

# Psychotherapeutic Value of Visuddhimagga for the Enhancement of Modern Psychotherapy

Dr. Wasantha Priyadarshana  
Postgraduate Institute of Pāli & Buddhist Studies  
University of Kelaniya

## Introduction

The Visuddhimagga written by Ven. Buddhaghosa could be recognized as the Manual of Theravāda Buddhist Psychology due to its salient psychological theories discussed therein. It is mentioned in the Mahāvamsa, the Great Chronicle (the greatest historical record of Ceylon) that the Visuddhimagga came into being as a result of commenting upon two stanzas from Saṃyutta-nikāya in order to get the permission from Mahāvihāra authority for translating Sinhalese commentaries into Pāli language.<sup>1</sup> At the inception of the Visuddhimagga, the objective of composition is explained as to prescribe treatments for: the inner tangle (antojatā) and the outer tangle (bahijatā) faced by the ordinary man (putujjanā).<sup>2</sup>

And on the other hand, a special attention should be paid on why this compendium was named as the Visuddhimagga. In the early Buddhist context, the term “visuddhi” has been utilized to render the meaning of Nibbāna (*summum bonum*). As far as the entire meaning of the term “Nibbāna” is concerned, it provides the meaning as happiness, contentment and peace.<sup>3</sup> Nibbāna is so called because; it blows out the fires of greed, hatred, and delusion.<sup>4</sup> When these fires are blown out peace is attained, and one becomes completely cooled (sitibata). The individual who experienced “Nibbāna” in this very life is called as sitibhūta<sup>5</sup>, cooled person. The reason why this person is known as sitibhūta means, because he/she completely eradicated noxious trio (desire, hatred and delusion) which makes a person hot, restless and induce him/her into problematic behaviors (pāpakāri) and various types of mental disorders (cetasikorogo).<sup>6</sup> Taking this entire meaning of the term “Nibbāna” into consideration, Ven. Buddhaghosa names this compendium as Visuddhimagga. Psychotherapeutic strategies revealed by commentator Buddhaghosa are centered on three fold training<sup>7</sup> (morality, concentration, and wisdom). This Threefold training elaborated in Visuddhimagga, in terms of sattavisuddhi (sevenfold purification), tries to transform three aspects of the individual as a therapeutic means. And on the other hand, various psychotherapeutic strategies advocated by the commentary show us various significances that are so relevant to this modern world. Therefore, the objective of this research paper is to disclose how far these strategies could be adopted for the enhancement of the repertoire of modern psychotherapy.

---

<sup>1</sup> Extended Mahāvamsa, Malalasekara, P.T.S, 1988, Chapter, xxxvii verse, p. 215

<sup>2</sup> Saṃyuttanikāya, i, P.T.S, 1973, P.165: *anto jatā bahijatā jatāya jatita pajā taṃ taṃ go tama pucchāmi koimaṃ vijataye jatā.* There are these two tangles, the inner tangle and the outer tangle. The people are enmeshed in these two tangles; and I ask thee Gotama, this question, who succeeds in disentangling these tangles”.

<sup>3</sup> Suttanipāta, ed, D, Andersen and H. Smith, P.T.S, 1931,p. 235

<sup>4</sup> Saṃyuttanikāya, iv, P.T.S, p.19

<sup>5</sup> Suttanipāta, ed D Andersen and H.Smith, P.T.S, pp. 542, 642

<sup>6</sup> Aṅguttaranikāya, ii, P.T.S, pp. 142, 143

<sup>7</sup> Saṃyuttanikāya, i, P.T.S, 1973, p. 165. “*sile patiṭṭhāya naro sappañño cittaṃ paññaṃ bhāvayaṃ atāpi nipako bhikkhū soimaṃ vijataye jaṭaṃ.*” When a wise man establishes well in virtue, develops his mind and attains wisdom, such a Bhikkhu ardent and sagacious, succeeds in disentangling this tangle” –Visuddhimagga.

## Psychopathology and Visuddhimagga

In the third and twenty second chapters of Visuddhimagga, the basic features of Theravāda Buddhist Psychopathology have been discussed. It is evident from these chapters that the entire scope of Psychopathology also has been well elaborated in terms of three categories. They are as follows.

- Psychological influence of noxious trio<sup>8</sup>
- Physical influences of four elements and three humors.<sup>9</sup>
- Kammic influence of previous causes.<sup>10</sup>

## Psychological Influence of the Noxious Trio

Commentator, Ven. Buddhagosa discusses with a great exposition the entire psychological background of defilements (kilesa) and its provocations towards various problematic behaviors and Psychiatric disorders.<sup>11</sup> Desire (rāga), hatred (dosa) and delusion are the central intrinsic defilements in the field of Theravāda Buddhist philosophy. Further, various aspects of these three elements are discussed in Theravāda Buddhist philosophy in terms of various generic terms, namely, ten fetters (dasasaṃyojanāni), the ten corruptions (dasakilesā), ten wrongnesses (dasamichattā), four perversions (cattāravipallāsā), forties (cattāroghanā) four injustices (cattāsoagati), four cankers (cattāroāsavā), four floods (cattāroogha), five hindrances (pañca nīvaranāni), one adherence (parāmāso), four clinging (cattāriupādāna), seven inherent tendencies (sattānusayā), three stains (tinimalāni), ten unwholesome courses of action (dasa akusalakammāpathā), and twelve unwholesome thought arisings (dvādasākusalacittupādā). Although these defilements (kilesa) are discussed in terms of various generic terms, in the context of psychological analysis, all these elements come under three crucial ingredients as desire (lobha) hatred (dosa) moha (delusion). The nature of desire (dosa) and its function has been graphically elaborated in the early Buddhism as impulse (kāmacchanda), excitement (rāga) enjoyment (nandi) love (sineha) thirst (pipāsa) consuming passion (parilāha) etc. According to the psychological analysis of Visuddhimagga, desire acts as a primordial essence which is conducive to provide happy and unhappy destinies.<sup>12</sup> It is very clear from the psychological analysis of Visuddhimagga that “desire” (lobha) has various functions leading human beings to acquire their primary and secondary needs. But in the actual world, individual is unable to acquire their wants and needs. The reason is the inevitable fact known as anicca or impermanence. In front of their failures due to impermanence (anicca), the next psychological reaction that originates in the mind is known as “dosa” or hatred. The individual who fails to acquire his/her wants and needs and provoked by dosa or hatred differs from a clam person. According to early Buddhist explanations, an individual influenced by hatred does not restate to get revenge from himself (attaṃtapa) and from the society (paraṃtapa).<sup>13</sup> As a result of this revengeful situation,<sup>14</sup> the individual led by hatred cannot understand the natural circumstances as they are. This infatuated situation of individual has been graphically discussed in the Theravāda Buddhism as the condition

---

<sup>8</sup> Visuddhimagga Tr. by Bhikkhu Ñānamoli, Taipei, Taiwan, R. O. C. 1956, xxii pp, 798,806

<sup>9</sup> Ibid iii, pp,102,104

<sup>10</sup> Visuddhimagga Tr. by Bhikkhu Ñānamoli, Taipei, Taiwan, R. O. C, 1956, iii, pp,104,105

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, xxii, pp,798,806

<sup>12</sup> The Dynamic Psychology of Early Buddhism, R.E.A Johansson, Oxford, 1978, P, 105

<sup>13</sup> The mind in Early Buddhism, Bh. Thich minh Thánh, New Delhi, 201, PP,145,149.

<sup>14</sup> Aṅguttara Nikāya, i. Pali Text Society, p. 149: He who is overwhelmed by hatred plans to his own harm, to the heart of others to the harm of both. He performs immoral acts in deed, words and thought, He cannot understand, as it really is his own profit, that of others, or that of both hatred is the cause of blindness, of not seeing, of not knowing, of loss of understanding: it is associated with trouble and does not lead to Nibbāna.

of moha (delusion). This infatuated mentality leads persons into various problematic behaviors and many psychiatric disorders.

### **Kammic Influences as a Crucial Ingredient of Psychopathology**

Kammic influences belong to previous existences are concerned here as a central element that can affect present physical and mental performances. Kammic influence plays here an important role as the significant ingredient that represents cultural, spiritual, and ethical consciousness of the individual. The very significant teaching both in early and Theravāda Buddhism is the Rebirth consciousness. As it is mentioned in the Visuddhimagga, individuals possess desire, hatred, deluded, faithful, intelligent and speculative characters in this present life due to the Rebirth consciousness. This resultant consciousness brings various behavioral patterns and thinking patterns that belong to previous existences (punabbhava). The Visuddhimagga says “Apparently one of greedy temperaments has formerly had plenty of desirable tasks and gratifying works to do, or has reappeared here after dying in a heaven. And one of hating temperament has formerly had plenty of stabbing and torturing and brutal works to do or has reappeared after dying. And one of deluded temperament has formerly drunk a lot of intoxicants and neglected hearing and questioning, or has reappeared here after dying in the animal existence. It is in this way that they have their source in previous habit”. It is very evident that the author gives an ethical analysis of individual regarding their previous cultural, spiritual, sociological conditions. The analysis of mental dispositions preoccupied by previous habits and their relevance to present problematic behaviors and to mental disorder is a very unique teaching in the field of psychotherapy revealed by Theravāda Buddhism.<sup>15</sup>

### **Influences of the Four Elements and the Three Humors as Physical causes to Various Problematic and Psychiatric Disorders**

As it is discussed in the Visuddhimagga, the physical elements of individual are formed with the help of earth (paṭhavi) water (āpo), fire (tejo) and wind (vāyo).<sup>16</sup> And on the other hand it is very clearly explained here that the proper function of the physical body exists on the equilibrium of three humors known as phlegm, wind, and bile. The imbalance of these four elements and three humors are conducive to problematic behaviors and psychiatric disorders.<sup>17</sup> It is said in the Visuddhimagga “then a person is of deluded temperament because two elements are prominent, that is to say the earth element and fire element. He is of heating temperament because the other two elements are prominent. But he is of greedy temperament recourse all four are equal. And as regards the humors, one of greedy temperament has phlegm in excess and one of deluded temperament has wind in excess or one of deluded temperament has phlegm in excess and one of greedy temperament has wind in excess. So they have their sources in the elements and the humors they say.”<sup>18</sup> According to the above mentioned expositions, it is very obvious that the psychiatric perspective of Visuddhimagga is very comprehensive. A part from that biological and the psychological causes have been highly concerned here in the context of psychopathology.

---

<sup>15</sup> Visuddhimagga Tr. by Bhikkhu Ñānamoli, Taipei, Taiwan, R. O. C, 1956, pp. 104,105.

<sup>16</sup> Visuddhimagga Tr. by Bhikkhu Ñānamoli, Taipei, Taiwan, R. O. C, 1956, xi, pp. 380, 384

Whatever is “characterised by hard ness” (thaddha lakkhana) is the Earth or solid Element; by cohesion (ābandhana) or fluidity, the water – Element: heating (paripācana) the fire or heat Element: by “strengthening” or “supporting” (vitthambhana) the wind or motion- Element. All four are present in every material object, though in varying degrees of strength. If, for instance. The Earth Element predominates, the material object is called ‘solid’ etc.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid iii, p. 80.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid iii, pp. 79,81.

## Personality and Character Analysis

According to the psychology of Visuddhimagga, individual means a psychophysical causal process which is analytically explained as the five aggregates (khandha), the twelve bases (āyatana), the eighteen elements (dhātu) and is synthetically discussed in the formula of conditioned genesis (paṭiccasamuppāda) as an ever changing and mutually conditioned series of phenomena.<sup>19</sup> Concerning the early Buddhist expositions, Ven. Buddhaghosa explains that the combination of psychophysical causal existence comes as a whole, as an individual. But according to this analytical and synthetic explanations, it is emphasized that no any permanent or everlasting existence in this transitory world that could be known as soul. The axiom of Tilakkhaṇa is also utilized here to avoid the delusive permanency of individual and any kind of permanent soul (anatta). Commentator Buddhaghosa, following early Buddhist teachings of the five aggregates (khandha), the twelve bases (āyatana) and the eighteen elements (dhātu) illustrate that, in the process of personality development, the psychological existence represented by the term nāma must be developed significantly than physical concern. Quoting Āhāra Sutta, the commentator emphasizes here that when edible food is provided to physical existence, three types of food known as phassāhāra, manosaṃcetanikāhāra and viññāṇāhāra should be provided for the existence of the mentality. These three foods do not represent the edible foods but totally mental.<sup>20</sup> Though Early and Therāvāda Buddhist teachings accept the interaction of these physical and mental elements, the predominant place is given to the existence of mentality and its development as a means of everlasting solution to every human predicament. This is a theory of paramount importance, both in early Buddhism and in Theravāda Buddhism because it is very impossible to eliminate every human problem in the absence of the proper mental development. Therefore, in the analysis of personality development, the mental development is much more highly emphasized than the physical nourishment. This mental transformation is discussed here as the one and only way that could be adopted to prevent every kind of human predicament.

In the Theravāda Buddhist exposition, the knowledge of physical age and the objectives related to relevant physical age are very helpful to understand the personality and its various disorders. The entire human lifespan is discussed in the kammattānāniddesa. The lifespan of every individual is of tenfold. They are as follows:

- Childhood (maṇḍa, 1 -10)
- Adolescence (kiddā, 10 - 20)
- Adulthood (vaṇṇa, 20 - 30)
- The period of the establishment of mundane life (bala, 30, 40)
- The period of wisdom (paññā, 40, 50)
- The period of physical decay (hāyana, 50, 60)
- The period of distortion of physical body (pabbāra, 60, 70)
- The period of having crooked body (vaṅka, 70, 80)
- The period of mental distortion (momuha, 80 - 90)
- The period of occurring death (sayana, 90, 100)<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> Ibid xv, pp. 552, 558

<sup>20</sup> Visuddhimagga Tr. by Bhikkhu Ñānamoli, Taipei, Taiwan, R. O. C, 1956, xi, pp. 372, 374.

<sup>21</sup> Dr. Wasantha Priyadarshana (edited by: Dr. Dion Peoples): "The Buddhist Concept of Conflict Resolution (An Approach To Global Recovery Through Mental Well-Being), inside: Global Recovery: The Buddhist Perspective, for the 7<sup>th</sup> United Nations Day of Vesak Conference, 2010, pp. 711, 712

According to above mentioned exposition, it is apparently proved that the Theravāda aim of providing counseling and psychotherapeutic knowledge to present world is not limited to certain period of life, but to the entire life span of the human being.

Six character types discussed in Visuddhimagga give a significant value in understanding their various behavioral and thinking patterns. Each six characters can be distinguished from others, in terms of five points. As mentioned in the Visuddhimagga: desire (rāga), hatred (dosa), deluded (moha), faithful (saddhā), intelligent (buddhi), and speculative (vitakka) characters can be known with reference to their different types of postures, actions, eating patterns, modes of seeing and with their various mental states.<sup>22</sup>

### **Problematic Behaviors and Psychiatric Disorders According to the Six Characters**

Out of six characters, faithful and intelligent characters are considered as healthy. But other four characters possess various problematic behaviors and psychiatric disorders. The very significant point that should be mentioned here is every problematic and mental disorder is again subdivided into very subtle categories. But it is very difficult to mention them all. Hence, abstract form of them is discussed here.<sup>23</sup>

### **Unhealthy Characteristics Possessed by Desire Character (rāga)**

- Hallucinatory habits (māyā)
- Fraudulent taxies (sātheya)
- Pride in all actions
- Delight in sinful actions (pāpicchatā)
- Unlimited desires (mahicchatā)
- Unsatisfactoriness (asantutthitā)
- Deep rooted defilements in every action (singa)
- Vacillation in duties (cāpalya)
- Not tearing of any sinful actions (anottappa)
- Shamefulness in any sinful action (ahirika)
- Infatuated mood in any functions (mado)
- Unconscious mind (pamāta)

### **Unhealthy Characteristics Possessed by Deluded Character (moha)**

- Sloth and torpor in physical and mental performances (thīnmiddha)
- Restlessness (uddhacca)
- Scrupulousness
- Uneasiness of after doing actions
- Skeptical doubts (vicikicchā)
- Dogmatism

---

<sup>22</sup> Guide through Visuddhimagga, V. Dhammaratana, Sri Lanka, 1964, pp. 34-36: The temperaments may be ascertained with reference to five points. They have been stated in the following gathā: “*iriyapathato kiccā bhojanādassanādito dhammappavattitoceva cariyāyo vibhāvaye*”. The temperaments may be known with relevance to posture, action, eating, seeing etc, and the mental states, For more details please see Visuddhimagga, III chapter, from pages 106-112.

<sup>23</sup> Dr. Wasantha Priyadarshana (edited by: Dr. Dion Peoples): “*The Buddhist Concept of Conflict Resolution (An Approach To Global Recovery Through Mental Well-Being)*, inside: Global Recovery: The Buddhist Perspective, for the 7<sup>th</sup> United Nations Day of Vesak Conference, 2010, pp. 711, 712

### **Unhealthy Characteristics Possessed by Hatred Character (dosā)**

- Provocativeness in day to day life patterns
- Imbalance of controlling hatred (upanāha)
- Covering others good qualities (makkha)
- Comparing one's good qualities with himself (palāsa)
- Intolerance of other wealth and progress (issa)
- Hiding his wealth from the others

### **Unhealthy Characteristics Possessed by Speculative Character (vitakka)**

- Excessive talkativeness
- Fondness for society
- Dislike for wholesome practices
- Unsettled in all his doings
- By night he broods over what to do next day
- By day he carries out last night's plans.
- Aimless rushing about.

### **Treatment Theories**

As discussed in the analysis of Psychopathology, individuals vary from each other due to their biological, Psychological, ethical, spiritual and cultural states. In the process of prescribing meditative subjects (kammaṭṭhānas) for six characters, these differences are highly concerned here. As an eminent Psychiatrist, commentator Buddhaghosa prescribes in the Visuddhimagga very significant treatments regarding the effects from biological, sociological, ethical, cultural and psychological status of each six characters.<sup>24</sup> Since, there was a highly propagated indigenous medical science; Ven. Buddhaghosa has merely mentioned few treatments regarding the biological conditions. And on the other hand his main aim was not to discuss biological background of individual but to discuss and provide the knowledge that could be adopted to behavioral and cognitive transformation as the definite solution for every human predicament. That is the understanding of the things as they are or which is known as paññā (wisdom)

But in this very limited biological analysis, the value of keeping in touch with the balance of three humors<sup>25</sup> has been well explained, And in the second step, the value of having suitable diet which helps to keep four elements in a healthful condition which can keep the body free from Physical problems is discussed. According to the early Buddhist expositions, this physical wellbeing of individual is conducive to achieve healthful mentality.<sup>26</sup> Taking these significant factors into consideration, Ven. Buddhaghosa mentions some biological treatments in order to attain mental wellbeing.<sup>27</sup> But in the entire content of Visuddhimagga, Ven. Buddhaghosa gives much more priority to ethical, spiritual, and psychological treatments more than biological treatments, providing more concerns to ethical background which is directly connected with causes of problematic behaviors and psychiatric disorders. Ritualistic performances full of psychotherapeutic values like pilgrimages, worshiping Buddha statues, and charity (dāna) are advocated as

---

<sup>24</sup> Vimuttimaggā and Visuddhimaggā, A comparative Study, Bapat, P.V. Poona, 1937, pp. 35, 36

<sup>25</sup> Visuddhimaggā Tr. by Bhikkhu Nānamoli, Taipei, Taiwan, R. O. C, 1956, pp. 104, 105

<sup>26</sup> The Dhammapada, Nārada, Sri Lanka, 2000 p. 177: “*ārogyaparamālabhā san tuṭṭhi paramamḍhanam vissāsapuramāñati nibbānam paramam sukham*” Health is the highest gain. (Contentment is the greatest wealth. The trust is the best kinsmen Nibbāna is the highest bliss. Therefore, it is very evident that without this psychical health the attainment of Nibbāna known as the highest mental purity is impossible.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid III, pp. 110, 111.

ethical treatments. In course of time, having understood the Psychotherapeutic significance of these ritualistic performances, Astrology came into being as a salient feature of Sri Lankan Psychotherapy.<sup>28</sup> Previous causes (pubbāciṇṇa – nidāna) are also given a significant place in Visuddhimagga as a central fact which is conducive to various mental problems.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, with an idea of minimizing this kammic effects or previous causes, moral discipline (sīla) is recommended here as a therapeutic means. It is said that, by practicing moral discipline one can change some undesirable behavior patterns connected with previous causes.<sup>30</sup> In order to change wrong thinking patterns and the cognitions which cause many psychiatric disorders and problematic behaviors, meditation<sup>31</sup> full of psychotherapeutic values is advocated in the Visuddhimagga as the sole solution for every human predicament. The above mentioned treatment process is further elaborated here in terms of sevenfold purification (satta- visuddhiyo): (i) purification of virtue (sīla – visuddhi), (ii) purification of mind (citta – visuddhi), (iii) purification of views (diṭṭhi – visuddhi), (iv) purification of conquest of doubts (kaṅkhā - vitarāṇa – visuddhi), (v) purification of knowledge and insight into the right and wrong path (maggāmagga - ñāṇadassana – visuddhi), (vi) Purification of knowledge and insight into progress (patipadāñānadassana – visuddhi). (vii) Purification of knowledge and insight into the noble path (ñāṇadassana – visuddhi). It has to be noted here that the first and the second purifications are represented by sīla and samādhi and the last five by paññā; and the transformation of thinking patterns is aimed at the first and the second purifications. But much emphasis is given to cognitive development with the last five purifications.<sup>32</sup> When a client is directed along with these seven purifications, he or she is able to prevent the above mentioned problems with different levels. These different kinds of therapeutic levels are elaborated in terms of five steps: (i) Overcoming by Repression (vikkhambhana – pahāna), (ii) Overcoming by the opposite (taḍaṅgapahāna), (iii) Overcoming by tranquillization (paṭipassaddhi – pahāna), (iv) Overcoming by Escape (nissaraṇa – pahāna), (iv) Overcoming by Destruction (samuccheda – pahāna)<sup>33</sup>

### **Relevance to Mental Health Prophylaxis**

The above mentioned therapeutic theories have been well discussed with several practical strategies. They are as follows.

- Practice of sīla for behavioral modification.
- Practice of Ascetic Practices (dhutaṅgas) for minimizing unlimited desires
- Understanding impediments (palibodhas) and leaving them in order to achieve clam environment.
- Meeting a suitable spiritual preceptor as a psychotherapist or psychologist counselor.
- Keeping a good therapeutic relationship between the spiritual preceptor and the candidate.

<sup>28</sup> See for more details, A celebration of demons (Exorcism and the Aesthetics of healing in Sri Lanka) Kapferer, Bruce, Bloomington, 1983.

<sup>29</sup> Visuddhimagga, pp. 35,36

<sup>30</sup> Guide through Visuddhimagga, pp. 1, 13.

<sup>31</sup> Psychotherapeutic significances of Buddhist meditation, including the aspects of both samatha (tranquility) and vipassanā (insight) have been well discussed by several scholars. For more detailed discussion read, Carrington, P. (1984) Modern forms of meditation. In R.L wool folk and P.M. Lethers (Eds), Principles and Practice of Stress Management New York: Guilford press, Carrington, P. (1987) managing meditation in clinical practice. In M.A, west (Ed) The Psychology of Meditation, Oxford: Clarendon press.

<sup>32</sup> For detailed discussion of Satta Viuddhi please see, Guide through Visuddhimagga written by Dhammaratana ,v.

<sup>33</sup> Buddhist Dictionary, Nyanatiloka. Singapore, p. 121

- Following suitable meditative objects (kammaṭṭhānas) prescribed by the spiritual preceptor. There are 40 kammaṭṭhānas. The following kammaṭṭhānas have been suggested for the temperaments concerned:

Temperaments	Kammaṭṭhānas
desire (rāga )	Ten unpleasant objects (asubhās) and mindfulness with regard to the Body.
hatred (dosa)	Four sublime abodes (brahmavihāras) and four vaṇṇakasiṇās.
deluded (moha)	Mindfulness on in and out breathing (ānāpānasati)
faithful (saddhā)	Six kinds of Recollection (anussati) (recollection of the Buddha, Doctrine, his noble disciples, of morality, liberality, Heavenly beings.
intelligent (buddhi)	Reollection of Death (maraṇānussati, Recollection of the peace of nibbāna (upasaṃānussati) Analysis of the four Elements (catudhātuvavatthāna)
speculative (vitakka)	Mindfulness on in and out breathing (ānāpānasati)

Nibbāna, the ultimate goal of Buddhism is to be attained with aid of a continuous practice focused on behavioral and cognitive transformation. One of strategies suggested by Buddhism in order to achieve behavior modification is moral discipline or moral culture. Providing high threshold under the category of sīla – visuddhi (moral purification), Buddhaghosa explains that sīla can minimize and calm down three types of internal fires known as the fire of attachment (rāgaggi), the fire of antipathy (dosaggi) and fire of ignorance (mohaggi). These three fires cause internal burns. But various moral disciplines introduced to laity, monk, and novice can minimize those internal burns with their behavioral transformation. When a laity observes moral discipline introduced as five precepts, he or she has to safe guard his or her body, speech, and mind from unwholesome actions. As it is discussed in early Buddhism, killing, stealing and adultery are known as unwholesome bodily actions. The unwholesome verbal actions are: back-biting, speaking harsh words and gossiping. And on the other hand, avarice, ill-will and false-views are known as threefold unwholesome mental action. At the first step, the particular moral disciplines known as the beginning of life of purity (ādhībrahmacariyakasīla) and the virtue of good behavior (ābhisamācarikasīla) are constructed as a result of practicing the five precepts. In the code of discipline, there are certain rules which have a direct bearing on the social behavior of a man. And there are others which have their bearing on his moral conduct alone. Keeping in view these two sets of rules in the Buddhist tradition, a distinction has been made in the context virtue of good behavior (ādhībrahmacariyakasīla) and that of the beginning of life purity (ābhisamācarikasīla), one is related to the social behavior and etiquette, while the other is related to the moral conduct. It is the observance of the latter that keeps the moral purity of a man. Therefore, sīla or moral conduct plays an important role as a strategy that could be used to change unwholesome conduct of an individual into a wholesome conduct. It is very evident that moral discipline that can be adopted as a self control or self development strategy in the field of mental health lies in the area of prophylaxis. There are various psychotherapeutic strategies scattered in the Visuddhimagga and so it is very hard to elaborate every strategy in this kinds of concise essay. Therefore, the relevance of Psychotherapeutic values has been briefly noted above. Every strategy constructed in the Visuddhimagga is expected to explain briefly at the presentation.