An Analytical and Creative Study of the Buddhist Theory and Practice of Psycho-therapy

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The teachings of the Buddha\(^1\) originally delivered to the people in India in the 6th Century B.C. have been further analyzed and interpreted over a long period of time in many countries such as Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, China, Korea and Japan. The purpose of this noble endeavour was to provide people with a right understanding which is beneficial for their well-being in this life, life here-after and final freedom.

The Buddhist traditions though vary in terms of interpretations commonly accept that the mental aspect of human personality plays the most important role in human behavior. According to the Buddhist analysis of five grasping groups (pañca-upādānakkhandha)\(^2\) mentality is explained under four groups and physical aspect represents only one group. The Abhidhammic analysis of the five groups ascribes 89 or 121 types of consciousness and 52 psychic functions to the mentality in relation to the feelings, perceptions, dispositions and consciousness. The physical or material aspect is analyzed into about 14 parts in early Buddhism and its Abhidhammic interpretation into 28 material elements. Mental and physical aspects though analyzed as two separate groups for the sake of easy understanding their mutual inter-dependent nature is emphasized.\(^3\)

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\(^1\) Except otherwise indicated all references refer to the editions of the Pali Text Society, London

\(^2\) S. 111., p. 101; D. 111., p. 233; M. 1., P. 190; A. V., p. 52

\(^3\) Sumanapala, G. D., Abhidhammic Interpretations of Early Buddhist Teachings, Singapore, 2005, pp. 12-14
The interdependent process of psycho-physical function of human personality in relation to the external world is explained in the early Buddhist discourses as follows:

**Step I** - Physical Body
- The eye
- The ear
- The nose
- The tongue
- The skin

**External Material World**
- Color and shape
- Sounds
- Smell
- Taste
- Temperature

Consciousness (mental awareness)

**Step II** - Senses → Sense-objects → Consciousness → feelings or sensations

**Step III** - Feelings → Perceptions or memory

**Step IV** - Perceptions (memories) → Reflection → dispositions
(concepts, ideas, beliefs, views, opinions)

**Step V** - Senses
- Sense-objects
- Feelings
- Perceptions
- Reflection
- Dispositions

Personality views
(Consciousness)
(self, I-ness, soul)

It should be stated here that the term “Consciousness” occurs two times in the above process. It stands for the Pali term “viññāṇā”, The usage of the term “viññāṇā” in the discourses does not refer to one and the same thing. In the Step I the term refers to the initial mental awareness as a response to the contact with external objects of the senses. The term in the Step V refers to the self-view or personality view that people construct in their day-to-day life. Without the confirmation of this personality view they cannot survive in the world because the world including human beings is subject to constant change. Momentary change of psycho-physical world motivates people to establish themselves permanently in the world by means of building up a personality view out of their experiences. This is the reason for their existence continuously in the worlds in terms of birth and death. The complete stop of this process is called final freedom or liberation in Buddhism.

The same psycho-physical process of human personality is given in a wider context in Theravada Abhidhamma as follows:

**Step I**: stream-consciousness, its vibration due to the contact between senses and sense-objects and the breaking of stream-consciousness

**Step II**: mental awareness arising of particular thoughts regarding the objects in relation to one of sense faculties due to the contact of the objects

**Step III**: Reflection on the sense-objects in terms of accepting, investigation and determining the nature of objects

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Step IV: Mental experience or enjoyment of the sense-objects in terms of rapid succession of seven thought-moments

Step V: Registering of the sense-experience in terms of two thought-moments

The above mentioned Abhidhammic analysis of psycho-physical process includes seventeen thought-moments. The complete process does not occur in regard to all experiences of sense-faculties. The moments of thought-process may vary in accordance with the extent of experiences. And the mind also as a sense-faculty contacts with mental objects or ideas directly.

This mental process is different from the above to some extent. But this mind-door process is very important as far as the Buddhist psycho-therapeutic methods are concerned. Ven. Nyanatiloka gives in brief the process as follows:

“The process of the inner, or mind consciousness, i.e., without participation of the five physical senses, is as follows: in case mind-object entering the Mind-door (manodvāravajjana), the ‘Impulsive Stage’ and the ‘Registering Stage’, before finally sinking into the subconscious stream”.  

A large number of mental problems in modern society is caused by thinking or reflecting over the concepts created through the sense data. The concepts created through the sense-perception process can be identified as mentality, mental concomitants or thoughts explained in Abhidhamma as fifty-two cetasikās. Out of the fifty-two cetasikās the karmically unwholesome cetasikās become the psychological basis for many mental problems. The 52 cetasikās are analyzed under the following categories:

i. Karmically wholesome or neutral: 25
ii. Karmically unwholesome: 14 = 52
iii. Karmically neutral: 13

The unwholesome thoughts are mainly related to greed, hatred and delusion. They become the basis for innumerable number of mental illnesses. The wholesome thoughts together with relevant behavior provide a good ground to get rid of all such problems.

According to early Buddhist teachings human beings possess two mental tendencies by birth. Simply they are likes and dislikes. These are mental reactions and they are extremely useful and essential for the survival of beings. Further they are not harmful defilements. But the problems arise out of them when they are developed without limits.

The unlimited growth of these two aspects can be given as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normal level</th>
<th>Middle level</th>
<th>Final level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>likes</td>
<td>greed</td>
<td>covetousness (discontent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dislikes¹</td>
<td>hate</td>
<td>malevolence (desire to injure)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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¹ Sumanapala, G. D., An Introduction to Theravāda Abhidhamma, Singapore, 1998, 135-137
² Ven. Nyanatiloka, Buddhist Dictionary, Singapore, 1946. See under Viññānakicca
³ op. cit., See under Cetasikā
The middle level tendencies are considered as mental disorders or unwholesome mental roots and the final ones are treated as unwholesome mental functions.\(^8\) As a result of unlimited development of greed and discontent one wishes to get everything that he or she likes. Due to the changing nature of the world no one is able to get everything that he or she wishes. Therefore as a result of the failure in this regard delusion arises in the mind. On the other hand due to the development of hate and malevolence though he or she wishes to keep away everything that he or she does not like, this attempt also becomes unsuccessful due to the impermanent nature of the world. So the result is same as in the first case. So delusion or mental disorder (confusion) becomes a common factor of all unenlightened beings. Hence the Buddhist saying that all ordinary beings are like mad people.\(^9\) Together with this madness there arises another defilement called conceit\(^10\) in the mind as a result of some achievements in those reactions. The delusion and conceit are the basic factors of mental disorders. All the mental problems whether they belong to psychosis or neurosis can be explained in relation to the above mentioned mental reactions. In brief this is the theory of psychotherapy in Buddhism.

Before we turn to the practice of psychotherapy in Buddhism it is not out of context to point out some specific characteristics that serve as the basis of the therapeutic methods.

i. All psycho-therapeutic methods in Buddhism are directed towards nibbāna extinction of all defilements as the goal. The actual experience of the goal is to give up everything in order to make an end to the suffering caused by repeated existence or rebirth. The patient who holds this view is able to bear up any problem with patience and satisfaction because he or she is trying not to gain anything but to give up everything.

ii. In Buddhism even a single mental illness is not named. Instead the basic or root elements of mentality are explained mainly with reference to the above mentioned unwholesome and wholesome roots. All other mental problems arise depending on these basic elements.

There are three main reasons for not naming the mental illnesses.

1. Physical illnesses are durable and they can be easily identified while the mental illnesses are momentary and cannot be identified with certainty.

2. It is the nature of human beings that they always depend on concepts indicated by specific terms of language in order to confirm their existence in the momentary world. Once they attach to a particular concept or word such as stress, depression or phobia referring to a mental illness the same word becomes a mental problem.\(^11\) It cannot be easily removed from the mind. Further the mental illness though we identify with some characteristics they never exist permanently. Searching for characteristics to identify mental illness is a deliberate attempt to deceive oneself. But the problem is that without naming an illness one cannot prescribe medicine. The delusion is that they believe mind is related to brain. As to Buddhism mind is a specific faculty in human personality and it is not only related to brain but to all the five physical sense faculties.

\(^{8}\) Akusalamūla, Akusalakamma

\(^{9}\) ummattako viya hi puthujjano, MA. 1., ed. Hevawitharana, Colombo, p. 23

\(^{10}\) māna, D. 111., p. 234

\(^{11}\) Adhivacanasamphassa, D. 11., p. 62; M. 1., p. 113 D. 111., p. 86
3. Buddhist psychotherapeutic methods are mainly directed to change the mentality of persons and they do not pay much attention to change the environment or other external or physical factors so as to bring the mentality into a calm status.

Practice of psycho-therapy is also based on a simple formula which can be expand and extend to meet with any mental problem of beings. The practice has three gradual stages:

i. development of moral behavior - behavioral therapy
ii. development of concentration - psychological therapy
iii. development of understanding - cognitive therapy

The first type of therapy refers to the restrainment of the five senses which are mainly responsible for the physical and verbal behavior of man. The second type refers to the restrainment of the above mentioned mental disorders namely greed, hatred and delusion-conceit.

The third type of therapy concerns the development of understanding of people regarding the true nature of the world of experience. These three stages are mutually interconnected and they support for the restrainment and development of each aspect gradually. Therefore, in Buddhist practice these three stages should be connected with every method of psycho-therapy.

It is not out of context to mention the relationship of physical body with the above stated three aspects of mental defilements namely greed, hatred and delusion. The Bhesajjamañjusā, the one and only Āyurvedic Pāli work available at present, states at the beginning that mental health should be maintained in accordance with the Tipiṭaka and Bhesajjamañjusā instructs to establish physical health. According to the Āyurveda all physical illnesses are related to imbalance of the three humors - phlegm, bile and air. The Visuddhimagga mentions that these three humors are connected with mentality as follows:

- greed - phlegm
- hatred - bile
- delusion - air

Although there are many other causes and conditions that influence the physical health such as environment and food the mental condition plays a prominent role in balancing the physical condition.

It is a fact that any theory cannot be put into practice as it is. So the well educated Buddhist psychologists can devise and develop various methods to be used in Buddhist psychiatry. All of them should be in conformity with the above mentioned basic elements of Buddhist theory and practice of psycho-therapy. And also it should be emphasized that all such methods bring temporary effects and the complete recovery of all mental problems can be achieved only through the realization of nibbāna, the sumnum bonum of Buddhist path to freedom. Until the final realization we should use such methods and I have developed some such methods depending on the Buddhist

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12 sīla, D. 111., p. 235
13 saṃādhi, A. 111., p. 12
14 paññā, D. 1., p. 245
15 S. 111., p. 83
16 Visuddhimagga, ed. Ven. Saddhatissa, Colombo, 1914, p. 76
cultural accounts and they are given below as an example. It should be stated that these methods are taught in the postgraduate courses in our university and they have already been used in Sri Lanka in the counseling programmes for over three years.

i. **Confession:** This method is derived from the practice of “(paṭtidesanā” followed by Buddhist monks and nuns. If they commit anything wrong they have to declare it in front of another member of the Saṅgha society before the dawn of the next day. Accumulating the experiences of wrong actions create mental problems. So it is better to purify one’s mind by declaring every such incidents as a daily practice.

ii. **Imitation:** Ālavaka and Aṅgulimāla, well-known two characters in Buddhist canon were tamed by the Buddha first by agreeing with them. Ālavaka saw the Buddha sitting in his cave and ordered him to go out. Buddha followed three times his order finally he was converted to Buddhism. As to this method first of all we should agree with the behavior of the mental patient. Otherwise we cannot control the patient as we wish.

iii. **Generalization:** Some people think that the mental problems affect them only. They become calm when they understand that such problems are common to many people in the society. Kisāgotam$ who was mad with the death of her son, realized the common nature of death for all beings when she was asked by the Buddha to bring some mustard seeds from a house where no one is dead.

iv. **Kamma:** The Buddhist theory of Kamma is a good therapeutic method that can be adopted successfully. There are some mental problems that cannot be analyzed properly revealing all causes and conditions. In such cases we can explain them that Kammā related to former lives may influence the present life. After experiencing the effects of such Kammās we will be released from such effects in the future. This way of thinking in accordance with the theory of Kamma has created a contented society for over two thousand years in Buddhist countries.

v. **Dialogue:** In many discourses of the canon such as Kasbhāradvāja and Aggañña friendly dialogues of the Buddha with people occur and they are logical and philosophical. These dialogues have influenced much for eliminating the mental problems of various types of persons. So we can use this method especially for educated people to help them to get rid of their mental problems.

vi. **Noble silence:** In some cases the best method of treatment is to maintain complete silence without responding to the complaints made by patients. This method has solved many social and individual problems in Buddhist society.

vii. **Psycho-analysis:** With reference to Madhupiṇḍika, Mahānīdana sutta etc. we can introduce this method in which the counselor should analyze the psychological process of the patient in order to clarify the causes and conditions of the problem.

viii. **Right motivation:** According to the famous event of Nanda, he was taken to heaven by the Buddha in order to detach him from Janapadakalyāṇī by showing damsels. The theory of this method is that one cannot be totally detach from one concept at once. So the person should be motivated to achieve a higher goal and from there he or she should be directed to desired object.
ix. **Logical analysis:** Some educated people like to argue with others. So the method of argument can be adapted to eliminate their problems. This also applies to educated people. Vāseṭṭhasutta and Aggañña sutta are good examples in this regard.

x. **Innocent punishment:** Brahmadaṇḍa is a punishment in which all other members do not talk with the patient. This can be used mainly regarding persons with personality disorders such as anger and arrogance. The main feature of these punishments is that they never hurt the patient physically.

xi. **Praising:** Some people are suffering due to the lack of appreciation for their service or work. Such people should be directed to suitable environment where they are appreciated. Before passing away Buddha did not forget to appreciate Ven. Ananda’s service and the benefits of the last meal given by Cundaṃkammāraputta.

xii. **Friendly meeting:** Some people suffer mentally due to the lack of association with other people. They should be provided with such friendly meetings with suitable persons.

xiii. **Creating religious emotions:** Pilgrimage is one of the most suitable way of creating religious emotions in order to get rid of mental problems such as worry, guilty-conscious, sorrow, etc.

xiv. **Creating emotion and intellect:** this concept is called “vedalla” and the patient should be provided with occasions where they can experience happiness and knowledge together. Reading novels, watching drama, singing, dancing, etc. can be used in this regard.

The above mentioned methods are given as examples and they are not adequately explained.
Cognitive, Behavioral and Psychotherapeutic Aspects as Reflected in Insight Meditation and Methods of Insight

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Objective:

The exposition of the universally applicable potentiality of cognitive and behavioral psychotherapeutic aspects reflected in Insight Meditation in order to alleviate, attenuate, prevent and heal mental problems and abnormal behaviors in the modern society is the main objective of this article.

Background and Nature of Mind

The Abhidhamma Piṭaka contains a highly systematized psychological analysis of human behavior and mind. According to Roga Sutta¹ and Salleka Sutta², every individual except Arahant suffers from mental problems. According to commentaries, all worldlings are deranged (Sabbe puthujjanā ummattakā).³

Individual’s mind is beleaguered by The Noxious Trio - greed-hatred-delusion (lobha-dosa-moha) (Mūla Sutta).⁴ According to Loka Sutta⁵, this triple root, when arising, causes harm, stress and discomfort. Mind is deluded with ignorance (avijjā), the primary root that causes vipallāsa (perversions - saññā-vipallāsa, citta-vipallāsa and diṭṭhi-vipallāsa)⁶ leading to form four perversions which take what is impermanent (anicca) as permanent; what is painful (dukkha) as pleasant; what is without a self (anatā) as a self and what is impure (asubha) as pure.⁷ The three levels of perversions which are fundamental to the Buddhist notion of ignorance or delusion are cyclical, and so the perceptions are formed in the context of one’s views, which are strengthened by his thoughts, and all the three work together to build the cognitive systems which make up his personality. Vipallāsa caused by ignorance due to the Noxious Trio veils individual’s mental eyes and prevents the knowledge of the Four Truths, and this is conducive to diverse problematic mentality and behavior.

The rapid modernization and the accelerated pace of life enveloped in the ‘modern’ economy, polity, technology and education incur unwholesome impacts on the minds of people, causing: pressure, boredom, tension, anxiety, depression, frustration, unrest, obsession, disappointments, etc.; and unwholesome behaviors like alcoholism, drug addiction, sexual harassment, polygamous or polyandrous conduct, sadism, gambling etc. The culture of violence that has arisen as the outcome

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2. Majjhima Nikāya. 8, PTS: M i 40.
4. Aṅguttara Nikāya. 3.69, PTS: A i 201.
5. Samyutta Nikāya. 3.23, PTS: S i 98, CDB i 189.
6. Aṅguttara Nikāya. 4.49, PTS: A ii 52.
of commercially exploited sadism in numerous unethical entertainments, popular unscrupulous literature, and the sophisticated technology through which they are distributed on a global scale creating an international culture of unwholesome life patterns that produce psychological problems and abnormal behaviors. As a result of the unawareness of Buddhist concepts that can be adopted to prevent or heal them, these problems get aggravated causing severe detriments to individual, family, society and the world as a whole.

**Buddhist Meditation**

According to Suttas like: *Sabbāsava, Sāmaññaphala, Jāliya, Mahāli* of Dīgha Nikāya; *Kandaraka, Ariyapariyesana, Atthakanāgara* of Majjhima Nikāya; *Jhāna Samyuttaya* of Samyutta Nikāya; *Satipatthāna* of Dīghanikāya and Majjhimanikāya; also *Dhammasangani* and *Vibhaṅga* of Abhidhamma Piṭaka; and commentaries like *Visuddhimagga* and the *Atthasālinī* - the basic meaning of bhāvanā, as a whole, can be rendered as the development of spiritual qualities or wholesome potentialities (*sattabodhyaṅga*) or development of wholesome doctrines “Bhāveti kusaladhamme vaḍṭhetī bhāvanā.”

The Right Mindfulness and the Right Effort in the Noble Eightfold Path are the two principles that embrace the entire field of meditation common to both systems - Samatha and Vipassanā.

**The Two Kinds of Meditation Designated in Buddhism**

Samādhi-bhāvanā (Tranquility or Calm meditation) that cultivates concentration (*citta-ekaggatā*) suppresses mental defilements. The development of Calm or Tranquility meditation creates concentration for making the mind peaceful, strong, and happy, as well as freeing it from all mental hindrances. Samatha, a pre-requisite for meditation lays the foundation for practicing Insight meditation which is the direct way to eradicate all the mental problems.

Vipassanā-bhāvanā that develops insight in the context of the Three Universal Characteristics helps one to eradicate the defilements by dispelling ignorance and uprooting causes of miseries. Insight meditation helps one to develop true wisdom and to see all things as they really are, until one can get rid of the defilements and attachments to everything.

In Sāmaññaphala Sutta², the Threefold training with Sīla as the preliminary phase, the practice of Samādhi as the second and Paññā as the means of attaining ultimate release from Āsavās (mental taints). Paññā is developed by Insight. Sabbāsava Sutta¹⁰ deals with seven ways of eradicating defilements that cause mental and physical problems. Among them, the first method is dassanā –understanding and the last method is ‘bhāvanā’. The highest stage of understanding is wisdom which is the realization of all the mental and physical phenomena. Hence, meditation is the means of transmuting the ordinary consciousness to the higher state.

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¹⁰ Majjhimanikāya, 2 PTS: M i 6
The Sevenfold Purity Expounded in Insight Meditation

Rathavinīta Sutta\(^{11}\) expounds sevenfold purity—satta visuddhi (elaborated in the Visuddhimagga and in Abhidhammaṭṭha-saṅgaha) as the seven successive methods of purification in Insight meditation:

1. Purity of Morality: Śīla-visuddhi
2. Purity of Mind: Citta-visuddhi
3. Purity of Views: Diṭṭi-visuddhi
4. Purity of overcoming Doubts: Kāṇkhāvitaraṇa-visuddhi
5. Purity of Knowledge and Vision of what is Path and Not-Path: Maggāmagga-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi
6. Purity of Knowledge and Vision of the Way or Progress: Paṭipadā-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi
7. Purity of Knowledge and Insight: Ñāṇadassana-visuddhi

Each of them purifies body, mind and thoughts in a gradual process. The Dasuttara Sutta\(^{12}\) of Dīghanikāya explains the Sevenfold Purifications among nine factors of endeavor leading to purification (pārisuddhi-padhāniyāṅga), out of which the last two are purification of wisdom and purification of emancipation. In the context of the seven successive methods of purification, purity in a nutshell means the elimination of unwholesome factors repugnant to purification.

Methods of Insight Meditation in brief

Insight Meditation (Vipassanā Bhāvanā) comprises of many methods developed on the basis of the last five of the Sevenfold Purity through the contemplations of transience, unsatisfactoriness and non-self (aniccānupassanā, dukkhaṇupassanā and anattānupassanā). The practice of Vipassanā begins at the Fifth Step of Purity (Maggāmagga-ñāṇadassana visuddhi) with the Contemplation of Groups (kalāpa-sammasana) that results in developing insight into Knowledge of Determination (Sammasana-ñāṇa). It is the knowledge that determines all that is in the present, past and future, internal or external, coarse or delicate, low or eminent, near or far is impermanent (anicca), suffering (dukkha) and non-self (anatta). This is elaborated in the Visuddhimagga.\(^{13}\)

Rathavinīta Sutta (The Discourse on the Relay of Chariots) shows the causal relations of each stage of purity - each stage of purity is to be accomplished for the sake of the other stage of purity.\(^{14}\) Thus, the sevenfold purity is the true knowledge of phenomenal existence, and it is linked with the Four Noble Paths that lead directly to ultimate realization.

The Buddha emphasized the importance of the contemplation of pañcaskhandha in the forty aspects of it explaining an advanced knowledge of insight known as anuloma-khanti which is adaptive knowledge of balance applied to absolute certainty (sammattaniyāma) of the First

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\(^{11}\) Ibid 24, PTS: M i 145
\(^{12}\) The Long Discourses of the Buddha, Tr. by Maurice Walshe, 34, P. 511.
\(^{13}\) The Path of Purification, Tr. by Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli, Chapter xx, 6, p.706.
\(^{14}\) Majjhimanikāya 24. PTS: M i 145
Path (sotąpatti-magga). The Paṭissambhidāmagga gives this list of forty items of contemplation in the context of the Five Aggregates (pañcaskhandha) establishing absolute certainty. These Forty Subjects for meditation known as kammaṭṭhāna in seven divisions are explained in the Path of Purification.

The Visuddhimagga, the Great commentary elaborates two aspects of kammaṭṭhāna in Insight Meditation as Rūpa-kammaṭṭhāna and Arūpa-kammaṭṭhāna which should be contemplated in terms of the Three Universal Characteristics of material aggregates and mental states respectively.

The Visuddhimagga exposes Eighteen Principal Insights (Aṭṭhasa mahāvipassanā) which dispel mental states that impede higher progress. In the development process of these eighteen insights, a contemplation known as sammasana-ñāṇa as mentioned above (determining of all phenomena of existence as anicca, dukkha, anattā), the beginning of insight which is still mundane is reached. This is the first stage of the development of insight.

The Paṭissambhidāmagga explains that a contemplation known as udaya-vaya anupassanā-ñāṇa (the knowledge and insight into rise and fall of the Five Aggregates of present existence) is attained. This is the second stage which leads to the manifestation of insight. In this process, the rise of mind-and-matter (Nāma-rūpa) in twenty five aspects and the fall of mind-and-matter in twenty five aspects in relation to their causes and conditions are contemplated. It is at this stage that the Ten Defilements of Insight (Vipassanā-kilesa) arise. With the overcoming of the Ten Defilements of Insight, the Purity of Knowledge and Vision of the Way or Progress (Paṭipadā-ñānadassana-visuddhā) is attained. The continuous practice in relation to the Four Supra mundane Paths leads to the attainment of Purity of Knowledge and Insight (Ñānadassana-visuddhi).

The mental development with insight in the process of suppressing, alleviating and eradicating all defilements or taints (sabbāsava) can also be attained through the following.

1. The Contemplation of the Body (Kāyānupassanā)
2. The Contemplation of feelings (Vedanānupassanā)
3. The Contemplation of the state of consciousness (Cittānupassanā)
4. The Contemplation of the mind-objects (Dhammānupassanā)

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15 The Path of Purification, Tr. by Bhikkhu Ānāmoli, Chapter xx, 18, PP. 710-711: Impermanent, suffering, disease, boil, arrow, calamity, affliction, alien, disintegrating, plague, disaster, terror, menace, fickle, perishable, unenduring, no protection, no shelter, no refuge, empty, vain, void, not self, danger, subject to change, no core, root of calamity, murderous, due to be annihilated, subject to cankers, formed, Māra’s bait, subject to birth, subject to ageing, subject to ailment, subject to death, subject to sorrow, subject to lamentation, subject to despair, subject to defilement.
16 Ibid, Chapter III, 104, P. 112: Ten Kasiṇas (totalities), Asubhas (foulness), Ten Anussatis (recollections), Four Brahma-vihāras (the Four Sublime Abodes), Four Arūpas (four immaterial states), Ālāre-paṭikkūla-saṅhā (perception of loathsomeness of food), Catu-dhātu-vavatthāna (analysis of the four physical elements).
17 Ibid, Chapter XIV, 11, P.482.
18 Ibid, Chapter xx, 89, P. 732.
19 The Path of Purification, Chapter xx, 105, P.739.
The Sevenfold Purity and Its Cognitive, Behavioral and Psychotherapeutic Aspects

1. Purity of Morality (Sīla-visuddhi) is the purification attained through refraining from bodily and verbal misconduct as well as from unwholesome livelihood. It is the non-transgression through body or speech of the basic precepts regulating the moral life, developing into the habitual conformation to the principles of righteous conduct. It is not the mere outward behavioral control. The moral purity which is of deeper and more psychological significance is the inner purification of character. Thus, the two-dimensional quality of moral purity is the purification of conduct and the purification of character.

Morality (Sīla) which is the conscious and intentional restraint from unwholesome deeds is volition (cetanā) manifested in speech and bodily action, and it is the foundation of entire Buddhist practice. Moral purity is one of the three constituents of the Noble Eightfold Path (sīla, samādhi and paññā). They are Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood. The development of moral purity - the basic morality of Five Precepts (pañcasīla) for layity, the basic morality of Eight Precepts (āṭṭha-sīla) for laity, The Ten Precepts (dasa-sīla) for novice monks and nuns, and 227 moral rules for fully ordained monks (bhikkhu pātimokkha) and 311 moral rules for fully ordained nuns (bhikkhunī-pātimokkha) is the overall ethical behavior. The Virtue of the Fourfold Purification (Catupārisuddhi-sīla) designated for monks is known as Sīla Visuddhi.

Moral intention is Cetanā Sīla, mental concomitants are Cetasika Sīla, moral restraint is Saṃvara Sīla, and not breaking any precepts is Avitik-kama Sīla. Moral intention (Cetanā) is one’s intention not to commit evil conduct in act and in speech, but to follow the seven wholesome courses of action (abstention from killing, stealing, adultery and improper speech such as lying, backbiting, divisive speech and gossip).

Moral abstinence (Virati) is refraining from all unwholesome courses of action and speech along with other immoral behavior. Virati also includes mental actions or thoughts which are refraining from covetousness, ill will and wrong view. As the Buddha preached, “Monks, he who eliminates covetousness will have moral mentality.” This is Cetasika Sīla.

2. Purity of Mind (Citta-visuddhi) signifies the purification attained through cleansing the mind from attachment, aversion, torpor, restlessness and conflict. It is of eight attainments: Four rūpa Jhānas and Four arūpa Jhānas (āsta samāpatti) with access-concentration (upacāra –samādhi) which has the capacity to suppress the Five Hindrances (pañcāna-rūpa) 21.

3. Purity of Views (Diṭṭi-visuddhi) implies the understanding the combination of mind and matter (nāma-rūpa) or the Five Aggregates (pañcaskhandha) dispelling erroneous conceptions or perversions (vipallāsa) of individuality and attainment of real vision of mind and body and their relation to phenomenal existence through the comprehension of mind-and-matter (nāma-rūpa) by the analysis of the Four Elements (ṭhūta) or by contemplation of the thirty two constituent parts of the body (kuṇūpa) or by Eighteen Elements (dhātu), the six senses, the six sense-objects and

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20 Visuddhimagga, Chapter I, 42, PP. 16-17. Virtue of Restraint of monks’ Disciplinary Code (Pātimokkha saṃvara sīla), Virtue of Restraint of the sense faculties (Indriya saṃvara sīla), Virtue of Purification of livelihood (Ājīva pārisuddhi sīla), Virtue of concerning Requisites (Paccaya sammisita sīla).

21 Dīghanikāya Poṭṭhāpāda Sutta PTS: D i 178 / Âṅguttaranikāya 9.64 PTS: A iv 457: Sensual Desire (kāmacchanda), Ill-will (vyāpāda), Sloth and Torpor (thīna-middha), Restlessness and Worry (uddhacca-kukkucca) and Skeptical Doubt (vicicchā).
the six kinds of consciousness corresponding to them or Twelve Sense-Bases (āyatana): the six sense-organs and the six sense-objects and the entire mental process attached to it with all their characteristic transience.

4. Purity of overcoming Doubts (Kaṅkhāvitarana-Visuddhi) is the conquest of all doubts regarding the phenomenal existence through the comprehension of the causal relation of mind and body (nāma-rūpa) understanding their causes and conditions in the context of samsāric existence. The knowledge of discerning conditionality sees only a conditioning body-and-mind process and a conditioned body-and-mind process. In other words, it is the knowledge that comprehends the law of kamma and its result in the context of mind and body and the comprehension established by dispelling doubts about the three phases of time - past, present and future by discerning the conditions of mentality-materiality.

5. Purity of Knowledge and Vision of what is Path and Not-Path (Maggāmagga-ñāṇadassana-Visuddhi) denotes the attainment of knowledge or insight into the Right path and Wrong path. That means it is the understanding that distinguishes the difference between the direct path and the misleading path. The practical method is known as comprehension by groups (kalāpa-sammasana) which is the contemplation on body and mind in their Three Universal Characteristics (anicca, dukkha and anattā). Here, the knowledge of Arising and Passing away of mental and material phenomena (udaya-vaya) occurs in two phases: undeveloped phase and mature phase. In the undeveloped phase, the Ten Imperfections of Insight22 (dasa vipassanā-upakkilesa) occur. These Ten Defilements of Insight, forming the Not-Path, which mislead insight, impede the progress in meditation. The realization of these imperfections is the purification by knowledge and vision of Right Path, and the avoidance of the imperfections leads to the attainment of true insight. Besides this, three kinds of mundane full-understanding23 are attained and a part of the Eighteen Principal Insights24 is attained by means of full-understanding as abandoning.

6. Purity of Knowledge and Vision of the Way or Progress (Paṭipadā-ñāṇadassana-Visuddhi). At this stage, with the absence of the inimical influences of the Ten Imperfections of Insight, insight reaches its culmination through a gradual and steady progress (known as paṭipadā) which consists of the Eight Knowledges25 with Knowledge in Conformity with Truth (saccānulomika-ñāṇa), as the ninth. This is the knowledge adapted to the Four Noble Truths. The knowledge of contemplation of dissolution (bhaṅgānupassanā-ñāṇa), one of the Eight Knowledges is conducive to eight advantages:

1. Elimination of wrong views regarding becoming
2. Abandoning the craving for life

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22 Visuddhimagga.xx,105, P.739- illumination (obhāsa), knowledge (ñāṇa), zest (piṭṭi), serenity (passaddhi), bliss (sukha), resolve (adhimokkha), exaltation (paggaha), mindfulness (upāṭṭhāna), equanimity (upekkhā) and attachment (nikāti).
23 Ibid, xx 3, P.704 - ṇātāpariññā-full understanding as the known, Tīraṇa-pariññā- full understanding as scrutiny, and full understanding as abandoning.
24 Ibid, Chapter xx, 89. P.732.
25 Ibid, Chapter xx (I) 93, P.734, Chapter XXI (II)3, P. 746 - Knowledge of contemplation of rise and fall (udayavayānupassanā-ñāṇa), Knowledge of contemplation of dissolution (bhaṅgānupassanā-ñāṇa), Knowledge of appearance as terror (bhayaṭṭhāna-ñāṇa), Knowledge of contemplation of danger (ādinaṇīvānupassanā-ñāṇa), Knowledge of contemplation of detachment (nibbidānupassanā-ñāṇa), Knowledge of desire for deliverance (muñcitukamīyatā-ñāṇa), Knowledge of contemplation of reflection (paṭisāñkhānupassanā-ñāṇa), Knowledge of equanimity about formations (saṅkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa).
3. Constant application in what is suitable
4. Purity of livelihood
5. Elimination of anxiety
6. Expulsion of fear
7. Possession of patience and self-control
8. Overcoming of dissatisfaction

7. Purity of Knowledge and Insight (Nañadassana-visuddhi): This is the complete purity gained through the knowledge of the Four Noble Paths – the path of Stream-entry, the path of Once-return, the path of Non-return and the path of Perfect Holiness. The knowledge of these Four Supra mundane Paths that lead to the total eradication of all defilements is the purity of Knowledge and Insight.

Cognitive, Behavioral and Psychotherapeutic Aspects as reflected in Insight Meditation

The first step of Satta Visuddhi, Sīla visuddhi (Purity of morality) illustrates the behavioral therapy which is the preparation for the foundation of Insight, and the other steps of Satta Visuddhi depict the cognitive and psychotherapeutic aspects in Insight meditation.

1. Purity of Morality

Behavioral and Psychotherapeutic Aspects of Morality

Morality or Sīla is the foundation of all meritorious actions. Sīla helps create a state of the mind that is not overwhelmed by fear, anxiety, remorse and confusion. Sīla strengthens our courage and ability. It lays the foundation for meditation practice and provides psychological strength. It is this foundation that is absolutely necessary to gain concentration. In a way, morality prepares the ground for planting the seeds of mental cultivation which gives rise to the tree of wisdom.

Morality enables a person to feel the basic level of safety and security that is a requisite for the practice of mental cultivation and wisdom. Sīla-visuddhi (Purity of morality) leads to purity of mind. Purity of mind (Cittavisuddhi) which is the basic foundation for penetrating the Four Noble Truths as well as all conditioned phenomena and the unconditioned which is Nirvāṇa.

The Therapeutic Rewards and Blessing of Morality

Freedom from remorse, acquisition of Joy, Rapture, Tranquility, Happiness, Concentration, Vision and knowledge according to reality, Turning away and detachment, The vision and knowledge with regard to Deliverance,

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26 Visuddhimagga. Chapter XXII, 1, 2, P.785. sotapatti-magga, sakadagami-magga, anagami-magga and arihatta-magga
Five Advantages through the Practice of Morality

The Buddha preached the following five benefits gained through the observance of the precepts. Great increase of wealth and prosperity through diligence, Noble reputation, Confident deportment without timidity in every society, Serene Death after a full life-span, Re-birth in a happy state or in a heavenly world.

The Wholesome Results gained by keeping the Five Precepts:

The First Precept – no physical disabilities, no dry and wilted look, no weakness and sluggishness, no fear of dangers, no fear of being killed by others and committing suicide, no lots of diseases, no loss of friends and no short life.

The Second Precept – no poverty, no loss of your belongings to the Five Enemies (water or flood, fire or conflagrations, thieves, tyrants or bad leaders and unloved heirs like bad sons and daughters).

The Third Precept – not hated by many, no lots of enemies, peace, happy family, no shame and embarrassment, no physical deformities, no much worries, no separation from your loved ones.

The Fourth Precept – no unclear speech, no crooked teeth, no foul mouth, no dull senses, no lack of honor, no roughness in speech, no lack of calm.

The Fifth Precept – no loss of judgment, not being lazy, not being forgetful, not being insane, sense of gratitude, moral shame and moral fear.

Behavioral, Cognitive and Psychotherapeutic Process of Sīla

By abstaining from immoral speech, actions and livelihood, the quality of blamelessness with non-remorse as the benefit can be achieved. One who observes the precepts is dear and loved by his companions holding him in high esteem. Non–remorse leads to joy (pīti) and bliss (sukha), followed by tranquility (passadhi), the proximate cause of concentration (samādhi). With concentrated mind, one is able to penetrate into the true nature of things (yathābhūta-ñāna) through Insight (vipassāna) and attain the Path and Fruition Knowledge (magga-phala-ñāna). Thus, Sīla is of many therapeutic aspects beginning with non-remorse and ending with the realization of Nibbāna. The Moral Purity purges the mind of its inferior, mean and inimical propensities and paves the way for inward purification.

2. Purity of Mind

The following mental disorders suffered by the Deluded-natured (moha-carita) are brought into diminution by Purity of Mind.

- thīna-middha - sloth and torpor (3rd of the Five Hindrances),
- uddhacca - restlessness (one mental hindrance and also one of the Ten Fetters)28

27 Visuddhimagga Chapter I, (IV), 23, P.9.
• *kukkucca* - wrongly-performed-ness like scruples, remorse, uneasiness of conscience, worry *vicikicchā* - skeptical doubts (one of the three fetters)

3. Purity of Views

Due to Diṭṭhi Visuddhi, one attains the view of reality or seeing things as they are (*yathābhūta-dassana*) that avoids falling into extremes and forming perversions or distortions of views (*diṭṭhi-vipallāsa*). The misconception that causes one to think as “I-ness” or “I am-conceit” (ego-conceit, *asmi-māna*) is eliminated. Seeing the transience of the Five Aggregates and their relation to phenomenal existence, he is not worried by the vicissitude of the world. A potentiality to face and overcome sorrow and lamentation is developed, and mindfulness to understand the truth that everything is impermanent including our own lives is developed. A wakefulness that everything is changing all of the time is created. By seeing this truth of impermanence of all worldly vicissitudes, our mind is trained to maintain equanimity leading to balance of our mind.

The Overall Therapeutic Benefits of Insight Meditation

• Decreasing and ridding the mind of various kinds of mental defilements which cause suffering.
• Increase of happiness with the reduction of suffering.
• Becoming detached from all the matters to which one used to be attached and as a result, being free from disturbances by worldly currents.
• Firm establishment of mind and development of wisdom to see things as they really are. As a result, one is unruffled, not swinging either way by worldly conditions - gain or loss, honor or dishonor, praise or blame, happiness or suffering - the vicissitude of the world.
• Decrease of selfishness and increase of sacrifices for the benefit of others.
• Development of a much more refined mind endowed with virtue in proportion to the level of practice reached.
• True peace of mind endowed with happiness which is unperturbed by secular matters.

Ten Asubhas (objects of impurities) and Kāyagatā-sati (mindfulness of body) are a therapeutic methods for mental disorders suffered by the Lust-natured (rāga-carita) such as hallucinatory habits (māyā), fraudulent tactics (sātheya), pride in all actions (māna), delight in sinful actions (pāpicchatā), unlimited desires (mahicchatā), unsatisfactoriness (asantutthitā), deep rooted defilements in every action, vacillation in duties (cāpalya), no fearing of any sinful action (anottappa), lack of moral shame in any sinful action (ahirika), infatuated mood in any function (mado), unconscious mind (pamāda).

Four Kasiṇas: nīla, pīta, lohita and odāta and the Brahma-vihāras are a therapy for mental disorders suffered by the Hate-natured (dosa-carita) such as provocation in day today life actions (kodho), hatred (upanāha), covering others’ good qualities (makkhi), comparing one’s good qualities with himself (palāsa), intolerance of others’ wealth (issā), hiding his wealth from the others (macchariya).
Ānāpāna-sati: is a therapy for the mental disorders possessed by the Deluded-natured (Moha-carita) such as sloth and torpor (thīna-middha), restlessness (uddhacca), scruples, remorse, uneasiness of conscience (kukkucca), skeptical doubts (vicikicchā).

Six Anussatis: Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha, sīla, cāga, devatā are a therapy for the mental disorders possessed by Saddhā-carita.

Marāṇa-sati: upasamānussati, āhārepaṭikūla-saññā, catudhātu-vavatthāna - Buddh or Intelligence.

Six Kasiṇas: paṭhavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo, ākāsa, āloka, and Four Arūpas – Sabba-carita or mixed character.

The psychotherapeutic aspects as reflected in the Eighteen Principal Insights

1. The contemplation of Impermanence (aniccānupassanā) abandons the perception of permanence.
2. The contemplation of Suffering (dukkhānupassanā) abandons the perception of pleasure.
3. The contemplation of Not-self (anattānupassanā) abandons the perception of self.
4. The contemplation of Dispassion (nibbidānupassanā) abandons delighting.
5. The contemplation of Fading Away (virāgānupassanā) abandons greed.
6. The contemplation of Cessation (nirodhānupassanā) abandons originating.
7. The contemplation of Relinquishment (paṭinissaggānupassanā) abandons grasping.
8. The contemplation of Destruction (khāyānupassanā) abandons the conception of compactness.
9. The contemplation of Fall (of formations) (vayānupassanā) abandons the accumulation of kamma.
10. The contemplation of Change (vipariṇāmānupassanā) abandons the conception of lastingness.
11. The contemplation of the Signless or the unconditioned (animittānupassanā) abandons sign.
12. The contemplation of Desirelessness (apaṇīhatānupassanā) abandons desire.
13. The contemplation of Voidness (suññatānupassanā) abandons misinterpreting (insistence).
14. The development of the Insight into phenomena (higher understanding or wisdom) (adhipaṇṇā-dhamma-vipassanā) abandons misinterpreting (insistence) due to grasping at once.
15. The development of Correct Knowledge and Vision (yathā-bhūta-ñāṇadassana) abandons misinterpreting (insistence) due to confusion.
16. The development of Danger or Misery (ādīnavānupassanā) abandons misinterpreting (insistence) due to reliance.
17. The contemplation of Reflexion (paṭisankhānupassanā) abandons non-reflection.
18. The contemplation of Turning Away (vivaṭṭanānupassanā) abandons misinterpreting (insistence) due to bondage.

The Overall Therapeutic Results of Insight Meditation

The behavioral problems caused by the adverse actions and evil speeches (detrimental bodily activities and malevolent verbal expressions) which are inimical to individual and society can be overcome through the Moral Purity, and this can be taken as an aspect of Vikkhambhana-pahāna\(^29\) - overcoming by suspension or repression (a temporary suppression of taints which lead to mental problems).

The adverse ideas and erroneous views are overcome through the Eighteen Insights, and this way of overcoming (the idea of permanence by impermanence, the idea of pleasure by suffering, self by Not-self, etc.) is known as The Overcoming by the Opposites – Tadāṅga-pahāna\(^30\)

The mental problems caused due to attachment, aversion, torpor, restlessness and conflict are overcome by the Purity of Mind (Citta-visuddhi) through eight attainments -four rūpa Jhānās and four arūpa Jhānas (asta samāpatis) with access-concentration (upacāra –samādhi) which has the potentiality to suppress the Five Hindrances (pañcanīvaraṇa). The overcoming by tranquilization is Paṭipassaddhi-pahāna.

All the behavioral and mental problems are completely overcome by the complete purity gained through the knowledge of the Noble Paths with the final attainment - arihatta-magga leading to the total eradication of all defilements through the Purity of Knowledge and Insight. This is known as the Samuccheda-pahāna –overcoming by destruction.

Conclusion

Modern psychoanalysis works on the assumption that when the origin of a mental disorder is revealed, its influence on unconscious motivation will automatically disappear. Such psychoanalysis has so far not been successful in diagnosing the root causes that bring into being mental problems and unwholesome behaviors. Hence, modern psychiatry or psychotherapy is incapable of the total eradication of problematic mentality that causes problematic behavior.

Buddhism which analyses the root causes of problematic personality in the context of the Noxious Trio – greed, hatred and delusion exposes a highly systematized psychological analysis of human mind and behavior with the prominence to the mind ( mano pubbaṅgamā dhāmmanā – mano seṭṭhā manomayā’).\(^31\) The cognitive, behavioral and psychotherapeutic aspect reflected in Insight Meditation is that when the mind is gradually purified, body and speech are cleansed. The total purity of mind brings about the complete eradication of all taints or cankers putting an end to all types of mental disorders and problematic behaviors. Eventually, the cognitive, behavioral and psychotherapeutic methods reflected in Insight Meditation can profusely be adopted to cure mental problems and abnormal behaviors in the modern society.

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31 The Dhammapada, K. Sri Dhammananada, verse 1–Yamaka Vagga P. 41.