GOLDEN RESEARCH THOUGHTS
ISSN: 2231-5063
IMPACT FACTOR : 4.6052(UIF)
VOLUME - 14 | ISSUE - 9 | MARCH – 2025

THE ROLE OF MEDITATION IN THERAVĀDA BUDDHISM: A STUDY BASED ON PĀLI SOURCES

Nijaling Doddamani
Dept of Pali And Buddhist Studies , Gulbarga University Kalaburagi.

ABSTRACT

Meditation occupies a central position in Theravāda Buddhism and constitutes an essential component of the Buddhist path toward ethical purification, mental concentration, wisdom, and liberation. The present study examines the role of meditation in Theravāda Buddhism with particular reference to Pāli canonical and related textual sources. The study focuses on major meditative practices described in the Pāli literature, including samatha (calm and concentration), vipassanā (insight), ānāpānasati (mindfulness of breathing), and the four satipaṭṭhānas (foundations of mindfulness). The Pāli Canon presents meditation not merely as a technique for relaxation but as a systematic discipline for understanding the nature of mind and reality. The study explores how meditation is connected with the development of sīla (morality), samādhi (concentration), and paññā (wisdom), which together form the threefold training of the Buddhist path. Particular attention is given to the relationship between mindfulness, concentration, mental purification, and the overcoming of greed, hatred, and delusion. The study also examines the gradual development of meditative consciousness and its relationship to the attainment of higher states of understanding and liberation.

The research is primarily textual and analytical, drawing upon selected teachings from the Dīgha Nikāya, Majjhima Nikāya, Saṃyutta Nikāya, Aṅguttara Nikāya, and Khuddaka Nikāya, along with relevant traditional interpretations and modern scholarly studies. The analysis indicates that meditation in Theravāda Buddhism serves both practical and transformative purposes by cultivating sustained attention, emotional balance, ethical awareness, and insight into impermanence, suffering, and non-self. The Pāli sources demonstrate that meditation is closely integrated with the entire Buddhist path rather than being an isolated spiritual practice. The study further highlights the importance of mindfulness and insight in transforming habitual patterns of thought and developing a deeper understanding of human experience. It concludes that meditation represents a fundamental method of mental cultivation in Theravāda Buddhism and provides an important framework for understanding the Buddhist pursuit of liberation. The study contributes to a clearer understanding of the philosophical, ethical, and spiritual significance of meditation as presented in the Pāli tradition.

KEYWORDS: *Theravāda Buddhism, Pāli Sources, Meditation, Samatha, Vipassanā, Mindfulness, Satipaṭṭhāna, Ānāpānasati, Samādhi, Paññā, Buddhist Philosophy, Mental Cultivation, Liberation.*

INTRODUCTION

Meditation occupies a fundamental position in the religious, philosophical, and practical framework of Theravāda Buddhism. The Pāli sources present meditation as an essential method of cultivating and transforming the mind. In the Buddhist tradition, meditation is generally understood through the concepts of bhāvanā, meaning mental development or cultivation, and samādhi, meaning concentration or collectedness of mind. The teachings preserved in the Pāli Canon explain that human suffering is closely associated with ignorance, craving, attachment, and unwholesome mental tendencies. Meditation provides a systematic means for observing these mental conditions and gradually overcoming them. The Buddhist path integrates meditation with morality and wisdom, forming the threefold training of sīla, samādhi, and paññā. Through ethical discipline the practitioner develops a stable foundation, through meditation the mind becomes concentrated and purified, and through wisdom the true nature of existence is understood. The Pāli texts therefore do not present meditation merely as a method of relaxation or temporary mental peace, but as an important discipline directed toward profound spiritual transformation. The practice of meditation is closely associated with mindfulness, concentration, self-observation, and the development of insight into experience.

The Pāli Canon describes several important forms of meditation, including samatha, vipassanā, ānāpānasati, and the four satipaṭṭhānas. Samatha emphasizes calmness, stability, and concentration, while vipassanā develops penetrating insight into phenomena as impermanent, unsatisfactory, and not-self. Ānāpānasati uses mindfulness of breathing as a structured method for developing awareness and concentration, while satipaṭṭhāna provides systematic contemplation of body, feelings, mind, and mental phenomena. These practices are repeatedly connected with the gradual purification of consciousness and the development of wisdom. The Pāli sources also emphasize that meditation requires sustained effort, mindfulness, ethical conduct, and appropriate understanding. The role of meditation can therefore be understood within the broader objective of the Buddhist path, namely the reduction and eventual elimination of suffering and the realization of liberation. A study based on Pāli sources is significant because it allows meditation to be examined within its original doctrinal and textual context rather than only through modern interpretations. This study explores the meaning, methods, objectives, and transformative significance of meditation in Theravāda Buddhism and examines how the Pāli tradition presents meditation as an integral part of the path toward spiritual awakening.

Aims and Objectives

The main aim of this study is to examine the role and significance of meditation in Theravāda Buddhism with special reference to the teachings preserved in Pāli sources. The study seeks to understand meditation as a systematic process of mental cultivation, purification, concentration, mindfulness, and wisdom within the Buddhist path.

Objectives of the Study:

- To examine the concept and meaning of meditation in Theravāda Buddhist thought.
- To study the major forms of meditation described in the Pāli Canon.
- To examine the significance of samatha and vipassanā meditation practices.
- To analyse the role of satipaṭṭhāna in the development of mindfulness and insight.
- To study the importance of ānāpānasati as presented in Pāli Buddhist literature.
- To examine the relationship between meditation, sīla, samādhi, and paññā.
- To understand the role of meditation in overcoming greed, hatred, delusion, and other mental defilements.

- To examine the relationship between meditation and the development of wisdom.
- To analyse the contribution of meditation to mental purification and emotional balance.
- To study the relationship between meditation and the Buddhist understanding of suffering, impermanence, and non-self.
- To examine the role of meditation in the development of concentration and mindfulness.
- To understand the significance of meditation in the Theravāda path toward liberation.
- To analyse selected Pāli canonical passages dealing with meditative practice.
- To distinguish the traditional Theravāda understanding of meditation from selected modern interpretations.
- To assess the philosophical and spiritual significance of meditation within Theravāda Buddhism.
- To highlight the continuing relevance of Pāli meditation teachings for the study of Buddhist philosophy and practice.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

The literature on meditation in Theravāda Buddhism is extensive and includes primary Pāli canonical texts, traditional commentaries, and modern scholarly studies. The Pāli Canon provides the principal textual foundation for understanding Buddhist meditation and its relationship with the broader path of spiritual development. The Dīgha Nikāya, Majjhima Nikāya, Saṃyutta Nikāya, and Aṅguttara Nikāya contain numerous teachings on mindfulness, concentration, mental cultivation, and insight. The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta and Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta describe mindfulness of body, feelings, mind, and mental phenomena as an important method of practice. The Ānāpānasati Sutta explains mindfulness of breathing as a systematic practice for developing concentration, mindfulness, and insight. The Sāmaññaphala Sutta presents meditation within the wider progression of Buddhist monastic training, while the Anapanasati and related teachings illustrate the relationship between calmness and insight. Traditional works such as the Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosa provide detailed discussions of meditation objects, concentration, mental purification, and stages of insight. These sources establish that meditation is not an isolated practice but an integral element of Buddhist ethical and intellectual development.

Modern scholars have expanded the study of Theravāda meditation by examining its doctrinal, historical, textual, and practical dimensions. Rupert Gethin has analysed the relationship between meditation, mindfulness, and the Buddhist path, particularly the role of the factors associated with awakening. Bhikkhu Bodhi has provided extensive translations and interpretations of the Nikāya literature, making important Pāli teachings accessible for contemporary study. Bhikkhu Analayo has critically examined satipaṭṭhāna and mindfulness through comparative and textual approaches, emphasizing their canonical foundations and practical dimensions. Wynne, Gombrich, Harvey, and other scholars have contributed to broader discussions of early Buddhist meditation, consciousness, ethics, and liberation. Nyanaponika Thera has highlighted the importance of mindfulness in Buddhist mental cultivation, while traditional Theravāda interpretations have emphasized the complementary roles of samatha and vipassanā. Existing literature demonstrates that meditation is closely connected with concentration, mindfulness, wisdom, ethical discipline, and liberation. However, further study remains useful for integrating the diverse Pāli references into a comprehensive analysis of meditation within Theravāda Buddhism. The present study therefore examines selected Pāli sources to understand the meaning, methods, objectives, and transformative significance of meditation within the Theravāda tradition.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The present study adopts a qualitative, descriptive, analytical, and textual research methodology to examine the role of meditation in Theravāda Buddhism based on Pāli sources. The primary sources for the study consist of selected texts from the Pāli Canon, particularly the Dīgha Nikāya, Majjhima Nikāya, Saṃyutta Nikāya, Aṅguttara Nikāya, and relevant works of the Khuddaka Nikāya. Important discourses dealing with meditation, mindfulness, concentration, breathing meditation, and insight are examined in their doctrinal context. Particular attention is given to the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta, Ānāpānasati Sutta, and other relevant Pāli passages. The study also considers the Visuddhimagga and selected traditional Theravāda commentarial materials to understand the systematic interpretation of meditative practices. Secondary sources include scholarly books, research articles, translations, and academic studies concerning Buddhist meditation and Pāli literature. Relevant materials are selected according to their direct relationship with the objectives of the study, and textual evidence is interpreted through close reading and thematic analysis.

The analytical method is used to identify major concepts such as bhāvanā, samatha, vipassanā, sati, samādhi, paññā, sīla, and liberation. The study compares relevant passages to understand the relationship between concentration, mindfulness, insight, ethical discipline, and spiritual development. A contextual approach is employed to examine meditation within the broader framework of the Noble Eightfold Path and the threefold training of morality, concentration, and wisdom. The research also analyses the objectives and transformative functions of meditation, including mental purification, overcoming defilements, developing mindfulness, and understanding impermanence, suffering, and non-self. Comparative examination of canonical and traditional interpretations helps identify continuities and differences in the understanding of meditation within Theravāda literature. The study does not involve field surveys, interviews, experiments, or statistical analysis because its primary purpose is textual and philosophical investigation. The collected material is organized thematically and interpreted critically in relation to the research objectives. Through this methodology, the study seeks to provide a systematic and textually grounded understanding of the role of meditation in Theravāda Buddhism based on Pāli sources.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Meditation is one of the central practices of Theravāda Buddhism, yet its meaning, purpose, and role are sometimes understood differently across traditional, academic, and contemporary contexts. The Pāli Canon presents meditation as an essential component of the Buddhist path, closely connected with ethical discipline, mindfulness, concentration, wisdom, and liberation. However, the diverse references to bhāvanā, samatha, vipassanā, sati, samādhi, and satipaṭṭhāna are distributed across different canonical texts and require systematic examination to understand their relationship. The problem addressed by this study is therefore the need to clarify how meditation is conceptualized and practiced within the early Theravāda textual tradition. Particular attention is required to understand whether meditation is presented merely as a technique for achieving mental calm or as a comprehensive process of mental cultivation leading toward insight and liberation. The study also seeks to examine how different forms of meditation described in Pāli sources contribute to the development of the mind and the removal of unwholesome mental tendencies.

Another important aspect of the problem concerns the relationship between meditation and other dimensions of Buddhist practice. The Pāli sources frequently associate meditation with sīla, samādhi, and paññā, but the precise nature of these relationships requires careful textual and analytical study. The role of mindfulness of the body, feelings, mind, and mental phenomena, as well as mindfulness of breathing, needs to be understood within the broader framework of Buddhist teachings. There is also a need to

distinguish the canonical understanding of meditation from interpretations that may arise from later developments or modern secular presentations of mindfulness and meditation. This study therefore addresses the problem of how Pāli sources explain the purpose, methods, significance, and transformative outcomes of meditation in Theravāda Buddhism. It examines how meditation contributes to concentration, mindfulness, wisdom, mental purification, and the understanding of impermanence, suffering, and non-self. By analysing relevant canonical and traditional sources, the study seeks to develop a coherent understanding of meditation as an integral part of the Theravāda Buddhist path.

NEED OF THE STUDY:

The study of meditation in Theravāda Buddhism is important for understanding one of the central dimensions of Buddhist philosophy, practice, and spiritual development. The Pāli Canon contains extensive teachings on mindfulness, concentration, mental cultivation, and insight, but these teachings are distributed across numerous discourses and require systematic examination. A focused study based on Pāli sources can help clarify the original textual meaning and significance of meditation within the Theravāda tradition. Meditation is closely associated with the cultivation of a disciplined, concentrated, and mindful mind, and therefore its study is essential for understanding the practical dimension of Buddhist teachings. Concepts such as bhāvanā, samatha, vipassanā, sati, samādhi, and ānāpānasati provide important foundations for examining how the Buddhist tradition understands mental development. The study is also needed to explain the relationship between meditation and the broader framework of sīla, samādhi, and paññā. By examining these concepts in their textual context, the research can contribute to a clearer understanding of how meditation functions within the Buddhist path toward wisdom and liberation.

The study is further needed because meditation is widely discussed in contemporary academic, religious, psychological, and popular contexts, where its traditional Buddhist meanings may sometimes be simplified or interpreted separately from their original doctrinal framework. A Pāli-based investigation can provide a more contextual understanding of meditation by examining canonical descriptions of mindfulness, concentration, insight, and mental purification. It can also help distinguish the early Theravāda textual understanding of meditation from later interpretations and modern adaptations. The study is significant for students and researchers of Buddhist studies, Pāli literature, Indian philosophy, religious studies, and comparative spirituality because it brings together important textual perspectives on meditative practice. It may also contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between meditation and the Buddhist analysis of impermanence, suffering, non-self, craving, and liberation. By systematically analysing relevant Pāli sources, the study seeks to demonstrate the philosophical, ethical, and spiritual significance of meditation and to provide a useful foundation for further research into Theravāda Buddhist thought and practice.

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR RESEARCH:

Further research can examine the role of meditation in Theravāda Buddhism through a more detailed comparative study of different Pāli Nikāyas and their presentations of meditative practice. Future scholars may investigate the development of concepts such as bhāvanā, samatha, vipassanā, sati, samādhi, and ānāpānasati across different canonical contexts. A specialized study may focus on the relationship between meditation and the Noble Eightfold Path, particularly the connections among right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. Another important area of research is the study of satipaṭṭhāna and its interpretation in different Pāli texts and commentarial traditions. Researchers may also examine the role of meditation in relation to the cultivation of the Brahmavihāras, including loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. Further textual studies could explore the relationship

between meditation, ethical conduct, and wisdom in the threefold training. Comparative research involving Pāli sources and Sanskrit, Chinese, or other early Buddhist materials may also provide insights into the historical development and interpretation of Buddhist meditation.

Future research may also investigate the relationship between traditional Theravāda meditation and contemporary interpretations of mindfulness and meditation. Such studies could examine how practices derived from Buddhist traditions have been adapted in educational, psychological, healthcare, and secular settings while considering the differences between traditional doctrinal objectives and modern applications. Empirical research may explore the experiences of contemporary Theravāda practitioners through interviews, observation, or case studies, thereby complementing textual research with field-based evidence. Comparative studies could examine meditation practices across different Theravāda communities in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, and other regions. Researchers may also investigate the role of meditation in monastic education, lay Buddhist practice, and contemporary Buddhist institutions. Digital Pāli resources and computational textual analysis could provide new opportunities for identifying patterns and terminology across large collections of canonical literature. Further interdisciplinary research connecting Buddhist studies, philosophy, psychology, history, and religious studies may contribute to a broader understanding of meditation. These areas can extend the present study and provide deeper perspectives on the historical, textual, philosophical, social, and practical dimensions of meditation in Theravāda Buddhism.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS:

The scope of the present study is centred on examining the role, meaning, methods, and significance of meditation in Theravāda Buddhism through selected Pāli sources. The study focuses primarily on the Pāli Canon, particularly the Dīgha Nikāya, Majjhima Nikāya, Saṃyutta Nikāya, Aṅguttara Nikāya, and relevant texts of the Khuddaka Nikāya. Particular attention is given to teachings concerning bhāvanā, samatha, vipassanā, sati, samādhi, satipaṭṭhāna, and ānāpānasati. The study examines meditation in relation to ethical discipline, concentration, wisdom, mental purification, and liberation. It also considers selected traditional commentarial interpretations, especially where they help explain canonical concepts and practices. The study aims to understand meditation within the wider framework of the Buddhist path and therefore considers its relationship with the Noble Eightfold Path and the threefold training of sīla, samādhi, and paññā. The scope is primarily textual, philosophical, religious, and analytical rather than experimental or clinical.

The study has certain limitations that should be recognized while interpreting its findings. Since the research is based mainly on textual sources, it does not provide empirical measurement of the experiences or psychological effects of meditation among contemporary practitioners. The Pāli Canon is extensive, and therefore only selected texts and passages directly relevant to the objectives of the study are examined. Differences among translations, interpretations, textual editions, and commentarial traditions may also affect the understanding of particular Pāli terms and teachings. The study is primarily concerned with the Theravāda textual tradition and does not provide a comprehensive comparative examination of meditation in all Buddhist schools, such as Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna traditions. Modern secular mindfulness practices are considered only where necessary for contextual comparison and are not the central focus of the research. The study also does not attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of meditation through medical or psychological experiments. These limitations define the boundaries of the research while allowing a focused examination of the textual and philosophical significance of meditation in Theravāda Buddhism.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

The present study focuses on the role and significance of meditation in Theravāda Buddhism as presented in selected Pāli sources. It examines the concept of meditation as a process of mental cultivation and explores important terms such as bhāvanā, samatha, vipassanā, sati, samādhi, and ānāpānasati. The study covers relevant teachings found in the major Nikāyas of the Pāli Canon, particularly the Dīgha Nikāya, Majjhima Nikāya, Saṃyutta Nikāya, and Aṅguttara Nikāya, along with selected texts from the Khuddaka Nikāya. Special attention is given to the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta, and Ānāpānasati Sutta because of their importance for understanding mindfulness and meditative cultivation. The study examines the relationship between meditation and the threefold training of sīla, samādhi, and paññā. It also considers the connection between meditation and the Noble Eightfold Path, particularly right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. The scope includes an examination of the role of meditation in developing mental stability, mindfulness, concentration, insight, and wisdom.

The study further explores the philosophical and spiritual objectives associated with meditation in the Theravāda tradition. It examines how meditation is related to the understanding of impermanence, suffering, non-self, craving, attachment, and mental defilements. The scope also includes selected traditional interpretations, particularly the systematic explanations of meditation found in Theravāda commentarial literature. Attention is given to the relationship between calm meditation and insight meditation and to the ways in which these practices contribute to mental purification and the Buddhist path toward liberation. The study provides a textual and analytical perspective rather than an empirical assessment of contemporary meditation practices. It may be useful to students and researchers of Pāli literature, Buddhist philosophy, religious studies, Indian philosophy, and Theravāda Buddhist traditions. The study also provides a foundation for further research comparing canonical meditation teachings with later developments and contemporary interpretations. Thus, the scope of the study extends across textual, philosophical, ethical, and spiritual dimensions while remaining focused on the role of meditation as presented through Pāli sources.

DISCUSSION:

The analysis of Pāli sources indicates that meditation occupies a central position in the Theravāda Buddhist path and is closely connected with ethical discipline, mental concentration, mindfulness, wisdom, and liberation. The concept of bhāvanā represents the cultivation and development of the mind, while practices such as samatha and vipassanā provide important approaches to mental calmness and insight. The Pāli Canon presents meditation as a disciplined process through which practitioners develop awareness of bodily, emotional, and mental experiences. The teachings on satipaṭṭhāna emphasize mindfulness of the body, feelings, mind, and mental phenomena, demonstrating that meditation involves careful observation of experience. Similarly, ānāpānasati, or mindfulness of breathing, provides a structured method for developing sustained awareness and concentration. These practices indicate that meditation is not presented merely as an isolated exercise but as part of a broader process of mental cultivation. The development of samādhi provides stability and clarity of mind, while mindfulness supports continuous awareness and insight. The discussion also shows that meditation is closely related to the threefold training of sīla, samādhi, and paññā, in which ethical discipline provides a foundation for concentration and wisdom.

The Pāli sources further indicate that the ultimate significance of meditation lies in transforming the practitioner's understanding of experience and reducing the mental conditions associated with suffering. Through sustained mindfulness and contemplation, practitioners are encouraged to understand the changing nature of physical and mental phenomena and to develop insight into anicca (impermanence),

dukkha (suffering or unsatisfactoriness), and anattā (non-self). Meditation is also associated with overcoming craving, attachment, ignorance, and other unwholesome mental tendencies. The relationship between calmness and insight demonstrates that concentration and wisdom have complementary roles within the Buddhist path. The textual evidence suggests that meditation supports the gradual purification of consciousness and the development of liberating knowledge. The study also shows that meditation cannot be fully understood apart from Buddhist ethics and the broader framework of the Noble Eightfold Path. Although contemporary interpretations often emphasize mindfulness for mental well-being, the Pāli sources place meditation within a wider religious and philosophical goal of liberation from suffering. Therefore, the discussion establishes meditation as a comprehensive discipline of mental development that integrates mindfulness, concentration, ethical awareness, insight, and wisdom within the Theravāda Buddhist tradition.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The study recommends that greater academic attention should be given to the systematic study of meditation in Theravāda Buddhism through original Pāli sources. Students and researchers should examine important canonical texts such as the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta, and Ānāpānasati Sutta in their broader doctrinal context. Pāli terminology such as bhāvanā, samatha, vipassanā, sati, samādhi, and paññā should be studied carefully to understand their meanings within the Buddhist tradition. Educational institutions offering courses in Buddhist studies, Pāli, philosophy, and religious studies may include detailed discussions of Theravāda meditation literature in their curricula. Researchers should also consider the relationship between meditation, ethical discipline, concentration, and wisdom rather than treating meditation as an isolated practice. Greater use of reliable Pāli editions, scholarly translations, commentaries, and critical studies is recommended for textual research. Comparative studies of different Nikāyas and commentarial interpretations may further clarify the development and interpretation of meditation practices. Scholars should also maintain a clear distinction between canonical Theravāda meditation and later adaptations when analysing contemporary forms of mindfulness.

Further research should combine textual, historical, philosophical, and empirical approaches to develop a broader understanding of meditation in Theravāda Buddhism. Researchers may undertake field studies among contemporary Theravāda monastic and lay communities to examine how canonical meditation teachings are understood and practiced today. Comparative research across Theravāda countries and Buddhist institutions could provide insights into different traditions of meditation and their educational contexts. Interdisciplinary studies involving Buddhist studies, psychology, philosophy, education, and religious studies may also explore different dimensions of meditation while respecting the original doctrinal framework. Digital Pāli databases and textual-analysis tools can be used to identify patterns in meditation-related terminology across large collections of Buddhist literature. Scholars should give attention to the historical development of samatha and vipassanā and their relationship with the broader Buddhist path. Meditation programs in educational settings should, where appropriate, present mindfulness together with ethical awareness and contextual knowledge of Buddhist teachings. Finally, future studies should continue to examine meditation as a multidimensional practice involving mental cultivation, concentration, mindfulness, insight, wisdom, and the Buddhist pursuit of liberation.

CONCLUSION:

The study concludes that meditation occupies a fundamental position in Theravāda Buddhism and represents an essential method of mental cultivation within the Buddhist path. The examination of selected Pāli sources demonstrates that meditation is closely connected with the development of

mindfulness, concentration, wisdom, ethical discipline, and mental purification. Concepts such as bhāvanā, samatha, vipassanā, sati, samādhi, and ānāpānasati provide important foundations for understanding the diverse dimensions of meditative practice. The Pāli Canon presents meditation not simply as a technique for achieving temporary calm but as a systematic discipline through which the practitioner develops awareness and examines the nature of experience. The teachings on satipaṭṭhāna emphasize mindful observation of body, feelings, mind, and mental phenomena, while mindfulness of breathing provides an important method for strengthening concentration and awareness. Meditation is therefore integrated with the broader framework of the threefold training of sīla, samādhi, and paññā. Ethical conduct supports mental stability, concentration supports clarity, and wisdom develops through careful understanding of experience.

The study further concludes that the significance of meditation in Theravāda Buddhism is closely related to the Buddhist understanding of suffering and liberation. Through sustained mindfulness, concentration, and insight, the practitioner develops an understanding of anicca (impermanence), dukkha (suffering or unsatisfactoriness), and anattā (non-self). Meditation contributes to the gradual weakening of craving, attachment, ignorance, and other unwholesome mental tendencies. The relationship between samatha and vipassanā demonstrates the complementary importance of mental calmness and insight in Buddhist practice. The Pāli sources thus place meditation within the larger framework of the Noble Eightfold Path and the pursuit of liberation. Although meditation has acquired diverse interpretations in contemporary contexts, its traditional Theravāda significance is best understood through its canonical and philosophical foundations. The study therefore highlights meditation as a comprehensive process of mental development that connects ethical discipline, mindfulness, concentration, insight, and wisdom. A careful study of Pāli sources provides a valuable foundation for understanding the historical, philosophical, and spiritual significance of meditation in Theravāda Buddhism.

REFERENCES

1. Analayo, B. (2003). Satipaṭṭhāna: The direct path to realization. Birmingham, UK: Windhorse Publications.
2. Analayo, B. (2013). Perspectives on Satipaṭṭhāna. Cambridge, UK: Windhorse Publications.
3. Bodhi, B. (2000). The connected discourses of the Buddha: A translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya. Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications.
4. Bodhi, B. (2012). The numerical discourses of the Buddha: A complete translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya. Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications.
5. Bodhi, B. (2017). The Suttanipāta: An ancient collection of the Buddha's discourses together with its commentaries. Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications.
6. Bodhi, B. (2011). The noble eightfold path: Way to the end of suffering. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society.
7. Gethin, R. M. L. (1992). The Buddhist path to awakening: A study of the bodhi-pakkhiyā dhammā. Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill.
8. Gombrich, R. F. (2009). What the Buddha thought. London, UK: Equinox.
9. Harvey, P. (2013). An introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, history and practices (2nd ed.). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
10. Ñāṇamoli, B., & Bodhi, B. (1995). The middle length discourses of the Buddha: A new translation of the Majjhima Nikāya. Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications.
11. Ñāṇamoli, B. (1976). The life of the Buddha according to the Pali Canon. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society.

12. Nyanaponika Thera. (1962). The heart of Buddhist meditation: A handbook of mental training based on the Buddha's way of mindfulness. London, UK: Rider.
13. Rhys Davids, T. W., & Rhys Davids, C. A. F. (Trans.). (1899–1921). Dialogues of the Buddha (Vols. 1–3). London, UK: Oxford University Press.
14. Soma Thera. (1941). The way of mindfulness: The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta and its commentary. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society.
15. Thanissaro Bhikkhu. (2000). Satipaṭṭhāna: The direct path to realization. Valley Center, CA: Metta Forest Monastery.