Chapter Four:

THE RELEVANCE OF THE CONCEPT OF ANĀTMAN FOR CULTIVATION OF THE MIND

The nature of things is described by the three characteristics, namely impermanence (Anicca), un-satisfactoriness or suffering (dukkha), and non-self-hood (anattā). Not to know this teaching is not to know Buddhism. It points out that all things are impermanent (Anicca), all things are unsatisfactory (dukkha), and all things are not selves (anattā). As long as one lacks the knowledge of Anātman principle, one is bound to go mindlessly liking or disliking things in one way or another or bound to be reborn endlessly in this Sāṃsāra. So only the cultivation of mind or literally called meditation one may perceive precisely of this nature of things. In Buddhism, in order to cultivate our mind pure, there is requirement of Śīla or morality is the first step then the next is very important as well Samādhi or meditation, the cultivation of mind in fact, there are many ways to practice meditation according to the Buddha which will be narrated later. Lastly from meditation, we shall get Paññā or wisdom is the final salvation, when wisdom arises, human beings will see clearly the nature of things such as Anātman. All these based on the Noble Eightfold Path.

4.1.1. Base Anātman For Cultivation Of The Mind.

Concept of Anātman, as selflessness, stems from the idea of impermanence. One of the sources of unsatisfied for human beings is the belief in a permanent self, or soul that is independent and separate. Buddhism acknowledges that the implications of Dependent Origination apply to human beings, and consequently, human existence is conditioned by causative factors. If human existence is grounded in the same reality of interconnectedness and interdependence as all other things, then humans are a reflection of this reality. Cultivating personal insight through Buddhist practice leads to the recognition that the notion of “self” or “soul” has no independent, permanent validity, and the elemental human fear of separation passes away. This understanding of
selflessness is critical to releasing us from the types of human fears that produce unsatisfied (fear of death; fear of rejection; fear of eternal punishment). By embracing selflessness, a freedom emerges in the Buddhist practitioner that grounds itself in the realization that the Universe, including the human realm, is already unified. Furthermore, this knowledge of the way things really are gives rise to the emergence of true human autonomy. Without exposure and insight to reality as it is, one cannot be considered “free.” With this freedom of exposure and insight comes a clear moral responsibility in followers of the Buddhist Path.

The important of the cultivation of self-awareness and the use of methodical meditation in understanding the essence of the human condition, and the incorporation of these techniques into solving problem in society through different religious and philosophical streams, is one of the main characteristics of Asian philosophies. Two particular motivations or pressures are always present when solving problem and regulating relationships from within. In the Chinese Buddhist tradition which stressed the stereological quest in its minutest detail, the distinction between Lijie and Wujie has been done.

This distinction will help us when analyzing Buddhism, as well as the two autochthonous Chinese philosophical traditions, Confucianism and Daoism and their distinct ways of cultivation of personality, which at a certain level might also bring the practitioner to the level of liberation of oneself from oneself. Patanjali’s system of spiritual development will serve as an illustration for one of the oldest manuals for the spiritual cleansing on the path to liberation.

Our aim is to look into important Asian philosophical texts that are centre towards the cultivation of personality or self-awareness as a way of soteriology.\footnote{Cheng Chung-Ying, Chan Historiography and Chan Philosophy, \textit{Journal of Chinese Philosophy}, 23(4) 1000, p. 490.} \footnote{Georg Feuerstein, The Yoga-Sūtra of Patanjali, Rochester: Inner Traditions International, 1989, p. 26.}
The texts were written down in the time when in Europe most of such movements have not yet been established. Whereas European philosophy was mainly concerned with the conditions of liberation, various schools of Asian philosophy were developing the very means of attaining this goal. The notion of soteriology first appeared in European history and literature around 1770. For Tucker it meant a plan for the restoration and perfection of human nature. Paradoxically the plan itself in its deeper meaning has never been realized in Europe. In the European philosophical heritage we find nothing to correspond with the original idea. It is important, however to recognize elements and insights of Tucker’s idea in Asian philosophical texts.

One should both accept and assimilate human impermanence and adopt meditative practice in addition to the commonly accepted logical discursive method. The following might be milestones on the path of salvation as it was practiced in Asian philosophy traditions:

The process begins with the establishment and strengthening of moral and ethical principles, be it the simple acceptance of Confucius ideal of Junze, the superior man or the obligatory introductory levels of Patanjali’s system, Yama and Niyama, or any other preparatory steps from other Asian philosophical systems. This should not be understood only on a purely national level of knowledge, but the insights should also be allowed to permeate the mind-body.

The self-purification may consist also of ascetic phases. Many written accounts of the life of the Buddha and various other mystics tell us of such purifying phases. On a certain level of spiritual development such special interventions are transcended and therefore no longer necessary.

At a certain point one transcends the frame offered by a logical discursive perception of reality that traps one not only into certain notions and words but also a certain lifestyle and social relations. Ideally one comes that the
truth is beyond words: “As for the way, the way that can spoken of is not the constant way.

Spiritual development continues through various subsequent phase, like the rungs of a ladder. On such ladder is Patanjali’s system which leads to Samādhi, complete liberation, and its uniqueness. These conditions should be seen as interdependent and interwoven. The importance of impermanence is correlated with the effectiveness of meditation: the good effects of meditation bring along also the acceptance of one’s own impermanence, not only on the rational level, but also on the trans-rational, deeper levels of consciousness. The condition for any advancement in the liberation process, however, is a thorough self-purification, which makes possible the access to the most subtle levels of mind-body-soul.

Self cultivation is the central aim of Confucius’ philosophy. Self-cultivation and self transformation lead to the state of moral consciousness and social integrity.\(^{319}\)

Tsze-Lu asked what constituted the superior man. The Master said the cultivation of him in reverential carefulness, and is that all said Tsze-Lu. His cultivation himself so as to give rest to others was the reply and is this all again asked Tsze-Lu. The master said, he cultivates himself as to give rest to all the people. His cultivation himself so as to give rest to all the people even Yao and Shun were still solicitous about this.\(^{320}\)

As the salvos continue, the doctrines of Anātmanand transmigration come under attack from those who see an inherent inconsistency between the doctrines. The doctrine of transmigration maintains that if one fails to escape the cycle of Samsāradriven by karma, they will be reborn according to their karma. Transmigration acts as cosmic justice, its annihilation the ultimate cosmic reward in Nirvāṇa, and as it works through karma, it is a just system


allowing one to be reborn into a life worthy of the acts and moral deeds of her previous self. Naturally, the doctrine of Anātman seems to conflict with the doctrine of transmigration because if the no-self principle is true, then it is unclear what or can be transmitted from this life to the next. Tuggy presents the counter-argument as a triad where one statement is inconsistent with the other three:

1. Reincarnation (transmigration theory shows how the universe is just.)
2. No-Self doctrine.
3. Reincarnation shows how the universe is just only if the people getting punished and rewarded are numerically the same as the people who did the evil and good deeds.\(^{321}\)

The Buddhist understandsof emptiness and the absence of ego development in the absence of many permanent egos in all sentient beings. It is based on the experience of language and thought which is not based only on the logically-discursive function of language which is supposed to express the absolute truth. The Mahāyāna Buddhist canon advocates the theory about two levels of truth: relative truth and absolute truth the understand of the absolute truth however demands the cultivation of higher states of consciousness which one can achieve by using specific practices. This higher level of truth recognizes objects and events an identical in their nature and connected in a certain whole, although recognized as separate entities. The knowledge and cultivation of both levels of truth are possible only with intellectual and logical undertakings which should also necessarily include more direct intuitive experiences. These include also mystical experiences, which in Buddhism are not understood as something opposed to reflexive thought. The majority of techniques engendering such experiences include conceptual thought which is only apparently incompatible with ineffable absolute truth to which the philosopher is aiming. Real knowledge therefore cannot be achieved on the

\(^{321}\) Tuggy Dale, “Class Notes: Objections to the No-self Theory”. Note: The website where this was obtained in October of 2005.
basis of theoretical thinking, but rather by using the unity of body-mental and somatic.\footnote{Oshima Hitoshi, Le Development Dune Pensee Mythique, Paris, Osiris, 1994.}

In the main, the history of European philosophy has perceived the Ego as something permanent, unchangeable, and autonomous, unlike that for the human personality. In early Buddhism the notion of Anātman was developed, in which an eternal and unchangeable essence, independent of anything else, exists. The absence of ego, therefore, means the negation of the absolute reality and any kind of permanent, unchangeable substance. It means also that people do not possess any centre or core, although we do have various mental functions. Here we see a complete negation, the absence of ego, but still the presence of mental, cognitive functions, carried out by the mind, which as such is originally unclear and therefore unable to grasp the truth. Therefore in Buddhism various mind-cleansing techniques are praised, which should free the mind from what Zhuang Zi would label as illusionary dust of the worlds. The cleansing techniques are supposed to be able to help the person in clarifying, and the person in clarifying, and cleaning the unclear mental states. The theories of the absence of Ātman or Anātman do not imply the absence of the mind, but rather the cleaning and clarifying of it.

In Buddhism, birth and death are understood as the first and the last of the four suffering which are common to all sentient beings which are able to experience suffering. This is also the ventral problem of human existence in Buddhism, which is just a part of raising-vanishing process, which we share with all living beings. The way to freedom, in which the strong stereological mission of Buddhism is to be perceived, should begin with the liberation from the raising-vanishing process, and share with all living beings. It means also the liberation from birth and death in the cycle of transmigration which is carried out in the unlimited of time and space and is based on the dehomocentric, non-anthropomorphic position in understanding the basic human problem and the liberation from it. Buddhism does not nurture the illusion of any kind of domineering position of humans in regard to other sentient beings. The
transcendence of human limitations in Buddhism is the way of acknowledging birth and death in the context of the wider spectrum of the raising-vanishing process which is common to all sentient beings. Freedom is here achieved by acknowledgement of one’s real position in the universe and the liberation from any kind of illusions of a special mission or distinguished position for human in the world. It includes also the true understanding of birth and death and their meanings. The courageous confrontation with death, and its real acceptance, is the basic of the liberation from birth and death. Liberation means the achievement of the process of thinking which is beyond conceptual thinking. The acknowledgement of one’s own ego leads to the forgetting of it, which enables the recognition of the absolute ego. The Buddha’s nature which is present in every individual is to be discovered only through the recognition or acknowledgement of one’s own ego in connection with everything which exists. This, however, is to grasp the obsolete ego. Egoless behavior, therefore, in Buddhist philosophy and practice, is the necessary condition for one’s liberation and achievement of freedom.

Self-cultivation techniques and various lead to the absence of ego as the basis for the absence of thought; not thought as such, but rather the egotistical attachment to the ego. It means the liberation from the selfhood or any need for the big other. This absence of thought, achieved by the practice of sitting meditation, is possible if the individual becomes a pure corporal subject and if one is concentrated on the activity itself which is carried out through the body. The absence of self implies also the overcoming of the distinctions between the ego and all the rest of the world, which allows the possibility for the presentation of reality. The unity of body-mind is achieved through the practice which is not bodily technique, but rather brings us beyond any duality. The proof of the freedom is the achievement of a level on which the entire world is without any illusionary dust, the dust produced by the object of the ego.

By training one’s mind in way cultivate wholesome mind and heart states in oneself, and by interacting with others in ways that cultivate wholesome mind and heart states in them, one can aspire to transforms
unwholesome mind and heart states into wholesome mind and heart states, thus positively transforming suffering. Educational practice holds potential in this regard as a prospective site for such training. Educational practice can be structured so as to allow students the opportunities to learn how to engage in skillful thinking, speech, and action (as well as other practices described in the Noble Eightfold Path) that has the potential to positively transform their own suffering and the suffering of others. Socially-engaged Buddhism aspires to address and ameliorate the problem inhering in and implied by a spiritual notion of suffering, thus, socially-engaged Buddhism is aimed at liberation in a spiritual sense. Thus, by framing an approach to education in a way that is consistent with socially-engaged Buddhism, education can become a vehicle for facilitating personal or spiritual liberation.

It is suggestible that mind can be analyzes as to its nature in the disciplines of psychology, ethics and naturalism. But for the sake of being in concord with the Buddha theory of suffering and of non-substance the former mainly relating to the basic for ethical attitude and the later, for philosophical viewpoint the disciplines of ethics and of psychology are preferable. The functionalistic approach in the discipline of modern psychology, it is at the risk going a little astray to note, comes to overshadow the once dominating structuralism, emphasizing ‘the study of mind from the is for point of view.’

When a good thought concerning the sensuous universe has arisen, which is accompanied by happiness associated and with knowledge, and has a it’s object a sight, a sound, a smell, a state, or what not, then there is contact, feeling, perception, thinking, thought, conception, discursive thought, joy, easy, self-collectedness, the faculty of faith, the faculty of energy, the faculty of mindfulness, the faculty of happiness, the faculty of vitality; right views, right intention, right endeavour, right mindfulness, right concentration; the power of faith, the power of energy, the power of mindfulness, the power concentration, the power of wisdom, the power of conscientiousness, the power of the fear of blame; absence of lust, absence of hate, absence of dullness, absence of

covetousness, absence of malice, right views; conscientiousness, fear of blame; serenity in the sense and thought, lightness in sense and thought, plasticity in sense and thought, facility in sense and thought, fitness in sense and thought, directness in sense and thought; mindfulness, intelligence, quiet, insight, grasp, balance. Now, these or whatever other incorporeal causally induced states there are on that occasion these are states that are good.\textsuperscript{324}

The nature of mind is difficult to be seen and understood and it is very subtle, very hard to control, assuredly light and quick and attaching itself to whatever it craves. It is, in case of the wording, constantly frightened, terrified and alarmed as well as agitated, flurried and anxious.\textsuperscript{325} The nature of mind should also be counted on account of its Dependent Origination, in which the casual factors play the decisive role in the arising of mind, thus subjecting to the impermanence earmark of Saṅkhāra. Even in the Buddha’s time Bhikkhu Sāti was ignored of the fact that there is no arising of the mind (in this case the term Viññāna is employed) unless it is through the collocation of causal factors.

A word about what is meant by the term “Mind’ (manas) in Buddhist philosophy may be useful here. It should clearly be understood that mind is not spirit as opposed to matter. It should always be remembered that Buddhism does not recognize a spirit opposed to matter, as is accepted by most other systems of philosophies and religions. Mind is only a faculty or organ (indriya) like the eye or the ear. It can be controlled and developed like any other faculty, and the Buddha speaks quite often of the value of controlling and disciplining these six faculties. The difference between the eye and the mind as faculties is that the former senses the world of colors and visible forms, while the latter senses the world of ideas and thoughts and mental objects. We experience different fields of the world with different senses. We cannot hear colors, but we can see them. Nor can we see sounds, but we can hear them. Thus with our five physical sense-organs-eye, ear, nose, tongue, body-we experience only the

\textsuperscript{324} J. Dhirasekera, pp. 1-5.
\textsuperscript{325} Nicca Utrastam Idaṃ Cittaṃ Niccam Ubbiggam Idaṃ Mano, S, I, p.53.
world of visible forms, sound, odors, tastes and tangible objects. But these represent only a part of the world, not the whole. What of ideas and thoughts? They are also a part of the world. But they cannot be sensed, they cannot be conceived by the faulty of the eye, ear, nose, tongue or body. Yet they can be conceived by another faculty, which is mind. Now ideas and thoughts are not independent of the world experienced by these five physical sense faculties. In fact they depend on, and are conditioned by, physical experiences. Hence a person born blind cannot have ideas of color, except through the analogy of sounds or some other things experienced through his other faculties. Ideas and thoughts which form a part of the world are thus produced and conditioned by physical experiences and are conceived by the mind. Hence mind (manas) is considered a sense faculty or organ (indriya), like the eye or the ear.

4.1.2 The Moral In Life Cultivation Of The Mind

The Buddhist Noble Eight Path it is the straight Path to self awakening to the structural engineering of a human personality and the origin of the universe. Knowing the straight Path, the Dhamma farer ill not drift from the eternal truth that governs and sanctifies human character with the love of wisdom and virtue. There are eight aggregates or components constituting the Noble Eight Fold Path, namely Right Understanding, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Actions, Right Livelihood, Right Efforts, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration. The Noble Eight Path is the brain child of Gotama Buddha derived from his supreme Enlightenment and self-cultivation to reach the fullness of human spirituality culminating in character maturity.

The hidden agenda of the Noble Eight Fold Path is stereological. It helps the Dhamma wayfarer realize that nothing has a self-identity of its own and everything is a systemic part of the systemic whole, the intuitive comprehension of the systemic whole as the unity of systemic as the unity of systemic parts in Anātman consciousness. Anātman consciousness is insightful penetration into the reality that every human personality is a dynamic process becoming of unity of contingent causes and conditions. Besides human personality, everything or
being is a dynamic process becoming devoid of any identity. When two human personalities interact and integrate, it becomes a larger unity of process becoming. Metaphorically out, every human personality is a selfless dynamic flowing river of life process connected to the borderless ocean, the one is the absolute truth of non-self (Anatman). Anātman is dynamic process becoming of unity of causes and conditions. Every empirical phenomenon, such as man, woman, family, work organization, social life, community living, human society, nation, human civilization should be perceived from the perspective of Anātman order to kill the self or ego.

In all worlds’ great religions, self centeredness is considered the major obstructive enemy of salvation or liberation. The eight principles or components help a faith believer or religious fractioned of any denomination to annihilate the self-centric ego of grasping. The destruction of self-centric ego will eradicate the three poisons of life, namely greed, hatred and delusion. The Noble Eight Fold Path is a sanctification process of avoiding evils, doing well and purifying the human mind.

The moral life is generally distinguished from the good life, a distinction that pertains to their nature as well as their quality. As far as their nature is concerned, the good life is founded on human emotion and disposition, while the moral life has its roots in the ultimately objective moral law, often associated with the divine, either as its guardian or as its author. For this very reason, the moral life is assumed to override the good life. This distinction also determines their qualitative difference. The moral life constitutes permanent and eternal happiness bearing the stamp of spirituality and sacredness. In contrast, the good life is one of temporary enjoyment and happiness associated with the sensory experiences of human beings, and is therefore materialistic and profane.

In the preceding chapter on freedom and happiness, it was pointed out that the Buddha avoided a sharp dichotomy between the happiness in Nirvāṇa

and the happiness associated with ordinary human life. This enabled him to recognize a more intimate relationship between the free person and the ordinary human being. The Buddha seems to have realized that if the moral life meant conforming to an absolute moral law that can override the good life; it could bring harm to human life. The history of mankind is replete with such instances. He therefore advocated a position in which human life could override the moral life. This is the implication of his famous statement that even “what is good has to be abandoned, let alone evil”. In other words, human life is not made for morals; morals are made for human life. An ideal, if it is formulated by human being, is based on an understanding of particular forms of good. Therefore that ideal must be modified when it comes into conflict with more concrete instances of good as human experiences continue to unfold. The Buddha used the simile of a raft to illustrate the pragmatic value of the moral ideal. William James expressed a similar sentiment when he argued for leaving part of the ideal behind when it came into conflict with the actual.

The Buddha’s renunciation of the conception of an absolute moral law and recognition of the validity of concrete or contextual moral conceptions may leave the impression that he justified a form of moral relativism. Relativism is generally frowned upon in ethics, primarily because, if it is true, then any and every act or principle adopted by a person or group of people, from barbarians to the most civilized, has to be recognized as right. Utilitarianism, in its two most popular forms, attempts to determine the rightness of an act or rule. On a superficial level of understanding, one may be tempted to compare such relativism or utilitarianism with Buddhism. However, a warning from the Buddha may prevent such a comparison.

The Buddha was not prepared to decide the rightness or wrongness of an action or a rule in itself. There are acts or rules that may appear to be right in particular contexts or situations. For the Buddha, the rightness or wrongness of an action or a rule does not consist in its situational or contextual validity alone, but rather in what it does to the person or the group of people in the particular
context or situation. Thus simply performing an act or adopting a rule because it is viewed as right does not constitute morality. It is the impact of the action or rule on the total personality or the group involved that gives it a moral character hence the Buddha’s statement, ‘Be moral or virtuous without being made of morals or virtues. The former is genuine; the latter is artificial. A moral person does not go about collecting moral medals. Instead, he or the social group that includes him grows with every moral action performed.

The path of morality thus turns out to be a gradual path. The Rathavinīta-Sūtra is a classic description of this path of moral progress, illustrated by the simile of a journey that requires a relay of seven chariots. Just as a traveler by means of a relay of chariots, eventually arrives at the end of his journey, so a person eventually reaches freedom and happiness through the cultivation of moral principles. Freedom and happiness thus constitute the ultimate goal or fruit, that is, a life of knowledge and compassion replacing the ordinary life of greed, hatred, and confusion.

The path to moral perfection constitutes the fourth noble truth and is generally described as the Noble Eightfold Path, which consists of:

1. Right view (Sammā diṭṭhi)
2. Right conception (Sammā sankappa)
3. Right speech (Sammā kammanta)
4. Right action (Sammā kammanta)
5. Right livelihood (Sammā ājīva)
6. Right effort (Sammā vāyāma)
7. Right mindfulness (Sammā sati)
8. Right concentration (Sammā samādhi)

These eight factors illustrate the comprehensive nature of the path of moral perfection recommended by the Buddha. Commenting on the Eightfold Path, Rhys Davids says, “If this Buddhist ideal of perfect life is remarkable when compared with the thought of India at that time, it is equally instructive
What is instructive from a comparative perspective is that it incorporates the functions of several philosophical traditions which, in the modern world, have tended to remain distinguishable from one another. For example, modern ethical philosophers who belong to the Analytic tradition confine their philosophical enterprise to a mere analysis and clarification of ethical concepts and theories, viewing ethics as a purely descriptive enterprise. Others for example, some of the Existentialists, like Kierkegaard consider it a valuable part of the philosopher’s vocation to recommend ways of life or modes of conduct that are conducive to the well-being of the individual as well as society. The Noble Eightfold Path is both descriptive and prescriptive. It involves an analytical study of knowledge as well as conception, and highlights factors that are relevant to any prescriptive theory in moral philosophy.

The term Sammā prefixed to the eight factors is generally translated as right, not because it is based on an absolute truth but because it is comprehensive or complete. Sammā is the contrary of wrong, which again is not based on the absolutely false but on the partial or the confused. The moral conceptions of right and wrong are therefore corollaries of the epistemological notions of the true and confused, not of the absolutist true false dichotomy.

The Noble Eightfold Path describes the way to the end of suffering, as it was laid out by Siddhartha Gautama. It is a practical guideline to ethical and mental development with the goal of freeing the individual from attachments and delusions; and it finally leads to understanding the truth about all things. Together with the Four Noble Truths it constitutes the gist of Buddhism. Great emphasis is put on the practical aspect, because it is only through practice that one can attain a higher level of existence and finally reach Nirvāṇa. The eight aspects of the path are not to be understood as a sequence of single steps, instead they are highly interdependent principles that have to be seen in

relationship with each other.

1. Right View

Right view is the beginning and the end of the path, it simply means to see and to understand things as they really are and to realize the Four Noble Truth. As such, right view is the cognitive aspect of wisdom. It means to see things through, to grasp the impermanent and imperfect nature of worldly objects and ideas, and to understand the law of karma and karma conditioning. Right view is not necessarily an intellectual capacity, just as wisdom is not just a matter of intelligence. Instead, right view is attained, sustained, and enhanced through all capacities of mind. It begins with the intuitive insight that all beings are subject to suffering and it ends with complete understanding of the true nature of all things. Since our view of the world forms our thoughts and our actions, right view yields right thoughts and right actions.

2. Right Intention

While right view refers to the cognitive aspect of wisdom, right intention refers to the volitional aspect, i.e. the kind of mental energy that controls our actions. Right intention can be described best as commitment to ethical and mental self-improvement. Buddha distinguishes three types of right intentions: 1. the intention of renunciation, which means resistance to the pull of desire, 2. the intention of good will, meaning resistance to feelings of anger and aversion, and 3. the intention of harmlessness, meaning not to think or act cruelly, violently, or aggressively, and to develop compassion.

3. Right Speech

Right speech is the first principle of ethical conduct in the eightfold path. Ethical conduct is viewed as a guideline to moral discipline, which supports the other principles of the path. This aspect is not self-sufficient, however, essential, because mental purification can only be achieved through the
cultivation of ethical conduct. The importance of speech in the context of Buddhist ethics is obvious: words can break or save lives, make enemies or friends, start war or create peace. Buddha explained right speech as follows: 1. to abstain from false speech, especially not to tell deliberate lies and not to speak deceitfully, 2. to abstain from slanderous speech and not to use words maliciously against others, 3. to abstain from harsh words that offend or hurt others, and 4. to abstain from idle chatter that lacks purpose or depth. Positively phrased, this means to tell the truth, to speak friendly, warm, and gently and to talk only when necessary.

4. Right Action

The second ethical principle, right action, involves the body as natural means of expression, as it refers to deeds that involve bodily actions. Unwholesome actions lead to unsound states of mind, while wholesome actions lead to sound states of mind. Again, the principle is explained in terms of abstinence: right action means 1. to abstain from harming sentient beings, especially to abstain from taking life (including suicide) and doing harm intentionally or delinquently, 2. to abstain from taking what is not given, which includes stealing, robbery, fraud, deceitfulness, and dishonesty, and 3. to abstain from sexual misconduct. Positively formulated, right action means to act kindly and compassionately, to be honest, to respect the belongings of others, and to keep sexual relationships harmless to others. Further details regarding the concrete meaning of right action can be found in the Precepts.

5. Right Livelihood

Right livelihood means that one should earn one's living in a righteous way and that wealth should be gained legally and peacefully. The Buddha mentions four specific activities that harm other beings and that one should avoid for this reason: 1. dealing in weapons, 2. dealing in living beings (including raising animals for slaughter as well as slave trade and prostitution),
and 3. working in meat production and butchery, and 4. selling intoxicants and poisons, such as alcohol and drugs. Furthermore any other occupation that would violate the principles of right speech and right action should be avoided.

6. Right Effort

Right effort can be seen as a prerequisite for the other principles of the path. Without effort, which is in itself an act of will, nothing can be achieved, whereas misguided effort distracts the mind from its task, and confusion will be the consequence. Mental energy is the force behind right effort; it can occur in either wholesome or unwholesome states. The same type of energy that fuels desire, envy, aggression, and violence can on the other side fuel self-discipline, honesty, benevolence, and kindness. Right effort is detailed in four types of endeavors that rank in ascending order of perfection: 1. to prevent the arising of unfrozen unwholesome states, 2. to abandon unwholesome states that have already arisen, 3. to arouse wholesome states that have not yet arisen, and 4. to maintain and perfect wholesome states already arisen.

7. Right Mindfulness

Right mindfulness is the controlled and perfected faculty of cognition. It is the mental ability to see things as they are, with clear consciousness. Usually, the cognitive process begins with an impression induced by perception, or by a thought, but then it does not stay with the mere impression. Instead, we almost always conceptualize sense impressions and thoughts immediately. We interpret them and set them in relation to other thoughts and experiences, which naturally go beyond the facility of the original impression. The mind then posits concepts, joins concepts into constructs, and weaves those constructs into complex interpretative schemes. All this happen only half consciously, and as a result we often see things obscured. Right mindfulness is anchored in clear perception and it penetrates impressions without getting carried away. Right mindfulness enables us to be aware of the process of conceptualization in a way
that we actively observe and control the way our thoughts go. Buddha accounted for this as the four foundations of mindfulness: 1. contemplation of the body, 2. contemplation of feeling (repulsive, attractive, or neutral), 3. contemplation of the state of mind, and 4. contemplation of the phenomena.

8. Right Concentration

The eighth principle of the path, right concentration, refers to the development of a mental force that occurs in natural consciousness, although at a relatively low level of intensity, namely concentration. Concentration in this context is described as one-wontedness of mind, meaning a state where all mental faculties are unified and directed onto one particular object. Right concentration for the purpose of the eightfold path means wholesome concentration, i.e. concentration on wholesome thoughts and actions. The Buddhist method of choice to develop right concentration is through the practice of meditation. The meditating mind focuses on a selected object. It first directs itself onto it, then sustains concentration, and finally intensifies concentration step by step. Through this practice it becomes natural to apply elevated levels concentration also in everyday situations.

From this it is quite clear that the Buddha’s way of life, his religious system, comprises the doctrine and the disciple. Discipline implies moral excellence, the taming of the tongue and the bodily actions, the code of conduct taught in Buddhism. This is generally known as Sīla, Virtue or moral training. The doctrine deals with men mental training, taming of the mind. It is meditation or the development of mental concentration, Samādhi, and Wisdom, Pañña. These three, Virtue, Concentration and Wisdom, are the cardinal teachings which when carefully and fully cultivated raise man from lower to higher levels of mental life; lead him from darkness to light, from passion to dispassion, from turmoil to tranquility.
These three are not isolated reactions, but integral parts of the path. This ideal is crystallized in the clear admonition of the Enlightened Ones of all ages ‘Cease from all evil; cultivate the good; cleanse your own mind’\textsuperscript{328}

Living in the palace amidst song and dance, luxury and pleasure, the Bodhisatta\textsuperscript{329} knew by experience that sense pleasures do not lead mankind to true happiness and deliverance. Six years of religious mortification, which he, as an ascetic, so zealously practiced in search of purification and final deliverance, brought him no reward. It was a vain and useless effort. Avoiding these two extremes he followed a path of moral and mental training and through self-experience discovered the Middle path consisting of the three groups.

Here a brief account of the three groups and how they aim at promoting and perfecting a path that consists of eight factors will be discussed.

It must always be borne in mind that the term path is only a figurative expression. Though conventionally we talk of treading a path, in the ultimate sense the eight steps signify eight mental factors. They are interdependent and interrelated, and at the highest level they function simultaneously; they are not followed and practiced one after the other in numerical order. Even on the lower level each and every factor should be tinged with some degree of right understand; for it is the key note of Buddhism.

These sayings of the Buddha explain the function and the purpose of cultivation Virtue, Meditation and Wisdom. Deliverance means living experience of the cessation of the three root causes of evil, greed, hatred and delusion or ignorance that assail the human mind. These root causes are eliminated through training in virtue, meditation and wisdom.

\textsuperscript{328} Sabba Pāpassa Akaraṇaṃ Kusalassa Upasampada, Sacittapariyodapanam Etān Buddhavanānaṃ. Dhammapada, p. 183.

\textsuperscript{329} Skt, Bodhisattva, on who adheres to or is bent on the ideal of enlightenment of knowledge of the Four Noble Truths. It is specially applied to an aspirant for enlightenment.
Thus it is clear that the Buddha’s teaching aims the highest purification, perfect mental health, free from all tainted impulses.

The Buddhist way of life, however, is an intense process of cleansing one’s speech, action and thought. It is self-development and self-purification. The emphasis is on practical results and not mere philosophical speculation, logical abstraction or even mere cogitation.

Though he recites only a little of the sacred texts but acts in accordance with the teaching, abandoning lust, hate and delusion, possessed of right understanding, his mind entirely released and clinging to nothing here or hereafter. Ge shares the fruits of the tranquil man. 330

These are clear indications that the Buddhist way of life, the Buddhist method of grasping the highest truth, awakening from ignorance to full knowledge, does not depend on mere academic intellectual development, but on a practical teaching that leads the follower to enlightenment a final deliverance.

The Buddha was more concerned with being than with inanimate nature. His sole object was to unravel the mystery of existence, to solve the problems of becoming. This he did by comprehending in all their fullness the Four Noble truths, the eternal verities of life.

This knowledge of the truths he tried to impart to those who sought it, and never forced it upon others. He never compelled or persuaded people to follow him, for compulsion and coercion were foreign to his method of teaching. He did not encourage his disciples to believe him blindly, but wished them to investigate his teaching which invited the seeker to come and see. It is seeing and understanding.

330 Dhammapāda, pp. 19-20.
To understand the world within, one must develop the inner faculties, one’s mind. The Buddha says: ‘Mind your mind’\textsuperscript{331} ‘The wise tame themselves.’\textsuperscript{332}

Today there is ceaseless work going on in all directions to improve the world. Scientists are pursuing their methods and experiments with undiminished vigour and determination. Modern discoveries and methods of communication and contact have produced startling results. All these improvements, though they have their advantages and rewards, are within this conflux of mind and body of man; however, there are unexplored marvels to occupy men of science for many years.

The life is so dark with ageing, so smothered with death, so bound with change, and these qualities are so inherent in it even as greenness is to grass and bitterness to quinine that not all the magic and witchery of science can ever transform it. The immortal splendor of an eternal sunlight awaits only those who can use the light of understanding and the culture of conduct to illuminate and guard their path through life’s tunnel of darkness and dismay.

The people of the world today mark the changing nature of life. Although they see it, they do not keep it in mind and act with dispassionate discernment. Though change again and again speaks to them and makes them unhappy, they pursue their mad career of whirling round the wheel of existence and are twisted and torn between the spokes of agony.

After all, a scientist or a plain man, if he has not understood the importance of conduct, the urgency for wholesome endeavor, the necessity to apply knowledge to life is so far as the doctrine of the Buddha is concerned, an immature person, who has yet to negotiate many more hurdles before he wins the race of life and the immoral prize of Nirvāṇa

\textsuperscript{331} Dīgha N, p.17.
\textsuperscript{332} Dhammapāda, p.80.
The Buddha is such seer, and his path to deliverance is open to all who have eyes to see and minds to understand. It is different from other paths to salvation, for the Buddha teaches that each individual, whether layman or monk is solely responsible for his own mankind is caught in as well as outer, and the Buddha’s infallible remedy, in brief is this: ‘The prudent man full or effort, established well in virtue, develops concentration and wisdom and succeeds in solving the tangle.’

The Buddha’s foremost admonition to his sixty immediate Arahant disciple was that the Dhamma should be promulgated for the welfare and happiness of many, out of compassion for world. The whole dispensation of the master is permeated with that salient quality of universal loving compassion.

Sīla or virtue, the initial stage of the path is based on this loving compassion. Why should one refrain from harming and robbing other people? It is not because of love for self and others? Why should one succor the poor, the needy and those in distress? Is it not out of compassion for those others?

To abstain from evil and do well is the function of Sīla, the code of conduct taught in Buddhism. This function is never void of loving compassion. Sīla embraces within it qualities of the heart, such as love modesty, tolerance, pity, charity and happiness at the concerned with the discipline of the mind.

When a good thought concerning the sensuous universe has arisen, which is accompanied by happiness associated and with knowledge, and has a it’s object a sight, a sound, a smell, a state, or what not, then there is contact, feeling, perception, thinking, thought, conception, discursive thought, joy, easy, self-collectedness, the faculty of faith, the faculty of energy, the faculty of mindfulness, the faculty of happiness, the faculty of vitality; right views, right intention, right Endeavour, right mindfulness, right concentration; the power of

333 Samyutta Nikāya, vol 1, p.13.
334 Vinaya Mahāvagga.
335 Vism: Silanīddesa.
faith, the power of energy, the power of mindfulness, the power concentration,
the power of wisdom, the power of conscientiousness, the power of the fear of
blame; absence of lust, absence of hate, absence of hate, absence of dullness,
absence of covetousness, absence of malice, right views; conscientiousness, fear
of blame; serenity in the sense and thought, lightness in sense and thought,
plasticity in sense and thought, facility in sense and thought, fitness in sense and
thought, directness in sense and thought; mindfulness, intelligence, quiet,
insight, grasp, balance. Now, these or whatever other incorporeal causally
induced states there are on that occasion these are states that are good.

All the functions and the so called agents are but transect and ever
changing like a stream of water.\textsuperscript{336}

The nature of mind is difficult to be seen and understood and it is very
subtle very hard to control, assuredly light and quick and attaching itself to
whatever it craves. It is, in case of the wording, constantly frightened, terrified
and alarmed as well as agitated, flurried and anxious. The nature of mind should
also be counted on account of its Dependent Origination, in which the casual
factors play the decisive role in the arising of mind, thus subjecting to the
impermanence earmark of \textit{Saṅkhāra}. Even in the Buddha’s time Bhikkhu Sāti
was ignored of the fact that there is no arising of the mind (in this case the term
Vinnāna is employed) unless it is through the collocation of causal factors.

Mind in the Buddha view, is thus a series of events in an incessant
process of emendation. Mind as unitary term is nothing more than a convenient
collective noun to comprehend a wide and complex nexus of mental states in
flux as ever mentioned in the foregoing section. As to its nature the mind or
Citta of the worldly individual is, psychologically speaking, constantly
throbbing, trembling and wavering. Ethically, it is exceedingly difficult to be
protected and to be saved from falling into moral lapse. Naturalistically, it
quivers like a fish out of water distracted by a multiplicity of stimuli.

\textsuperscript{336} J. Dhirasekera, op. cit., 4, p. 170.
Now, the main course of treatment should be postponed to make a brief introduction of the pre-Buddhist concept of mind. And then, it is followed by a survey of the primary source on the basis of which the study is elaborated. This survey tents towards chronological perspective.

Among the most important verbal roots denoting mental processes in the Ṛg Veda, N. Ross Reat observes, mind is the most general in meaning that it well-nigh refers to the functioning of any mental organs and faculties. The most common nouns derived from this verbal root, namely, mind, citta and cetas, are for all intents and purposes synonymous, and refer very generally to ‘thought’ or in some cases ‘mind’. Nouns and verbs derived from the root mind are so broad in meaning as to be capable of being substituted for virtually any of the more precise terms for mental organs and faculties. The verbal root man and its derivatives the closest relatives of mind are almost as broad in meaning as the derivatives of mind. Generally speaking, they imply more specifically than mind the process of intellectual cogitation. Other than this very vague and inconsistent distinction, the derivatives of mind and man, in the Ṛg Veda, are practically indistinguishable in meaning. Verbal forms while the opposite is true of derivatives of man. It is probably best therefore to translate nominal forms of mind with ‘thought’ and the term Manas with mind’. Such translations construe Manas as mental organ and mind as mental faculties, even though admittedly there is no clear distinction between these terms in actual usage in the Ṛg Veda.\(^{337}\)

The derivatives of mind in Ṛg Veda, like the term mind in Buddhist, refer in the broadest way to mental process whether perceptive, intellectual, emotional or imaginative it may be said that these derivatives denote the functioning of any one of the several mental organs and faculties mentioned in the Ṛg Veda. Used with the term Manas, mind indicates mental perception or intellectual thought. With hard (heart) it refers to emotional or intuitive thought. With refers to imaginative, visionary thought. With Kkratu it refers to volitional

\(^{337}\) N. Ross Reat, The Origins of Indian Psychology, p. 99.
thought. It is the broad and general nature of mind and its derivatives that constitutes the most distinctive characteristic of this family of terms.\textsuperscript{338}

The terms are so close in interrelation that most of the cases especially in the early Vedic texts they are interchangeable without any risk of unintentional modification of the meaning. In the Vedas, the idioms referring to mind are nearly always Manas; they are much like our own analogous phrases such as: ‘Sun travels quick as mind’…, ‘we know what the mind was’…, ‘approving thy mind’…, ‘this praise has been offered by the mind’…, ‘what a man reaches with mind, that he expresses by speech’…, ‘by what great mind may we arrest the storm gods?’…, wise in mind…trembling in mind…please in mind’…, a woman mindful of the gods…, we must consult the thought of another…beyond our thoughts’…, ‘which prayer is to be the choice of thy mind’?\textsuperscript{339}

The substantial’s metaphysic of Indian thought could be expressed by the presumptive statements such as the Upaniṣads passage which reads that in the beginning, this world was only the Self (ātman) in the form of a person. Looking around he saw nothing else than the self. He first said ‘I am’. There arose then the name of ‘I’ for the first time. Later on he realized the real self and the mutable self (or the empirical consciousness) which are graphically presented with the image of two birds perched on one branch, the one simply watching and the other enjoying the fruit.\textsuperscript{340} Through the range of meaning as meant by the root mind above presented, it is quite safe to suppose that the root mind’s family would be able to compass either of ‘the two birds’ and both of them.

The Buddha has in various ways spoken of the independent origination of the mind and has also stated that there is no arising of the mind except though the collocation of causal factors. The Madhupindikasutta sets out clearly the

\textsuperscript{338} Ibid. p.107.
causal connection between the conceptualizing activity of the mind and the birth of illusions, obstacles, obsessions and hindrances to spiritual progress: dependent on mind and mental object there arises mental consciousness by contact there arises feeling; what one feels one cognizes; what one cognizes one reasons out; what one reason out one becomes obsessed with; on account of the obsessions the individual is assailed by imagined notions in respect of what can be known by the mind in the past, present and future. So the origination of mind or Vinnāṇa a phase in the processes of life of an individual mental and physical as well cannot be visualized in separation with the other ones.

In terms of psychoanalysis, the ‘ego’ of human personality which is experienced as the ‘self’ or ‘I’ and is in contact with the external world through perception, it is the part, which remembers, evaluates, plans, and in other ways, is responsive to and acts in the surrounding physical and social world. The ‘ego’ coexists, in psychoanalytic theory, with the id and ‘superego’, as one of three agencies proposed by Sigmund Freud in his attempt to describes, in Freud’s terminology, the executive functions of personality; it is the integrator between the outer and inner worlds, as well as between the id and the ‘superego’.

The development of human capacities, culminating in three fold knowledge in the Buddha’s teaching of which the final process is release from influxes or achievement of the deathless. Mind had begged him of a close observation of the factors as originally suffering. He should be devoid of their causes. Mind had begged him to stop cento’s preoccupation with Mano by way of insight and to understand the impermanent as suffering, the emptiness as not-self, and the pain as destruction. In all prescribed circumstances of life, the pain had begged of him the well-controlled self.

Mind was then tempting him toward the impermanent and transient, whereas is often an attribute Nirvāṇa. In fact, his mind was obstructing him from reaching his goal. This process within a state of conflict must be calmed down. Mind, which is formless, far going, wandering alone, must be guided by the thinking of Nirvāṇa. He had chosen his way of life in obedience with his mind,
and now that same mind begged him to go back to the old way of life. In a good sense he had done what mind asked of him throughout many births, knowing that Saṃsāra’s suffering was caused by mind, whether he reached human existences, Deva like existence, or he reached downward existences.341

The essence of the Buddha’s teaching can be summed up in two principles: the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. The first covers the side of doctrine, and the primary response it elicits understands; the second covers the side of discipline, in the broadest sense of that word, and the primary response it calls for is practice. In the structure of the teaching these two principles lock together into an individual unity called the Dhamma Vinaya, the doctrine and discipline, or in brief, the Dhamma. The internal unity of the Dhamma is guaranteed by the fact that the last of the Four Noble Truths, the truth of the way is, is the Noble Eightfold Path, while the first factor of the noble Eightfold Path. So to follow the Noble Eightfold Path is a matter of practice rather than intellectual knowledge concept of Anātman for cultivation of the mind.

4.1.3 Three Marks Of Existence As Depicted in Budhism

The subject today is the three universal characteristics of existence. This is an important part of the teachings of the Buddha. Like the Four Noble Truths, karma, the teaching of Dependent Origination and the five aggregates, the teaching of the three characteristics is part of what we might call the doctrinal contents of wisdom. In other words, when we talk about the knowledge and the understanding that is implied by wisdom, we have this teaching in mind.

The three characteristics of existence that we have in mind are the characteristics of impermanence (Anitya), suffering (Duhkha) and not-self (Anātma). These three characteristics are always present in or are connected with existence, and they tell us about the nature of existence. They help us to know what to do with existence. What we learn to develop as a result of understanding

341 Psalms of the Early Buddhist, Vol, 1107, p. 373.
the three characteristics is renunciation. Once we understand that existence is universally characterized by impermanence, suffering and not-self, we eliminate our attachment to existence. Once we eliminate our attachment to existence, we gain the threshold of *Nirvāṇa*. This is the purpose that understanding the three characteristics serves. It removes attachment by removing delusions, the misunderstanding that existence is permanent, is pleasant and has something to do with the self. This is why understanding the three characteristics is part of the contents of wisdom.

The Buddha believed and taught that everything in the world is related to the three marks of existence, and that everything and everyone is conditioned by the world around them. The three marks are made up of *Dukkha*, *Anicca* and *Anattā*which, combined are reasoned to be the inescapable factors which are underlying in our world spiritually and physically. It is argued that Buddhists like the idea of the three marks of existence because it gives them a greater understanding about themselves, as well as their purpose in this state of being. Also, it may be important as the Buddha’s clear knowledge and understanding is strongly believed by Buddhist followers, therefore it can be seen as the basis for understanding the reasons for living. Although this may be argued as depressive, for example *Dukkha* is about suffering which is a topic many people are unwilling to talk about, and don’t like the idea as their believe it is too negative. However, for Buddhist the three fundamental mark of existence offer a true insight into the reality of life as well as greater understanding.

Another main teaching of Buddhist metaphysics is known as the Three Marks of Existence. The first is *Anicca*, impermanence: all things are transitory, nothing lasts. The second is *Anātman*, No-Self or No-Soul: human beings, and all of existence, are without a soul or self. There is no eternal, unchanging part of us, like the Hindu idea of *Ātman*; there is no eternal, unchanging aspect of the universe, like the Hindu idea of Brahman. The entire idea of self is seen as an illusion, one which causes immeasurable suffering; this false idea gives rise to the consequent tendency to try to protect the self or ego and to preserve its
interests, which is futile since nothing is permanent anyway. The third mark of existence is that of Dukkha, suffering: all of existence, not just human existence but even the highest states of meditation are forms of suffering, ultimately inadequate and unsatisfactory.

The three marks of existence can be seen as the basis for the Four Noble Truths above; in turn the three marks of existence may be seen to come out of an even more fundamental Buddhist theory, that of Pratityasamutpāda: Dependent Origination, or Interdependent Co-arising. This theory says that all things are cause and are caused by other things; all of existence is conditioned, nothing exists independently, and there is no First Cause. There was no beginning to the chain of causality; it is useless to speculate how phenomenal existence started. However, it can be ended, and that is the ultimate goal of Buddhism - the ultimate liberation of all creatures from the pain of existence.

Sometimes this causality is spoken of as a circular linking of twelve different factors; if the chain of causality can be broken, existence is ended and liberation attained. One of these factors is attachment or craving, Taṇhā, and another is ignorance; these two are emphasized as being the weak links in the chain, the place to make a break. To overcome selfish craving, one cultivates the heart through compassion; to eliminate ignorance one cultivates the mind through wisdom. Compassion and wisdom are twin virtues in Buddhism, and are cultured by ethical behavior and meditation, respectively. It is a process of self-discipline and self-development which emphasizes the heart and mind equally, and insists that both working together are necessary for enlightenment.

Three marks followed as are:

1. **Impermanance**

   Early Buddhism dealt with the problem of impermanence in a very rational manner. This concept is known as Anicca in Buddhism, according to
which, impermanence is an undeniable and inescapable fact of human existence from which nothing that belongs to this earth is ever free.

Buddhism declares that there are five processes on which no human being has control and which none can ever change. These five processes are namely, the process of growing old, of falling sick, of dying, of decay of things that are perishable and of the passing away of that which is liable to pass. Buddhism however suggests that escape from these is possible and it's through Nirvāṇa.

Hinduism also believes in the impermanent nature of life. But it deals with this problem differently. According to Hinduism, impermanence can be overcome by locating and uniting with the center of permanence that exists within oneself. This center is the Soul or the self that is immortal, permanent and ever stable.

According to Hinduism, Ātman is the fundamental truth that exists in every being, while at the microcosmic level it is Brahman who is the fundamental and supreme truth of all existence. He who realizes Ātman verily becomes Brahman and attains immortality.

The Buddha differed radically with this most fundamental concept of Hinduism and in line with his preaching the early Buddhists did not believe in the existence of a permanent and fixed reality which could be referred to as either God or soul. According to them what was apparent and verifiable about our existence was the continuous change it undergoes.

Thus early Buddhism declares that in this world there is nothing that is fixed and permanent. Everything is subject to change and alteration. "Decay is inherent in all component things," declared the Buddha and his followers accepted that existence was a flux, and a continuous becoming.

According to the teachings of the Buddha, life is comparable to a river. It is a progressive moment, a successive series of different moments,
joining together to give the impression of one continuous flow. It moves from cause to cause, effect to effect, one point to another, one state of existence to another, giving an outward impression that it is one continuous and unified movement, where as in reality it is not. The river of yesterday is not the same as the river of today. The river of this moment is not going to be the same as the river of the next moment. So does life. It changes continuously, becomes something or the other from moment to moment.

Take for example the life of an individual. It is a fallacy to believe that a person would remain the same person during his entire life time. He changes every moment. He actually lives and dies but for a moment, or lives and dies moment by moment, as each moment leads to the next. A person is what he is in the context of the time in which he exists. It is an illusion to believe that the person you have seen just now is the same as the person you are just now seeing or the person whom you are seeing now will be the same as the person you will see after a few moments.

Even from a scientific point of view this is true. We know cell divisions take place in each living being continuously. Old cells in our bodies die and yield place continuously to the new ones that are forming. Like the waves in a sea, every moment, many thoughts arise and die in each individual. Psychologically and physically he is never the same all the time. Technically speaking, no individual is ever composed of the same amount of energy, mental stuff and cellular material all the time. He is subject to change and the change is a continuous movement.

Impermanence and change are thus the undeniable truths of our existence. What is real is the existing moment, the present that is a product of the past, or a result of the previous causes and actions. Because of ignorance, an ordinary mind conceives them all to be part of one continuous reality. But in truth they are not.
The various stages in the life of a man, the childhood, the adulthood, the old age are not the same at any given time. The child is not the same when he grows up and becomes a young man, nor when the latter turns into an old man. The seed is not the tree, though it produces the tree, and the fruit is also not the tree, though it is produced by the tree.

The concept of impermanence and continuous becoming is central to early Buddhist teachings. It is by becoming aware of it, by observing it and by understanding it, one can find a suitable remedy for the sorrow of human life and achieve liberation from the process of Anicca or impermanence. 342

2. Suffering

The heart of the Buddha’s teaching lies in the Four Noble Truths (Cattāri Ariyasaccāni) which he expounded in his very first sermon343 to his old colleagues, the five ascetics, at Isipatana (modern Sarnath) near Benares. In the sermon, as well have it in the original texts, these four Truths are given briefly. But there are innumerable places in the early Buddhist scriptures where they are explained again and again, with greater detail and in different ways. If we study the Four Noble Truths with the help of these references and explanations, we get fairly good and accurate account of the essential teachings of the Buddha according to the original texts.

The First Noble Truth (Dukkha-ariyasacca) is generally translated by almost all scholars as ‘The Noble Truth of Suffering’, and it is interpreted to mean that life according to Buddhism is nothing but suffering and pain. Both translation and interpretation are highly unsatisfactory and misleading. It is because of this limited, free and easy translation, and its superficial interpretation, that many people have been misled into regarding Buddhism as pessimistic.

342 From www.hinduwebsite.com
343 Dhammacakkappavattana-Sūtta, Setting in Motion The Wheel of Truth, Alutgama, Pub, 1922, p. 9.
First of all, Buddhism is neither pessimistic nor optimistic. If anything at all, it is realistic, for it takes a realistic view of life and of the world. It looks at things objectively (yathābūtāṃ). It does not falsely lull you into living in a fool’s paradise, nor does it frighten and agonize you with all kinds of imaginary fears and sins. It tells you exactly and objectively what you are and what the world around you is, and shows you the way to perfect freedom, peace, tranquillity and happiness.

One physician may gravely exaggerate an illness and give up hope altogether. Another may ignorantly declare that there is no illness and that no treatment is necessary, thus deceiving the patient with a false consolation. You may call the first one pessimistic and the second optimistic. Both are equally dangerous. But a third physician diagnoses the symptoms correctly, understands the cause and the nature of the illness, sees clearly that it can be cured, and courageously administers a course of treatment, thus saving his patient. The Buddha is like the last physician. He is the wise and scientific doctor for the ills of the world (Bhisakka) or Bhaisajya-guru).

It is true that the Pali word Dukka(or Sanskrit dukka) in ordinary usage means ‘suffering’, ‘pain’, ‘sorrow’ or ‘misery’, as opposed to the word Dukha meaning ‘happiness’, ‘comfort’ or ‘ease’. But the term Dukkhaas the First Noble Truth, which represents the Buddha’s view of life and the world, has a deeper philosophical meaning and connotes enormously wider senses. It is admitted that the term Dukkha in the First Noble Truth contains, quite obviously, the ordinary meaning of ‘suffering’, but in addition it also includes deeper ideas such as ‘imperfection’, ‘impermanence’, ‘emptiness’, ‘insubstantiality’. It is difficult therefore to find one word to embrace the whole conception of the term Dukkhaas the First Noble Truth, and so it is better to leave it translation, than to give an inadequate and wrong idea of it by conveniently translating it as ‘suffering’ or ‘pain’.
The Buddha does not deny happiness in life when he says there is suffering. On the contrary he admits different forms of happiness, both material and spiritual, for laymen as well as for monks. In the Āṅguttara-Nikāya, one of the five original Collections in Pāli containing the Buddha’s discourses, there is a list of happiness’s (sukhāni), such as the happiness of family life and the happiness of a recluse, the happiness of sense pleasures and the happiness of attachment and the happiness of detachment, physical happiness and mental happiness etc. But all these are included in Dukkha. Even the very pure spiritual states of Dhyāna attained by the practice of higher meditation, free from even a shadow of suffering in the accepted sense of the word, states which may be described as unmixed happiness, as well as the state of Dhyānawhich is free from sensations both pleasant (dukhā) and unpleasant (dukkha) and is only pure equanimity and awareness— even these very high spiritual states are included in Dukkha. In one of the Sūtras of the Majjhima-Nikāya, (again one of the five original Collections), after praising the spiritual happiness of these Dhyānas, the Buddha says that they are ‘impermanent, Dukkha, and subject to change’ (aniccā dukkhā viparināmadhammā). Notice that the word Dukkhais explicitly used. It is Dukkha, not because there is ‘suffering’ in the ordinary sense of the word, but because whatever is impermanent is Dukkha.

All kinds of suffering in life like birth, old age, sickness, death, association with unpleasant persons and conditions, separation from loved ones and pleasant conditions, not getting what one desires, grief, lamentation, distress—all such forms of physical and mental suffering, which are universally accepted as suffering or pain, are included in Dukkha as ordinary suffering (dukkha-dukkha).

A happy feeling, a happy condition in life, is not permanent, not everlasting. It changes sooner or later. When it changes, it produces pain,
suffering, unhappiness. This vicissitude is included in Dukkhaas suffering produced by change (viparināma-dukkha).

It is easy to understand the two forms of suffering (dukkha) mentioned above. No one will dispute them. This aspect of the First Noble Truth is more popular known because it is easy to understand. It is common experience in our daily life.

But the third form of Dukkhaas conditioned states (saṃkhāra-dukkha) is the most important philosophical aspect of the First Noble Truth, and it requires some analytical explanation of what we consider as a ‘being’, as an ‘individual’, or as ‘I’.

What we call a ‘being’ or an ‘individual’, or ‘I’, according to Buddhist philosophy, is only a combination of ever-changing physical and mental forces or energies, which may be divided into five groups or aggregates. The Buddha says: ‘In short these five aggregates of attachment are Dukkha. 346

The central importance of Dukkha in Buddhist philosophy is not intended to present a pessimistic view of life, but rather to present a realistic practical assessment of the human condition that all beings must experience suffering and pain at some point in their lives, including the inevitable sufferings of illness, aging, and death. Contemporary Buddhist teachers and translators emphasize that while the central message of Buddhism is optimistic, the Buddhist view of our situation in life.

Walpola Rahula explains the importance of this realistic point of view:

First of all, Buddhism is neither pessimistic nor optimistic. If anything at all, it is realistic, for it takes a realistic view of life and of the world. It looks at things objectively (yathābhūtaṃ). It does not falsely lull you into living in a fool’s paradise, nor does it frighten and agonies you with all kinds of imaginary

fears and sins. It tells you exactly and objectively what you are and what the world around you is, and shows you the way to perfect freedom, peace, tranquility and happiness. One physician may gravely exaggerate an illness and give up hope altogether. Another may ignorantly declare that there is no illness and that no treatment is necessary, thus deceiving the patient with a false consolation. You may call the first one pessimistic and the second optimistic. Both are equally dangerous. But a third physician diagnoses the symptoms correctly, understands the cause and the nature of the illness, sees clearly that it can be cured, and courageously administers a course of treatment, thus saving his patient. The Buddha is like the last physician. He is the wise and scientific doctor for the ills of the world.347

The Buddha acknowledged that there is both happiness and sorrow in the world, but he taught that even when we have some kind of happiness, it is not permanent; it is subject to change. And due to this unstable, impermanent nature of all things, everything we experience is said to have the quality of Duhkha or unsatisfied. Therefore unless we can gain insight into that truth, and understand what is really able to provide lasting happiness, and what is unable to provide happiness?

3. Anātman

To understand the Anātman doctrine, one must understand that the eternal soul theory "I have a soul" and the material theory “I have no soul" are both obstacles to self-realization or salvation. They arise from the misconception "I Am." Hence, to understand the Anātman doctrine, one must not cling to any opinion or views on soul-theory; rather, one must try to see things objectively as they are and without any mental projections. One must learn to see the so-called "I" or Soul or Self for what it really is: merely a combination of changing forces. This requires some analytical explanation.

The Anātman doctrine applies most specifically to the human individual. One mode of demonstrating a human being to be "soulless" is the cross-sectional analysis of an individual employed in the famous chariot analogy of

The Questions of King Milinda. At the end of a long discussion, the monk Nagasena and King Milinda come to the conclusion that just as the term "chariot" is only a way of naming a collection of particular terms, so too is the term for "human being." Human being signifies only a loosely joined set of physical body-parts; or more inclusively, five temporarily connected "heaps" (Skandhas) which are a form, sensation, perception, the predispositions, and consciousness. "Form" refers to bodily form primarily, and "predispositions" to the karma inherited from past lives.

The philosophy of Anātman or no self is integral to the Buddha's teachings. Our mistaken picture of our self and the feeling that we are or may be permanent contributes to our selfishness and our suffering. By seeing that we are impermanent beings, comprised of component parts and not an eternal soul we are able to give up some of our ego and become more selfless people. This is important in our process of abandoning attachment to material things. If we accept our inevitable death and the unreality of our soul we are more capable of reducing our attachment to the material pleasures of this life. And although it may be difficult to fully realize the unreality of our permanent selves it is also freeing. If we are not permanent beings we can realize that things like guilt, success, accumulation of wealth and other worries simply have no meaning once this aggregate of component parts departs this world.

The third law states that there is no permanent essence, "self", ego, or soul in phenomena. The term originates as the negation of the concept of Atta (Ātman) which was the equivalent in the old Brahmanical religion of the Buddha's day to what other religions have called the "soul". The Buddha advanced psycho-physical explanation of the individual which leaves no room for a soul. The Buddha recognized that the delusion of self or ego was one of the most powerful of human instincts, and at the same time one of the most potent sources of ignorance and wrong action. In applying the Anātman doctrine to the phenomena of the external world some care must be exercised. Early Buddhism did not deny the reality of the external world. It argued that the phenomena of the external world could be broken down into its constituent components, and
that nothing else other than these components existed. It was only in this sense that the phenomena of the external world were declared to be empty (suñña). Some schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism have taken the doctrine of emptiness to imply a denial of the reality of the external world. This interpretation is foreign to early Buddhism. Early Buddhism only asserts that there is no fixed essence or being in phenomena, but only a process of becoming.\textsuperscript{348}

4.1.4 Nirvāṇa is No Self

In Buddhism, the ultimate goal is to reach Nirvāṇa, breaking the cycle of death and rebirth. Buddha discovered the method of freedom and enlightenment through the Four Noble Truths, Eight Fold Path, three marks of existence, and the doctrine of Anātman. Anātman is a difficult doctrine to understand because of its un-orthodox stance on souls. Buddhism rejects the Brahmanic views of an external soul for that of an impersonal non self. The Skandhas are constantly changing; this supports the belief of Anātman non self. Dependant Origination teaches that everything is a stream of mental activity is in constant flux. The Buddhist thoughts are that Anātman is essential to reaching Nirvāṇa without it the individual will continue to search for their inner self where none exist and never shall become enlightened.

The Buddhist concepts of Nirvāṇa and Saṃsāra were also central to understanding Buddhist soteriologies and had important implications for views toward poverty and wealth. In early Theravāda Buddhism, for example, Nirvāṇa and Saṃsāra were viewed as far apart Nirvāṇa being the ‘unborn’ and ‘unbecoming’ and defined in terms of what Saṃsāra was not. The soteriological goal was to escape Saṃsāra through escaping craving, and to do this through practicing the Eightfold Path. Only when a person had escaped Saṃsāra could they attain Nirvāṇa, whether Nirvāṇa was conceiving of as an ethical state or also as a metaphysical one. The implication for early Theravāda Buddhist believers

\textsuperscript{348} By Dr Victor A Gunasekara: Basic Buddhism A Modern Introduction to the Buddha’s Teaching, 2 Jan 2001.
was that to attain *Nirvāṇa* right ethical behavior was a key.  

The concept of *Nirvāṇa* implied that since no eternal unchanging *Ātman* (self) existed, there was no reason to withhold giving to others, or to hoard wealth, since there was no ‘I’ that needed to be protected or defended more than others, the idea of *Nirvāṇa* also held a potential paradox. That is, if there was no self, then what individual or personal moral obligation could exist? Could ethics even be possible if there was no self? The most common early Theravāda Buddhist answer to this was that whether there was a self or not, *Karma* continued to exist and wrongful moral actions led to negative karma while right actions led to positive karma. Thus the nonexistence of self did not imply those actions and their results, or ethical responsibility, could not exist.  

In such a state the enlightened king begins with his understanding of the truth *Anātman* and based upon this understanding acts benevolently and without ‘self’ to carry out compassionate measures for the sick, elderly, farmers, children, mendicants and beggars, based upon the *Karma* premise that such giving of wealth will produce more prosperity and wealth for the kingdom in the future. He also cooperates with the Sangha to spread the Dharma.  

In this way *Nāgārjuna* takes up the themes of *Karma*, *Anātman*, compassionate giving and state cooperation and puts them into an overall viewpoint of how Mahāyāna economic and social ethics should be carried out by the benevolent king. In the process, he also presents both the continuities and differences between *Mahāyāna* economic ethics and those of *Theravāda*: the continuities consisting of a common stress on the importance of giving; the differences change in an individual’s thinking as the key to all later benevolent.

In Buddhism, the personality, which according to its view arises out of the five Skandhas themselves impermanent, is not regarded as an eternal self but

\[\text{349 The Relationship between Nirvāṇa and Saṃsāra: An Essay in the Evolution of Buddhist Ethics, Philosophy East and West, 1971, pp. 55-58.}\]


\[\text{351 Robert Thurman, Nāgārjuna’s Guidelines for Buddhist Social Activism, in The Path of Compassion, pp. 131-39.}\]
rather as the conventional ego of everyday experience. Buddha himself, in answer to the question whether a self exists or not, never put forward a definite position so as not to cause new concepts to arise that would be irrelevant and obstructive for spiritual practice. Thus the teaching of no self is to be understood more as a fruitful pedagogical device than as a philosophical doctrine. Nevertheless in the course of the development of the Buddhist system of thought, this came more and more to be an unequivocal denial of the existence of a self. Only the Vatsiputriya School affirmed the concept of a self. This view was considered false by the other schools.

In Buddhism the methods for the attainment of liberation concentrate on doing away with the belief in an ego as the essential obstacle to the realization of Nirvāṇa. Clinging to the concept of an ego is the primary cause of all passions and must be completely overcome. If one does not apprehend the impersonality of existence, does not recognize existence as a flux of arising and passing away of physical and mental phenomena in which there is no constant self, then one is unable to grasp the Four Noble Truths in their real significance and is unable to attain the insight that is essential for release.

A related idea, which finds support in the Pali Canon and the contemporary Theravāda practice tradition despite its absence in the Theravāda commentaries and Abhidhamma, is that the mind of the arahant is itself Nirvāṇa. There is a clear reference in the Anguttara Nikāya to a "luminous mind" present within all people, be they corrupt or pure, whether or not it itself is pure or impure. The Canon does not support the identification of the "luminous mind" with nirvanic consciousness, though it plays a role in the realization of Nirvāṇa. Upon the destruction of the fetters, according to one scholar, "the shining Nirvāṇa consciousness flashes out" of it, "being without object or support, so transcending all limitations."

In Mahāyāna Buddhism, Nirvāṇa and Saṃsāra are said to be not-different in the sense that there is no metaphysical barrier between the two. An individual
can attain Nirvāṇa by following the Buddhist path. If they were ultimately different this would be impossible. Thus, the duality between Nirvāṇa and Samsāra is only accurate on the conventional level. Another way to arrive at this conclusion is through the analysis that all phenomena are empty of an essential identity, and therefore suffering is never inherent in any situation. Thus liberation from suffering and its causes is not a metaphysical shift of any kind. For better explication of this thinking see two-truths doctrine. The Theravāda school makes the antithesis of Nirvāṇa and Samsāra the starting point of the entire quest for deliverance. Even more, it treats this antithesis as determinative of the final goal, which is precisely the transcendence of Samsāra and the attainment of liberation in Nirvāṇa. Where Theravāda differs significantly from the Mahāyāna schools, which also start with the duality of Samsāra and Nirvāṇa, is in not regarding this polarity as a mere preparatory lesson tailored for those with blunt faculties, to be eventually superseded by some higher realization of non-duality. From the standpoint of the Pāli Suttas, even for the Buddha and the Arahants suffering and its cessation, Nirvāṇa and Samsāra, remain distinct. Both schools agree that Sākyamuni Buddha was in Samsāra while having attained Nirvāṇa, in so far as he was seen by all while simultaneously free from Samsāra.352

In Buddhism Nirvāṇa is the first of all, it means the cessation, the extinction of all suffering. But our suffering comes from our wrong perceptions misunderstanding. And that is why the practice of meditation, the practice of looking deeply has the purpose of removing wrong perceptions from us. If you are able to remove wrong perceptions, you will be able to be free from the afflictions and the sufferings that always arise from wrong perceptions. You have wrong perception on yourself and on the other, and the other has wrong perception on them and on you and that is the cause of fear, of violence, of hatred. That is why trying to remove wrong perceptions is the only way to peace.

352 Majjhima Nikāya 2-Att. 4.68.
And that is why Nirvāṇa is, first of all, the removal of wrong perceptions. And when you remove wrong perceptions, you remove the suffering.\textsuperscript{353}

The Buddha taught that human existence is characterized by various forms of suffering (birth, aging, sickness, and death), which are experienced over the course of many lifetimes in the cycle of rebirth called Samsāra. Seeking a state beyond suffering, he determined that its cause negative actions and the negative emotions that motivate them must be destroyed. If these causes could be eradicated, they would have no effect, resulting in the cessation of suffering. This cessation was Nirvāṇa. Nirvāṇa was not regarded as a place, therefore, but as a state of absence, notably the absence of suffering. Exactly what persisted in the state of Nirvāṇā has been the subject of considerable discussion over the history of the tradition, though it has been described as bliss unchanging, secure, and unconditioned.

To achieve Nirvāṇa, or the end of suffering, Buddhist followers must follow the Noble Eightfold Path as set forth by Buddha over 2,500 years ago. The eight steps of the path form the fourth truth of the Four Noble Truths, which are among the most fundamental of Buddhist teachings.

The Eightfold Path is often depicted as a Dharma wheel, closely resembling a ship’s wheel. The eight steps comprising the path or wheel result in a practical guide to ethics, mental rehabilitation, and mental reconditioning. By achieving these eight steps, a Buddhist follower will eliminate all suffering and reach the desired state of Nirvāṇa.

According to Buddhism, when the state of Nirvāṇā is attained, all afflictions and the cycle of birth and death will be extinguished, there will be no more suffering, eternal happiness is attained, perfect wisdom is realized, and all illusions are eradicated. Ordinary people think that Nirvāṇa is attained only after death. Actually, the definition of Nirvana is "without birth or death.”

\textsuperscript{353} Thich Nhat Hanh, \textit{Nirvāṇa In Buddhism is the End all of Suffering}. Pub, 2007.
Nirvāṇa means the extinction of "clinging"; the elimination of Ātma-Graha (holding on to the concept of the self) and Dharma-Graha (holding on to the concept that things are real); and the eradication of the obstacles of defilement and the riddance of the hindrance of knowledge. It means putting an end to the cycle of birth and death. Nirvāṇa is liberation. Defilement is bondage. A criminal, chained by shackles, has lost his freedom. Likewise, living beings are bound by the chains of greed, hatred, and delusion. If living beings practice the Dharma and put an end to these defilements, they will all be liberated and thus attain Nirvāṇa. Other than going through this process, Nirvāṇa is not to be found in any other way.

During the Buddha's time, the Buddha's disciples traveled to different places to teach the Dharma after they had attained Nirvāṇa. From their example, we can understand that Nirvāṇa is not something that can be attained outside of Dharmas. All Dharmas are originally Nirvāṇa. However, since the minds of living beings are obscured by ignorance, by delusion and clinging, and by thinking that the "self" and the Dharmas have a substantial existence which can be attained, they encounter obstacles, hindrances, and bondage everywhere they go. If we can be like the Buddhist sages who understand that all things arise due to Conditioned Genesis, then even though we still exist in this world, we can realize that all existence is ever changing and lacks a true self-nature. We will no longer be attached; wherever we are we will then be liberated. Liberation is Nirvāṇa.

Some people say that life is like an ocean in which there is perpetual motion, with waves coming one after the other. The continuous movement of the ocean exemplifies the impermanence of the Saṃsharas. If we can look at the waves through the eyes of the Buddhist sages, we then soon realize that although the waves are turbulent, the nature of water is always calm. Likewise, life is an endless cycle of birth and death, but the real self-nature is always in perfect peace. Thus, if we want to attain the liberation of Nirvāṇa, we have to realize it through the impermanence of all Saṃsharas and the no substantiality of all
Dharmas. It is not possible to find the state of perfect peace of *Nirvāṇa* apart from impermanence and no substantiality.

In *Saṃsāra* philosophy, *Nirvāṇa* is the state of being free from both suffering and the cycle of rebirth. It is a crucial concept in Buddhism and Jainism. *Nirvāṇa* is Sanskrit word, literally meaning to cease blowing.

Buddha described *Nirvāṇa* as the perfect peace of mind that is free from hungering, anger and other distressed states. This peace, which is in reality the cardinal nature of the mind, is unveiled when the root causes of the distressed states are resolved. The causes themselves lie deep within the mind, but their destruction is gradually achieved by living a regimented life. In *Nirvāṇa* the root causes of yearning such that one is no longer subject to human suffering or further states of rebirths in *Saṃsāra*.

According to Buddhist philosophy *Nirvāṇa* will enable individuals to free themselves from the worldly attachments and in the process help them to rise over Moha and *Māyā*. Buddha explained, the whole world is in plumes. By what fire of birth, old age, death, pain, lamentation, sorrow, grief and despair it is kindled.

Buddhist philosophy states that *Nirvāṇa* is neither a states of annihilation nor nothingness. It is auspicious, eternal and happy. *Nirvāṇa* deviates from the concept of heaven. The state of *Nirvāṇa* passes through *Nirodha*. *Nirodha* in Buddhism means breaking away from the false notions of the world and soul, as Buddhism does not believe ‘I’ the concept of a permanent soul. Buddhism does not profess that *Nirvāṇa* is to be achieved in an afterlife. This is where it sets itself apart from most of the religious philosophies.