Abstract

The aim of this research was to analyze in detail the forty subjects of Samatha meditation in Theravāda Buddhism. Although we do not find such a definite number of subjects recommended for Samatha meditation in the Pāli discourses, these are scattered throughout the canon. Commentators, especially Ven. Buddhaghosa have successfully taken an attempt to systematize the methods of meditation under Samatha and Vipassanā in the Visuddhimagga.

Under the method of Samatha meditation Ven. Buddhaghosa has recommended forty subjects in accordance with the nature of different characters.

It is a well-known fact that the human mind is very complex consequently, we need various methods to train the mind in order to suit different mental levels.

In order to accomplish the above mentioned task we have planned the research under five headings:

The first chapter clarifies the early Buddhist context of the practice of meditation and it provides a background to the main research.

Based on the findings in the first chapter we have made an attempt to explain the origin and development of the two methods as a result of historical evolution in the second chapter.

The third chapter explains the background of the forty subjects of Samatha meditation. There is a long description regarding the preparatory activities for Samatha meditation in the commentaries especially in the Visuddhimagga.