

The Nature of Abbhantarañāṇa*

Ven. Ratanak Keo, Phrakhru Bhavanabodhikun and Suwin Thongpan
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, KhonKaen Campus, Thailand
Corresponding Author, E-mail: ratanak_keo@yahoo.com

Abstract

The purpose of study is to analyze the nature of abbhantarañāṇa in the context of knowledge. It intends to study the knowledge related to the perspectives of Buddhist canonical texts, scholars and philosophical thinkers.

This paper analyzes the nature of abbhantarañāṇa (intuition) focusing on the definition, meaning, nature and characteristics of abbhantarañāṇa. According to the analytical result abbhantarañāṇa is a faculty of the mind: immediate knowledge putting the term knowledge beyond the mental process of conscious thought. In the perspective of Buddhism it is deemed a mental state between the universal mind and one's individual mind. It is the first state of enlightenment, direct innovation or immediate knowledge without technique and it exists secretly.

Otherwise abbhantarañāṇa is the ability to acquire knowledge without proof and understanding and it is “inner knowledge, intelligence, insight, the ability to know or understand without rational interference, interrogation, or experiment. On the other hand, it is the first stage of enlightenment without technique and cause and it arises mysteriously. The arising of abbhantarañāṇa is the nature of related process of intuitive nature itself with arising new knowledge, special knowledge and inner insight. When it appears it is very important to remember and take note due to this kind of knowledge can give benefits for life.

Keywords: Abbhantarañāṇa; Intuition; Inner Knowledge

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1. Introduction

This article is an analytical study of *Abbhantarañāṇa* in the context of knowledge. It intends to study the knowledge related to the perspectives of Buddhist canonical texts, scholars and Philosophical thinkers.

In Theravada Buddhism, Buddha, Buddhist scholars and especially the meditators always talk about *ñāṇa*, using it with other compound Pali word such as *vipassana-ñāṇa*, *solasa-ñāṇa* and so on. One problem is that neither ‘16 *vipassana-ñāṇa*’, ‘three kinds of *ñāṇa*’, ‘*solasa-ñāṇa*’ nor other *ñāṇas* which are taught in Buddhism can be found in the Pali Canon except that the terms of ‘*Abbhantara-ñāṇa*’ not appear.

Abbhantarañāṇa is not often talked about like *vipassana-ñāṇa*, *solasa-ñāṇa* (16 insight, knowledge) or three kinds of *ñāṇa*: insight; knowledge but it is a kind of new knowledge that always arises in the inner mind of all human beings. It is the ability to acquire knowledge without proof, conscious reasoning, or evidence or without understanding how knowledge was acquired. It is like an automatic knowledge which arises by its self without practice and it always arises and appears by the nature of its self. Mostly we are not interested in what, when, where and why this kind of knowledge

arises in our mind. Likewise we rarely know the benefits and importance of this knowledge for our lives. As the definition, meaning, nature, characteristic of *Abbhantarañāṇa* is not mostly interested and known-well in the term of philosophy. It is not described clearly. So we should put forward the questions: what is *Abbhantarañāṇa*?

Thus this analytical article is going to study definition, meaning, nature, characteristic and kinds of *Abbhantarañāṇa* in perspectives of scholars and thinkers and in terms of Theravada Buddhist philosophy.

2. Definition

Abbhantarañāṇa is a compound Pali word consists of *abbayantara* + *ñāṇa*. *Abbhantara* (Mahāthera,1997) (Pali, Sanskrit, *Abbhayantara* or *Abbhayān-tara*) means inner, inside between or between inside, middle or middle place. *Abbhantara* (Nath, 1968) is used as a prefix for connecting to other words. For example: *abbhantarakirya* (*abbhantara* + *kirya*) means inner verb, inside verb. This verb that use the *anta*-prefix or *mana*-prefix as an adverb of compound noun, mostly use is widely in Pali and Sanskrit words. There are many words that use as prefix, *abbhantara* such as *abbhantarasanna*, *abbhantarasima*, *abbhantaratha*,



abbhanta-raññā and so on.

Ñāṇa (Pali, Sanskrit, ñā-thatu + yu-suffix) means knowledge, intelligence, insight, conviction and recognition. Ñāṇa is in the theory of cognition: it occurs in intensive couple-compounds with the term sight such as cakkhu (eye) and dassana (sight or view), giving (right) understanding or enlightening. There are three kinds of ñāṇa (insight or knowledge): (1) atitamsa-ñāṇa: insight in to the past or knowledge of the past, (2) Anāgatamsa-ñāṇa: insight in to the future, knowledge of the future and (3) paccuppannamsa-ñāṇa: insight in to the present, knowledge of the present. And other three kinds of ñāṇa (insight; knowledge): (1) acca-ñāṇa: knowledge of truths, (2) kicca-ñāṇa: knowledge of the functions with regard to Four Noble Truths and (3) kata-ñāṇa: knowledge what had been done with regard to Four Noble Truths. Cakkhukarana (giving (in)—sight, e.g. Dassana ‘knowing and seeing’, ‘clear sight’, i.e. perfect knowledge; having a vision of truth, i.e. the theory of life with a recognition of truth, philosophy and all-comprising knowledge.

Abbhantaraññā is a compound Pali word: abbhanatara + ñāṇa = abbhanataraññā means possibility of understanding or knowing something immediately without

having to go through thinking, an experiment or interrogation. It is translated in English word “intuition” in term of philosophy. In the term of Buddhist epistemology, it is the purity of first enlightenments, direct innovation or immediately without humility (middleman). It is enlightenment without technique and middleman and it exists with secrecy.

Abbhantaraññā is translated as ‘inner knowledge, intelligence, insight or it is best translated as ‘intuition’ with the English and philosophical word ‘intuition’ (Petro). The word intuition comes from Latin verb intueri translated as to ‘consider’ or from the late Middle English word intuit to contemplate the ability to know without rational interference.

3. General Meaning

Abbhantaraññā is instant instruction or consciously instinctively intuition, the possibility of understanding or knowing of something immediately without having to go through thinking, interrogation, or experiment. For instance, one understands the goodness of own lives by the sense of seeing or seeing without thinking.

Abbhantaraññā is the beginning of the first enlightenment, as a direct sight or momentum, without the help of a mediator.



It is enlightenment without technique and cause (or guide), it arises mysteriously.

Another meaning, abbhantarañāṇa has a great variety of different meanings like inner sensing, unconscious cognition, ranging from direct access into unconscious knowledge, inner insight to unconscious pattern-recognition and the ability to understand something instinctively, without the need for conscious reasoning, usually translated into English ‘intuition’, translated into Khmer ‘អាមេរីយោប់’ and Thai ‘อัชฌัตติကญาณ, การรู้เอง’, known by its self. In philosophical theory, there are philosophers who contend that the word ‘intuition’ (Bertrand, 1976) is often misunderstood or misused to mean instinct, truth, belief but rather meaning, realms of greater knowledge and other subjects, whereas others contend that faculties such as instinct, belief and intuition are factually related to intuition.

4. The Nature of Abbhantarañāṇa

Abbhantarañāṇa is the ability to know without sensible interference. It is the birthright, truth, buried treasure that arises in the mind or detector, messenger and life guide leading without thinking or considering. It is like a necessary part of

process of the receptive thought from past experiences with intuitive nature (Carter, 2001). We always receive impressions of abbhantarañāṇa all the time. It is a natural function but a skill or knowledge that can be developed and strengthened. Otherwise it is skillful, subtle and elusive but always presents to deal with knowledge and wisdom. It has the necessary part of becoming aware of what has already been done or existed before. If acknowledged Abbhantarañāṇa is always present or appears, rather than a transcendental event, it becomes much easier to identify its subtle nature.

Abbhantarañāṇa follows the flow of own intention and attention. A focused mind will have access to strong and clear impressions of intuitive nature. When own mind is focused, it guides to specific and meanings of the abbhantarañāṇa. When the mind is focused intently on anything, whatever it is focused on will have access to its intuitive nature. The more mind keeps the attention focused on something the more which is revealed the deeper insight. This is the key to conscious access of abbhantarañāṇa.

In the terms of Buddhism, abbhantarañāṇa is a faculty of mind of



immediate knowledge and puts term knowledge beyond mental process of conscious thought, as the conscious intelligence cannot necessarily reveal subconscious information, or give such information into communicable form. In the practice to get knowledge and wisdom in Theravada Buddhism, there are various techniques that have been developed to produce many kinds of knowledge (*ñāṇa*) including intuitive capability as well, such as meditation resolving of which leads to states of minor enlightenment. *Abbhantarañāṇa* is considered as the mental state or the discriminating mind between the universal mind and one's individual.

5. Kinds of *Abbhantarañāṇa*

Abbhantarañāṇa is divided into four kinds (*abbhantarañāṇa*):

1. *Abbhantarañāṇa-cittavidyā*: (අභජතරුණයාචිස්ට්‍රිජා) Mental Intuition
2. *Abbhantarañāṇa-paññā*: (අභජතරුණයාපනා) Intellectual Intuition
3. *Abbhantarañāṇa-Indriya*: (අභජතරුණයාභ්‍රිය) Faculties Intuition
4. *Abbhantarañāṇa-prakata*: (අභජතරුණයාජාක්‍ර) Certainly Possible Intuition

1. *Abbhantarañāṇa-cittavidyā* (Mental Intuition) deals with data and framework. It is the way of seeing the combinations of information available to the mind that it has not seen before. It leads to certain level of creativity due to piecing things together. In the sense, human with strong mental intuition has gift for coming up with new innovative ideas (Sayadaw, 2008).

2. *Abbhantarañāṇa-paññā* (Wise Intuition) is knowledgeable intuition that people have a more emotional, empathetic sense of intuition which is able to sense how they feel emotionally or to know something or someone. The people who got emotionally intuitive are able to get a sense of way other person feels for them when they meet, even before meeting up physically. The strong emotional intuition of people who are able to feel something or someone before they meet and tell them if someone fits and can create a good relationship and know each other or work together effectively. They intuitively get a sense of how people will come together emotionally.

3. *Abbhantarañāṇa-Indriya* (Faculties Intuition or Physical Intuition) is instinctive part of physical body. It is



important how one would move, moments before something happens to that exact and clear impression which would have endangered them. This faculty intuition informs physical bodies on what one does to prevent being hurt to it and the person intuitively avoids an accident due to being physically awkward.

4. *Abbhantarañāṇa-prakata*: (Certainly Possible Intuition) what one tends to get confused on the difference between own bodies intuition versus and the psyche's intuition. The certainly possible intuition is very different from the other three in that it is not about knowing about specific areas like physical positions, people or ideas. Psyche (Wehmeier, 2001) is the mind, the deepest feeling and attitude. Instead, it is the sense of things related to timelines. One gets a sense that something is shifting or something is not right and there are things looming ahead so one starts preparing for it. This is predictive in nature and takes a holistic view of everything. It often has to do with not just it but how one is involved in something that is bigger.

In short, *Abbhantarañāṇa* is a kind of sixth sense. In the basic model, humans have three different bodies—physical,

emotional and mental. These three bodies feed into a space of awareness which is collectively known as the psyche. The data accumulated over time and tapped into subconsciously by them is used to create a sense of how human calculate the moves and make decisions (McHugh, 2008).

There is a distinction between the three different kinds of intuitive senses that human will find useful. If one can recognize oneself in one of these areas, s/he will be able to tune in to wherever own intuition is stronger.

As three bodies feed into the same space of awareness—the psyche—they are very strongly interlinked and it is important to ensure that the three bodies are well-taken care of and well-developed. It will allow being more in tune with the inner subconscious and making decisions that are closest to the true selves. (Russell, 1979).

6. *Abbhantarañāṇa* (Intuition) and *Vicara* (investigation)

Abbhantarañāṇa and *Vicara* (the relation between *abbhantarañāṇa* and *vicara*) are strategies of thought that depend on each other. Intuition exists first or before the investigation. *Abbhantarañāṇa* happens before *vicara* and it is the basic



provider to create awareness in the mind. Abbhantarañāṇa is sum of total the concluded mind to take and know something easily. For vicara is the proof giver to abbhantarañāṇa.

Abbhantarañāṇa and vicara are two forms of enlightenment which depend on each other, go along together and complete to each other by different forms in the branches of enlightenment. There are four different characteristics Abbhantarañāṇa and Vicara.

The four characteristics of Abbhantarañāṇa (intuition):

1. Abbhatañāṇa is the detective of various discoveries.
2. Abbhatañāṇa is the provider of construction materials.
3. Abbhatañāṇa is founder of a related contact.
4. Abbhatañāṇa is too fast to think without reason, lack of reason.

The four characteristics of Vicara (investigation):

1. Vicara is an analyst on the discovery.
2. Vicara is a recruiter and use of materials.
3. Vicara is representing the value of the relationship.
4. Vicara is comments that are always slower and rarely sparse.

The philosophical link between abbhatañāṇa and vicara: (1) when abbhatañāṇa is detective of various discoveries, vicara is an analyst of the discovery, (2) when abbhatañāṇa is the provider of construction materials; vicara is as the recruiter and user of materials, (3) when abbhatañāṇa is the founder of the related contact, vicara represents the value of the relationship, and (4) when abbhatañāṇa is too fast to think without reason or lack of reason, vicara comments and is always slower and rarely sparse. Therefore both abbhatañāṇa and vicara are depending on each other.

7. Ñāṇas: The Insight Knowledge

In Satipatthana vipassana is the development of Insight Knowledge in terms of one central principle which called three universal characteristics and seven purifications, stages of purification into 16 ñāṇas (insight knowledge). Ñāṇa in Theravada Buddhism is taught clearly by the Buddha and frequently raised to talk by Buddhist scholars and meditators, not like abbhatañāṇa. Here are the kinds of ñāṇa in Theravada Buddhism, namely:

1. Solasa-ñāṇa (16 insight; knowledge or sixteen stages of Vipassanā):



knowledge namely (1) *ñamarupa paricchedañāṇa*: knowledge to distinguish mental and physical states, (2) *paccayapariggahañāṇa*: knowledge of the cause-and-effect relationship between mental and physical states, (3) *sammasanañāṇa*: knowledge of mental and physical processes as impermanent, unsatisfactory and oneself, (4) *udayabbaya ñāṇa*: knowledge of arising and passing away, (5) *bhangāñāṇa*: knowledge of the dissolution of formations, (6) *bhaya ñāṇa*: knowledge of the fearful nature of mental and physical states, (7) *ādinava ñāṇa*: knowledge of mental and physical states as unsatisfactory, (8) *nibbidā ñāṇa*: knowledge of disenchantment, (9) *muncitukamayata ñāṇa*: knowledge of the desire to abandon the worldly state, (10) *patisankha ñāṇa*: knowledge which investigates the path to deliverance and instills a decision to practice further, (11) *sankhārupekha ñāṇa*: knowledge which regards mental and physical states with, (12) *anuloma ñāṇa*: equanimity knowledge which conforms to the Four Noble Truths, (13) *gotrabhu ñāṇa*: knowledge of deliverance from the worldly condition, (14) *maggañāṇa*: knowledge by which defilements are

abandoned and are overcome by destruction, (15) *phalañāṇa* : knowledge which realizes the fruit of the path and has nibbana as object and (16) *paccavekkhana ñāṇa*: knowledge which reviews the defilements still remaining (Payutto, 2003).

2. Other three kinds of *ñāṇa*, insight; knowledge: (1) *Atitamsa-ñāṇa*: insight into the past or knowledge of the past, (2) *Anāgatamsa-ñāṇa*: insight into the future, knowledge of the future and (3) *Paccuppannamsa-ñāṇa*: insight into the present and knowledge of the present.

3. Another three kinds of *ñāṇa*: insight; knowledge: (1) *Sacca-ñāṇa*: knowledge of the truth as they are, (2) *Kicca-ñāṇa*: knowledge of the functions with regards to the Four Noble Truths and (3) *Kata-ñāṇa*: knowledge what had been done with regard to the Four Noble Truths (Ñānārāma, 2000).

Thus three *ñāṇas* (Solasa-ñāṇa: sixteen stages of Vipassanā, another three kinds of *ñāṇa* and other three kinds of *ñāṇa*) above are different from *abbhatarañāṇa*. In Theravada Buddhism, all *Ñāṇas* are developed by course of knowledge in Theravada Buddhism but *abbhatarañāṇa* exist by its self.



8. The characteristics of Abbhantarañāṇa

1. Arising of Abbhantarañāṇa

Abbhantarañāṇa is organic, fluid and free-flowing. The way to access the abbhantarañāṇa is by going outdoors and connecting with nature. The nature is intuitive and always in the flow and balance. The power of nature makes everything happen without any forces of energy or human power. This is the presence or shows the power of abbhantarañāṇa.

Example 1: Nature just knows and realizes that it too has the intuitive nature, an inner knowing of exactly what needs to be done, where to go and how to make things happen. The past experiences offer a gateway for receiving the answers. Whenever we connect to the intuitive flow of past experiences, it can be one with the answers they provide. We feel them, think of them, know them, connect with them and remember that it is everywhere. Abbhantarañāṇa is waiting to give signs, guidance and answers.

Example 2: Sometimes, when we sit with doing nothing, it is just like taking a rest without thinking, considering or investigating and set the mind free into nature. Suddenly it arises the knowing of something or understanding something

clearly in the mind. It is like a new knowledge (Bertrand Russell, 1979) or mental innovation of mind without thinking. It is just like the memory of good or bad past experiences, but it is maybe the new knowledge arising from the past experiences by its revalorizing and converting, therefore it rises up as the good knowledge that it had never appeared in the mind before. This is beautiful, good one of knowledge in the positive way (Phrakru Bhāvanābodhikun, 2011). This kind of knowledge suddenly arises in the mind but it is fast to disappear, there as there is the appearance of Aphantarañāṇa which one should remember or take note of it, because it is going to disappear very fast and mind cannot remember or understand what it is? (Upatessathera, 2012) This kind of knowledge happens in the mind by processing its self that we can call ‘the process of intuitive nature’. This is the appearing of aphantarañāṇas (Tanabe, 2010).

2. Practice to arise of Abbhantarañāṇa

We can tries to practice when we are seeking intuitive insight into something or someone. Close our eyes and sit quietly the first few. With this practice, we will be able to focus on anything, when



we are about and receive impressions easily. And then try this with ways we know and with the thing or persons we do not know anything about, with our discoveries as following:

1. Close the eyes sit quietly and set the mind free. Take a few minutes in deep slow breathing in and out then relax.

2. Bring things we want more insight into our awareness and gently focus on them.

3. Ask our intuition: If these things were an animal, what would (he/she) be? Allow our creative imagination to transform them into the image/impression of an animal.

4. Stay focused on the thing and allows it to access its nature to us. Notice the environment it is in. What is it doing? How is it moving? Ask it to access its nature to us and just continue to observe what emerges in our inner vision or inner thought. After a while, ask any questions that come to mind. It will respond. The abbhantarañāṇa will exist.

Our impression conveys, investigates and considers intuitive insight. If we stay focused and allow things to reveal, we will come away with understanding and insight that could not have been realized through

the analytical faculties and ordinary impressions. This is the process of connecting to abbhantarañāṇa and attempt to practice this with as many things as we can. We can get the full benefit and insight this will bring to us according to practice and observing differences.

3. The Importance of Abbhantarañāṇas

Abbhantarañāṇa is the special knowledge, inner insight that always arises in all human beings by its way. It is like knowledge of way of life, or knowing of something in the correct way to solve the problems of life or help to lead the life into the correct way to be free from any kinds of problems. It is not like vippassanañāṇa or other kinds of ñāṇa described above because those ñāṇas happen by depending on the way of practice like satipatthana vipassana or vipassanakamathana that is insight knowledge to release from suffering (problem), but abbhantarañāṇa is a new knowledge, inner knowledge exists by itself according to the link between past experiences and present events with intuitive nature. It is a good knowledge for leading into happiness of human beings. Therefore, when this kind of knowledge, abbhantarañāṇa arises in the mind, we



must remember it and take note because it will help us to get many benefits for our life.

9. Conclusion

Abbhantarañāṇa is the ability to acquire knowledge without proof, conscious reasoning, evidence, or without understanding. It is inner knowledge, intelligence, insight, the ability to know without rational inference and the possibility of understanding or knowing of something or some one immediately without thinking, interrogation, or experiment. It is the purity of first enlightenments, direct innovation or immediately without humility. It is enlightenment without technique and exists with secrecy. On the other hand, abbhanatarañāṇa is the beginning of the first enlightenment, as a direct sight or momentum, without demonstrating from a mediator. It is enlightenment without

technique and cause and arises mysteriously.

The nature of abbhantarañāṇa is a faculty of the human mind, immediate knowledge with putting term knowledge beyond mental process of conscious thought. In the Buddhist perspectives it is deemed a mental state between the universal mind and one's individual, discriminating mind.

The arising of abbhantarañāṇa is the process of intuitive nature itself as new knowledge, special knowledge and inner insight. When it appears it is very importance to remember and take note because this kind of knowledge can help us to get the benefits of knowing our living and understanding of something and someone in finding correct way to solve the problems and in helping us to practice in correct way for happiness in present and next life.

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