

## A THEORETICAL STUDY ON THE EARLY BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE OF COUNSELING FOR THE PREVENTION OF ILLICIT AFFAIRS

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The aim of this paper is to investigate the role that Buddhist Counseling could play in married life. Illicit Affairs convey bitter suffering for both the husband and the wife in marriage. Even though Sri Lankans have been pursuing Buddhism, which promotes healthy human relations, adultery related family issues are at a higher level. The lack of awareness regarding the value of the Buddhist teaching lead problems between husbands and wives. The objective of this paper is to identify the extent to which Buddhist canonical teachings could be used to overcome illicit affairs. When paying attention to psychological and sociological research, it could be noticed that a considerable amount of experiments has been done in relation to illicit affairs. Many studies have uncovered a number of causes for illicit affairs. However, they have not given successful solutions to resolve the issue. A limited number of Buddhist articles have been published on illicit affairs emphasizing the negative consequences of such affairs, and they too have not identified prevention methods based on Buddhism to overcome the issue. Knowledge is incomplete if it is not pragmatic. The mere recognition of the problem of illicit affairs is not sufficient to resolve the problem; it is important to propose a cessation method. The present study pays attention to the mentality of the couple. According to Buddhism, passion and defilements arise in the unrestrained mind. The failure to recognize that could result in the deterioration of the husband-wife relationship. This paper adopts the approach of the four noble truths in conceptualizing and addressing the idea of illicit affairs: the nature of illicit affairs, the causes of illicit affairs, the cessation of illicit affairs, and the path leading to the cessation of illicit affairs. According to this theory, it is easy to recognize the nature and negative consequences of illicit affairs. Recognizing the nature of illicit affairs and their unhealthy results is not sufficient as far as solving the problem is concerned. The present paper examines the problem from the perspective of Buddhist ethical teachings. The Buddhist path for this problem is more practical since the noble aspiration of the Counseling techniques, which are available in the Buddhist doctrine, is to overcome all kinds of suffering. This study used the interpretative approach, and hermeneutics was employed as the method of the study. The key texts are the *Siglovāda-sutta* of the *Dīgha-nikāya* and the *Samajīva-sutta* of the *Anguttara-nikāya*. A number of discourses from the *Sutta-pitaka* were selected in order to address the research problem. The Buddha's teaching of the Four Noble Truths was employed to analyze the data. The study shows how the selected Buddhist discourses could be applied as a theoretical approach for the prevention of illicit affairs.

*Keywords:* Illicit Affairs, Prevention, Counseling