Chapter-6

CONCLUSION

According to Buddhism, man’s position is supreme. Man is his own master and there is no higher being or power that sits in judgment over his destiny. The Buddha said, “One is one’s own refuge who else could be the refuge?” He admonished his disciples to ‘be a refuge to themselves’, and never to seek refuge in anybody else. He encouraged each person to develop himself and to work out his own emancipation because man has the power to liberate himself from all bondage through his own personal effort and intelligence so the Buddha says: ‘you should do your work, for the Tathagata only teach the way.’ The word ‘Tathagata’ literally means one who has come to Truth, i.e., one who has discovered the Truth. This is the term usually used by the Buddha referring to himself and to the Buddhas in general.

The present work entitled ‘Vipassna Meditation and Theravada Tradition: A Historical Perspective’ tried to shed light on the teaching of the Buddha particularly his way of meditation that he discovered and it aims at producing a state of perfect mental health, equilibrium and tranquility. One who wants to liberate from the circle of life called Samsara in Buddhist perspective has to do the only thing and it is nothing but practicing Vipassana Meditation. The word ‘meditation’ in English is a very poor substitute for the original term ‘bhavana’ which means ‘culture or ‘development’, i.e. mental culture or mental development. Mental culture plays the most important role for everyone as being human being. By removing one’s impurity, one can reach the highest

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302 Dhp.verse.160.
303 D.ii.p.62.
304 Dhp.verse.276.
mental culture. Only human beings can gain this culture by training his or her mind through his or her strenuous effort.

The Buddhist Bhavana aims at cleansing the mind of impurities and disturbances, such as lustful desires, hatred, ill-will, indolence, worries and restlessness, skeptical doubts, and cultivating such qualities as concentration, awareness, intelligence, will, energy, the analytical faculty, confidence, joy, tranquility, leading finally to the attainment of highest wisdom which sees the nature of things as they really are and realizes the Ultimate Truth, *Nibbana*, the final goal of Buddhism.

There are two forms of meditation mentioned in Buddhist texts. One is the development of mental concentration prescribed in the texts, leading up to the highest mystic states such as ‘the Sphere of Nothingness’ (*Akincannayatana*) or ‘the Sphere of Neither-perception-nor-Non-Perception (*Nevasanna nasannayatana*)). According to the Buddha, all these mystic states are mind-created, mind-produced, conditioned. They have nothing to do with Reality, Truth. This form of meditation existed before the time of the Buddha. The Buddha himself studied these yogic practices under different teachers and attained to the highest mystic states, but he was not satisfied with them because they did not give complete liberation. They did not give insight into the Ultimate Reality. He discovered the other form of ‘meditation’ known as *Vipassana* ‘Insight’ into the nature of things, leading to the complete liberation of mind, to the realization of the Ultimate Truth, *Nibbana*. This is an essentially Buddhist meditation, Buddhist mental culture. It is an analytical method based on mindfulness, awareness, vigilance, observation. In this paper, we focus on *Vipassana* meditation and *Nibbana*, its final result.
In terms of interpretation of Nibbana, this research has tried to understand what the true meaning of Nibbana is theoretically and philosophically. However, one many not understand the true nature of Nibbana through worldly concepts but one may assume that it is a transcendental state, which exists in the nature of dhamma. Dhamma here means lokuttara-citta, supremundane consciousness which exists as a transcendental state known by enlightened beings.

As has been mentioned, the canonical texts provide meditators the understanding of what is Nibbana with systematic and practical methods. Since systematic applications of the canonical methods clarify the significance of meditation, meditators comes to know that the primary objective of Buddhist meditation, that is to purify the mind. One may understand for oneself what Nibbana is by applying the canonical methods, such as paryatti (to study theory), Patipatti (to practice meditation in accordance with the theories) and pativeda (to attain the realization of Nibbana). Theoretical understanding and philosophical understanding of Nibbana are always incomplete. Consequently, one must practice the path of spiritual realization in order to properly understand the meaning of Nibbana. With progress on the path of spiritual realization (visuddhimagga) there is clarification of the theoretical and philosophical opinions. Spiritual liberation here means liberation from defilements, liberation from hindrances, and liberation from wrong view or concept.

On the other part, the disciples of the Buddha split into many schools, one century after the passing away of the Buddha. Then, the term ‘Theravada’ ‘Mahasanghika’ and soon came into use among the disciples representing the doctrine and discipline they follow. Theravada is one of the schools that is existing even today in Southeast Asia,
especially practicing in Burma (Myanmar), Sri Lanka, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia. We trace the historical background the reasons why Buddhist schools were divided into several denominations. Therefore, in this research work we present the above mentioned topic with the intention of gaining a man’s position in supreme from Buddhist perspective as well as Theravada tradition who are following strictly as taught by the Buddha, it is one of Buddhist schools exercising in Asia.

Now let us sum up the primary purpose of the discussion. This study attempts to analyze the Buddhist Meditation technique called Vipassana Meditation, its benefits and its essence of those Buddhists and non-Buddhists who are searching for mental culture that can gain realization of Nibbana, perfect peace that destruct all defilements which is latent in one’s body.

It may be assumed that the works of Buddhist scholars are based on canonical texts through theoretical study and probably practical experience as well. The historical background of Buddhist schools that split after the passing away of the Buddha have been traced. This study has not completely covered the entirely of canonical texts, commentaries, and sub-commentaries because of the large number of volumes of canonical texts and the riches of the sources of Buddhist literature. It is hoped that this study will assist other academic researchers in Buddhist studies since it provides some of the benefits of meditation for those who have an interest in Buddhist meditation, they may come to understand at least in rudimentary terms the theoretical, practical and philosophical aspects of the word ‘Samatha’, ‘Vipassana’, ‘Nibbana’ ‘Theravada’ and so on.