

Psychological View On Mind In Buddhism

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Abstract

In Buddhism, the study of the mind is classified as an internal science. Psychology (the study of what the mind is) and cognition (the study of how the mind works) are important aspects of the spiritual path. Although medicine and logic are considered external sciences, and more importantly, they are given less importance compared to internal sciences. Because everything that the Buddha taught, everything in the Buddhist canon, helps to get rid of suffering and attain happiness, it only happens with the mind. Medication can heal the body, but it cannot make us happy.

According to Buddhism, physical health is also linked to mental states. Therefore, the real threats to our well-being are the three basic deceived minds of attachment, anger and ignorance, which can lead to all other suffering, both mental and physical. Only by fully understanding the mind and its functions can we overcome the confusing thoughts and emotions that plague us.

While the ultimate goal of studying the mind is complete freedom from suffering, we can also study the mind for more immediate therapeutic reasons. Investigating the mind by analyzing our thoughts, emotions, and so on is the first step to alleviating all manner of mental illnesses. In his first teaching, the Buddha compares the stages of freeing the mind to recovery from an illness: if we don't first recognize that we are ill, we won't seek help, and if we don't know the origin of our illness, we cannot choose the most effective therapy.

Keywords: Four Noble Truths, Mind, Wisdom, Psychology, Body

Four Noble Truths and Mind

The Buddha uses the framework of four noble truths to create this insight: the first truth, the truth of suffering, and disease. The second fact, the truth about the origin of suffering, indicates the cause of the disease. The third fact is the understanding of the truth of cessation, the possibility of a complete cure, and the fourth truth, the truth of the path that leads to cessation, is healing. The Four Noble Truths cover the entire spiritual path with its many facets, but we can apply them equally to the nature of the mind. To change the mind is to

look at how it can be used an understanding that can only arise from a true knowledge of its nature¹. In Western psychotherapy, a patient is guided towards an understanding of his or her mental state in order to affect healing. In this, the goals of Buddhism and Western psychotherapy are interrelated. But despite the many similarities, not all goals are shared. The purpose of psychoanalytic analysis is to bring together the various elements of the soul's emotions, memories, and more. In contrast, aspiration in Buddhism must rise above the concept of I or "I". Instead of harmonizing the

contradictory elements of the soul, it becomes whole, aiming to transcend the concept of self according to Buddhist teachings. In rejecting the concept of self, Buddhism is radical. No matter what we have or how emotionally balanced we are, a sense of insecurity lives on in our psyche; unless this is addressed, it will be very difficult for us to fully realize; the reason for all this is the misconception that I am. We suffer from a misunderstanding of our mode of existence, and based on that understanding we misjudge the existence of an active, real "I". We cannot say that we are mere illusions or dreams, but that the central figure in the drama of our lives is the "I". If we are ever to transcend the finite and indefinite worldview we hold, we must understand what the human body and mind we call the "I" really are. This is why Buddhist psychology places strong emphasis on analysis.

Western psychoanalysis seeks specific causes for specific mental problems, but from a Buddhist perspective uses unrealistic short-term scales. Of course the science of the Western mind is derived from Freud's theory, but there is an assumption that what is wrong with us can be discovered from our childhood. That is not the Buddhist way. Buddhism does not consider the root cause of our problems to be outside of this life, but rather has developed the habitual tendencies of our own minds over many lifetimes.

Parents and the environment play an important role in transforming us into the human beings we are today. Western psychoanalysis is the approach to resolving specific complaints. Buddhism seeks to understand the various negative states of the mind as symptoms of profound disease and to find the root cause of the disease. So the Buddhist approach is very holistic. This approach is reflected in Tibetan medicine, which not only treats the causes rather than the symptoms, but also meticulously examines those underlying causes with actions that emerge from the misconception of Western psychology. The latter discipline sees disease as an incompatibility between the elements of the self; the former sees the whole idea of him as sick. Significant fundamental differences between Western and Buddhist approaches should be appreciated. Neuroscientists can gain a lot of knowledge from ancient texts; On the

contrary, Buddhist practitioners can learn a lot from the mind. Sophisticated tests that determine the function of different parts of the brain are attractive, highly effective, and highly compatible with Buddhist concepts².

Mind in Buddhism

The Buddha often taught about the mind, and all Buddhist interpretations are based on the Buddha's own words, the Suttas. The formulas common to both the Theravada and Mahayana traditions of Buddhism often refer to the four noble truths and the mind, discuss its functions and teach us how to purify our present mind and transform them into wisdom, understanding and compassion. Many suttas from the Mahayana tradition, such as the Perfection of the Wisdom Sutra (Prajnaparamita Sutra) deal with the mind in detail and explain how our perceptions deepen.

According to Tibetan Buddhism, Vajrayana is a complex esoteric teaching commonly known as Tantra, taught directly by the Buddha. Tantras contain many teachings about the nature of the mind, which express subtle moods in a variety of ways, and include explanations of how they can be used to understand the ultimate nature of reality. The words of the Buddha are divided into three "baskets" or Pitakas: Vinaya Pitaka, Sutta Pitaka and Abhidharma Pitaka. Each basket, though related to the other, has a unique focus, and these emphases include the three higher exercises of behaviour, concentration, and wisdom³. Vinaya focuses on ethical behaviour, especially monastic and ordinary vows and the administration of monasteries. The Sutta Pitaka is a collection of discourses by the Buddha which focuses primarily on cultivating concentration.

The Abhidharma Pitaka, written about three hundred years after the death of the Buddha, is about the development of wisdom or knowledge⁴. Understanding the mind falls into this last category, because without knowing the dynamics of our mind, we cannot understand the nature of reality. The Abhidharma Pitaka includes some texts written in the Pali language, and some texts written in Sanskrit. Although seven major Pali Abhidhamma texts remain, no original Sanskrit texts have been found. Since the original texts have been lost, Tibetan monks have traditionally read the Abhidharma through two very important commentaries. Vasubandhu

and Asanka's Abhidharma texts focus on the mental phenomena that occur in a particular state of mind, the verbal and physical manifestations that result from those mental phenomena, and the habitual thought patterns that lead to wisdom and peace or delusion and suffering. The analytical process of classifying mental states into enlightened minds and deceived minds sharpens our assessment of what should be created and abandoned. Abhidharmakosha focuses entirely on the mind and its functions. It describes different types of minds

This is an important task for analysis and reinforces the notion that it is necessary to develop an analytical mind in order to understand the mind and progress on the path to wisdom⁵. Abhidharmakosa Buddhism proves that it is more than just memory and meditative concentration. We need to gain a true understanding of profound subjects, such as the four seals of Buddhism, and to integrate them into our lives at the very deepest level, and for that we need the analytical mind. This is the method that the Abhidharma describes. The other group of texts concerned primarily with the mind is called Pramana. These are mainly intellectual texts that explore how the mind works⁶. Two Indian masters in this field were Dignaka (5th century) and his indirect disciple Dharmakirti (7th century). Although the intellectual interpretations of the mind were studied long before the time of these scholars, it was Dignaka and Dharmakirti who systematically established the tradition⁷. Thus they are considered the founders of Buddhist epistemology. The texts they composed, such as Dignaga's Compendium on Valid Perception *Pramanasamucchaya* and Dharmakirti's commentary on it, *Commentary on Valid Perception Pramanavarttika*, as well as the *Beyond Abhidharma and Oaths*, the mind is also explored in Mahayana research articles such as *The Guide to the Life of Bodhisattva (Bodhisattva)*, written by the great Indian master Shantideva, who meticulously explains how to cultivate, identify and practice the best grace. It is explored in resisting anger and cultivating qualities such as concentration, happy endeavor and wisdom.

Commentaries on these texts by later Tibetan monks clarify the difference between perceptual and conceptual consciousnesses and define valid and mistaken minds, they also

elucidate the epistemological aspect of the mind and how knowledge develops through the process of analysis and investigation. Furthermore, the Vajrayana texts contain detailed descriptions of various mental phenomena that operate in the conscious and unconscious states during waking, sleeping or dreaming, and how the mind moves from one life to the next at death. By systematically examining all these teachings, one can create a complete picture of the mind⁸.

Although these texts are a powerful tool in understanding the mind and its functions from as many angles as possible, the ultimate realization of the nature of the mind can only arise through our own experience. The Buddha simply did not accept his words, but advised him to examine them "as a goldsmith tests the quality of gold."⁹ Although Buddhist practitioners see the importance of the teachings of the Buddha and other great masters, they will not accept them without conducting their own inquiry. Rational and critical analysis is the means to a deeper understanding of the nature of the mind. Therefore, there are no contradictions in the different and sometimes different interpretations given by different Buddhists over the centuries. Each Buddhist monk took the ideas of the previous one as a starting point and developed a deeper understanding based on it¹⁰.

Monastic Study of the Mind

Before starting on great texts such as the Abhidharmakosha or the *Pramanavarttika*, Tibetan students usually study a preliminary text, called an entering or introductory text, which condenses and categorizes the root text as an aid to memorization¹¹. In the case of the treatises on epistemology and psychology, the introductory text is known as *lorig*, "awareness (to) and knowledge (rig)." Psychology, generally speaking, is concerned with how the environment is interpreted by the mind¹². Therefore, it is an analysis of the inner world of our experience. Without understanding our experience of the world in which we function and interact, we have no way of understanding, for example, suffering, which is the starting point of the spiritual journey, the first noble truth. Epistemology, in turn, is the study of knowledge: how we know what we know and

how we can test its validity and refine our knowledge. As such, it goes beyond the mere analysis of everyday experience to a genuine understanding of wisdom. According to Buddhism, epistemology and psychology go hand in hand. When the study of psychology is undertaken without the basis of epistemology and the methods of practice it suggests, there is a risk that it will remain a mere intellectual exercise and not bring real benefit¹³

The mind in Buddhism is often divided into two categories. The first is basic consciousness, or awareness, which just means our base line capacity for subjective experience. This basic awareness is some-times referred to as "mind." The mind, however, undergoes constantly shifting mind states, and these mental events are further divided into main "minds" and their associated "mental factors"¹⁴," The study of psychology in Buddhism often means the study of these minds and mental factors. Mind and Psychological Factors in Abhidhamma Studies, using Asanka's Abhidharmasamuccaya and Vasubandhu's Abhidharmakosha, go into more detail than the introductory Loric texts¹⁵. These two and their related commentaries are traditional as they provide a detailed discussion of each mind and mental factors Working in parallel with the study of the Abhidharma texts, study the mind and its functions from a scientific perspective based on Dignaga's Pramana Samuccaya, Dharmakirti's Brahmanavartika and their various interpretations. These texts play an important role in tradition, but whatever the level or type of study, it is the study of the mind, and its goal is to realize our ability to dispel our illusions and become a Buddha¹⁶.

Necessity of the Study of Mind

According to Buddhism, we are nothing more than body and mind, and mind is the sole motivator of all our actions and the creator of all our happiness and suffering¹⁷. It is therefore impossible to overemphasize the importance of mind in Buddhism. It can nourish the body well and the eyes can see beautiful scenes, but only the mind can make it happy. Conversely, there may be pain in the body and others may abuse our ears, but only the mind can turn this into suffering¹⁸. Of course, if we are angry, we should avoid physically attacking the person we are angry with or abusing with words, but such

actions of body and speech are the result of anger, so in the end it is the angry mind. Have some interest in the mind and its potential, of how important the mind is. How important a good home, good food, good friends, a satisfying job, and other external factors are to our health, comfort, and general happiness. Most thoughtful people also recognize that external phenomena alone do not rule lives. However, to thoroughly investigate just how much influence the mind has. But are going to really transform life from confusion and suffering to clarity and happiness, the knowledge gained through investigation must be deep, at a heart level. Knowledge must be transformed into practical experience¹⁹.

Buddhism sees the mind as crucial whereas the body is relatively less important. Of course it is necessary to look after the body, and struggling to physically survive leaves no time to develop the mind; but within Buddhist literature there is that if we look after the mind well, the body will be taken care of along the way. Nurturing our own minds will also affect those around us; we will benefit family, friends, colleagues, and society in general. So benefiting all sentient beings, the goal of Mahayana Buddhism begins with taking care of our own mind. There are two reasons why it is important to understand the One is because there is an intimate connection between mind and karma²⁰. The other is that our Mind plays a crucial role in our experience of happiness and suffering. We all want to be happy and free from suffering. That was the Buddha's starting point and most important message in the four noble truths, which shows clearly that the final and complete end of suffering is possible. Although each Buddhist philosophical school has developed slightly different assertions about the mind²¹, they all present the mind as the central player in our experience of happiness and suffering. This is true here and now, in the future, and in fact through all future lives until we free ourselves from suffering completely. So it is crucial for a Buddhist practitioner to understand the mind and then put that understanding into practice at the deepest possible level. Furthermore, our understanding of the mind must extend to the crucial relationship between the mind and the external, material world. Failure to understand this relationship is at the very center of the worldwide environmental disaster that we are

so close to experiencing. The internal workings of mind, cognitive processes, emotions, and so on relate intimately to our external environment. Inner and outer worlds couldn't be more intimately connected, and to create true happiness for ourselves and others we need to shift from this current obsession with the material world into a more realistic relationship with our own minds²². Learning about the mind is beyond lists and levels. It is important to see for ourselves how the mind responds when confronted with the shapes and colours that make up the outside world, and how it affects the outside world. This is what the word spiritual means.

The Nature of Mind

Regardless of the level of visual acuity, all Buddhist schools agree that only a moment of the previous mind can cause the present mind. It is basic. All events arise due to the mind and substance, causes and conditions, and the main substantial cause of the mind is the previous moment of the mind²³. Buddhism does not present a final creator like other religions, although it does offer some explanation for the formation of events. That explanation is the principle of reason. There are both mental and physical phenomena because they have a previous sequel and they act as a cause. This moment of the mind is caused by of course, there are other factors involved. Buddhism speaks of substantial and secondary causes. Naturally we must remember that our state of mind is not divorced from what is happening in our external world²⁴. A good word from a friend or a good meal can bring a happy mood, but its substantial reason must be the moment before the mind. Good food does not change the mind. Previous moment of the mind. This is completely unnatural. In fact, it was just an experience. This experience has two aspects: it is clear and cognitive. The mind itself is really defined as clearly and knowingly in the teaching texts²⁵.

Moreover, the mind is not static, but a continuum of momentarily moving events containing elements of this experience. As mentioned above, we can talk about the many mental phenomena that occur every second, such as emotions, thoughts and many more and the mind, which is the basic foundation on which those phenomena occur. Within the

continuum of the mind are levels of subtlety, the toy masters that determine their basis and our surface life, from the conscious total mental phenomena we know to the subtle anaesthetic phenomena. The central mind that underlines our whole being is even deeper. This is the basic state of mind that goes from life to life²⁶.

Mind is Not Body

Whether the mind is divided or part of the body is a debate that has been going on for centuries. General Knowledge we have a body, it is a body, and a mind, one does deeds, one does thinking. An investigation into this dichotomy reveals that it is not so easy²⁷. Western scientists who study the mind are severely constrained by the constraints of the traditional scientific method, where the rules of evidence are developed only in relation to physical observations. Without a rigorous and consensual method for verifying the claims of consciousness research, theories about the nature of the mind have varied widely over the past century. These theories are often divided into two groups: behaviorists and materialists, those who insist that the mind is nothing and that the mind and body are fundamentally different. Behavioral experts emphasize that what we see as mental processes are actually energy exchanges within the brain, which are so complex that they are transformed into rational thinking, not really the mind. Buddhism denies this. According to Buddhist thought there are many stages in understanding the mind, but everyone agrees that the body is the object and the mind is not the object²⁸. This is a basic principle. There is nothing in matter that can change our brain, body organs or external things into the mind. All the different interpretations of the mind, from the practical explanations in the Sutra teachings to the most subtle explanations of the highest yoga tantra, are based on the assertion that the mind is a different phenomenon from the material world.

According to Buddhism, the material world is made up of the four main elements of land, water, fire and air and the four properties that arise from them. These labels are not real and our bodies do not contain mud and fire! Rather they refer to the properties of solidity, fluidity, heat and motion, respectively²⁹. Four Attributes Four of our five senses are objects: form, smell, taste and tactile objects. It is

impossible for Buddhists to say that these elements are the cause of the mind. The main reason must be non-material. This is what we need to explore and be absolutely clear. The mind is just an experience and it is not a bar; so its reason must be one.

This understanding is present in all Buddhist literature. The mind can affect the object and vice versa, but the two are unique to each other. If some object is without colour, shape or dimension of object, it cannot be object at the same time. That does not mean, however, that mind and body aren't closely interconnected. The deeper we explore the nature of mind in Buddhist psychology, the more we see the interconnection of mind and body and that certain levels of mind depend heavily on both the function and existence of the physical nervous system³⁰. This interconnection is reflected at the deepest possible level, to the point where the division between mind and body can be blurred, especially in areas such as psychosomatic illness. Nevertheless, the basic belief of Buddhism is that we are a mixture of material form and non-material mind, and cannot change or change each other. By explaining the connection between anger (mind) and ugliness (meaning), it can be easily seen that the mood of anger never changes to the physical state of the ugly face. Anger can make our face ugly, but the mind cannot become a face. However, the connection between mind and object is stronger than this.

According to Buddhism, the anger we experience now is the reason why we have an ugly appearance in the future, which makes perfect sense. You can see this in people who are very angry; it is in that anger that their whole body has grown. Although not ugly, according to Buddhism the effect of anger is to live in a bad environment like a battlefield. Many total senses like our five senses cannot function without our nervous system or brain. That is very clear. For the eye sensation to function clearly and knowingly, it depends on three conditions. One of them is the sensory organ of the eye, a subtle object that forms within the real eye organ. In the zone of desire in which we live, our whole being focuses on the object of existence. The reason for Buddhism's assertion that the mind is not the body is that the basic tenets of Buddhism revolve around the law of karma or cause and

effect³¹. The body disappears at death. If the mind and body are together, the thought of the mind will disappear. Without the continuity of the mind, the effect can never follow the cause; the chain will be broken. This is completely inconsistent with the concept of karma. Buddhism emphasizes innumerable rebirths, and there is an intermediate state between death and subsequent rebirth or existence called bardo³². The first moment of the mind of this life is the result of the last moment of the mind of the intermediate-level being. That mental flow can be seen as an intermediate-level being from the first moment and before, until the last moment of the mind of the previous life. The mind that continues in death is not the most superficial state of mind with its overt ideas and emotions, but rather the most subtle mind - the center of our existence that determines conditions with all the desires that will ripen in future life³³.

The Mind is Clear and Intelligent

Buddhist philosophical texts clearly define the mind as what the mind is. According to Keshe Rapton, the clarity of the mind refers to the nature of consciousness as "non-object, space-like ... colour, shape, or object dimension is completely absent." No ability to know. The mind is only clear and capable of reflecting or knowing an object. The mind can also be defined as a subjective event that arises depending on the object appearing to it. To be an object, as this definition states, there must be an object³⁴. There can be no feeling without the object to be felt. This takes us to another basic aspect of the mind. The mind is the actual process of knowing the object that appears to it. So the mind is not a fixed thing, but it is the process of its clarity and cognition. It is not as if we have to somehow create this clear and knowing nature. It already exists and is constantly running to know the world around us. Cognition or organization ... is called the mind, which is non-objective.... This is ... the basic nature of the mind, the clear light nature of the mind. "The basic clarity of the mind is under all cognitive phenomena³⁵" means the physical states that it evokes based on our experience and the transient mental states that arise and cease in our minds. This means that the key to liberation is embedded within the framework of our conscious life.

How can we recognize the face of this mind? We can only know this if our own mind is freed from contact with ordinary objects. We need to reduce the true nature of the mind and see what it is, freeing our mind from the interactions of external and internal objects, such as images, smells, sounds, thoughts or feelings that usually accumulate in our consciousness³⁶. We can only see the screen behind the pictures if we turn off the projector. Once the rest is gone, the mind will only be the object of meditation. The mind naturally becomes aware of itself when it frees us from limited relationships with the external sensory objects that normally occupy it³⁷. If we want to know about a book, we have to take care of that book. We have to read it, touch it, look at the card and do everything necessary to understand it. The mind is also right. If you really want to know the nature of the mind, you have to make the mind the central object. The mind cannot be free without an object. By its very nature the mind is the object, the agent, the doer. Object and subject cannot be interdependent without each other. That is why, through deep meditation, when our mind is freed from contact with all external and internal objects, the subjective mind will naturally focus on one object³⁸. The meditative techniques to free our minds vary according to different schools and different levels of practice. Sensory experiences or the more insidious mental events taking place all the time discursive thoughts, feelings, and so on can well be objects of our meditation; these are minds but not the clear and luminous mind we are referring to here. The mind that is the object of meditation on the mind is the mere luminosity that is the base of all mental events. By learning to focus on the mind free of gross conceptualizations, we can touch this intrinsic freedom and thereby begin to cut the bonds of karma and afflictions.

Conclusion

The mind is the forerunner of (all evil) states. Mind is chief; and they are created by the mind. When speaking or acting with an impure mind, pain follows someone like the hoof wheel of an ox. The mind is the forerunner of (all good) states. Mind is chief; and they are created by the mind. When one speaks or acts with a pure heart, happiness always follows one like a shadow. The human mind is like a mirror. A mirror does not discriminate, but simply

reflects everything in front of it, regardless of whether it is scary or wonderful. Similarly, your mind takes over the aspect of your surroundings and if you do not know what is going on, your mind will be filled with garbage. Therefore, it is very important to be aware of your surroundings and how they affect your mind. If we wander in life unknowingly and simply react to events that arise in our lives, our surroundings can have a tremendous impact on our mental well-being. But by beginning to understand the relationship between our mind and the objects they encounter, we can instead begin to use our mind to influence our surroundings.

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