

PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVES ON BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGY OF FIVE AGGREGATES AS DEPICTED IN THE PĀLI CANON

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Buddhist Psychology explains the reality of the connection between name (*nāma*) and form/matter (*rūpa*) in the context of the mental conduct of human beings. As people have different mental or physical problems, the Buddha, considering the individual character traits of different people, was capable of understanding them clearly and finding solutions to them. The Five Aggregates (*pañcakkhandhā*), i.e., corporeality, feeling, perception or cognition, volitions and consciousness, constitute the mental and physical aspect of personality or “self”. These five are products of dependent arising (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), a principle of reality which leaves no room for the existence of any permanent self. Buddhist Psychology of the Five Aggregates discusses mental and physical constitution of people and methods of finding solutions to the problems arising from it. The question that arises is “what is the root of problems and how could one solve them?” According to the Buddhist perspective, all problems arise out of mental defilements (*kilesa*). Basically, three unwholesome roots (*akusala mūla*), i.e., greed, hatred and delusion, resulting from clinging to an illusory self by assuming it to be permanent is the source of all such defilements that give rise to problems. Buddhist Psychological teachings provide different methods, such as the practice of the four foundations of Mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*), to eliminate the mental defilements. This practice involves observing with mindfulness the nature and activities of the body, the feelings, the mind and mind objects. Through mindfulness meditation, one would contemplate on the Five Aggregates as being defiled and impermanent, for the purpose of lessening existing desires and discontents, and maintaining the health of the body and the mind. Not clinging to anything in the world, one may destroy the root of problems and become free from attachment to the Five Aggregates. In the present study, I focus on the practical perspectives for research purposes to find an answer to the most important question “Can Buddhist Psychology provide answers to current problems faced by millions of people in the world?” Based on a thorough study, I explore the useful applications of Buddhist Psychology in dealing with the Five Aggregates. Through a decent understanding of the practical perspectives of Buddhist Psychology, one may know how to use it more effectively in daily life.

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