

THE CONCEPT SACCAKIRIYA IN BUDDHISM AS A TREATMENT FOR MENTAL ILLNESS BEYOND PSYCHOTHERAPY

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According to the interpretation given by the American Psychological Association, psychotherapy is a way to help people with a broad variety of mental illnesses and emotional difficulties. Further, it is known as “talk therapy.” In Buddhism, the concept known as “Saccakiriya” also has similar characteristics. Psychotherapy can help eradicate or control troubling symptoms so that a person can function better and increase well-being and healing. There are several different types of psychotherapy and some types may work better with certain problems or issues. Psychiatrists and other mental health professionals use several types of therapy. The choice of therapy type depends on the nature of the patient’s particular illness and circumstances and his or her preference. Therapists may combine elements from different approaches to best meet the needs of the person receiving treatment. Yet, the concept “Saccakiriya” has a different aspect of psychotherapy. “Saccakiriya” is a concept somewhat difficult to be rendered into English with all its nuances. Simply expressed, it refers to a declaration on oath, an asseveration of truth, solemnly performed to the effect that “if such and such is the case truly and truthfully, such and such a thing should come to pass.” The concept “Saccakiriya” is a motif found in the stories of the Pali canon and commentaries, as well as in the post canonical works such as Milindapañha. In addition, the facts related to Buddhist history indicate that “Saccakiriya” is a unique aspect of psychotherapy that Western psychology has not paid attention to. In this research paper, psychotherapeutic significance and the uniqueness of the concept “Saccakiriya” are discussed.

Keywords: Psychotherapy, Saccakiriya, Sīlaguṇa, Saccaguṇa, Talk therapy