

A Critical Study on the Problem of Memory among Buddhist Schools

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The ancient Buddhism is known as the time before Buddhist disciples were divided into several sects in India. This could be identified as a division created by modern scholars. They indicate that Buddhist teachings of *Theravāda*, *Mahāyāna* and *Tantrayāna* are further extension of teachings of Early Buddhism. Because of that various words have come with the intention of getting this matter clarified. Such as “*Primitive Buddhism*”, “*Pre-canonical Buddhism*” or “*Original Buddhism*” and “*Early Buddhism*” have been used in the introduction of Fundamental Buddhism. In addition to that as two main classifications in Buddhism known as *Northern Buddhism* and *Southern Buddhism*, further classification based on geographical factors. The divisions of *Hīnayāna* and *Mahāyāna* could be recognized as a classification done on path of freedom in Buddhism.

Statement of the Problem.

After passing away of lord Buddha, a great number of philosophical causes and reasons were brought about for arising schools of Buddhism. Among those philosophical disputes, the question of the Memory appears as an important dispute with special reference to individuals. Hence, Buddhist schools have to have a substantial answer for this inescapable question unwaveringly while protecting kernel of the Buddhist norm. As a result of going to provide new solutions for this problem, many of new concepts were included to the Buddhist philosophy by the schools of Buddhism. In relation to this fact, the *Encyclopedia of Asian Philosophy* has described the background and nature of the problem of memory which had to be faced by Buddhist scholars in the history of Buddhist philosophy thus; (i) ‘all compounded phenomena are impermanent (*anitya*)’, (ii) ‘All contaminated phenomena are suffering (*dukkha*)’, (iii) ‘All existents (*dhammas*) are without self (*anātman*)’. As being these teachings the major theories of Buddhism, scholastic

Buddhism has to be given necessary or acceptable answers while protecting the kernel of the Buddhist teachings.¹

It is very interesting to note that, schools of Buddhism had to introduce new concepts in order to resolve such kinds of problems in elaborating the Buddhist norm. Hence, the '*Pudgalavāda*' was accepted by a group of *bhikkhus* and the 'existence of three times (*Traikalika-asthitva*)' was accepted by the *Sarvāstivāda* tradition. Further, they created the concept that 'all subject and object matters are existing' in three periods of time.² The other sect who asserted that these conflicts were originated because of accepting the Abhidhamma tradition, therefore, they accepted only the Suttas as substantial and therefore, they were known as '*Sautrāntikas*. In fact, the concept of '*Bīja*' was introduced as the main solution for all psychological problems. The sect of *yogācāra* has resolved this problem by introducing the '*Ālayavijñāna*' (*Store-consciousness*). In relation to this there are many scholars have pointed out that, *Theravāda* response of memory can be identified through the concept of *Cittavīthi* and concept of '*Bhavaṅga citta*.' In considering the above points, it is appropriate to undergo different attitudes of *Pudgalavāda*, *Sarvāstivāda*, *Sautrāntika*, *Yogācāra* and *Theravāda* in briefly. In order to point out the problem of memory and solutions given for solving the problem, there are several sources can be assisted such as *Abhidharmakosabhāṣya*, A Discussion of The Five Aggregates (*Pañcaskandaprakaraṇa*) and A Discussion for The Demonstration of Action (*Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa*) of venerable *Vasubandhu*, venerable *Vasumitra*'s, Origin and Doctrines of Early Indian Buddhist School (*Samaya-bhedopacaranacakra*) and also *Kathāvatthupparakaraṇa* of Theravādins.

Sarvāstivāda Buddhist Tradition.

Here, it is very interesting to pay our attention to the solutions given for resolving the problem of memory by the *sarvāstivāda* Buddhist tradition. It is a well-known fact that the early Buddhist

¹ *Encyclopedia of Asian philosophy*, p. 287 "These assumptions, in turn, generated certain problems that Buddhist philosophers were forced again and again to confront. Among these are: what ontological status to assign to the different *dharma*s that constitute the 'lexicon' of the Buddhist vision of reality; how to explain memory, karmic efficacy and personal continuity in the absence of a permanent self; how to evaluate knowledge and reason in a tradition that assumes that liberation must occur through trans-rational means; and how to relate an unconditioned, non-causal state like *nirvāna* to the dependently originated practices of the path and to basic onto-logical assumptions about impermanence and no-self."

² *Abhidharmakāśhaṃ*, *Pañcamaṃ kośasthānam*, verse: 25.

sarvakālāstitā uktatvāt dvayāt sadviṣayāt phalāt|
tadastivādāt sarvāstivādā iṣṭāḥ caturvidhāḥ|

term of the 'sati' (Pāli) or *smṛtiḥ* (Sanskrit) has been classified as a mental factor (*caitta*) out of the ten kinds of *mahābhūmika dharmas* which occurs in every mind invariably by the *sarvāstivāda* Buddhist school as follows.

1. *Vedanā* - feeling
2. *Cetanā* – volition
3. *Samjñā* - conceptual identification
4. *Chandaḥ* - desire for action
5. *Spr̥ṣo* - contact
6. *Matih* - intellect
7. *Smṛtiḥ* - memory
8. *Manaskāro* - the act of attention
9. *Adhimokṣa* – confidence
10. *Samādhiḥ sarvacetasi* – absorption or concentration³

Here, this occurrence of the term *smṛtiḥ* is recognized as memory in the *sarvāstivāda* Abhidhamma. According to *Collect Cox*, the *Smṛtiḥ* which is in the above-list that can be considered as an evidence for the increasingly development of psychological orientation of *Ābhidharmic* analysis with reference to the memory. On the other hand, *Padmanabh S. Jaini* comments that, in occurring of *sarvāstivāda Ābhidharmic* term of 'smṛtiḥ' (memory) as constant arising mental factor in human mind which is shown a kind of 'unfitness' when indicating since the memory of past. Further, he observes that however, in the latter part, venerable *vasubandhu* having apprehended the anomaly and recenses it by dividing into two group all *mahābhūmika dhammas*, in explaining the 'caitta' (mental factors) in his one overt work *pañcaskandhaprakara*.⁴ Therefore, our attention should be paid to the compilation of *pañcaskandhaprakara* in order to apprehend that idea clearly. "Among these, what are the events associated with citta? They are whatever events are associated with citta. And what are they? They are *Vedanā* (sensation), *cetanā* (volition), *samjñā* (conceptual identification), *chandaḥ*

³ *Abhidharmakośhaṃ, dvitīyaṃ kośasthānam, verse: 24*
vedanā cetanā samjñā chandaḥ spr̥ṣo matih smṛtiḥ/
manaskāro'dhimokṣaśca samādhiḥ sarvacetasi/

⁴ Gyasto, Janet, *In the Mirror of Memory*, p. 8

(desire for action), *sprśo* (contact), *matiḥ* (intellect), *smṛtiḥ* (memory), *manaskāro* (the act of attention), *adhimokṣa* (confidence), *samādhiḥ sarvacetasi* (absorption or concentration) Among these, the first five occur in every *citta*. The next five are certain only with specific objects-of-sense.”⁵ Accordingly, the first group is named five universal. (*sarvaga*) *dharmas*. Other five are called five particulars (*prati-niyataviṣaya*).⁶ Therein, the term (*smṛtiḥ*) has been interpreted as: ‘Non-forgetting of a range of events towards which there is acquaintance’ and ‘Certain kind of discourse of *citta*.’⁷ Therefore, the *smṛtiḥ* (memory) performs in distinctive terms such as *smṛtiḥ*, *anusmṛtiḥ*, *pratismṛtiḥ*, *smarana*, *asampramosatā* and *cetaso ’bhilāpā* etc in *sarvāstivādin*’ treatises.⁸

As the mentioned above, *smṛtiḥ* (memory) in the *Abhidharmakośa* has been defined under the mental events which are occurred in human mind invariably. In the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, the same term has been interpreted as “*smṛtirāmbanā-sampramosaḥ*” by venerable *Vasubandhu*. It means that, (*āmbana*) “retention of” or (*asampramosaḥ*) “not letting drop the object.”⁹

In the *Sphutārthābhidharmakośavyākhyā* which is composed by the venerable *Yasomitra*, the term *smṛtiḥ* is identified under two meanings. The first is “*āmbanam mano na vismarati*” which means that the mind does not forget the object. The second is identified as “*tac cābhilapatīva, sāsmṛtiḥ*” which means that the *smṛtiḥ* can repeat it (object).¹⁰ Furthermore, the *Yogācāra* Buddhist philosopher venerable *Sthiramati* has defined the term *smṛtiḥ* in the sense of memory in his *Thriṃśtikā-vṛtti*. According to him, the term *smṛtiḥ* is so called because, a certain object which was previously experienced, does not let it forgets and also, which has the ability of recalling those objects. The experienced object is called ‘a conceived object’. ‘*Asampramosa*’ is so called because, it is the factor for non-dropping (those) objects. The object which was previously

⁵ *Pañcaskandhaprakara*, p. 66

⁶ *Abhi.bhās*, Vol. I, p. 333.

⁷ *Pañcaskandhaprakara*, p. 67

“What is (*smṛtiḥ*) memory? It is the ‘non-forgetting of a range of events towards which there is acquaintance’ and is a ‘certain kind of discourse of *citta*.’”

⁸ *Abhi.bhās*, Vol. I, pp. 335.

‘*Smṛti*’ is *smṛti*, *anusmṛti*, *pratismṛti*, *smarana*, *asampramosatā cetaso ’bhilāpā*.

⁹ *Abhi.bhās*, Vol. I, p. 190.

Smṛti is non-failing with regard to the object; a *dharma* by virtue of which the mind does not forget the object, by virtue of which it cherishes it in order to so express it (*abhilasatīva*).

¹⁰ *Sphutārthā-Abhidharmakośavyākhyā dvitīyam kośasthānam*, verse: 24.

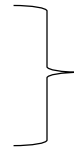
viśeṣanimittagrāha itī. viśayaviśeṣarūpagrāha ity arthāḥ.. smṛtirāmbanāsampramosa itī. yadyogād āmbanam mano na vismarati, tac cābhilapatīva, sāsmṛtiḥ. (this is quoted from, Gyasto, Janet, *In the Mirror of Memory*, p. 55)

experienced is called ‘*vastu-pūrvānubhūtam*’. The ability of recollecting, rethinking, grasping those objects, is called ‘*abhilāpanatā*.’ When representing ‘*abhilāpanatā*,’ mind is totally established. Therefore, it is called ‘*avikṣepa-karmikā*’ (non-distraction of mindfulness)”¹¹

Furthermore, the *Abhidharmakośha* includes a very important discussion on the *smṛtiḥ* in connection with ‘*anusmaranavikalpa*’. In order to understand, it has to be paid attention to the previous stanza. “five consciousnesses always include *vitarka* and *vicāra*. The last three *dhātus* are of the three types. The other *dhātus* are free from the one and the other.”¹² According to commentary reading of this stanza, five consciousnesses means eye, ear, nose, tongue and body consciousness and three *dhātus* (*antyāstrayastriprakārāḥ*) are meant three elements viz. *mano dhātu*, *dharma dhātu* and *manovijñāna dhātu*. Out of the ten kinds of *mahābhūmika dhammas*, except these three elements five consciousnesses are associated *vitarka* and *vicāra*. Then, next stanza is clarified that, *nirūpanāvikalpa* (distinguishing) and *anusmaraṇāvikalpa* (recollecting) are free from *vitarka* and *vicāra*.¹³ Its *Bhāṣya* interprets it as follows.

“*svabhāvavikalpa* is *vitarka-vicāra*; *anusmaraṇavikalpa* is the memory associated with mental consciousness; *nirūpanāvikalpa* is non-absorbed *prajñā* of the sphere of the mental consciousness. In *kāmadhātu*, the five consciousnesses have only the first type of *vikalpa*: they, include memory, but not *anusmaraṇavikalpa*, for they are not capable of recognition; they include *prajñā*, but not *nirūpanāvikalpa*, for they are not capable of examination. *nyayānusāra* the nature of *svabhāvavikalpa* is *vitarka*.”¹⁴

Now, it can be concluded as follows;



¹¹ *Thriṃśtikā vṛtti: verse 10*

smṛtiḥ samstute vastuany asampramosaśḥ cetaso’bhilāpanatā. Samstutam vastu pūrvānubhūtam. ālambanagrahanāvipranāsakūranatvād asampramosah. Pūrvagrhitasya vastunah punah punar ālambanākārasmaranam abhilāpanatā. abhilāpanam evābhilāpanatā. sa punar avikṣepakarmikā. ālambanābhilāpane sati cittaśyā-lambanāntare ākārantare va vikṣepābhūvād avikṣepakarmikā.

¹² *Abhidharmakośham, dvitīyaṃ kośasthānam, verse: 32*

*savitarkavicārā hi pañca vijñānadhātavaḥ|
antyāstrayastriprakārāḥ śeṣā ubhayavarjitāḥ||*

¹³ *Abhidharmakośham, dvitīyaṃ kośasthānam, verse: 33*

They are free from *vikalpa* to the extent that they are free from *nirūpanāvikalpa* and from *anusmaraṇavikalpa*. They are dispersed mental *prajñā*, mental memory whatever it may be.

Nirūpanānusmaraṇavikalpenāvikalpakāḥ|

tau prajñāmānasī vyagrā smṛtiḥ sarvaiva mānasī||

¹⁴ *Abhi.bhas, Vol. I, p. 144.*

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| 1. <i>Nirūpanāvikalpa</i> = <i>Mano vijñāna dhātu – prajñā</i> (wisdom) | <i>Avitarka</i> |
| 2. <i>Anusmaraṇavikalpa</i> = <i>Mano dhātu - Smṛtiḥ</i> (memory) | <i>Avicāra</i> |
| 3. <i>Svabhāvavikalpa</i> = <i>Pañca-vijñāna</i> (Five consciousness) → | <i>Vitarka</i>
<i>Vicāra</i> |

Here, the relationship between *smṛtiḥ* and '*Anusmaraṇavikalpa*, is explained in the following quotation.

“All mental memory (*Smṛtiḥ*), that is to say, the mental memory, is or is not concentrated. For, according to the School, the mental memory uniquely has for its object the thing previously experienced and does not take into consideration its name, according to the definition: "What is memory? Expression of the mind (*Cetaso'bhilāpaḥ*). The mode of existence of memory connected to the five consciousnesses is not an expression (*Abhilāpa*) of a thing previously experienced. It is thus not *Anusmaraṇavikalpa*.”¹⁵

***Vātsīputriya* Buddhist Tradition.**

In the Buddhist context, usually, the term Memory implies both the ability of recollecting past incidents of this life and previous lives. In relation to this, there has been a debate between the *vātsīputriyās* and the *sarvāstivādins* on account of the Memory. The *vātsīputriyās* questions that “If the self does not absolutely exist how can the momentary mental events (*cittas*) be capable of the remembrance or recognition of an object experienced (*anubhūta*) a long time ago?”¹⁶ The answer was given by *vasubandhu* (the *sarvāstivādins*) as, “Memory and recognition are generated immediately, in a series, from a certain type of mind, when this type of mind arises from the idea of object already perceived and which one calls “object of the memory.” In relation to this answer, a question was again raised by the *vātsīputriyās* as “What is type of mind from whence memory immediately shoots up? The response of *Vasubandhu* is, the following conditions should be represented to arise memory (*smṛtiḥ*).

1. *Tadabhoga*: It is necessary that a bending of the mind be produced, an act of attention, towards the object.

¹⁵ *Abhi.bhas*, Vol. I, p. 145.

¹⁶ *Abhi.bhās*, vol. v. p. 1339

2. *Sadṛsa- samjñā*: It is necessary that the mind involves an idea resembling the object, in the case where one remembers by reason of resemblance (for example, I remember fire perceived a long time ago because the idea of fire is placed in my mind by the sight of present fire).
3. *saṃbandha-samjñā*: it is necessary that the mind involves an idea in relation to the object, in the case where one remembers without there being resemblance (for example, I remember fire because the idea of smoke is placed in my mind by the sight of smoke).
4. *Pranidhāna*: it is necessary that the mind involves a *Pranidhāna*, or resolution, an *abhyāsa*, or habit (for example, the resolution has been placed in the mental series, “I shall remember this at such a time”).
5. *Anupahata-prabhāva*: Also, when it is of this nature that is to say, when it presents the characteristic 1. and one of the characteristics 2 – 4 if the thought does not proceed from the idea of the object of memory that is to say, if the mind so envisaged is not produced in a series where the idea of a certain object has been laced by perception, if this mind does not proceed from this idea the mind cannot produce memory.¹⁷

Furthermore, the debate flows as follows.

Vātsīputriyās: How can one mind see and another mind remember? It is contrary that *Yajñadatta* remembers an object that *Devadatta* has seen.

Vasubandhu: That is right. There is no connection between *Devadatta* and *Yajñadatta*. Their minds are not in the relationship of cause and effect, as is the case for minds which form series. Indeed, we do not say that one mind sees an object and that another mind remembers this object, because these two minds belong to the same series. We say that one past mind, bearing a certain object, brings about the existence of another mind, the present mind, capable of remembering this object. In other words, a mind of memory is generated from a mind of seeing, as fruit is generated from the seed through the force of the last stage of the transformation of the series. This point has been clarified. Memory is generated after recognition.

Vātsīputriyās: In the absence of a soul, who remembers?

Vasubandhu: What do you understand by “to remember”?

Vātsīputriyās: To grasp an object by the memory.

¹⁷ *Abhi.bhās*, Vol. V, pp. 1339-40

Vasubandhu: Does “to grasp” differ from memory?

Vātsīputriyās: Memory is the agent of the action “to grasp”

Vasubandhu: We have explained what is the agent of this action: it is the cause of memory, namely a certain type of mind.

Vātsīputriyās: But, if it is only a certain type of mind that is the cause of memory, how can one say that *Caitta* remembers?

Vasubandhu: One gives the name *Caitta* to a series; a mind of memory is generated, in this series, from a mind of seeing, and by reason of this fact one says that *Caitta* remembers.

Vātsīputriyās: In the absence of a soul, whose is the memory?

Vasubandhu: What is the sense of the genitive “whose”?

Vātsīputriyās: This genitive designates its master.

Vasubandhu: Explain by an example how you understand that someone is the master of memory.

Vātsīputriyās: As *Caitta* is the master of the cow.

Vasubandhu: In what is *Caitta* the master of the cow?

Vātsīputriyās: In that he directs and employs the cow as he pleases.

Vasubandhu: To what then is the memory directed and employed by a master, for whom you search with great pains.

Vātsīputriyās: It is directed and employed on the object that one wants to remember (that is to say, it is employed on remembering).

Vasubandhu: To what purpose?

Vātsīputriyās: For the purpose of memory.

Vasubandhu: What idle talk! I direct and employ a certain thing with a view to the same thing! Explain to me then how memory is employed: do you want to say that one transmits it to a certain place? Do you want to say that one causes it to be produced?

Vātsīputriyās: Memory does not die out; it is then not transmitted. One causes it to be produced.

Vasubandhu: What you call “master” is then simply the cause, and what you call “subject” is simply the result. In fact, the cause, by its command, operates the result; it is then “master”; and the result, in that it is

subordinate to the cause at the moment of its arising, is called “subject.” Since the cause suffices as master, why require a self to which you could attribute memory? Memory belongs to whatever causes memory. Complexes of *samskhāras*, or the five *skandhas* forming a homogeneous series, are called “*Caitta*” and “cow.” One says that the *Caitta*-series possesses the cow-series, because the *Caitra*-series is the cause of the geographic displacement and the various changes of the cow-series. There is not there any one, real entity “*Caitta*,” nor another entity called “cow;” there is not, for the *Caitta*-series, any quality of owner or master outside of its quality of cause.¹⁸

According to the above conversation, it is highlighted that The *Vātsīputriyās* maintain the problem of memory by using their belief of *Pudgala* (person) and on the other hand, the *Sarvāstivādins* also tries to maintain the same problem by providing concept of same series of *caittās* or ‘*Caitta-santati*’.

When considering, the all above factors, it can be identified that the *Sarvāstivādins* have endeavored to maintain the problem of memory by developing the term *Smṛtiḥ* as successful solution. It can be distinguished by paying our attention on comment which given by P.S. Jaini as thus “we already have referred to *Vasubandhu*’s brief definition of *Smṛtiḥ* and how it was understood as mindfulness by the *Vaibhāsikas*. However, in his appendix to the *Abhidharmakosabhāsyā*, called the *Pudgalaviniscaya*, *Vasubandhu* provides us with detailed material on *Smṛtiḥ*, not as he defined it earlier as mindfulness, but as memory of the past. The context for his account of memory is provided by the *Pudgalavādin Vātsīputriyās*, the Buddhist heretic, who apparently uses the phenomenon of *Smṛtiḥ* as a valid ground for his doctrine of a durable entity called *pudgala* (translated variously as “person,” “self,” or “soul”).¹⁹

***Sautrāntika* Buddhist Tradition.**

The school of *Sautrāntikas* which has originated from the *hīnayāna* school, the attention can be paid at two important sources which are called *Abhidharmakośabhāsyā* and *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa* of venerable *Vasubandhu* and ‘*Samaya-bhedopacarana-cakra*’ (Origin and doctrines of Early Buddhist Schools) of *Vasumitra* in studying the provenance of the *Sautrāntikas*. According to the *Vasumitra* there are five reasons have been adopted to be known as the *Sautrāntika* Buddhist tradition as follows;

¹⁸ *Abhi.bhās*, Vol. V. pp. 1340-42

¹⁹ Gyasto, Janet, *In the Mirror of Memory*, p. 49

1. *Skandha* transmigrate from former to the latter. Hence, they are identified as *Sankrāntivāda*. (Transference of *Skandhas*).
2. Apart from *Āryan* paths there is no eternal destruction of the *Skandhas*.
3. There are *Mūlāntikaskandhas* (the origin of the five adventitious aggregates) and also the *Ekarasaskandhas* (*Skandha* of the one taste (subtle-consciousness or *suksmacitta*)).
4. An average man (*Prathajjana*) also possesses the potentiality of becoming a Buddha (lit. in the state of an average man there are also divine things *āryadharmas*.)
5. There are the *Paramārtha Puggalas*.²⁰

In the early Buddhism, the term *bīja* (seed) has been mentioned in several places in connection with the defilements. In order to answer all kinds of psychological problems, the *sautrāntikas* has developed the theory of *bīja* (seed) by following early Buddhist teaching of dormant Dhammas (*anusaya*). According to comment of Masuda, is explained by attending on the commentary of ‘the Origin and Doctrines of Early Indian Buddhist School’ that the *skandhas* are synonymous with *bīja*.²¹ The *sautrāntikas* explain the operation of *kusala* and *akusala dharmas* by speculating a theory of seeds. There are three kinds of seeds:

1. Seeds of evil (The seeds of evil (*akusala-bīja*) are called *anusaya*.)
2. Seeds of good (the seeds of good are called *kusala-dharma-bīja*.)
3. Those which are indeterminate. (*abyākata*)²²

Further, a number of prominent ideas can be seen in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* in order to understand the characteristics of the activity or function of seeds theory of *Sautrāntikas*. Following four qualities are mentioned.

- i. The seeds of defilement have not been uprooted through the Path of the Saints.
- ii. The seeds of defilement have not been damaged by means of the worldly path.

²⁰ *Origin and Doctrines of Early Indian Buddhist School*, pp. 66-67

²¹ *Origin and Doctrines of Early Indian Buddhist School*, pp. 67-68

²² *Abhidharmadīpa*, p, 103

iii. The seeds of innate good have not been damaged through false views.

iv. The seeds of good “obtained through effort” are in good condition at the moment when one wants to produce this good.²³

In relation to this clarification, *Sarvāstivādins* raised a question that ‘but what should we understand by “seeds”? The *sautrāntikas* replied as follows.

“By seeds we understand *nāmarūpa*, that is, the complex of the five *skandhās*, capable of generating a result, either immediately or mediately, by means of the *parināma-visesa* of its series. The series is the *samskāras* of the past, the present and the future, in relation to causality, that constitutes an uninterrupted series. The *parināma*, or the evolution of the series, is the modification of this series, the fact that this series arises differently from itself at each moment. The *visesa*, or culminating point of this evolution, is the moment of this series that possesses the capacity of immediately producing a result.”²⁴

From these factors, it becomes more explicit that theory of seeds of *Sautrāntikās* has been used for all problems which were arisen in relation to the identity of beings. Therefore, we can speculate that the theory of seeds can be considered as the solution for the problem of memory which was arisen among the Buddhist schools.

***Yogācāra* Buddhist Tradition.**

The *Yogācāra* school of Indian Buddhism, has taken much effort to give solution for the problem of memory of the individuals by concerning on other solutions given by schools of Buddhism. There are several terms such as *smṛtiḥ*, *viññapti*, *vāsanā* and *bīja* etc. have been discussed under the connection with the memory in the *yogācāra* Buddhism. Here, it is tried to make an inquiry by attending on the *viṃśatikā* and *thriṃśatikā viññptikārikās* which composed by the venerable *Vasubandhu* and also *Mahāyāna* Buddhist text of *Lankāvatārasūtra*.

According to the venerable *Vasubandhu*’s point of view, from the term of *smṛtiḥ* is delineated that experiences or conceptualities that experienced through the sense bases. In other words, the memory (*smṛtiḥ*) should be apprehended as what is previously experienced. In the *Yogācāra* Buddhist philosophical treatises are of similar terms like, *viññapti*, *vāsanā*, *citta*, *viññāna* and *bīja*.

²³ *Abhi.bhās*, Vol. I, pp. 210-11.

²⁴ *Abhi.bhās*, Vol. I, pp. 211-12.

These factors have been undergone to the discussions in detail by many *Mahāyana* philosophers in connection with the memory. Venerable *Vasubandhu* imparts that, in explaining the way of perceiving objects with the awareness of mind, one can experience immediate knowledge (*pratyaksa*).²⁵ Therefore, all experiences or conceptualities of one, are apparently become as ‘*vijñapti*’. According to veteran Buddhist scholars, *Yogācāra* concept of *vijñapti* is firstly used in the *Sarvāstivāda* Abhidhamma as a particular condition of Karma by venerable *Vasubandhu* and however in the *Yogācāra* Buddhism, it refers to indicate (objects) “Manifest to any consciousness.”²⁶ This ‘*vijñapti*’ (experiences or conceptualities) is given rise to arise one’s memory. Which means that, one’s memory (*smṛtiḥ*) is always arisen by associating ‘*vijñapti*’. Also, venerable *Vasubandhu* distinguishes ‘memory’ in the terms of *vijñapti*. The following instance is quoted from the *Viṃśtikā-vijñapti-kārikā* to clarify it further. “As such, a concept is said to reflect that (experience). Memory arises therefrom. One who is not awakened does not realize the absence of the object of perception in dream.”²⁷ In considering commentary of the above treatise, has denoted the above appeared verse has been denoted in detail. According to that, there are many elements are produced by the mental ‘*mano vijñapti*’²⁸ such as, exercise of thought (*vikalpābhyaśa*), dispositional tendencies (*vāsanā*) etc. The ‘sensible muchness of any object’ is accelerated by these elements which are born in one’s mind.²⁹

It is important to study the relationship between the mind and object according to the *Lankāvatārasūtra*. It explains that, eight kinds of *vijñānas* can be separated into two kinds of *vijñānas*. Those two are called *khyati-vijñāna* (perceiving *vijñāna*) and *vastuprativikalpa-vijñāna*. Although, the *vijñāna* is divided into two groups, the Buddha elucidates (in *Lankāvatāra*) that,

²⁵ *Viṃśtikā vijñapti kārikā: verse 16*

Pratyaksa-buddhīh svapnā dau yathā sā ca yadā tadā,

na so ’rtho drsyate tasya pratyaksatvam katham matam.

²⁶ Narain, A.K, *JIABS Vol.9, 1986*, “*The Meaning of Vijñapti in Vasubandhu's Concept of Mind*” by Bruce Cameron Hall, University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA. PP. 7-23

²⁷ *Viṃśtikā vijñapti kārikā: verse 17*

Uktam yathā tad-ābhāsā vijñāpiti smaranam tatah,

svapne drg-visayābhāvam nāprabuddho ’vagacchati.

²⁸ *Viṃśtikā vijñapti kārikā: verse 1.*

Vijñāpiti -mātram-eva-etad-asad-artha-avabhāsanām.” This is mere representation of consciousness, Because of the unreal appearance of objects.

²⁹ *Viṃśtikā vṛtti: verse 17*

Vinā-āpi-arthena yathā-artha-ābhāsa cakśur-vijñāna-ādika vijñāptir-utpadyate tathd-uktam. Tato hi vijñāpteh smṛti samprayuktā tat-pratibhāsa-eva rūpadivikalpika mano- vijñāptir -utpadyat ’iti na smṛtyutpādād-artha-anubhavaḥ sidhyati.

there is no difference between these two *vijñānas*.³⁰ In the *sūtra*, there are three modes of consciousnesses have been distinguished based on characteristics of *vijñānas*.³¹ Those three kinds of *vijñānas* and two kinds of *vijñāna* or *khyativijñāna* and *vastuparivikalpa vijñāna* (eight kinds of *vijñāna*) can be compared with adding cessation of *ālayavijñāna* or the pure state of *vijñāna* (*mūlavijñāna*) which has been mentioned in the *sūtra* by lord Buddha, as follows.

Three modes of <i>vijñāna</i> .	Two divisions of eight <i>vijñānas</i> .
1. The <i>vijñāna</i> as evolving.	1. <i>Khyati-vijñāna</i> - the perceiving consciousness functions by reason of the evolution of the unfathomable memory. (mysterious habit-energy or <i>Acinya-Vāsanā</i>)
2. The <i>vijñāna</i> as producing effects	2. <i>Vastuprativikalpa-vijñāna</i> - the object discriminating consciousness functions by reason of discrimination of an objective world, and on account of the habit-energy or memories (<i>vāsanā</i>) expanding diffusely (<i>prapañca</i>) since beginning-less time.
3. The <i>vijñāna</i> as remaining in its original nature	The cessation of the <i>ālayavijñāna</i> 's variously accumulating habit-energy which is generated when unrealities are discriminated. (<i>mūlavijñāna</i>)

In

accordance with the above teaching of the *Lankāvatārasūtra*, the *vāsanā* (memory) is being played kernel role of existing of individuality.

The '*vāsanā*' (*memory*) is produced by the *manovijñāna* by perceiving and grasping objects from the external world. It brings about to accumulate the Karma. Therefore, *ālayavijñāna* can be regarded as a resultant consciousness (*vipāka-vijñāna*) and which depends on the *manovijñāna*.

³⁰ Lankāvatāra Sūtra, pp. 33-34

Mahamati, in the *Vijñānas*, which are said to be eight, two functions generally are distinguishable, the perceiving and the object-discriminating. As a mirror reflects forms, Mahamati, the perceiving *Vijñānas* perceives (objects). Mahamati, between the two, the perceiving *Vijñānas* and the object-discriminating *Vijñānas*, there is no difference; they are mutually conditioning. Then, Mahamati, the perceiving *Vijñānas* functions because of transformation's taking place (in the mind) by reason of a mysterious habit-energy, while, Mahamati, the object-discriminating *Vijñānas* (38) functions because of the mind's discriminating an objective world and because of the habit-energy accumulated by erroneous reasoning since beginning-less time.

³¹ Lankāvatāra Sūtra, p. 33

“Three modes are distinguishable in the *Vijñānas*: (1) the *Vijñāna* as evolving, (2) the *Vijñāna* as producing effects, and (3) the *Vijñāna* as remaining in its original nature.”

Then, it is an obvious fact that, one's memory is solely performed by associating the *manovijñāna*. Following instance will clarify it properly.

“According to my teaching, *Mahamati*, the getting rid of the discriminating *manovijñāna* this is said to be *nirvāna*. *Mahamati* said: Does not the Blessed One establish eight *vijñāna*? The Blessed One replied: I do, *Mahamati*. *Mahamati* said: If eight *vijñāna* are established, why do you refer to the getting-rid of the *manovijñāna* and not of the seven (other) *vijñānas* (as well)? The Blessed One said: With the *manovijñāna* as cause and supporter, *Mahamati*, there rise the seven *vijñānas*. Again, *Mahamati*, the *manovijñāna* is kept functioning, as it discerns a world of objects and becomes attached to it, and by means of manifold habit-energy or memory (*vāsanā*) it nourishes the *ālayavijñāna*.”³²

This definition is concluded the essence of theory of the mind in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. It highlights mainly three characteristics.

1. *The ālayavijñāna* and other six *vijñānas* depend on *manovijñāna*.
2. *The ālayavijñāna* is nourished by the *manovijñāna*, by discerning objects.
3. *The ālayavijñāna* is enshrined those objects as memories by name of *acintya-vāsanā* (habit-energy or memory) by functioning the *manovijñāna* and empirical *vijñāna*.

By explaining of the dreaming (*svapne dr̥g-visayābhāvam nāprabuddho'vagacchati*) the *viṃśtikāvṛtti* says that the world is a form of ‘*Manovijñapti*’ of one mind itself. Whatever one cognizes, those are called mere mental images. It is explained by giving an example as; when one is sleeping, and dreaming, he feels that the dream is really existing. However, after awaking from the asleep, he feels that, it is a mere dream. Similarly, until one attains into the *Nirvāna* (*emancipation*), he is in a state of *Sansāric* dream.³³ It properly explains as thus; ‘The world is totally asleep. It is a sleep characterized by the habit of vainly distinguishing between subject and object. The world so asleep sees unreal objects, just as in a dream. As long as it is not awoken it cannot properly realize the unreality of those objects. The supramundane-intuitive knowledge will act as a remedy to this sleepiness. When through such knowledge one is awakened, the previously

³² Lankāvatāra Sūtra, p. 109

³³ Viṃśtikā vṛtti: verse 17

Yadi yathā svapne vijñptir-abhūta-artha-viśaya tathājāgarato'pi syāt-talhādeva tad-abhāvam lokaiḥ svayam-avagacchet. Na ca-evam bhavati. Tasmān na svapna iva-artha-upalabdhiḥ sarvā nirarthikā.

attained impure, mundane, knowledge will vanish, and consequently one will properly realize the unreality of the mistaken objects. Thus, the dream-experience and the waking experience are similar to each other.³⁴

***Theravāda* Buddhist Tradition**

The *Theravāda* Buddhist school is known as the oldest school in the history of the Buddhist Philosophy. However, according to some recent scholars, the *Theravāda* Buddhist tradition has been silent on the crucial problem of memory. It clarifies as follows.

“The *Theravādin* Abhidhamma texts are totally silent on this matter, although their notion of the *Bhavaṅga* (lit., “constituent of becoming”) consciousness could have been exploited to serve this purpose. As is well known, the *Theravādins* propose a theory of perception whereby a series (*vīthi*) of several mental events (*citta*) with the same object is maintained, after which the basic consciousness resumes until the next series begins. The series (of mental events) can be maintained for as many as seventeen moments when material objects are cognized (*pañca- vijñāna*), or even longer for a mental cognition (*Manovijñāna*).”³⁵

Although, the *sarvāstivādins* introduced the term ‘*sati*’ as memory in accordance with the early Buddhism, the *Theravāda* Buddhist philosophers have developed the early Buddhist term of ‘*saññā*’ as memory of the individuals.³⁶ The ‘*sati*’ is frequently translated as ‘mindfulness’. The *Theravāda* Abhidhamma tradition has tried to omit the sense of memory from the ‘*sati*’ in composing their Abhidhamma treatises.

As it was mentioned early, the *Sarvāstivāda* tradition solved this problem of memory including the *Smṛtiḥ* into their Abhidharma exposition of *Mahābhūmika Dharma*. According to them, mindfulness (*sati*) can be presented in both wholesome and unwholesome consciousness. However, Theravādins are reluctant to include the ‘*sati*’ into seven universal mental factors (*Sabbacittasādhāraṇa*) accordingly. According to Theravādins the ‘*sati*’ occurs only in wholesome consciousness. It cannot be occurred with the unwholesome consciousness. The reason

³⁴ Viṃśatikā *vṛtti*: verse 17

Evām litatha-vikalpa-vāsanā-nidrayā prasupto lokah svapna iva abhutam artham paśyana prabuddhas-tadabhāvam yathāvan-na-avagacchati. Yadā lu tat-pratipaksa – lokottara – nirvikalpa – jhāna – lābhāt - prabuddho bhavati tadā lad-praṣṭa labdhaaśuddha - laukika - jñāna – samnkhībhāvāt – visayo - abhūvam yathāivadaivaragacchati-iti samānametat.

³⁵ Gyasto, Janet, In the Mirror of Memory, p,

³⁶ Nyanaponika, Abhidhamma Studies, pp. 111-18; Janet, Gyasto, The Mirror of Memory, pp. 61-66

is for that, it is invariably beautiful. Therefore, they included the ‘*sati*’ into the list of *sobhana cetasika*. (beautiful mental factors). They developed the ‘*saññā*’ because, it is considered as one aggregate out of the five. It should be mentioned here that *citta* (consciousness), *cetasika* (mental factors) and even definitions of *rūpa* (matters) indicated in *Theravada* Abhidhamma are not exceeding five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*).³⁷ By considering all these circumstances, the ‘*saññā*’ was included into the seven universal mental factors (*Sabbacittasādhāraṇa*) by *Theravāda* Buddhism.

By overlooking all these new concepts, the *Theravāda* tradition has introduced ‘*Saññā*’ as the solution for the problem of memory. The *Theravādins* have shown and understood that the unsuitability of the term ‘*sati*’ in interpreting as the memory, they have chosen the most relevant term ‘*Saññā*’ as the memory. As it is one aggregate out of the five aggregates, it was included into the list of seven universal mental factors (*sabbacittasādhāraṇa cetasika*) without any hesitation. Nevertheless, the memory is a very complex process. It cannot be represented by a single term. Therefore, in the fifth century (5th AD) ‘*Saññā*’ has been developed under the seventeen kinds of mind moments by Venerable *Buddhaghosha* and his successors of the *Theravāda* Buddhist Tradition. When it comes to the twelve centuries (12th AD), it has been developing more broadly. By attending the development of *cittavīthi* from the early Buddhism, one can surmise that the term *Tadārammaṇa* has been included into the *Cittavīthi* (cognitive process) in the era of writing commentaries (5th AD). As we quoted above Jaini’s definition on *Theravāda* mental series has been commented by Janet Gyasto as thus; “...Jaini, whose article introduces the problem of memory of the past in the Abhidharma literature as a whole, suggests that the “having the same object” (*tadārammaṇa*) moment of the Theravada “mental series” could also perform the function of registering and consigning the object of perception to memory.”³⁸ The term *tadārammaṇa* is parallel with the *bhavaṅgacitta* (life-continuum). According to the *visuddhimagga* of *Buddhaghosa thera*, shows us that as thus; “At the end of the impulses, if the object is a very vivid one in the five doors, or is clear in the mind door, then in sense-sphere beings at the end of sense-sphere impulses resultant consciousness occurs through any condition it may have obtained such as previous kamma, impulse consciousness, etc., with desirable, etc., object. (It occurs thus) as one among the eight sense-sphere resultant kinds with root cause or the three-

³⁷ *Galmangoda, Sumanapala, Ābhidhammika Vivaraṇa*, p. 119

³⁸ Gyasto, Janet, *The Mirror of Memory*, p. 8

resultant mind-consciousness elements without root-cause and it (does so) twice or once, following after the impulsions that have impelled, and with respect to an object other than the life-continuum's object, like some of the water that follows a little after a boat going upstream.”³⁹

The *bhavaṅgacitta* is the most salient factor of one’s life.⁴⁰ Therefore, memory is solved by the *bhavaṅgacitta* in the *Theravāda* Abhidhamma by making link to the term *tadārammaṇa*. Therefore, many veteran intellectuals, *Theravāda* tradition tends to reserve the problem of memory by introducing the theory of *bhavaṅga* and seventeen kinds of mental process (*cittavīthi*) of human mind.⁴¹ The following instance is strong enough to clarify the aforementioned.

“*bhavaṅga citta* is the hidden repository of all impressions and memories of thoughts that pass through the *vīthi citta* or conscious mind. All experiences and tendencies are stored up there, but from there they sometimes can exert an influence over the conscious mind without the conscious mind’s being aware of the source of this influence. The Buddhist *bhavaṅga citta* is not identical with the unconscious of Western psychology, although in very many respects they are similar. *bhavaṅga citta* is wider in scope than the Western unconscious, nor do the *vīthi citta* and *bhavaṅga citta* operate together at the same time, these two states of mind being conditioned by each other.”⁴²

By considering the all factors mentioned above, it can be concluded that Although, the *sarvāstivāda* Buddhist tradition has tried to answer the problem of memory by developing the

³⁹ Bhikkhu Nyānamoli, *The path of purification*, p. 462 *Visuddhimagga*, (VRI) p. ii, 86. “*Javanāvasāne pana sace pañcadvāre atimahantaṃ, manodvāre ca vibhūtamārammaṇaṃ hoti, atha kāmāvacarasattānaṃ kāmāvacarajavanāvasāne iṭṭhārammaṇādīnaṃ purimakammajavanacittādīnañca vasena yo yo paccayo laddho hoti, tassa tassa vasena aṭṭhasu sahetukakāmāvacaravipākesu tīsu vipākāhetukamano-viññādhātūsu ca aññataraṃ paṭisotagataṃ nāvaṃ anubandhamānaṃ kiñci antaraṃ udakamiva bhavaṅgassārammaṇato aññasmiṃ ārammaṇe javitaṃ javanamānubandhaṃ dvikkhattuṃ sakiṃ vā vipākaviññānaṃ uppañjati.*”

⁴⁰ Bhikkhu Nyānamoli, *The path of purification*, p. 462 “At the end of registration the life-continuum resumes its occurrence. When the (resumed occurrence of the) life-continuum is again interrupted, advertent, etc., occur again, and when the conditions obtain, the conscious continuity repeats its occurrence as advertent, and next to advertent seeing, etc., according to the law of consciousness, again and again, until the life-continuum of one becoming is exhausted. For the last life-continuum consciousness of all in one becoming is called *death (cuti)* because of falling (*cavanatta*) from that (becoming). So, that is of nineteen kinds too (like rebirth-linking and life-continuum). This is how the occurrence of nineteen kinds of resultant consciousness should be understood as death.”

⁴¹ Gyasto, Janet, *In the Mirror of Memory*, p. 54 The *Theravādin* Abhidhamma texts are totally silent on this matter, although their notion of the *Bhavaṅga* (lit., “constituent of becoming”) consciousness could have been exploited to serve this purpose. As is well known, the *Theravadins* propose a theory of perception whereby a series (*vīthi*) of several mental events (*citta*) with the same object is maintained, after which the basic consciousness resumes until the next series begins. The series (of mental events) can be maintained for as many as seventeen moments when material objects are cognized (*pañca- viññāna*), or even longer for a mental cognition (*Manoviññāna*).

⁴² Gunaratna, V. F., *Rebirth Explained* p. 16.

early Buddhist term of “*sati*” as memory, it seemed not so strong enough to solve the problem. On the other hand, *Pudgalavādins*’ theory of ‘existence of a person’ was directly supported for the eternalism (*sassatavāda*). As well as, the theory of seeds (*bīja*) has been introduced by the *sautrāntika* Buddhist sect by following early Buddhism in order to solve the same problem. Nevertheless, their theory of *bīja* is also supported to the eternalism as their teachings alike ‘*ekarasa skhandha bīja*’ (one taste aggregate of seed). Finally, it was found *ālayavijñāna* of *Yogācāra Mahāyāna* Buddhism (the great vehicle) also was appeared as a state of the development of the theory of seeds of the *sautrāntikas*. Further, they also have taken the term ‘*ālaya*’ from the early Buddhism. On the other hand, the *Theravāda* tradition suggested the term ‘*saññā*’ as the solution and it has been developed through the *cittavīthi* adding *tadārammaṇa* (*bhavaṅgacitta*). However, it is convenient that the *Theravāda* tradition has been able to provide substantial answer for the problem of memory by overlooking at the whole problem and answers given by the other schools of Buddhism.

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VRI = Vipassana Research Institute (chaṭṭhasaṃgāyanā CD version 04.)