Introduction

The origin of Buddhism can be traced back to the day when Prince Siddhattha, after being deeply affected by the sights of old age, sickness and death, renounced worldly pleasures in search of emancipation from the miseries of life. He roamed the forest following austere practices for six years, but did not find what he sought for. Finally, on reflecting upon himself, he discovered the process of arising and ceasing in all things. This Insight brought him to realize that the entire system of arising and cessation was linked to all suffering in beings and the path to the cessation of suffering. In other words, he discovered The four Noble truths. From this moment of Enlightenment, he was known as the Buddha, meaning ‘The Enlightened One’.

After becoming the Buddha, he preached and guided innumerable beings for forty-five years and his teaching is known as the Dhamma. The Dhamma is divided into three categories, known as Tipitaka, the three baskets. The aim of the Buddha’s teachings is for all beings to be free from mental and physical sufferings and to attain the highest degree of peace. His unique way was meditation which means to investigate in detail one’s own mind and body to arrive at Insight and to see and know the true state of things, which are in the process of arising and ceasing from day to day, moment to moment. Meditation is not a practice belonging to any religion but which can be practised by anyone of any religion who wishes to attain inner peace and happiness. However, the ultimate goal that can be achieved by Vipassanā meditation is Nibbāna, the human perfection.
Here, I would like to explain about the human imperfection in brief. *Dukkha* means suffering such as physical pain and mental sorrow or grief. However in reality, it encompasses dissatisfaction, discontent, anger and unease etc. When pleasures and joy cease, or when one’s loved one departs, *Dukkha* in the form of sadness, disappointment, anger and displeasure prevails. Hence worldly pleasures and joy is not the ultimate goal to emancipation.

*Dukkha* is the consequence of human imperfections. In the *Pali* language, human imperfections are known as *Kilesa*, the defilements of the mind. It comes in three kinds, namely greed (*Lobha*), hatred (*Dosa*) and delusion (*Moha*). The characteristic of *Lobha* is the tendency of the mind to cling to an object. Its various aspects are greed, lust, craving, attachment, and covetousness. They are common characteristics of all men and women of whichever religion. The characteristic of *Dosa* is the tendency of the mind to repel an object. Hatred, anger, ill-will, jealousy are all aspects of *Dosa*. *Moha* means delusion or ignorance. We are deceived by our own false perceptions of the world around us. The mind is extremely rapid, subtle and difficult to perceive. It pursues objects according to one’s own likes and dislikes and rarely sees things objectively. As long as one fails to remove these three defilements, one is hindered from seeing things as they really are and emancipation from suffering is impossible.
Aim of present research

The aim of the present research is to elucidate the Buddhist concept of Nibbāna, the absolute liberation from misery of life. It also points out that the various methods of meditation in Theravāda Buddhism currently practised today, are in one form or the other of the four foundations of mindfulness taught by the Buddha in the Satipatthāna Sutta, in controlling the mind to get inner peace and happiness. At its highest level, mindfulness meditation will lead one to experience the cessation of the mental and physical phenomena. According to Buddhism, life is nothing but a state of constantly changing process of mental and physical phenomena, which is perceived as Suffering. Therefore cessation of these phenomena means freedom from suffering.

Mindfulness meditation is the one and only way to attain Nibbāna, the Buddhist’s final goal. (Ekāyano ayam bhikkhave maggo).¹ The Buddha taught in the Ānāpānassati Sutta, ‘O bhikkhus, I never teach the practice of breathing in and breathing out to him who is devoid of mindfulness’ (Nāhaṃ bhikhave mutṭṭhassatissa ānāpānassati vadāmi).² Mindfulness is so important that the Buddha taught mindfulness is the begging by way of middle path, in the middle by way.³ He also said in the Dhammapada ‘there is no death for the mindful, and the unmindful is like the dead.’ (Appamādo amatam padam maccuno padam).⁴ When mindfulness has arisen, one keeps check of things salutary or unsalutary, blameless or blameworthy, excellent or inferior, and contrasts of dark and

¹ D.N.vol.2.p-230
² S.N.vol.3.p-368
³ S.N.vol.3.p-368
⁴ Dhp.verse.21
bright; and one comes to know ‘these are Four foundations of mindfulness, these are the Four right efforts, the Four roads of spiritual success, the Five mental faculties and powers, the Seven factors of enlightenment, and this is the Noble Eightfold Path’. Knowing this, one practises what ought to be practised, adopts what ought to be adopted, and does not adopt what ought not to be adopted. Mindfulness is like the advisor to the king who reminds what things are beneficial, and unbeneﬁcial, helpful and unhelpful (Yathā maharaja...ime rañño hita, ime ahiṭa, evanevakho...sati upajjamānā hitaḥiṭānaṁ dhammānaṁ samani veseti).

Thus if one has mindfulness, he can remove unbeneﬁcial things and take hold of the beneﬁcial.

Mindfulness meditation is a simple and scientific way of practice, logical, applicable and useful to everyone. The technique offers equal beneﬁts to all who practise it without discrimination of race, class, sex, color or faith. So, if one follows the methods mentioned in the Satipatthāna Sutta, one is sure to be free from suffering and can realize Nibbāna, the supreme blissful state (Yohi koci bhikkhave ime cattāro satipaṭṭhānā...upādi sese anāgāmita).

The method of research is based on the various types of contemplations. They are, contemplation on the body, contemplation on the feeling, contemplation on the mind, and contemplation on the mental objects in accordance with the Buddha’s teaching in the Satipatthāna Sutta. As primary sources, I have deducted from the main Buddhist Pāli Canon (The Suttas), their commentaries (The Āṭṭhakathās), sub-commentaries (The Tikās) and as secondary sources, from various books

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5 Mil.p-36
6 D.N.vol.2.p-238. and M.N.vol.1.p-76
by leading authors on meditation practices in *Theravāda* Buddhism, as well as my own practical experiences throughout my life. It is my hope that my project will offer a way of mind development, which will pave the way to basic happiness and further to the highest peaceful bliss.

This research is confined under the following chapters;

Chapter one: The nature of *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna sutta*

The chapter one deals with general aspects of *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta*. It aims at explaining the terminology in relation to *Satipaṭṭhāna*, the status of *sutta*, and the *Kammāsadhamma* and *Kuru* country where the Buddha delivered the entire method of mindfulness meditation. In this chapter, I am going to illustrate mindfulness, similar to the treasurer of a king who reminds the king of the royal possessions in detail, daily, at night and in the morning. Then, the four kinds of mental quality; Ātāpi, Sampājāna, *Sati, Vineyya abhiṣēkāpañānassā*, which should be followed by the meditator in his meditation practice will be mentioned. These qualities are the basic of the meditation practice, foundations of mindfulness, and the substance of the whole *Sutta*. They show how to practise mindfulness meditation, how meditator has to follow, has to work with full force, full understanding, energetic and attentive. Besides, I will mention *Suttas* concerning with present work as well as the meditation methods taught by the Buddha in *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta* in brief.
Chapter two: Buddhist view on the contemplation of body

Second chapter mainly deals with the contemplation on the body (Kāyānupassanā), the first foundation of mindfulness meditation practice. The aim here is to lead one to a complete integration of body, speech and mind, and come to understand the deeper reality of these three. The practice begins with mindfulness of breathing (Ānāpānassati). The body is used as a supporter to always find back into a virtuous state of mind or into meditation. Contemplation on the body finally leads one to the understanding that all phenomena, all forms, all ‘bodies’, are free of inherent existence, empty, completely pure, interdependent and transparent just like reflections on a pure mirror or on clear unmoving water. This is the true, final simplicity of "just being", which is the key to contemplation on the body right from the very beginning.

Chapter three: Buddhist view on the contemplation of feeling

The third chapter deals with the contemplation on the feeling (Vedanānupassanā), the second foundation of mindfulness meditation practice. I will discuss the instruction on the contemplation of feeling ‘Regard feelings as feelings’ (Vedanāsu vedanānupassi viharati)⁷ in this chapter. These are just simple feelings, not one’s feelings. This has given rising to the instruction to mentally say, when there is any kind of feeling arising. And also the awareness of "worldly" and "unworldly" feelings and of their combinations as pleasant worldly feelings, unpleasant feelings.

⁷ D.N.vol.2.p-235, M.N.vol.1.p-75
worldly feelings and so on will be mentioned as meditation objects in this chapter.

Chapter four: Buddhist view on the contemplation of mind

The fourth chapter deals with contemplation on the mind (Cittanupassana), the third foundation of mindfulness meditation practice. In this chapter, I will discuss the contemplation on the mind concerns with various kinds of mind in accordance with Abhidhamma pitaka. Sixteen kinds in eight pairs are mentioned by way of example; the mind with passion (Saraga) and the mind without it (Vibaraga) and so on. The instruction for the contemplation on the mind is ‘Look at mind as mind’ (Cittesu cittanupassi viharati). This is the simple way of the Buddha’s teaching but when putting his advice into practice, one quickly sees how profound his teaching is. In this chapter, mindfulness meditation goes a step further to examine the causes for the appearance and dissolution of the various states of mind. Due to the contemplation on the mind one will begin to know the qualities and capacities of mind, and how he can encourage wholesome states of mind to arise and what will be favorable to the quick disappearance of unwholesome states.

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8 D.N.2.p-235, M.N.vol.1.p-75
Chapter five: Buddhist view on the contemplation of mental objects

The fifth chapter deals with the contemplation on the mental objects (Dhammanupassanā), the fourth foundation of mindfulness meditation practice. In this chapter, I will discuss the five sets of mental qualities; the five hindrances, the five aggregates of clinging, the six internal and the six external sense-sphere, the seven factor of enlightenment, and the four noble truths. The main instruction for this chapter is 'See Dhammas as Dhammas’ (Dhammesudhammānupassī viharati),\(^9\) which could be elaborated as: See the inter-relatedness of everything in the world. See its emptiness. There is no self, no I, no lasting identity in any aspect of this world. Here, according to the Satipatthāna Sutta, mindfulness is directed to all Dhammas in the broadest sense of the term: an overall investigation into the truth of the Buddha's teaching based on whatever phenomenon arises in mind.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

The present project at the end highlights some necessary principles for the meditator as well as the seven benefits of mindfulness meditation that the Buddha encouraged to his followers. Also the Buddha’s insurance for his teaching on the four foundation of mindfulness are mentioned in this chapter. A critical study of Buddha’s preaching of mindfulness for attaining the Nibbāna, revealed the significance of various aspects of mindfulness in attaining peace in life.

\(^9\) D.N. vol. 2.p-235, M.N. vol.1.p-75
It may focus common man’s attention to the mindfulness taught by the Buddha. It is anticipated that the work will at least illuminate in view of Buddhist the common man’s interest and knowledge on mindfulness and lead the path to genuine blissful peace.