

POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF PALI AND BUDDHIST STUDIES

**A Critical Study on the Content, Structure
And Practice of Jhana in Early Buddhism**

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**A DISSERTATION SUPMITTED TO THI POSTGRADUATE
INSTITUTE OF PALI AND BUDDHIST STUDIES UNIVERSITY
OF KELANIYA ,.....LANKA
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF HEREQUIREMENTS OF
THE DIGRES OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

OCTOBER 2009

Abstract

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This thesis is mainly focused on the meditative practice in the Buddhist path to liberation. The practice of meditation is related to the second training in the traditionally accepted threefold training (*tisso sikkhā*) comprising of ethical conduct (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*). The present research is mainly focused on the second training called concentration (*samādhi*). According to the texts *samādhi* is the cultivation of mind (*citta*) and *paññā* is the cultivation of wisdom.

This subject has already been discussed by many in both academic and practical perspectives. In doing this research I collected data from the canonical texts and critically evaluated them to find out the exact role played by *jhānas* in the cultivation of mind (*citta*). In the process of examining this crucial issue attention has been directed to a very minute study of the four material (*rūpa*) *jhānas*, as well as immaterial attainments (*arūpa samāpatti*).

An attempt has been taken to solve the problem related to the factors that made the Buddha incorporate *jhānic* practice into the meditation practice that he presented.

Besides, I have deeply examined the problems related to the hindrances (*nīvarṇas*), the obstruction they produce, as well as the methods used to suppress them. I also tried to examine how the Buddha adjusted this pre-Buddhist *jhānic* practice to help the production of higher knowledge (*abhiññā*), as well as soteriological knowledge (*āsavakkhya ñāṇa*) which is unique to Buddhism.

Special focus was put on the impact of *jhānic* practice as the regulation, refinement and culture of the emotion and intellect, the blending of which brings about ethical (emotional) perfection and intellectual enlightenment.

In doing this research, I have found strong evidence to show that there exists a very elaborate practice between ethical conduct (*sīla*) and concentration (*samādhi*), which bridges, the gap between them, makes ethical conduct (*sīla*) a necessary support for concentration (*samādhi*).