

# The Buddhist Idea of Memory : A Study Based on the "SmrutibīJa" Concept

Ven. Karandagolle Suseema Thero  
Department and Pali and Buddhist Studies  
karadagollesuseema@gmail.com

Memory can be identified as a prominent concept discussed in modern psychology. Since the beginning of psychology, different schools of psychology have expressed their views on memory through different approaches and with the beginning of neuroscience at the end of the twentieth century, facts about memory were also discussed from a biological basis. This research studies how memory, which is discussed in modern psychology, has been analysed through the concept of smrutibīja in Buddhist teachings. Various words, such as saññā manasikāra dhāraṇa, have been used for memory, but for this research, the concept of smrutibīja, which comes from the Yogācāra Vijñānavāda School is used. By using Vasubandhu Thera's Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi, its commentary and Lamkāvatāra sūta as the primary source and modern psychological texts on memory as the secondary source, this research is conducted through the qualitative research methods. Modern psychology divides memory into three parts: sensory memory, short-term memory, long-term memory. Here, data organisation, memory development, forgetting, and disorders related to memory, such as dementia and Alzheimer's, are discussed. In Buddhism, memory has been interpreted in different synonyms through different concepts. In early Buddhism, memory was analysed as saññā, and in the Theravada Buddhist school, memory was analysed through words such as saññā, manasikāra and through the concept of cittavīthi. In sarvāstivāda, Buddhist school memory has been analysed as saññā. In Yogācāra tradition, memory is analysed through the concept of seeds. "**sarva bījaṃ hi vijñānaṃ**" There are three types of seeds that exist in the store consciousness. They are **smrutibīja**, **karmabīja**, **kleśabīja**. The memory is analysed widely through the concept of smrutibīja. This research can identify how the concept of memory is interpreted in modern psychology and Buddhism.

**Keywords:** Long-term memory, Sensory memory, Short-term memory, smrutibīja, Yogic idealism