III. The early Buddhist concept of person

1. Textual background

The Nikāya of the Theravādin written in Pāli has not only been preserved in complete form but also been believed to be the oldest of the existing canon. It is said that we can find chronological order even in itself. Works in gāthā (verse) such as Suttanipāta, Dhammapada, Theragāthā, Therīgāthā etc. are believed to be preceding those in prose.95 In the Suttanipāta, we can see some resemblance with other portions of the Nikāya. There is an opinion that the Dīghanikāya (henceforth: DN) contains the oldest teaching in the Suttanipāta.96 Although it cannot be said assuredly, we can assume that it contains works of earlier period.97 The Pāli Vinaya is also believed to be containing the very early teaching. Especially in Mahāvagga, we come across the vivid scenes related to the Buddha after the enlightenment.

However, it should be noted that there could be a considerable gap, chronologically and geographically, between what the Buddha actually taught and what has been written down for the first time.98 There is possibility of certain teachings uttered by the Buddha being forgotten, or being intervened by teachings of others. Therefore, the understanding of the teaching of the

96 Warder (2000), preface.
97 It is believed that prose texts of the Dīghanikāya are more authentic in their preservation of the utterances and dialogues of the Buddha. Ibid.
98 According to Lamotte, the writing down of the teaching of the Buddha, which had been handed down orally till then, took place between 35 B.C. and 32 B.C. Lamotte (1988), p.368. The perfect preservation of the original teaching of the Buddha in the time span of almost half a millennium in oral tradition is hardly thinkable.
Buddha, when based only on the Nikāya and the commentaries thereon, can be somewhat limited.

It is said that many of the Buddhist sects — Sarvāstivādin, Mahāsāsaka, Dharmaguptaka, Mahāsāṃghika, Sautrāntika, and so on — had kept the teaching of the Buddha through their own traditions, and had their own canons. According to Lamotte, the original text of the Āgama in Sanskrit or Middle Indian is not known to us in its integrality. What we have is only a certain amount of sūtras that form part of the Āgama collections.99

Besides the sūtras mentioned above, we have another reliable and comprehensive source that could be compared with the Nikāya. The Chinese Tripitaka contains a complete translation of the four Āgamas. However, these four Āgamas are not of the same origin. The translation of the four Āgamas has been done by different translators from the texts belonging to different sects, since many of them had been lost already.100 The translation is presumed to have been carried out between the second half of the fourth century and the beginning of the fifth century by monks of Kāśmirian origin or connection.101

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100 Dīrghāgama (Ch. 長阿含) is believed to be belonging to the Dharmaguptaka, and the original language might have been the local Prākrit of North-West of India; Madhyamāgama (中阿含) and Saṃyuktāgama (鍾阿含) are believed to be belonging to the Sarvāstivādin, and they might have been written in Sanskrit; Ekottarāgama (增一阿含) is believed to be belonging to the Mahāsāṃghika, and to be written in Prakrit. Cf. E. Lamotte (1988), pp.153-156. pp.32-50, Chi-zen, Akanuma Comparative Catalogue of Chinese Āgamas and Pāli Nikāyas, Nagoya, 1929, Gogen Mizno (水野弘元), Shin Butten Kaidai Jiten (新佛典解題事典); New Encyclopedia of Bibliographical Explanation on the Buddhist Canon, Warder also supports the above. But he points out that there has been a great deal of controversy about the Ekottarāgama among the Japanese scholars. Some attribute it to the Dharmaguptaka, and some others to the Mahāsāṃghikas. Cf. Warder (2000), p.6 Meanwhile, Reat superficially mentions that Dīrghāgama and Ekottarāgama are also belonging to the Sarvāstivādin. Cf. EIP (1996, vol. VII), p. 24.
None of these translations is based on Pāli originals, but rather on Sanskrit or Prākrit recensions.\textsuperscript{102}

We can see some of the features of the Āgama when compared with the Nikāya. The number of sūtras in the Āgama is bigger than that of the Nikāya. The arrangement of the sūtras is quite different from each other. The contents of the respective sūtras in the Nikāya and the Āgama are not exactly the same. Comparatively late works are included in the Āgama, since it has been compiled much later than the Nikāya.\textsuperscript{103}

Considering all the above, one can come to the conclusion that the Nikāya of Theravāda sect should be taken as the main material of this chapter. The commentaries and the Āgama will be referred too. However, in the case of commentaries, they should be dealt with care, for certain content of them is evident of being influenced by the sectarian view.\textsuperscript{104} In that case, they should be excluded. It is true what Hoffman points out. He said that commentaries may give some understanding, but reading early Buddhism without them

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., p. 155.
\textsuperscript{104} We should give attention to the following points Warder raised: "According to the Sthaviravāda tradition commentaries (Pāli Āṭṭhakathā, literally ‘discussions on the meaning’) were brought to Ceylon by Mahendra along with the Tripiṭaka when Buddhism was first introduced into the island." And he summarized the finding of Dr. Adikāram very briefly. "(1) none of these Sinhalese commentaries is now extant, for they were eventually replaced by the Pāli versions of them which we now use (made in the 5th century A.D.); (2) nevertheless these Pāli versions reproduce the contents, or part of the contents, of the Sinhalese commentaries, apart from introductory and concluding remarks by the translators, and on rare occasions a comment added by a translator (and to be his own) on a point not clarified in his Sinhalese sources; they are not word by word translations of specific texts, for there was a plurality of old commentaries which was reduced to a single Pāli version for each Tripiṭaka book, selecting what the translator considered necessary, but despite this ‘editing’ and the exceptions noted above they are in effect translations of material much older than themselves, not, as is widely assumed, new compositions of the 5th century A.D.; (3) the period of composition of the Sinhalese originals ended in the 1st century A.D. practically nothing is known – or likely – to have been added later; (4) despite additions down to the 1st century A.D. in Ceylon the formation of these commentaries reaches back into the older Indian tradition expounding the text of the school; (5) many Sthaviravāda teachers are mentioned by name for their individual views on interpretation, the majority of these lived in Ceylon in the 1st century B.C. and the 1st century A.D." Warder (2000), pp.307-8.
enables one to gain an understanding which would not be possible if the commentaries are taken into account.\textsuperscript{105} Since we have studied from the Vedic period, although the Nikāya is written in Pāli which has a common root with Sanskrit, Sanskrit terms will be mainly used in this chapter – sometimes with abbreviation S. However, when required, Pāli terms will be used with abbreviation P.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the Upaniṣads, which are the culmination of Brahmanical tradition, understand the concept of person and make room for personal identity on the basis of the concepts like Ātman and Puruṣa. Early Buddhism on the contrary gives an account of these ideas without taking recourse to the concept of Ātman. The concept of anātman is one of the core concepts of early Buddhism. Therefore, the early Buddhist doctrine of anātman will be discussed here at length before going to the concept of person and personal identity in this chapter.

2. The doctrine of anātman (P. anattā) in early Buddhism

Translating the word ātman into English cannot be done satisfactorily when Buddhist texts are concerned. According to Warder, the word ātman in Sanskrit, or attan in Pāli, is basically a reflexive pronoun meaning ‘himself’, ‘herself’, ‘oneself’, ‘myself’, etc. It may mean ‘my own’, ‘your own’, ‘his own’, etc. when it is used in genitive case. It is also used to refer to the essential self, or a ‘soul’. In the Upaniṣads, the word ātman is generally used...

\textsuperscript{105} Hoffman (1987), p.5.
in this latter sense. However, his opinion that this word when used as a noun is best to be translated as ‘soul’ is not convincing. As Norman has pointed out, if ātman is to be translated as ‘soul’, then the word would mean that these various things, as it were, five aggregates are ‘not soul’. But, if we remind us of parato (P.; ‘as other’) as being a synonym for anattato, the linguistic justification for translating ātman as ‘self’, not as ‘soul’, can be made. According to Norman, it is clear that the only translation which it is possible to co-relate to “as other” is “not self”. Translation of the word ātman as ‘self’ or ‘Self’, though widely in use, is also not enough to convey its inclusive meaning. For the understanding of what the Buddha really denies in relation to ātman, a careful reading is needed. Careless translation of a certain word could lead us to the misunderstanding of the idea. In order to avoid this, it is better to use the word ātman as it is.

In Pāli, the word anattā is a noun (nominative, singular form of anattan (m.) = S. anātman) as well as a predicative adjective. It means ‘not ātman’ or ‘without ātman’. Etymologically, the word anattan is derived from attan with the negative prefix a, a substitute for the negative particle na, which changes to an before vowels. When it is used as a noun, being a tappurisa (S. tatpurusa) compound, it could be translated as ‘not-self’ or ‘non-self’ according to the context. As an adjective, the word anattan becomes anatta, and follows the declension of the word it qualifies. Being a bahubbīhi (S.

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108 PED, p.22.
109 For the different senses of the particle na, see PSED, p.1. Among the six senses of na, viz. sādṛśya, abhāva, anyavā, alpatā, aprāwastyā and virodha, only two, that is, abhāva, ‘absence’ or ‘negation’, and anyavā, ‘difference’ or ‘distinction’ are applicable here.
110 The word ‘non-self’ here refers to the noun which has the meaning of ‘without ātman’ above.
bhuvrīhi) compound, and na having the sense of ‘absence’, it would mean ‘the one who has no attā’ or ‘that in which there is no attā’, i.e. ‘devoid of attā’. In this case, it could be translated either as ‘self-less’ or ‘non-self’.

However, both the noun anattan and the adjective anatta are commonly used in the text without specific discrimination. This being the case, although the translations ‘not-self’, ‘non-self’, ‘self-less’ etc. are possible, the word anātman, or anattā in Pāli, itself is preferred, as in the case of ātman.

In early Buddhism, anitya (impermanent), duḥkha (unsatisfactory) and anātman, the so-called Three Characteristics (tri-lakṣaṇa; P. ti-lakkhana), are mentioned as the general characteristics of existence. It is said that, whether Tathāgatas appear in the world or not, the Three Characteristics still remain as a fact, a firm and necessary condition of existence. In the first sermon, in Dhammacakkappavattanasutta, the Buddha declares the five grasping-aggregates to be duḥkha. According to him, what is impermanent is the cause of duḥkha, and what is duḥkha cannot be considered as the ātman. What is anātman is explained in this manner: ‘this is not mine’ (P. n’etam mama), ‘this I am not’ (P. n’esoham asmī), ‘this is not my ātman’ (P. na m’eso attā). This statement is a kind of formula that occurs whenever the five aggregates are explained by the Buddha. The purport is that one should not consider any of

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111 Here, the word ‘non-self’ is an adjective. Norman, however, claims: “translations such as ‘without self’ and ‘having no self’ can not be correct, because the grammar and syntax show that anattā is not a possessive adjective, which it would need to be to have such a meaning. It is descriptive compound.” Norman (1997), p.35.

112 In ordinary usage, duḥkha means ‘suffering’, ‘misery’, ‘pain’, ‘sorrow’, ‘unsatisfactoriness’ or ‘evil’ as opposed to the word sukhā. It is difficult to find a proper word to embrace the whole conception of the term duḥkha. So, it is better to use the original word.

113 Samyuttaṇiṇīkāya (henceforth: SN) V, p.420 ff.

114 SN III, p.19; p.22; p.49; p.67; etc. Majjhimanikāya (henceforth: MN) I, 22, p.139; 35, p.234; SN II, p.125f; SN III, p.19; p.49; p.67f; etc. Later, the commentary states that the notion ‘etam mama’ is induced by craving (tanhā), the notion “esoham asmī” by conceit (māna), the notion “m’eso attā” by wrong views. Cf. Papāṭhaka sūdāni Vol.1, p.183, MN.8.
the five aggregates as the ātman. In many of his discourses, the Buddha advised his disciples to get rid of strong attachment to that which is not the ātman. In the Suttanipāta, which is mainly gāthā (verse) and is believed to be earlier than other works in prose in the Nikāya, we can see a rather simple explanation related to the anātman. Without making any reference to the five aggregates, it is said: Whatever a man thinks of as 'mine', that too disappears with his death. Knowing thus indeed, a wise man, one of my followers, would not incline towards possessiveness.¹¹⁵ This indicates that the sense of ‘mine’ is one of the causes of the strong attachment which should be eliminated.

It is said that the Buddha had denied the self consistently. Does this mean that the Buddha has denied the existence of the individual self? Or, does this mean that he denied the existence of the permanent Self? Neither, in fact, is relevant to the above statement. What we see in the Nikāya is that the Buddha has kept on emphasizing that the individual self is nothing but five aggregates (pañcaskandha; P. pañcakkhandha) which are impermanent, unstable and changeable, to which we should not attach; and that these five aggregates should not be seen as the ātman.¹¹⁶

The doctrine of anātman is the corollary of the analysis of the five aggregates. According to early Buddhism, the sentient being is made up of five aggregates, namely, form (rūpa), feeling (vedanā), apperception (samjñā), mental formations or volition (saṃskāra), and consciousness (vijñāna). These five aggregates are inseparable. It is the basis of the rebirth; and the development of consciousness cannot be explained independently of the other

¹¹⁶ SN III, p.147f.
four aggregates.\textsuperscript{117} The five aggregates constitute the human personality. These are the common property of all human beings. While a Buddha or an arhat does not generate any form of clinging, ordinary people cling to the five aggregates as their own personality. That is the reason why they are also called as the five clinging-aggregates (P. \textit{pañcupādānakkhandhā}).\textsuperscript{118} Ignorance is said to be the fundamental cause related to the Dependent Origination which is the doctrine of the conditionality of all the phenomena. When this is cultivated by craving, an instinctive impulse gives rise to the notion ‘I am’.\textsuperscript{119} Based on this notion, the clinging to oneself, or the five aggregates, will take place, which is the main obstacle to the enlightenment.\textsuperscript{120} It is also explained that the five clinging-aggregates are rooted in desire.\textsuperscript{121}

In the SN, the Buddha gives the definition of a ‘being’ while answering the question of the monk Rādha:

'A being (\textit{sattra})! A being! — it is called. Why, Blessed One, is it called a being?'

'Because the desire, attachment, pleasure and craving which are attached to the form and which intermingle with them, that is called a being.' (The same

\textsuperscript{117} Whenever \textit{Anātman} is explained in Nikāyas, all of each five aggregates are enumerated together. Interpretation of \textit{viññāna}, especially in relation to the \textit{Niññanas} of \textit{Pratītyasamutpāda} might be different depending on the sectarian Buddhism. But, it is clear that \textit{viññāna} in early Buddhism has not been treated separately apart from the other four aggregates. Hoffman also points out that a comparison of these two terms, i.e., \textit{viññāna} and \textit{ātman} seems wrongheaded. Cf. Hoffman (1987), p.53.

\textsuperscript{118} Cf. SN III, pp. 47-48; Mathieu Boisvert (1997), p.20: "The terms \textit{pañcakkhandha} and \textit{pañcupādānakkhandha} are used almost interchangeably. The only, but crucial, difference between these two forms of aggregates is that the group of the \textit{pañcupādānakkhandha} is potentially subject to biases (\textit{āsava}) and clinging (\textit{upādāna}), while the other is not."

\textsuperscript{119} SN III, p. 155.

\textsuperscript{120} Cf. SN III, p. 155f.

\textsuperscript{121} Cf. SN III, p. 99f.
We can see a different type of teaching which denies the five aggregates as the ātman. In the SN, it is said:

The uninstructed worldling, who is not a seer of the noble ones, who is not a seer of superior person and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dharma regards 'form as ātman (rūpam attano)' or 'ātman possessing form (rūpavantam attānam)' or 'form as in ātman (attāni rūpam)' or 'ātman as in form (rūpasīmim attānam). (The same is applied to all the remaining aggregates.)

This personality view assumes twenty forms, arrived at by conceiving the ātman in four different ways related to each aggregate. From the Buddha's point of view, these are all wrong. This view called as satkāyadrstī is translated as 'personality belief' or 'identity view', since the five aggregates constitute the 'person' or 'individual'.

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122 SN III, p. 190.
123 SN III, p. 46; p. 97f.; MN I, 44, pp. 300-301.
124 We can see different types of negative explanation related to the five aggregates in the commentary. Cf. Cūlaniddesa 167 (The commentary on Sn 1119): “form (P. rūpa) is not being (satta), not soul (jīva), not man (nara), not young man (mānava), not woman (āthi), not male (purisa), not ātman (atti), not belonging to ātman (attāya), not belonging to I (aham), not belonging to mine (mama), not belonging to anyone else (kok), not belonging to anyone’s (kaśaci).”
125 In fact, only one of the five aggregates, i.e. rūpa is related to kāya (body). According to Hajime Nakamura, in primitive Buddhism, five aggregates were equated with the body (kāya) in some cases. Cf. SN III, p. 143. He said that the Buddha had adopted the term nāmarūpa or kāya from the current philosophy, and used them for his preaching that these are not ātman nor belonging to ātman, along with the Buddhist term ‘five aggregates’ which was newly developed. According to him, kāya means ‘individuality’, ‘individual person’ or ‘personality’; unlike modern concept, it is not limited to the body. Thus, it is better to understand it as ‘self’ in modern terms. Cf. Nakamura (1981), pp.17-25. In primitive Buddhism, satkāyadrstī was a very important concept. According to Sn 231, it is said that at the time the Buddha attained the enlightenment, three things became abandoned by him: the false view of individuality (P. sakkāyaditthi), doubt (P. vicikicchita) and clinging to mere rules and ritual (P. silabbata). But, afterwards, it became merely one of the false views along with other five or ten.
Then, what exactly is ātman in the teaching of the Buddha? For that, we need to think over the philosophical milieu of those days. We can see, especially from the Upaniṣadic texts, that the speculation on the ātman was prevalent—probably, too much—at the time of the Buddha. Then, it could easily be conjectured that this atmosphere has caused the reaction of Buddhism, more precisely the doctrine of anātman, along with other Śrāmanic speculations. As we know, the Buddha clearly mentions that the five aggregates are not the ātman.\footnote{There is another type of teaching of anātman. “The body, Bhikkhus, is not ātman. If the body, Bhikkhus, were ātman, the body would not be subject to disease, and we should be able to say: ‘Be my body so, be not my body so.’ (rūpam bhikkhave anattā, rūpan ca h’idam bhikkhave attā abhavissa, na yidam rūpam ābādāhāya samvatteyya, labbhetha ca rūpa evam me rūpam hotu, evam me rūpam mā ahosti). “That means, if the five aggregates were the ātman or pertained to the ātman, they could be controlled and governed. But such is not the case. Cf. SN III. p.67., Mahavagga, Vinaya pp.13-14. We can assume that the Buddha has certain preconception of ātman which has the power of complete mastery from this example.} The basic formula he offers, as seen above, is: ‘this is not mine’ (P. n’etam mama), ‘this I am not’ (n’eso aham asmi), ‘this is not my ātman’ (na m’eso attā). This reminds us of the famous sayings in the Upaniṣad: ayam atmā brahma,\footnote{BU. 2. 5. 19.} aham brahma asmi\footnote{BU. 1. 4. 10.} and tat tvam asi.\footnote{CU. 6. 8. 7.} The aham of aham brahma asmi implies the ātman which is identified with Brahman. This aham can be related with that of n’eso aham asmi in the Nikāya. Expressions such as eso aham asmi etc. which appear in the same context are meant for something that is permanent, of weal, and stable by nature. Therefore, we can rightly say that both the occurrence of aham denote the ‘I’ that represents the ātman, which is identified with Brahman, and which must have been current at the time of the Buddha. As we have already seen in the previous chapter, it has been assured that at least some of the early Upaniṣads
are earlier than the Buddha. It is difficult to assume that the Buddha, who would have surely received all the good education at that time, did not know this \textit{ātman}.

Therefore, it seems that what the Buddha has rejected is no other than the \textit{ātman} of early Upaniṣads. The Buddha has called the attention of the people that the theory of \textit{ātman} prevalent at that time is of no use for the enlightenment. He kept on emphasizing that the debate on metaphysical matter is fruitless, and has nothing to do with our existential reality. He urged us to turn our eyes to the existential ‘I’.

Some scholars persist that the Buddha himself did not deny the \textit{ātman} in clear terms. Pande says: "There is bondage only so long as one sees the 'self' in what is not the self."\textsuperscript{131} Nakamura emphasizes that Buddhism—at least primitive Buddhism—rejects the \textit{ātman} nature of what is not the \textit{ātman}. Therefore, it is not wrong if one sees the \textit{ātman} in the right way.\textsuperscript{132} We come

\textsuperscript{130} Norman also points out this matter in his article \textit{A note on Attā in the Alogaddipamamasutta}. “It seems undeniable that the Buddha’s audience were aware of the Upanisadic view, and realized that it could be refuted simply by pointing out that the world around us, which consists of material form, etc., is obviously non-eternal and dukkha, and not eternal and sukha, as would be essential if the doctrine that the world and the \textit{ātā} are the same were correct.” And further, he analyzes the \textit{sutta} by his own view. “The doctrine that the world and the \textit{ātā} are the same (so loko so \textit{ātā}) also affirms the oneness of the individual \textit{ātā} and the world-\textit{ātā}. The phrase \textit{eso \textit{ham asmi}} ‘I am that’ is the \textit{tat tvam asi} ‘Thou art that’ of the Upanisad looked at from the point of view of the first person instead of the second person. Since \textit{loko-\textit{ātā}}, then the Buddha’s argument is: “If there is world-\textit{ātā}, then there is something belonging to world-\textit{ātā} in me, i.e. if there is a world-\textit{ātā}, then I (and all other things) would have \textit{ātā} which is part of the world-\textit{ātā}, and I would have all the “things” that go to make up world-\textit{ātā}. Material form (\textit{rūpa}), etc., would be “mine”. If, however, each individual \textit{ātā} were part of the world-\textit{ātā}, then each painful sensation felt by one part of the world-\textit{ātā} would be felt by every other part of the world-\textit{ātā}, i.e. when wood is burned the \textit{ātā} in us would feel the pain suffered by the \textit{ātā} in it. We do not feel any such pain because there is no world-\textit{ātā}.” Cf. A note on Attā in the Alogaddipama-sutta.


\textsuperscript{132} Nakamura (1981), p.28. His claim can be supported by the following verse: “See the world together with the \textit{devas}, which (wrongly) thinks that there is \textit{ātman} in \textit{anātman} (and which is) entrenched in name and form.” Sn 756. \textit{anattani atamānaj passa} ... However, we have to admit that the same statement can be interpreted in either way, that is, in favor of the traditional view or in favor of Nakamura’s opinion.
across such a radical claim from well known scholars. N. N. Bhattacharyya, for instance, while mentioning the view of Mrs. Rhys Davids, seems to support it:

She advocated the view that the Buddha did not preach the 'no-soul' theory at all, but that it was a later monkish innovation under the impact of the Sāṅkhya, the growth of a narrow world-view and hostility towards the Brāhmaṇas.  

It is true that the Buddha did not exactly deny the 'existence' of the ātman. What he denied is the identity of the five aggregates with the ātman. The question arises, however, whether, because of this fact, it is right to say that the Buddha approves the existence of the ātman. There are many cases where the Buddha clearly opposes the concept of the creator-god. If the Buddha was really against the ātman he should have shown the same attitude. He should have shown his clear opposition to the concept of ātman. One could claim on this basis that the Buddha recognizes the ātman indirectly. However, we should not bypass the counterclaim. If the Buddha was not really against the ātman, he should have approved the existence of the ātman clearly. What

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134 Cf. Pañcaśīyatassutta, MN II, p.228ff.; Tīrthāyatanasollutta, AN I, p. 173ff.; Brahmajīlasutta, DN I. The Buddha classified heresies in three or five-fold. One of them is the so-called issara-nimmāna-hetu-vāda, which means 'whatever happiness, unhappiness or neutral feeling one experiences, all that is due to the creation of a creator-god (S. ēvāra; P. issara)'. Takakusu also asserts that Buddhism is atheistic, and that there is no doubt about it. Cf. Takakusu (1956), p.45. When we examine the fundamental doctrines of the Buddha, such as Dependent Origination, the Four Noble Truths or the Three Characteristics, there is no room for the concept of God. Nevertheless, he did not have to reject the then popular concept of Brahmā totally. When the Buddha was questioned about the existence of gods (devas), he answered that they exist on good ground. When further questioned as to why he used the qualification 'on good ground', he says that it is because it is commonly taken for granted that gods exist. Cf. Sattāsollutta, MN II, pp. 212-3.
we see is that he neither denies nor recognizes the existence of the ātman. This is understood by the well-known attitude of the Buddha, i.e. the Middle Path which avoids two extremes—here, one extreme is absolute affirmation which could lead a person to eternalism (P. sassatavāda) and the other extreme, total negation which could lead a person to annihilationism (P. uchchedavāda). These two views along with other views form altogether sixty-two views which are well explained in Brahmajālasutta\textsuperscript{135}. This attitude of the Buddha is seen also in the Poṭṭhapādasutta, where the Buddha cares much about Poṭṭhapāda, the wandering mendicant, falling into one of the two dogmatisms, and thus does not give direct answers to his questions.\textsuperscript{136}

Considering the above, the claim that the Buddha has approved the existence of the ātman, or that he has recognized the ātman indirectly, seems to be inadequate. The Buddha was not willing to give any kind of answer or instruction that could lead to further attachment. The teaching of anātman in the Nikāya clearly shows that it is the primeval attachment based on the concept of 'self' – be it related to possessiveness, or identity, or the inner essence – that should be finally removed.

The assertion that it is not wrong when one sees the ātman in the right way is not appropriate too. We should not overlook the purpose of the teaching of anātman. The teaching of anātman is not meant for perceiving the ātman in correct way. The latter may occupy a part in the process of realizing the anātman, but it is not the goal of the former. The goal of the teaching of anātman is to make one perceive that there is nothing in this phenomenal

\textsuperscript{135} Cf. Brahmajālasutta, DN I.
\textsuperscript{136} Cf. Poṭṭhapādasutta, DN I.
world which can be called as the ātman, and then to lead him to the state of being freed from attachment to the world.

Throughout the history of Buddhism, the most widely believed concept of anātman is ‘non-self’, i.e. ‘non-existence of ātman’. Based on the ‘not-self’ concept of anātman, and assisted by the fact that there is no clear statement of denying the existence of ātman in the Nikāya, one may see this as ‘development’ or ‘change’ of the original concept of anātman – ‘not-self’. However, the denial of the existence of ātman should not be confused with the non-existence of ātman. While the former is one of the matters of avyākta (P. avyākata; unexplained, undetermined), which the Buddha avoided to give the answer since it will lead a person to annihilationism, the latter can be understood under the same context of the ‘not-self’ concept of anātman. The ‘non-existence of ātman’, or the ‘non-self’, seems merely another way of understanding the same meaning of anātman. In support of this, we come across the use of the word sūnya (P. suñña) to express the ‘absence of ātman’. In the Sutta Pitaka, the Buddha explains this term when Ānanda asks about it:

“The world is void!” “The world is void!” is said, lord. Pray, lord, in what respect is the world void? ‘Because the world is void of the self, Ānanda, or of what belongs to the self, therefore is it said “The world is void.” And what,

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138 See fn. 126 above.
139 The ten unexplained (avyākta) are: 1) Whether the world is eternal, 2) or not; 3) Whether the world is infinite, 4) or not; 5) Whether the self (jīva) is identical to the body, 6) or different from it; 7) Whether the Tathāgata still exists after death, 8) or he disappears with it, 9) or he both exists and disappears after death, 10) or he neither exists nor disappears after death. Cf. DN I, pp. 187-8; MN I, pp. 157, 426, 484; SN III, pp. 213ff., 258; IV, pp. 375ff.; V, p.418; AN IV, pp. 66ff.
140 SN III, p. 21; SN IV, p.54.; MN II, p. 263.
Ānanda, is void of the self or what belongs to the self? Eye... visual objects... eye-consciousness and the rest (ear... sound objects... ear-consciousness, etc.) are void of the self. That is why, Ānanda, it is said “The world is void.”

According to this sutta (P.), the six sense organs, the corresponding objects and consciousnesses – i.e. the eighteen elements (dhātu) – are void of the atman and of what belongs to the atman; and therefore, the world is also void. As will be seen below, the eighteen elements, like the five aggregates, are one of the different classifications of an individual as well as the phenomenal world in Buddhism. In the case of the five aggregates, it is the identity of these with atman that has been rejected; and in the case of the eighteen elements, it is the absence of atman that has been explained. Thus, from this example, we can say that the ‘non-existence of the atman’ was already there in the teaching of anātman, in the Nikāya. Or, in other words, it can be said that the concept of anātman in the Nikāya comprises the ‘non-existence of atman’. Although the Buddha was declined to show his clear position of denying the existence of atman, he was ready to utilize the ‘non-existence of atman’ as the meaning of anātman, provided that the listener does not fall into the trap of the two extremes of dogmatism.

141 SN IV, p. 54.

142 This can be easily supported by the Three Characteristics. When we analyze the statement sabbe dhamme anattā, it is difficult to understand the word anattā as a tatpurusa compound which can have both the meaning ‘not-self’ and ‘non-self’ – thus, which can be claimed as to convey only the ‘not-self’ sense – but as a bahuvrihi compound which is used as an adjective of the word dhamma and which is more appropriate as having the ‘non-self’ meaning. In contrast to my opinion, Steven Collins applied the term ‘not-self’ for anattā of “sabbe dhammā anattā”. “When the term is applied to a plural subject, particularly in the axiom ‘All things are not-self’(sabbe dhammā anattā), the form is ambiguous, and could be interpreted as an adjective, ‘without self’. Since the Buddhist tradition has not placed any emphasis on the grammatical interpretation of anatta, I will translate it simply and literally as ‘not-self’.” Collins (1982), p.95.
General meaning of the word śūnyya is ‘empty’, ‘uninhabited’, ‘void’ and so on. It also denotes the absence of substance.\footnote{PED, p.717. In many cases, the word suñña (P.) in a compound qualifies the other component for the meaning of a place or an environment of solitude fit for practicing meditation. For example, suññāgāra (empty place) is seen frequently along with rukkhāmīla (root of tree) and arañña (forest) as a place for meditation. Cf. SN V, p. 383.} There are many texts dealing with anātman (P. anatta) in the Nikāya, but those explained with the term śūnyya are few. This shows that the word śūnyya was not as effective as the word anātman in early Buddhism.\footnote{In fact, in Chinese Āgama, suññatā (kong, 空) is often seen along with other Three Characteristics. Cf. Choong (1999), p.29. As Lamotte points out, it reflects that the Āgama covers later period than the Nikāya. According to him, Mahāyāna concept has already been infiltrated into the Āgama tradition. Cf. Lamotte (1988), pp.154-156.} Besides, the term ‘śūnyatā’ (voidness), which has emerged as a major concept in Mādhyamika system, and which is one of the fundamental principles of Mahāyāna Buddhism, also appears in the Nikāya. There, however, it is not as theoretically developed as is seen in Mādhyamika system.\footnote{Karunadasa asserts that actual meaning of suññatā in Nikāyas is ‘devoid of’ rather than ‘void’. “suññatā, as explained in the Nikāyas, does not really mean void (although we have translated it so) but devoid – devoid of atta (self, substance) or of anything pertaining to atta (atta attanīyena). Ritta, tuccha, asāra carry more or less the same meaning. To deny a persistent or ever-enduring substance, mental or material, does not mean that the world of experience is unreal. It only amounts to a different interpretation of the world.” Karunadasa (1989), p.170.} In many cases, it is explained in the context of meditation.\footnote{In some sutta-s the term suññatā is used as the state of concentrative meditation, or the abode of emptiness, an achievement of the meditation. Cf Cūlasuññata-sutta (MN 121) MN III pp.104-109, Mahāsuññata-sutta (MN 122). MN III pp.109-118, Suññakathā of Patissambhidāmagga.\footnote{Patisambhidāmagga (Henceforth: Paṭis) is belonging to the Khudhakancikāya. However, it “itself is probably not all of the same date. It may have grown mostly by accretion of Treatises, ‘chapters’ and sections, but surely grew also organically by some expansion of its mālākas or ‘series’ and, for example, by expanding its sets of ‘emptinesses’ and ‘understandings’”. Cf. The Path of Discrimination (Paṭis), trans. Bhikkhu Nāgamoli, with an introduction by Warder (2000), pp.177-184.)} It is Nagārjuna who has innovated and established the concept of śūnyatā to be fit for the philosophical argumentation.

In Paṭisambhidāmagga, which is said to be belonging in the later stage of Nikāya,\footnote{Patisambhidāmagga (Henceforth: Paṭis) is belonging to the Khudhakancikāya. However, it “itself is probably not all of the same date. It may have grown mostly by accretion of Treatises, ‘chapters’ and sections, but surely grew also organically by some expansion of its mālākas or ‘series’ and, for example, by expanding its sets of ‘emptinesses’ and ‘understandings’”. Cf. The Path of Discrimination (Paṭis), trans. Bhikkhu Nāgamoli, with an introduction by Warder (2000), pp.177-184.) anātman is identified with śūnyatā:
Contemplation of *anātman*, and contemplation of voidness, these *dharmas* are one in meaning and only the letter is different.\(^{148}\)

The concentration of voidness (P. *suññatā*-samādhi) is one of the methods of meditation. In this method, an object of contemplation is viewed as void of self, and of what belongs to the self. This voidness seems to have become more obvious to the members of the Buddhist order when they were going through the practice of meditation. After having achieved what they have been taught, they might have found out that the word *suññatā* is more effective and convincing for those who are already indulged in the Buddhist way of practicing meditation.

It seems that, in the course of time, members of the Buddhist order have tried to explain their experiences in a more systematic way. The Saṅgha, as an established religious group, had to compete with other religious rivals by equipping itself with more systematic and detailed analysis based on the meditative experiences. Thus, whatever the intention of the founder was, some kind of modification in the theory could have taken place as far as it is not deviating from the main track. The result of this process is no other than the texts of Abhidharma Buddhism.

In the *Kṣudrakāgama*, which has been mentioned in *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya*, the Buddha emphasizes that there is no *ātman* belonging to oneself,
and that everything internal and external is void. From this, we can infer that the Buddha does not admit any kind of ātmān. Confronting this quotation, Pudgalavādin, the counterpart, claims that this sūtra itself does not exist in the Āgama. Whether the sūtra really existed or not, the quotation itself seems to reflect the changed atmosphere related to the anātman in the development of Buddhism: The ‘non-self’ came to represent the concept of anātman instead of the ‘not-self’ which is more prevalent in the Nikāya.

It is not simple to judge what anātman suggests by means of theory. Edward Conze also points out that among all the tenets of Buddhism none has occasioned more controversy and misunderstanding than the anātman theory. He criticizes that the understanding of anātman as extinction of the false, empirical self—and when this is realized it leads to ‘true Self’—is mere misinterpretation. According to him, this misinterpretation is not only confined to Buddhist studies in Europe but also in ancient India. As the evidence he said that two centuries after the parinirvāṇa of the Buddha the

149 AKBh XI: ‘In Kṣūdrona also, it has been said to the poor brāhmaṇa. “Listen carefully ... There is no self belonging to oneself. It is wrongly conceived. There’s no being, no self, in this world, all these elements are caused. Only twelve parts constitute the world, viz. Aggregates, Bases, and Constituents. After considering all these, pudgala is not obtained. See, everything internal is empty (sābhaya). See, everything external is empty. Even the one who practices the sādhya is not at all to be found. Likewise, there are five faults, in the acceptance of ātmāna. 1. One has wrong view that there is ātmāna, and wrong view that there are living beings. 2. One becomes indistinguishable from the followers of other schools. 3. One becomes the follower of a wrong path. 4. One’s mind does not enter into voidness it becomes neither delighted, nor stable, nor free. 5. One’s noble qualifications are not purified.” However, after this arguing, Pudgalavādin claims that this text is not authentic for not being found in Nikāya scripture.’

150 H. Nakamura also confirms and presumes that the sūtra might have been developed in later period. Cf. Nakamura (1981), p.83, fn. 45.

151 Although the Sarvāstivādins excluded the minor texts from their Tripitaka, they nevertheless possessed a certain number of them and did not hesitate to resort them as if they were canonical or paracanonical authorities. In fact, they frequently cite them, sometimes by the title of Kṣudraka (cf. Kṣudrakāyā, ed.Woighara, p.33, 1.32), sometimes even by that of Kṣudrakāgama (Kośa, IX, p.249; Tib. Lün phran chégs, Chin. Shao fen a han in T 1559, p. 306a 7; Tsa a chi mo in T 1558, p. 154b 22). Lamotte (1988), p.152.

Pudgalavādins have emerged with this problem.\textsuperscript{153} Whatever the real meaning of \textit{anātman} is, \textit{anātman} should not be related to ‘true Self’. Because, ‘true Self’ is one of the basic elements that make us get attached to ourselves. Neither the ‘not-self’ nor the ‘non-self’ gives any room for the conceptually constructed ‘true Self’. In fact, understanding of the teaching of \textit{anātman} could hardly be achieved without knowing other main doctrines of Buddhism—such as, the Middle Path, the Eightfold Path, the Four Noble Truths and Dependent Origination. This is conjectured from one of the episodes in the \textit{Mahāvagga}, in which the Buddha preaches the \textit{anātman} to the five monks who have become his first disciples. It is only after when they have attained certain stage of enlightenment concerning all the doctrines mentioned above, that they come to understand and realize the \textit{anātman}, and finally achieve the arahatship.

\textbf{2.1 In relation to the doctrine of karma}

The doctrine of karma was believed widely and studied accordingly by the religious teachers at the time of the Buddha. In the pre-Buddhist literature the word karma was used mainly in the sense of either ‘religious rituals’ or ‘duties of man’. Later, it came to mean ‘action’ in general, and thus, to mean ‘moral act’, as well as ‘its consequence’. The belief in rebirth is the corollary of the doctrine of karma, since there should be not just one life, but a series of lives that bear the consequences of previous acts. Thus, the term ‘karma’ has been often used as a synonym of \textit{samsāra}, or ‘the cycle of rebirth’.

\textsuperscript{153} This remark which relates the view of the Pudgalavādin with ‘true Self’ is inappropriate. This matter will be dealt with in the next chapter.
In Buddhism, karma means any kind of intentional act, whether it is mental, verbal or physical. Volition is the most crucial factor in determining the karma. Therefore, in early Buddhist texts the word karma was treated as equivalent to the word cetanā, or volition. This action can be morally good (P. kuśala), evil (P. akuśala), or neutral (P. avyākata). It can be active in physical deed, speech or mind, and is liable to give rise to the consequence which is determined by the goodness or badness of the action. In fact, the Buddha has said that among the three deeds the deed of mind is more blamable for the effect of an evil deed.

It seems that the doctrine of karma is incompatible with the theory of anātman. Without assuming the ātman responsible for the identity and continuity, it would be difficult to assert justifiably the theory that deals with moral responsibility and consequences of deeds. According to Buddhism, everything that exists is due to the causation; it disappears when cause and condition cease. Unless the cause and condition are ceased the karma of an individual is to go on. Buddhism basically accepts the doctrine of karma. However, the doctrine of anātman, be it not-self or non-self, denies the ātman. Could these two doctrines stand together without any contradiction?

The Nikāya shows that this was a baffling matter to some of the monks even at the time of the Buddha. In Saṁyuttanikāya, one monk, while hearing the instruction of the Buddha, raises a question in his mind: ‘So, then you say

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154 Cf. AN III p. 414; cetanāham bhikkhave kammaṁ vadāmi. cetayitva kammaṁ karoti, kāyene vācaya manasā.
155 MN I, p. 373. imesatā kho atam tinnatā kammānām evaṁ patiṭhātānām evam... “Of these three deeds thus divided, thus particularized, I lay down that deed of mind is the more blamable in the effecting of an evil deed. ...”
that body is not the self; feeling is not the self; likewise apperception, the mental formations and consciousness. Then what self can those deeds affect that are done by not-self?\textsuperscript{156} This question seems quite natural to be raised by an ordinary man. However, the Buddha, reading it by mind, rebukes such a person to be senseless, sunk in ignorance and led astray by craving. The Buddha announces that the question has already been answered by him thus and thus in those teachings. And then, follows the typical teaching of the Three Characteristics. The instruction given, which is seen in many suttas, does not seem to be a direct answer to the question.

We can also check the Mahāpuṇṇamasutta in Majjhimanikāya, which is almost the same as the above sutta. Here, the Buddha announces: ‘You, monks, have been trained by me (to look for) conditions (P. patīcca) now here, now there, in these things and in those.'\textsuperscript{157} This means that it is not natural for the monks who have been instructed by the Buddha to raise such a question. They should endeavor to see anātman in the law of condition which explains the causation of the phenomenal world where karma works.

The Buddhist doctrine of karma or rebirth does not necessarily have to imply the transmigration of the soul. Karma is not said to be stored somewhere in the mind or in any other part of the body. According to Milindapañha, it rests depending on name and form (nāmarūpa), and is carried on from one birth to another.\textsuperscript{158} This can be explained in the following manner: The new

\textsuperscript{156} SN III, p. 104.
\textsuperscript{157} MN III, p. 19.
\textsuperscript{158} Milindapañha (Henceforth: MnP), II, 2, 6. p.58. ‘The king said, ‘What is reborn?’ ‘nāmarūpa is reborn’ ‘What, is it same nāmarūpa that is reborn?’ ‘No, but, by means of this nāmarūpa one does a good or bad deed and, because of this deed, another nāmarūpa is reborn.’ According to the following verse, when king asked what is nāmarūpa, Nagasena replied,” in the expression of
being is neither absolutely the same—since it has changed—nor totally
different—since it is in the same stream of kamma energy. The point is that
there is no such a thing like ‘soul’ or ‘self’ which is the agent of
transmigration, but there is a person understood by the terms such as
nāmarūpa, five aggregates etc. who is subject to former karma.

It seems, however, that the compatibility of the doctrine of karma with that
of anātman shown in early Buddhism was not enough. After the main schism
of the samgha, which took place not long after the parinirvāṇa of the Buddha,
when various different sects were developed, one of the main issues was
related to this matter. For example, consciousness (vijñāna) has become to be
believed as psychological factor, which is responsible for life-continuum, i.e.
bhavarūpa by the Theravādin later, just like pudgala of Pudgalavādin, and
santāna (P.) of Sautrāntika and Sarvāstivādin.\textsuperscript{160}

\footnotesize
\textit{nāmarūpa}, whatever is gross therein, that is rūpa: whatever is subtle mental states (sukhumā
cittacetasikā dhammā), that is nāma’ And it is said , “why is it, Nagasena, that nāma is not
reborn separately, or rūpa separately?” ‘ These things, great king, are dependent the one upon;
they simply arise together,’ ‘Give me a simile.’ ‘ As a hen, great king, would not get a yoke or an
egg-shell separately, but both would arise in one, they two being intimately dependent one on the
other ; just so, if there were no nāma there would be no rūpa. What is meant by nāma in that
expression being intimately dependent on what is meant by rūpa, they arise together....’ MnP II.
2, 8, p.62.

\textsuperscript{159} Narada (1973), p.272. Concerning this, we should see The unclothed (ascetic), SN II, p. 19.
Here, the view that one and the same person both acts and experiences the results is seen by the
Buddha as amounting to the Eternalist theory, an extreme which should be avoided. However, we
should pay attention that four (same, different, both, or neither) possible alternatives are rejected
in this sutta. As Steven Collins also pointed out, it is important to notice here that fourth
alternative (neither the same nor different) which Narada Bhikkhu described with some modifier,

\textsuperscript{160} We can find some premonition of these concepts in the Nikāya. Sampasādaniyasuttanta (DN
III. p. 105) mentions ‘unbroken flux of consciousness (P. vijhānasotam),’ and in Bhārahārasutta
(SN III, p. 25), it is said that pudgala is the agent of rebirth. We can find the word santāna (P.) in
the Nikāya—probably, the only occurrence in the Nikāya—but, it can not be taken as life-
continuum. In the context, it is said that it should be discarded like other examples, since no
essence is seen here. SN III, p. 143. In DN (II, p. 62), the Buddha asks Ānanda: “Were vijhāna not
to descend into the mother’s womb, would nāma-rūpa become constituted therein?” Ānanda
answers: “It would not, lord.” Here, some scholars claim that this statement is the evidence of the
Buddha’s admitting of vijhāna as an intermediate agent. But, as we can see, this is a kind of
counter question using a simile. It can not be accepted as a main doctrine of the Buddha. Even, in
2.2 In relation to the Four Noble Truths

The motive of the Buddha's renunciation was the observing of the reality of life as consisting of duḥkha which penetrates our worldly life. In fact, the existential concern for the duḥkha drove him to seek the solution desperately. Finally, he found the cause of the duḥkha and the way to get out of it. His first preaching is no other than the practical solution to the problem of duḥkha in a specific way.

We should notice that the beginning of the first discourse of the Buddha was the Eightfold Path and the Four Noble Truths. According to the Mahāvagga, the five bhikṣus who became the first disciples of the Buddha obtained the pure and spotless Eye of the Truth (dharmaṇakṣus) in turn only after the teaching of the Four Noble Truths. Then, they received the pabbajjā (P.) and upasampadā (P.) ordinations from the Buddha. After that, when the Buddha preached the doctrine of anātman in accordance with the Three Characteristics, those five bhikṣus finally became free from attachment to the world and became arhats (P. arahat).\(^{161}\)

From this episode, we can see how practical the Buddha's approach to the problem was. He went straight away to the point to solve the problem of the duḥkha.

The Four Noble Truths, the fundamental Buddhist doctrine, are as the following:

\(^{161}\) Mahāvagga, Vinaya I, 6.1-47 Vin I pp.7-14; Vinaya texts, part II pp.89-102.
1. *Dukkha* (P.): everything is suffering or symptom of suffering,

2. *Dukkhasamudaya*: the arising of *dukkha*,

3. *Dukkhanirodha*: the cessation of *dukkha*,

4. *Dukkhanirodhagāminipatipāda*: the path leading to the cessation of *Duḥkha*, which is the Eightfold Path.\(^{162}\)

Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort and Right Concentration constitute the Eightfold Path. The first two are classified as wisdom, the second three as morality, and last three as concentration. The practical implication of this Eightfold Path is the Middle Path which avoids the extreme of asceticism on the one hand and the extreme of hedonism on the other hand.

As we have seen above, the doctrine of *anātman* was taught to those who were already in certain level of intellect, that is to say, those who have fully understood the Four Noble Truths, who have acquired the Eye of the Truth, and thus, who had no doubt concerning the transient nature (*anītya*) of the phenomenal world. However, it does not mean that the teaching of *anātman* was delivered only to those monks who are qualified. We cannot expect that the group of gathered monks consisted of only those of high mentality whenever the teaching of *anātman* was held by the Buddha. Likewise, we should not jump into conclusion that the doctrine of *anātman* was the sole means for the attaining of the Arhatship. We may say that the doctrine of *anātman* was one of the efficient means that leads one to the highest level in

\(^{162}\) MN(9) I, pp.48-49. MN(141) III, p249-252.
Buddhism—especially for those who are gravely engrossed in the concept of self.

2.3 In relation to Dependent Origination

The Buddha's enlightenment has been expressed in the form of Dependent Origination (pratītyasamutpāda; P. paticcasamuppāda). The Buddha expresses the principle of Dependent Origination in the basic formula as follows:

When this exists, that exists; from the arising of this, that arises. When this does not exist, that does not exist; from the cessation of this, that ceases. (P. Imasmin sati idam hoti, imassuppada idam uppajjati. Imasmin asati idam na hoti, imassa nirodha idam nirujjhati.)\(^{163}\)

This abstract statement is applied to the conditioning relation between successive pairs in the list of twelve factors. The chief cause is Ignorance (avidyā), and others are Volitional Activities (samskāra), Discriminative Consciousness (vijñāna), Name and Form (nāmarūpa), the Six Bases of Senses (saṣāyatana), Contact (sparśa), Feeling (vedanā), Craving (ṭṛṣṇā; P. taṭhā), Clinging (upādāna), Becoming (bhava), Birth (jāti) and Old Age and Death (jāramarana). It has been developed in a systematic manner in later Buddhist philosophy.

The content of Dependent Origination is to avoid two extreme views, that is, eternalism (P. sassatavāda) and annihilationism (ucchedavāda).\(^{164}\) Before the

\(^{163}\) SN II, p.28; p.70 etc. MN.III, p.63. etc.

\(^{164}\) Cf. SN II, p.17; p.20; p.23; etc.
Buddha, philosophical schools would base their arguments generally on two possibilities, that is, either something exists or not. The Buddha postulated the third possibility which is known as the Middle Path. The doctrine of Dependent Origination is the 'middle path' in respect of that the Buddha adopts the law of causality and conditionality without accepting any agent governing the causal process. The doctrine of Dependent Origination denies the existence of any substantial entity beyond the cause and condition. Walpula Rahula also points out that the doctrine of anātman is the natural result of, or the corollary to, the analysis of the five aggregates and the teaching of pratītyasamutpāda.\(^{165}\)

In the phenomenal world whosoever is born cannot avoid old age and death. Whatever that is subject to rise is subject to cessation. Duḥkha is subject to cessation, since it arises. If we find the cause of it, it can be ceased. The doctrine of Dependent Origination gives a systematic explanation for the rising and ceasing of the phenomenal world. So, the possibility of attaining liberation from the duḥkha can be explained here too. We can find a great number of statements related to the duḥkha and the origin of the duḥkha in the Nikāya.\(^{166}\) In fact, the doctrine of Dependent Origination is no other than a specified analysis of the duḥkha. It is said that the fundamental cause of the duḥkha is the ignorance of the Four Noble Truths. Without doubt, the doctrine of Dependent Origination is closely related to the Four Noble Truths.

Among the Twelve Links of the Dependent Origination, the
interdependence between vijnāna and nāmarūpa is the basic nexus from which

166 Cf. SN II, p.70; SN III, p.160; etc. MN I, pp.48-49. MN III, p249 ff.
all subject-object relationships in ordinary experiences come out; and its
dynamic structure reveals also the inner working of our mind, through which
our conversion from ignorance to enlightenment becomes possible.\textsuperscript{167} It can be
said that the fundamental aim of Buddhist training is transforming of the
personality, not just upgrading it.

As we can see, according to Buddhist theory of causation the action of a
person is not fixed but conditioned. By the effort with the right way, namely
the Eightfold Path, a person can change his own condition. The Buddha did
not express directly that there is no ātman.\textsuperscript{168} As mentioned before, he has
penetrated into the problem that the learned people of that time were too much
obsessed with the ātman. He tried to cure them from the disease of
metaphysical inquiry. There is no use of the exploration of the theory of ātman.
The Buddha does not have any intention to establish another theory of
metaphysics. All the teachings of the Buddha have firm base on the
effectiveness and morality.

3. Analysis of person in early Buddhism

\textsuperscript{167} Nakamura (1996), p.69.
\textsuperscript{168} According to Hoffman, the Buddha clearly announced that ‘ātman does not exist; as giving the
evidence; \textit{So evam samanupassanto asati na paritassati} (he regarding thus that which does not
exist, will not be anxious.) He interprets that the term ‘asati’ means ‘that which does not exist’,
and asserts that ātman does not exist. However, when we read the context carefully it does not
seem so. In fact, here ‘regarding thus’ indicates that all the five aggregates are ‘This is not mine,
this I am not, this is not my self.’ So, this passage means since he regards them (five aggregates)
thus, he is not agitated about what is non-existent which could be happened when people are
Early Buddhism classifies phenomena (dharma) into different categories. They are the five aggregates, the twelve bases of consciousness (āyatana) and the eighteen elements (dhātu). The person, since individuals are included in the phenomena, can be analyzed and explained accordingly depending on these classifications.

3.1 The Five Aggregates (skandha)

The five aggregates (skandha) are as the following:

1. Matter or form (rūpa): the four great elements (mahābhūta), viz. earth, water, fire and wind, and matter derived from the four great elements (upādāyarūpa).

2. Feeling (vedanā): feelings resulting from contact with the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.

3. Apperception (samjñā): apperceptions of colours, sounds, odours, tastes, tangibles and mental images.

4. Mental formation or Volition (samskāra): volitions concerning colours, sounds, odours, tastes, tangibles and mental objects.

5. Consciousness (vijñāna): (discriminative) consciousness of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.\[169\]

It is said that these are all inseparable, and the development of consciousness cannot be explained without other four aggregates. We can infer this factor from the etymological background. The term skandha (P. khandha)

\[169\] Cf. SN III, p.58ff..
was not invented by the Buddha. It was already used in pre-Buddhist literature. According to the Nirukta, which is one of the oldest Indian treatises on semantics and etymology, the general meaning of skandha in the Veda is 'branch of a tree', since they are attached to the tree. The other meaning is 'shoulder' since the shoulder is attached to the body.\textsuperscript{170} And it is seen to be derived from the root 'skand', to leap. We can find this word in a pre-Buddhist Upaniṣad as well as in a post-Buddhist Upaniṣad.\textsuperscript{171} In Pāli texts, it is used not only to refer to the five aggregates. When it is used for a person, it means 'shoulder' or 'back', and for tree, 'trunk'. Another usage widely used in Pāli is 'mass', 'all that is composed under' or 'a collection of'. When it is used with dukkha, it means 'mass of duhkha (P. dukkhakkhandha)', or 'all that is comprised under dukkha'. Sometimes it is used to refer 'section' or 'division'. For example, in the case of the Dīghanikāya, there are four khandha-s, i.e. sila, samādhi, paññā, vimutti (P.).\textsuperscript{172}

We have seen that the original meaning of the Sanskrit word skandha is 'branch of a tree' and 'shoulder'. In fact, these do not stand for the meaning of 'main body'. It seems that a kind of faculty which can 'be joined' or 'be united' is implied. If we adopt this meaning to the conception of the five aggregates (pāñcasāndha), it can be said that they are all inter-related forming a personality, just as the main branches of a tree are joined to 'the trunk of a tree'.

\textsuperscript{170} The Nighantu and the Nirukta, ed. and trans. by Lakshman Sarup, 6. 17, p. 102.
\textsuperscript{171} Cf. CU. 2. 23. 1; MaiU. 7. 11. It is broadly accepted that Chandogya Upaniṣad is earlier than the Buddha, while Maitrīyaniya Upaniṣad is later. Cf. also Winternitz, A History of Indian Literature, Vol. I, p.245.
\textsuperscript{172} Cf. PED.
forming the main body of a tree. Thus, it can be conjectured that the word khandha in Pāli was enriched in order to explain the unique idea.

As one of the five aggregates, rūpa is defined as ‘matter’ in the sense of generic (genus), and is sometimes translated as ‘form’ in the sense of what is visible. Although not all rūpa is visible, as an object of the first consciousness, it should be rendered as ‘visible’. The translation ‘body’ for the rūpa is not proper in strict sense, since it does not cover all the meanings of the rūpa.

While other four aggregates are involved with mental functions, the rūpa represents five physical sense organs and their corresponding objects. It is not

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172 “Buddhaghosa and Dhammapāla – the two illustrious commentators of Theravāda Buddhism – collate as many as nine meanings (attha) in which the term in question is said to occur in the canonical works, namely, (1) rūpakkhandha – the material aggregate (2) sarīra – the physical body of a living being (3) vanna – colour (4) santhāna – form, figure, configuration (5) kāsinānimitta – the ‘meditation’ object (6) paccaya – condition, cause (7) sabhāva – nature. The 8th and 9th are what we have introduced as the cosmological (rūpadhātu) and ‘psychological (rūpadhātu)’ meanings. That the number is not exhaustive is recognized by the addition of the word ādi, etc.” Karunadasa (1989), p.1

174 In some Nikāya, rūpa seems to be depicted by body in literal sense. Cf. MN I, 420, MN I, 185 (fn.330), SN III, 86. The case of the former two (MN I, 420, MN I, 185), if we read carefully, we may come to know that the Buddha teaches the method of the meditation to Rāhula through the theory of anānam. Here, it is explained specifically that the body (rūpa) we are clinging to is nothing but five elements (mahabhūta?); These two sutas mentions five elements including space which compose our body parts, and that internal (which is belonging to my own body) and external (others) are no difference. Rāhulasamutīya in Samyutta Nikāya which actually related with these two sutas, we can get some hint what kind of message these two sutas try to convey.

Venerable sir, how should one know, how should one see so that, in regard to this body with consciousness (imasmin saviṇānakā kāye) and in regard to all external signs (bahiddhā ca sabbāniśītta), I-making, and the underlying tendency to conceit no longer occur within?**” Any kind of form whatsoever, Rāhula, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near – one sees all form as it really is with correct wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self’**” The commentary given by Bhikku Bodhhi on this dialogue is the following. “In regard ‘imasmin saviṇānakā kāye; he shows his own conscious body. And bahiddhā ca sabbāniśītta: the conscious body of others and insentient objects. Or alternatively: by the former expression he shows his own sentient organism and that of others’ (reading with Se attano ca parassa ca saviṇānakam evam); by the latter, external form not bound up with sense faculties (bahiddhā anidṛtyabaddharūpam). Cf.SN II, 252. The connected Discourses of the Buddha translated by Bhikku Bodhhi. SN II, p.698. The case of latter (SN III, 86), while showing etymological approach for rūpa: body is spoiled, therefore it is called rūpa (ruppati kho bhikkhave tasmā rūpan ti vuccati), the given example should be realistic to every one so that we can understand directly. Thus, it is said that body is spoiled by cold, by heat, by hunger, by thirst, by contact with flies, by mosquitoes, by wind, by sun, and by serpent.
separated from other mental functions, and thus, cannot exist independently. In the Nikāya, the definition of rūpakkhandha (P.) clearly shows that it is ‘four primary elements (mahābhūta)’ and ‘matter derived from the four great elements (upādāyārūpa)’. It is stated that all matter is past, present or future, internal or external, gross or subtle, small or large, far or near. However, there is no explanation of ‘matter derived from the four great elements (upādāyārūpa)’ in the Nikāya. Walpola Rahula, based on Abhidharma texts, explains ‘upādāyārūpa’, which he translates as ‘Derivatives of four Great Elements’, as follows:

In the term ‘Derivatives of four Great Elements’ are included our five material sense-organs, i.e. the faculties of eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body, and their corresponding objects in the external world, i.e. visible form, sound, odour, tastes, and tangible things, and also some thoughts or ideas or conceptions which are in the sphere of mind-objects (dharma-yatana). Thus the whole realm of matter, both internal and external, is included in the Aggregate of Matter.

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175 In Mahāmādāna sutta, we could come across some significant meaning of nāmarūpa through the discourse of the Buddha on nidānas. ‘... Those modes (ākāra), features (litgo), characters (nimitta), exponents (addeya), by which the mass of nāma (nāmakāya) manifests itself, - if all these were absent, would there be any manifestation of a corresponding verbal impression (adhipacanasamphasso) in the mass called rūpa (rūpakāya)? ‘There would not lord. ’Those modes, features, characters, exponents, by which the mass of rūpa manifests itself - if all these were absent, would there be any manifestation of an impression of sense-contact (patighasamphasso) in the mass called nāma? ‘There would not, lord.’ ” Cf. DN II, 62.

176 MN I, p. 185 (Mahāhathipadopamasutta).

177 SN IV, p. 382.


179 Cf. Rahula (1978), pp. 20-21. There is another definition of upādāyārūpa from the text of northern tradition Pañcaskandhaka-prakarana written by Vasubhandhu. “‘what is derived from the four great elements? The sense organ of the tongue, the sense organ of the ear. The sense organ of the nose, The sense organ of the tongue, The sense organ of the body, visibles, sounds, smells, tastes, everything that can be subsumed under tactile sensation, and unmanifested action.
According to the above statement, eleven bases (āyatana), excluding manas, belong to the rūpa, and are the object of manas. Vedanā is 'feeling'. It is the first mental function resulting from the contact of physical and mental organs with the external world. All our physical and mental sensations, i.e. pleasant, unpleasant or neutral, are included in this group. Saṃjñā is 'apperception' of colours, sounds, odours, tastes, tangibles and mental images following from the previous stage. Saṃjñā also does the actual discriminating of objects of all five senses, while viśṭhāna is the awareness by which we experience every stage of the cognitive process—including the process of discriminating. \(^{180}\) Saṃskāra is 'mental formations' or 'volition' (cetanā) concerning colours, sounds, odours, tastes, tangibles and mental objects. \(^{181}\) Vijñāna is discriminative 'consciousness' of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. Citta and manas also said to be the same as consciousness. \(^{182}\)

In the Ḥāliddikānīsutta, it is said that the other four aggregates are the home (oka) of viśṭhāna. \(^{183}\) And it is also said that they are support (S. ālambana, P. ārammanā) of viśṭhāna. \(^{184}\) These passages seem to show the privileged status of viśṭhāna among the five aggregates. Then, which one has the role as a subject of cognition? In Theravāda Buddhism, it is believed that viśṭhāna does, and it is asserted that viśṭhāna has a hypothetical role as a subject of rebirth. It can be assumed that, since none of the aggregates has the

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\(^{180}\) Cf. The Atthakathā of Kaccanāyavasutta shows the three stages of consciousness (viśṭhāna) to be distinguished, namely apperceives (saṃjñānāti), cognizes (viṣṭhānāti), understands (pajñānāti). Cf. Sārathā-ppakāsāni Vol.II, p.293. See The Connected Discourses of the Buddha, SN III, p.1072, fn.114.

\(^{181}\) Cf. SN III, p. 60.

\(^{182}\) Cf. SN II, p.94.

\(^{183}\) Cf. SN III, p. 9.

\(^{184}\) Cf. SN III. P.53. More over it is stated that there is no other support for the establishing of consciousness except these four.
capacity of being self-conscious, only viññāna has a faculty of discrimination and attention. However, in Mahātānhaṭṭasīkhaṇhaya-sutta, the Buddha asserts that the viññāna is not the self, and not even to be conceived as a life-long, immaterial substance. The human personality is generally represented by the term nāma-rūpa which is the two fold division of five aggregates. Nāma

denotes 'mentality' or 'psychic personality' comprising four psychological factors, i.e. the four aggregates—vedanā, saṃjñā, saṃskāra and viññāna, while rūpa denotes physical body and matter comprised of four great elements and matter derived from the four great elements. In most cases, nāma and rūpa occur together in a compound, which indicates that a psychophysical complex cannot be clearly divided into the two. However, in early Buddhism, we can see that more weight has been put onto mentality than its object, and thus, focusing more on analyzing the mentality. This reflects the Buddha’s view that mentality is much fickler than physical body.

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185 Cfr. MN I, p. 256ff. The dialogue between the Buddha and monk Sāthi. In other Nikāyas also, it is declared that viññāna must not be taken as the self. However, the Buddha mentions gandharva (P. gandhabha) later in this sutta. Even though he denies the role of viññāna as a hypothetical self in earlier part of the sutta, he mentions of gandharva (P. gandhabba) as an intermediate agency in later part. Similar concept appears in Mahānāma-sīkhaṇhaya in DN, but here instead of gandharva it is viññāna which apparently has a role as an intermediate agency. Cf. DN II, p.62. See fn.106.

186 But, this specific classification of nāma as four aggregates does not seem to be found in the Nikāya, even it is generally used. Such as English-Pali dictionary from P.T.S and Buddhist dictionary by Nyanatiloka also explain nāmarūpa in this manner. Only in Samyuktika Agama it is said, “What is nāma? They are vedana, saṃjñā, saṃskāra, viññāna, except rūpa.. What is rūpa? They are four great elements and matter derived from the four great elements (四无色讓四無色然行然識然 云何色 讓四大四所造色). Cf. Samyukṭagama T 2, p.85a. In the Nikāya, nāma is defined as vedanā, saṃjñā, cetanā (intention), phassa (contact) and manasikāra (attention). Cf. SN II, p.3. There is another explanation, according to which viññāna does not belong to nāmarūpa. When nāmarūpa is correlated with the five aggregates, nāma is identified with three mental groups, namely, aggregates of feeling, apperception and mental formations, and rūpa is identified with the aggregate of material form. Cf. Vibhaṅga, p.186.

187 Cf. SN II, pp.94-95. It would be less erroneous to call the body the self, for it may last for a hundred years. On the other hand, thought (P. citta), mind (P. mano), consciousness (P. viññāna) are restless, like a monkey in the forest which seizes one branch, only to let it go and grasp another. Cf. also AN I, p.10; SN IV, p.166.
The four aggregates have a role as a subject of cognition. Since four of them equally have a peculiar faculty of cognition, and none of them has qualification of being named as a self, the idea of five aggregates suggests that a person is no other than cognition itself. We can see a significant passage from the Udāna: there is only seeing when it is seen, there is only hearing when it is heard, there is only thinking when it is thought, there is only perceiving when it is perceived.\(^{188}\)

3.2 Concerning the Twelve Bases (āyatana)

Another classification of phenomena concerns the twelve bases of cognition (āyatana).\(^{189}\) They are subdivided into the so-called six internal, or personal, bases (P. aṭṭhāyatana) and the six external bases (P. bāhirāyatana), i.e. the sense organs and their respective objects.\(^{190}\)

The six internal bases are eye (caṭṭhas), ear (śrotas), nose (ghṛṇa), tongue (jīvā), body (kāya) and mind (manas). The six external bases are the visible (rūpa), sound (śabda), odour (gandha), taste (rasa), the touchable (sarpasthāya) and the object of mind (dharma).

Āyatana is translated as ‘base’, ‘sphere’ or ‘entrance’. The word ‘base’ is used in the sense that they are the place, or the locality, for the contact occurring between the sense organs and their objects. Consciousness takes place depending on them, having them as its support. The word ‘sphere’, may be, is used in order to convey the sense of differentiated fields or domains

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\(^{188}\) Udāna, 10: ‘dite dithamattam bhavissati, sute sutamattam bhavissati, mute maitamattam bhavissati, vihitamattam bhavissattī.’

\(^{189}\) DN II, p. 302; etc.

where the consciousness is related. The consciousness cannot arise alone without them. They are the supporters as well as the doors (dvāra) for the consciousness to appear.\(^{191}\) The word ‘entrance’ is used mainly to give this sense.

The six internal bases constitute the subjective element which has capacity of reaction, and the six external bases constitute the objective element which produces the impact. Ten āyatanas, excepting manas and dharma (āyatanas), are physical. Among them five bases, viz. eye…body, are organs (indriya) made of subtle matter (rūpaprasāda) which is derived from the four great elements (upādāyārūpa). The remaining five, i.e. the visible etc., are objects (viṣaya) made of rough matter.

Manāyatana is of mental order. It is a collective term designating all forms of consciousness. Dharmāyatana can include both physical and mental order. It designates every object of thought, whether past, present or future, real or imaginary. Manas grasps its own object as well as objects of other five senses and those senses themselves, while other senses perceive their own objects only. In Samyuttanikāya it is said by the Buddha:

‘There are, brahmin, as you say, these five sense organs of different object (P. visaya) and different domain (P. gocara), and they do not mutually experience each other’s object and domain. Manas is their common ground of resort. It is manas that experiences the object and domain of them all.’\(^{192}\)

\(^{191}\) Cf. Stcherbatsky (1922), p. 8.
\(^{192}\) SN V, p.218
The six internal bases, without the counterpart, i.e. the six external bases, are seen to represent all the elements of existence. It is said, thus, in another sutta in Samyuttanikāya:

Through the eye, friends, through the ear, the nose, tongue, body, through the mind one is conscious of the world, has conceit of the world. That is called “world” in the noble discipline.\textsuperscript{193}

So to speak, in Buddhism, the world is identified with the six internal bases because the latter is the necessary internal condition for the experience, and thus, for the presence of the world. In other words, when the Buddha teaches about the world, it is the world that is conceived based on the experience made through the six internal bases that cover the six external bases.

\subsection*{3.3 The Eighteen Elements (dhātu)}

The eighteen elements (dhātu) are as the following:

The six organs: eye (cakṣus), ear (śrotra), nose (ghrāṇa), tongue (jihvā), body (kāya) and mind (manas).

The six objects: the visible (rūpa), sound (śabda), odour (gandha), taste (rasa), the touchable (sparṣāvyā) and the object of mind (dharma).

The six consciousnesses: eye-consciousness (cakṣurviṇāna), ear-consciousness (śrotraviṇāna), nose-consciousness (ghrāṇavijñāna), tongue-

\textsuperscript{193} SN IV, p.95.
consciousness (jihvāvijñāna), body-consciousness (kāyavijñāna), mind-consciousness (manovijñāna).

These eighteen elements are formed by adding respective six consciousnesses to the twelve bases. They explain the working of the consciousness depending on the latter classification. 194 The sense organ (indriya) as a substrate (āśraya) and the object (viṣaya) as a seized-object (ālambana) give rise to the consciousness (vijñāna). It is said:

Because of the eye and the visible, visual consciousness (cakṣūrvijñāna) arises…; because of the mind (manas) and the object of thought (dharma), mental consciousness (manovijñāna) arises; the conjunction of the three is contact (sparśa); there arise together (sahajāta) feeling (vedanā), apperception (samjñā) and volition (cetanā). 195

The six consciousnesses and manas are mental, while dharma can be either physical or mental. The first five consciousnesses have five material organs as their supports (āśraya), but the sixth, i.e. manovijñāna (mind-consciousness), has no such substrate. Bhikkhu Bodhi interprets that mind-consciousness comprises all consciousness except the five types of sense consciousness. It includes mental consciousness of mental images, abstract ideas, and internal states of mind, as well as the consciousness in reflection upon sense objects. 196

Therefore, manodhātu, which is formed by one of the six consciousnesses, takes the role as a temporary substrate of them. 197 The dharmāyatana is

194 SN II, p.140.
195 SN II, p.72; SN IV, p.33; etc.
197 Cf. Lamotte (1988), p.31. According to Sarvāstivādin, the term manodhātu is given to what is used as substrate as a 'contiguous and immediate antecedent' (samanantarapratyaya), i.e. any of
identical with the dharmadhātu. It may be physical or mental, past, present or
future, real or imaginary.\textsuperscript{198} The manodhātu, however, is not identical with the
manāyatana, but is comprised within the manāyatana. The manāyatana is a
collective term for the five kinds of sense-consciousness, mind-element
(manodhātu) and mind-consciousness-element (manovijñānadātu).

In the Buddhist psychology, the concept of manas is often more definitely
circumscribed by the terms manāyatana, manoindriya and manodhātu (P.),
which are practically all the same.\textsuperscript{199} Thus, the classification into eighteen
elements amounts nothing but to giving more detailed explanation of the
mental process. And it indicates that the early Buddhism has an
epistemological background. From this point of view, it is very clear that there
is nothing free from the empirical life of person in this world.

3.4 Vījñāna and Nāmarūpa

We can see that most of the teachings of the Buddha are interrelated with
each other logically. The twelve links of Dependent Origination share
common frame with the above three classifications. Many scholars insist that
the primordial formula of Dependent Origination is seen in Sāmkhya or even
in Jainism, before the Buddha. Whichever is earlier, the significance is that the
Buddha has systematized it clearly from his own experience of enlightenment
and has made it as one of the fundamental tenets.\textsuperscript{200} Among the twelve links of

\textsuperscript{198} BD, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{199} PED, p.520.
\textsuperscript{200} Cf. "whoever understands the paticcasaṅgupāda understands the teaching of the Buddha, and
whoever understands the teaching of the Buddha understands the paticcasaṅgupāda." MN I, pp.
190-91.
Dependent Origination, the interdependence between the *vijñāna* and the *nāmarūpa*\(^{201}\) is the basic nexus from which all subject-object relationships in ordinary experience come out.

Here, the *vijñāna* is generally explained as the condition for *nāmarūpa*, but, we can see that it appears as being conditioned by *nāmarūpa* as well. This significant state is seen in the *sutta* where the Buddha preaches *nidāna*, but here only ten *nidānas* except *samskāra* and *avidya* among twelve *nidāna* has been enumerated. In which the following thought occurred to Gotama Buddha before his enlightenment.

“… By what is name-and-form conditioned? Then *bhikkhus*, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom: ‘When there is consciousness, name-and-form comes to be; name-and-form has consciousness as its condition.’ “Then, bhikkhus, it occurred to me: ‘When what exists does consciousness come to be? By what is consciousness conditioned?’ Then, bhikkhus, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom: ‘When there is name-and-form, consciousness comes to be; consciousness has name-and-form as its condition.; “Then, *bhikkhus*, it occurred to me: ‘This consciousness turns back; it does not go further than name-and-form. It is to this extent that one may be born and age and die, pass away and be reborn, that is, when there is consciousness with name-and-form as its condition, and name-and-form as its condition.”\(^{202}\)

The *vijñāna* and the *nāmarūpa* are mutual dependent conditions, and cannot function independently. This is stated clearly in the following *sutta*:

\(^{201}\)The word *nāma* is derived from the root *vānam* and literally it has the characteristic of bending (*namana*) on to the object. The word *rūpa* is derived from the root *vṛup* (Sk. *ṛūp*), which means to break, to violate, to hurt, to spoil, to destroy, etc. Cf. *Visuddhimagga*, Chpt. XVII, p.147.

Just as two sheaves of reeds might stand leaning against each other, so too, with name-and-form as condition, consciousness [come to be]; with consciousness as condition, name-and-form [come to be].\textsuperscript{203}

In the case of the five aggregates, the nāma represents four mental factors while the rūpa stands for the physical factor derived from the four great elements and matter derived from the four great elements. In this case, the vijñāna is one of the mental factors (nāma) and can not be separated with other factors. Thus, it is said to be included in the nāmarūpa.\textsuperscript{204} The vijñāna operates depending on the physical body (rūpa) and in conjunction with other mental factors; and, it is only when vijñāna is present that a physical body and mental factors participate in cognition. It is this inter-dependent relation that has been emphasized in Dependent Origination, which might explain the reason for the separate mentioning of the vijñāna from nāmarūpa in the list.\textsuperscript{205}

In fact, it is not only the vijñāna that has been treated separately from the nāmarūpa, but also vedanā and the saṃskāra are there in separate among the twelve links. This indicates that the nāmarūpa here is not confined to human personality but extends to the manifested world itself as an object of the

\textsuperscript{204} As it is mentioned in the foot note 86, such as English-Pali dictionary from P.T.S and Buddhist dictionary by Nyanatiloja and many others say that vijñāna also belongs to nāma like other three mental skandhas. But, I can not find any specific mentioning that vijñāna is also included whenever nāma is explained in Nikāyas. Only Chinese Agama confirmed it, while explaining about each nidānas. Cf. Samyuktāgama, T.2, p.85a.
\textsuperscript{205} Some scholars especially those who affiliated to the Theravādin try to distinguish vijñāna into two types according to the context. The one is the vijñāna in five skandhas and the other is the vijñāna in nidānas. That means, the former is as the action of being conscious, the latter as consciousness in transmigration. However, whichever vijñāna belongs to, understanding vijñāna should be simple as what the Buddha actually taught without any sectarian embellishment. In fact vijñāna is treated indifferently whether it is one of the five skandhas (SN III, p.61) or one of the nidānas (SN II pp.3-4) in Nikāya, as the following. “And what, bhikkhu, is consciousness? There are these six classes of consciousness: eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, mind-consciousness. This is called consciousness.” Cf. SN III, p.61, SN II pp.3-4.
vijñāna. And vijñāna as a prior condition for the rising of the manifested world, i.e. nāmarūpa,²⁰⁶

The word nāmarūpa appears in the Upaniṣad which is earlier than Buddhism. Varma says: “In the Upaniṣads the nāmarūpa is the phenomenal appearance and the real substratum is behind it.”²⁰⁷ The term nāmarūpa in this context indicates the two modes by which the world has evolved. Therefore, it denotes the differentiated manifestation of the undifferentiated (avyākta) — Ātman/Brahman, i.e. the empirical individual as well as the entire phenomenal world.²⁰⁸

Besides, there is a significant difference between the form of the word used in Brahmanism and that used in Buddhism. In the Upaniṣad, the dual form (nāmarūpābhyaṃ) is used, which indicates the intention of the user for the distinction between the name and the form. In Buddhism, it is the singular form (nāmarūpaṃ) that is used. This reflects the idea that the human personality is not to be divided sharply into the name and the form, i.e. the

²⁰⁶ In Mahāniddānasutta it is said, “I have said that vijñāna is the cause of nāmarūpa… were vijñāna not to descend (okkamissathā) into the mother’s womb, would nāmarūpa become constituted there in? It would not lord …” Cf. DN II, p.62. Not only this sutta, there are some other suttas which deal vijñāna or nāmarūpa in related with rebirth. Cf. SN II, p.65; pp.90-91; p.101, etc. When we examine these suttas, we can find that most of them are using the word “okkamati”. Most of translators including Bhikkhu Bodhi renders it into ‘descend’, and the corresponding commentary of Theravādin also understood it accordingly. But it is also possible to translate it as ‘develop’, then, it could be understood in different way. As Hoffman pointed out, if we takes ‘okkamati’ as ‘descends’, then Buddhism is seen as countenancing the possibility of disembodies consciousness existing quite apart from the material world… But, there are good reasons why neither the disembodied consciousness view nor gandharva view should be attributed to early Buddhism without reservation. First, as Kalupahana has pointed out, there is no antarābhava in early Buddhism. Secondly, the Buddha refused to speculate on the relation between the soul and body in the famous ten questions set aside, thereby refusing to commit himself to a dualist picture. Cf. Frank J. Hoffman (1987), p.68.


²⁰⁸ BU. I. 4. 7.
mental and physical aspects of individuality. So, translating it as 'Mind-and-Matter' is not appropriate. This rendering can be led to mind/matter duality.

Buddhism may have taken the initial idea from Brahmanism. It is quite natural to use already existing terms and concepts for the new theory. While the nāmarūpa in Brahmanism does not show any specific implication or intention for an individual being, but covers the whole phenomena, subjective or objective, the nāmarūpa in Buddhism focuses more on personality, stressing the physical and the psychical sides of an individual as a whole.

In the context of twelve links, it is clearly mentioned what is nāmarūpa and what is vijñāna in Vibhaṅgasutta.

And what, bhikkhus, is name-and-form? Feeling (P. vedanā), apperception (P. saññā), volition (P. cetanā), contact (P. phassa) and attention (P. manasikāra): this is called name. The four great elements and the form derived from the four great elements: this is called form. Thus this name and this form are together called name-and-form.

And what, bhikkhus, is consciousness? There are these six classes of consciousness: eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, mind-consciousness. This is called consciousness. 209

As already pointed out before, this passage indicates that the vijñāna and the nāmarūpa is the basic nexus from which all subject-object relationships in ordinary experience come out.

Twelve links of Dependent Origination should not be understood in terms of cosmogony. However, we cannot discard totally the evolitional aspect from

209 SN II pp.3-4. and similar passage also found in MN I p.53.
it. In fact, it has been understood as three consecutive lives of a living being in Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda. Later, the viññāna has been believed by the monks that it is the psychological factor which is responsible for the consciousness of life-continuum. This concept of viññāna has been developed in sectarian Buddhism as denoting the rebirth-linking consciousness.

4. The problem of person and personal identity in early Buddhism

Let us try to integrate what we have done in sections 2 and 3. The notion of a person can be understood in its two aspects; what a person is not and what a person is. The consideration of anātman provides an answer to the first question. The brief answer is that what we call a person was supposed to possess the essence called ātman by the Upaniṣadic and many other philosophers, but in fact person cannot be identified with ātman, because there is no ātman in actual fact. The realization that I am not ātman and that there is no ātman has also moral and soteriological significance, and this we have seen by considering the associations of anātman with karma, Dependent Origination and Four Noble Truths. We have discussed all this in section 2.

The second question is: What is a person then? The answer can be sought in the early Buddhist framework in terms of five skandhas, twelve āyatana, eighteen dhātu or items of viññāna and nāmarūpa. We have discussed this in section 3. Now, understanding what is not a person (anātman) and what is after all there what we call a person (skandha, āyatana, dhātu, nāmarūpa, viññāna), forms the basis of the next question about the person – the question

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210 Cf. DN II, p.62.
of personal identity. Let us see how the question arises on the grounds of early Buddhism.

According to early Buddhism, there is only the psycho-physical process of existence called five aggregates which changes incessantly. The five aggregates arise and pass away by the condition, but none of the five aggregates is identified with the ātman. What we call ‘person’ is thus a flow of this psychic and physical process, rising and falling continuously, to which no substantial, immutable, permanent nature can be attributed. Accordingly, it is viewed that a person dies and is reborn without any agent that transmigrates from this life to the other.

In a single human life, we normally imply two measures to figure out the identity of the person: one is the continuity of the body, the other the memory. The latter stands on the basis of continuance of experience, which is possible on the basis of the continuity of the body. When we come to the matter of rebirth, however, the continuity of the body bears no significance; only the memory becomes an indispensable factor. In both cases, viz. in the case of a single lifetime and in the case of consecutive lives, we see that memory is the main factor in establishing the idea of personal identity.

Without the memory, it is difficult to deal with the matter of rebirth, and further the moral and lessons related to it. But, can we remember anything when we were two years old or below even in this life? We cannot say that certain event did not take place or that we did not live through due to the absence of our memory. Likewise, merely on the basis of our limited ability for memory, we cannot easily set aside the rebirth. We see, especially in
Buddhism, that the memory of previous lives of certain authoritative persons is acknowledged. The Buddha often spoke of the acquisition of supernatural powers or knowledge (abhiñā), one of which was the power of remembering one's previous life. He himself referred to his own previous lives. Moreover, there is the case of sotāpanna (P.),\textsuperscript{211} the one who has to be reborn seven times to attain the emancipation. These could be seen as though Buddhism basically admits the agent that goes on through various lives.\textsuperscript{212}

The problem of personal identity inherent in the concept of person in early Buddhism becomes obvious when related to the rebirth. It is not fully legitimate to say that the doer himself experiences the result in a single life-stream, because he is changing in every moment. This questionable aspect can be expressed in a clearer manner when related to the rebirth. A newly born being is neither the same as the earlier, since it has changed the body, nor different from that, since it carries the same karma. We cannot say that the doer of the deed in the previous life is the same as the one who experiences its result in this life, nor can we say that the two are different.

After the parinirvāṇa of the Buddha, some of his followers were probably not satisfied with the interpretation that a person is merely the result of a combination of psycho-physical factors. For them, a person should be something unlike a chariot.\textsuperscript{213} A constant subject in cognitive actions should

\textsuperscript{211} Sotāpanna: "If a man after the disappearance of the 3 fetters (personality-belief, skeptical doubt, attachment to mere rules and ritual; s. samyojana) has entered the stream (to Nirvāṇa), and is no mere subject to rebirth in lower worlds, is firmly established, destined to full enlightenment. After having passed amongst heavenly and human beings only seven times more through the round of rebirths, he puts an end to suffering. Such a man is called 'One with 7 Births at the Utmost' (sattakkhattu-parama). BD. p.172.

\textsuperscript{212} Cf. DN I, p. 81.

\textsuperscript{213} Cf. SN I, p. 135: "When all constituent parts are there, The designation 'chariot' is used; Just so where the five aggregates exist, Of 'being' do we speak."

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be there, which undergoes and accumulates experiences. If there were
no ‘receiver’ of experiences, how could knowledge have been formulated? If
there is nobody, where do the experience and the karma thereof go and
stay? Therefore, a person cannot be merely the five aggregates characterized
by the anātman. Some kind of agent should be there.\textsuperscript{214} It is exactly what the
doubtful monk had in his mind, by which he was rebuked by the Buddha. And,
this kind of thinking gets more support when considered in the context of the
rebirth.

It seems that many monks, after the parinivāṇa of the Buddha, thought of
overcoming this problem. They seem to have given attention to the generally
observed characteristic ‘neither the same nor different’ mentioned above.
They could also have thought that even though anātman is basically accepted
we cannot but admit that there is something, which is neither identical with
nor different from the five aggregates, which works like the agent of
transmigration.\textsuperscript{215}

The Bhāraḥārasutta explains that burden (P. bhāra) refers to the five
aggregates while their carrier (P. hāra) is the person (P. puggala; S. pudgala).
This person bears a name, belongs to a family and is the enjoyer of happiness
and unhappiness.\textsuperscript{216} This sutta has offered a good example for the support of

\textsuperscript{214} Cf. \textit{Sangyutikāgama}, T.2, p.246-305b (Shou ti'en hua sheng ching, 受天化生經): 如是等士夫
從此至他天。‘It is thus that a person from this world arrives in another heaven.’ In this passage,
pūrva has been designated as an agent like pūdgala in Pudgalavādin, bhavārga in Theravādin,
and sanțāna in Sautrāntika. All of these concepts had been developed in Abhidharma Buddhism
later.

\textsuperscript{215} In fact, most of the sects of the sectarian Buddhism developed a theory related to this as a main
subject. ‘The Sthānvārāvāda had the theory of the thought-series with the continuing neutral state
called ‘existence limb (bhavārga), mere continuity. The Mahāśāṅghikas had a doctrine of ‘basic
consciousness’ (mūlavrjāhāna) and the Mahīśāskas that of the ‘group which continues until the

\textsuperscript{216} SN III, pp. 25-26.
their view. The group of monks sharing this new idea is called the Pudgalavādin, since their newly postulated concept is *pudgala*. Its view will be studied in the next chapter in detail.

It seems that there were also monks who were inclined to analyze the phenomenal world into details after the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha. They tried to deal with every aspect of all that could be dealt with and explain it in a systematic way. The understanding of the impermanence in terms of momentariness through the analytical method appears to have exposed not any contradictory aspect concerning personal identity. They did not have to raise any doubt on the concept of person according to early Buddhism, but to explain it in a more detailed and convincing manner. However, this does not mean that they were free from the problem itself. They could see the limit they had, and thus have made great effort to overcome it. It is shown in the discussions of various Abhidharma texts extant, grouped under the Sarvāstivādin, the culmination of which is the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*. It will be studied in the next chapter too.

At this point, we should remind ourselves of the allegory of poisonous arrow in the Nikāya. The Buddha strongly warned his followers against the meaningless, metaphysical debates. He preached the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path for avoidance of this trap and the attainment of the goal. The release from the *duḥkha*, is the fundamental goal of the teaching of the Buddha. The result of his enlightenment can be enjoyable for those who achieve the same. It is said: "Just as the great ocean has but one taste, the taste

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217 *Cūla-Mālāni kyāsutta*, MN I, p. 426ff.; etc.
of salt; even so this discipline of Dharma has but one taste, the taste of release (P. vimutti).” We do not know how many have achieved it after the parinirvāṇa of the Buddha. Although the Buddha has clarified the dharma, still there remain doubts for many others. His desperate followers groped for some clue and tried to analyze his teachings theoretically, because the Buddha never encouraged them only to be faithful to or worship him.

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