

***A Psychological Study of Jhāna,  
Magga and Phala in Buddhist Path of  
Purification***—(A study based on the Pali canon)

By Ven. Xing Pu

The dissertation submitted to Postgraduate Institute of Pāli and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Under the Supervisors of  
Prof. Asanga Tilakaratne and Prof. Daya Edirisinghe

May 2006

## Abstract

According to Buddhism, the nature of mind is naturally pure; it, however, is closely influenced by human behavior. In other words, if the behavior is bad, mind becomes defiled and then this defiled mind causes the human's suffering. On the other hand, if behavior is good, mind becomes so pure that it may lead someone to mental emancipation or *nibbhāna*. Since mind gets impure, the purpose of the Buddha's teaching is to help human beings not only to understand why, how and from what we are suffering, but also find some way or a path to get rid of defilements and to make human mind back to natural purification.

On the basis of this crucial point, my dissertation mainly focuses on a psychological analysis of the processes of the mental development either wholesome or unwholesome such as the mental defilements of the five hindrances and the processes of the eight *jhānic* practices in mind. By perceiving the movements of the mental development either good or bad, one is able to remove the unwholesome thoughts and continuously cultivate his wholesome mind forward through the right paths such as the Eightfold Noble Paths or the Threefold Training taught by the Buddha.

In this case, not only the above two types of paths are mentioned in my thesis, but also the four holy paths or the four *maggas* are particularly analyzed and discussed in it, which are *Sotāpatti-magga*, *Sakadāgāmi-magga*, *Anāgāmi-magga* and *Arahatta-magga*. This is because these four magas are the best way to lead humankind to get rid of mental fetters and other defilements, and to achieve the four holy stages or the four holy fruits namely, *Sotāpatti-phala*, *Sakadāgāmi-phala*, *Anāgāmi-phala* and *Arahatta-phala*. The four *maggas* and the four *phalas* are like four pairs of twins in each stage with its matched fruit respectively. In other words, once the four *maggas* are explained, the four *phalas* are also mentioned relatively; or when the *phalas* are explained, the four *maggas* are correspondingly spoken of.

Besides, another point is also discussed in my thesis, that is the relation between *jhāna* and *vipassanā*. According to Theravada Buddhism, there are two systems of meditation namely, *samatha bhāvanā* (development of serenity) which aims at *samādhi* (concentration) and *vipassanā bhāvanā* (development of insight) which aims at *pañña* (wisdom). It is clear that the *jhāna* practice is a main part of concentration development. Based on the Buddha's words, the *jhāna* practice is conducive to getting one's mind freed from hindrances, and making it more concentrated as well as developing *vipassanā*.

BDP Buddhist Dictionary  
 CP Compendium of Philosophy  
 DhP Dharmapada  
 DhS Dharmapada Aṅgikāṇḍa  
 DhV Dharmavaṅṇana  
 DhV A Dharmavaṅṇana Aṅgikāṇḍa Aṅgikāṇḍa  
 DN Dīghanikāya  
 DN A Dīghanikāya Aṅgikāṇḍa  
 DPN Dictionary of Pali Proper Nouns  
 EB Encyclopaedia of Buddhism  
 ETK Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge  
 MDT Buddhist Dictionary - Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines  
 MN Majjhima Nikāya  
 MN A Majjhima Nikāya Aṅgikāṇḍa  
 NP Nettipakaraṇa  
 PD The Pali - English Dictionary  
 PP The Path of Purification  
 PT The Path of Freedom  
 P Paramatthapaṇḍita  
 Pā Pāṇini's Aṣṭaṅgahyāna  
 Pā A Pāṇini's Aṣṭaṅgahyāna Aṅgikāṇḍa  
 PTT The Pali Text Society (London)  
 Pp Pāṇini's Aṣṭaṅgahyāna