

**An extended Abstract on the Utility of the Naikan Therapy  
for the Rehabilitation of Youthful Offenders  
in Sri Lanka: A Brief Explanation of the Basic Theories**

**Ven. Galle Dhamminda  
Ven. Panamure Chandima  
Ven. Pahalagama Dhammika**

Naikan (*nai* means “inner,” *kan* means “looking”), Japanese: 内観, lit. ‘Inside looking’ or ‘Introspection’ is a practice developed by Yoshimoto Ishin (1916–1988). Primarily this structural method was focused on a selected young group and then, it was introduced to the General public. Now it is well-known practice that is based on one's inner thoughts by recalling his/her past deeds from the perspective of other people in their life. It is said that self-reflection is one of the best practices of healing method. In the Naikan therapeutic method, it has been considered on three questions as follows:

1. What have I received from?
2. What have I given to?
3. What troubles and difficulties have I caused to?

Many of Naikan practices are much focused on these three questions. For the first time, the three questions preliminary are added to the individual's relationship with his/her mother. Hence, it can be expanded towards other relationships. The strength of family relationship is highly appreciated by the Naikan practitioners.

Yoshimoto modified the original Shin Buddhist practices to introduce the Naikan therapy is called *mishirable* (self-examination), the development of self-reflection.<sup>1</sup> He has further explained the idea of creating Naikan is to spread the ‘utter joy and happiness’. He has practically involved with Naikan therapy at prisons as a method of reform technique. Later on this therapeutic

method was populated among the medical doctors and Psychologists in Japan as an effective psychotherapy for alcoholism. In the study of self-reflection the formal methods of the purposes can be mentioned thus:

1. There is the requirement for time which is set aside exclusively for the purpose of self-reflection.
2. Use of a space, preferably with some degree of isolation that limits external distraction.
3. The application of questions or structure which helps us examines our lives with an emphasis on our conduct in relation to other people, creatures and objects.

The discussion of self is referred to the ancient idea of soul. The word Psychology derives from Greek roots with the meaning of 'study of psyche' or 'soul' and 'breath', 'spirit', and *logia* means 'study of' or 'research'.<sup>2</sup>At the moment, the Naikan Therapy as a psychotherapeutic method of healing people has developed its scope towards self-reflection instead of searching 'soul'. The Naikan practice on the other hand, can be recognized as the gradual development of the discussion of 'Introspection', the examination of one's own conscious thoughts and feelings introduced by Plato, Wilhelm Wundt, the father of modern Psychology and Edward B. Titchener. Today, Naikan is probably expanded over 40 centers in Japan and many centers now established in Australia and German as well.

Today, the society is eagerly awaiting for the Naikan practitioners from the world. With regard to the Sri Lankan context, Naikan can be applied in rehabilitating Youthful offenders. The Department of Prisons' Vision is entitled as 'Social reintegration of inmates as good citizens through rehabilitation'. The Department obviously focuses on the safeguarding and good relationship among the officers and prisoners. The mission says 'Creation of a good relationship between the prison officers and the inmates in order to achieve the main objectives of custody, care and corrections and thereby improve the job satisfaction of the officers and buildup positive attitudes among officers and regulate the welfare of the prisoners, utilizing their productivity of labor for the benefit of the country'. With reference to statistics of youthful offenders based on 2014-2018, the number of direct admissions to training school under the age group of 16 & Under 17 years has been increased in the year of 2018.

The following sources say that under the age group of 21 to 22 Years, no admitters were available for 5 years. (2014-2018)

Direct admissions to Training School for Youthful Offenders, *Watareka* according to Age Groups, 2014-2008<sup>3</sup>

Age Group	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
16 & Under 17 Years	7	18	9	16	20
17 & Under 18 Years	-	3	-	-	6
18 & Under 19 Years	9	-	4	5	2
19 & Under 20 Years	-	-	-	-	-
20 & Under 21 Years	-	-	1	1	-
21 to 22 Years	-	-	-	-	-
Total	16	21	14	22	28

Many of those offenders were from the rural areas in the country. Lack of educating, status of delinquent's family background and other issues made them problematic and directed them towards offences.

Direct admissions to Training School for Youthful Offenders, *Watareka* according to Residence, 2014-2018<sup>4</sup>

Sector	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Urban	7	3	3	2	9
Rural	9	18	11	20	19
Total	16	21	14	22	28

This research has its target group as the Youthful Offenders with reference to the sources from Sri Lankan Prisons by 2014 to 2018. This research suggests that the Naikan therapy is applicable for Youthful Offenders with the method of Self-reflection to overcome crime and incentive to crimes.

Generally, the term delinquency refers to a large variety of disapproved or, antisocial behavior of children and adolescents, which the society does not approve of, and, for which the punishment or corrective measures are justified in the public interest.<sup>5</sup> The laws and legislative enactments attached to juvenile delinquency are available at 'The Children and Young Persons Ordinance' (CYPO) No. 48 of 1939 (as amended). This amendment provides the establishment of the juvenile court in Sri Lanka. Youthful Offenders (Training Schools) Ordinance No. 28 of 1939, Probation of Offenders Ordinance No. 42 of 1944, Penal Code Act No. 2 of 1882, Code of Criminal Procedure Act No.

15 of 1979 and Prison Ordinance No. 16 of 1877 also deal with some special legal provisions relevant to juvenile offenders.<sup>6</sup> The followings would be some of suggestions for the Rehabilitation of Youthful Offenders in Sri Lanka with much help of the Naikan Therapy.

1. Many of the offenders are sent to the rehabilitation centers as the first options: we suggest that the youthful offenders should be treated by the Naikan therapeutic methods as the first option.
2. If the offenders are sent to the prison, trained counselors should be alert to the possibilities on mental condition of the offenders.
3. A small lesson on the Naikan therapy is to be applied to the School syllabus to develop mental awareness of all students.
4. It is high time that Sri Lanka should take necessary actions to take care of children who should eagerly instruct with psychological needs better than an exam oriented society.

Additionally, it is suggested that the existing Administration system in the Sri Lankan Prison should be strengthened with a new vision of rehabilitation that basically focuses the mentality and its variations relevant to the youthful offenders with supplement of the Naikan Therapy which is considered as one of the best psychological healing methods now in the world. And, finally this research will be fruitful to cease many of delinquencies.

**Keywords:** Naikan Therapy, Self-reflection, Youthful Offenders, Rehabilitation, Sri Lanka

## Endnotes

- 1 **Demystifying Japanese Therapy:** An Analysis of Naikan and the Ajase Complex through Buddhist Thought, Chikako Ozawa-de Silva, <https://web.archive.org/web/20140507083219/http://psyanth.med.harvard.edu/docs/ChikakoOzawa.pdf>, Retrieved 06/02/2020 @ 10.00 am.
- 2 **Online Etymology Dictionary.** (2001). <https://www.etymonline.com/word/psychology>, Retrieved 05.02.2020 @ 10.54 am.
- 3 **Prison Statistics of Sri Lanka,** Statistics Division, Prisons Headquarters, Sri Lanka, P.47-50, Vol. 38, 2019.
- 4 **Prison Statistics of Sri Lanka, Statistics Division,** Prisons Headquarters, Sri Lanka, P. 47-50 , Vol. 38, 2019.
- 5 Ashok Kumar Jain, Criminology, **Penology And Victimology,** (Ascent Publications 1995).
- 6 Section 75 of the Penal Code.