



A Study of *Ānāpānasati* based on the *Visuddhimagga* and the *Vimuttimagga* in the Perspective of Chinese Buddhism

Mr. Wang Dongcheng, Phramaha Anon Anando,

Asst. Prof. Dr., Prof. Dr. Lu Kai Wen

International Buddhist Studies College

Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

Corresponding Author Email: godeess@gmail.com



Abstract

Ānāpānasati, also known as mindfulness of breathing, is a method of breathing meditation that has its roots in the Buddhist tradition and originates from the Buddha's time. The teaching of *Ānāpānasati* in two treatises of the *Visuddhimagga* and the *Vimuttimagga* belongs to Theravada Buddhism. There are two objectives in this research, which involve *Ānāpānasati* in the two treatises.

Ānāpānasati is the core teaching of meditation; based on these two treatises, the author conducted a comparative study in the perspective of Chinese Buddhism. These treatises with their detailed description of meditation practice have a special significance in Buddhism.

This paper explores the eight or four stages of *Ānāpānasati* in two treatises and emphasizes the meditation sign, the key to achieve the first *jhāna*. In systematizing the practice of *Ānāpānasati*, both treatises create a structure based on the four foundations of mindfulness.

Keywords: *Ānāpānasati*, *Vimuttimagga*, *Visuddhimagga*.

Introduction

Ānāpānasati refers to a method of breathing meditation that has its roots in the Buddhist tradition and originates from the Buddha's time. In the *Visuddhimagga* it involves sixteen bases divided into eight stages, which, when practiced, can lead to the seven purifications. The *Vimuttimaggā* has a similar structure with the *Visuddhimagga*. Nowadays, there is a growing interest in the research on *Ānāpānasati* in China, but the research on these two treatises is still limited. It is necessary to explore the history of *Ānāpānasati* in the perspective of Chinese Buddhism briefly, especially based on the related scriptures. Generally, we can say that in China there were five historical stages concerned with *Ānāpānasati*, development of related scriptures and practice.

The first stage belongs to the period of early Buddhism and involves the different volumes of Agama scriptures, a collection of early Buddhist texts, which has five parts and was translated into Chinese in the ancient time. Some of the teachings related to *Ānāpānasati* were recorded in *Ekottara Āgama* (Numbered Discourses) and *Samyukta Āgama* (Connected Discourses). The second stage involves *Ānāpānasati Sutta*, which has been translated into Chinese in the East Han dynasty, although the original text is already lost. The text that is available today has been edited multiple times and is called *Maha-Ānāpānasati Sutta*. (大安般守意经)¹ It can be said that this scripture is similar to the *Ānāpānasati Sutra* in the *Nikaya* and influenced the Buddhist practice in China for a long time.²

The third stage involves the teaching of the Sanskrit scripture *Abhidharma-kośa* (Verses on the Treasury of Abhidharma). It has been translated into Chinese by Zhendi and Xuanzang. For *Ānāpānasati*, the explanation in this treatise only focuses on the six stages but neglects the sixteen bases.³ The fourth stage of its development involves the Mahayana scripture *Maha-Samatha and Vipassanā* (摩诃止观), a treatise written by master Zhiyi, the founder of Tiantai sect. In the teaching, master Zhiyi explains three kinds of *Ānāpānasati*, which include sixteen bases, six wonderful stages, and perfect jhāna.⁴

¹康僧會序,《大正藏》,《大安般守意经》(Taishō Tripiṭaka, Maha-Ānāpānasati Sutra),第15册,第0602经,第1卷

²鎌田茂雄,中国佛教通史:卷二(Shigeo Kamata, The history of Chinese Buddhism:Vol II),高雄:佛光文化事业有限公司,2010,97页。

³覃江,入山捉猴:佛教安般念研究(Qin Jiang, *Catching the monkey in mountains: a study of Ānāpānasati in Buddhism*),四川:巴蜀书社,2008.8.页200.

⁴Ibid. 页260。

The fifth stage of its development belongs to the modern time and involves the scripture of *Visuddhimagga*. This treatise is famous in the south of Asia but the translation from Pali to Chinese has been finished no longer than one hundred years ago. A wave of Buddhist renaissance in China made the scripture more popular and to be used as a guidebook of meditation. The scholars should notice another book, written in the recent years by Wuxinru, where the author explained Bhaiṣajyaguru sutra and emphasized the practice of *Ānāpānasati*.⁵ This Mahayana sutra is also popular in the Tibetan Buddhism. The practice method in his explanation involves the tantric way and the detailed description of the meditation sign.

These five stages shows that the practice of *Ānāpānasati* in China has its own tradition. It develops with the development of Buddhism and involves three vehicles. In the paper below, the author will try to explore *Ānāpānasati* in the treatise of *Visuddhimagga* using the Chinese resources.

Ānāpānasati in the Visuddhimagga

Focusing on the historical context and background of this treatise for the purpose of the research, we can find some evidence in the history of Sri Lanka. The King Mahinda established *Mahāvihāra* monastery, so the Buddhist teaching in this kingdom began to base on its teaching until one sect was formed. Due to the support of *Valagam Ba*, *Abhayagirivihāra* monastery has been established later on, and these two sects were divided in 29 B.E.⁶ *Abhayagirivihāra* sect absorbed the Indian Buddhist thought. Compared to the *Mahāvihāra* monastery, the *Abhayagirivihāra* monastery developed in a different way. The influence of Mahayana Buddhism led them to have a huge difference.

The author of the *Visuddhimagga* is Buddhaghosa. According to the historical records of Mahavamsa, in the period of King Mahānāma, in his domination from 409 to 431, Buddhaghosa finished the *Visuddhimagga* in *Mahāvihāra* monastery. He was born in

⁵ 吴信如, 药师经法研究 (Wu-Xinru, *The research of Bhaiṣajyaguru Sutra*), 北京: 中医古籍出版社, 1997, 页86。

⁶ 黄夏年, 《南亚研究》, “观音的《清静道论》及其禅法” Huang-Xianian, “*Buddhaghosa’s Visuddhimagga and His Practice of Dhyana*” 1989年, 第1期, 第26-36页。

the Brahman family in southern India and translated many books as a child.⁷ His translations include some famous books.

Considering the main characteristics of the *Visuddhimagga*, the first one is its clear analysis and close integration with the practice. In this treatise, there is a large number of description of Sangha living rules and monastic practices⁸. All of them focus on the practice, the explanation is logical and smooth.⁹ It is easy for the practitioners to find reference to their activities. This treatise clearly describes the steps of practice. Some knowledge of it is concerned with science or Buddhist wisdom.

In *Visuddhimagga*, the author explains *Ānāpānasati* with the principle of *cattāro-satipaṭṭhāne*. In the Chapter VIII, Other Recollections as Meditation Subjects, in the section mindfulness of breathing, it gives a clear description of the sixteen bases at the beginning.¹⁰

The first four bases, which follow the first foundation of mindfulness, are related to the body.¹¹ As the nature of concentration is one-pointedness, the practitioner cannot focus on the whole experience of the body, but only observe a particular place, for instance, the area under the nose. One argument is, if the concentration is fixed under the nose, how can practitioner experience the whole body?¹² In fact, the working place here is only an area that people should care about, not fix on it. With deep concentration, the practitioner can stay aware of his whole body. In a similar way, if a person would stand on a stone and watch the sunset, it wouldn't be necessary for him to concentrate solely on his foot touching the stone. The principle of *Ānāpānasati* is the same: to develop mindfulness, the practitioner observes the area under the nose but does not fix his mind on it. From the view of Chinese tradition,

7 “Beyond the Tipitaka: A Field Guide to Post-canonical Pali Literature”, edited by Access to Insight. (Published by BCBS Edition), Retrieved on 8 February 2018: <http://www.accesstoinight.org/noncanon/fieldguide.html>

⁸Tr. Bhikkhu ñāṇamoli, *The Path of Purification*, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2010), pp.5-55.

⁹黄夏年,《南亚研究》,“观音的《清净道论》及其禅法”(Huang-Xianian,“*Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga and His Practice of Dhyana*”),1989年,第1期,第26-36页。

¹⁰ Tr. Bhikkhu ñāṇamoli, *The Path of Purification*, op.cit., p. 259.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² 释大寂,《世界宗教学刊》,“《长部·大念处经》中观呼吸法门与《瑜伽师地论》中阿那般那念之比较”(Shi Daji, Comparing the Practice of Breathing in ‘Mahasatipatthana Sutta’ in *Dīghanikāya* with the Way of *Ānāpāna* in *Yogācāra-Bhūmi*), 2007年,第9期,第38页。

the best way is to direct all the sensations towards the breathing: watch the breathing, listen to the breathing, taste the breathing, and touch the breathing.

The first four steps are the fundamentals of the sixteen bases. The purpose of practice is to teach the beginner to master the method of *Ānāpānasati*, and help the practitioner to achieve absorption concentration. The absorption concentration is fundamental for practicing other steps. The second four bases belong to the sensation foundation of mindfulness.¹³ These four steps coordinate with the sensation *satipaṭṭhāne*. The third four bases belong to the mind foundation of mindfulness.¹⁴ Because the set of *jhāna* factors is different for each of the four *jhānas*, the mind in the four *jhānas* is different too. The gladdening of consciousness and concentrating of consciousness need to distinguish the factors of *jhāna*. The fourth four bases belong to the Dhamma foundation of mindfulness.¹⁵ In the fifteen base, the contemplation of cessation has the same method of practice as the fourteen base. In the sixteen base, the contemplation of relinquishment has two kinds, namely, relinquishment as giving up and relinquishment as entering into.

In the *Visuddhimagga*, the author explained the eight stages of *Ānāpānasati*, which are (1) counting, (2) connecting, (3) touching, (4) fixing, (5) observing, (6) turning away, (7) attaining purification, and (8) looking back on these. Before these eight stages, Buddhaghosa pointed five stages as the conditions, which are learning, questioning, establishing, attaining absorption, and characterising. The eight stages of *Ānāpānasati* are the extension of the four bases of *Ānāpānasati*. How to establish a perfect teaching in the simplest stages? The *Visuddhimagga* tries to answer this question. The eight stages of *Ānāpānasati* are Buddhaghosa's contribution to extract the essence and purify a great number of theories. These eight stages can help the practitioner to achieve the *appanā* (fixing the thought on a single object) directly.

As the second significant contribution, the explanation of these eight stages established a theory of meditation sign and made it be completed. In the *Visuddhimagga*, meditation sign has a precise description. The author explains three kinds of meditation signs and forms a theory about absorption concentration. The three meditation signs are preparatory sign, which is usually a physical object to concentrate on, acquired sign, which emerges in the mind on base of this physical object, and counterpart sign, which is a stable sign and reflects the truth of *jhāna*.

¹³ Tr. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, **The Path of Purification**, op.cit., p.259.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.260.

The third point of this explanation is to make the practice of the first *jhāna* very clear. The axis of these eight stages is the first *jhāna*. As mentioned before, the difference between the first, second, third and fourth *jhāna* is only the reducing number of the their factors. All the four *jhānas* belong to the *appanā*, for these four absorption concentrations the meditation sign is same. The achievement of the first *jhāna* is fundamental for the meditation practice. After this achievement, the practitioner should try to reduce the number of factors with the counterpart sign to attain higher *jhānas*.

Basically, in the eight stages of *Ānāpānasati*, four stages belong to samatha meditation; they are counting, connection, touching and fixing. Another four stages belong to vipassanā meditation; they are observing, turning away, purification, and looking back on these.

Ānāpānasati in the Vimuttimaggā

Although the *Vimuttimaggā* is an important treatise of Buddhism, its influence in China is still limited in the contemporary age. This treatise has been included in the Chinese Tipitaka for thousand years:¹⁶ the survival of the *Vimuttimaggā* shows that it must have a special value.

The huge system of the *Vimuttimaggā* with its extensive volumes shows that it probably used a huge source of scriptures. There are twelve chapters in the treatise and it is difficult to say the original edition is perfect. It may be due to a wide range of materials taken or the additional principle followed by the translator, the volumes seem to be scattered and the work lacks sufficient systematicness. On the part of the concentrated learning, many of the contents are scattered in different volumes with repetitions. In order to explore the meditation objects and methods in the *Vimuttimaggā*, the research adopts the method of simplification to sort out each chapter and the contents corresponding to the topic.

The author of *Vimuttimaggā* is Upatissa. The details of his life are not recorded. The Japanese scholars Nagai and Nanjio believed that Upatissa was a particular person in the history, but an Indian scholar wrote that there are no records about Upatissa in the Pali

¹⁶ 阿羅漢優波底沙梁言大光造，梁扶南三藏僧伽婆羅譯，《大正藏》，《解脫道論》(Taishō Tripiṭaka, Vimuttimaggā) 卷6, 第1648经

scriptures or documentaries.¹⁷ The Samantapāsādikā mentions Upatissa who could possibly have the same identity as the author of the *Vimuttimaggā*.¹⁸

In the *Vimuttimaggā* we can find a special definition of *Ānāpānasati* and it shows the different way of understanding the practice. A Chinese scholar Huang-Xianian explored it and came to a conclusion that some of the teachings came from the gurus and not from the scriptures directly.¹⁹ The teaching on *Ānāpānasati* in the *Vimuttimaggā* is contained in chapter 4, The Way of Practice.²⁰

In the *Vimuttimaggā*, the explanation of sixteen bases of *Ānāpānasati* has three aspects: they are the four foundations of mindfulness, four *jhānas*, and four methods. At the beginning of this chapter, the author points that it needs to achieve the four foundations of mindfulness.²¹

The structure of these four bases of breathing meditation in the *Vimuttimaggā* is same with the description in the Agamas. First, the author explains the preparation for the practice of these four bases. For the important factors of these four bases, the *Vimuttimaggā* explains how to coordinate the breathing and the mind. This treatise explains that the principle is concentration. If the practitioner is in the deep concentration, he can coordinate the breathing and the mind, thus the breathing will become very subtle. *Vimuttimaggā* follows the stages of *jhāna* and classifies the body from gross to subtle, up to the point of achieving Nirvana. Compared with the Chinese Āgama scriptures, the second four bases of *Ānāpānasati* are explained in a way similar to the *Visuddhimaggā*. The structure of these bases follows the four *jhānas* and includes a clear explanation. The third four bases are explained in a way similar to the *Visuddhimaggā*. The forth four bases of *Ānāpānasati* are clearly explained in the *Vimuttimaggā*. They are contemplating impermanence, contemplating fading away, contemplating cessation, and contemplating relinquishment.

¹⁷ P.V. Bapat (1937), *Vimuttimaggā and Visuddhimaggā: A Comparative Study*, Poona, India.p.17

¹⁸ 优波底沙著，黄夏年译，解脱道论 (Huang-Xianian, *Vimuttimaggā*)，高雄：佛光文化事业有限公司，1998。页3。

¹⁹ 覃江，“汉传‘安般念’传承考” (Qin Jiang, *The Inheritance of Ānāpānasati in Chinese Language Buddhism*)，《西南民族大学学报，人文社科版》，2005年第26卷，第4期，第282-284页。

²⁰ 阿羅漢優波底沙梁言大光造，梁扶南三藏僧伽婆羅譯，《大正藏》，《解脱道論》(Taishō Tripitaka, *Vimuttimaggā*)卷6，第1648经，分別定品第四

²¹ Ibid. 行门品第四，“令滿四念處，令滿七覺意，令滿解脫。

In short, the two treatises demonstrate different ways of analyzing the way of practice. Based on its own way of analysis, the *Visuddhimagga* extended the stages of Ānāpānasati from four to eight, not following the structure of the *Vimuttimagga*. The *Vimuttimagga* describes four stages of counting, connection, fixing, and observing. The key points here include three parts. The significance of touching, the explanation of purification and the analysis of meditation sign.

In the discussion on meditation sign in the *Vimuttimagga*, there are two kinds of explanation and both of them in chapter 4.²² The first one describes the characteristics of meditation sign and used some metaphors. The second one discusses the appearance of the sign and describes the related feelings of the body.

For the first description, the meditation sign is compared to a silk cloth or cotton. This description was accepted by the *Visuddhimagga*. Back to the *Vimuttimagga*, the author believes that meditation practice should be based on this sign, making it stronger and clearer. With the white light increasing, the counterpart sign will emerge in the working place such as the nose, lips, or even extend to the whole head, and the practitioner will be able to feel the movement of the wind. At this time, the practitioner will experience happiness and calmness.

The second kind of meditation sign is called the abnormal sign. This kind of sign is like smoke, fog or dust, and it can disturb the practitioner. The treatise describes the feelings which appear with the abnormal sign, such as the needling sensation or the biting of ants. This disturbing experience will make the practitioner confused or attached to it. With this sign, the practitioner easily loses mindfulness and forgets to concentrate on the breathing. However, if the practitioner will keep his mindfulness on the breath and refuse to follow the sign, this kind of sign will disappear. So the practitioner will achieve the subtle and correct meditation sign, like the cotton or silk cloth.

Scholars have different opinions on the different kinds of meditation signs. Some believe that the abnormal sign is the result of a wrong practice, which makes the counterpart

²² Ibid. 行门品第四, “彼坐禅人, 以九小烦恼清净心, 现念入息, 彼相得起。名相者, 如抽绵抽古贝, 触身成乐触, 如凉风触身成乐触, 如见入出息风触, 鼻口唇念作风想, 不由形色, 此谓相。若坐禅人, 以修多修相成增长, 若鼻端增长, 于眉间于额, 成多处住, 成满头风。从此增长, 满身猗乐, 此谓具足。”接着是第二: “复有坐禅人, 从初见异相, 如烟如雾如尘如碎金, 犹如针刺, 如蚁所啮, 见种种色。若坐禅人, 心不明了, 于彼异相, 心作异想成颠倒, 不成出入息想。若明了坐禅人, 不作异意想, 念现入息, 念现出息, 离作余想, 若如是作意, 异相即灭, 是坐禅人得微妙相。心不放逸, 念现入息念现出息。”

sign impossible.²³ But most of the scholars believe it is only one period or step of practice. In the *Vimuttimaggā*, the author said that if one thinks this way, the abnormal sign will disappear.²⁴ Another evidence show that the calmness of the whole body is one positive achievement of practice. So the abnormal sign is only one stage of practice, it can develop with mindfulness until the counterpart sign is coming. In the *Visuddhimaggā*, the author set the debate of meditation sign aside and only emphasized mindfulness to encourage the practitioners to continue their observation.²⁵

Briefly, the *Vimuttimaggā* discusses the meditation sign and establishes a theory to explain it. The description involves the explanation of abnormal sign, counterpart sign, and the way of getting and using it. Compared with the *Visuddhimaggā*, the theory of meditation sign in the *Vimuttimaggā* is more original. It has deeply influenced the practice of *Ānāpānasati* in China.

The Comparison of *Ānāpānasati* in the Two Treatises

As a teaching on meditation, *Ānāpānasati* is a guide for training the mind. The following discussion will focus on the three aspects, namely the preparation for meditation practice, the comparison of working places, and the meditation sign.

The preparation for meditation can be defined in two ways. On a larger scale, it includes the monastic discipline and dhutanga practice. In the narrow definition, it only includes the detailed method of living in the place of meditation.

In the *Visuddhimaggā*, the discussion about meditation involves mainly concepts. In chapter 3, it introduces the concept of concentration and explains it in detail. The preparation for meditation is concerned with two kinds of things. In general, the monastic discipline and dhutanga practice should belong to this kind of preparation.

²³ 覃江，入山捉猴：佛教安般念研究 (Qin Jiang, Catching the monkey in mountains: a study of *Ānāpānasati* in Buddhism), 四川：巴蜀书社，2008.8, 页165。The scholar QinJiang believes that the abnormal sign here in *Vimuttimaggā* is wrong and against the white counterpart sign near the nose. In fact, in Mahayana scripture such as *Śūraṅgama-sūtra*, the counterpart sign is observing the white counterpart sign near the nose.

²⁴ 阿羅漢優波底沙梁言大光造，梁扶南三藏僧伽婆羅譯，《大正藏》，《解脫道論》，(T. *Vimuttimaggā*) 第32册，第7卷，第1648经，行門品，“若如是作意，異相即滅”

²⁵ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimaggā*, Tr. by Ye Jun, (觉音尊者著，叶均译，《清淨道論》，高雄：正覺學會，2000年），頁286。

The first section in the *Visuddhimagga* explains the rules of discipline, with the method to find a suitable temple to practice, or how to find a qualified teacher.²⁶ Without this preparation, the practice of meditation will be difficult. The *Vimuttimaggā* uses the same structure to explain how important this preparation is. It gives more explanation of the ascetic practices. The comparison of the working places between two treatises can give some clue for understanding the development of meditation theory.

The second section of the *Visuddhimagga* describes samatha practice, especially the conception of a working place (*kammaṭṭhāna*).²⁷ There are forty meditation objects or working places, which include breathing meditation. For the different stages of concentration, the method of practice is different.

Based on its own method, the *Visuddhimagga* extended the stages of *Ānāpānasati* from four to eight, not following the structure of the *Vimuttimaggā*. The eight stages of *Ānāpānasati* in the *Visuddhimagga* are counting, connection, touching, fixing, observing, turning away, purification, and looking back on these. The *Vimuttimaggā* describes four stages: counting, connection, fixing, and observing. The key points here include three aspects: the significance of touching, the explanation of purification and the analysis of the meditation sign. First is the exploration of the stage called touching. There are three stages common to the two treatises. Counting, connection, and fixing have the same explanation but touching is a new stage that occurred in the *Visuddhimagga*. The stage of touching focuses on the working place of *Ānāpānasati*, at the point where breath is touching the body. The observation of this point as the working place makes the process of *Ānāpānasati* more exact.

Purification became an individual stage with its meaning related to the name of the *Visuddhimagga*. In the perspective of Indian Buddhism, purification is an important conception of Buddhist practice.

Another important change in the *Visuddhimagga* is the addition of four new stages after observing. The stages observing, turning away, purification and looking back on these belong to the insight meditation. All the insight meditation stages are based on the practice of observation. For these special eight stages, the *Visuddhimagga* constructs one system to complete the practice.

²⁶ Tr. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, **The Path of Purification**, op.cit., pp.5-55, Part I—Virtue (Sīla).

²⁷ Ibid.

With the purpose to complete the theory of meditation, the *Visuddhimagga* adds this stage and establish one condition to produce the meditation sign. It can say that in the *Visuddhimagga*, the counterpart sign of meditation is an axis to organize the stages of practice. The description of meditation sign in two treatises are different.

It is necessary to discuss the five *jhāna* factors to mark the four or five kinds of *jhāna*, which the *Visuddhimagga* describes clearly.²⁸ In the practice of the first *jhāna*, the five *jhāna* factors are the applied thought, sustained thought, joy, bliss, and one-pointedness.

In the *Visuddhimagga*, the description of the meditation sign is more clear than in the *Vimuttimaggā*. The author describes three kinds of meditation signs: preparatory sign, taken-up sign, and counterpart sign. The critical one is the sign which can help the practitioner to distinguish the *jhāna*. The preparatory sign is always unstable: it usually appears as a gray image or some other thing. If the practitioners follow the object wrongly, they will meet the abnormal sign. The *Vimuttimaggā* discussed this kind of abnormal sign and it can lead to the preparation sign according to the *Visuddhimagga*. When concentration is accumulated, the meditation sign will be pure and stable. The taken-up sign means the pure meditation sign that occurs in the mind of the practitioner. If the practitioner maintains mindfulness, the counterpart sign will arise with the five factors of *jhāna* to distinguish it. The arising of the counterpart sign marks the achievement of the first *jhāna*.

The difference between the two treatises on this topic is the description of the counterpart sign. The explanation of it in the *Visuddhimagga* is more precise than in the *Vimuttimaggā*. It can be said that the *Vimuttimaggā* is a more mature treatise, particularly in explaining the practice of *Ānāpānasati*.

Conclusion

The number of studies dedicated to the two treatises, especially the topic of *Ānāpānasati* in the perspective of Chinese Buddhism, was increasing during the fifty years after the translation of these works was completed. The remarkable growth of the related research shows that Chinese Buddhists began to pay attention to these great treatises.

For the first objective, this paper introduced the background of the *Visuddhimagga* and presented an explanation of *Ānāpānasati* found in this treatise, in short, the sixteen bases

²⁸ Ibid., p.147.

and the eight stages. The explanation of *Ānāpānasati* in the *Visuddhimagga* is based on the four foundations of mindfulness. Obviously, Buddhaghōṣa used the description of *Ānāpānasati* from the ancient scriptures and made it more precise. This paper discussed the eight stages of *Ānāpānasati* and clearly explained the way to achieve the first *jhāna*. The observation of the meditation sign as described in the treatise is an important part for mind training. From the view of Chinese Buddhism, the *Visuddhimagga* made a great contribution to the theory of meditation. The meditation sign is the key factor to achieve *jhāna*.

The second research objective was to study *Ānāpānasati* as described in the *Vimuttimaggā*. The *Vimuttimaggā* is another Buddhist manual for practice, which authorship is attributed to Ven. Upatissa. Some scholars believe that the *Vimuttimaggā* was the key reference book for the *Visuddhimaggā* because the treatises share many opinions and metaphors. The *Vimuttimaggā* and the *Visuddhimaggā* follow the same structure when explaining the practice of *Ānāpānasati*. For the description of the meditation sign, the *Vimuttimaggā* comes up with a theory to point that the abnormal sign can be overcome with right concentration. To compare with the *Visuddhimaggā*, its explanation is simple and brief.

After the comparison of the two treatises, especially in the part of *Ānāpānasati* explanation, it can be said that they have the same structure but describe the aim of practice differently. The idea of the *Visuddhimaggā* is based on the concept of purification and determines the highest goal as seven purifications. For the *Vimuttimaggā*, freedom is the highest objective. *Ānāpānasati* is a way to achieve sixteen insight knowledges step by step. Vipassanā depends on samatha, concentration and wisdom have a close relationship.

The new discoveries of this paper are twofold. First, the *Visuddhimaggā* established a theory of the meditation sign, second, the *Vimuttimaggā* is the first treatise in China to introduce the concept of the counterpart sign. Although it is simple and original, its influence was significant.

Abbreviations

EĀ.	Ekottara Āgama	增壹阿含经
T.	Taishō Tripiṭaka	大正新修大藏经

References

I. Chinese Primary Sources

大正新修大藏经刊行会编,《大正新修大藏经》(Taishō Tripiṭaka)东京:大藏出版株式会社, Popular Edition in 1988.

求那跋陀罗译,《大正藏》,《杂阿含经》(Taishō Tripiṭaka, Saṃyukta Āgama),第2册,第99经,第5卷,第803经。

求那跋陀羅譯,《大正藏》,《杂阿含经》(Taishō Tripiṭaka, Saṃyukta Āgama),第2册,第99经,第29卷,第808经。

瞿昙僧伽提婆译,《大正藏》,《增壹阿含经》(T, EĀ.), (增壹阿含经安般品第十七之一·一),第2册,第5卷,第125经。(和上面空格不同)

II. English Primary Sources

Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, *The path of purification*, tr. by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, Buddhist Publication Society, 2010.

Arahant Upatissa. *The Path of Freedom*, trs. from Chinese by Rev. N.R.M. Ehara, Soma Thera and Kheminda Thera. Colombo: D.R.D. Weerasuria, 1961.

III. Chinese Secondary Sources

(1) Chinese Books

王建光,魏晋南北朝时期的头陀僧,(Wang Jianguang, *The dhūta monks in the Six Dynasties*)《华林》第2卷。中华书局,2002年。

印顺,印度佛教思想史(Yinshun, *History of Indian Buddhist Thought*)台北:正闻出版社,1992。

吕澂,印度佛学源流略讲(Lu Cheng, *The Brief Lecture of the Indian Development*),上海:上海人民出版社,2005。

优波底沙著,黄夏年译,解脱道论(Huang-Xianian, *Vimuttimagga*),高雄:佛光文化事业有限公司,1998。

吴信如,禅定述要(Wu-Xinru, *The brief of meditation*),北京:民族出版社,2002。

觉音尊者著,叶均译,《清静道论》(Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga*, tr. by Ye Jun),高雄:正觉学会,2000。

覃江, 入山捉猴: 佛教安般念研究 (Qin Jiang, *Catching the monkey in mountains: a study of Ānāpānasati in Buddhism*), 四川: 巴蜀书社, 2008.8。

(2) Chinese Articles

巫白慧,《世界宗教研究》,“印度早期禅法初探——奥义书的禅理”1996年,第4期。

林崇安,《中華佛學學報》,“释尊时期止观法门的实践”,(Lin Chong'an, *The meditation practice of Samatha and Vipassana in the age of Buddha*) 1997年,第125-146页。

黄夏年,《南亚研究》,“觉音的《清净道论》及其禅法”(Huang-Xianian,“*Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga and His Practice of Dhyana*”),1989年,第1期,第26-36页。

覃江,《西南民族大学学报,人文社科版》,“汉传‘安般念’传承考”,2005年第26卷,第4期,第282-284页。

释大寂,《世界宗教学刊》,“《长部·大念处经》中观呼吸法门与《瑜伽师地论》中阿那般那念之比较”,Shi Daji, Compare the practice of breath in ‘Mahasatipatthana Sutta’ in Dīghanikāya with the way of ānāpāna in Yogācāra-bhūmi), 2007年6月,第九期,第38页。

释自鼎,《成大中文学报》,“佛典中修习禅定过程的诠释——以《清净道论》[观呼吸]禅定过程为例”(Zinai Shi, *The Interpretation of Meditative Process in Buddhist Texts: the Practice of Mindfulness of Breathing (ānāpānasati) in Visuddhimagga as an Example*), 2007年,第87-124页。

(3) Chinese Thesis

哈磊, 四念处研究 (Ha Lei, A Study of the Catvari Smṛty-upasthānāni), *Dissertation of Ph.D.* Si Chuang: Si Chuang University, 2004.

释大荷,《清净道论》“安那般那念”之古今诠释——以南传上座部佛使尊者与帕奥禅师为例, (Shidahe, *On Ancient and Modern Explanatory Comments of ānāpānasati in Visuddhimagga – Taking Bhikkhu Buddhadasa and Pa-Auk Sayadaw as Examples*), *Master's Degree thesis*. Yilan: Fo Guang University, 2008.

IV. English Secondary Sources

(1) English Books

P.V. Bapat, *Vimuttimaggā and Visuddhimaggā: A Comparative Study*, printed by J.C. Sarkhel, Calcutta oriental press, Calcutta, 1937.

(2) English articles

Anālayo, “The Treatise on the Path to Liberation (解脱道论) and the Visuddhimaggā”, *Fuyan Buddhist Studies*, No.4(2009) : 1-15.