to the Samaṇamuṇḍika sutta and the Saṅgaṇikārāma sutta

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Introduction

The Samaṇamuṇḍika sutta of Majjhima Nikāya expresses that in the first *jhāna*, the unwholesome intentions (*akusala-saṅkappa*) cease without residue. The commentary affirms that this refers to the first *jhāna* pertaining to the fruit of non-returning. The path of non-returning eradicates sensual desire and ill will, and thus prevents any future arising of the three unwholesome intentions: sensual desire, ill will, and cruelty. Then it also mentions that wholesome attention (*kusala-saṅkappa*) cease without residue in the second *jhāna* and the commentary explains that this *jhāna* refers to the fruit of Arahantship. In the Saṅgaṇikārāma sutta, its commentary comments that in this context, *samādhi* refers to the path and fruit concentrations.

Samādhi means the unification of the mind on its object (*citteggakatā*). It is sometime referred to one pointedness (*ekaggatā*) which is prominent and developed into a factor of *jhāna*. However, in some contexts in early Nikāya, *samādhi* indicates to the state of mind that contemplated in *jhāna*. This *samādhi* can be categorized into two types as mundane (*lokīya*) and supramundane (*lokuttara*) concentration (*samādhi*).

Research Objective

To understand clearly in the Buddhist soteriology to the nature of *lokuttara-jhāna* state that differs from the nature of *lokiya-jhāna* state. And to know how these two *jhāna* plays in important role differently in the Buddhist path to awakening.

Research Methodology

The study based on the critical analysis of the nature of *lokuttara-Jhāna* in relation to *samādhi* that refers to *lokuttara* that occurs in early Nikāyas and Abhidhamma.

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Research Problem

What kinds of *jhāna* and *samādhi* are referred in the Samaṇamuṇḍika sutta and the Saṅgaṇikārāma sutta?

Research Literature Review

Bhikkhu Brahmāli in his article “*Jhāna and Lokuttara-jjhāna*” argues that the above-mentioned commentary interpretation of *Samādhi* in the Samaṇamuṇḍika sutta, and the Saṅgaṇikārāma sutta is misleading to the Buddhist soteriological path by means of adding to the later developed concept of path consciousness (*magga*), which occurs one moment and fruit (*phala*) which occurs at least two or three moment consciousness into the Sutta nature. In these sutta, the commentarial teacher, Ven Buddhaghosa interpreted the *samādhi* as *magga samādhi* and *phala samādhi* by analysis of the nature of the usage term of *samādhi* that occurs in these suttas.

Research Framework

Whether the commentary interpretation is right or not? To explore to this question, it will focus on the Samaṇamuṇḍika sutta and the Saṅgaṇikārāma sutta and their commentaries to understand the mundane and supramundane *jhāna* in Buddhist spiritual path.

Research Discussion

The Samaṇamuṇḍika sutta expresses the dialogue between the Buddha and Pañcakaṅgo carpenter with regard to *sampannakusalaṃ paramakusalaṃ uttamapattipattaṃ samaṇaṃ ayojjhaṃ*. A person who possesses ten qualities can be designated as accomplished in what is wholesome, perfected in what is wholesome, an ascetic invincible attained to the supreme attainment. This person refers to the Arahant. Therefore, the commentary interprets the two *jhāna* mentioned in this suttas as the fruit of non-returning and the fruit of Arahantship. Bhikkhu Brahmāli argue that this interpretation misleads the early suttas concept of liberation. According to his opinion, these two *jhānas* indicates to the material *jhāna* that means *lokīya jhāna*, that according to commentary, it refers to supramundane *jhāna* (*lokuttara*). The *Jhāna* sutta of Aṅguttara Nikāya mentions that depending on the material and immaterial *jhāna* (*rupa-arupa-jhāna*), the cankers (*āsava*) can be destroyed. However, it does not mean that these *jhāna* directly terminate the cankers without remainder. In the Ariyāpariyesana sutta, the Buddha informs us that though he and both of his former teachers, Āḷāra and Udaka possessed concentration (*samādhi*) based on the mundane *jhāna*, it does not support the attainment of Nibbāna (*Lokuttara*).

The Mahācattārīsaka sutta also indicates that the arahant is perfect with these ten noble factors in supramundane level. Thus, based on these two evident suttas, what it can be said is that the *lokuttara kusala jhāna* concept is much developed related to meditative practice in the early Buddhism, and it is more developed in Abhidhamma Piṭaka with the classification of supramundane citta into *kusala (magga)* and *vipāka (phala)*. In addition, to more understand the nature of supramundane *jhāna*, the commentary of the Paṭisambhidhāmagga says that the mundane absorption of first *Jhāna* and so on is called *jhāna* in the sense of closely contemplating on the object of earth meditation etc., in the sense of closely contemplating the nature and general characteristic of the conditions of insight meditation; and the supramundane consciousness is called *jhāna* in the sense of closely contemplating on the real characteristic of Nibbāna.

As far as we have noticed to the early Nikāyas, these two are the evident suttas that refers to the *lokuttara jhāna* state directly with the eradication of unwholesome attentions (*akusalasaṅkappa*). Although the sutta refers to first and second *jhāna*, it does not mean to mundane *jhāna* for the reason that mundane *jhāna* does not eradicate to the unwholesome attentions totally without remainder. Hence, according to this sutta, we have to notice the Pāli phrase “*akusala saṅkappā/kusala-saṅkappā aprisesā nirojjhanti*” that it means that totally ceased without remainder. Therefore, the commentary interprets rightly the two *jhāna* states as *lokuttara jhāna*, i.e., the first *jhāna* to fruit of non-returning and the second to fruit of Arahantship.

In the *Saṅgaṇikārāma* sutta, it is said that with the fulfilment of right concentration (*sammā-samādhi*), one will abandon the fetters (*saṃyojanā*) and attain Nibbāna. Here also, Ven. Buddhaghosa says that *Samādhi* in this context denotes the path and fruit consciousness. This interpretation also has been argued by Bhikkhu Brahmāli by arguing that this also a misunderstanding of the sutta. In this context, what he wishes to refer to is only the mundane *jhāna* and *samādhi*.

Nevertheless, the fivefold knowledge of right concentration (*Samādhi*) are mentioned in the Saṅgīti sutta. The Nettipakaraṇa differentiate these five types of concentration as the first one is tranquility (*samatha*) and the last four are insight (*vipassana*) referring to *lokuttara samādhi*.

However, the commentary of Dīgha Nikāya describes that all *samādhi* refers to the Arahantship *samādhi* (*phalasangāpatti*).

Additionally, the Mahācattārīsaka sutta indicates that the unification of mind equipped with the seven factors is called noble right concentration with its supports and its requisites. In addition, the noble right concentration is pertaining to the path consciousness. Thus, according to our understanding, it can be available both mundane and supramundane *samādhi* for the reason that both types of concentration related to right view (*sammā-samādhi*) can indirectly and directly abandon respectively the fetters. Moreover, the path (*magga*) and fruit (*phala*), fruit absorption (*phalasangāpatti*) concepts are criteria for the Buddhist teaching as to the totally eliminating of greed, hatred and delusion gradually and abiding in later as the absorption in the fruit. If it is neglected this concept, the Buddha teaching will be in the same line as mundane *jhāna* concept.

Research Conclusion

Therefore, it can be concluded that the mundane and supramundane *jhāna* perform the pragmatic value in meditative technique in early Nikāyas and Abhidhamma for contemplating of *magga*, *phala*, *phalasangāpatti*, and *saññāvedayitanirodha* for the noble persons. The analysis of mental quality with regard to morality, concentration and wisdom is mentioned in early suttas. Therefore, it can be said that *Jhāna* and *Samādhi* mentioned in these suttas indicate to mundane and supramundane *jhāna* that support to the spiritual progress in the Buddhist soteriology.

Keywords: Samañamañḍika, Jhāna, Samādhi, Nikāyas, Abhidamma