

# A Study on the Early Buddhist Method of Psychoanalysis

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විෂයානුබද්ධ හා පුද්ගලානුබද්ධ ලෝකයේ ස්වභාවය හඳුනාගැනීමේහිලා මූලික සූත්‍ර දේශනා තුළ දක්නට ලැබෙන විශ්ලේෂණ ක්‍රම වැදගත් වේ. විශ්ලේෂණය සම්බන්ධයෙන් පොදුවේ සාකච්ඡා කෙරෙන ස්කන්ධ විභාගය, ඡට්ටාන විභාගය, ද්වාදස ධාතු විභාගය, අට්ඨාරස ධාතු විභාගය ආදියට අමතරව හඳුනාගත හැකි විශ්ලේෂණ ක්‍රම විද්‍යාවක් මූලික සූත්‍ර දේශනා තුළ දක්නට ලැබෙන අතර, මෙම කෙටි අධ්‍යයනය මගින් ඒ පිළිබඳ සාකච්ඡා කෙරේ.

ප්‍රමුඛපද: අත්දැකීම් ලෝකය, ආත්මීය, විශ්ලේෂණය,  
වෛෂයික, සංකල්පීයකරණය, සංසිද්ධි.

## Objective of Analysis

The process of the development of human knowledge is basically based on the psychological foundation of perception and cognitive process. The formation of ideas, memory, views, taking decisions etc. take place as a result of the conceptualization of the world of phenomena. On the

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other hand, it is an essential foundation for the formation of knowledge, the enhancement of skills and the attitudinal change in the individual. Nonetheless, in Buddhist teachings what is called knowledge, wisdom<sup>2</sup>, understanding and realization has a very specific meaning<sup>3</sup>.

According to Buddhist teachings in understanding the world of phenomena, it is necessary to be attentive on the formation of concepts because what we call knowledge in general has a conceptual foundation<sup>4</sup>. If one is subjugated by the concepts formed in the mind; decision taking, formation of right views and attitudes towards the world of experience, development of human competences in the right direction etc. become a very difficult task. The individual is connected to the external world through his sense faculties, the contact of the relevant objects and arising of the relevant consciousness<sup>5</sup>. However, sense perception is a causal process that has many facets according to the teachings and the final result is the bondage of the individual to a conceptualized phenomenon created by one self<sup>6</sup>. The submission of the individual thus leads to many complicated and complex issues. The conceptualization of phenomena is a natural process of human mind, but the issue is the subjugation of the individual to such self-created mental phenomena. In order to overcome

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2 *“panna pan’avuso kimatthiya ti., panna kho avuso abhinnattha parinnattha pahanattha ti”* Trenckner.V. 1979. Majjhimanikaya., Vol.,I.,Pali Text society London P.,293

3 *“sabbam lokam abhinnaya sabbaloke yatha tatha;sabbaloka visamyutto sabbaloke anupayao”* Rev., Richard Morrise., 1976.,Anguttaranikaya., Vol.,II.,The Pali Text Society., London.,P.,24

4 Trenckner.V.,,1979.,Majjhimanikaya., Vol.,I.,Pali Text society London.,pp.,111,112

5 Trenckner.V., 1979.,Majjhimanikaya., Vol.,I.,Pali Text society London.,pp.,295,296

6 Rhys Davida.T.W.,William Stede.,1997., The pali-English Dictionary., Asian Educatinal Services., New Delhi., P.,412

this psychological issue of human perception, Buddhism has prescribed many approaches, procedures, techniques and methods of observation and among them one of the most important method is the analysis of the concepts. The analysis leads to a compressive knowledge of the world of phenomena known as *paññā*, (insight), *abhiññā* (supernormal powers), *ñāna* (knowledge) etc., in Buddhist teachings. Thus, only if one is not subjugated to the conceptualized phenomena; a right knowledge is possible to perceive the world of phenomena in their true perspective and this is the ultimate goal of Buddhist Path. However, in the process of the acquisition of true knowledge, the methods of analysis is important either it is mundane or supra-mundane knowledge.

### **Fundamentals of Analysis**

The Pali terminologies such as *samsatṭha*, *visamsatṭha*, *nissita*, *anissita* etc. reflect how the material and mental elements of phenomenal world exist. This is well explained in the Buddhist teachings of *anupassana* which denotes the observation or the analysis accordingly<sup>7</sup>. Thus, as a very authentic and scientific firsthand approach towards the physical and mental phenomena, they have been analyzed in order to give a complete knowledge of the world of experience in Buddhist teachings. In the Pali canonical literature one may find four types of analysis such as:

1. Analysis of Five Aggregates<sup>8</sup>
2. Six Sense Faculties<sup>9</sup>

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7 Trenckner.V. 1979. *Majjhimanikaya*,. Vol.,I.,Pali Text society London.,p.,56

8 Leon Feer.,M., 1975.,*Samyuttanikaya*,.Vol.,III. Pali Text society London.,P.,47

9 Leon Feer., M., 1990.,*Samyuttanikaya*,.Vol.,IV. Pali Text society London.,pp,2-5,

3. Six Sense Faculties and their Objects<sup>10</sup>,
4. Eighteen Elements<sup>11</sup>.

These are the the very basic analyses found in the early Buddhist discourses prescribed for the right understanding of the world of phenomena. According to some schools of Buddhist thought such analysis is given based on the individual differences as well. In the first group of analysis the concept of individual has been analyzed into five aggregates in which one may find mental and material elements that form the corporeality. In the second group the basic sense faculties of the individual have been analyzed as they provide the foundation for arising of relevant consciousness and cognitive process. On the other hand, sense-objects have been analyzed in relation to the sense faculties, as they are the crucial elements for so called human knowledge.

### **Various Methods of Analysis**

Although the above classification is the very basic method of analysis in Buddhist teachings, one may find that Buddhist method of analysis encompasses mental and material phenomena that are conceptualized subjectively or objectively with attributions, qualifications and formations. The discourses such as *Mūlapariyāya sutta*<sup>12</sup>, *Satipaṭṭhānasutta*<sup>13</sup>,

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10 Rhys Davids.T.W.,Estlin Carpenter.J.,1966.,Dighanikaya.,Vol.,II., Pali Text society London.,p.302

11 Leon Feer., M., 1990.,Samyuttanikaya.,Vol.,IV. Pali Text society London.,, pp., 32,33.

12 Trenckner.V. 1979. Majjhimanikaya., Vol.,I.,Pali Text society London.,pp3-5

13 Rhys Davids.T.W.,Estlin Carpenter.J.,1966.,Dighanikaya.,Vol.,II., Pali Text society London.,,p.291

*Sabbasavasuta*<sup>14</sup>, *Mahāvedallasutta*<sup>15</sup>, *Brahmajālasutta*<sup>16</sup> etc. reflect the various aspects of the Buddhist analysis of the world of phenomena. For instance, the *Mūlapariyāasutta* gives a very comprehensive analysis of the individual differences based on the comprehension of the phenomenal world<sup>17</sup>. The *Satipatṭānasutta* focuses on the analysis of the mental and material phenomena based on their dynamic transformation<sup>18</sup>. Hence, the Buddhist method of analysis is very important in many aspects and especially in enhancing the knowledge, competencies and the attitudinal change in the individual that lead to the realization of phenomena in their true perspective.

The different methods of analysis found in early Buddhist teachings can be classified basically as follows:-

- Analysis of the sub-concepts in a concept.
- Analysis of the no-existent elements in a concept.
- Analysis of the characteristics in a concept with the opposite characteristics
- Analysis of the functions in a concept
- Analysis of a concept on an objective basis
- Analysis of a concept on its subjective basis

The world of phenomena comprises of material and non-material elements of existence known and they exist

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14 Trenckner.V. 1979. Majjhimanikaya,. Vol.,I.,Pali Text society London.,p.,2

15 Trenckner.V. 1979. Majjhimanikaya,. Vol.,I.,Pali Text society London P.293

16 Rhys Davids.T.W.,Estlin Carpenter.J.,1975.,Dighanikaya., Vol.,I., Pali Text society London.,p.2

17 Trenckner.V. 1979. Majjhimanikaya,. Vol.,I.,Pali Text society London.,p.,2

18 Ibid.,p.,56

as composite (*samsatṭha*) or non-composite (*visamsatṭha*) elements<sup>19</sup>. Although the above nature is reflected in the elements of existence it is not possible to analyze them as independent entities due to the fact that even a smallest unit of matter comprises many other components. Therefore, various methods of analysis is found in Buddhist teachings as they very significant in understanding the very nature of the elements of existence. The above methods of analysis can be studied in detail taking into consideration their different aspects as follows:-

### **Analysis of the sub-concepts in a concept**

According to Buddhist teachings that any major concept such as; man, tree, woman direction, time etc. is formed based on many other sub-concepts. However, true knowledge is possible only if one is aware of the nature of a concept and has the skillfulness make use of it without submission to such mentally formed attributions, qualifications and characterizations.

Thus, it is important to identify the sub-concepts that a main concept is formed. In the *Visuddhimagga*, when explaining the individual, it said that no doer of the deeds is found, no one who ever reaps their fruits, empty phenomena (pure elements) roll on, this view alone is right and true<sup>20</sup>. Further, it is explained that No God, no Brahma, may be called, the maker of this wheel of life, Empty phenomena (pure elements) roll on, Dependent on conditions. This draws the attention of

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19 Trenckner.V. 1979. Majjhimanikaya,. Vol.,I.,Pali Text society London P.293

20 Pamunuwe Buddhaddatta Thera.,2006.,Visuddhi Magga.,Vol.,VIII.,Hewavitarana Trust.,Colombo.,p.,453

the individual towards the sub-concepts that make a totality, or a full concept. In a more practical way this can be understood in terms of Buddhist teachings on *upadānakkhaandha*<sup>21</sup> etc. On the other hand, our understanding of the various individuals in human society such as wise, fool, learned etc. are also a result of the sub-concepts that make such qualities of an individual. According to the explanations, it is said that one is called wise if one has the qualities such as: one who points out faults, reprovess, not affected by praise and blame, do not prattle with a yearning for pleasures, no elation or depression when touched by happiness or sorrow etc.<sup>22</sup> further, the Mangala sutta has clearly pointed out such qualities in an ascending order when explaining what is called Blessing.

Thus, it is important to note that a concept can be explained in a highly philosophical way as well as a practical way based on the sub-concepts that make a full concept. Thus in Buddhist teachings a concept is described based on the internal and external sub-concepts which make a totality.

### **Analysis of the no-existent concepts in a concept**

Another important aspect of the Buddhist method of analysis is the explanation of a concept based on the sub-concept that should not be existent in the main concept. It is stated what is called person, individual or aggregates there is no Soul, Self or any other permanent entity because the external observation and understanding of a concept could lead to misunderstanding of it generating of erroneous

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21 Rhys Davids.T.W.,Estlin Carpenter.J.,1966.,Dighanikaya.,Vol.II., Pali Text society London.,, Vol.II.,p.,35

22 Acariya Buddhakkhita., 1986.,Dhammapada., Mahabodhi Society., Bangalore. pp.,32,33

views and ideas and concepts<sup>23</sup>. Hence, it is important to analyze a concept based on the non-existent elements in it. In this regard, the Buddhist teaching on “*kāyānupassanā*” is important because it makes the individual contemplate on the evanescent nature of the corporeality to understand the reality in it<sup>24</sup>. In a more practical way this is explained that not by mere eloquence nor by beauty of form does a man become accomplished, if he is jealous, selfish and deceitful<sup>25</sup>. Further, it is said that not by passing arbitrary judgments does a man become just; a wise man is he who investigates both right and wrong<sup>26</sup>.

Thus, it is important to go deep into a concept with a close observation and this method of analysis is found in the *Satipaṭṭhānasutta* which has prescribed the Fourfold Mindfulness as a method for the true knowledge<sup>27</sup>. The analysis of material elements (*kāya*), analysis of sensations (*vedana*), and analysis of elements (*dhamma*) analysis of mental functions (*citta*) clearly indicates this. One of the main objectives of this sort of observation is to identify the non-existent elements that make a totality. Thus, mere external observation of an object does not lead to the understanding of the true nature of it.

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23 Leon Feer., M., 1975., Samyuttanikaya.,Vol.,III. Pali Text society London.,pp.,67-69

24 “Here *kāyānupassana* signifies the analysis of energizing functions (*anapanasati*),analysis of behavior(*iriyapatha*),analysis of one’s movements (*sampajanna*),analysis of major components (*patikkula*),analysis of elements(*dhatumanasikara*),analysis of different paces(*navasivathika*)”Trenckner.V. 1979. Majjhimanikaya., Vol.,I.,Pali Text society London.,pp.,56-58

25 Acariya Buddharakkhita., 1986. Dhammapada., Mahabodhi Society., Bangalore P.,104

26 Ibid.,P.,103

27 Trenckner.V. 1979. Majjhimanikaya., Vol.,I.,Pali Text society London.,p.,56



## **Analysis of the characteristics in a concept with the opposite characteristics**

Another important method of observation is the analysis of the characteristics of a concept in relation to the opposite characteristics. For instance, in the *Satipaṭṭhānsutta* under the contemplation of mind, various positive and negative characteristics are analyzed to understand the dynamic nature of mind.<sup>28</sup>

In some other contexts this is explained in a very practical way as well. For instance, it is said that those who mistake the unessential to be essential and the essential to be unessential, dwelling in wrong thoughts, never arrive at the essential<sup>29</sup>. Thus, in understanding a concept with its opposite characteristics or functions is another aspect of analysis.

28 “when a mind with greed (*raga*) arises, a bhikkhu knows, "This is a mind with greed"; or when a mind without greed arises, he knows, "This is a mind without greed"; when a mind with anger (*dosa*) arises, he knows, "This is a mind with anger"; or when a mind without anger arises, he knows, "This is a mind without anger"; when a mind with delusion (*moha*) arises, he knows, "This is a mind with delusion"; or when a mind without delusion arises, he knows, "This is a mind without delusion"; or when a lazy, slothful mind (*samkhittacitta*) arises, he knows, "This is a lazy, slothful mind"; or when a distracted mind (*vikkhittacitta*) arises, he knows, "This is a distracted mind"; or when a developed mind (*mahagattacitta*) arises, he knows, "This is a developed mind"; or when an undeveloped mind (*amahagattacitta*) arises, he knows, "This is an undeveloped mind"; or when an inferior mind (*sauttaracitta*) arises, he knows, "This is an inferior mind"; or when a superior mind (*anuttaracitta*) arises, he knows, "This is a superior mind"; or when a concentrated mind (*samāhitacitta*) arises, he knows, "This is a concentrated mind"; or when an unconcentrated mind (*asamāhitacitta*) arises, he knows, "This is an unconcentrated mind"; or when a mind temporarily free from defilements (*vimutticitta*) arises, he knows, "This is a mind temporarily free from defilements"; or when a mind not free from defilements (*avimutticitta*) arises, he knows, "This is a mind not free from defilements".”Ibid.,59

29 Acariya Buddhārakkhita., 1986. Dhammapada., Mahabodhi Society., Bangalore. P.7

## Analysis of the functions in a concept

The analytical observation of the functional aspect of a concept is another significant method employed in the early Buddhist discourses. The concepts according to Buddhist teachings are perceived as independent or dependent, composite or non-composite, relative or non-relative, subjective or objective. Hence, it is difficult to see the true nature of the elements of existence as human mind always leads towards two extremes in the process of the perception of an object. Another important fact is that although one perceives an objects as composite or non-composite it is extremely difficult to see the covert nature of a phenomenon. However, as a method of understanding the intricacies of the objective and subjective phenomenon, Buddhism has advised the individual to see the functional aspect of a concept. For instance, in the definition of the five Aggregates, the emphasis is on the functional aspect of elements. *Rūpa* is defined as subject to break-down, shatter. *Viññāṇa* is defined as bare-awareness<sup>30</sup>. The mind in the Buddhist literature is always explained based on its functional aspects such as ever swift and seizing whatever it desires, without form, wanders far and alone, fickle and unsteady etc.<sup>31</sup>. It is important to note that the concept of mind cannot be directly observed. Hence, it is necessary to emphasis the various distinctive functions of it.

Further, the individual subjugated and overcome by defilements cannot be identified by just external observations. Hence, it is important to observe the mental and physical behavior of such individual. Especially the *Vasala* and

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30 Trenckner.V. 1979. Majjhimanikaya., Vol.,I.,Pali Text society London P.292

31 Acariya Buddhakkhita., 1986. Dhammapada., Mahabodhi Society., Bangalore P.,15

*Parabha suttas*<sup>32</sup> have the method of analysis in order to understand the self-destructive and self-defeating nature of an individual.

### **Analysis of a concept on an objective basis**

In addition to the above it is important to analyze a concept based on its objective nature. The *Abhidhammic Dhamma* theory applies this method of analysis in explaining world of phenomena. For instance, the element of consciousness signifies the bare-awareness and it is produced as a result of causality. Thus it is subjective to soullessness, unsatisfactoriness and the impermanence. In the *Mahātaṇhā Saṅkhaya sutta* this method of analysis is found<sup>33</sup>. There the nature of unsatisfactoriness, forms, sensation, perception, formation and consciousness is explained based on its objective nature<sup>34</sup>. On the other hand, a concept can also be analyzed on a subjective basis as well. However, according to Buddhist teachings such way of analysis leads to the formation of erroneous views of the world of phenomena.

### **Conclusion**

According to Buddhist teachings the world of phenomena is formed based on relationships. Mental and physical phenomena have to analyze in relation to their, functions, characteristics, nature, sub-concepts, opposing element etc. Thus, it is important to note that world of

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32 Dines Andersen. Helmer Smith.,1984., Suttanipata. New Edition.,Pali Text society London,pp.,18-21

33 Trenckner.V. 1979. Majjhimanikaya,. Vol.I.,Pali Text society London P.,259

34 Leon Feer., M., 1975., Samyuttanikaya.,Vol.,III. Pali Text society London.,pp.,110,111

phenomena is reflected as a totality and perceived as a totality and understood as a totality and conceptualized as a totality. However, human mind does not have the enough capacity to realize the underlying dynamic nature of the world of phenomena<sup>35</sup>. The Buddhist view is that for one who is dependent (*nissitassa*) on account of craving, conceit and views; there is wavering (*calitam*), palpitation because one is not free from the grip of taking conceptualized phenomena as my and mine. Hence, in Buddhist teachings various aspects of analysis of phenomena is presented in the enhancement of human knowledge, competencies and attitudinal change in the individual.

However, Buddhist method of analysis is comprehensive and wide-ranging and in this regard the individual differences are also important. A concept can be analyzed in many ways and this is necessary to cultivate the human mind to perceive the true nature of the world of phenomena.

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35 “*Nissitassa calitam,||anissitassa calitam n'atthi,||calite asati passaddhi hoti,||passaddhiya sati nati na hoti,||natiya asati agatigati na hoti,||agatigatiya asati cutupapato na hoti,||cut'upapate asati nevidha na huram||na ubhayam antarena esevanto dukkhassa' ti*” Leon Feer., M., 1990.,Samyuttanikaya.,Vol.,IV. Pali Text society London.,P.,59

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