

# Chapter one

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This chapter will focus on several aspects; how a person will achieve a relaxed state of mind through contemplation and whether space can create a psychological relationship with the human mind in achieving this.

## 1.0 Definition of contemplation

'*Contemplation*' is described as a special kind of concentration. In Buddhist psychology contemplation is described as a "*to closely observe*".

*"The corresponding pali verb annupassati can be derived from the verb 'to see', passati, and the emphatic prefix annu, so that annupassati means 'to repeatedly look at', or 'to closely observe'. The discourses often speak of contemplation in order to describe a particular way of meditation, an examination of the observed object from a particular viewpoint. In the case of the body, for example such observation can involve contemplating the body, as impermanent, and therefore as something which doesn't yield lasting satisfaction or as unattractive and not self and therefore as something to let go of."*

(Anlayo There, Satipatthana, The Direct Path to Realization, (2003), Quality Printers, Sri Lanka)

Rebecca Krink, (CLC, 2005, London, p2.) discusses range of ideas about contemplation. She presents Dr. Jon Kabat-Zin's idea of contemplation which is similar to Buddhist analysis.

*(These terms) refer to methods of disciplining the mind by focusing on a specific object of thought or by completely letting go of all thoughts and emotions, and just simply watching or witnessing whatever arises in a consciousness. Such practice usually results in growing awareness of non-attachment to the contents of our mind, with an increasing ability to exercise choice in how we use our mind. In practical terms, this usually brings about a greater sense of self-mastery, well-being, equanimity and reduced stress".*

(Rebecca Krinke, 2005, Contemporary landscape of Contemplation, Routledge and Francrgce group London).

Here she emphasises that contemplation involves stress reduction.

She also presents another aspect of contemplation described by Robert Durbaks. He finds contemplation to be an activity that deepens our involvement with the world.

Krink also stresses that 'contemplation' is a developmental activity. "Contemplation may start from definition of fixed attention of one thing". But it is not a fixed action or goal, it is developmental activity. Contemplation moves from "fixed attention" to "identification", which may defined as becoming one with the object one is contemplating, until eventually, "identification" deepens, and there is the sense of communion.<sup>1</sup>

Contemplation is thus an inner experience that one can get while a person is engaging in a deep level of observation or viewing. Considering those ideas, it is evident that the religious ideologies focused on the spiritual aspects of contemplation, Dr. Kabat-zin and Durbaks, focused more on establishing positive thinking and calming of the mind in achieving day-to-day targets which are more worldly and materialistic. All these ideas and views commonly express the calm and soothing qualities the contemplative mind would possess. In this thesis, contemplative qualities are taken as one that can be experienced in day-to-day targets, which is similar to the therapeutic effect for example spa, action or engaging in a hobby such as watching film or opera.

### **1.1.1. Contemplative state of mind**

Many researches have established that one can achieved deep relaxation through contemplation. Therefore the contemplative state of mind is considered as a relaxed state of mind.

*"A meditative state is the state of mind that someone is in during meditation. It is usually a state of relaxation".*

*Wikipedia the free encyclopedia.*

The Venerable Ajahn Chah (Thai Meditation master), in 'A Test of Freedom', clearly describes the character of mental state of contemplative mind and it's relation to relaxation. According to him this mental state is known as "Samadi". *Samadi* is the state of concentrated calm.

*"Samadi is the state of concentrated calm resulting from meditation practice. Once the mind is peaceful this can happen, you do not have to think a lot about it , it just happens by itself. This is called the energy of a peaceful mind. This state of mind is not drowsy; the five hindrances- desire, aversion, restlessness, dullness and doubt have all fled... .. When the mind is peaceful and established firmly in mindfulness and self-awareness, there will be no doubt concerning the various phenomena, which we encounter. We will clearly know, as it is everything that arises in the mind. The mind which reaches samadi is like this. ... .. This samadi brings great peace."*

*Venerable Ajahn Chah, , A taste of Freedom, (2006)The Wheel publication, Thailand*

Therefore the contemplative state can be considered as a 'peaceful', 'calm' and 'relaxed' state. 'Samadhi' can be maintained in different levels. It is developed stage by a stage, but every stage is maintained by certain degree of calmness, peace and relaxation in mind. Mind becomes more refined at each stage. The Character of this initial level of 'samadi' can be described as the following :



Figure 1

Contemplate in landscape

*"This mind is peaceful, but it's as if there is "cloudiness" within the calm. It's not a normal sort of drowsiness though, some impressions will manifest, may be we'll hear a sound or see a dog or something. It's not really clear, but it is not dream either. This is because these live factors have become unbalanced and weak."*

*Venerable Sujiva There, the first step to insight meditation DEL printers (PVT) Ltd Sri Lanka (1998)*



This is very close to the peaceful state of mind that one would experience in the day-to-day life such as engaging in watching film or in a opera or a drawing a painting<sup>2</sup>; but this state of mind is focused, and mindful, so one can see clearly with no confusion, be able to take the right judgment, control sudden impulses emotions and be able to go towards deep concentration. In the deepest level of samadi mind become stable and well focussed and much clear. To achieve the most refined state of mind we need to focus to our attention on the inner mind. At this stage the mind will be detached from the outer world.<sup>3</sup>

Ajahn Chah stresses that one can realize true freedom and peace through contemplation. He stresses that this development needs to be based on the integration of proper understand and “mindfulness” in to both meditation and ordinary daily activity.<sup>4</sup> The significance of the process of contemplation is that one can experience different levels of *Samadhi* while on contemplating. It point out that one can have similar experience of first level of *samadi* by perceiving tranquillity of environment.

### 1.1.2. Form of contemplation

According to Buddhist psychology basically there are two forms of contemplation to achieve the peaceful mind. These are ‘*calming contemplation*’ and ‘*insight contemplation*’.<sup>5</sup>

Thurman, professor of indo- Tibetan studies, defines such forms of contemplation. As follows:

“There is “*calming contemplation*” focuses on the elimination of thought, which benefiting body and mind, and “*insight contemplation*” which is similar to “*reflective states*”, and is considered to contribute more to psychological, intellectual and spiritual development than *calming contemplation*”.

Rebecca Krink, (CLC, 2005, London, p1.)

## **FORM OF CONTEMPLATION**

### **CALMING CONTEMPLATION**

- **FOCUS ON  
INNER MIND AND  
BODY**
- **CONCENTRATE  
OR  
CONTEMPLATE  
ON BODY  
MOVEMENT,  
BREATH OR  
MENTAL  
IMPRESSION**

### **INSIGHT MEDITATION**

- SOLVING PROBLEMS,  
SEEING THE TRUTH.  
CONCENTRATE OR  
CONTEMPLATE ON  
THREE UNIVERSAL  
CHARACTER OF**
- **IMPERMANENCE**
  - **UNSATISFACTO  
RY**
  - **NON-SELF**



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**RELAX PEACEFUL MIND WHICH  
FREE FROM RESTLESSNESS,  
AVERSION, DULLNESS AND  
DOUBT,**

### **STATE OF SAMADHI**

- **FIRST LEVEL OF SAMADHI**
- **DEEPEST LEVEL OF  
SAMADHI**

The Venerable Ajaha Chah presents a similar idea. According to him one can attain a contemplative mind through the use of wisdom (through contemplating and seeing the truth of things, solving problem). He further says that when we see the truth, peace will arise. While another one can achieve the same mental state by concentrating towards the mental impression arises in inner mind or breath or body movement such as waking meditation. The Individual can come to the contemplative state by using one of these methods.

He described the *insight contemplation* as follows.

“One can attain peace through the use of wisdom, through contemplating and seeing the truth of things solving problems that way. This is using wisdom rather than the power of Samadhi” to attain calm in practice it's not necessary to sit in meditation, for instance. Just ask yourself ... And solve your problem right there. A person with wisdom is like is this?  
(Venerable Ajahn Chah, (20060), *A taste of Freedom*, The Wheel publication, Thailand )

The Venerable Sujeewa There author of First step to Insight Meditation, describe that **insight contemplation as concentrating the mind onto the three universal characteristics of existence, impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non- self.**

“This can be achieved by understanding the nature of hindrance regarding the three universal characteristics of impermanence, unsatisfactory ness, non –self.”  
Venerable Sujiva There, *The first step to insight meditation* DEL printers (PVT) Ltd Sri Lanka (1998)

“In this contemplation it is of particular importance to dissociated the feelings from even the faintest thoughts of 'I' or 'mine'. ”there should be no ego-reframe.

(Nayanponka Thera, *contemplation of feeling*, The discourse grouping on the feelings. ( *Vedana-samayantta*) Translated from the Pali, with an introduction, Buddhist publication society., Sri Lanaka)



According to the Ven: Ajahn Chah; in '**calming contemplation**', it is necessary to **focus our attention on the inner mind**. When our attention is solely focused towards the inner mind, we see all mental impression clearly. We will see the coming together of morality, concentration and wisdom. This is called the path in harmony. When there is this harmony, the mind will be free of confusion and become calm. Here he emphasizes the substance of introverted nature of mind to achieve the peacefulness in mind. This calm mind can even lead towards deep **insight meditation**.<sup>6</sup>

*"Here we enter calm and then the mind is sufficiently calm, we come out and look at outer activity. Looking at outside with a calm mind gives rise to wisdom".*

*(Venerable Ajahn Chah, (2006), A taste of Freedom, The Wheel publication, Thailand)*

From such a point we can identify in to another crucial phenomenon that calmness that is achieved through contemplative environment (many evidence specially Kaplan's restorative theory and Jay Appleton survival theory indicate that natural landscape has great impact on calming the mind) can even lead towards the insight contemplation. In that point it can be assumed that landscape space has the possibility to persuade the person towards the deep spiritual level. In 'calming contemplation' observation is based on body movement, breath or mental impressions that arise in inner mind.

Whether it is 'calming contemplation' or 'insight meditation' awareness is important in achieving peaceful mind. In *Satipattana Suthra* says: in bringing the mind to them of contemplation, Sati or awareness is an important factor. This Sati is simply recollection. It is a cause for the arising of self-awareness and wisdom. This steady, undisturbed, alert and clear kind of awareness is defined as mindfulness. By concentrating with awareness on specific objects one can develop the mindfulness, which means contemplation.<sup>7</sup>

*"For right samadi mind should be calm with awareness at all."*

*Venerable Sujiva There*

By cultivating such qualities as concentration, awareness, intelligence, will, energy, the analytical faculty, confidence, and joy, the mediator can gain mental calmness or tranquillity in terms of inner part of happiness and in some may reach the highest wisdom which is free from mental impediments.

As described earlier, contemplation can be identified as fixed attention or close observation with an alert mind. This is a process fully experienced through one's mind and can be said as a state of mind. One may achieve a relaxed state of mind through body activity and close watch of mental impressions. One may realize it through an insight. It was accepted that in the process of contemplation, it is important to see the impermanence of secular things and the self less nature of world.

**If this kind of mental state, or the contemplative state can be-induced through space; if space can evoke feelings of impermanence, and non self and therefore association of such space can help creating the contemplative state of mind.**



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### **1.2. Contemplation from stress reduction perspective.**

According to Thai meditation Master Ajaha Chah, mind is normally peaceful, but, depending on moods happiness or pain will occur. When we don't follow the moods; mind becomes peaceful. Such mind doesn't get disturbed by emotion such as anger, sadness and greed that are factors of stress generatio. Training the mind to be alert on these aspects, such things can be avoided.

In line with Buddhist philosophy, a mind, which is deflected by feelings, desires and emotions, is considered as a weak mind; and a mind, which is focused and settled, is considered as strong one.



Figure 2

Many people like to relax in outdoor environment such as mountain area



'Sathipattana sutra', the Buddhist philosophical text about meditation explains that the mind which is controlled through meditation or contemplation is better focused and strong. Through such training one cultivates in one self-positive thoughts and emotions that are conducive to happiness, contentment, kindness, compassion, and helpfulness. These are dispositions or in normal terms, virtues that protect one from the world. Contributing to a positive self-concept. The beneficial effects for the body and mind through meditation or contemplation have been well documented by research and are exemplified by a calm, relaxed state.

## 1.2 Art as a contemplative media

Early discussion indicates that contemplation is a totally mental exercise, which is carried out within. Hence the question arises whether a lifeless object or an inanimate environment which is space can make such difference

- *"There is something aristocratic about an English riding boot. It's rather odd-looking leather sheath, only faintly reminiscent of the shape of a human leg –it awakens sensation of elegance and luxury- calls to mind prancing thoroughbreds and pink coats."*

*(Steen Eiler Rasmussen, experiencing Architecture, Chapman and Hall 1959-London)*

The Above statements clearly suggest that lifeless objects may influence generating feelings and emotions. Susanne Langer brings out a similar theory in her book *Form and feelings*: which says lifeless objects can evoke pleasure and displeasure. This feeling evoked by lifeless object is described as objective feelings and is totally depending on the beholder.<sup>8</sup> But According to Langer, artwork can have a greater and deeper impact on a beholder than day-to-day physical objects. Art is often linked to contemplation: the artist may be seen as being in a contemplative state to create or the viewer is seen as contemplating the work of art.<sup>9</sup>

*“Work of art has the ability to stimulate and producing sentiment in the spectator”*

*(Langer Susanne- feeling and form, (1953), Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.  
London*

*“Art achieves its communicability through the identity of mental content between the artist and spectator”*

*(Thanji Rekha The esthetic meaning 1980)*

Langer establishes this idea by giving several reasons. She emphasise that the function of art is not ‘make believe’ but to understand the meaning it presents. Therefore the purpose of art is not preaching and blind belief, but arousing curiosity and triggering the mind to think, and find out things by one self. This is similar to what happens in the process of insight meditation.

Langer further states that, unlike an ordinary physical object an art work has the ability to stand out and speaks for itself. An art work has an ability to bind people towards it and to convey messages, in other words an art work has the ability to communicate things.



Figure 3  
Art can be contemplative  
media

*“How can we capture, hold and handle feelings so that their content may be made conceivable and presented to our consciousness in universal form, without being understood in the strict sense.”*

*Langer Susanne, FAF, (1953), London ,p52.*

The Universal quality of art or, the ability of a ‘form of art’ to speak a common language which is understood by everyone in spite of nationality or race is another significance factor about an art form. Therefore an art form communicates deeper messages with human mind and may guide towards a spiritual level. Langer Susan also presents in here book the ideas of Prall about how artwork is communicated.

*"Art is the creation of forms symbolic of human feeling".*

*-Linger-*

*Langer Susanne, FAF, (1953), London ,p78.*

Symbols can speak strongly and can communicate with a person similar to a dialogue between two people.

*They are symbols for the articulation of feeling and convey the elusive and yet familiar pattern of sentence. And as essentially symbolic forms they lie in a different dimension from physical objects as such. They belong to the same category as language."*

*Steen Eiler Rasmussen,, EOA, 1959-London, p.5*

According to Jay Applton, Symbols may be manifested at many levels, from a very primitive, one to that of a deep and spiritual level, which would guide a person to an insight. Also an art is merely not an extravaganza of emotions, but through symbolism, it evokes deeper senses.<sup>10</sup>

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As discussed earlier, it was found that a lifeless physical object specially an art work, has the ability of changing a person's moods, acting as a universal language and thereby building up a deep intellectual relationship with the mind. Also it has the ability of directing a person towards the insight.

*"Many art experiences have provided to be of help in this important task of self-discovery."*

*Elizabeth Adams Hurwits, Design a Search for Essentials, (1964), International text book company.*

Dr. Ananda Coomaraswami also suggests, that artwork has the ability to stir the conscious and persuade toward contemplation. He says in a figure of speech and figure of thought..... More pleasure is not the aim of art; it has to go more deeper ,



intellectual and spiritual levels triggering off ones stream of thoughts and contemplate the mind. Thus as highest function of art is communicate with our sub –conscious.

*“Art is often linked to contemplation: the artist may be seen as being in a contemplative state to create, or the viewer is seen as contemplating the work of art, or art is seen as able to induce a contemplative response.”*

*Rebecca Krink, (CLC, 2005, London, p2.)*

From Krink’s description of art and contemplation; it clear that deep intellectual relationship can occur between perceiver and art object.

According to the philosopher Wilber all artwork is consciously or unconsciously aiming for a certain level of connection with its viewer, and each viewer has a certain level of ability to pick up on the level that the art is transmitting.

### 1.3.1. Landscape as art form

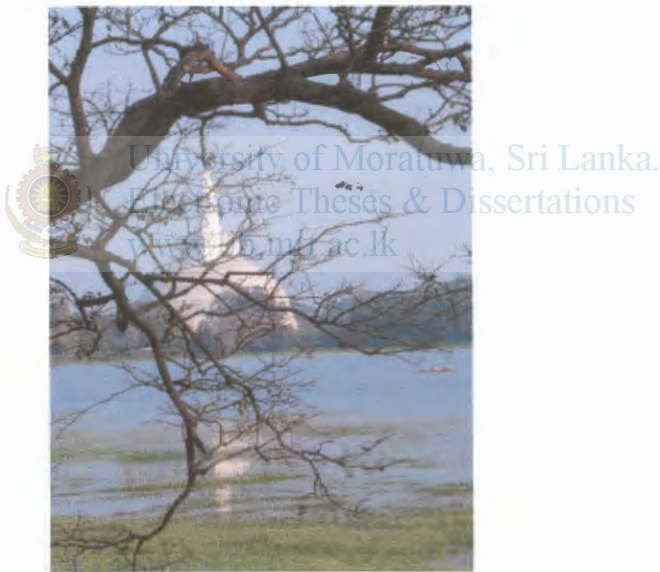
Landscape, as art form, possesses all the above attributes of an art form as discussed earlier. Apart from landscape being an art form, a natural physical attachment may be built up from constant connection.

*“Landscape must understand its role as an art process. The Skill of landscape architecture lies in process. The Skill of the landscape architect lies in the choosing and combining of these elements to highlight a particular expressive quality when changing the co-relationship”.*

*Peirce F. Lewis , Landscape Architecture sp. 1989.*


If the Landscape is an art form landscape space can be the medium which expresses artistic values. Landscape in a sense is creation itself, like the painter manipulating colours and lines like the musician manipulating sound and melody. The landscape architect manipulates the space.

In considering Landscape as a art form, the concept of space is a significant element, therefore, it is important to consider the role of 'space' in relation to human activity, and it's involvement in human psychology in order to examine 'space ' as the media for contemplation. From a psychological viewpoint 'space is a medium for expression, in day-to-day life. It is a background for our activities. Therefore, our activities, memories, and experiences and our imagination is closely bound within the space that we associate. Because of this close association, landscape space is more familiar to man than any other art form. Although landscape space refers to out door space; such space is common to both Architecture and Landscape. Whether it is Architectural space or landscape space both have common attributes such as quality and role.



**Figure 4**  
Landscape is an art form. It can create strong psychological relationship with mind.

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