

# PSYCHOTHERAPY BY KARMA TRANSFORMATION: HEALING COGNITIVE PROLIFERATION (*PAPANCA*) BY SKILLFUL CONVERSATION (*BUDDHA-TALK*)

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## Abstract

After a bird's eye review on Buddhism and psychotherapy, a clinically probed comprehensive practice merging the two approaches is concisely described. Psychotherapy by Karma Transformation is a conversational method of emotional re-education which aims at ceasing distress and agony by a process of systematic treatment, constructive coaching and planned intervention. As exemplified by the Buddha, the Buddhist therapist establishes and handles a helping relationship, intimate and distant at the same time, which is based on the *non-specific factors* of loving-kindness, empathic compassion, sympathetic joy and intra/inter-relational balance through 'deep listening'. The presented helping conversation is structured by an ABC/DE-Form which is a blueprint to applying self-talk with therapeutic content that is firmly anchored in the Buddha's teachings. Thus, this method of eradicating psychological suffering fuses content/spirit informed by the Buddha's discourses (*Nikayas*) and a dialogue structuring tool derived from Rational Emotive Cognitive Behavior Therapy. Administering this well-defined and evidence-based *specific factor* during ongoing assessment and therapy presupposes attention and awareness regarding *karma* of action/thought-feeling (body/speech-

mind) which is entwined in dependent origination. Aiming at detoxifying-antidoting the three poisons of greed, hatred and ignorance, transforming *karma* not only serves therapeutic purposes, it also benefits seekers in becoming an *arahant*, i.e. someone who has eradicated inner enemies.

## Introduction

The combination of Rational Emotive Cognitive Behavior Therapy (RE-CBT) and Buddhist psychology is a special blend called Psychotherapy by Karma Transformation (PKT). Meant for Buddhists and others on the spirituality path, there seems to be a percentage of students who suffer from emotional and/or personality disorders, particularly among stream-enterers when starting their Buddhist quest. Their numbers likely correspond with these disorders' prevalence in the general population, which is one out of four to seven of all adults in the Western world ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prevalence\\_of\\_mental\\_disorders](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prevalence_of_mental_disorders)) These disorders will sooner or later hamper the practice of meditation and it is here that counselling or therapy, 'the talking cure', steps in. An exceptional group of people among them stand out by a defensive way of dealing with themselves and others. This was first noted in the eighties by Welwood (1983) who called the phenomenon 'spiritual bypassing'. It is using one's Buddhist pursuit as an ego aggrandizing manoeuvre and a protection against confrontation with unprocessed emotional fragilities. If someone's quest is genuine, then PKT is likely an adequate antidote.

This article outlines a pioneering therapeutic methodology based on the Buddha's discourses which functions as a model for therapeutic conversations meant to teach clients to talk sanely to themselves. This Buddha-talk can be learned through a self-help instrument, an ABC/DE-Form, which is already used in RE-CBT, as an emotional re-

educational tool. Thus, PKT is a socially constructed amalgam of instrumental hardware (a paper-and-pencil form) and functional software of sanity as in the *Nikayas*.

There are many variants of Buddhism (Theravada plus more than a dozen denominations of Mahayana) and there are many variants of psychotherapy (a conversational method to heal psychological suffering). In delineating the subject (see Table): do we talk about a psychotherapy using meditation techniques as an adjunct like in MBCT? Or is it about Buddhist meditation with therapeutic side-effects? Or do we talk about a psychotherapy with Buddhist side-effects? Or is it about Buddhist psychotherapy: a fusion of Buddhism as content and a therapeutic form, like old wine in new bottles? Highlighting the latter, this article integrates spirit and content of the Buddha's 17.000 discourses with an ABC/DE structured conversational method of RE-CBT. How does PKT look like and what does this Buddhist psychotherapy entail?

<b>Buddhism &amp; Psychotherapy Combinations</b>	<b>Psychotherapy 1</b>	<b>Buddhism</b>
<b><i>Meditational techniques (e.g. mindful-ness, breathing, sensing meditation)</i></b>	<b>Psychotherapeutic Buddhism:</b> A psychotherapy using a meditation technique, e.g. MBCT or MB-EAT	<b>A Buddhist meditation</b> with (unintended) therapeutic side-effects, e.g. Breathing Meditation/relaxation

<p><i>Conversational tech-niques</i> (e.g. psychoan-alytic, cognitive-beh-av-ioral, experiential)</p>	<p>A psychotherapy with intended Buddhist side-effects, e.g. Gestalt Therapy/here-now awareness</p>	<p><b>Buddhist psycho-therapy:</b> A therapeutic conversation with Buddhist content, e.g. Karma Transformation</p>
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PKT is a method written about in the eponymous book (Kwee, 2013a) which explains a structured conversational procedure of speech and self-speech/self-talk meant to end psychological suffering and assuage physical suffering. The Buddha did not feature a conversational method per se. As he did not explicitly teach the technique of dialoguing per se, his artful skill of interviewing remains an implicit given. Whereas the Buddhist intervention of choice is meditation to awaken, which I prefer to call mind/heartfulness (Kwee & Berg, 2016), healing of emotional problems is to be accrued unswervingly by psychotherapy rather than by meditation. While mind/heartfulness of speech, self-speech/self-talk by deep and 'kindful' listening to oneself and others are a prerequisite, being wakeful does not automatically create sane self-interlocution. Meditation leaves scenarios of salubrious intentions and wholesome activity instructions in the dark. Intentional action is the definition of *karma* (Sanskrit) or *kamma* (Pali) which, if unhealthy and unhelpful, is to be transformed by way of thoughtful conduct. Specificity of healthy and helpful self-talk is required in teaching clients to redirect unwholesome, unrealistic, irrational, dysfunctional and unconstructive cognitions by conceiving and believing wholesome, realistic, rational, functional and constructive thoughts.

PKT helps in developing insight and understanding how to manage harmonious relationship with self as a basis for dealing with others. Sharing the same elementary concern

to alleviate mental suffering, Buddhist and psychotherapeutic approaches complement each other by combining the best of two worlds. This article proffers a clinically probed - structured and methodical procedure of conversation - to be skilfully applied in psychotherapy by offering Buddhist content and spirit by a tested format of transferring information and implementing interventions. This therapeutic operating system runs software as supplied by the Buddha in his discourses. This fusion is a new counselling and therapeutic method which aims at transforming regretful *karma* by sowing and reaping cognitive intention and behavioral action which are wholesome.

To be sure, changing irrational cognition, modifying dysfunctional action and transforming disordered emotion is the quintessence of healing in PKT which offers a *secular* Buddhist content via a methodically structured conversation as in RE-CBT (Kwee & Ellis, 1998). Rather than taking the present offering at face value, the reader is invited to use critical thinking skills (Peoples, 2013; [www.iabu.org/JIABU2013](http://www.iabu.org/JIABU2013)).

## **Buddhism and psychotherapy**

Buddhist psychology provides an attractive empirical alternative to cognitive psychology by its non-reductionist view of non-dual psyche. Unlike Buddhist psychology, which has been studied and written about during a century, Buddhist psychotherapy is a quite neglected subject. Although few Buddhists will deny the therapeutic value of Buddhism, the history of linking Buddhism and psychotherapy is quite recent. After all, the history of psychotherapy is much younger than that of psychology. Besides, Buddhism in the West is usually known as a religion, not as a secular psychological therapy. No wonder

that books on Buddhism as therapy are scarce. Here is a brief impression of the encounter between Buddhism and three major psychotherapy schools: Freudian psychoanalysis, experiential therapy and CBT.

The first well-known book connecting Buddhism to psychotherapy stems from 1957. Written by Fromm, Suzuki and De Martino it bears the German title *Zen-Buddhismus und Psychoanalyse*. It connects the Freudian method with Japanese Zen. Hailed by many, it offers commonalities and differences whereby contrast strikes, like in the example of appreciating a flower. Buddhists unite with the flower's beauty, leaves it intact, sees the universe in it, while the Westerner picks it, dissects it and forges a subject-object duality. Since this book various other works connect and mix Buddhism and psychoanalysis. They mostly dilute or distort Buddhism by recasting and accommodating Buddhist wisdom into Freudian thought, like narcissism, even though the psychoanalytic view on Buddhist revered mind states is negative and considered to be a pathological regression to an infantile mode of living. While psychoanalysts grapple with the ego having a problem, Buddhists tackle ego or self as being the problem's cause.

Historically interesting is Allan Watts' 1961 book *Psychotherapy East and West* wherein the philosopher describes the therapies of the seventies. He notably weighs in the Freudian, Jungian, Rogerian, existential and Gestalt approaches on Buddhism, Taoism, Vedanta and Yoga, leaving the subject of psychotherapy in Buddhism underexposed. Like most other books this one compares Buddhism and psychotherapy without offering Buddhism as a conversational treatment. Indeed, the therapist focusses on psychological disorder, while the Buddhist teacher is concerned with advancing orderly minds. A recent overview of the two approaches in comparative tenet is

presented by Padmasiri de Silva in his 2014 book *An Introduction to Buddhist Psychology and Counselling*.

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Several interesting links can be found on Buddhism and various other humanistic/experiential denominations, like those innovated by Perls and Rogers; however, none of them offer a method of Buddhist psychotherapy. Noteworthy therefore, is David Brazier's Zen Therapy as formulated in two books, the 1995 *Zen Therapy: Transcending the Sorrows of the Human Mind* and the 2001 *Zen Therapy: A Buddhist Approach to Psychotherapy*. Questioning Western psychology from a Zen point of view, the author blends a demystified Buddhism with an experiential outlook and suggests that Zen Therapy or rather 'Zen as therapy' is the oldest form of psychological treatment which aims to stop yearning that life should be perfect while life is and will stay imperfect.

A Japanese therapy form, Morita Therapy (Shoma Morita, 1874-1938) might be considered the first Buddhist inspired behavioural approach using sensory deprivation, occupational tasks and complex activity assignments. Although Zen-inspired it is not a Buddhist psychotherapy. This can also be argued about the fashionable Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy. These denominations use (Western) mindfulness as an adjunct to already existing cognitive-behavioral procedures. Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction and other mindfulness-based approaches is about a Western variant of an isolated practice of mind/heartfulness which was once an integral part of awakening and inner liberation.

Links between psychoanalytic and psychodynamic therapies and Buddhism and meditation have been laid by quite a good many therapists among others by the earlier mentioned Welwood (1983), who covers: converging psychodynamic psychology, Buddhist spirituality, and its

practical implications for health/healing and relationship/community. Another author is Epstein (1995). He writes about an integration of Buddhist and Freudian approaches and offers a psychoanalytic framework for a meditation-inspired healing toward a Buddhist understanding of a healthy emotional life. Many other authors are in this field of combining or integrating Buddhism and psychodynamic thought, but their writings will not be covered here due to space constraints.

*Buddhist Psychology and Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy: A Clinician's Guide*, by Tirch, Silberstein and Kolts (2016), presents a psychotherapy which combines and integrates Buddhist philosophy and techniques with the practice of CBT. They share the cognitive behavioral notion that the root of emotional suffering is one's reaction to events not the events themselves. Aiming at improving therapy and cultivating a positive mind, the authors coin a transmodern futuristic concept of the *Behavioral Bodhisattva* who is a cognitive-behavioral practitioner equipped with a succinct roadmap of Buddhist concepts. The bodhisattva ideal of a scholar-practitioner-activist is an appealing one. After articulating the functional relationship between Buddhist psychology and CBT, they bridge and unite the two worlds. Using the 'Four Truths' and the 'Eightfold Path' as an overarching framework, they feature psychopathological suffering, Buddhist underpinnings of mindfulness, compassionate helping, experiential exercises, guided meditation and clinical vignettes. The authors facilitate a Buddhist offering of evidence-based interventions. This is quite different from the present endeavour which merges and fuses Buddhist content in a RE-CBT jacket.

The cognitive-behavioral approach to Buddhism started three decades earlier with the ground-breaking writings of Padmal de Silva, William Mikulas and myself as reported in my 1990 edited book *Psychotherapy, Meditation and*

*Health: A Cognitive-Behavioural Approach* which contains chapters of these pioneers. While Mikulas (2007) introduced terms like the 'behaviors of the mind', De Silva (1984, 1990) listed two dozen behavioral interventions with striking similarity to Buddhist operations. Most illustrative is the behavioral assignment given by the Buddha to Kisa Gotami who mourned her two-year son bitten by a snake. She was in despair but repressed her grief by denying her kid's death. Desperately asking how her son can be cured, the Buddha replied: *There is only one way to help you and your child. Look for a black mustard seed from a house where no one ever died given to you by someone who has no deceased relatives.* Carrying the dead body, Kisa Gotami sought everywhere but could nowhere find such seed. Finally realising the assignment's meaning, she cremated her baby and was healed.

My own elaborations lead to editing books supporting the idea of Buddhist psychology and psychotherapy, including: *Western and Buddhist Psychology* (1996), *Meditation as Health Promotion* (2000), *Horizons in Buddhist Psychology: Practice, Research and Theory* (2006) and *New Horizons in Buddhist Psychology: Relational Buddhism for Collaborative Practitioners* (2010) (Kwee, Gergen & Koshikawa, 2006; Taams & Kwee, 2006). Ideas of more than sixty international collaborators confluence in discerning two major methods of intervention, meditation and conversation, outlined in two monographs. Meditation is laid down in *Buddha as Therapist: Meditations* (Kwee, Kwee & Shaub, 2015) and conversation is laid down in *Psychotherapy by Karma Transformation: Relational Buddhism and Rational Practice* (Kwee, 2013a). The present article reflects a comprehensive description of PKT, a Buddhist psychotherapy, as an amalgam of a Western mode of conveying the Buddha's healing system. It details a central technique of RE-CBT whose operational

system is suitable to run the software of *Dhamma's* content and spirit. The therapist applies skilful practice by working on past karmic emotional episodes to arrange future wholesome *karma*. Therapy tackles the ABC-centrepiece of a causal emotional episode which reads: 'I am not stressed by external Activating events (A), but I stress myself by my own unwholesome Beliefs (B) about these events with the inevitable logical fate or Consequence of emotionally motivated behavioral *karma* (C)'. Wholesome Dhamma Disputation (D) of unwholesomeness is required to ensue new future wholesome emotional and behavioral karmic Effects (E): PKT serves 2600-year-old wine in a 21<sup>st</sup> century bottle. The proposed conversational practical method finds corroboration in the Buddha's discourses. Its *sutta* back-up is reviewed by Jenny Quek in her 2007 dissertation: *The Buddha's Technique and Practice of Counselling as Depicted in the Pali Canon*.

### **On emotion, cognition and action/*karma***

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Living in a Western world with psychology and psychotherapy as clinical professions, clients are aware that deep-rooted psychological problems is to be *solved* by psychotherapy rather than be *dissolved* by meditation. In PKT, mind/heartfulness of body/speech-mind, self-talk and kindness to deeply listen is a prerequisite for clients to facilitate recognition that there is a problem at all and to enable awareness that psychological defence mechanisms truncate clarity of mind that there is a problem at hand. Being mindful/heartful helps noticing mind's cognitive avoidance tactics, like denial, projection, regression, sublimation and so forth, to repress painful material. In practice this implies that psychotherapy advises not to accept mind content at face value nor to take thoughts for granted.

The client's report is often only the tip of the iceberg with lots of ice-pack below. Beneath could be cognitions of emotional craving (*tanha*), sensual yearning (*raga*), disturbed or disturbing emotions (*kilesa*) and regrettable actions (*karma*). The cognitive causes of unhappiness engendering *karma* require analysis. PKT matches the ABC as backed in the *Dhammapada* (Byrom, 1993, italics added; [www.insightflorida.org/uploads/dhammapada.pdf](http://www.insightflorida.org/uploads/dhammapada.pdf)).

We are what we *think*  
All that we are arises with our thoughts  
With our thoughts we make the world  
*Speak* or *act* with an impure mind  
and trouble will follow you  
as the wheel follows the ox that draws the cart  
We are what we *think*  
All that we are arises with our thoughts  
With our thoughts we make the world  
*Speak* or *act* with a pure mind  
and happiness will follow you  
as your shadow, unshakable

In keeping with the Buddha, we are body/speech-mind. As we think (mind) so we speak (speech) and act (body). *Karma* is action that we have chosen for and which co-arises with overt and covert self-chosen intentional thoughts. Intentions, implicating activity and its fruits (*karmaphala*), are a state of heart-mind (*Cetana Sutta*) leading to volitional action of body/speech-mind. Per the Buddha: '[action by] intention... [I say] is *kamma*' (*Nibbedhika Sutta*). Thus, *karma* transformation implies behavior modification which takes place in conjunction with cognitive change, particularly inner speech or self-talk, i.e. the things one says to oneself. PKT is a Buddhist psychotherapy *pur sang*, a conversational

practice aimed at detoxifying virulence and antidoting poisonous, irrational self-talk and consequent unwholesome *karma*.

The Buddha discerned three poisons (3P): greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*) and ignorance (*moha*). The latter entails not-knowing how psyche functions which includes not understanding mind projections, latent yearning-craving, toxicity-irrationality and ego-inflation (*anusaya*), and how these create illusions of self/soul and delusions of god and separateness. The human predicament is that 'it rains thoughts' which is a phenomenon that needs to be made visible to enable transformation. This presupposes observation of knowing what is or has been said during inner chatter creating unwholesome *karma*. Knowing by mind/heartfulness of what one says to oneself (and to others) is necessary before being able to detoxify poisoned self-talk and antidote unwholesome irrationality by wholesome rational self-instruction. Thus, mind/heartfulness is an assessment instrument for diagnosis which is tantamount to making karmic 3P self-talk transparent. Having tapped and taped the verbatim of private dialogues in clinical practice for decades, I espouse the Buddha's thesis that suffering begins with craving which instigates the affliction of greed and hatred going berserk due to ignorance on how psyche functions. The Buddha's ancient categorisation of affliction is topical when we consider two worldwide mammoth disasters rampant today: a banking crisis due to greed and extremists' terrorism due to hatred.

Streamlining greed and hatred with contemporary psychological terminology, here is a detailed classification of basic or primary emotions in contemporary vocabulary. An emotion comprises a certain pattern or conglomerate

of specific bodily sensations which adhere to the metaphor of water. Since we are 75% water this water metaphor reverberates our inner emotional experiencing. Thus, anxiety-fear feels ice cold, sadness runs like water, anger boils and joy evaporates. My clinical insight and understanding regarding emotions is that greed contains *anxiety* or *fear* about the anticipation of future loss and contains *grief* about a foregoing valuable loss of a person or another relevant 'object'. Hatred contains *anger* which could escalate to aggression, violence and hostility and contains self-hatred which ensues *depression*. Thus, we ascertain *depression*, *anxiety*, *anger* and *sadness* which hides *joy*, *love*, *stillness* which encloses in its deepest center a state of being unmoved, an absolute silent condition which is the starting point of these basic emotions. These states are layered like an onion. The cognitive style of each basic emotion can be illustrated as follows:

Depression: 'I'm a loser with no future, I hate myself...'

Anxiety: 'What if I fail, if I lose, if I'm laughed at...'

Anger: 'She or he must not and should not be like that...'

Sadness: 'I will never ever can get over it...'

Joy: 'Life is good, hahahaha...'

Love: 'I feel happy, I smile within...'

Silence: unspeakable emptiness (MTN)...

If body no longer listens to mind, it's time that mind starts listening to body. There are for about 4000 words in English denoting emotional states of various intensities which can all be captured by the psychologists' catchword 'affect' comprising the entire range of moods, feelings and emotions. Their varieties, colours and shades are derivatives of the basic emotions and can be inferred as

secondary emotions which manifest as a mix of primary emotions or as a mix of emotion and cognition. For example, 'feeling guilty' is a mix of the cognition 'I am guilty' and the emotion anxiety to be wrong and punished; 'I feel ashamed' is likely a mix of the cognition 'being nude' and the fear to be defenceless. The self-talk inherent in these two affective states is 'I am guilty because I am wrong and will be punished' and 'I am ashamed to be nude and defenceless'. The rationale of discerning secondary emotions is to reveal the unwholesome irrational self-talk which results in unfortunate karma, for instance self-incarceration due to guilt or avoiding social situations due to shame. Depression equivalents include feeling blue, despondent, dejected, downhearted, etc.; equivalents of anxiety are apprehension, fright, panic, horror, etc.; anger: livid, hostility, irritation, resentment, etc.; sadness: pity, sorrow, pain, agony, etc.; joy: glad, humour, happy, delight, etc.; love: kindness, compassion, affection, tenderness, etc.; stillness: serenity, relaxation, peaceful, grateful, etc. In silence, we remember who we are.

Can we step out of *karma*? Cognition, emotion and action do not arise independent from each other but concur interdependently. If the three modalities are in a condition of disharmony, something is likely wrong (*Khanda Sutta*). The Buddha, who called himself a *kammavadin*, an expert who helps transforming *karma* (and concomitant cognition and emotion), dealt with wisely applying conversational skills to redirect thinking (cognition-imagery) by changing intentional thought, ceasing emotional suffering and arranging wholesome *karma*. Transforming karmic intention and action is essential to bend and step out of regretful *karma*. By formulating wholesome rational self-talk amid a thicket of unwholesome cognitions, unwholesome emotion can be

eradicated accruing wholesome action. Transforming *karma* is a collaborative practice aimed at the 'non-rebirth' of the 3P. Heading to nirvana, a state of quenched negative emotional flames, one develops 'heavenly' feelings of non-greed and non-hatred by extinguishing 'hellish flames' of depression, anxiety, anger and grief by non-ignorance, knowledge and wisdom. Nirvana has become a household term for the extinction of emotional arousal. Eventually, there is inner peace.

Emotional re-education by keeping a rational outlook facilitates stepping out of *karma*. Serving survival, an emotion cannot as such be eradicated and is therefore to be accepted by tolerating; once accepted, it will disappear and replaced by another emotion. An emotion is not a fact, is neither right nor wrong, neither good nor bad. Even if powerful and felt like 'it's true', an emotion just is. If an emotion comes up strongly, there is no need to act upon it. The quickest way to get rid of an unwanted emotion is to feel it deeply until it reaches a turning point; fighting perpetuates its presence. Like everything in life, emotions do not last forever.

### **Karma is a 'dependent origination' process**

The taste in all of the Buddha's discourses is that of dealing with *dukkha* as this-worldly psychological suffering caused by self-chosen *karma* due to birth, illness, aging and death. In addition suffering is equivalent to these psychological states (*Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*):

sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, despair, being with the unloved, not being with the loved and frustration when not reaching a goal. In short, the *khandas* of

clinging are *dukkha*

‘Death’ and ‘birth’ are events which are to be dealt with in life. Remember the Buddha’s reply to the metaphysical question whether he would exist after physical death: ‘I expound and point out only the reality of suffering and the cessation of suffering’ (*Anuradha Sutta*). Consequently, the Buddha exhorted (*Malunkyaputta Sutta*):

I’ve not explained that the *arahant* exists or doesn’t exist after death; I’ve not explained that the *arahant* both exists and doesn’t exist after death or that the *arahant* neither exists nor doesn’t exist after death. Why have I not explained this? Because this profits not, nor has to do with awakened life, nor leads to the aversion, absence, cessation, quiescence of craving, wisdom and nibbana; therefore I haven’t explained it.

And what have I explained? *Dukkha* have I explained, its origin, its cessation and the path leading to cessation and why have I explained this? Because this does profit, has to do with awakening and lead to the aversion, absence, cessation, quiescence of craving, supreme wisdom and *nibbana*; therefore have I explained it.

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu (1906-1993) brightly contends that inferring ‘birth’ in Buddhist Pali literature as physical birth is a major obstacle in comprehending the Buddha. For an adequate understanding of Buddhism, birth and rebirth are to be viewed as the delivery of *karma* or the reappearance of emotional action. The wise and mindful are familiar with two modes of speech: ordinary speech and *Dhamma* speech. The awakened who is aware of these two modes of speech understands that birth and death refer to karmic *dukkha*, which might last an entire life because, due to life’s imperfection, the births and deaths of karmic suffering usually last an entire life. ‘Deathless’, as used by the Buddha, might denote *nirvana*, the

cessation of suffering found in the ultimate reality of not-self/MTN, which is the rationale of Buddhism's 'timeless' way including psychotherapy (*Magandiya Sutta*).

It is only by training dexterous responding to the human predicament of *karma*'s life and death, comparable to the skillful drill of a 'smith, seamstress, horse or elephant trainer' will one be able to come to grips with existential suffering. *Nirvana* is not a geographical travel destination, but is located in one's very body, with its perceptions and thoughts, where the 'All' can be found (*Sabba Sutta*) and where the Buddha declared 'the world, its origin, its cessation and the way leading to its cessation' (*Rohitassa Sutta*). Thus, the 'All' and the world are not in the beyond out there, but in the inner world experienced through our senses.

The end of the world [ordinary speech] can't be known, seen or reached by going; yet without reaching the end of the world' [Dhamma speech] there is no making an end to suffering' (*Lokanta Gamana Sutta*).

Consequently, karmic rebirth in the various realms of 'gods, titans, humans, hungry-ghosts, animals or hell-beings' refers to this-worldly states of 3P affliction which relates to irrational thinking.

Afflicted *karma* is described by the Buddha as comprising 12 factors related in 11 links of dependent origination (*paticcasamuppada*). The sequence starts with *avidya* or ignorance as a condition for the next condition, which is a condition for the next condition, etc. The links connect like domino pieces (*Patichcasamuppadaavibhanga Sutta*):

From ignorance comes *sankhara*/karmic activity,

from karmic activity comes *vinnana*/consciousness,  
from consciousness comes *nama-rupa*/mind-body,  
from mind-body comes *sanna*/sense-perception,  
from perception comes *phassa*/contact,  
from contact comes *vedana*/feeling,  
from feeling comes *tanha*/craving,  
from craving comes *upadana*/clinging,  
from clinging comes *bhava*/becoming,  
from becoming comes *jati*/birth,  
from birth comes *jara-marana*/aging-decay/death.

In plain wording, ignorance breeds regrettable *karma* appearing in consciousness of mind/body, where perception senses contact, that generates feeling, which provokes craving, that energises clinging, which impregnates becoming, that leads to the (re)birth of new karmic suffering (*dukkha*) or karmic happiness (*sukha*), which will age, decay and finally die.

This 'entire mass' of karmic *dukkha* is to be ceased by meditation-contemplation on knowledge and wisdom which enables the end of ignorance which halts *karma*, consciousness, mind-body, perception, contact, feeling, craving, clinging, becoming, birth and aging-decay/death. Determined by *dukkha*'s sequelae, we mostly feel-think/act habitually (on autopilot) in the flux and fickle of dependent origination. Exposing the relevance of dependent origination, the Buddha asserted: 'Whoever sees dependent origination sees the Dhamma, whoever sees the Dhamma sees dependent origination' (*Upanissa Sutta*).

Whereas the above sequence displays a *domino metaphor* of *karma*'s dependent origination suitable for meditation-contemplation, the *candlelight metaphor* highlights *karma*

's dependent origination in the conversational method emphasized here. Partly overlapping the 12 factors the *khandas* comprise: feeling (*vedana*), perceiving (*sanna*) and activity (*sankhara*), all functioning in body/*nama* with consciousness/*vinnana*. The candlelight sequence typically starts with a 'craving' affliction as the root cause of self-chosen psychological suffering. Luxuriating in Buddhist terminology, this is caused by craving/*tanha* conjured up by an impinging outer or inner stimulus that begins with contact/*phassa*, feeling/*vedana*, perception/*sanna* which evoke irrational cognition/*vitakka* and cognitive proliferation/*papanca*. Unwholesome thinking arouses emotional affliction/*kilesa* and elicits action/*karma*, a ditto unwholesome deed-conduct-behavior. This sequence, lays the groundwork for a structured format to transform *karma*. Reflecting on these metaphors, the Buddha's enigmatic statement on dependent origination becomes understandable: 'When this is, that is; from the arising of this comes arising of that; when this isn't, that isn't; from the cessation of this comes the cessation of that' (*Mahakammavibhanga* and *Culasakuludayi Sutta*).

Dependent origination implies an MTN of the self that is constituted by the *khandas* or psychological modalities of clinging. We are karmic body/speech-mind with consciousness with modalities which act/interact, think/intend and feel/emote. Suffering comes about when we cling to a modality, while relinquishing modality attachment liberates from bondage to illusory self. Because neither modality exists in isolation but co-arises and co-subsides in conjunction, none of the modalities can be identified as I, me, mine or myself. Because of this co-dependency, the self lacks permanent substance or inherent existence and is thus completely empty. Insight in not-self and understanding MTN by experiencing empty

self by letting go of clinging, warrant karmic liberation and fundamental happiness. Consequently, while knowing in-depth that there is no self at an ultimate level of reality, we can live by the conclusion that self, ego or soul is nothing but an illusion at a provisional level of daily reality. Astoundingly, like behaviorism that refuses to see a 'ghost in the machine', Buddhism, after 2600 years of investigation, could not find a sole self to identify with. Tons of books and trillions of words can be spent on the notion of MTN because of dependent origination, but no language can replace the reset or reboot experience of no-mind and the remembrance who we really are

### **Eradicating self-talk of ignorance**

When coming to therapy clients cherish opinions reflecting their ignorance on how psyche works, for example: 'Never express emotions, control what comes to the surface' (repression); 'All emotional problems disappear by itself, my effort is not necessary' (magical thinking); 'My emotional misery or stress is caused by someone else or by circumstances' (projection); 'I am not responsible for my own emotional fate: serenity, love, joy, grief, anger, fear and depression' (false attribution). The two latter types of irrational thinking are particularly unwholesome and a most common blunder if the aim is to lead a fulfilling and happy life. Declaring not to be responsible for one's own actions/*karma* and intentions/*vitakka* is erroneous, unrealistic and unconstructive. Slipping these off to somebody or something else implies a choice not to take charge of one's very own craving (*tanha*), emotional fate (*kilesa*) and unfortunate action (*karma*).

Suffering is inflicted by ourselves through the things we say to ourselves. PKT teaches sane self-talk, while underlining, that:

By oneself unwholesomeness is done, by oneself one suffers, by oneself unwholesomeness is left undone, by oneself one is purified, purity and impurity depend on oneself, no one can purify another (*Dhammapada*)

Furthermore, the Buddha's last words sound therapeutic when he urged to invest in ourselves (*Mahaparinibbana Sutta*):

And whoever... now or after I am dead, shall be an island unto... and a refuge to themselves, shall take to themselves no other refuge, but seeing Dhamma as an island, seeing as a refuge Dhamma, shall not seek refuge in anyone but themselves - it is they... who shall reach the Further Shore! But they must make the effort themselves. Accept only what you can self perceive as valid, rely on your own efforts and be a light to yourself.

As emotion-action co-arise with self-talk, the Buddha advised to apply four balancing efforts requiring energy (*viriya*) to safeguard wholesomeness (*Padhana Sutta*):

(1) Guard/prevent unwholesome unskillful/irrational self-talk to arise, if not yet arisen.

(2) Abandon/disregard unwholesome unskillful/irrational self-talk, if already arisen.

(3) Develop/make wholesome skillful/rational self-talk arise, if not yet arisen. (4)

Sustain/save wholesome skillful/rational self-talk if already arisen.

This safeguarding behooves the prerequisites of awareness and attention to emotional and behavioral states of suffering and mind/heartfulness of accompanying unwholesome thinking, i.e. concomitant unskillful and irrational cognitions. To be sure, being able to mindfully/heartfully observe feelings, thoughts and *karma* is a

necessary beginning for transforming which happens in dependent origination of these modalities. PKT is especially keen to catch and target irrational/unskilful self-talk regarding the 3P and transform the *karma* of depression, fear, anger and grief into the *karma* of joy, love and serenity-silence.

PKT is in accord with the pristine teaching of the Buddha in pertaining a structured dialogue. Well rooted to a basic source, he explicated that 'what one perceives, that one thinks about, what one thinks about, that one mentally proliferates' (*Madhupindika Sutta*). Mental, conceptual or cognitive proliferation, *papanca* in Pali, is the habitual and unconscious profusion of irrational self-talk running wild. This process starts with the six senses: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin and what I have called 'the mind's eye'. Using the example of seeing, the course is that dependent on eye and forms, eye-Cs arises, the meeting of these three is contact (*phassa*) with a positively, neutrally or negatively felt sense effect and ditto feeling (*vedana*), whose perception (*sanna*) generates thinking/self-talk (*vitakka*); negativity engenders irrational proliferation with unwholesome emotional and behavioral results. *Papanca* is illustrated in the following anecdote:

A man wants to hang a painting. He has a nail, but no hammer and intends to borrow from his neighbour he saw yesterday, but then he started to doubt: 'What if he refuses? Yesterday he said no hello. He might be in a hurry or maybe only pretended. What if he dislikes me? I haven't done anything wrong. If he would want to borrow from me, I would immediately give it to him, why wouldn't he? How can a fellow human being refuse a simple request? People like him are awful. He thinks I depend on him, just because he owns a hammer. I'm fed up!' So, the man rushed next door, rang and shout: 'Keep your fucking hammer!'

Clients' narratives require therapist's structuring to keep seeing the forest for the trees. One way of structuring a client's story flood is by discerning events and using the ABC-centrepiece to create sanity (Kwee & Ellis, 1998). Here is a Jataka inspired explanation of the ABC:

Once in a forest, a sleeping hare heard a hullabaloo, He believed it's the end of the world and started to run. Other animals thought the same and joined him fleeing. One species after the other started running and all were in a frantic sprint that would have led to their demise. When the Buddha, as Bodhisattva, saw them panicking, he asked: *'What's the matter?' 'The world ends'*, they said. *'That can't be true, let's find out why you think so'*. Questioning them in succession, he finally arrived at the hare who started the run: *'Where were you and what were you doing when you thought it's the end of the world?'* *'Sleeping under a mango tree'*. Then, the Buddha hypothesized: *'You heard a mango fall, that shocked you (Activating event), you thought that it's the end of the world (irrational/invalid Belief), took fright (negative emotional Consequence) and started to run' (karmic behavioral Consequence). 'Let's go back to that tree to verify'*. Thus, the Bodhisattva saved the animal kingdom from demise.

As it rains thoughts, there are uncountable 'emotional re/births' a day. Human beings have up to 100 billion brain cells (neurons) and when we think 1 million to 1 billion connections flicker. This boils down to about 750 thoughts an hour which is about 12.000 to 70.000 thoughts per day; 95% of these thoughts are the same as yesterday's and 85% is seemingly negative (National Science Foundation; C. Greer, [www.hvacprofitboosters.com](http://www.hvacprofitboosters.com)).

*Papanca* lives its own life in the ongoing stream of consciousness due to exploding irrational self-talk and

karmic activity (*sankhara*) via one of six *sense-contact-feeling-perceiving-cognitive-proliferative/evaluative-emotional/behavioural processes*. The ABC structure of *karma* is applicable to *papanca* escalation which discerns seven stages of consciousness (*Cetana Sutta*), as follows:

(1) A - Visual or other sense consciousness (*vinnana*), 'bare sensation' before object apprehension: *sense consciousness*.

(2) A - Contact (*phassa*): the meeting of sense-organ/object/consciousness converges in *contact consciousness*.

(3) A - Feeling (*vedana*), the hedonic tone of the sensory experience: positive/neutral/negative elicits *feeling consciousness*.

(4) A - Perception (*sanna*: 'bare reaction'), a distinctive positive/neutral/negative awareness of *perceptual consciousness*.

(5) B - Thinking (*vitakka*): interpretation-evaluation of *the sensed, contacted, felt and perceived* object influenced by the 3P, *cognitive consciousness*.

(6) B - Proliferation (*papanca*) of irrational self-talk, resulting in mushrooming concepts/images: *evaluative consciousness*.

(7) C - Emotional colour and behavioral action (*tanha-kilesa* and *sankhara-kamma*): *emotional/behavioral consciousness*.

The latter engenders suffering's (re)birth in relation to decay-illness-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, despair, being with non-loved ones, not being with loved ones and frustration.

*Papanca* in the end is like a dramatic monkey-mind: unsettling, restless, capricious, whimsical, fanciful, inconstant, confused, indecisive and uncontrollable. Even though energised by three latent causes (*anusaya*): emotional craving/*tanha* (or lust/*raga*), irrational views/

*ditthi* and conceit due to ego inflation/*mana*, *papanca* can be eased by breaking the seven step-cycle, which can be done in two ways:

- (1) Meditation that restrains the senses at the bare sense/ feeling-experience without colouring, like in the instruction to Malunkyaputta or Bahiya (*Malunkyaputta/Bahiya Sutta*): *in the seen there will be only the seen; in the heard there will only be the heard; in the sensed there will only be the sensed; in the cognized there will only be the cognized*, and so forth.
- (2) Self-talk correcting conversation; thinking's self-reflexiveness concocts languaging about languaging, but the map is not the territory and the word is not the thing.

Sanity is based on mind/heartfulness of the ladder-of-abstraction that starts at the concrete/non-verbal/silent/unspeakable level of impermanence and climbs up the verbal levels from describing to interpreting to evaluating, emoting and acting.

### **From an ABC format to an ABC/DE-Form**

The confluence of RE-CBT and Buddhist psychology creates the current PKT with the ABC *karma* sequence as a centrepiece, comprising the *khandhas*, *phassa*, *sanna*, *vedana*, *vitakka*, *papanca*, *tanha*, *raga*, *kilesa*, *viriya*, *sankhara*, *karma* and *paticasamupadda* in *vinnana-nama/rupa* as the most essential components one is largely ignorant (*avijja*) about.

In order to anchor the ABC principle deeper in the Buddhist teaching, here are 17 cognitive-emotional mind/heart moments as described in the *Abhidhamma* (3<sup>rd</sup>c BCE - 0/5<sup>th</sup>c), the canonical deeper teachings, which parallels the ABC sequence:

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A detailed depiction of a 'firing order', a 'street' (*vithi*), as discerned in Theravada's 3<sup>rd</sup> canon of numerical abstractions by anonymous adepts scans these 17 steps (10 non-karmic, 7 karmic as in above line) of cognitive-emotional 'nano' mind-moments (*cittas*) which correspond with the present ABC *karma* sequence. There is an *Activation*, an event (e.g. mango falling) starting at (1) deep sleep (non-awareness), (2) vibration (sound awareness), (3) interruption (waking awareness) (4) sensation of (6-sense based awareness, (5) perception (feeling awareness: + 0 -), (6) attention (concentrative awareness), (7) investigation (memory awareness), (8) noting (determination awareness), (9~10~11~12~13~14~15): turning points, karmic impulse-habitual unawareness or mindful awareness (for transforming unwholesome to wholesome *karma*), (16) reflection by wholesome *Beliefs* in context of karmic history and a fresh intention to new action as *Consequence* prompting a wholesome emotional and behavioral output, and finally (17): memory storage and retention of the experience

The ABC-centrepiece is anchored five-fold in Buddhism. In the foregoing the ABC was explained in the context of the Jatakas, *papanca* and the *Abhidamma*. In the following, the *karma* of suffering is further elaborated in the ABC of the *khandhas*/modalities depicting a *karma* sequence, a sheet or form to work with, and in the ABC of an emotional episode that is based on the 'four ennobling realities' (4ER), thus called as a more realistic alternative to 'noble truths'. Applying *Dhamma* talk, the term truth is misleading because in Buddhism there is MTN but no transcendental or eternal truths. Besides, the adjective noble is deceptive because nobody will become a member of the royal family. Buddhism is about ennobling our hearts.

Here is an explanation of the ABC/DE in the context of the 4ER and the 'eightfold balancing practice' (8FBP), whereby D stands for dispute or disputing unwholesome/irrational thoughts and E stands for the targeted emotional and behavioral (karmic) effects. The ABC/DE components reflect an emotional episode by tracking the 4ER/8FBP and subsequently working toward wholesome karmic (re)births:

1<sup>st</sup> ER *Dukkha*/Affliction (A): An activating event evokes karmic emotional suffering of agony, adversity and stress.

2<sup>nd</sup> ER *Samudaya*/Beliefs (B): This was caused and causes a karmic unwholesome intending, irrational craving and self-sabotaging thoughts (thus, transform irrational cognitions).

3<sup>rd</sup> ER *Nirodha*/Consequences (C): the way out is *emotional restructuring* of greed, hatred and *cognitive restructuring* of ignorance by enacting constructive intentions and behaviors via Disputing (D) ignorance toward Effects (E) wholesome emotion and (inter)action (*nirvana*).

4<sup>th</sup> ER *Magga*/PKT: designing karmic wholesome/rational intentional cognition-imagery; walking the talk of the 8FBP.

Transforming the *dukkha* of *karma* requires wakefulness, mind/heartfulness regarding the 8FBP (a topic addressed elsewhere; Kwee, 2017; JIABU in press). Altogether the 8FBP impresses as a psychotherapy proposition. Each of these items - views, intentions, speech, actions, living, effort, awareness and attention - requires change. Working on these issues is exactly what psychotherapeutic healing demands:

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- (1) Changing views on the causes and conditions of *karma* and how to transform future *karma*;
  - (2) Changing intentions, discerning un/wholesome,

un/realistic, ir/rational and de/constructive;  
 (3) Changing speech, changing karmic intentions  
 takes place through speech/dialogue and self-talk;  
 (4) Changing activity, intentional self-talk breeds  
 karmic affliction/ emotion and behavior-interaction;  
 (5) Changing living, transforming thought/action and  
 way of being to generosity and caring for  
 relationships; (6)  
 Changing effort to forbearance/commitment/resolve  
 when transforming *karma* of action-cognition-  
 emotion; (7) Changing  
 awareness: mindful awareness gives insight and  
 understanding of the ABC/DE of *karma*'s vicissitudes;  
 (8) Changing attention: mindful attention starts  
*karma* transformation; focussed concentration is the  
 first step.

To close, here is an elaboration of the ABC of *khandhas*  
 reflecting a *karma* sequence, highlighted before in a  
 candlelight metaphor. The below format is a scheme that  
 forms a blueprint for an ABC/DE-Form to work with clients  
 when structuring the therapeutic dialogue in PKT.

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<b>Activating event</b>	<b><i>Phassa/vedana/sanna</i>: 6 sense door</b>
Ap/perception	contact incl. mind's eye's
internal stimuli,	
Memory	felt + 0 -
<b>Beliefs</b>	<b><i>Ditthi/vitakka/papanca</i>: karmic</b>
conceiving Ir/rational	& projecting of illusion
(self/soul) & delusion	(separateness/god) &
ignorant self-talk to	be
transformed to wholesome intending	
<b>Consequences</b>	<b><i>Tanha-kilesa/sankhara-karma</i>:</b>
craving of Emotional	greed (fear-grief) &
hatred (depressed- Behavioral	angry) result
is grasp-&-cling attachment	

<b>Disputing</b> wholesome Empirical it realistic, Awfull?	<b>Self-talk of reasoning</b> leads to karma by questioning: is rational, constructive & will it result in kindness/compassion/joy-intermind?
<b>Effect</b> mind	<b><i>Nama/rupa-vinnana</i></b> // Body/speech- mind

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Before presenting the ABC/DE-Form, first, a short example of the result when applying the ABC/DE format as a *karma* sequence of the birth or rebirth of an emotional episode due to ignorance (*avijja*). Not an Activating event (*phassa*, *vedana* and *sanna*) per se, but irrational Beliefs about the event (*ditthi*, *vitakka* and *papanca*) lead to disturbing emotional (*raga*, *tanha* and *kilesa*) and behavioral Consequences (*viriya*, *sankhara* and *karma*).

An example of one irrational Belief and its disputation: *He must love me or else I am a worthless human being*. The disputing questions are: is this wholesome, realistic, rational and constructive? Will it lead to contentment (kindness, compassion or joy)? The alternative thinking based on rationality reads: *Thus, I won't reach my goal of joy or contentment. It is not compassionate to talk this way to myself, I will, by saying such things to myself, be sadder and depress myself. Besides, there is no evidence whatsoever that he must love me, nor is there any proof that my worth depends on being loved by him. If he loves another woman, logic says that he must not love me which feels sad but no reason to detest myself. My worth of self can't be judged, because there is no accurate way to rate it. My mere existence warrants my value unconditionally. His not loving me does not magically make me a worthless human being. Thinking this way will avoid a conflict with myself and makes me feel OK to let him go.*

Finally, in the appendix of this article, the ABC/DE-Form which reflects a *karma* sequence and a *khanda* analysis, a tool for methodologically structuring a therapeutic dialogue in PKT when transforming *karma* and during training of the client in wholesome, realistic, rational and constructive self-talk to secure wholesome birth and re-birth of karmic intentional action.

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### **Closing discussion: specifics and non-specifics**

The first discussion theme is the question whether there can be a Buddhist psychotherapy? PKT works from a meta-psychological growth paradigm toward the non-suffering of clients with certain circumscribed methods discernible in conversation and meditation. Although this article is limited to the therapy module, there is a meditation module that has therapeutic value but which is not psychotherapy per se (Kwee, Kwee & Shaub, 2015; Kwee, 2017 in press). The literature on the question reveals that 15 of the major therapy systems are declared bona fide because of four trans-theoretical characteristics (Prochaska & Norcross, 2014). PKT meets the requirements of having a *theory of personality* (self and not-self) and a *theory of psychopathology* (3P). Clients embark on a *transformational process* of four stages (*Sutta Pitaka*): stream enterer, once returner, non-returner and *arahant*, a designation for 'someone who has eradicated his inner enemies'. The last characteristic is *outcome research*, which PKT lacks in the empirical-statistical sense, but can boast by claiming that a 2600 year surviving method of yielding *arahants* suggests a favourable outcome. So, it seems that the question posed can be answered by 'yes, there can be a Buddhist psychotherapy'. PKT is one exponent able to spawn Buddha-talk in a conversational frame of reference (Kwee, 2010, 2012ab, 2013abc, 2014).

The second theme is the helping relationship, a condition '*sine qua non*' of any therapy and therefore elaborated

here. Rapport, the framework for any effective therapy, needs to be handled in a professional way. A trustworthy relationship wherein the client confides in the therapist could do about half of the work. Known as a 'common factor', a harmonious working alliance and a client's favourable expectancy, it is a significant contributor to success (Lambert, 1992). The Buddha's model for a working relationship is contained in the *kalyanamittata* concept (*Kalyanamitta Sutta*) which models a highly confidential relationship of a protagonist with a virtuous, admirable and eminent fellow-traveller, friend, colleague, advisor, mentor, teacher, or therapist for that matter. Such companionship or camaraderie is 'the whole of the wholesome life'; many were liberated through 'good friendship' with the Buddha (*Upaddha Sutta*).

The third theme is being a 'professional friend', professional because it is in principle a temporary, task-oriented and paradoxically 'intimate but distant' working relationship. Like 'dawn, the harbinger of the rising sun' leading to liberation from suffering by wise counsel (*Pathamamitta* and *Dutiyamitta Sutta*), professional friendship contributes in developing 'wings to self-awakening' (*Sambodhi Sutta*). It is the strongest external factor that might harm (*Meghiya Sutta*) or help (*Dighajanu Sutta*). There are five proficiencies to emit helpfulness (*Udayi Sutta*): (1) speaking step-by-step, (2) explaining *karma*, (3) talking compassionately, (4) teaching not for material reward and (5) expounding without exalting or downgrading. Harming is omitted by rendering *loving-kindness*, *empathic compassion*, *sympathetic joy* and *relational equanimity*. Mobilising self-healing (*Sigalovada Sutta*), the Buddha explicated the topics when rendering compassionate professionalism:

Talk which [does not lead] to... freedom from passion... to tranquillity, to higher knowledge, to awakening, to Nibbana, namely, talk about kings,

robbers and ministers, talk about armies, dangers and war, about food and drink, clothes, couches, garlands, perfumes, relatives, cars, villages, towns, cities, and provinces, about women and wine, gossip of the street and of the well, talk about the ancestors, about various trifles, tales about the origin of the world and the ocean, talk about what happened and what did not happen, such and similar talk I shall not entertain... But... talk which is conducive to... Nibbana... about a life of frugality, about contentedness, solitude, aloofness from society, about arousing one's energy, talk about virtue, concentration, wisdom, deliverance, about the vision and knowledge of deliverance, such talk I shall entertain (*Mahasunnata Sutta*).

The fourth theme is that therapy exists by the grace of 'the miracle of education'. This points at the importance of the unique personal and marvellous connectivity of the educator and the student during transferring knowledge, wisdom and skills (*Kevaddha*, *Sangarava* and *Samannaphala Sutta*). The therapist is flexible and willing to adapt to the client. This is exactly what the Buddha did when delivering discourses by attuning to the level, needs, capacities and vocabulary of the people he communicated with. He did so by disseminating his *Dhamma* in Magadhi (a variant of Pali) instead of using high-brow Sanskrit. Local language secures infiltration in the listeners' hearts. This is part of the principle of 'skilful means' (*Kusala Sutta*) which allows adjusting *Dhamma* to various audiences, like the present metamorphosis of *Dhamma* as psychotherapy.

In conclusion, whereas the above discussion refers to common or non-specific factors of the working relationship, this article is mainly devoted in laying a Buddhist foundations for a specific factor which is a dialogical tool that can structure *karma* transforming conversations. In PKT the quintessence is changing

cognitions or the 'things that you say to yourself' to transform emotion and modify *karma*. A prerequisite to revise thoughts and thinking is knowing that one thinks at all. Most people just think but do not meta-think or think about their thinking. That is why being mindful by observing thinking is a precondition to change the self-talk of *karma*. Thus, some mind/heartfulness meditation in advance is helpful. To be sure, rather than just thinking, training in awareness by bare attending and perceiving cognitions to know that one thinks is necessary for transforming *karma*. Using the ABC/DE-Form as an instrument assists in teaching awareness of self-talk and adjusting thoughts by skilfully rendering the Buddha's teachings. The form serves as a nutshell that can bring about Buddha-talk, i.e. the major content and the grand spirit of the *Dhamma*, like 'the universe in a single dewdrop'. Using the form empowers clients of all faiths in helping themselves to solve their psychological problems on their own and will benefit seekers of Buddhist liberation as well.

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## APPENDIX

## Glossary to the ABC/DE-Form

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*Phassa*: sensory contact through the six senses

*Vedana*: felt sensation or feeling negative, positive or neutral

*Sanna*: perceptual awareness of the sensory feeling

*Ditthi*: unwholesome-unrealistic-irrational-unconstructive

*Vitakka*: *thinking by cognitions, concepts and images*

*Papanca*: irrational self-talk as interpretations and evaluations

*Raga*: grasping-clinging to continue greed, hatred and ignorance

*Tanha*: thirst or craving due to fear, grief, anger or depression

*Kilesa*: affliction, defiled by disturbing emotions and moods

*Viriya*: motivation, effort, commitment, diligence, energy

*Sankhara*: action, conjoint with emotion and cognition

*Karma*: intentional action by dependent origination

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## The ABC/DE-Form of a Karma Sequence

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Activating event (sense-based)      D-A: Dispute by sense control  
(*phassa/vedana/sanna*)      (video/audio taping-tracking)

Beliefs: karmic (un)wholesome      D-B: Dispute by questioning  
(*ditthi/vitakka/papanca*)      each thought/image\*

1

1

2

2

3

3

4

4

Consequence of emotion  
(*raga/tanha/kilesa*)

Effect/emotional: nirvana by  
balanced contentment,  
kindness, compassion or joy?

Consequence of action  
(*viriya/sankhara/karma*)

Effect/behavioral:  
wholesome  
karma by balanced effort &  
wise interaction of kindness,  
compassion, joy?

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\*(1) Is this B wholesome/realistic/rational/constructive:  
absolute or relative? (2) Will B lead to contentment &  
inter-mind: balanced kindness, compassion, joy? (3)  
Phrase a new self-talk intending-instructing wholesome  
emotion & constructive action.

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