

The Potential Efficacy of the Practice of the Theravada Concept *Asubha* (Repulsiveness) in Curbing Irrational Racism in the Buddhist Community

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The present research chiefly examines the nature of the Theravada concept *asubha* thereby, seeking potential efficacy in the practice of ‘Contemplating Repulsiveness’ to curb irrational racism in the Buddhist community. Although numerous analogous terms have more or less covered the meaning of the concept *asubha*, the ‘deterrent effect’ of the same in combatting the two hindrances viz. ‘the false view of individuality’ (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) and ‘the pride’ (*māna* or *ahaṅkāra*) have been highlighted in this study. The prevalent irrational racism in today’s world has caused substantial harm to humanity at large. The aim of the researcher, therefore, is to examine the possibilities of using the ‘repulsive nature’ of *asubha* to transform irrational racist thoughts of the average Buddhist into sheer harmless notions of ethnicity in particular. Factually, the practice of *asubha* is a multifaceted teaching which demands several levels of ‘successive development’ in the mind of the Buddhist to reach complete realisation. The *Visuddhimagga* enumerates the said levels of developments as Universal Repulsiveness (*samasarīra-paṭikkūlatā*), Characteristic Repulsiveness (*asubha-lakkhaṇam*) and Actual Repulsiveness (*paṭikkūla-bhāva*), respectively. Accordingly, this study argues that the afore mentioned understanding of universal repulsiveness could possibly ignite a sound ‘initial deterrent effect’ within the average Buddhist against his/her own natural inclination to indulge in irrational racism. At this juncture, ‘the false view of individuality’ (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) and its accompanying ‘pride’ (*māna* or *ahaṅkāra*) could be suppressed to a considerable extent. Although, the characteristic repulsiveness is well present in a living body just as in a dead body, the very realisation of the same is hindered by the deep-rooted ignorance (*moha*) and other various embellishments which shun the reality from surfacing. Hence, the study further contends that the development of understanding of the Buddhist of ‘Actual Repulsiveness’ of his/her own body promotes equality among the Buddhist community and such an understanding is pregnant with a potential efficacy to deter the Buddhist from indulging in irrational racism.

Keywords: Theravada, Repulsiveness, Racism, Ethnocentrism, Equality.