
Buddhist Ways to Manage Mental Suffering with Special Reference to Girimānanda sutta

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Abstract

This article is for alleviating mental suffering, with a specialized focus on the Girimānanda Sutta. By examining the profound experiences of Venerable Girimānanda, who endured severe illness and mental distress, the study elucidates practical approaches rooted in the Buddha's teachings that offer pathways to understanding and mitigating psychological suffering. Integrating perspectives from Theravada Buddhism and contemporary psychology, the investigation highlights the concept of saṅkhāra-dukkhaṭā, emphasizing the intrinsic link between mental formations and suffering as articulated in the sutta. Contrary to the predominant reliance on medical and psychological interventions in modern contexts, this study underscores the importance of comprehending the fundamental nature of suffering through a Buddhist lens. It advocates for the application of transformative practices such as mindfulness, meditation, ethical conduct, and the cultivation of insight, which are essential components of the Buddha's path to mental well-being. By conducting a detailed exegesis of the Girimānanda Sutta, the research identifies actionable methods that not only address immediate distress but also foster long-term resilience and psychological equilibrium.

The findings demonstrate the enduring relevance of ancient Buddhist teachings in addressing the emotional and mental health challenges prevalent in today's society. In an era marked by increasing societal pressures and a surge in mental health concerns, the study highlights how the timeless principles outlined in the Girimānanda Sutta can provide effective strategies for achieving emotional balance and inner peace. These Buddhist practices offer a complementary framework to contemporary mental health approaches, presenting holistic solutions that integrate spiritual wisdom with psychological well-being. Furthermore, the research emphasizes the applicability of the Girimānanda Sutta's teachings in contemporary settings, illustrating how these ancient strategies can be adapted to modern therapeutic practices. By bridging traditional Buddhist philosophy with current mental health discourse, the study provides a comprehensive perspective on managing mental suffering, advocating for an integrated approach that leverages both spiritual and scientific insights.

In conclusion, this study offers a novel perspective on the intersection of Buddhism and mental health, demonstrating how the *Girimānanda Sutta*'s teachings can inform and enhance contemporary efforts to manage mental suffering. It underscores the potential of Buddhist principles to contribute to sustainable mental well-being, advocating for their incorporation into modern practices aimed at fostering emotional resilience and inner tranquility.

Keywords: Buddhist Ways; Emotional wellbeing; Mental Suffering; *Girimānanda Sutta*

Introduction

The Buddha extensively addressed the nature of physical and mental suffering, identifying their causes and providing remedies through his teachings. Physical suffering stemming from factors like lack of resources or insults can escalate into personal distress, sometimes resulting in extreme behaviors such as suicide, violence, or murder (Jayasekera, 2021). Mental suffering, on the other hand, often emerges from emotional vulnerabilities such as the loss of loved ones or a profound sense of unhappiness. Common causes include bereavement, the end of relationships, job loss, trauma, illness, or life transitions such as retirement (Gethin, 1998).

Humans encounter experiences tied to wealth, fame, praise, and self-satisfaction throughout life. When these are disrupted, the resulting mental suffering can profoundly affect an individual's well-being (Harvey, 2007). The Buddha emphasised the dhamma as a path to reducing physical and mental suffering, proposing that a healthy and balanced mind leads to a harmonious body. He taught that understanding and addressing one's emotional state through mindfulness and contemplation could alleviate mental distress (Anālayo, 2010).

The *Girimānanda Sutta* offers a significant framework for managing mental suffering by introducing ten contemplations that promote self-awareness and emotional resilience. The sutta recounts how Venerable *Girimānanda* was healed upon hearing these teachings, showcasing the transformative power of the Buddha's words (Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi, 1995). This underscores the importance of reflective practices in cultivating mental well-being. In many Buddhist cultures, monks are invited to recite such teachings, offering spiritual strength and alleviating physical and psychological suffering. It is characterised as an intricate syndrome

featuring clinically significant disturbances in an individual's cognition, emotion regulation, or behaviour. These disruptions signify dysfunction in the underlying psychological, biological, or developmental processes that designate mental functioning. (Varvard, V.N., 2013)

Mental suffering often poses a challenge for individuals unfamiliar with the Buddha's guidance as they struggle to navigate the dynamic interplay of life's positive and adverse events. The Buddha identified these fluctuating conditions as *lokadhamma*—the inevitable vicissitudes of existence. He emphasised that an unsettled mind lacks the clarity to appreciate the virtues of the dhamma and find liberation from suffering. Recognising the nature of these events can lead to greater equanimity and reduce distress (Rahula, 1959).

The Nature of Mental Suffering in Theravāda Buddhism

Mental suffering, or *dukkha*, is a fundamental concept in Theravāda Buddhism, intricately defined by the Pāli terms “*citta-dukkha*” and “*cetasika-dukkha*.” *Citta-dukkha* refers to the inherent dissatisfaction or unease experienced within the mind (*citta*), while *cetasika-dukkha* pertains to the specific mental factors or states (*cetasikas*) that contribute to this suffering (Conze, 2003). These terms collectively encompass a broad spectrum of negative mental states, including emotions such as anxiety, sadness, anger, and frustration, which arise from various life circumstances and internal psychological processes.

The term *citta* originates from the root “*cinta*,” meaning focus or concentration, underscoring the pivotal role of mental focus in the experience and interpretation of suffering. In Theravāda Buddhist teachings, mental suffering is not merely a reaction to external events but is deeply rooted in the mind's habitual patterns and conditioned responses. The Four Noble Truths, which form the cornerstone of Buddhist philosophy, provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the nature of mental suffering. According to these truths, suffering arises from craving and attachment, persists due to ignorance, and can be overcome through the cultivation of wisdom and ethical living (Conze, 2003).

This chapter delves into *citta-dukkha* and *cetasika-dukkha*, exploring the psychological dimensions of mental distress and their implications for spiritual development. By examining the characteristics of mental suffering, such as its pervasive and multifaceted nature, the analysis offers insights into how individuals can recognize and address these internal challenges. Understanding mental suffering within Theravāda Buddhism emphasizes the

importance of mindfulness, meditation, and ethical conduct as means to alleviate distress and advance toward spiritual liberation (Conze, 2003).

Moreover, this exploration bridges ancient Buddhist wisdom with contemporary psychological perspectives, highlighting the enduring relevance of these teachings in fostering mental well-being and resilience. By situating *citta-dukkha* and *cetasika-dukkha* within the broader context of human existence and the pursuit of enlightenment, the chapter underscores the profound insights Theravāda Buddhism offers for managing and overcoming mental suffering.

Mental suffering According to Psychology

In contemporary society, psychology is a prominent and extensively studied discipline encompassing various aspects of mental health and human behavior. Psychology, derived from the Greek words *psyche* (mind or soul) and *logos* (study), fundamentally involves the scientific examination of mental processes and behavior (Myers, 2023). Unlike the limited historical scope suggested, psychology has a rich and diverse history that spans multiple cultures and regions, with significant contributions from both Western and non-Western traditions (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2019).

Mental suffering, within the field of psychology, refers to the experience of emotional distress, psychological pain, and discomfort that individuals encounter due to various internal and external factors. This suffering can manifest in numerous forms, including anxiety, depression, trauma, and stress-related disorders (American Psychological Association [APA], 2022). Psychological approaches to managing mental suffering predominantly involve psychotherapy, a therapeutic technique aimed at alleviating mental distress through structured conversations and behavioral interventions rather than solely relying on pharmacological treatments (Beutler, 2021).

Psychotherapy encompasses a range of modalities, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), psychodynamic therapy, and humanistic therapy, each offering unique strategies to address mental suffering. CBT, for instance, focuses on identifying and restructuring negative thought patterns, while psychodynamic therapy explores unconscious processes and past experiences to understand current emotional struggles (Beutler, 2021). These methods emphasize the importance of the therapeutic relationship and the active participation of the individual in their healing process (Norcross & Wampold, 2018).

Psychiatry, a closely related field, involves the medical treatment of mental disorders, often integrating medication with psychotherapy to address complex psychological conditions (American Psychiatric Association, 2022). While psychiatry focuses on the biological and neurological aspects of mental health, psychology provides a broader understanding of the cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions of mental suffering (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2019).

In recent years, the integration of psychological principles with advancements in neuroscience and technology has enhanced the effectiveness of treatments for mental suffering. Mindfulness-based therapies, for example, incorporate techniques that promote present-moment awareness and emotional regulation, demonstrating significant benefits for individuals experiencing chronic stress and anxiety (Kabat-Zinn, 2015).

In conclusion, psychology offers a comprehensive framework for understanding and addressing mental suffering through diverse therapeutic approaches and evidence-based practices. By emphasizing both the scientific and humanistic aspects of mental health, psychology continues to play a crucial role in mitigating psychological distress and promoting overall well-being.

Causes of Mental Suffering

In the realm of psychology, mental suffering is ascribed to a myriad of causes, frequently stemming from intricate interplays among biological, psychological, and environmental factors. This exposition delineates salient contributors to mental suffering within the purview of psychology. It can be seen that specific genetic factors predispose individuals to mental health disorders, with a discernible amplification in vulnerability for those with a familial history of mental illness. Discrepancies in neurotransmitter levels, including serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine, are implicated in mood disorders such as depression and anxiety. Early life experiences, notably those involving trauma, abuse, or neglect, wield a profound influence on mental health, contributing to conditions like post-traumatic stress disorder (Friedman et al., 2021).

Mental Suffering According to Buddhist Perceptive

In Theravāda Buddhist psychology, the human mind is depicted as a dynamic entity in constant flux, encompassing both wholesome and unwholesome aspects. When harmful mental activities dominate, the mind becomes susceptible to the development of mental disorders. The notion that the mind precedes all mental states underscores the centrality of

the mind in shaping one's experiences. An impure mind can result in suffering, akin to a wheel following the foot of an ox. The mind operates alongside the five sense organs, but its purity can be compromised when it absorbs external influences. Its natural state is pure, but it can become tainted by defilements stemming from external objects.

It can be realised that suffering and happiness in Theravāda Buddhist perspective, while often seemingly opposing forces, share a profound connection. In this regard, suffering can trigger not only physical pain but also mental distress. Consequently, exploring the realms of happiness necessitates understanding suffering, as the two are intricately linked. The pursuit of elevated happiness involves the mitigation of suffering, and conversely, diminishing suffering can enhance happiness. One must journey to comprehend their underlying meanings to grasp the essence of pleasure and pain.

According to the Pāli-English Dictionary, suffering encompasses various meanings, including unpleasantness, pain, misery, disease, illness, sorrow, discomfort, and trouble. In the ultimate reality sense, these are encapsulated by the Pāli word “vedanā”. Vedanā is a significant mental state that is universally present in all types of consciousness. It is characterised by feeling and arises from the point of contact. The feeling is precisely defined as a conscious, subjective impression that does not entail cognition or representation of an object. Sensation, conversely, pertains to "the content of sensuous intuition or how a conscious subject is affected by the presence of an object.

Akusalamūlasutta identified the fundamental causes of disordered human behaviour as "Akusalamūla". The fundamental reasons are threefold: Lobha (desire), Dosa (hate), and Moha (delusion). Desire (Loba), the desire for pleasurable things, is one of the three sources of human motivation. It is the first and worst pollution of the mind, with a limitless scope and the ability to endure for an extended time. It is ravenous; after fulfilling one want, it will jump to the next, endlessly and continuously, making it impossible to manage. Said it is easy to create but tough to erase. Hatred (dosa). Hatred is the term used to describe the avoidance of painful experiences. Hatred, anger, and ill-will can harm others but occur in short, limited scopes and are easier to control. Delusion is a potent latent pollutant that enwraps greed and hatred, maintaining the human mind permanently in ignorance. Dhammacakkappavattanasutta explains these three inspirations as craving (Taṇhā), lust (Taṇhā), and delusion (Moha).

Craving is the chief root of suffering and the endless cycle of rebirths. People suffer from their imagination of past and future events, which leads to sadness and fear of uncertain things in the future. The mind and body burn by craving, lust, hatred, and delusion, causing suffering. Vipallāsasutta points out that our mind tends to hold wrong views and distortions towards the unreal things in the world. Karmic influence, found in the stories of Chakkuphala and Moggalana, is a central element that can affect present physical and mental performance. The Buddha experienced unpleasantness during his life, highlighting the importance of understanding and controlling these root causes.

Causes of Mental Suffering

This section ascribes causes of mental suffering, which can be found in the Dukkhasamudaya Sutta of the Salāyatanasamyutta (The Setting in Motion of the Wheel of Dhamma), which delves into the Second Noble Truth (PTS IV. 86). It elucidates how craving, specifically the craving for sensual pleasures (kāma-tanha), the craving for existence (bhava-tanha), and the craving for non-existence (vibhava-tanha), serve as causal factors in the perpetuation of suffering. This craving ignites our desires and attachments, giving rise to mental suffering characterised by anguish and distress.

Furthermore, in the Rādha Dukkha Sutta (S. IV. 48). it is emphasised that Rādha, one should relinquish the desire for anything that causes suffering (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2000). When an individual cannot let go of their desires, it results in the emergence of mental suffering as a response to sensory contact. Though the exact phrase “feeling is suffering, perception is suffering” is not explicitly mentioned, it aligns with the core teachings of the Buddha regarding the nature of suffering. According to this sutta, feelings and perceptions, when conditioned by factors like clinging and ignorance, indeed play a role in contributing to mental suffering.

It is pivotal to notice that the causes of mental suffering are multi-faceted, encompassing three distinct forms: the inherent unsatisfactoriness of conditioned phenomena (saṅkhāradukkha), the suffering arising from constant change and instability (vipariṇāmadukkha), and intrinsic suffering (pariyāyadukkha). Saṅkhāradukkha is rendered as “mental suffering, ” which results from the impermanence and inherent discomfort associated with life's events and their ultimate vulnerability (Ledi Sayadaw, 2012). Praise, for instance, is fleeting, and its vanishing is undesirable, leading to distress.

This mental suffering arises from a lack of knowledge about the nature of dhamma and the ever-shifting reality of life. Without this understanding, one's ability to manage their

mind effectively is compromised, resulting in stress and inner turmoil. Therefore, exploring the various dimensions of life's suffering is crucial, as its meaning extends beyond a singular facet (Ajahn Chah, 2011).

These facets of suffering are interconnected, much like the palm and back of a hand. When the hand is turned palm up, the back of the hand is concealed, and vice versa. Pleasure veils pain, and pain veils pleasure from our perception. Wrong conceals right, and right hides wrong. A comprehensive knowledge of life necessitates the examination of both sides. In society, suffering is not confined to physical discomfort and illness; it also extends to the illusions arising from the pursuit of pleasure and the experience of pain and sorrow, often triggered by praise and blame.

This threefold suffering encompasses the universal human wish for a happy life, embodied in the shared desire "To love happiness; to hate suffering". In this common aspiration, people stand equal (*sukhakāmā*, *dukkhapatikūlā*). Humans naturally seek and embrace moments of happiness and favourable circumstances while avoiding moments of suffering and adversity. However, their inclination often stems from a limited awareness of the ten types of *saññā* conditions, including *anicca saññā* and *anatta saññā*, among others. It is essential to recognise that life's trials and tribulations are a part of the human experience, affecting individuals from all walks of life (Nandamālābhivamsa, 2010).

Suffering and hardship are inherent aspects of the human journey. In society, individuals may savour blessings such as success, recognition, commendation, or joy, while they may also confront unfavourable circumstances, including setbacks, criticism, disapproval, or anguish (Dhammānanda, 1989). Like a pendulum, life swings between favourable and unfavourable conditions, and these fluctuations are integral to human existence.

Thomas Bien conveys that pain is an inherently human experience, fluctuating intermittently throughout life. However, it is crucial to distinguish between the transient nature of pain and the enduring state of suffering. He ascribes that suffering emerges as a consequence of both the existence of pain and our inclination to resist it. Moreover, it can be seen that a pivotal insight lies in the direct relationship between resistance and suffering: when the resistance factor is reduced to zero, the corresponding level of suffering also diminishes (Bien, 2006). The degree of our suffering is intricately tied to the extent of our resistance to pain. In essence, the more tightly we cling to our aversion to pain, the more profound our experience of suffering becomes.

Conversely, adopting a posture of receptivity and openness to pain, allowing for its presence and actively engaging with it, serves to mitigate the intensity of our suffering. Softening our stance toward pain and embracing it reduces the overall burden of suffering. Therefore, cultivating an attitude of acceptance and a willingness to experience pain can be instrumental in alleviating the human propensity for unnecessary and prolonged suffering.

The Overview of the Girimānanda Sutta's Structure

The Girimānanda Sutta, found in the “Tens” section of the Aṅguttara Nikāya, is a discourse that is not extensively covered in the commentary for this Nikāya. The commentary primarily briefly notes several diseases mentioned in the fourth contemplation. The themes addressed in this discourse are, in fact, comprehensively explained in the Visuddhimagga (the central pillar of the commentarial tradition) or other primary Nikāya commentaries. A committed Buddhist disciple who diligently follows the spiritual path described above to mitigate mental suffering must navigate through ten distinct stages of mental distress. This exposition initiates with the establishment of correct moral discipline, progresses through the cultivation of a focused and concentrated mind, and culminates in attaining true wisdom and ultimate liberation.

Nonetheless, since early times, the Girimānanda Sutta has enjoyed popularity as a “partita” discourse for protection and was included in an ancient anthology of such discourses known as the Catubhāṇavāra. Around the 13th century C.E., a Sri Lankan Thera, whose name remains unknown and is referred to as “a pupil of Ānanda Vanaratana Thera”, authored a commentary on the Catubhāṇavāra. This commentary, the Sāratthasamuccaya (Collection of Essential Meanings), was created to streamline the process of seeking commentarial explanations scattered throughout various texts. The Sāratthasamuccaya is a compilation that gathers and interconnects pertinent passages, primarily drawn verbatim from their sources. In the case of the Girimānanda Sutta, the content is derived mainly from the Visuddhimagga, with some additional material incorporated from the sub-commentary to that work, the Paramatthamañjūsā, and from other primary Nikāya commentaries (Ñānamoli Bhikkhu, 2006). On one occasion, the Buddha resided in Sāvattṭhī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. Meanwhile, the Venerable Girimānanda was gravely ill and suffering. The Venerable Ānanda approached the Blessed One, paid his respects, sat beside him, and implored, “Venerable Sir, the Venerable Girimānanda is seriously ill and in great distress. It would be a compassionate act if you could visit him”.

The Buddha responded, 'Ānanda, if you visit Bhikkhu Girimānanda and expound ten specific perceptions, it is possible that upon hearing them, his affliction will immediately alleviate. Ānanda referred to this list of ten perceptions: The perception of impermanence, the perception of non-self, the perception of unattractiveness, the perception of danger, the perception of abandonment, the perception of dispassion, the perception of cessation, the perception of non-delight in the entire world, the perception of impermanence in all conditioned phenomena, and mindfulness of breathing. Notably, this teaching appears familiar to both of them, yet it is not found elsewhere in the discourses as an established Buddhist teaching.

Ten Ways to Manage Mental Sufferings

The Girimananda Sutta explains that unchecked desires often cause suffering. The Buddha's healing methods, such as treating a monk named Tissa, demonstrate the transformative power of mindfulness and awareness. The Buddha wished for humanity to be liberated from suffering, and the Anamataga sutta emphasises that mortality is a universal reality all humans face.

1. Perception of impermanence

The Buddha emphasises the significance of meditation in understanding death and suffering caused by separation. The Sutta meditation program incorporates techniques such as dispassion, cessation meditation, relinquishment of cravings, and mindfulness of breathing. (Payutto, 2017) The Girimananda Sutta meditation program aims to heal body and mind diseases and liberation. Je Tsongkhapa emphasises the importance of understanding karma's infallibility and samsara's pain to manage emotional pain and cultivate peace. The program involves dispassion, cessation meditation, giving up cravings, and mindfulness of breathing. Individuals can control their minds and dispel distress by focusing on awareness of thoughts and emotions, grounding techniques, and understanding impermanence (Mangalam & Deleks, 2020).

2. The Perception of Non-Self

The Buddha stated that everything is temporary. Understanding that nothing is permanent or personal can bring peace of mind. Mindfulness meditation helps us recognise that everything is in continual motion. Five corpses, picture Pain thinking perception Consciousness is not a fixed self but continually evolving. Selflessness, as revealed in sutras

such as the Khemaka Sutta (S III. 128.), can cure disease. Venerable Khama and the monks became enlightened after explaining the notion of non-self.

Buddha's teachings urge individuals to be satisfied with their experiences and recognise their fleeting and transient character. Decreasing personal attachment and practising mindfulness and compassion alleviate emotional distress. Knowing impermanence means letting go of attachments, which leads to everlasting pleasure and achievement (Hodge, 2015).

3. The Way to Practice the Perception of Unattractiveness

Realising the body's impurity is crucial, as is getting rid of ego pride that emerges from the picture. Deformation of the body. Knowing what is not good allows you to perceive your body genuinely without reacting aggressively to others. The key to correctly perceiving the body is awareness. Asubabhava meditation lowers appetites and attachments in the body, resulting in difficulties like aversion and discontent. Unpleasant It reveals the genuine nature of the hideous impermanent body. When passion ends, the mind calms and can enter and see the reality of the body, allowing the ego to be transcended and Nirvana to be attained. It promotes mental health, knowledge, and prosperity. Individuals can integrate these techniques into their everyday lives.

4. The Way to Practice Contemplating Danger

It is necessary to understand that disease in the body is natural, think about natural laws, meditate on the body's sin, and develop the awareness that the body is the sin of the pains encountered. It emphasises the importance of thinking about the sin of the body and understanding the naturalness of the body's sin. The Buddha taught that a person who thinks the human body is impermanent and full of diseases is less egoistic and selfless. Cultivating a practical spirit is a practice that reduces attachment and eases emotional pain (Gunaratana, 2014).

5. The Way to Practice of Abandoning

The essence of this wisdom lies in the profound importance of releasing negative beliefs. It is a crucial step on the path of personal growth and spiritual development, as it allows us to transcend our opposing ideas. For example, if you perceive a pleasant sensation, you become an idea you wish to experience. If you encounter a terrible sensation, you develop biased notions that you should not accept.

Establishing a feeling of purity is not just a recommendation but a powerful tool in our arsenal against wicked ideas. It acts as a shield, preventing negative thoughts and emotions

from taking root in our minds. If thoughts of sin enter your mind, you will feel miserable and depressed. Like all humans, the Buddha is devoid of sensuous pleasures and joys. He suggests letting go of feelings of rage, wrath, and harming people. We must avoid items damaging to others (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1995).

6. The Way to Practice Perception of Dispassion

The need for connection to things causes numerous sufferings, concerns, and afflictions. Lust is like attempting to balance a mustard seed on a moving needle. The "Fire Sermon" was the first time the Buddha mentioned the significance of overcoming desires. All six senses and their perceptions cause attachment; the Buddha stated that burning with anger and sensuality results in recurrent suffering.

'Mercy Understanding', a term coined by the Buddha, refers to the ability to detach from our senses and understand the suffering of others. This detachment can lead to empathy. Suppressing the impulse and delaying the movements can induce disgust. Remaining lust-free in life lowers tension and pain. This sutra teaches us to cultivate the awareness of sadness since desire causes us to suffer (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1995).

7. The Way to Practice of Perception of Cessation

Nobody can be free of the challenges and pains of life. To end those dreadful things, it is also vital to practise awareness to cease. These challenges may seem insurmountable, but one can transform through the dedicated practice of mindfulness. The individual who strives to regulate their pain becomes less self-centred and less hateful and develops a mindset that eradicates negative notions such as carelessness and ignorance. As the fire of suffering is quelled by the interaction of the six senses with their objects, one can realise that nothing truly exists and that what occurs is merely a loss of control. Powerful meditation can provide glimpses of cessation while also eliminating the deluded, flaming mind.

8. The Way to Practice of Perception of Non-delight in the Entire World

Looking at the universe, there is no such thing as enjoyment. Very few people claim that all human needs are met. There needs to be more contentment. Furthermore, seeing how much they are being destroyed daily makes many individuals unhappy rather than pleased. Because of these ideas, one may grasp the concept of non-happiness and achieve peace. Greed, anger, and a clear mind must conquer hatred and illusion. Impermanence Recognising sorrow and selflessness is essential for relaxation and serenity. It implies that all births during cycles only

indicate impermanence and suffering. The mentality that seeks outward gratification alleviates pain (Nandamālābhivansa, 2016).

9. The Way to Practice Perception of Impermanence in All Conditioned Phenomena

We must realise that there is nothing to covet. In this development, the emphasis is on the body and its components. It entails recognising that instability, degradation, and sickness are egoless. A person with a strong sense of self feels compelled to be who he believes he is and what he should do. Finding happiness entails getting rid of those sufferings, the incorrect notions and the ego and practically practising that there is nothing to seek. He is obliged to dismiss any negative thoughts that have emerged. The Buddha stated that developing virtuous thoughts relates to creating unwholesome and unshakable minds.

10. The Way to Practice of Perception of Mindfulness of Breathing

Observation, a powerful tool, is crucial to maintaining our mental health. Mindfulness, a skill that can be honed through regular activities designed to stabilise emotions and meditation, empowers us to take charge of our mental well-being.

Emotions play a part in all human beings. Mindfulness includes both likes and dislikes. It implies that if you focus on your likes and dislikes whenever they arise in your head, emotional anguish will not be able to control your thoughts. My daily loves and dislikes consist primarily of avarice and fury. Ignorance of this situation is ignorance. It is critical to learn to manage and live peacefully as a cittanupāsana. It is to comprehend that good and evil must be recognised in one's thinking.

In conclusion, this exploration of Buddhist methods for managing mental suffering, with insights drawn from the *Girimānanda Sutta*, underscores the relevance of these ancient teachings in addressing the complexities of emotional pain. The *Sutta*'s ten practical approaches—ranging from perceptions of impermanence and non-self to mindfulness of breathing—offer a comprehensive framework for cultivating mental resilience and inner peace. These methods emphasize the impermanent, non-self nature of existence and the transformative power of mindfulness, enabling individuals to release attachments, dispel negative emotions, and transcend ego-driven distress.

Each practice, whether focusing on the unattractive nature of the body, the dangers inherent in attachment, or the cessation of cravings, builds a pathway toward liberation from suffering. These teachings remain deeply applicable in today's world, offering tools to navigate

modern life's challenges with greater clarity and serenity. By integrating mindfulness, compassion, and self-awareness into daily practice, individuals can alleviate emotional burdens, foster spiritual growth, and embrace lasting tranquility.

Conclusion

This study has meticulously examined Buddhist methodologies for addressing mental suffering, with a specific focus on the *Girimānanda Sutta* (AN.V. 108). Mental suffering remains a pervasive and universal challenge inherent to the human condition, and Theravāda Buddhism provides profound insights and practical strategies for alleviating its impact. The *Girimānanda Sutta* delineates multiple pathways aimed at fostering inner peace and achieving liberation from distress. Key among these are the practices of perceiving impermanence (*anicca*) and cultivating mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpānasati*), both of which serve as foundational techniques for individuals seeking to transcend mental anguish.

These Buddhist practices are not merely theoretical constructs but are deeply practical, offering tangible methods for individuals to navigate the complexities and pressures of contemporary life with enhanced grace and resilience. By embracing the understanding of impermanence, individuals can develop a perspective that mitigates attachment and aversion, thereby reducing the intensity of mental suffering. Simultaneously, the disciplined practice of mindfulness of breathing cultivates a stable and focused mind, enabling individuals to maintain equanimity amidst life's inevitable fluctuations.

The wisdom imparted by seasoned practitioners and the rich traditions of Theravāda Buddhism further enriches this journey, providing invaluable guidance and support to those endeavoring to overcome mental distress. This exploration into Buddhist approaches to mental suffering underscores the journey of self-discovery and spiritual cultivation that is central to Buddhist practice. It highlights how ancient wisdom and enduring truths can be seamlessly integrated into modern therapeutic contexts, offering holistic solutions that complement contemporary psychological interventions.

Moreover, the study emphasizes the relevance of the *Girimānanda Sutta* in today's world, where societal pressures and mental health concerns are increasingly prevalent. By drawing on the timeless teachings of this sutta, individuals can cultivate a tranquil heart and a clear mind, illuminated by profound wisdom. This integration of Buddhist principles into

daily life not only fosters emotional balance and inner peace but also builds long-term psychological resilience.

In essence, this research advocates for incorporating Buddhist strategies, as exemplified by the *Girimānanda Sutta*, into contemporary efforts to manage mental suffering. It underscores the potential of these ancient teachings to contribute significantly to sustainable mental well-being, offering a path toward emotional resilience and spiritual fulfillment. As we continue to navigate the challenges of modern existence, the timeless insights of the *Girimānanda Sutta* provide a beacon of hope and a roadmap for achieving lasting tranquility and mental clarity.

Abbreviations

- AN. V. =Aṅguttara Nikāya
S. IV. =Salāyatana Samyutta
S. IV. =Salāyatana Samyutta
S. III. =Samyutta Nikāya

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