

Dissertation Title : An Analysis of the Existentialism in Theravāda Buddhist Philosophy

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Date of Graduation : 16 September 2015

Abstract

This Dissertation “An Analysis of the Existentialism in Theravāda Buddhist Philosophy” is of 3 objectives: (1) to study Jean-Paul Sartre's concept of the Existentialism; (2) to study the concept of the Existentialism in Theravāda Buddhist philosophy; and (3) to critically analyze the Existentialism according to the concept of Theravāda Buddhist philosophy. This is a qualitative research.

From the analysis: 1) In relation with the first objective, it was found that Sartre's existentialism is of two characteristics of phenomenology: (1) the ontological concept possessing two kinds of beings, namely ‘the being in itself’, and ‘being for itself’. These two beings exist in the world; and (2) the concept of humanism concerning the existence of human being that preceded the essence. 2) In relation with the second objective, it was found that the concept of existentialism in Buddhist philosophy consists of two parts: (1) the metaphysical concept concerning the existence of materiality and immateriality, together with the Law of Causation; and (2) the concept in terms of humanism regarded as the Five Aggregates - the non-Ego, sufferings, and needs. 3) In relation with the third objective, it was found that the concept of existentialism in Buddhist philosophy is focused on the human being which is not just a living being but to live consciously with the awareness of phenomenon; this will then be known as the existence with the essence.

In analyzing the concept of Existentialism, the researcher only agreed with Sartre's viewpoint of human being's existence but disagreed with the point in over-emphasizing of such an existence because such a view would lead to the attachment of the Self. The Theravada Buddhist philosophy not only emphasizes the value of existence but also advises man to detach the Self because the only existence is not the true goal but attainment of Nibbāna.