

Abstract

The primary objective of this study is to undertake a critical analysis of the notion of *Nirvāṇa* as found in early Buddhist thought and the latter schools of thought represented by *Mādhyamika* and *Yogācāra*. The study has undertaken in-depth readings of the Pali Sutta Pitaka to locate the ideas of Early Buddhist thinkers; and for *Mādhyamika* assertions, the study relied on the readings of the *Śālisthamba Sūtra*, *Sadharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra*, *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra* along with Ven Nāgarjuna's *sūtra* composed for the *Mūlamadhymakakārikāvatāra*, namely *Prajñāpradīpa*, *Akutobhaya*, *Buddhapālitaṅgīti*, *Prasannapadāṭīkā*; and the *sūtras* found in the *Bodhisatta Caraṇaya*, namely, *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, *Madhyamakāvatāra*. For the *Yogācāra* school, the study reread the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, *Daśabhūmika Sūtra*, *Mahāyāna Sūtrālaṅkāra*, *Abhidharma Samuccaya*, *Vijñāptimātratāsiddhi*, (*Viśatikā* and *Thiśatikā Kārikā*) and *Madhyantavibhāgaśāstra*.

The first chapter of the study introduces a comprehensive survey of Early Buddhism on the following aspects, namely: the idea of *Nirvāṇa*, *Prathītyasamutpāda*, the four noble truths, *Nirvāṇa Pratipadā*, *Viññāna Samudaya* and *Nirodha*, *Karma Vighra*, whether *Nirvāṇa* is a state of being or non-being, Early Buddhist thinking on the philosophical debate, early Buddhist assertion on the existence or non-existence of the *Tatāgata* after *parinirvāṇa*, *Suññatāva*, *Samsāra-Nirvāṇa* concept as well as the Early Buddhist idea of *Nirvāṇa* as a totally liberated state. The next chapter will introduce the *Mādhyamika Gurukulaya*, *Mādhyamika Nirvāṇa Vighrahaya*, *Prathītyasamutpādaya*, the Four Noble Truths, *Bodhisatva Pratipadāva*, *Viññāna Samudaya* and *Nirodhaya*, *Karma Vighrahaya*, whether *Nirvāṇa* is a state of being or non-being, *Mādhyamika* ideas on philosophical debate, *Mādhyamika* ideas on the existence or non-existence of the *Tatāgata* after *parinirvāṇa*, *Śūnyatāva*, *Samsāra-Nirvāṇa* concept and the idea of the state of *Sammā Sambuddha*. The third chapter will focus on introducing the *Yogācāra Gurukulaya*, *Yogācāra Nirvāṇa Vighrahaya*, *Prathītyasamutpādaya*, the Four Noble Truths, *Bodhisatva Pratipadāva*, *Viññāna Samudaya* and *Nirodhaya*, *Karma Vighrahaya*, whether *Nirvāṇa* is a state of being or non-being, *Mādhyamika* ideas on philosophical debate, *Mādhyamika* ideas on the existence or non-existence of the *Tatāgata* after *Parinirvāṇa*, *Śūnyatāva*, *Samsāra-Nirvāṇa* concept and the idea of the on the existence or non-existence of the *Tatāgata* after *Parinirvāṇa*. In the fourth chapter, the study focuses on the similarities of the three schools, Early Buddhism, *Mādhyamika* and *Yogācāra* schools of thought on the notion of *Nirvāṇa*. The conclusion states that though the representation of *Nirvāṇa* in the three schools of thought have their differences and similarities when it comes to *Dukkhanirodha* philosophy, both *Mādhyamika* and *Yogācāra* schools show reconciliation of thoughts and ideas.

Key words: *Nirvāṇa*, *Pratītyasamutpādaya*, *Arahatvaya*, *Ālayaviññānaya*, *Śūnyatāva*