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RIGHT VIEW (*SAMMĀ DIṬṬHI*) AS AN ETHICAL AND COGNITIVE BASIS FOR SELF TRANSFORMATION: A CRITICAL STUDY**Ven. Unapana Pemananda***Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya*

The Right View in Theravada Buddhist teachings is generally explained as the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths: Suffering, the Cause of Suffering, the Cessation of Suffering and the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering. It plays a major role in the course of purification. However, early Buddhist teaching of right view avoids every kind of grasping or clinging. Therefore, right understanding may refer to what is meant by *sammā diṭṭhi*.

Indeed, a right or wrong view is a psychological term which explains the internal sources of human behaviour. Right view or wrong view is the basis of one's personality. A person's view is directly tied with the faculties of sense, mind, thinking, memory and behaviour. Cognitive psychology is the branch of psychology that studies mental processes including how people think, perceive, remember and learn. As part of the larger field of cognitive science, this branch of psychology is related to other disciplines including neuroscience, philosophy and linguistics. Therefore, my research will review the ethical and cognitive aspects of the Right View in Theravada Buddhist teachings and show its relevance to self-transformation as understood in Buddhism.

This is primarily a textual study. The Tipitaka, specially the *Sutta Piṭaka* and the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* were used as primary sources. For further elucidation and for supporting evidence commentaries were consulted. The *Visuddhimagga*, though a late compilation, because of the high esteem in which it is held in the Theravāda tradition, was also utilized in the investigation. In addition,, relevant secondary literature on psychology was also used.

The Buddha's teaching could be analyzed with a view to understanding suffering and the cessation of suffering (*dukkha* and *nirodha*). The Buddhist term *Sammā Diṭṭhi* (*Right View*), mentioned under the fourth truth called the Noble Path has already been explained in various contexts of the Pāli Canon and Commentaries. I argue that this has ethical and cognitive significance in the process of purification and self-transformation.