Carl Jung's Collective Unconscious Mind and Past Life of Human Being

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පෙර භවයේ පැවැත්ම පිළිබඳව සංකල්පය මානව ශිෂ්ටාචාරය ආරම්භයේ සිටම සංවාදයට ලක් වූ පුකට පුස්තූතයකි. විශේෂයෙන්ම ආගමික හා දාර්ශනික සන්දර්භයන් තුළ මෙම සංකල්පයට සුවිශේෂී වැදගත්කමක් හිමි ව තිබේ. මෙම පර්යේෂණයේ අරමුණ වූයේ මනෝවිශ්ලේෂණවාදී ගුරුකුලය නියෝජනය කරන සුපුකට මනෝවිදාහඥයෙකු වූ කාල් යුංග් විසින් ඉදිරිපත් කරන ලද සාමූහික අවිඥානය පිළිබඳව සංකල්පය මගින් මිනිසාගේ පෙර භවයේ පැවැත්ම පිළිබඳව අනාවරණය කරනවා ද යන්න පරීක්ෂා කිරීම යි. මුලාශු අධායනය කිරීම මගින් ගුණාත්මක දත්ත යොදාගෙන මෙම ගවේෂණය සිදු කරන ලදී. එහිදී විශේෂයෙන් ම බුදුදහමේ පෙර භවය පිළිබඳව සඳහන් වන ඉගැන්වීම් ආධාර කර ගන්නා ලදී. බුදු දහම ඉතා පැහැදිලිව අතීත හා අනාගත භවයේ පැවැත්ම පිළිගනියි. එය එක් එක් පුද්ගලයා විසින් සිදු කරනු ලැබූ පෞද්ගලික කිුයාකාරකම්වල පුතිඵලයක් ලෙස සිදු වේ. එනම් බුදුදහම අවධාරණය කරන්නේ පුද්ගල අත්දැකීම් හා සම්බන්ධ අතීත පැවැත්මක් පිළිබඳ ව ය. නමුත් යුංග් විසින් අතීත පැවැත්ම පිළිබඳව ඉදිරිපත් කරන සංකල්පය ඊට වෙනස් ය. ඔහු සාමූහික අවිඥානය පිළිබඳව සංකල්පය මගින් සැම පුද්ගලයකු තුළ ම දැක ගත හැකි අතීත පැවැත්ම හා සම්බන්ධ පොදු මානසික මූලයක් පිළිබඳව සාකච්ඡා කොට ඇත. ඒ තුළ මානවයාගේ පොදු අත්දැකීම් වලින් සැදුම්ලත් මූලාකෘති නමින් හඳුන්වන ආශමය චර්යා රටාවන් අන්තර්ගත වේ. කෙසේ නමුත් මෙම පරිණාමීය ආශමය චර්යා රටාවන් ද ඉතා දිගු කලකට පෙර පැවති සවිඥානික අත්දැකීම්වලින් බිඳී පැමිණ ඇත. ඒ අනුව ඔවුගේ සාමුහික අවිඥානය

පිළිබඳව සංකල්පය ජීව විදාහත්මක, පරිණාමීය, මනෝවිදාහත්මක හා පාරභෞතික සංකල්පවල සංකලනයක් ලෙස සැලකිය හැකි අතර එමගින් මිනිසාගේ අතීත පැවැත්මේ පොදු පැතිකඩ අනාවරණය කළ ද පුද්ගලික පැවැත්ම පිළිබඳව අදහසක් එයින් හෙළි නො කෙරේ.

යතුරු පද: සාමුහික අවිඥානය, මූලාකෘති, පෙර පැවැත්ම, පුනර්භවය, ආත්මය

Abstract

The concept of existence of former life is a well-known subject matter which has been discussed since the early days of the civilization. Particularly, this concept has become significant in the domain of religious and philosophy. Aim of this study was to investigate whether collective unconsciousness, the concept introduced by the prominent Psychoanalyst Carl Jung, reveal the past life of human being. This study has been done using source studies with the qualitative data. Buddhist teachings on former life have been particularly borrowed in this case. Buddhism apparently upholds the idea of former and future life. It occurs as a result of personal actions done by each individual. It means that Buddhism emphasizes a former existence which is related the personal experiences. But Jungian concept of former life is different to Buddhist view. Jung through his collective unconscious mind has discussed a common psychic substrate related to previous life, can be seen in everyone. It contains the patterns of instinctual behaviors, which consist of universal human experiences known as archetypes. However, these instinctual behaviors too have derived from conscious experiences which existed very long time ago. Thus, his concept of collective unconscious mind can be considered as a syncretism of biological, evolutionary, and metaphysical concepts. Although the collective unconsciousness uncovered the common aspects of previous existence, it does not imply any personal existence about the previous life of human being.

Keywords: Collective Unconsciousness, Archetypes, Former Existence, Reincarnation, Psyche

Introduction

The objective of this research paper is to investigate how Jungian collective unconscious mind accompanied with past life of human being described in Buddhism and Hinduism or how much Jungian collective unconscious mind demonstrate the features of the past life of human being. It is apparent that there is a great technical and mechanical difference in between Buddhist view of past life and Jung's concept of collective unconscious mind. It seems that the Buddhist concept of past life may have been used in the sense of ethics or emancipation.

The purpose of this study is not to prove the Buddhist concept within the psychological context but to understand the above concept through a comparative analysis. Existence of past life discussed mostly in Buddhism and Hinduism is one of the controversial and interesting topics in modern time. Buddhist and Hindu followers have accepted the concept of reincarnation, which is also called the past life or previous life as their holy teaching irrespective of evidential value. As it appears, reincarnation can be divided into two models, belief model and evident model, is a state, belief, experience, or any other entity, which may be conscious or unconscious. Collective unconsciousness, mainly deals with previous experiences is the concept of Jungian psychology that convinces past life of human being. On the other hand, his concept regarding the unconscious mind is different from Buddhist and Hindu view.

Research Problem

The research problem of this study is "Does Jungian collective unconscious mind reveals the past existence of human being?"

Aims of the Research

I. To investigate whether Jung's concept of collective unconscious mind reveal the former existence of the individual.

II. To identify the similarities and differences between the Jungian concept of past life and Buddhist view of reincarnation.

Importance of the Research

Past life is not a tangible thing, and it cannot be detected by any scientific equipment and it cannot be proved by the scientific method as well. Therefore, studying the past life in the scientific domain is often controversial. However, it is not that scientific studies on this subject matter is not there. Existence of former life is highly acknowledged in religious context. Similarly, most of the philosophers in the early era have been grappled with this metaphysical concept.

Psychologist Carl Jung particularly attempted to investigate the former existence from a psychological standpoint. The concept of former existence is directly linked to psychological aspect of the individuals as it deals with someone's belief system. Most of the cultures particularly in Asian region believe in past life based on their religious or spiritual values. Therefore, present psychological study on previous life is significant to academics and general public as well.

Literature Review

When considering the literature on current subject matter, it is obvious that rebirth or previous life has been the subject of many disciplines such as Philosophy, Psychology, religious studies and Anthropology for a long period of time. Though the large number of studies have been done on this matter, here we only consider the literature in the area of psychological studies. The Psychologist Car Jung is one of the earliest sholars who concentrated on the past life of the individuals. He has commented on rebirth in his book on "Four Archetypes-mother, rebirth, spirit, tricksters". Besides, his idea about the rebirth is seen in his collected work entitled "Archetypes and Collective Unconsciousness". Jungian analysis of rebirth seemed to be multi-perspective (Evolutionary, Spiritual or religious, and Biological) though he largely focused on Psychology.

The most significant twenty century researcher in the area of past life studies was psychiatrist Ian Stevenson, (Phoenix, 2016) from the University of Virginia investigated many reports of young children who claimed to remember a past life. He conducted more than 2500 case studies over a period of 40 years and published twelve books including twenty cases suggestive of reincarnation and where reincarnation and biology interested (Stevenson, 2003)

Sumitra Phoenix who earnt the Doctorate from the University of Milbourn, investigated the subjective experiences about the reincarnation, rebirth and transmigration of the individuals. Anil Kumar Mysore Nagaraj and his colleagues speculated the reincarnation as perceived by various religions and religious movements as well as some research evidence (Nagaraj et al, 2015).

Methodology

The study designed for the present time is a qualitative approach in order to inquire the subject matter more comprehensive and analytical way based on book references.

Discussion

Some modern scholars have come forwarded to study the scientific and psychological validity of metaphysical concepts like reincarnation and super natural power. For past few decades, reincarnation has been the subject of most researchers in the field of parapsychology. Though the most of the scientists have rejected the concept of rebirth, some modern researchers have shown a positive connection between dying and rebirth.

Carl Gustav Jung, the Swiss psychologist is one of the earliest famous characters in analytical school of psychology after the foundering father Sigmund Freud. At first, Jung became a follower of Freud but in later he disagreed with him over the nature of sexuality (Schultz & Schultz, 2004). However, their basic concept regarding the personality is alike but different in contents. Both were concerned about the unconscious mind, which is the fundamental concept of their theory. However, the concept of universal unconscious mind is unique to Jung. Jungian aim was not to introduce metaphysical concept like rebirth or reincarnation. Thought he was interested in Indian `philosophical and religious traditions such as Jainism, Hinduism, and Buddhism, he did not have religious purpose. He just wanted to analysis mind and its consequent factors for the purpose of finding a therapy for those who were mentally ill. However, Jung's following comment on rebirth obviously shows his idea about the concept of rebirth.

"Rebirth is an affirmation that must be counted among the primordial affirmations of mankind. These primordial affirmations are based on what I call archetypes. In view of the fact that all affirmations relating to the sphere of the supra sensual are, in the last analysis, invariably determined by archetypes, it is not surprising that a concurrence of affirmations concerning rebirth can be found among the most widely differing peoples. There must be psychic events underlying these affirmations which it is the business of psychology to discuss" (Jung, 2004: 58).

Affirmation is a concrete statement derived from a repetition of positive utterance. Primordial refers to the evolutionary period that primitive man lived. All affirmations relating to super sensual experiences (transcending the senses) determined by archetypes. (Jung, 2004: 58). Jung believed that there must be psychic events behind these affirmations. His idea of unconscious mind has shared features with the concept of reincarnation in Buddhism and Hinduism. This article would reveal the different aspects of those two concepts based on our basic assumption that Collective unconsciousness convinces the past life of human being.

Forms of Rebirth

The concept of rebirth is used in the different senses in various contexts. Rebirth is a very common heading in the religious settings across the word. In contrast, it has been a great rite and belief among the ancient tribes. it has also been a very popular theme even in the fields of philosophy and psychology. In this case, five main connotations of this concept will be focusing.

I. Metempsychosis

Metempsychosis refers to the transmigration of soul or psyche. According to this view, one's life is prolonged in time by passing through different bodily existences; or, from another point of view, it is a life-sequence interrupted by different reincarnations (Jung, 2004).

II. Reincarnation

The term Reincarnation is used in the sense of continuous existence of personality. Here the human personality is regarded as continuous and accessible to memory, so that, when one is incarnated or born, one is able, at least potentially, to remember that one has lived through previous existences and that these existences were one's own, i.e., that they had the same ego-form as the present life. As a rule, reincarnation means rebirth in a human body (Jung, 2004).

III. Resurrection

This means a re-establishment of human existence after death. A new element enters here: that of the change, transmutation, or transformation of one's being. The change may be either essential, in the sense that the resurrected being is a different one; or nonessential, in the sense that only the general conditions of existence have changed, as when one finds oneself in a different place or in a body which is differently constituted (Jung,2004).

IV. Rebirth (renovation)

The concept of rebirth refers to the rebirth within the span of individual life. This word upholds the idea of renovation, renewal or even of improvement brought about by magical means. Rebirth may be a renewal without any change of being, inasmuch as the personality, which is renewed, is not changed in its essential nature, but only its functions, or parts of the personality, are subjected to healing, strengthening, or improvement. Thus, even bodily ills may be healed through rebirth ceremonies (Jung, 2004).

V. Participation in the process of transformation

This is a type of indirect rebirth. Here the transformation is brought about not directly, by passing through death and rebirth oneself, but indirectly, by participating in a process of transformation which is conceived of as taking place outside the individual. In other words, one has to witness, or take part in, some rite of transformation. This rite may be a ceremony such as the Mass, where there is a transformation of substances, the central act of worship of the Roman Catholic Church (Jung, 2004).

Collective unconsciousness

Jung's concept of unconscious mind can be divided into two parts: personal unconsciousness and collective unconsciousness. Personal unconsciousness consists of memories, impulses, wishes, faint perception and other experiences in a personal life that has been suppressed or forgotten is far from our conscious awareness. However. this level of unconsciousness is not much deeper. Things that contain in the personal unconsciousness can easily be recalled to the conscious awareness (Schultz & Schultz, 2004). Virtually, the personal unconsciousness is Jung's term for the Freudian unconsciousness, as contrasted with the Jungian concept of the collective unconsciousness (Ellenberger 1970). Jung considered the personal unconsciousness to be a more or less superficial layer of the unconsciousness (Jung, 1969). Collective unconsciousness, which is unaware to individual lies below the personal unconsciousness, contains the cumulative experiences of previous generations, including animal ancestors. According to Jung, these universal evolutionary experiences construct the basis of human personality, which is the innate part our personality. From an anthropological point of view human were evolved from micro to macro level through the long processes. All experiences that man have accumulated during the evolutionary process deposited in the universal unconsciousness. The experiences in the collective unconsciousness are unconscious and We are not aware of them, nor do we remember or have images of them, as we do of experiences within the personal unconsciousness. Jung argued that the collective unconsciousness had profound impact on the lives of individuals. According to Jung universal unconscious mind constitute of instincts and archetypes. Instincts are innate pattern of our behavior and archetypes are universal symbols such as the Great Mother, the Wise Old Man, the Person, Anima and Animus, the Self, the Father, the Child etc.

Archetypes

Archetypes are the universal symbols that remains in the all-human unconscious mind. They are innate and hereditary. We typically experience archetypes in the form of emotions associated with significant life events such as birth, adolescence, marriage, and death or with reaction to extreme danger. Jung rejected the notion that the human mind is a blank slate at birth to be written on solely by experiences. He argued that the human mind contains fundamental unconscious biological aspect of our ancestors. (Verywellmind, archetypes, 22th Jul 2021) Archetypes symbolize the basic human motivations, values, and personalities. Jung has introduced several archetypes, which are described below in details.

The Persona

Persona is the public image of one's personality. According to Jung, we get used persona to suppress our primitive urges, impulses and emotions that are not socially acceptable. Appearing in the form of phony image in front of society instead of showing real image is the main characteristics of this architype. (Verywellmind, archetypes, 22th Jul 2021)

The shadow

This is the darkest side of our self, which contains envy, greed, prejudice, hate, immoral, passionate, and unacceptable desires, and activities. The shadow urges us to do things we ordinary would not allow ourselves to do. (Jung, 1964 :167)

The anima or animus

It is believed that everyone has both female and male characteristics. Thus, Anima is the feminine form of the male psyche, and animus is the male form of the female psyche. (Jung, 1964 :176, 189)

The self

Self refers to the center of entire personality, which constitutes consciousness, the unconscious, and the ego. The self is both the whole and the center of our personality and considered the most important archetypes in the concept of Jungian unconscious mind.

The father- authority figure, stern, powerful

The mother- nurturing, comforting

The child- longing for innocence, rebirth, salvation

The wise and old man- guidance, knowledge, wisdom

The hero – champion, defender, rescuer

The maiden -innocence, desire, purity

The trickster – deceiver, liar, troublemaker (Verywellmind, archetypes, 22th Jul 2021)

Collective Unconsciousness and Former Experiences

In this context, past experiences refer to the experiences that we acquired in previous life, which is far from personal unconsciousness or which is beyond the normal conscious level. According to Jungian psychology, collective unconsciousness is the innate part of our personality, which builds the basis of individual personality. This analysis signifies the importance of collective unconsciousness in making human personality. Collective unconsciousness undoubtedly plays a key role in developing personality and it immensely influences human personality. Contents of collective unconsciousness show the different types of experiences and it is the main element that our personality is shaped. As far as Buddhism is concerned, it is obvious that Buddhism has vigorously accepted the impact of previous experiences to the present and future lives of individuals. Kamma(volition), punabbava(reincarnation) are the two core concepts in Buddhism related to previous experience. Based on the nature of experiences, it can affect to the present life positively or negatively, which is called meritorious effect (bright action with bright result) and de-meritorious effect (dark action with dark result) (MN, Kukkuravatika sutta, 1995: 495). These all experiences are self-based or self-oriented, which is considered the most important part of life in Buddhism and it is the center of life. Buddhism is a person-centered philosophy, in which one who performs the evil things is responsible for consequent of it; no one is able to impure others. One becomes impure due to his own deeds. Purity or impurity depends on his or her own behavior (Dhammapada, Attavaggo, 1950: 114). Carl Jung considered the self is most important archetypes that represents the unified unconsciousness and consciousness of an individual. Furthermore, collective unconsciousness also comprises the personal experiences in addition to universal experiences.

It has already been explained how unconscious contents has arisen according to Jungian Psychology. When analyzing the incidents relating to this concept in Buddhism, unconscious contents seem to have arisen in four ways.

- i. Things that erupt by the influence of karmic action
- ii. Things that erupt because of training or habits
- iii. Verbal apocalypse about the past existence of self and thers
- iv. Extra-sensory perception about other's past life

Since Buddhism has greatly acknowledged the impact of *Karma* to the lives of individuals, no further expansions are required to it. However, the second factor that things that erupt because of training or habits should be discussed. Some examples are found in suttas in relation to this idea.

"In one occasion, *pilindavaccha* thera addressed the monks as if they were outcast. Buddha having heard that asked monks to call before him. When he accepted his offense the blessed one, having directed Then the Blessed One, having directed attention to Ven. Pilindavaccha's previous lives, said to the monks, "Don't take offense at the monk Vaccha. It's not out of inner hatred that he goes around addressing the monks as if they were outcastes. For 500 consecutive lifetimes the monk Vaccha has been born in brahman families. For a long time, he has been accustomed to addressing people as outcastes. That's why he goes around addressing the monks as if they were outcastes." (Udana, Pilinda sutta, 2012: 54)

Above description shows that *pilindhavaccathera's* bad behavior occurred because of his training in the past life. This means that some of our trained behaviors pass through one existence to another one.

Similar incidence can be found *mahavagga* in *Dhammapada*

"Five laymen go to the monastery to hear the Law. During the Buddha's sermon the first falls asleep, the second digs the earth with his finger, the third shakes a tree, the fourth gazes at the sky; the fifth alone listens to the Law. The Buddha informs Ananda that in five hundred successive existences the first was a dragon, the second an earthworm, the third a monkey, the fourth an astrologer, and the fifth a repeater of the Veda. What they did, they did from the force of habit" (Burlingame, 1921: 32)

This shows that some disciples who have been animal in their previous life have been brought animal life experiences to the present human life. In other word, both animal and human former experiences, have become reactivated in their present life.

In many occasions, Buddha has himself disclosed the incidence in the former life and he has uttered about his psychic power in remembering the previous existence with the help of *pubbenivasanussatighana*, remembrance of former existence.

Mahasihanada sutta refers to the strength of his psychic capacity in retrieving the former life of others (MN, Mahasihanada sutta, 1995: 166). *Makhadewa Sutta* demonstrates how buddha has emerged past life of others by means of his extraordinary psychic power (MN, Makhadeva sutta, 1995: 692). *Jatakapali* thoroughly contains of Buddha's revelation about the previous existence of others.

Preceding explanations indicates that there must be an existence of consciousness or psyche within individual, which bring about continuous existence to the person in the *samsara*. According to Buddhism, rebirth occurs as a result of *karma*, accumulated by the persona within his lifespan and as well as previous life. So, where does this *kamma* store? It seems *Kamma* must be stored in the stream of consciousness of the person. Similarly, Carl Jung has adopted the existence of psyche and rebirth. However, Buddhist concept of rebirth is not exactly the same as the Jungian idea. Consider the following excerpt from Car Jung.

"I am of the opinion that the psyche is the most tremendous fact of human life. Indeed, it is the mother of all human facts; of civilization and of its destroyer, war. All this is at first psychic and invisible. So long as it is "merely" psychic it cannot be experienced by the senses, but is nonetheless indisputably real. The mere fact that people talk about rebirth, and that there is such a concept at all, means that a store of psychic experiences designated by that term must actually exist. What these experiences are like we can only infer from the statements that have been made about them" (Jung, 2004: 58)

This explanation apparently shows that he has unquestionably acknowledged a super sensual existences or psychic power that man possesses. According to him, there must be a storage of psychic experiences in the humankind. Rebirth is a type of archetypes remains in the collective unconscious mind.

Taking everything into account, similarities, and differences between Buddhist view of former existence and Jungian view can be categorized as follows.

Characteristics of the Collective Unconsciousness	Characteristics of the Buddhist Reincarnation
Syncretized approach (evolution- ary, biological, and metaphysical view) into past life experiences	Metaphysical or spiritual approach into past life experiences
The person is unconscious about past experiences	The person is either conscious or unconscious about past experiences
Past experiences affect the present life and at times individual's certain behavior reflects the past experi- ences	Previous experiences negatively or positively affect the present life
Past experiences remaining in the collective unconscious are trained or habits behaviors, not conse- quence of an action	Experiences that store in the per- sonal unconsciousness are conse- quence of an action or might be a result of a trained or habit behavior.
Some behaviors are innate and conditioned	Both innate and conditioned behav- iors are acknowledged
Previous experiences deposit in the cumulative unconscious	Past experiences store in the per- sonal unconsciousness
	In some occasion, former trained experiences spontaneously come into play in the pertinent situation or object

Conclusion

This article investigated how Jungian concept of collective unconscious mind uncovered the previous existence of humankind. Above analysis shows that Jung has repeatedly acknowledged the psychic existence (mental or any other metaphysical entity) within the individuals. Buddhism also upholds the idea of psychic existence. According to Buddhism, our previous experiences exist in the personal unconsciousness, the mental existence where personal experiences (relating to this life and previous life such as place, types of existence etc.) stored. Conversely, Jung accepted the both personal and universal unconsciousness. In Jung view, personal unconsciousness only contains the experiences which repressed in the present life. This idea suggests that Jungian personal unconscious mind do not deal with previous life like Buddhist concept. Freud also supported to the idea of personal unconsciousness in the same way. The concept of universal unconscious mind is unique to Jungian Psychology. Jung believed that every human inherited the common (shared) psychic substrate which constitutes the universal human experiences are known architypes, the patterns of instinctual behavior of humankind. Although, instincts are evolutionary patterns of behaviors, they are derived from prior consciousness, which existed long before. In conclusion, Jung's concept of universal unconscious mind is the syncretism of biological, evolutionary, Psychological, and metaphysical concepts. Moreover, although Jungian concept of collective unconscious mind uncovered the common aspects of previous existence, it does not imply any personal existence about the previous life of human being.

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