

**THE INTERSECTION OF BUDDHIST EPISTEMOLOGY
AND COGNITIVE COUNSELLING:
A DEEP DIVE INTO THE *BRAHMAJALA SUTTA*'S
CRITIQUE OF PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS**

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The *Brahmajāla Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya* offers profound insights into cognitive distortions that shape wrong views, leading to psychological unrest. It outlines 62 wrong views arising from fundamental cognitive misperceptions of reality, resulting in individuals confusing untruths with truths and vice versa, causing mental confusion and distress. This research investigates how the *Brahmajala Sutta* addresses cognitive errors and proposes corrective measures through the Buddhist concept of right understanding (*sammā-diṭṭhi*). The primary research problem is exploring how *Sutta*'s critique of wrong views can be applied to modern counseling theories focusing on cognitive distortions. The hypothesis posits that *Sutta*'s cognitive aspects can serve as tools for counseling by addressing the root causes of wrong views and psychological unrest, ultimately leading to clearer perceptions and mental well-being. Using a textual analysis methodology, this study examines *Sutta*'s content through the lens of cognitive counseling theories, comparing it with modern practices such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). *Sutta*'s counseling theory emphasizes correcting wrong views, similar to CBT's approach of identifying and rectifying faulty thinking patterns. However, while Western cognitive approaches focus on alleviating mental distress and improving daily functioning, the Buddhist approach in the *Brahmajala Sutta* aims at a deeper transformation—leading individuals to ultimate liberation from suffering (*Nibbāna*). The Western cognitive approach, pioneered by Aaron Beck and Albert Ellis, primarily targets cognitive distortions related to individual well-being, such as anxiety and depression, aiming to restructure thoughts for healthier cognitive functioning. In contrast, the Buddhist approach addresses the nature of existence itself, aiming to transcend suffering by eliminating the root causes of cognitive distortions—craving, aversion, and ignorance. Thus, while both approaches address cognitive errors, the Buddhist method seeks a profound transformation toward enduring mental liberation. The *Brahmajala Sutta*, by emphasizing right understanding, provides a timeless framework for integrating Buddhist and modern cognitive counseling practices to address both psychological and existential concerns.

Keywords: *Brahmajala Sutta*, cognitive counseling, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Buddhism