

Dissertation Title : The Methods of Mental Development According to Kasina in Theravada Buddhism

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Abstract

This dissertation is mainly of three objectives: 1) to study ten-Kasina depicted in Theravada Buddhism; 2) to study how to train ten-Kasina appeared in Theravada Buddhism; and 3) to study the methods of mental development in accordance with ten-Kasina in Theravada Buddhism. This is a type of qualitative research which focuses on the data collected from the Theravada Buddhist scriptures: Tipitaka, Pali Canon, Sub-Commentaries, and other related technical papers rewritten in descriptive.

The findings have shown that the ten-Kasina in Theravada Buddhism is one of forty kinds of meditation laid down by the Buddha for being used as practical methods of mental cultivation for Buddhists. It is very efficient, powerful and helpful to raise one's mind to a state of concentration more rapidly. In actuality, the purpose of mental development based on the ten-Kasina is to obtain the virtues. With the ten-Kasina, monks cultivate their mind to attain Jhana (Absorption) more quickly than with others. It is due to the fact that this kind of meditation is used as a tool to help ones gain Uggaha-nimitta (visualized image) and Upacara-samadhi

(access concentration) more easily. For those with a stage of Anagami (non-returner) or Arahant (a worthy one), moreover, the achievement of Nirodha-samapatti is accessible. This is, however, one of virtues arising from spiritual practice by means of Kasina in Theravada Buddhism, and through this way, practitioners are able to further develop Vipassana (insight) meditation for the ultimate goal in Buddhism, nirvana.

The methods of mental development applied by means of Kasina in Theravada Buddhism are a process of spiritual training to develop the potentiality of practitioners in terms of physical, speech and mind on the one hand; and to purify their mind on the others. This process is in actuality made for a foundation of mental development (calmness meditation) and further applied to intellectual work – tranquility-based Vipassana development or the so called “Samatha-yanika” Vipassana – which is employed as a guideline to reach a state called Citta Visuddhi (purity of mind) in Theravada Buddhism.