

The 3rd International Association of Buddhist Universities (IABU)

Conference

6th to 8th May 2017 in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU),
Ayutthaya at United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC), Bangkok, Thailand

Abstract

Dr. Talat Praveen
Assistant Professor
Department of Pali
Savitribai Phule Pune University Pune

Title: Mindfulness meditation: The ancient Buddhist theory and modern applications

“*parimukham satim upaṭṭhāpetum*”¹ (to surround oneself with watchfulness of mind)²

Etymologically, Pāli word ‘*sati*’ derives from ‘*smṛti*’ in Sanskrit, means memory, but it was given new implications in the Pali literature, and thus the rendering of ‘*sati*’ as memory is insufficient in most contexts. As pointed out by T.W. and C.A.F. Rhys Davids, ‘*sati*’ has been translated by different people in different ways, such as *conscience, attention, meditation, contemplation, insight*. The word ‘*sati*’, usually translated as “*mindfulness*,” in early Buddhism, and examines its soteriological functions and its central role in the Buddhist practice of meditation and Psychology.

Mindfulness (*sati*) is a function or quality of mind, but it is often described as something to be practiced or cultivated. The mindfulness (*sati*) is one component of the *ariya aṭṭhangika magga, satipattāna, pañca indriya, pañca bala, satta bojjhaṅga, Bodhipakkhiyadhamma*, etc., that leads to the final religious goal of liberation.

The paper will illustrate how mindfulness and mindfulness meditation functions in the path to liberation from a psychological perspective and how it helps to achieve ultimate religious goal.

The main concern of this paper will be the relationship between ‘*sati*’ and two main categories of Buddhist meditation *samatha* and *vipassanā*.

The Buddhist meditation technique is non-sectarian, its aims to remove totally of the mental impurities (*āsavas*) and complete healing from human suffering. The resultant of Buddhist meditation is to achieve the highest happiness of full liberation from the bondages of cyclic or empirical existence.

The paper will be focused the Theravada principle underlying the practice of mindfulness meditation. This involves interaction between the mind and its objects. It will be also discussed the various types and function of mindfulness in terms of such interaction in different states of mind ranging from normal consciousness to several kinds of meditation.

It also equips new applications on the ancient teaching or technique by applying the Buddhist masters, which is based on Theravada ideas. The paper will mainly analyse and compare with the two Buddhist meditation masters, Mahāsi Sayādaw and Thich Nath Hanh modern applications and Theravada theory of the meditation. The practice of mindfulness is zealously advocated by the Theravāda tradition for *vipassanā* meditation. The paper will be analysed that mindfulness is not only limited to the role as a method of insight (*vipassanā*) meditation, but it also has a key role in serenity (*samatha*) meditation.

The methodology of this research paper is mainly focused on the Pāli Canon as well as commentaries, sub-commentaries of the Pali literature (the *suttas* of the Pāli literature i.e. *ānāpānasati sutta, satipaṭṭhāna sutta*, Pali text *Visuddhimagga, Milindapañha*, and Pali Commentary etc) text of the above mentioned Buddhist meditation masters and other secondary sources.

Key words: Sati, Samatha, Vipassana, Mindfulness meditation,

¹ Majjhimanikaya iii.89 PTS

² Pali-English Dictionary, T. W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, PTS. 1921-1925.