Chapter Two:

THE CONCEPT OF ANĀTMAN IN LATER BUDDHISM

2. 1.1 The Origin Of Religion And Early Buddhism.

The history of Buddhism dates back to the year 580 BC, which started with the birth of Buddha Siddhartha Gautama. Born in the Lumbini, Southern Nepal, Siddhartha left his home at a young age of 29 years, in search of enlightenment. After going through a life of self-denial, discipline and meditation, he attained enlightenment, which resulted in the alleviation of all his pain and suffering. He then set on a journey of teaching people the path to enlightenment that would liberate them from the cycle of life and death.

Gradually, Buddhism spread to numerous countries of the world, which resulted in development of the religion. The original Indian foundation was expanded by the inclusion of Hellenistic as well as Central Asian, East Asian, and Southeast Asian cultural elements. The history of Buddhism also witnessed the development of numerous movements and divisions, such as Theravāda, Mahāyāna, etc.

The First Council

The First Council of Buddhist Sangha was organized a few months after Buddha attained Mahāparinirvāṇa. It was held in Rajagaha, with the aim of developing an agreement on his teachings. However, the teachings of Buddha were not written down even then.

The Second Council

The Second Council took place around 100 years after the Mahāparinirvāṇa of Lord Buddha. The aim of the council, held at Vesali, was to settle a conflict over the nature of the arahant (or Buddhist saint) and monastic discipline, which had arisen between Mahasanghika majority (Great Assembly) of eastern India and Sthavira minority (the Elders) of the west.
**The Era of Asoka the Great**

Asoka, the first Buddhist Emperor, was the ruler of the Magadhan Empire. Initially a ruler obsessed with the aim of expanding his empire, he changed after witnessing the brutal carnage at the battle of Kalinga. This event led him towards Buddhism and he built his empire into a Buddhist state, a first of its kind. He laid the foundation of numerous stupas and spread the teachings of Lord Buddha throughout the world.

**The Third Council**

The Third Council of Buddhist Sangha was held under Emperor Asoka, in Pataliputra. The reason for the council was deterioration in the standards of the monks. The consequence of the council was exclusion of numerous bogus monks from the Sangha.

**Spread of Buddhism in Sri Lanka**

Emperor Asoka sent his son, Mahindra, to Sri Lanka to spread Buddhism in the state. He succeeded in converting the King of Sri Lanka to Buddhism and soon, Buddhism became the state religion of the country.

**The Fourth Council**

The Fourth Council took place in Sri Lanka, in the Aloka Cave near the village of Matale. It was in this council that decision was taken to write the teachings of Lord Buddha for the first time. The entire writing was collected in three baskets and given the name of Tipiṭaka or the Pāli Canon. It comprises of three Piṭakas, namely Vinaya Piṭaka (the rules for the monks and nuns), the Sūtra Piṭaka (Buddha's discourses) and the Abhidhamma Piṭaka (philosophical and psychological systemization of the Buddha's teachings). Another Fourth Buddhist Council (Sarvastivada tradition) was held around 100 CE at Jalandhar or in Kashmir. It is said to have been convened by the Kushana king, Kanishka,
India has gone down to history as a land remarkable for intense religious devotion, high spiritual endeavor, and daring philosophical speculation. Literary testimony to the creativeness of thought is abundant. The earliest sayings or Mantras belonging to the great religious movement which swept India are the four collections of hymns known as the Vedas. These as sayings though not as writings, date from about 4000 B.C. the earliest of these is the Rg-Veda. It shows how the Vedic Indians worshipped and adored. Their wonder and awe were evoked by the powers of nature, such as the wind, the rains, the dawn, the sun, the night, and the storms. To these powers as Vedas, many hymns are addressed. There are also wedding hymns and funeral hymns. Again the Rg-Veda shows in the creation hymns and some old riddle hymns the beginning of a philosophy.

Appended to the Brāhmanas are the Upaniṣads. These are instructional in nature. Their dates and their numbers are alike uncertain. Many, however, have been preserved. With these we enter another phase of Indian thought, which shows no trace of nature worship, nor is it connected with sacerdotalism. It brings the faint monotheistic tendency discernible in the Rg-Veda to a very distinctive and new culmination. The Upaniṣads, although they may cover several centuries on the whole agree that reality is one without a second, whole undying the all. This world ground was called Brahman. Probably independently of this concept was developed the concept of Ātman as the supreme Self, the inmost essential being. The two as Brahman-Ātman, the world self, were then combined as an expression of the highest. Now, since this Brahman-Ātman was the all, man’s relation to it was regarded as one of sublimation. His position was summed up in the phrases, now become classical, ‘I am Brahman’.

Professor Rawson considers that the six early prose Upanisads in their main portions, the Isā and the first Adhyāya of the Katha are almost

118 I believe that etymologically Deva is shining one. Dr Coomaraswamy in a New Approach to the Vedas, London, 1933, pp. 55-56.
certainly pre-Buddhist and may roughly be assigned to the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. If this is so, we have now taken a very brief glimpse of Indian thought from about 4000 B.C to the early Buddhist epoch. The depth of Buddhism to its precursors has hardly yet been measured.\textsuperscript{120}

The early history of the teaching which we call Buddhism may be differentiated roughly into two phases. There is no obvious cleavage between these two phases; no distinctive name which marks a change of thought, outlook, or background as the earlier phase merges into the later. Hitherto Early Buddhism has, in the main, been regarded as forming an integral body of teaching, now enshrines in the works called ‘canonical.’ These have been made accessible to students of Pali Buddhism through the unremitting labors of the Pāli Text Society.\textsuperscript{121}

These will have flourished sometime between about 530 and 483 B.C. if following the most widely accepted view; we hold that Gautama died in 483 B.C. it is recorded that he died when he was in the eighties, having begun his teaching when he was twenty-nine years old. According to this reckoning he would have been born about 563 B.C.\textsuperscript{122}

They originate from the title Buddha which later came to be an epithet given to Gautama as the enlightenment One, the One who is Awake. Even so, this epithet was probably not accorded to him until more than a century after his Nirvāṇa\textsuperscript{123}

The Theravāda school is fundamentally derived from the Vibhajjavāda grouping\textsuperscript{124} which was a continuation of the older Sthavira group at the time of the Third Buddhist Council around 250 BC, during the reign of Emperor Asoka in India, Vibhajjavadins saw themselves as the continuation of

\textsuperscript{120} A most interesting evaluation has, however, recently appeared: Mrs Rhys Davids, \textit{The Birth of Indian Psychology and its Development in Buddhism}, London, 1936.
\textsuperscript{121} See Table of Pali Buddhist Literature, above, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{122} E. J. Thomas, \textit{The Life of Buddha as Legend and History}, London. 1927. P. 27.
\textsuperscript{123} Mrs Rhys Davids \textit{Outlines of Buddhism}, London, 1934, p. 44.
orthodox Sthaviras and after the Third Council continued to refer to their school as the Sthaviras, their doctrines were probably similar to the older Sthavivaras but were not completely identical. After the third council geographical distance led to the Vibhajjavādins gradually evolving into four groups: the Mahīśāsaka, Kāśyapīya, Dharmaquptaka and the Tāraparnīya, the Theravāda is descended from the Tāmraparnīya, which means ‘the Sri Lanka lineage’.

According to Buddhist school A.K. Warder, the Theravada spread rapidly south from Avanti into Maharashtra and Andhra and sown to the Cholas country (Kanchi), as well as Ceylon. For some time they maintained themselves in Avanti as well as in their new territories, but gradually they tended to regroup themselves in the south, the Great Vihara (Mahavihara) in Anuradhapura, the capital of Ceylon and the northern regions apparently relinquished to other school.125

The name of Tāmraparnīya was given to the Sri Lanka lineage in India but there is no indication that this referred to any change in doctrine or scripture from the Vibhajjavadins, since the name points only to geographical location. The Theravāda accounts of its own origins mention that it received the teaching that were agreed upon during the Third Buddhist Council, and these teaching were known as the Vibhajjavada.126 In the 7th century, Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang and Yijing refer to the Buddhist school in Sri Lanka as ‘Sthavira’.127 In ancient India, those schools that used Sanskrit as their religious language referred to this school as the Sthaviras, but those that us Pali as their religious language referred to this school as the Theresa128. Both Sthaviras and Theresa both literally mean ‘the Elders.’ The school has been using the name Theravāda for itself in a written form since at least the 4th century AD, when the term appears in the Dīpavamsa.

125 Indian Buddhism by A.K. Warder, Motilal Banarsidass, 2000, p. 278.
128 It is used in the Dipavamsa, quoted in Debates commentary, Pali Text Society p. 4.
Over much of the early history of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, three subdivisions of Theravāda existed in Sri Lanka, consisting of the monks of the Mahāvihāra, Abhayagiri Vihāra, and the Jetavana Vihāra. According to A.K. Warder, the Indian Mahīśāsaka sect also established itself in Sri Lanka alongside the Theravāda, into which they were later absorbed. Northern regions of Sri Lanka also seem to have been ceded to sects from India at certain times. When the Chinese monk Faxian visited the island in the early 5th century AD, he noted 5000 monks at Abhayagiri, 3000 monks at the Mahāvihāra, and 2000 monks at the Cetiyapabbatavihāra. Over the centuries, the Abhayagiri Theravādadins maintained close relations with Indian Buddhists and adopted many new teachings from India. These included many elements from Mahāyāna teachings, while the Jetavana Theravāda adopted Mahāyana to a lesser extent. Xuanzang wrote of two major divisions of Theravāda in Sri Lanka, referring to the Abhayagiri tradition as the “Mahāyāna Sthaviras,” and the Mahāvihāra tradition as the Hinayāna Sthaviras.

Theravāda promotes the concept of Vibhajjavāda, literally ‘Teaching of Analysis.’ This doctrine says that insight must come from the aspirant’s experience, critical investigation, and reasoning instead of by blind faith; however, the scriptures of the Theravāda tradition also emphasize heeding the advice of the wise, considering such advice and evaluation of one’s own experiences to be the two tests by which practices should be judged.

In Theravāda, the cause of human existence and suffering is identified as craving, which carries with it the defilements. Those defilements that bind humans to the cycle of rebirth are classified into a set of ten, while those defilements that impede concentration are presented in a fivefold set

130 Ibid., p. 280.
131 Ibid., p. 280.
133 Ibid, P. 124.
called the five Hindrances.\textsuperscript{136} The level of defilement can be coarse, medium, and subtle. It is a phenomenon that frequently arises, remains temporarily and then vanishes. Theravādas believe defilements are not only harmful to one, but also harmful to others. They are the driving force behind all inhumanities a human being can commit

Theravādas believe these defilements are habits born of ignorance that afflict the mind of all unenlightened beings, which cling to them and their influence in their ignorance of the truth. But in reality, those mental defilements are nothing more than taints that have afflicted the mind, creating suffering and stress. Unenlightened beings clinging to the body, whereas in reality the body is an impermanent phenomenon formed from the four basic elements. Often characterized by earth, water, fire and air, in the early Buddhist texts these are defined to be abstractions representing the sensorial qualities solidity, fluidity, temperature, and mobility, respectively.\textsuperscript{137} The mental defilements frequent instigation and manipulation of the mind is believed to have prevented the mind from seeing the true nature of reality. Unskillful behavior in turn can strengthen the defilements, but following the Noble Eightfold Path can weaken or eradicate them.

In order to be free from suffering and stress, Theravādas believes that the defilements need to be permanently uprooted. Initially they are restrained through mindfulness to prevent them taking over mental and bodily action. They are uprooted through internal investigation, analysis, experience and understanding of their true nature by using Jhāna. This process needs to be repeated for each other and defilement the practice will then lead the mediator to realize the Four Noble Truths, Enlightenment, and Nirvāṇa. Nirvāṇa is the ultimate goal of Theravādas, and is said to be a state of perfect bliss wherein the person is liberated from the repeated cycle of birth, illness, aging and death.

\textsuperscript{137} Dan Lusthaus. What is not Yogacara; He specifically discusses early Buddhism as well as Yogācāra.
Theravādas believe that every individual is personally responsible for their self-awakening and liberation, as they are the ones that were responsible for their own actions and consequences. Simply learning or believing in the true nature or reality as expounded by the Buddha is not enough; the awakening can only be achieved through direct experience and personal realization. An individual will have to follow and practice the Noble Eightfold Path as taught by the Buddha to discover the reality for them. In Theravāda belief, Buddha, Gods or deities are incapable of giving a human being the awakening or lifting them from the state of repeated cycle of birth, illness, aging and death. For Theravādas, Buddha is only a Teacher of the Noble Eightfold Path, while gods or deities are still subject to anger, jealousy, hatred, vengeance, craving, greed, delusion, and death.

It is believed that someone who practices with earnestness and zeal can attain Nirvāṇa within a single lifetime as did many of the first few generations of Buddha’s disciples. For others, the process may take multiple lifetimes, with the individual reaching higher and higher states of realization. On who has attained Nirvāṇais called an Arhant. Since Lord Buddha is believed to have possessed the ultimate knowledge on guiding a person through the process of Enlightenment, Theravāda believes of a Buddha attain Enlightenment the most quickly.

According to the early scriptures, the Nirvāṇa attained by Arahants is identical to that attained by the Buddha himself, as there is only one type of Nirvāṇa.138 Buddha was superior to Arahants because the Buddha had discovered the path all by himself, and has taught it to others. Arahants, on the other hand, attained Nirvāṇadue in part to the Buddha’s teachings. Theravādas revere the Buddha as a single supremely gifted person but do recognize the existence of other such Buddha in the distant past and future. Mattreya, for example, is mentioned very briefly in the Pali Canon as a Buddha who will come in the distant future.

Traditionally Theravādas can either have the conviction in the Buddha’s teaching or practice the minor precepts in the hope of gaining some minor benefits or they can investigate and verify by direct experience the truth of the Buddha’s teaching by practicing the Jhana which is part of the Noble Eightfold Path for their own Enlightenment.

The concept of cause and effect, or Causality, is a key concept in Theravāda, and indeed, in Buddhism as whole. This concept is expressed in several ways, including the Four Noble Truths, Panca-Niyāma Dhamma and most importantly, the Paticca-Samuppāda.

Abhidhamma is Theravāda canon differentiable between a root cause and facilitating cause. By the combined interaction of both theses, an effect is brought about. On top of this view, logic is built and elaborated whose most supple form can be seen in the Paticca Samuppāda.

This concept is then used to question the nature of suffering and to elucidate the way out of suffering, as expressed in the Four Noble Truths. It is also employed in several sutras to refute several philosophies including creationism, formal description of the Four Noble Truths follows:

A. Dukkha (suffering): This can be somewhat broadly classified into three categories. Inherent suffering or the suffering one undergoes in all the worldly activities, what one suffers in day to day life: birth, aging, diseases, death, sadness, etc. In short, that entire one feels from separating from ‘loving’ attachments and associating with ‘hating’ attachments is encompassed into the term. The second class of suffering, called suffering due to change, implies that things suffer due to attaching themselves to suffering. The third, termed Saṅkhāra Dukkha, is the most subtle, being suffered simply by not realizing that they are mere aggregates with no definite unchanging identity
B. Dukkha Samudaya (cause of suffering): craving, which leads to Attachment and Bondage?

Is the cause of suffering? Formally, this is termed Taṇhā. It can be classified into three instinctive drives. Kāma Taṇhā is the Craving for any pleasurable sense object (which involves sight, sound, touch, taste, smell and mental perceptive). Bhava Taṇhā is the Craving for attachment to an ongoing process, which appears in various forms, including the longing for existence. Vibhava Taṇhā is the Craving for detachment from a process, which includes non-existence and causes the longing for self-annihilation.

C. Dukkha Nirodha (cessation of suffering): One cannot possibly adjust the whole world to one’s taste in order to eliminate suffering and hope that it will remain so forever. This would violate the chief principle of change. Instead, one adjusts one’s own mind through detachment so that the change, of whatever nature, has no effect on one’s peace of mind. Briefly stated, the Third Noble Truth implies that elimination of the cause (craving) eliminates the result (suffering). This is inferred in the scriptural quote by the Buddha, ‘whatever may result from a cause, shall be eliminated by the elimination of the cause’.

D. Dukkha Nirodha Gāmini paṭipadā (pathway to freedom from suffering): this is the Noble Eightfold Pathway towards freedom or Nirvāṇa. The path can roughly be rendered into English as right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.

The early history of the teaching which we call Buddhism may be differentiated roughly into two phase. There is no obvious cleavage between these two phases; no distinctive name which marks a change of thought, outlook, or background as the earlier phase merges into the latter. Hitherto early Buddhism has, in the main, been regarded as forming an integral body of teaching, now enshrined in the works called ‘canonical.’ These have been
made accessible to students of Pali Text Society.\textsuperscript{139} A more critical examination of these ‘texts’ than any, with one or two exception, hitherto accorded them, cannot fail to reveal the existence of two phases of early Buddhist thought.

These are the three characteristics of all conditioned phenomena in \textit{Theravāda} thought.

The three stigmata refer to the three essential marks or characteristics of all "compounded" things, animate or inanimate, microscopic or macroscopic. Because of the universality of their applicability they could be considered as having the force of universal laws. These characteristics are impermanence (anicca), unsatisfactoriness (dukkha), and insubstantiality (anatta). As these translations of the basic Pāli terms are only approximate, a further elaboration of these basic concepts of the Dhamma is necessary.

1. \textit{Anicca}; The law of impermanence asserts that all phenomena are subject to constant change, to rise and fall, and no permanent states, either physical or animate, exists. The dynamic nature of phenomena is today a commonplace of science. But until quite recently many physical features of the universe were considered immutable, and in the human plane the belief in enduring states or characteristics is still an article of faith in many religious systems. The law of anicca establishes impermanence as the basic universal law.

2. \textit{Dukkha}; The law of dukkha states that all complexes of phenomena are in the final analysis unsatisfactory. It means that no compounded thing or state could be considered as a universal norm of goodness or beauty. It imparts the normative dimension into the consideration of objective reality which is the hallmark of the \textit{Dhamma}. The law of dukkha is usually considered in relation to the human situation, and here unsatisfactoriness manifests itself as "suffering", which is the popular rendition of the term. It is in this sense that it constitutes the first of the Four Noble Truths.

\textsuperscript{139} See Table of Pali Buddhist Literature, above, p. 15.
3. **Anatta**; 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 anatta 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 Mahayāna 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{140}

If it borne in mind that “Early Buddhism” is not a homogeneous whole, it will fall into a truer perspective and be more readily understood. The many “central conceptions which have been read into it, alone suggest that homogeneity is not one of its leading characteristics. If this were acknowledged “Early Buddhism” would no longer be treated as a strange, isolated phenomenon, arising independently of previous Indian thought. It would be found that it is linked with the *Upanisad* philosophy on the one side, and further, that through its own development; it leads down to the *Mahāyānist* Buddhism on the other.

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\textsuperscript{140} By Dr Victor A Gunasekara, *Basic Buddhism; A Modern Introduction to the Buddha’s Teaching*, 2 Jan 2001.
The Arahan concept, is spite of its probably contemporary existence with that of the Anattā doctrine, is a vindication of the rights of Attā, the self. The Arahan is never said to be Anattā; nor as this among the ideals set before him. He might be praiseworthy if he had made the stuff of existence to wane, but he was not exhorted to make the self to wane. On the contrary, Arahanship sometime was won, as it is recorded after a monk had been zealous, ardent, with a self that had striven.141 As Mrs Rhys Davids says, Pahitatta142 “swore with Anattā” the Arahan was not exhorted to get rid of the self-false views about the self, yes; but that is very different from becoming “devoid of self,” Pesitatta. This is a word by which the commentators were almost bound to paraphrase Pahitatta, since they lived under the shadow of the Anattā doctrine.

Buddha was a great teacher of the either way. His basic problem was to obtain emancipation from the entanglements of the world because these are infected with transistorizes. There is no anchor place of safety and refuge against the elemental sway of the primordial dark powers of total destruction and negation. From the dismal and satanic sway of death, the seer of the Upanisads had prescribed a return to the superior spiritual ultimate the Brahman. There are a few stray references in the Tripitaka which may, indirectly, indicate the possible belief of Buddha in an absolute. But the overwhelming evidence of the general bulk of the Tripitakas is against the ascription to Buddha of any belief in absolutism. He starts in his famous formula of the Pratityasamutpādā with the basal factor of ignorance. It is possible to argue this monumental power of ignorance postulates the eventual, although remove, presence of some spiritual being, unmindfulness of whose existence result in the process of the chain of psychic becoming. But in original Buddhism, ignorance is not a cosmic power of creative becoming as in the Samkarite Vedantic metaphysics but is a subjective non-awareness of the four Aryan truths about the existence and removal of suffering from the world.

141 For this translation, see Mrs Rhy Davids, Birth of Indian Psychology, etc., p. 295; also p. 347.
Since the force of ignorance is not a cosmic power of illusory creation, hence it is not possible to say that original Buddhism is a philosophy of illusionism. It *Nirvāṇa* could mean the absolute extinction of all manifested phenomenal, then it could have been possible to say that original Buddhism is illusionism because against the mighty reality of an imponderable nihilist the concrete processes and phenomenal becoming would be utterly non-existent and would be only illusory appearance. Hence I think that from the philosophical standpoint, original Buddhism is neither absolutism nor illusionism.

In all the great religions of the world we find that the acceptance of a transcendent and cosmic Godhead is a vital principle. The monotheistic religions frankly preach obedience to and firm devout faith in a great personal anthropomorphic Godhead. Even the polytheistic religions of Greece accepted some sort of a head in a divine pantheon. There can be no organized religious system and belief without Godhead because the basic of religion is the rejection of the temptations of the lower selves for the sake of the realization of some superior realm of being. Buddha ridicules the theistic conceptions of his time. Thus early Buddhism is perhaps the only example in the history of religions to be contracted on the basic of the negation of Godhead. Sometime it has been said that the silence of Buddha about metaphysical questions was an indirect indication of his view about the non-comprehensibility of superior truth by the ordinary intellect. Gandhi said that the purity and perception of the personal life of Buddha are enough evidence to confirm his belief in a supreme divine principle. But regardless of such indirect, and to my mind, weak arguments to prove the belief of Buddha in Godhead, the Early Buddhist scriptures are consciously marked by the absence of any devout fervor for the majesty and providence of God which we find in the Rig-Veda or the Old Testament. Early Buddhism thus poses a serious problem for philosophy of religion. For the consummation and perfectibility of the religious life what is needed is not merely a primordial God as pure activity.

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or a God as the foundation and guarantee for a moral life. Religion is postulated on the acceptance of a God who is all-merciful and compassionate and who can make responses to a life of devout communion. The theistic view of the world alone can make the world meaningful for a sensitive soul repelled by the transitory and evanescent character of worldly phenomena. It there is no feeling of responsive divine communion and fellowship and no assurance of an infinite immortality there can be no religious life. A materialist, a skeptic or a nihilist could criticize some of the desecrations of the theistic conceptions of pre-Buddhist India. But in spite of some truth in these criticisms, it is to be stated that no system of religious faith and discipline could be found in an atheistic word. We can have social and moral rules to organize our social relations in the absence of God, but it is absolutely meaningless and futile to plead for a religious life of inner fellowship in the absence of God. Religion without God may sometimes be a mockery of words and a supreme example of self deception. Hence in spite of great veneration for the personality and lofty character of Buddha, I do not regard Early Buddhism as a religion in the theistic and devout sense of the term.144 But although Early Buddhism may not be considered to be a religion in the traditionally accepted sense of a path to divine realization and communion and cultivation of a sense of dependence on God, it is to be deemed a religion in the sense of teaching a transcendence of the passions of the empirical ego an affirming the mystical quest for the raptures of contemplation. Its elevated code of austere morals and its emphasis on the obliteration of sorrow and deliverance from all pain also impart to it the character of a religion.

Sometime it has been said that Buddha was opposed to metaphysics because he was preoccupied with the problem of immediate release from the suffering of the world. His stress on the healing of a wound caused by the

arrow and not dialectical discussions about the structure of the arrow is supposed to indicate his pragmatic and positivistic temper. But he was not a pragmatist in the sense of stressing the factual contents of concrete sensuous experience. Modern Contemn Positivism makes a fetish of science and believes in the regeneration of the world by the formation of a positivist society under the management of the priests of science. It was wrong to class Buddha as a Contemn Positivist. Buddhist Positivist does not aim to exalt physical. Buddha’s insistence on the impermanence of worldly phenomena is completely antithetical to the ascription of Pierce, James, Dewey and others and the positivistic sociology of Augusta Comte are utterly rooted in this world. They want to utilize the resources of human ingenuity and science for the transformation of the world. The temper of Buddha was absolutely and permanently permeated with the sense of complete disenchantment and utter sense of the insignificance of the cosmos. He is completely removed from the modern belief in the incorporation of bureaucratic and technological rationality in the social and economic structure of mankind. The problem of Buddha is a personal and an eternal problem. He was disillusioned with the world because there was no sense of stability in it. Although the problem of Buddha starts at a psychological level, it is eternal in the sense that death, disease, dismay and final disaster are in the permanent destiny of all human beings. Modern Phenomenologist, Freudsians, Existentialists and Neuron-psychologists also substantiate the view-point of early Buddhism in their stress on a fundamental “anxiety” as the impelling basis of man’s existence.

Buddha wanted a way of escape and the found the way in the theory and practice of the negation and neutralization of the human ego. The ego is the root of all anxieties, neuroses, impeded impulses, deviant and psychopathic behavior and compulsive strivings proceeding from the unconscious. Hence Buddha wanted the extinction of ego hood which is the root of all Dukkha. There is no apparent casual relation or perhaps any relation between the pursuit of an ascetic way of life and the evermighty fact of death because like a physical demoniac colossus, death equally reduces the noble and
the unjust, the saint and the criminal to nullity. In a theistic system, which Buddhism is not, there is the belief in the conservation of moral efforts which finally results in a realization of spiritual fellowship and communion with God. The only rational connection between an austere living and moral emancipation is the psychological feeling that by rejecting the things which lead to pleasure and comforts in life, man achieves a vicarious conquest over the all-negating, all-destroying power of death. The terror of death arises from the fact that it pulverizes all that a man holds dear. If it were possible to make a voluntary abandonment of these things which a man holds dear then to that extent the terror of death would be eliminated. Hence according to Buddha an ascetic negation and rejection of the thongs of the world and a steady, devoted pursuit of pure life are meant to provide emancipation. The uncertain and accidental character of death provides the justification of the passionate urgency with which Buddha and his disciples pleaded with the people to accept the Buddhist way and to seek salvation.

Buddha refused to accept the concept of the soul as a spiritual monadic substance. The Upanisadic conception of the identification of the psychic self and the cosmic transcendent self also failed to satisfy him. The Sāmkhya Yoga conception of the multiplicity of transparent selves did not evoke his sympathetic response. In her researches after 1972, Mrs. C.A.F. Rhys David had been desperately trying to give a positivistic and absolutistic interpretation of the message of early Buddhism. She even fabricates the fantastic thesis of the “unknown co-founders” of Buddhism. But in the philosophical and sociological study of religions we are not concerned with the dialectical play over obscure and insignificant worlds relegated to some, rather unimportant, corners of the scriptures, but we emphasize the vitality of the gospel. We mean to put the stress on one point: what is the message that has been promulgated with repeated emphasis? To what points does the teacher constantly return and what elements does he constantly reiterate? If this standpoint it taken into consideration, we are constrained to think that early Buddhism emphasized the neutralization and negation of subjectivism. It
reduces the being and the personality of man into a psycho-physical complex of the five elements Rūpa, Sanjnā, Vedanā Samskāra, and Vijnanāna. The negation of the human self as a spiritual and immortal principle shows the dangerous recoil of subjectivist psychology on itself. In the Vedic religion the external world was regarded as of great ontological signification and the great Vedic deities were supposed to have physical real existence. This ontological speculation received a check with the exaltation of the psychic principle in man. The Upanisads preach the glories of the might splendors of the Ātman that is identical with Brahman, which is the originating and the energizing principle of the cosmos. But the critical and devastating attacks of early Buddhism were levelly not only against the supreme absolute, the infallibility of the Vedic scriptures and the sanctity of the concept of self as an eternal principle was also pulverized. The use of the introspective method had thus attained climax in the reduction of the spiritual self almost too utter nihilist. This negation of the philosophical and sociological principles in the formation and crystallization of the reality of the human spirit and by refusing to offer nay coherent and systematic answers to the problem of the origination, the procession and the destiny of the universe, early Buddhism entirely negated those philosophical elements which constitute the essence of any religious system. Science tries to view the things of the world in terms of the manifestation of some primal material or vital principle. It tries to explain the cosmic in terms of the cosmic. But the distinctive criterion of religion is to explain the cosmic in term of the Supra-cosmic. If the physical sciences explain history in terms of the concatenation of physical processes and phenomena, the religious seeks to understand history in terms of super-temporal eternity. The basic principle of the idealistic philosophy of religion is the acceptance of the revelation of eternity in the phenomenal modes of spatiotemporal location. From this standpoint the philosophical foundations of early Buddhist religion were weak but for what it lacked philosophically, it compensated sociologically. The exalted and inspired character of Buddha accentuated the notion of religious charisma associated generally with the
personality of the founder of a religion. In spite of Buddha’s negation of the eternal and immutable principles of the *Upaniṣad* metaphysics, his inculcation of the moral way and his emphasis on the worthlessness and vanity of the things of this world, the foundation of a powerful order of monastic confraternity accentuated the belief in the transcendent character of the founder. Sociologically speaking, one of the basic principles of religion is the exaltation of the founder who is looked upon as the human centre of awe and reverence. The magnification of the religious leader is a cardinal element in the institutionalization of religion. Thus if from the philosophical standpoint Buddhism tends to negativism and nihilism, from the sociological standpoint it presents to us the picture of the accentuation of the reverence for the sacred personality of the leader. The reverence for the sacred leader is perhaps a legacy from the remote anthropological past of man.

### 2.1.2 Anattā In The Early Buddhist Literature.

The doctrine of *Anattā* forms the keynote of the teachings of the Buddha and laterally means that the Atta is non-existent. The denial of the Atta finds expression in the following statement ascribed to the Buddha in the Samyutta Nikāya: *Sabbam bhikkhave aniccam sabbam bhikkhave dukkham sabbam bhikkhave anatta.*

The chapter just preceding the one from which we have pouted the three statements, contains such expressions as *sabbe bhikkhave jaradhaa vyadhidhammam maranadhamma samkilesadhamam* etc. These statements leave no doubt that in all these cases we have taken the term saba as indicating the things condition. So we find the saba is a technical term and stands for the samskrta dharma. This conclusion of ours is confirmed by the definition of saba as given in the Sabbavaggo of the *Salāyātana-samyutta*:

*Kin ca bhikkhave sabbam cakhu ceva rūpa ca sotanca sadda ca ghananca gandha ca gihvarasa ca kayo ca photthabba ca mano ca dhamma ca idam vuccati bhikkhave sabbam.*

According to this definition saba[145]

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146 Ibid XXXV, pp. 34-38
147 Ibid, P. 15, XXXV, p. 23
means eye and the forms, the nose and the smells, the ear and the sounds, the
tongue and the tastes, the body and the tangible things, the mind and the
mental objects. Here the term sabba means twelve Āyatana. In a more
elaborate way the Buddha explains the same term while giving instructions on
the giving up the sabba. He states that eye, form, eye-contact, eye-
consciousness and the different feeling due to eye-contact are to be renounced.
Similarly he preaches with references to other sense roans’. 148

What about the unconditioned? Is it also devoid of Atta? Walpolo
Rahula thinks that it is, and refers to the three statements from Dhammapada
in support of his contention. 149 These statements which are very similar to the
passage from SamyuttaNīkāya quoted above are as follows: sabber Dharma
Anatta. Rahula thinks that while the phrase Sabba Sankhara indicates the
things conditioned and the unconditioned. But it is difficult to accept this
interpretation. We may hold that the word sabber should have the same
meaning as the term samba. Viz. the conditioned things and it is unreasonable
to assume that the scope of the word Sabba while occurring together with the
term Dharma is so extended as to include even the opposite meaning, the
Unconditioned. Moreover the phrase saber dharma has been used many ties in
the Buddhist scriptures to mean only the conditioned. The Karatalaratna, a
comparatively late work written by Bhavaviveks, described sarvadharmah as
being of dependent origin. 150 Again in the Culasaccakasutta of the Majjhima
Nikāya, it is stated: “rupaṃ Bhikkhave aniccam, vedana anice vinnanam
aniccam, rupam Bhikkhave anutta, vedana...sañña...samkhara...vinnanam
anatta, sabbe samkhara anicca, saber dharma anatta, “here both the phrases
sabba dhamma and Saba samkhara obviously refer to the five skandhas. That
only the conditioned things are meant here become evident when in the same
Sūtra. 151 We meet with a discussion on things which are both anicca and
Anattā. Nirvāṇa is not included on this discussion The Upasivamanapuccha of

the SātraNipata. 152 Saber Dharma has been explained as skandhas and ayatanas in the cullaniddesa, 153 making it clear that Nirvāṇa is outside the scope of this phrase in the Mahaparinirvāṇa Sūtra. 154 Aniruddha explains Buddha parinibbana as vimokkho of consciousness, the term ‘vimokkho has been explained by Buddhaghoso in the Sumangalavilasini. 155 As freedom from all dhammas thus the testimony of the Suttanipta and Mahaparinirvāṇa Sutra confirms that the phrase sabbe Dhamma does not include Nirvāṇa within its scope.

So the things conditioned were definitely held to be devoid of Atta. But was the Nirvāṇa, the unconditioned also bereft Atta? Is the Atta non-existent with reference to the Unconditioned also? In the Udāna 156 Nirvāṇais described as Anattawhich is rightly glossed as Attá-virahita in Paramattha-idam. Thus the Atta is non-existent either as a Samskṛta-dharma. The Atta is nothing but a figment of imagination.

To know the reason behind the denial of Atta we have first to be clear about the exact implication of them term Atta. Scholars differ as to the precise sense in which this term has been used. But before their views were discussed it is necessary to point out that the Prakrit word Attáis the same as atman in Sanskrit. This philological identification has led to philosophical misunderstanding the scholars. Some scholars automatically take atta to be the Ātman of the Upanisads. They think that the philosophical implications of these two terms Atta and Ātman are identical and consequently the doctrine of Anattā came to mean for them the refutation of the Upaniṣad Ātman. The scholars belonging to this ground have unfaltering faith in the Buddha as the unique preacher of the True law, and as such harbor no weakness for the honored traditions of the Upanisads. The view of Walpole Sri Rahula, and

155 Ibid. p. 396.
worthy representative of this group, will be presented later. On the other hand, those scholars who hold both the Buddha and the Upanisads in high esteem do not subscribe to this view. Let us take note of the opinion of Radhakrishnan\textsuperscript{157} refers to the dialogue between the wondering ascetics Vacchagotta which, according to him, shows that something there is, though it is not the empirical self. In another place\textsuperscript{158} he refers to this empirical self and states that it is the false view that ours for the perpetual continuation of this small self, which the Buddha refutes.\textsuperscript{159} According to Randhakrishnan, also agrees with the statement of the Buddha that the reduction of the self is neither the same nor different from the Skandhas, he further the same nor different from the Skandhas. He further states\textsuperscript{160}: It is also clear that the reduction of the self to number of Skandhas is not ultimate. If the self is merely an impermanent compounded of body and mind… then when it disappears then there is nothing which is delivered…freedom becomes extinction. But Nirvāṇa is timeless existence and so the Buddha admits the reality of a timeless self.”


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Radhakrishnan appears to be of the opinion that the term ‘\textit{Attā}’ which he translates as self has been used in two different senses. One meaning of \textit{Attā} is the small self or empirical self which the Buddha rejects through the doctrine of \textit{Anattā}. The other implication of the term \textit{Attā} is the true self which is same as \textit{Nirvāṇa} and is accepted by the Buddha. It is the identity of this true self with other things that the Buddha rejects.

We may now discuss the opinion of Rahula who represents the other group of scholars, while explaining the doctrine of \textit{Anattā}. Rahula\textsuperscript{161} refers to the different concepts of \textit{Ātman}, even the concept of \textit{Brahman-ātman} of the \textit{Upanişads} and holds that the Buddha was unique in rejecting all such doctrines through the doctrine of \textit{Anattā}.“The ideal of abiding, immortal substance in man or outside, whether it is called \textit{Ātman}, I, soul, self, or ego, is

\textsuperscript{158} Ibid. p. 386.
\textsuperscript{159} Ibid. p.388.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid. p. 451.
considered only a false belief, a mental projection. This is the Buddha doctrine of *Anattā*.\(^\text{162}\) So it appears that by the doctrine of *Anattā*. The Buddha was denying *Attā* which was accepted by every other philosophic-religious term that even the *Brahman-Ātman* concept of the *Upnīṣads* stands hereby negated.

It is clear that the concept of the *Upnīṣads-Ātman* acts as a powerful background in influencing the formulations of both the above-mentioned view. Conze,\(^\text{163}\) on the other hand, propounds different theory which is not connected with the *Upnīṣads-Ātman* in any way. He is not sure what notions of an *Ātman* were denied by the Buddha, but the believes that these notions are of two kinds, the ideals implied in the use of ‘I’ and ‘mine’, and I the philosophical opinion of the self is confined to the five Skandhas, and nothing is said either way about its existence quite apart from the. The Buddha never taught that the self is not, only that it cannot be apprehended.

It is obvious that the solution of this knotty problem hinges on the proper understanding of the nature of *Attā* that was rejected by the Buddha. It is really strange that none of the scholars who suggested the equation of Atta either with the *Upnīṣads* Brahman-Attan or with some other non-Buddhist concepts ever suggestion without first defining the concept of *Attā* is bound to be methodologically unscientific and unconvincing.

To arrive at a more objective conclusion the following approach may be suggested. On the one hand we should study those materials form the *Nikāya* and *Āgama* which are more or less descriptive in nature, such materials provide us with legends and other information about the *Attā* philosophy dominant in the region where the Buddha was preaching his *Anattā*doctrine, and so engaged his attention. The reason for doing so it the justifiable surmise that the *Attā* concept or concepts, the negation of which forms the core of Buddhism, should find some mention in this descriptive type of scripture. On the other hand we should carefully scrutinize another type of the material

\(^{162}\) Ibid, p. 55.

contained in the Buddhist scripture which is more critical and philosophical in nature, and acquaints us with detailed arguments justifying the rejection of the *Attā* philosophy. Out of such study will also emerge the *Attā* concept or concepts which the Buddha was rejecting? The study of these two types of materials will enable us to form a complete ideal of the different *Attā* concepts the Buddha discarded as false view. It is only then we would be in a position to reliably know whether the *Upniṣads* concept of *Attan-Brahman* was rejected or not.

The major non-Buddhist concepts of *Attā* criticized in the *Nikāyas* and *Āgamas* are broadly divided into four main categories dealing with a) *Satkayadrsti*, b) *Sasvatavada*, c) *Ekaccassatavada*, and d) *Ucchedavāda*. We will discuss these heresies in the order given here.

**a. Satkayadrsti: in the Samyutta Nikāya**\(^{164}\) we came across the following description of a false view which later came to be known as Satkayadrsti

“Those recluses and Brahmans who while seeing in various ways see the *Attā* (soul), they actually see the five aggregates of attachment or any of them. Which five? In this connection, monks, an uneducated ordinary person envisages matter as a soul, or a soul in matter, or he envisages feeling, perception, the formative forces, or consciousness as a soul, possessed by a soul, in a soul, or soul in tem. Envisaging thus he gets a thought “I am”. Being ignorant he thinks this, or “I am this” or “I shall be” “I shall not be” or I shall be material “or” I shall be having perception “or” I shall be without reception (samjnin)” or “I shall have neither perception nor non-perception. But one, who is educated, abandons ignorance and gets knowledge…and does not have any of these thought.”

The passage quoted shows that the *Attā* in which these recluses and Brahmans believes could be in four different ways connected with the five Skandhas and this connection is constant. The existence of an *Attā* without any

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reference to the Skandhas was unthinkable. This association of the soul with the Skandhas gave rise to certain ego-centric thoughts in which both these elements the soul and the Skandhas are present, e.g. “I am this” “I shall be material” etc.

Here we have a succinct description of a false view that draws our attention to its two main features: 1) Attā refers to an individual soul whose essence consists of an awareness of ‘I’; 2) Attā is invariably connected with the Skandhas. Its existence is always conceived in association with Skandhas. This heresy, as already noted, came to be known as Satkayadrstu. The term Satkaya refers to the five aggregates of attachment (Pancupadanakkhandha) and Satkayadrstu to a false view that fails to see the Skandhas merely as Skandhas, but always views them through the prism of Attā. The most subtle from of Satkayadrstu is discernible in the feeling “I am” which lingers in anybody who is spiritually below the status of an Arhat. He may nap longer consciously believe in it, he may even intellectually refute it, but he is not yet free from the vestige of this pernicious heresy.

We may refer to passage in the kosa literature that helps us to understand more clearly the different modes of relationship existing between the soul and the five Sakandhas. This passage, like the Samyutta Nikāya account, distinguishes between the twenty bases of grasping at the notion of soul. One regards the soul as the five Skandhas, as the flame of a lamp is

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165 In the Alagaddupamasutta of the Majjhima Nikāya, pts, Vol I p. 138, Nalanda Ed, Vol. I, p. 185. We read that the feeling of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ are interdependent. And with ‘I’ and “mine” to really and truly exist, the possibility of this false view would also be there: “That is the world that is Atta. I shall be after death, everlasting, abiding eternal, unchanging and I shall remain as such for eternity”. The feeling of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ being absent, the possibility of the false view would not be there, so a staunch belief in the reality of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ is the fulcrum on which the illusory image of an eternal soul rests.


167 In this connection we may refer to the episode of Kheaka recorded in the Samyutta Nikaya, Vol. I, p. 127. PTS ED. Some Monks ask Khemaka whether he sees in the five aggregates of attachment any self (atta) or anything pertaining to self (attaniya). Khemaka relies in the negative but at the same time admits that he is not yet an arhat. “I am not Arhan free from all impurities, oh friends, with regard to the five aggregates of attachment. I have a feeling ‘I am’ but I do not clearly see ‘this is I am’. Then Khemaka explains what he calls ‘I am’ is neither matter, feeling, perception, mental, formation (sankhara) nor consciousness nor anything without them. But he has the feeling ‘I am’ with regard to the five skadhas, though he could not see clearly ‘this is I am’. He says it is like the smell of a flower, it is neither the smell of the petal, nor of the colors, nor of the pollens, but the smell of the flower. Khenaka further explains that this feeling ‘I am’ disappears when one progresses further, just as the chemical smell of a freshly washed cloth disappears when it is kept in a box.
identical with its visual appearance; the soul as having or possessing the five kandhas, like the shadow of a thing, the kandhas in the soul, as the scent in a flower; the soul in the Skandhas, as the gem in the casket.\(^{168}\)

This account of the Sathayadrsti acquaints us with the most basic form of Attāheresy. Satkayadrsti merely postulates a relationship between the soul and the five Skandhas. It neither advocates the eternity of the soul nor hold the soul to be co-terminus with the body. Satkayadrsti is neither Savatavada nor Ucchedavada. But the following statement recorded in the Samyutta Nikāya\(^{169}\) ima kho gahapati ditthiya sakkayaditthiya satihontishow that the satkaya drsti is the root cause of all other heresies, including the Sasvatavada and the Ucchedavada. A person believing in a soul and having desire for existence willingly believes that the soul survives the body and accepts the false view of its permanent existence. On the other hand, a person thirsting for non-existence, willingly believes that death is the ultimate end of everything, and comes to believe in the false view of non-existence (Vibhaadrsti) the annihilation of soul after death.\(^{170}\)

b. Sasvatavada: the account of the Sasvatvada as given in the Brahmajalasūtra\(^{171}\) may be abridged as follows” there are recluses and Brahmanans who accept the philosophy of externalism and proclaim that both the soul and the world ear eternal. And why they do so some recluse and Brahmana by means of exertion and proper mental attention attains to such a concentration of mind that they are able to recall minding many hundreds

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\(^{168}\) See, E. cone, Buddhist thought in India, p.33. It is to be noted that the same comparison at Atta with smell of a flower also occurs in the Sayutta Nikaya. We should, however, observe that though Khemaka feels ‘I am’ he does not treasure this feeling; he wants to get rid of it as something unreal. But to a follower of Sasvatavada this feeling indicates something real which is the very essence of his eternal being. The spiritual experience is same in both the cases, though the wisdom needed to interpret the experience correctly is absent in case of the Sasvatavadins.

\(^{169}\) Samyutta, Vol. IV, p.28

\(^{170}\) Lamotte, Indian Buddhism, p.35, 48, 51. In this connection we may refer to the Sattasavasutta, Majjhima Nikāya, and Nalanda Ed. Vol. I, pp. 12-13, which also states that it is due to ego-centric thought that such a wrong view arises: “This is my self, which speaks and feels, which experiences the fruits of good and bad actions now here, now there, this self is permanent, stable, everlasting, unchanging, remaining the same forever and ever.” This false view is given the designation of Sasvatavada in the Suyuta Nikaya; that is the self that is the world. He takes rebirth, he is eternal, and stable, unchanging this is the externalist view-point. CF. S. part II, pp.98-99; 182

of thousands of past births. And they think: there I was born of such a name, of such a lineage and caste.\textsuperscript{172} My food was such. I was the experience of such pleasure and pains and had such a span of life. Falling from there I was born here.\textsuperscript{173} Thus they remember their past existences in full detail. And each of them says to himself: “\textit{sassato atta ca loko a vanjho cutattho esikatthayithito, te ca satta sandhavanti samsaranti cavanti upapajjanti, atthi iveva sassata-saman ti}.”\textsuperscript{174} T.Wothys David’s translates as follows: “The soul is eternal; and the world giving birth to nothing news, is steadfast as a mountain-peak, as a pillar firmly fixed; and that though these living creatures transmigrate and pass away, fall from one state of existence and spring up in another, yet they are (atthi) forever and ever.\textsuperscript{175}

Though this translation tallies with the traditional Buddhist explanation, it is difficult to accept it, as it raises some problems. From the legend we have seen that the living being in this world could only remember the details of their past lives here. And an awareness of an unchangeable ‘I’ links all these past lives together and gives rise to the notion of an eternal soul (\textit{Attā}). The same soul was thought to be born again and again as different individuals. The \textit{Attā} and Satta are not identical. The Skandhas are admitted to be different in each of these births, though the \textit{Attā} characterized by the awareness of an ‘I’ remains unchanged.

The above translation from Rhys David’s of the stock description of \textit{Sasvatavada} it not in agreement with the implications of the \textit{Sasvatavada} legend. In this translation not only the two verbs of motion (sandhavanti and samsaranti) indicating repeated deaths and rebirths and so underling changer are connected with the Satta but also the verb of existence (atthi) indicating permanency becomes associated with the same satta. If we accept this

\textsuperscript{172} In the Mahapadanasutta we have Evam-jata in place of Evam-vanno. Both the terms means social class and caste, Dīgha Nikāya, Vol.I .p. 8.
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid, p.15.
\textsuperscript{175} Dialogues of the Buddha, part I. PTS, London, 1977, p. 28.
translation we have to admit that the Sasvatavada thought the concept of eternity to be compatible with the notion of change. The soul’s eternity was not at variance with its identity with the changeable Skandhas. But there is no reason to believe that the Sasvatavada were so unrealistic as to support such an unreasonable view. We have seen that according to the Sasvatavada the eternal soul characterized by a sense of ‘I’ was different from the changing individuals. Moreover, other religious groups contemporary of the Sasvatavada were also not supporters of such a view. The Ucchedavadins\textsuperscript{176} took the soul to be identical with the Skandhas, and consistent with this view they help that the soul is destroyed together with the body. The Ekaaccasassatavadins\textsuperscript{177} believed the Mahabrahma to be eternal as they did not appear to have known that the Mhabraham was also identical with the Skandhasm created, and subject to death. All the religious groups including the Sasvatavadins thus seem to have held the view that the soul to the eternal must have an existence independent of the Skandhas. So the translation making the Satta eternal cannot be accepted. The only other possibility is to take ‘Atthi’ in the sense of a singular number and to connect it with ‘Attā’ then we get the following translation: “The soul is eternal; and the world giving birth to nothing new, is steadfast as a mountain-peak, as pillar firmly fixed; and these living being move on and on, transmigrate, fall from one state of existence, rise in another, but (the soul) exists or eternity.”

The purpose it is, however, important to know how the Buddhists would understand this philosophy. From our discussion of the Satkayadrsti it is clear that according to the Buddhists interpretation of the false view the soul must be either identical with or closely related to the Skandhas. This relation is such that the existence of a soul part from the Skandhas is unthinkable. The changes which the Skandhas undergo even during one’s lifetime are obvious. Moreover the acceptance of the repeated deaths and rebirths that the Skandhas do no remain unchanged. In short, according to the Buddhist interpretation, the

\textsuperscript{176} Dīgha Nikāya, Vol I, see, p.34; also see, p.12

\textsuperscript{177} See, p.10 ff.
Sasvatavada admitted the changeable nature of the Skandhas, accepted the close relationship existing between the soul to be eternal (sassato). This also seems to be the opinion of Buddhaghosa\textsuperscript{178} as expressed in the Sumandalavilasini, but, as already show, Buddhist presentation of the externalism is not the same as the original philosophy of the Sasvatavada. The Sasvatavada themselves regarded ‘Attā’ to be independent of body and mind, i.e. of the Skandhas, to use the Buddhist terminology. This seems to be reason why the Sasvatavada themselves did not relate the soul to of the Skandhas in the stock description of their own philosophy. Even the logicians and thinkers,\textsuperscript{179} among them have nothing to say about the relationship existing between the soul and the Skandhas.

Whatever may be the case, it is of no consequence for our present study that the Buddhist presentation of the Atta of the Sasvatavada does not tally with the original concept. What really matters is the ideal the Buddhist had of such a concept. For when they reject a concept of an eternal soul, they do so in the light of their own understanding of it. So it is important to take note of their deal of the Attā concept which may be described as follows: The Attā is an eternally existent endive dual soul which is either identical with the Skandhas or neither so closely attains liberation nor gets annihilated.

c. Ekaccasassatavada: A concept of Attādifferent from that of the externalists has been recorded in the Brahmagalalasutta of the Dīgha-Nikāya.\textsuperscript{180} This is the concept of an eternal soul unique to the Mahahabrahma as held by the followers of the Ekaccasassatavada. The Buddha in order to explain the origin of the Ekaccasassatavada relates the following legend about the past lives of the upholders of this philosophy:

When the world system dissolves the being is reborn in the Abhassara world. They are mate of mind. Now the world system begins to

\textsuperscript{179} Dīgha Nikāya, Vol. I, p. 16
\textsuperscript{180} Ibid. pp. 17-19; Dialogues of the Buddha, part I, pp. 30-32.
come into existence and an empty *Braham-vimana* (Brahma-place) appears. One of the beings at the end of merits or span of life falls from the *Abhassara* world and is reborn in the Brahma-palace. There he lives, made of mind (*manomayo*), feeding on joy (*piti-bhakkho*), radiating light, etc. and thus does remain there for a long time. And the feels lonely and longs for companions. Just then some being die in the Abhassara world and are born in the Brahma-palace. They are just like the being that was first born in the Brahma-palace. They are just like the being that was first born. As these beings were born after he described for company, he thought himself to be *Brahma Mahabrahma*, creator, and father of all that are and are to be. And the other beings also thought that they have been created by *Mahabrahma*. Their lives are of shorter duration than that of *Mahabrahma*. They die in the Brahma-palace and are reborn here in this world. Here one of them leads a religious life and can remember his past existence in the Brahma-palace, but beyond that. He thinks of *Mahabrahma* as creator permanent, fixed, eternal, of a nature which is not subject to transformation while he regards himself and other beings as created by *Mahabrahma*, impermanent, not fixed eternal, and having the nature of dying.

The last part of the above account seems to be a stock description which formed a part of the original philosophy of the *Ekaccasassatavadins*. According to their philosophy only the uncreated is eternal while the created is impermanent. Only *Mahabrahma* is eternal and the other beings are impermanent. The information that *Mahabrahma* was made in mind were most probably not included in their philosophy, for it is not mentioned in the utterance of him who remembers his past existence. Otherwise we have to assume that according to the *Ekaccasassatvada* mind can be both created and uncreated. So it appears that this extra bit of information has been added in accordance with the Buddhist dogma. Thus as per the understandings of the Buddhists, the followers of the *Ekaccasassatvada* believed in an eternal soul only in case of *Mahabrahma* and this soul was made of mind, uncreated and immortal.
Two other groups of the *Ekaccasassatvada*\(^ {181}\) believed in may eternal individual souls. But the eternity is not absolute in these cases; it may be lost either due to the lack of self-control or due to envy. The fourth group of the *Ekaccasassatavadins*\(^ {182}\). Were comprised of the logicians and the thinkers who concluded by reasoning that there are two souls, one impermanent and the other permanent. The soul consisting of ear, nose tongue and body is impermanent, not fixed, not eternal and having the changeable nature. But the soul which is thought or mind or consciousness is permanent, eternal etc.

d. *Ucchedavada*: the seven groups of *Ucchedavadins*\(^ {183}\) identified an individual soul variously with physical body, or sensual desire, or mind, or infinite space, or infinite consciousness, or nothingness, or neither perception nor not perception. The first group believed in one made of gross matter while the other groups believed in more than the soul is one soul. And all these groups upheld the doctrine that the soul is annihilated with the destruction of the body. It appears that even before the Buddhists the Ucchedavadins denied the belief in an eternal individual soul (*Attā*) which was identical with one of the *Skandhas*. Therefore this philosophy came to be known as the doctrine of *Nirvāṇa*.

So far we have discussed the *Satkayadrsti*, *Sasvatavada*, *Ekaccasavatavāda* and the *Ucchedavāda*, and these are the only dominant heresies regarding *Attā* and relevant to our study that have been recorded in the *Āgamas* and *Nikāya*.\(^ {184}\) Presumably these were the four main types of heresies that attracted the attention of the Buddha and the early Buddhists. It is obvious that the *Atta* concepts discussed in the *Ucchedavāda* and Satkayadrsti can in no way be connected with the problem of *Attā* identity with the *Ucchedavada* and *Satkayadrsti* can in no way be connected with the problem of *Attā* identity with the Upanisadic Ātman. It is only these *Sasvatavāda* and *Ekaccasassatavāda* concepts that deserve to be considered in this connection.

\(^{181}\) Dīgha Nikāya, Vol. I, pp.19-21
\(^{182}\) Ibid., p. 21.
\(^{183}\) Ibid., pp. 34-35.
\(^{184}\) Ibid., pp. 34-35.
In course of our discussion we have noted the following characteristics of an eternal soul as envisaged by the followers of the Sasvatavada and Ekaccasassatavāda. The first group of Ekaccasassatavāda believed that only the soul of Mahabrahma, who is uncreated, is eternal. But the Sasvatavada and the other groups of Ekaccasassatavāda recognize numerous, eternal, individual souls who are either identical with the skandhas or so closely related to them as to be dependent on them for their very existence. The second and third groups of the Ekaccasassatavāda, however, are of the opinion that the eternity is not absolute, for the beings die if they indulge in sensual pleasures or are afflicted with jealousy. The first type of Ekaccasassatavāda explicitly states that the souls, including that of the Mahabrahma, are made of mind. This view seems to have been accepted by the second and third groups of the Ekaccasassatavāda who made the eternity of the individual souls dependent on the purity of mind. According to the fourth groups of the Ekaccasassatavāda which consists of the logicians and the thinkers, the individual soul is identical with Citta or Manas or Vijnana. Thus we find that the Ekaccasassatavāda concept of soul belonged to the sphere of mind and at least in most cases could not rise beyond the Rupaloka. Moreover the eternal souls are confined within space and time and are characterized by the subject-object split.

The UpaniṣadĀtman, on the other hand, is not an individual soul. The Ātman is the supreme reality, the only being that is beyond speech, beyond the reach of mind and the notion of space. And such a Ātman can by no stretch of imagination be equated with any of the Skandhas. In short, the Sassato Attā of the Buddhist scriptures and the Ātman of the Upaniṣads are two diametrically opposing points of view.

So long we have discussed scriptural materials which are more of less descriptive in nature. Now we pay attention to a more critical type of Āgama-Nikāya passages which acquaint us with the reasons for the rejection of different types of Attā heresies, and thereby provide us with some extra details regarding these heresies.
We have seen that four kind’s relationship between the Attā and the Skandhas were recognized. Out of these only one type of relationship viz. that of identity between the Attā and the Skandhas, finds prominent mention in the Nikāyas and the Āgamas. This appears to have been the dominant heresy at the time of the Buddha. Only in a few cases the early Buddhist canon takes note of other types of relationship, viz Attā has skandhaka or Attā is not a particular type of Skandhaka. Again the nature and contents of such a criticism of Attā heresy vary depending on the type of persons for whom it was meant. The discourses which are held for the benefit of the Buddhist monks are quite different from those meant for non-Buddhist ascetics.

With these preliminary remarks we will proceed to arrange the relevant materials according to the type of heresies criticized and the type of persons addressed.

2.1.3. Buddha’s Theory Of Anattā In Early Buddhist Philosophy.

The philosophy of the Buddha comprehends a theory of knowledge, a theory of reality, an ethical system, a social and political philosophy well as suggestions for a philosophy of law and international relations. A careful examination of the essentials of these aspects of its philosophy show that they are inter-related and interconnected.

One of the characteristic features of the philosophy of the Buddha, which distinguishes it from Upanisada philosophy and the non-Vedic schools is it causal conception of the universe. The Buddha states: “what is causation? On account of birth arises decay and death.

The difficulty with early Buddhist philosophy is that Buddha does not make categorical statements. Some teachers and reformers express themselves in explicit and clear and we exactly know here they stand. Dayānanda Saraswati is one such example. On the other hand, there are teachers who adopt positions of compromise and speak at different levels. Buddha, Śamkara and Kant are example of this second type. At the absolute metaphysical level Śamkara repudiated God but accepted theism at the
theological and devotional level. In the realm of pure reason there is no place God according to Kant, but he accepts God in the field of practical reason. Buddha was a cautious teacher and although sometimes he would claim that he had given out his teachings unreservedly, it appears that at other times he would make a distinction among his listeners and would refuse to disseminate some esoteric teachings to the unregenerate multitude. Sometimes he would list certain question as Avyākrta and would not say either yes or no in answer to them. Thus it becomes most embarrassing to ascribe any explicit metaphysical position to him. This uncertainty is further increased by the difficulty to putting a uniform interpretation on the vast literature of the Tripitakas which have been composed by different authors at different times. Thus Buddha has been regarded as an agnostic, a radical pluralist, ethical idealist and a psychological negativist. Whatsoever a position be ascribed to him, it can always be countered by citing some clear or obscure passage from the Tripitakas.

During the Upanisada period, keen discussions were going on regarding the nature and destiny of the Ātman.\(^\text{185}\) It is possible that the remove root of Buddhist Anātman may be found in the statement of Indra to Prajāpati (where the former says): that the Ātman in the deep dream state unrelated to the empirical consciousness appears like ‘annihilated’ (vināśamevāpito). But in place of abstract metaphysical speculations, Buddha evinced a tremendously urgent concern for the elimination of the positive concrete fact of suffering. It is true that there are cosmological and eschatological discussions in the early Buddhist scriptures but the ever whelming burden of all these writing is sorrow and the end of sorrow. The realistic approach to the cessation of suffering through an austere and disciplined life ascendant in Buddhist thought. But although on account of his ethical pragmatism and anti-transcendental positivism Buddha could dismiss enquiries into the nature of the absolute, he could not remain silent on the problem of the human self because all questions moral perfectibility and the extinction of suffering are concerned with the

\(^{185}\) Chhāndogya, VIII, 11, 1.
nature of the human personality and hence ethical discussions could not afford to ignore the problem of the human self.

According to Buddhist traditions, ignorance is the root cause of the aversion and attachment that leads to suffering. These traditions argue that the Buddha’s awakening consisted in overcoming ignorance and then attaining a fundamental insight into the nature of reality. The Buddha’s teachings, then, were intended to help others achieve liberating insight. Elaborations and interpretations of the Buddha’s teachings have been developed and contested for more than two millennia, generating a rich philosophical tradition with a great diversity of views and methodologies. While it would be inappropriate to categorize Buddhist thought only in Western philosophical terms, the primary areas of Buddhist philosophical inquiry can be roughly distinguished along the following lines: insight into the fundamental nature of reality (metaphysics and ontology); understanding the nature of this insight and other knowledge (epistemology); the limits and possibilities for articulating knowledge linguistically (philosophy of language); understanding how to interpret written and oral teachings (hermeneutics); understanding intention, action, and the consequences of action and how we ought to live (ethics); and understanding the agent of knowing and action and the nature of consciousness (philosophy of mind and the person). Rational and creative inquiry into these questions that is philosophy was often regarded as a central element of the Buddhist path. A few words about the following bibliographic essay will help readers benefit from the resources included here. Buddhist philosophical traditions are extensive and diverse, not unlike Western philosophical traditions. Given constraints of space, this bibliographic essay on Buddhist philosophy is only able to map the major peaks in a vast mountain range. The article is categorized in several ways: by school; by national tradition; by major figure; and by philosophical area. (This means there is occasional overlap, but it will enable students and scholars to look at any one section to find what they are seeking.) Some sections are distinguished by whether they include primary or secondary texts. This distinction frequently breaks down in scholarship on
Buddhist philosophy, as translations are often accompanied by extended introductory essays and commentary such that they cannot be neatly characterized simply as primary texts. Another distinction that is sometimes blurred in Buddhist philosophy as it is in Greek, medieval and much early modern philosophy in the West is that between philosophical and religious texts. The texts discussed in this bibliographic essay are primarily of a philosophical nature and do not require any knowledge of Asian languages, culture, history, or even Buddhist religious traditions. However, students interested in a serious study of Buddhist thought would benefit from reading texts in other areas of Buddhist studies. Finally, this entry emphasizes books, as opposed to articles, and scholarship in English, leaving out many landmark works in French, German, Japanese, and Italian. References to these important texts can be found in the resources suggested below.

Sometimes it is said that Buddha never denied the transcendent immanent self as inculcated in the *Upanisada* and his immediate purpose was merely to clear the ground for the triumph of the *Upanisada* view which had been out of focus because of the revolt led by skepticism, agnosticism, determinism and materialism. By denying to the empirical phenomenal psychic-physical *Nāmarūpa* the character of selfhood he was preparing the ground for the emergence of the absolutistic view of the self. Radhakrishnan ascribes such a role to the founder of Buddhism. He says: “Buddha clearly tells us what the self is not though he does not give any clear account of what it is. It is however wrong to think that there is no self at all according to Buddha…Buddha is silent about the Ātman enunciated in the *Upanisada*. He neither affirms nor denies its existence…Buddha consistently refuses to deny the reality of the soul.”

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186 In the Saṃyutta Nikāya, III, 17, ff., there is a denial of immanence. According to Alagaddupamn Suttanta of the Majjhina Nikāya the notion that world and soul are one has been repudiated.


veil of contingency. At the end of this process they find the universal self, which is one of these finite entities, though, the ground of them all. Buddha holds the same view, though he does not state it definitely. “The *Vedantification*” of early Buddhism attempted by Radhakrishnan appears untrue. If in his heart of hearts Buddha did adhere to the concept of spiritual real, why was he shy of saying so? It must have been a stupendous task of self-deception (or hypocrisy?) for Buddha to adhere to a monistic spiritualism and keep mum over it for forty-five years. If the Tripitaka are to be considered the basis for the views of Buddha, then the concept of ‘soullessness’ seems to me to be the view of the founder Buddhism.

There are three cardinal conceptions of early Buddhism impermanence, non-soulism (*anattā*) and the gospel of sorrow. Since there is nothing permanent, it almost automatically follows that the soul or self as an abiding self-subsisting entity does not exist. Soon after the *Upasampadā* of the Pancavargiya Bhikkhus (which included Kondanya) Buddha delivered a sermon to them on *Anātman* and emphatically stated that *Rūpa, Sanjnā, Vedanā, Samskāra*, and *Vijnāna* do not constitute the self. The question, however, of anything besides this *Nāma-Rūpa-Skandhabe*ing the self is an open one. One school of interpreters would argue that Buddha only meant to deny that the phenomenal categories are the self but he silently meant to assert the selfhood of something super-phenomenal. This positivistic interpretation derives partial strength from the last sermon of Buddha in the *Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra* where he exhorts his disciples to be *Ātma-dīpa* (a light unto oneself) and *Ātma-śarana* (a refuge unto oneself).

There are several references in the early Buddhist scriptures to the denial of the soul or self. In the *Anguttara Nikāya* it is stated: “Even so do men of true creed declare the gnosis they have won they tell of their gain (artha) but

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189 Ibid, p 388.
190 The Anguttara Nikāya, III, p. 359.
they do not bring in the ego.” The *Samyutta Nikāya* contains similar repudiations of the ego:

“When one says ‘I’, what he does is that he refers either to all the *Khandhas* combined or any one of them and deludes himself that was ‘I’. Just as one could not say that the fragrance of the lotus belonged to the petals, the color or the pollen so one could not say that the *Rūpa* was ‘I’; that the *Vedanā* was ‘I’, or any of the other *Khandhas* was ‘I’. There is nowhere to be found in the *Khandhas* ‘I am.’

In the *Simha Sūtra* of the *Samyutta Nikāya* it is stated that Buddha taught the doctrine of the decomposition and dissolution of matter and he taught to Baka that even the *Brahmaloka* was not eternal. In this same *Samyutta Nikāya* it is stated that the world “is empty of a self or of anything of the nature of a self.” When Ānanda asks Gautama Buddha the meaning and significance of the phrase ‘the world is empty’ the latter says:

“That it is empty Ānanda, of a self, or of anything of the nature of a self. And what is it that is thus empty? The five seats of the five senses, and the mind, and the feeling that is related to mind all these are void of a self or of anything that is self like.”

In the *Majjhima Nikāya* the doctrine of the permanence of the soul or self is regarded as a foolish doctrine. Thus it is clear that there several explicit statements with reference to *Anattā*.

Sometimes it is said that Buddhist *Anattāvāda* is directed not so much against the metaphysical notion of the self as formulated in the *Upanisada* but against the primitive animistic views prevalent in popular circles. But it is also true that some of the *Upanisada* themselves contain

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194 *Samyutta Nikāya*, IV, 54.
196 There are some passages, however, in the early Buddhist literature which should like denials of the *Upanisadic* notion of the self. The *Majjhima Nikāya*, I, 138, contains the following: “Since neither self, nor ought to belonging to self, brethren! Can really and truly be accepted, is not the heretical position which holds: ‘this is the world and this is the self, and I shall continue to be in the future,
primitive and animistic notions. The *Kathopanisad* twice refers to the human soul as being of the size of the thumb (angushthamātrah).\(^{197}\) The *Śvetāsvatara* says that human soul is of the same subtle size as the ten thousandth part of the tip of the hair. But Buddha would give no quarter to such conceptions.

Neither would he seriously consider the Jaina conception of the soul as *Śarīraparimāṇa*. Beyond the psycho-physical organism or the *Nāmarūpa-skandha*, Buddha would refuse to acknowledge any other subtler metaphysical entity.

Buddha also says that the *Vijnāna* is not self.\(^{198}\) This statement has been interpreted as being directed against two schools of thought the *Upanisada* and the Jaina. Buddha has no sympathy with the conception of the soul as an abstract cognize and he wants to repudiate the Upanisadic notion of the *Vijnāna* as *Brahman*.\(^{199}\) He also repudiates the Jain conception of the soul as on having consciousness as its essence. Buddha’s view that the *Vijnāna* is not the self is further reinforced with the view that in the fourth and fifth stages of *Dhyāna* there is the experience of *Naivasamjñānāsamjñāyatana* and *Samjñāvedayitaniruddha*.

Besides the animistic and the Jaina notions of the soul, a third contemporary school repudiated by Buddha was that of Ālāra Kālam. In his early wandering, Buddha approached the renowned sage Ālāka Kālāma and became his disciple learning the successive degrees of ecstatic meditation. Ālāra taught the view that the individual soul when it abolishes itself set free. “…having abolished himself by himself, he sees that nougat exists and is called a nihilist; then like a bird from its cage, the soul escaping from the soul

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197 In the “Savitri” section of the Mahābhārata also it is said: Angusthamatram Purusham Niscakarsha Yamo Balāti See B.G. Tilak, *Gita-Rahasya*, Hindi edition, p. 191.
198 In the Tanhāsamkkhva Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya (M.N. No. 38) it is maintained that Vijnāna is not to be regarded as the Attā or the soul but is not to be conceived as even a life-long immaterial substance. C.A.F. Rhys Davids, “Soul Theory in Buddhism, journal of Royal Asiatic Society, 1903, says that Vijnāna is not an abstract entity but a series of intellectual processes or force-moments. But his statement that vijnāna hypothetical quasi-noumenal continuum of self-induced flashpoints of consciousness” is over-sophisticated. There seems, to me, no has interpreted Vijnāna as the fundamental element of pure undifferentiated empty consciousness.
199 In the Śatapatha Brāhmanan, X, 3, 5, 13, the self is define either as mind or as consciousness.
escaping from the body is declared to be set free; this is that supreme Brahman constant, eternal and without distinctive signs, which the wise who know reality declare to be liberation.”

Buddha objected to this doctrine on the ground that the liberated soul was still a soul, and whatever the condition it attains, must be subject to rebirth, and “the absolute attainment of our end is only to be found in the abandonment of everything.”

The overwhelming refrain of the Tripitakas is that there is no soul or self as a substance. In the preceding pages we have cited explicit references which negate any notion of a transcendent ‘I’ nevertheless, there are certain passage and statements which mention the word Attā. These do create a problem. Either it has to be accepted that there is inconsistency in the Tripitakas, which, considering the great bulk of this literature and also the fact that its different partitions were composed at different periods, by several disciples, is not surprising, or it as to be accepted that the references to Attā are to the empirical personality of man and not to a metaphysical substance.

In the Mahāvagga Buddha asks the thirty Bhadravargiyas to make a search after the soul Attā Gaveseyyāmā? Sometimes is it said that the word Attā used here is merely taken from the current terminology and its sole purpose is to string then the resolve of men to follow the path leading to the extinction of sorrow and there is no implication of the definite positing of a spiritual entity as a self-subsistent being.

In the Dhammapada it is said Attā hi attano nātho ko hi nātho paro. Here the word Attā which is a Pali form of Ātman is used. This statement has a complete resemblance to this Shloka of the Bhagavadgītā (VI, 5): Uddharedāmanātmānam nātmānamavasādayet Ātmaiva hyatmano bandhurātmaiva ripurātmanah

Besides the use of the word Attā, the words Ātmadīpa and Ātmaśarana are also used in the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra. The Bhikkhus are

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201 Ibid, p.21.
203 Ibid. 21
exhorted to regard the Attā as their light and refuge. Thus Guatama Buddha makes an emphatic and righteous protest against the doctrine of grace which is sponsored in some of the Upanisada as the Katha.\textsuperscript{204} Buddha recognizes the dignity and worth of human personality and human efforts. Hence he repudiates the notions of the prophetic and mediating role of the Saviors. Buddha thereby denies having any pretension to supernatural authority or to kinship with any extraordinary immortal principle (although there are some other passages in the Tripitakas which may support such claims). It may be point out, however, that these words Ātmādīpa and Ātmaśarana cannot be taken as enunciations of the positive concept of the soul as substance. Their aim is to stress individual efforts but no metaphysical soul seems to be implied here. In the Samyutta Nikāya(III, 25) it is said: “O ye mendicants! I am going to point out you the burden as well as the bearer of the burden: the five states are the burden and the Pudgala is the carrier of the burden; he who holds that there is no soul is a man with false notions”. In this statement the duality of the pudgala (self) as the subject and the matter stuff as the object is posited. Later on, this Bhāravāhi conception as formulated in the Saṃyutta Nikāya was taken up by the Sammittiyyās and the Vātsiputriyās and they adhered to the notion of a soul as distinct from the Nāmarūpa.\textsuperscript{205} This passage of the Samyutta does sanction the notion of a soul as a self-subsistent entity and unless it is explained away, as by A.B. Keith, as a reference not to any transcendentental substance but only to the popular empirical view, it is bound to prove a stumbling-block to the negativistic interpretation of early Buddhism.\textsuperscript{206} I think that this is a very intriguing passage and it definitely sanctions the notion of a substantive psychic entity. But perhaps it is alone in so categorical an assertion with regard to the reality of the Pudgala. It might be taken as a later interpolation in view of its incongruence with the vast majority of other passages which sanction Anātmavāda.

\textsuperscript{204} The Kaṭhopanisad, 1, 2, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{205} According to Stcherbatsky, there is a difference between the Attā and the Pudgala. Attā connotes the psychical-physical self while the pudgala means a permanent soul. This distinction seems far-fetched. Stcherbatsky, The Central Conception of Buddhism, p. 22.
There is a further passage in the *Samyutta Nikāya* which reads:

“There then the wandering monk Vachchagotta spoke to the Exalted One, saying “How does the matter stand, Venerable Gautama, is there the ego? When he said this, the Exalted One was silent. ‘How then, Venerable Gautama, is there not the ego? And still the Exalted One maintained silence. Then the wandering monk Vachchagotta rose from his seat and went away. But the Venerable Ananda said to the Exalted One: wherefore sire has the Exalted One not given an answer to the questions put by the wandering monk Vachchagotta? If I, Ananda, when the wandering monk Vachchagotta asked me: ‘is there the ego?’ had answered, ‘The ego is, and then that Ananda would have confirmed the doctrine of the Sramanas and Brahmanas who believe in permanence, if I Ananda when the wandering monk Vachchagotta asked me ‘Is there not the ego? Had answered ‘The ego is not, ‘ten that Ananda would have confirmed the doctrine of the Sramanas and Brahmanas who believe in annihilation”

Oldenberg draws a negativistic conclusion from this dialogue and says that this passage leads to the Buddhist teaching ‘the ego is not’. But this means that Oldenberg is committing the same fallacy of annihilations which Buddha was anxious to avoid, Buddha inculcates the middle path between externalism and annihilations and as in his conception of Aniccāvāda so also in his conception of Anattāvāda he steers a middle path but Goldenberg puts an extreme view in his mouth. But although I agree that generally Buddha had a negativistic approach to the concept of the Attā. I differ from Oldenburg since I think that this particular passage does not sanction Anattāvāda

Although the general impression that has been left on my mind from a study of the *Tripiṭaka* literature is that Buddha did not believe I any self-subsistent human self or in any non-corporeal soul-entity, there are some literary reference as well some indirect arguments to show that Buddha might
have had belief in some kind of a spiritual entity that dwelt in the human body and which was an eternal immutable self. 208 In the Samyutta Nikāya occurs: “When one says ‘I’ what he does is that hirers either to all the Skandhas combined or any one of them and deludes himself that was ‘I’.” 209 Here the empirical psycho-physical complex is denied the character of a permanent spiritual self but some positivistic interpreters of Buddhism argue that by denying the character of self to empirical categories Buddha is indirectly arguing for a meta-empirical self. 210 In the famous Dharmacakra-pravartana Sūtra delivered at Sārnath, everything, subjective and objective is denied the character of a self. Buddha says that what is evil and painful cannot be the Ātman. With reference to this passage also, advocates of a spiritual self have put forward the interpretation that Buddha is only repudiating the character of selfhood to the empirical and phenomenal categories but is indirectly sponsoring his belief in a meta-empirical self. But I think that the question is still problematic and it is difficult to argue categorically that the denial of selfhood to the phenomenal modes implies the indirect positing of the reality of a transcendent superior ‘I’.

The Buddhist monk is advised to view the objects of the world as ‘This is not mine, I am not this. This statement may imply that the denial here refers only to the empirical elements and there is still a transcendent self which remains when the worldly entities pass away.

One of the grounds in support of Ātmavāda is the belief in heavens and hells. If after death the soul goes to heaven or hell in accordance with its merit or demerit then it necessarily follows that there must first be a soul. If there is first such a substance as the soul, only then does the question of its

208 Poussin, “The Ātman in the Pāli Canon”, Indian Culture, Vol. II, 1935-36, pp. 821-824, does recognize that in the Pali literature there are many passages supporting Anātman but few passages which support Attā.
209 Samyutta Nikāya, II, 13: It is no fit question to ask, who experiences contact? Who is that feels? This is the right way to question: conditioned by what is there contact? Conditioned by what, is there feeling?”
210 Locke argued that there must be an enduring soul or self wherein the various mental operations of thinking, feeling and willing have their substratum.
final destiny come up.\textsuperscript{211} If a system believes in heavens and hells, then to be consistent it must adhere to the belief in the existence of a soul. The mythology of the Tripiṭakas is full of the mention of heavens and hells. Various gods, Yaksas and Gandharvas\textsuperscript{212} are also referred to. According to the Dhammapada Buddha condemns a liar to hell, Buddha himself refers to his visits to the various Loka. Such an enormous mythology looks meaningless if there is no substantiality. There is radical incongruity in believing in different kinds if heavens and hells and at the same time in denying any entity as the self or the soul. If it were to be said that the ‘character’ or ‘impressions’ of a man transmigrate, then the stay of such shapeless subtle essences in heavens and hells is calculated neither to satisfy the critic nor to offer solace to the multitude.

Another indirect argument to substantiate a positive interpretation of Buddhist Attā is the emphasis on Dhyāna.\textsuperscript{213} Without positing a spiritual principle it is impossible to explain the ascending scales of mystical consciousness. The adherence to the canons of Śīla prepares an aspirant for Samādhi and Samādhi results in the attainment of Prajinā or discriminative vision. This Prajināis the great attribute of the SamyakaSambuddha and gives to him Dharma Vipaśyanā. Commenting on the four-fold Dhyāna of early Buddhism C.A.F. Rhys Davids has stated:

“First, the attention by way of sense-cognition is hypnotically stimulated and concentrated. Till mind working through sense is arrested. Then intellectual zest or keen interest dies away; and then mind as happy, easeful emotion ceases, and a sort of zero-point is attained, leaving the vaguest consciousness of wide abstraction: infinity of space; next, infinity of receptive consciousness (viññāna), a potentiality consciousness, or awareness that the preceding stage, so far from revealing any persistent unity was ‘nothing

\textsuperscript{211} The Egyptian mythology was built upon the peculiar conception of the soul prevalent there.
\textsuperscript{212} A peculiar significance is attached to gandharva in some parts of Buddhist literature. According to the Majjhima Nikāya, I, 265 and the Anguttara Nikāya, I, 176 the Nāmarupa can only develop if the Gandharva descends I the womb.
whatever’ (natthikinci). Finally, a stage is reached described as neither conscious nor unconscious faint and delicate mentality fading into complete trance. And the expert Jhānist could so predetermine this self-hypnosis as to induce it and emerge from it when he chose.”

These grades of superior mystical illumination receive their ontological significance only if a positive interpretation is put on Attā and belief in an ultimate spiritual reality of which the human soul is a particularization is attributed to Buddha.

There are some references in the Buddhist scriptures to a blissful Nirvāṇa. In the Dhammapada, Nirvāṇa is regarded as the state of highest happiness. In the Theragāthā and the Therīgāthā one finds poetic descriptions of the rapturous and ecstatic state of Nirvāṇa bliss. In the Mahāvagga it is said that after Enlightenment, Buddha enjoyed the bliss of that exalted state of a long time. These statements do not fit in which a negativistic notion of the final destiny of man. It is to be emphasized that if moral life has a purpose, if mystical realization of the human personality then there must be an infinite principle in the cosmos and human life. Without ardent belief in the reality of the self as a substance, a man may become a giant hero and a gigantic intellectual but spiritual life seems difficult and even meaningless and purposeless. The deep serenity and contemplative life of Buddha, his stress on the attainment of superregional truth which was the sure means to the cessation of suffering and his perfect peace in the face of his approaching end do not receive their satisfying meaning in the context of a philosophy of non-soul. If only the gospels of soullessness and annihilationist Nirvāṇa are the final consequences of the most rigorous ascetic and ethical discipline, then early Buddhism would appear to be most unsatisfying both as a popular religion and as a true metaphysic. The dissatisfying character of early Buddhist negativism


215 In the Samyutta Nikāya it is stated, however, that Brahmacaryavāsa is not possible on the supposition of the identity of the body and the soul neither is it possible on the supposition of the body and the soul, neither it is possible on the supposition of the different of the body and the soul. (R. Samkṛityayana, Buddha Darshana in Hindi, pp. 22-23)
led, as a reaction, to the growth of popular ceremonialism and idolatry and also to philosophic absolutism in the latter developments of Mahāyāna religion and philosophy.

In the famous Buddhist formula of Triśrana there is surrender to Buddha, Dharma and Samgha. So far as surrender to Buddha is concerned, during his life time meant the acceptance of his spiritual leadership although he himself never made such claim. Anyway, it can be argued that if Buddha was completely extinct after the Parinirvāṇa then there was no sense in making surrender to him. The element of surrender has significance only if Buddha was subsisting as a spiritual being, may be, in com super-terrestrial regions.

These indirect evidences in support of Ātmavāda are indeed significant. A religion is a hole and it has not only to provide certain abstract propositions of cosmology but has to give a philosophy of life to the people. Hence a number of compromises have to be made with popular views and prejudices and some of them are also incorporated in the religious system itself. Thus although I hold that at a philosophical plane, Buddha expounded the notion of soullessness I think that he was constrained, by the force of the environmental matrix wherein he operated as a religious leader, to include many notions and conceptions which appear crude from the standpoint of abstract soullessness. Unless we are prepared to regard the Tripiṭakas as a conglomeration of incongruent notions, we should say that although from the rigid canons of philosophical exposition Buddha adhered to soullessness, still to provide energetic inspiration to the people he had to speak at times in linguistic symbols which are more consonant with a positive belief in a soul.

Western interpreters especially in the nineteenth century and the earlier part of the twentieth century put a negativistic interpretation on early Buddhism. Hegel regarded Buddhism as a creed of final negation. Edward Caird interpreted Buddhism as doctrine recoil upon the subjective entity and as a gospel of Nirvāṇa extinction. Streeter in his Buddha and Christ and Melemed in his Spinoza and Buddha interpret Buddhism as a negative creed which

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denied the soul and the world. It is true that the Christian interpreters feel glory
in contrasting the affirmative stress on the blessedness of the soul in
Christianity from the nihilistic extinction of the soul which is all that
Buddhism has to offer to man. But if this, rather extreme, interpretation has
been put upon Buddhism, the early Buddhist scripture, which are the sole
sources for knowing what Gautama Buddha taught and which have been so
regarded by Buddhist for over thousand years, are themselves to blame for
that. There is no clear linguistic evidence to indicate that Buddha ever adhered
to the notion of a transcendent self as the inmost essence of a man. The attempt
to attribute a positive belief in some kind of a spiritual self to Buddha, on
logical and philosophical grounds of consistency, is always problematic. For
making early Buddhism look like a positive creed of spiritual fulfillment, I
would not sanction an interpretation which clearly goes against the later of the
Tripiṭakas. The Tripiṭakas, I would regard as far as more authentic for knowing
the inner meaning of the gospel of Buddha than any modern neo-Hinduist
attempts at “Vedantification” of Buddhism as attempted by Ramakrishna,
Vivekananda, Gandhi and Radhakrishnan.

Mrs. C.A.F. Rhys David’s has perhaps made the most wide spread
contributions in the field of early Buddhism. In her earlier publications like
Buddhism and Buddhist psychology she puts a negativist interpretation on
Buddhist Anattā and wrote: “The Anti-Attāargument of Buddhism is mainly
and consistently directed against the notion of a soul, which was not only a
persistent, encouraging, blissful, transmigrating super phenomenal being, but
was also a being wherein the supreme Ātman or world soul was imminent, one
with it, in essence and as a bodily or mental factor issuing its fiat.”217

But in her later writings she almost absolutely changed her
standpoint218 and began to propound that Anattā is a later accretion219 of

217 The fundamental basis of Buddhist Anātmanvāda was to challenge the supposed exemption of the
Ātman from the universal laws of causation and impermanence C.A.F. Rhys Davids, Buddhist
psychology, p. 32.
Rhys Davids, “The Relations between Early Buddhism and Brahmanism.” Indian Historical
Quarterly, Vol. X, 1934, pp. 274-287, says that the concept of immanence as taught in the
monastic origin and is an imposition on the original gospel of Sākya Buddha which (the original gospel) was more or less constructed on the Upanisadic pattern. Referring to the Samyutta Nikāya\textsuperscript{220} which she compares with the Brihadāranyaka refrain Ātmanas tu kāmāya sarvam priyam bhavati says; “I believe it is far more likely, that the original speaker of the verse used Āttā in the sense in which the original speaker of the Upanisad utterance used Ātman, I believe it is far less likely that Sakyan used Āttā in the sense in which Piṭaka compilers came to use it, much later. For those two older spokesmen, the Ātman, Ātta, was that more in each man who was potentially the most in him,”\textsuperscript{221} according to the interpretation of C.A.F. Rhys Davids, Rhys Davids, the insistence on “becoming” would mean not an ontological via media between being and non-being but an ethical discipline for the realization of the “potential” in man. The change of stand of C.A.F. Rhys Davids who had spent nearly fifty years of her life-time in the study of Buddhism is significant. But my own impression about the researches of C.A.F.Rhys David is that they are full of hair-splitting verbal dialectics and rely on imagination. She is willing to stretch words and phrases to yield meanings at which the original speakers would be staggeringly surprised. Her fantastic thesis of an original positive Buddhism and a later monkish asceticism is ridiculous. Furthermore, she has not brought forward any single authentic passage which would convincingly show that Buddha believed in the spiritual and substantiality character of the soul.


\textsuperscript{221} C.A.F. Rhys Davids, “The whole wide world we traverse with our thought,
And nothing find to man more dear than self
Since aye so dear the self to others is
Let the self-lover harm no other man.”
(Spoken by Buddha to Prasenajit)
This verse also occurs in the Tibetan Dhammapada translated by Rockhill (but not in the Pali Dhammapada).

The Theravāda school upholds the Pāli Canon or Tipiṭaka as the most authoritative collection of texts on the teachings of Gautama Buddha. The Sūtra and Vinaya portion of the Tipiṭaka shows considerable overlap in content to the Āgamas, the parallel collections used by non-Theravāda schools in India which are preserved in Chinese and partially in Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Tibetan, and the various non-Theravāda Vinaya. On this basis, both these sets of texts are generally believed to be the oldest and most authoritative texts on Buddhism by scholars. It is also believed that much of the Pāli Canon, which is still used by Theravāda communities, was transmitted to Sri Lanka during the reign of Asoka. After being orally transmitted for some centuries, were finally committed to writing in the last century BCE, at what the Theravāda usually reckons as the fourth council, in Sri Lanka. Theravāda is one of the first Buddhist schools to commit the whole complete set of its Buddhist canon into writing.²²²

Much of the material in the canon is not specifically “Theravāda”, but is instead the collection of teachings that this schools preserved from the early, non-sectarian body of teaching. According to Peter Harvey:

The Theravāda, then, may have added texts to the Canon for some time, but they do not appear to have tampered with what they already had from earlier period.²²³

The Pāli Tipiṭaka consists of three parts: the Vinaya Piṭaka, Sūtra Piṭaka and Abhidhamma Piṭaka. Of these, the Abhidhamma Piṭaka is believed to be later addition to the first two Piṭakas, which, in the opinion of many scholars, were the only two Piṭakas at the time of the first Buddhist Council. The Pāli Abhidhamma was not recognized outside the Theravadas School.

Buddhism is unique among the religious systems of the world in having denied the substantial character of the soul. No other religion, Aryan or Semitic, has dispensed with the soul. If the Tripiṭakas have to be followed, there is no doubt that Anattā means the radical denial of the soul. The psycho-

physical empirical categories have been denied the character of soul in early Buddhism. The overwhelming silence about and even the occasional denial of the *Upanisad* conception of the soul are almost conclusive to prove that Buddha did not subscribe to any soul empirical or transcendent. It is a surprising phenomenon as to so such vigor and vitality and spread in so many areas of the world.

But although Buddhism denies the perpetually abiding character of any ego or self, it cannot be regarded as being a materialistic creed. Its essential conception is the conditions or dependent character of all phenomena. What was called the self or the *Ātman* in pre-Buddhist literature is stated by Buddhism to consist of sensations and conformations. Buddha is an Anātmavādi but not a materialist. If Buddhism were corporeal materialism repudiated an enduring soul and preached the reality of the body. But according to early Buddhism the body is no abiding reality.\(^{224}\) It is a cluster of certain elements of physical phenomena and nothing more. Hence what exists is a mere process, a complex manifold interdependent phenomenal aggregation subject to origination, maturation and eventual extinction. It can be said that the aim of Buddhism is to teach the contingent character of all physical and mental phenomena and to repudiate any permanent, abiding, eternal self or substance. In place of the self-determined and self-sufficient character of simple entities, *Anātman* is a registration of the flowing, relative and ‘devoid of any soul’ character of the physical complex.\(^ {225}\) The detailed categorization of matter, perception, feeling, conformation and consciousness in the Nāmarūpa-skandha has been done only with a view to preach the soullessness if any the possible material and mental factors.

This dissertation examines the doctrine of *Anātman* as it was articulated by the Buddha according to the earliest Buddhist texts, and in the two branches. *Theravāda* and *Mahāyāna* that represent the principal doctrinal

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\(^{224}\) According to the Saṃyutta Nikāya and mind “are impermanent, are liable to suffering, and without soul.”

\(^{225}\) Cf. The Samyutta Nikāya, V. 10. 6. The statement in the Samyutta has also been quoted in T.W.Rhys Davids, The Questions of King Milinda SBE, II, 1. 11.
divisions of early Buddhism, the central thesis is that the teaching of Anātman is to be viewed as a stereological prescription. The Discourses of the Buddha suggest that he associated "suffering" (duhkha) with certain psychological attitudes or "interests" that entangle a person in the presentations of experience; that is, a person projects onto impermanent phenomena a value that is inappropriate to the transience of these phenomena. In particular, the Buddha seems to have thought that belief in the existence of a self or simply the "sense" of an enduring "I" engenders an attachment to and "identification with" elements in our experience, knowledge that phenomena are impermanent (anitya) and therefore "not-self" (Anātman) was proposed to help dissipate this attachment and identification and thereby to help dissolve suffering. Doctrinal differences notwithstanding, this stereological theme was prominent throughout early Buddhist philosophy.

The early Buddhist doctrine of Anattā has given rise to two main interpretations on the part of modern scholars. According to the mainstream view, Anattā means the denial of a permanent self-entity, both at the microcosmic and the macrocosmic levels. However, scholars with a Vedanta orientation who tend to believe that early Buddhism is a systematic representation of the pre-Buddhist Upanisad thought as well as those who believe in a perennial philosophy based on the transcendental unity of all religions, think otherwise. In their opinion, Buddhism believes in a Self (with’s’ capitalized) which is not identical with any of the constituents (khandhas) of the empiric individuality taken severally or collectively, but which transcends them at both levels.

The Buddhist doctrine of Anattās intended as a remedy for the cessation of this erroneous belief (sakkāya-diṭṭhi-nirodha)." This is sought to be achieved by the opposite process, i.e. by negating each aggregate as a self-entity, so as to eliminate all possibilities for the emergence of this notion. The final conclusion of this process of negation is that none of the five aggregates that make up the empiric individuality can be identified as one's own self
Buddhism analyzes human existence as made up of five aggregates or "bundles" (skandhas): the material body, feelings, perceptions, predispositions or karma tendencies, and consciousness. A person is only a temporary combination of these aggregates, which are subject to continual change. No one remains the same for any two consecutive moments. Buddhists deny that the aggregates individually or in combination may be considered a permanent, independently existing self or soul (ātman). Indeed, they regard it as a mistake to conceive of any lasting unity behind the elements that constitute an individual. The Buddha held that belief in such a self results in egoism, craving, and hence in suffering. Thus he taught the doctrine of Anātman, or the denial of a permanent soul. He felt that all existence is characterized by the three marks of Anātman (no soul), Anitya (impermanence), and Dukkha (suffering). The doctrine of Anātman made it necessary for the Buddha to reinterpret the Indian idea of repeated rebirth in the cycle of phenomenal existence known as Samsāra. To this end he taught the doctrine of Pratityasamutpada, or dependent origination. This 12-linked chain of causation shows how ignorance in a previous life creates the tendency for a combination of aggregates to develop. These in turn cause the mind and senses to operate. Sensations result, which lead to craving and a clinging to existence. This condition triggers the process of becoming once again, producing a renewed cycle of birth, old age, and death. Through this causal chain a connection is made between one life and the next. What is posited is a stream of renewed existences, rather than a permanent being that moves from life to life in effect a belief in rebirth without transmigration.

The ultimate goal of the Buddhist path is release from the round of phenomenal existence with its inherent suffering. To achieve this goal is to attain Nirvāṇa, an enlightened state in which the fires of greed, hatred, and ignorance have been quenched. Not to be confused with total annihilation, Nirvāṇa is a state of consciousness beyond definition. After attaining Nirvāṇa, the enlightened individual may continue to live, burning off any remaining
karma until a state of final *Nirvāṇa (parinirvāṇa)* is attained at the moment of death.

In theory, the goal of *Nirvāṇa* is attainable by anyone, although it is a realistic goal only for members of the monastic community. In Theravāda Buddhism an individual who has achieved enlightenment by following the Eightfold Path is known as an Arhat, or worthy one, a type of solitary saint.

For those unable to pursue the ultimate goal, the proximate goal of better rebirth through improved karma is an option. This lesser goal is generally pursued by lay Buddhists in the hope that it will eventually lead to a life in which they are capable of pursuing final enlightenment as members of the Sangha.

The ethic that leads to *Nirvāṇa* is detached and inner-oriented. It involves cultivating four virtuous attitudes, known as the Palaces of Brahma: loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. The ethic that leads to better rebirth, however, is centered on fulfilling one's duties to society. It involves acts of charity, especially support of the Sangha, as well as observance of the five precepts that constitute the basic moral code of Buddhism. The precepts prohibit killing, stealing, harmful language, sexual misbehavior, and the use of intoxicants. By observing these precepts, the three roots of evil lust, hatred, and delusion may be overcome.

*Nirvāṇa* is not situated in any place nor is it a sort of heaven where a transcendental ego resides. It is a state which is dependent upon this body itself. It is an attainment (Dhamma) which is within the reach of all. *Nirvāṇa* is a supramundane state attainable even in this present life. Buddhism does not state that this ultimate goal could be reached only in a life beyond. Here lies the chief difference between the Buddhist conception of *Nirvāṇa* and the non-Buddhist conception of an eternal heaven attainable only after death or a union with a God or Divine Essence in an after-life. When *Nirvāṇais* realized in this life with the body remaining, it is called Sopadīsesa *Nirvāṇa-dhātu*. When an Arahat attains *Parinibbāṇa*, after the dissolution of his body, without any remainder of physical existence it is called *AnupadīsesaNirvāṇa-dhātu*. 