

Abstract

This thesis examines the psychological dimensions reflected in the biographies of the Pāli Canon with the goal of presenting significant psychological concepts and approaches featured in the biographies. Methodology included analysis, interpretation and classification of the selected thirty-four biographies of bhikkhus, bhikkhunis, laymen and laywomen, in detail, to understand the prominent psychological aspects and behavior patterns of the human personality. Behaviour of a person vary with his personality type, causes and conditions and motivational factors. Craving (*taṇhā*) is the main cause to stimulate unwholesome behavior of a person. *Āsava* emphasizes the arising of emotions with sense stimulation and developing with sense perception. *Papañca* is the absorption of sense experiences and conceptualization of new ideas with the dispositions already in the mind. Latent tendencies (*anusaya*), with the assistance of motivational factors, recur strong behaviour patterns, sometimes harming self, society or both. In this context, latent tendencies, environmental factors and relationships have a significant influence over the behaviour patterns. Analysis of the selected biographies highlighted the impermanent nature of the temperaments and the capability of human mind to transform from one personality to another. The four main categories of personalities identified are: (i) one strong wholesome or unwholesome personality during the lifetime; (ii) complete behavior and/or psychological transformation from unwholesome to wholesome personality; (iii) complete behavior and/or psychological transformation from unwholesome to unwholesome personality and; (iv) personalities with mixed temperaments depending on the situation and prominent within a given period. Unwholesome personality changes occur with a person having unwholesome behavior or mental status, changing into another unwholesome personality. Transformation from unwholesome behaviour to wholesome behaviour were noticeable in some personalities and complete wholesome personality transformations were evident from the biographies of *arahants*.