

Non-Self and The Five Aggregates

Version 1.01, September 2017

By Khun Reinhard

<https://www.khunreinhard.com>
KR.emailcontact@gmail.com

CONTENT	page
1. Introduction	2
2. Two kinds of truth – two kinds of language	3
3. The meaning of ‘self’ in the Buddha’s time	4
4. The Buddha’s definition of ‘non-self’	5
4.1 <i>The Five Aggregates</i>	5
5. Summary	9
6. Literature	10
7. About the author	11



1. Introduction

According to Buddhist belief life is governed by the *Three Characteristics of Life*:

1. All conditioned things are impermanent (*aniccā*).
All conditioned phenomena (everything we can experience through our senses) are inconstant, unsteady, and impermanent. Things are constantly coming into being and ceasing to be. Since nothing lasts, there is no inherent or fixed nature to any objects or experience.
2. All conditioned things are unsatisfactory (*dukkha*).
The word *dukkha* corresponds to a number of terms in English including suffering, pain, sorrow, affliction, anxiety, dissatisfaction, discomfort, anguish, stress, misery, and frustration.
3. All things (conditioned and unconditioned) are non-self (*anattā*).
No unchanging, permanent, enduring core or essence to anything.

The first two characteristics are valid for all conditioned phenomena (*saṅkhārā*) while the third characteristic has a wider scope – it includes more than the conditioned, it includes the unconditioned as well (see below). Here we are interested in *anattā*, the third characteristic. More information about all *Three Characteristics of Life* in my book ‘Introduction to Buddhism and to Buddhist Meditation’.¹

Anattā (Pāli²) or *anātman* (Sanskrit) are composite words consisting of *an* (not, without) and *attā* or *ātman* (self, soul).³ The teaching about *anattā* is one of the pillars of Buddhism and is a doctrine which sets Buddhism apart from all other religions as those, in one form or another, postulate something permanent, a self or a soul. This Buddhist teaching is contrary to the Christian belief of a soul, so deeply engrained in Western culture, and therefore the concept of *anattā* is difficult to grasp for people from the West. Actually it cannot be comprehended on a mere intellectual level – it needs meditative insight in order to really understand it.

The concept of *anattā* is of utmost importance for the understanding of other core Buddhist principles like *Dependent Origination*⁴ (the *2nd Noble Truth*) including re-birth (who or what is re-born if there is no ‘self’?) or the doctrine of *karma*⁴ (which ‘non-self’ receives the result of a karmic action committed by a ‘non-self’?). A lot of confusion amongst Buddhists and people interested in Buddhism is caused by diverse interpretations of the doctrine of *anattā*.

Based on the scriptures accepted in Theravāda Buddhism it is here undertaken to shed light on this teaching by bringing our attention to the following questions:

- What was the common understanding of ‘self’ in the Buddha’s time?
- What is the Buddha’s definition of ‘non-self’?
- What is there instead of a ‘self’?
- Which kind of truth, which kind of language is used to describe spiritual matters?

Wherever possible I have used the early Buddhist texts, the Nikāyas, as reference and tried to rely as little as possible on the commentaries. As I cannot read the early Buddhist texts written in Pāli, Sanskrit or some Chinese language, I have to rely on translations of these early texts and their commentaries into English or German language. Any misinterpretation of these texts or commentaries as well as any peculiar

¹ A preview of the book is available at <http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00H8L80RO>

² Early Buddhist scriptures use either Pāli or Sanskrit, two closely related literary languages of ancient India.

³ Wikipedia in / 1 /

⁴ See my articles *The Here-and-Now-Interpretation of Dependent Origination* and *Karma and Merit in (Thai) Buddhism*. Links on page 11.

use of the English language (I am not a native English speaker) is solely the responsibility of the author and I sincerely apologise for any mistake that may have occurred.

The relevant quotes used for this paper are given either in the text itself or in the footnotes so that readers who do not have the Nikāyas at hand can follow up easily. Sometimes I commented inside a quotation. These comments are clearly marked in [\[square brackets\]](#) and/or in blue colour. Pāli terms, common Buddhist terms and extended quotations in the text itself are printed in italics.

Any comment, suggestion, critique regarding this paper is welcome.

2. Two kinds of truth – two kinds of language

The historical Buddha gave talks to people from all walks of life and he adjusted the level of his teachings according to the capability of his audience. Maurice Walshe⁵ writes in the Introduction to the Dīgha Nikāya:

“Very often the Buddha talks in the Suttas in terms of conventional or relative truth (sammuti or vohāra-sacca), according to which people and things exist just as they appear to the naive understanding. Elsewhere, however, when addressing an audience capable of appreciating his meaning, he speaks in terms of ultimate truth (paramattha-sacca), according to which ‘existence is a mere process of physical and mental phenomena within which, or beyond which, no real ego-entity nor any abiding substance can ever be found’ (Buddhist Dictionary under Paramattha⁶).”

When studying the Buddhist texts we need to be aware of the kind of language used, conventional or spiritual or dhamma⁷ language, and must not mix them up. We use conventional language to describe human interactions but for expressing spiritual matters we need a more precise language, a spiritual or *dhamma* language. On the worldly level we use everyday language to describe interactions with others. We say ‘me’ and ‘mine’ and so on – nothing wrong with it. We use spiritual or *dhamma* language on the transcendental level to deal with absolute truth, with spiritual matters. Here there is no ‘me’ nor ‘mine’. Here is of course not anything at all, but all there is, is just an ever changing process of nature, consisting of an ever changing body and an ever changing mind (the *Five Aggregates*, see below), no abiding ‘self’ to be found in this process.

⁵ Maurice Walshe, Introduction to the Dīgha Nikāya, page 31 in / 2 /

⁶ *Paramattha*. The Buddha, in explaining his doctrine, sometimes used conventional language [\[in explaining ‘conventional truth’ \(vohāra-sacca\)\]](#) and sometimes the philosophical mode of expression [\[‘truth \(or term, exposition\) that is true in the highest \(or ultimate\) sense’\]](#) which is in accordance with undeluded insight into reality. [...] It should be noted, however, that also statements of the Buddha couched in conventional language, are called ‘truth’ (*vohāra-sacca*), being correct on their own level, which does not contradict the fact that such statements ultimately refer to impermanent and impersonal processes. [Nyanatiloka. Buddhist Dictionary. See / 3 /]

⁷ Dhamma in Pāli or dharma in Sanskrit means in brief: natural phenomena or the teaching of the Buddha.

3. The meaning of 'self' in the Buddha's time

Before the lifetime of the Buddha a belief in an eternal 'self' or *atman* or *Brahma* was common in India. The 'self' was regarded as that what feels, thinks, experiences and does everything in a person. After the individual 'self' had purified itself from all defilements by spiritual endeavour, it would recognize itself as being part of or identical with the highest or 'universal self' (*paramātmā*) and would experience eternal bliss from then on. This 'self' was regarded as existing everywhere, eternally, without any change, not depending on anything. These ideas could differ between various schools of Brahmanism/ Hinduism and to me it is not that different from the Christian concept of a 'soul' but this 'soul' is created by and dependent on God and may even be able to change.

According to the Buddha the hypothetical 'self', 'soul' or '*ātman*' could exist on either of three levels in

- the coarse physical body – composed of the four great elements
- the astral body – only form, created by the mind, may appear in meditation,
- consciousness – formless

but the Buddha said all of those concepts need to be abandoned in order to reach the highest goal.⁸

The Buddha denied a permanent 'self' on both the conventional and transcendental level, but he himself used the expression 'self' and equivalents when questioned about it, talking about morality or educating people not capable to understand ultimate truth^{8b, 9} and he did not denounce all other teachings involving a view of 'self' in one way or another as necessarily wrong. The doctrines of two of his former teachers, Ālārātāpasa Kālāmagotta and Uddakatāpasa Rāmaputta, or that of Niganthanātaputta (Mahavira), the 24th patriarch and reformer -not the founder- of Jainism, are in many respects not so far away from the Buddha's teaching, the main differences being the view of 'self' and 'non-self', and therefore the Buddha didn't reject their wisdom as wrong but only denied, that their systems would reach the final goal, the complete cessation of suffering, without abandoning *ātman* in one more step¹⁰.

⁸ "Potthapāda, there are three kinds of 'acquired [assumed] self' the gross acquired self, the mind-made acquired self, the formless acquired self. What is the gross acquired self? It has form, is composed of the four great elements, nourished by material food. What is the mind-made self? It has form, complete with all its parts, not defective in any sense-organ. What is the formless acquired self? It is without form, and made up of perception [perception here means consciousness]."

"But I teach a doctrine for getting rid of the gross acquired self..., for getting rid of the mind-made acquired self,... for getting rid of the formless acquired self, whereby defiling mental states disappear and states tending to purification grow strong, and one gains and remains in the purity and perfection of wisdom here and now, having realised and attained it by one's own super-knowledge. [...]"

^{8b} But, Citta, these are merely names, expressions, turns of speech, designations in common use in the world, which the Tathagata [Buddha] uses without misapprehending them."
[DN 9, *Potthapāda Sutta*, i196, page 167 in / 2 /]

⁹ "In the same way, all such expressions as 'I', 'self' and so on are always in accordance with conventional truth, and the Buddha never hesitated to use the word *attā* 'self' (and also with plural meaning: 'yourselves', etc.) in its conventional and convenient sense. In fact, despite all that has been urged to the contrary, there is not the slightest evidence that he ever used it in any other sense except when critically quoting the views of others, as should clearly emerge from several of the Suttas here translated."
[Maurice Walshe, Introduction to the Digha Nikāya, page 31 in / 2 /]

¹⁰ Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu gives more details in / 4 /.

4. The Buddha's definition of 'non-self'

"In Buddhism-related English literature, anattā is rendered as 'not-self', but this translation expresses an incomplete meaning, states Peter Harvey; a more complete rendering is 'non-self' because from its earliest days, anattā doctrine denies that there is anything called a 'self' in any person or anything else, and that a belief in 'self' is a source of dukkha. It is also incorrect to translate anattā simply as 'ego-less' [...] because the Indian concept of ātman and attā is different from the Freudian concept of ego." (Wikipedia / 1 /).

Sabbe dhamma anattā = All dhammas are 'non-self'.¹¹

The Buddha denied that there is something like a 'self' in anything. What should be seen as 'self' is something not illusory, existing by itself, not conditioned by nor depending on anything, permanent, in short it would be an unconditioned *dhamma*. This has led some people to argue (eg the Dhammakaya sect in Thailand) that *nibbāna* or nirvana is the 'self' as all the mentioned attributes apply to it; *nibbāna* being the single one unconditioned entity in Buddhism. I do not want to go deeper into that discussion here. People interested in this matter may have a look at Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu's publication "The Buddha's Doctrine of Anatta" in / 4 /. For our part here let's remember the above quoted saying of the Buddha: "*Sabbe dhamma anattā.*"

4.1 The Five Aggregates (*khandhas*)

The Buddha said that the 'self' is not a reality. He did not say that there is nothing at all however, but all there is, is just an ever changing process of nature, consisting of an ever changing body and an ever changing mind. He labelled this process the *Five Aggregates*, no abiding 'self' to be found in it. The two basic components of human life, body and mind, are divided into: Physicality or Form or Body and the four non-physical aggregates: Feeling, Perception, Mental Formation and Consciousness. These five functions of nature or the *Five Aggregates* function interdependently when the conditions are around for them to function and this, said the Buddha, is what experiences life, this is what lives life.

The Five Aggregates

Mind	&	Body
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling, sensation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Positive, negative, neutral • Perception, recognition • Mental formation, thinking process • Consciousness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, mind-consciousness 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form, materiality, physicality, including the 'outer' world, Physical sense organs, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eye, ear, nose, tongue, body Physical sense objects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Form, sound, odor, taste, touch

¹¹ *Sabbe dhamma anattā* = All dhamma [conditioned and unconditioned] are 'non-self'. Chanted by Buddhists all over the world and to be found in many places in the early Buddhist text.

[eg SN 22.90, *Khandhasamyutta*, *Channa*, page 946 in / 5 /, *Dhammapada* 277-279, page 65 in / 6 /]

- **Body** (*rūpa*) comprises our own body including the five physical sense organs, as well as the respective sense objects in the physical, material world around us. All physical sense organs are located on the body surface where all contacts with the 'outside' world take place. For example we may see a tree 20m away from us, but seeing happens in the eye, located on the body surface. This is why the 'outer' world is regarded to be part of the body aggregate.
- **Feeling** or sensation (*vedanā*) are just the three basic feeling tones of pleasant, unpleasant or neither pleasant nor unpleasant or neutral. You knock your knuckles on a hard surface; a feeling tone arises which the mind then interprets as unpleasant. If you feel a cool breeze touching the skin on a hot day, then the feeling tone arising will be interpreted by the mind as pleasant. The neutral kind of sensation is by far the most common, because most of the contacts that take place in the course of a lifetime are more or less meaningless, they do not really throw up a sensation which is judged to be pleasant or unpleasant. Feeling here does not mean mood or emotion like anger, envy, jealousy, love etc.
- **Perception** (*saññā*) recognises, labels, remembers physical and mental objects. It recognizes different colours, recognizes different forms, discriminates this from that ... makes the world we live in understandable.
- **Mental formation** (*saṅkhāra*) or the thinking process including volitional activities. The thinking process evaluates and responds to the data uncovered by perception with thinking, may be with verbal activity following on from that or some kind of physical response may take place. The 'self-idea' comes from thinking, we fall in love, and it is the thinking process that actually does it, there is nobody doing it. The thinking happens but there is no 'me' involved, it is just nature functioning in the way that nature does.
- **Consciousness** (*viññāṇa*), sometimes sense-consciousness, is awareness of or sensitivity to an object. It cognizes but does not recognize. "Consciousness must associate with the other four aggregates in order for these aggregates to arise and have meaning. Thus consciousness is the foundation of the *Five Aggregates*. If consciousness is not present, the other four aggregates cannot exist."¹² According to Buddhists human beings have six senses and a separate consciousness for each of them – we have eyes and eye-consciousness, ear and ear-consciousness, mind and mind-consciousness, etc. Buddhists assert further, that the mind processes events in sequence, one after the other, but because it is so very quick, we get the impression that it can process several events parallel at the same time. For one kind of consciousness to arise, the previous one has to cease.

Let's imagine the eye sees a tree. The coming together of this external sense-object (tree) with the internal sense-organ (eye) triggers eye-consciousness to arise, resulting in eye-contact. This contact is just the awareness that something is seen – it is not a 'tree' at this point because eye-consciousness doesn't know anything about a tree. Consciousness is just awareness and it takes recognition (the memory function) to turn this into a tree. But before recognition takes place a basic feeling tone (either positive, negative or neutral) will arise from this eye-contact. A positive or negative feeling tone will trigger the mind to pay closer attention; in objects causing a neutral feeling tone the mind is usually not interested. Then the mind will recognise the object (it's a banyan-tree) causing the sensation and continues with mental formation ("This is a beautiful banyan-tree").

That's it. We think it is 'me' seeing the banyan-tree but actually it's the aggregates – five processes of nature operating because the conditions are around for them to operate in – no need for a 'self' doing the seeing, recognition and thinking. As long as we do not cling to the *Five Aggregates* as being 'self' or 'me'

¹² Varasak Varadhammo in / 8 /, page 155
Khun Reinhard

we will have no problems. No 'I' to hear, 'I' to see ... just hearing, seeing ... without the 'I' turning it into a selfish process. Actually there is much more to it than this brief description. A detailed explanation of the processes involved is available in my article *The Here-and-Now-Interpretation of Dependent Origination*¹³.

It is important to realise that the *Five Aggregates* are governed by the *Three Characteristics of Life*, that is, they are impermanent, subject to stress and tension and 'non-self'. In this article we are not concerned with the *dukkha*-part of the three characteristics¹⁴ but will have a quick look at impermanence and the Buddha's explanation regarding 'non-self'.

The body's impermanence is quite obvious, it changes continually from birth to death, and the mind is a miasma of change. Assume you are listening to a noise. Your ear receives the sound and ear-consciousness is aware of it, thus hearing takes place, followed by recognition and some thoughts may arise. Then you may feel a breeze on your skin. Your body receives the touch of the wind and body-consciousness is aware of it, thus a bodily feeling takes place. But when you are aware of the bodily feeling then you are no longer aware of hearing because now there is only body-consciousness active, the previous ear-consciousness has faded away and died down --> impermanence. Next you may see something in front of you. The eye is in contact with that object and eye-consciousness becomes aware of it. Eye-consciousness is getting 'born', thus seeing happens and the previous body-consciousness is no longer active. You may remember something. Mind-consciousness is active and so on ... Every mind state depends on its own consciousness. For one kind of consciousness to arise or to get 'born' the previous one had to cease or to 'die'. Each of these mind states is capable to produce the notion of a 'momentary self' which the ignorant mind then glues together to a 'permanent self' living life from the cradle to the grave.¹³

The Buddha refused that any of these *Five Aggregates* comprises a self.

"Bhikkhus [monks], form is nonself. For if, bhikkhus, form were self, this form would not lead to affliction, and it would be possible to have it of form: 'Let my form be thus; let my form not be thus.'

"Feeling is nonself ... Perception is nonself ... Volitional formations are nonself ... Consciousness is nonself. For if, bhikkhus, consciousness were self, this consciousness would not lead to affliction, and it would be possible to have it of consciousness: 'Let my consciousness be thus; let my consciousness not be thus.' But because consciousness is nonself, consciousness leads to affliction, and it is not possible to have it of consciousness: 'Let my consciousness be thus; let my consciousness not be thus.' [...]

"Therefore, bhikkhus, any kind of form whatsoever, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, all form should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: 'This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.'

"Any kind of feeling whatsoever ... Any kind of perception whatsoever ... Any kind of volitional formations whatsoever ... Any kind of consciousness whatsoever, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, all consciousness should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: 'This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.'"¹⁵

Now, there are people who argue that while the Buddha refuted a 'self' inside of the *Five Aggregates* he hasn't said anything about a 'self' outside of the aggregates, thus suggesting that the Buddha didn't deny a 'self' somewhere else.¹⁶

¹³ Khun Reinhard. *The Here-and-Now-Interpretation of Dependent Origination. An attempt to explain the arising of the self-concept in the human mind*. See link on page 11.

¹⁴ Related information for example in my already mentioned book; footnote 1 on page 2.

¹⁵ SN 22.59, *Khandhasamyutta, Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta*, pages 901-902 in / 5 /

¹⁶ "It should be noted that in the above basic formulas the absence of a self is confined to the five skandhas [Five Aggregates in Sanskrit], and that nothing is said either way about its existence or non-existence quite apart from them. The Buddha never taught that the self 'is not', but only that 'it cannot be apprehended'." [Edward Conze, page 39 in / 7 /]

Along a similar line goes the argument when the Buddha didn't answer (neither affirming nor rejecting) a question of the wanderer Vacchagotta regarding the existence of a 'self'. They claim that if the Buddha didn't explicitly deny the existence of a 'self' then it should exist, yet he Buddha himself gives the reason for his silence and what he thinks about the existence of a 'self' in the second half of the same Sutta:

Then the wanderer Vacchagotta approached the Blessed One ... and said to him: "How is it now, Master Gotama, is there a self?"

When this was said, the Blessed One was silent.

"Then, Master Gotama, is there no self?"

A second time the Blessed One was silent.

Then the wanderer Vacchagotta rose from his seat and departed.

Then, not long after the wanderer Vacchagotta had left, the Venerable Ananda said to the Blessed One: "Why is it, Venerable sir, that when the Blessed One was questioned by the wanderer Vacchagotta, he did not answer?"

"If, Ananda, when I was asked by the wanderer Vacchagotta, 'Is there a self?' I had answered, 'There is a self,' this would have been siding with those ascetics and brahmins who are eternalists. And if, when I was asked by him, 'Is there no self?' I had answered, 'There is no self,' this would have been siding with those ascetics and brahmins who are annihilationists.

*"If, Ananda, when I was asked by the wanderer Vacchagotta, 'Is there a self?' I had answered, 'There is a self,' would this have been consistent on my part with the arising of the knowledge that '**all phenomena [dhamma] are nonself**'?" [Text-decoration **bold** by the author]*

"No, venerable sir."

"And if, when I was asked by him, 'Is there no self?' I had answered, 'There is no self,' the wanderer Vacchagotta, already confused, would have fallen into even greater confusion, thinking, 'It seems that the self I formerly had does not exist now.'"¹⁷

The Buddha rejected both views, capable of allowing a 'self' creeping into his teaching, in the above Sutta himself and again I would like to refer the reader to the text chanted by Buddhists all over the world "**All** dhammas [\[conditioned and unconditioned\]](#) are 'non-self'."

Apart from the Buddha's view there have been other views of 'non-self' as well, for example the nihilistic view that denies everything including 'self' and 'non-self'. For more examples and details about different views of 'self' and 'non-self' see Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu in / 4 /.

¹⁷ SN 44.10, *Abyākatasamyutta*, *Ānanda*, pages 1393-1394 in / 5 /
[Khun Reinhard](#)

5. Summary

Human beings are made up of a body and mind which, in conventional language, is referred to as a 'person' or 'self' or 'me' and we usually assume, that this 'self' or 'soul' was somehow born at the beginning of our lives and continues as more or less the same until we die and which, in between, experiences all the things that are seen, heard, smelled, tasted and touched, does all the thinking. There is a 'me' and this 'me' is the same 'me' and this 'me' is always around right throughout life. It is a constant like a solid, unbroken line from birth right up until death. According to Buddhists it is a big mistake to think like this.

On the level of ultimate truth, using spiritual language, there is neither a 'person' nor 'self' nor 'soul' nor '*ātman*'. All there is, is just an ever changing body and an ever changing mind (feeling, perception, mental formation, consciousness) which the Buddha labelled the *Five Aggregates*, experiencing life from moment to moment, changing from moment to moment.

One permanent entity, not depending on causes, exists in Buddhism though, *nibbāna* or *nirvana*, but this is 'non-self' (*asaññhatadhamma*) either. "Rather, it is only the state of extinction or the condition after all impermanent things have become extinct."¹⁸

Our problems in life arise because we cling to the idea that there is a 'self', maybe rooted in what we call the survival instinct. We cling to it as something which is always around in a long, unbroken line, but actually it arises and passes away continually, right throughout our lives, every time there is a meaningful sense contact, the meeting of a sense organ and its object. And no one could count the number of times the senses function in the course of a lifetime or even in one year because it is always happening, but it is not a continuous, unbroken process. Whatever arises as a result of that sense experience is not a constant and is also not a 'self'. But we, because we cling to the idea that it is, then end up with *dukkha* as the Buddha said, because then we think there is a 'me' who lives life and everything that happens during the course of life happens to 'me'. If we do not cling to this sense of being a 'self', we are not fooled by it, we understand what it is, we do not allow it to brew up these selfish feelings in the mind, then there will be no problem; there just will be the basic natural process of life taking place, nobody to experience it. There will be no 'self' to turn it into a selfish process. This is precisely what Gotama did, that is what made him into a Buddha. He shattered the illusion that there is a permanent, existing 'self' or, if you prefer 'spirit', 'soul' or '*ātman*', it all comes to the same.

For people having grown up in cultures with a strong self-esteem (like the Western-Christian one) the concept of 'non-self' is difficult to understand, for persons with a feeling of inferiority it can be even threatening. It needs a strong and healthy ego to cope with the 'non-self'-concept. This sounds like a paradox, but the meaning of 'non-self' does not indicate that we do not exist at all, but we are no unchangeable, solid entities, rather an ever changing natural process.

Letting go of the 'self'-idea is no easy task and it will be successfully accomplished only when reaching the first level of holy or noble persons in Buddhism, when becoming a *stream-enterer*. The way to realize this state is by practicing the *Noble Eightfold Path* which includes insight- or *vipassanā* meditation through which we get insight into the *Three Characteristics of Life* – impermanent, dissatisfying and non-self.

¹⁸ Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu in / 4 /, page 38.

6. Literature

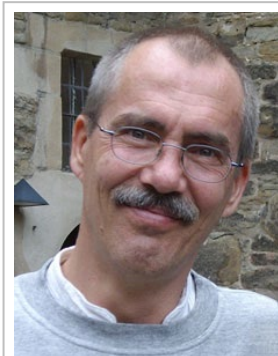
- / 1 / **Anatta**
In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*.
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anatta> (accessed August 23, 2017)
- / 2 / **Digha Nikāya** (abbr. **DN**)
The long discourses of the Buddha
Translated from the Pāli by Maurice Walshe
Wisdom Publication, Boston 1999
ISBN 978-0-86171-103-1
- / 3 / **Nyanatiloka Mahathera**
Buddhist Dictionary. Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines
Fourth revised Edition 1980, Reprinted 1988, updated August 17, 2005
Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka
ISBN: 955-24-0019-8
http://what-buddha-said.net/library/pdfs/Nyanatiloka_Buddhist_Dictionary.pdf
(accessed June 22, 2017)
- / 4 / **Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu**
The Buddha's Doctrine of Anatta
Dhammadana Foundation, Chaiya, Thailand 2002
<https://enlightenmentward.wordpress.com/2013/02/26/buddhist-book-2012the-buddhas-doctrine-of-anatta/> (accessed August 29, 2017)
- / 5 / **Samyutta Nikāya** (abbr. **SN**)
The Connected Discourses of the Buddha
Translated from the Pāli by Bhikkhu Bodhi
Wisdom Publication, Boston, 2000
ISBN: 978 0-86171 -168-8
- / 6 / **The Dhammapada**
The Buddha's Path of Wisdom
Translated from the Pali by Acharya Buddharakkhita
http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/scrndhamma.pdf
(accessed August 28, 2017)
- / 7 / **Edward Conze**
Buddhist Thought in India
First published in 1962, Reprinted with corrections, 1983
Allen & Unwin, London
ISBN: 0-04-294128-8
- / 8 / **Varasak Varadhammo (P.A. Payutto)**
Suffering and No Suffering
Buddhadharma Meditation Center, Hinsdale, IL, USA
Printed in Thailand 1996,
ISBN: 974-89647-0-1

7. About the author

My name is Reinhard Hölscher. In Thailand I'm politely addressed as Khun Reinhard.

For many years now I'm living in southern Thailand, studying Buddhism, practising meditation, teaching yoga and sharing my knowledge and experience regarding both *Theravāda* Buddhism and Hatha-Yoga with a large number of foreign students.

In 1995 I've started to participate in the monthly 10-day meditation retreats at the International Dharma Hermitage of Wat Suan Mokkh, Chaiya, Thailand. First as a participant, then as a helper, yoga teacher and coordinator, and later I've given talks during these retreats. Between 1995 and today I've altogether spent more than seven years at the International Dharma Hermitage.



Khun Reinhard

Together with my wife I have offered the course 'Introduction to Buddhism and Buddhist Meditation' at a small meditation centre in Hua Hin (Thailand). These courses started in October 2010 and were offered 6 - 12 times each year. They have ended with the onset of Covid-19 and won't be revived again. The first edition of this book has developed from the talks given during these courses.

I have been (on and off) involved with teaching at the Dipabhāvan Meditation Centre on Koh Samui, Thailand since 2006 and (interrupted by Covid-19) teach there since the end of 2018 a 7-day retreat from the 11th to the 18th every month.

<https://dipabhavan.weebly.com>

Another interest of mine is yoga. I have practised Hatha Yoga for 48 years and taught it for more than 17 years after yoga teacher training in 2000 at the Vivekananda Ashram near Bangalore in India. During my lessons I have introduced more than 2,000 women and men to the basics of Hatha-Yoga. Most were taught in 10-day courses.

Information, articles and books regarding my meditation and yoga experiences are available on my website at:

<https://www.khunreinhard.com>

Publications

eBooks (available in PDF, EPUP, MOBI ... - format; in both English and German language)

- [Introduction to Buddhism and to Buddhist Meditation – 3rd Edition](#)
- [Enjoy Hatha Yoga – 2nd Edition](#)

Articles (PDF, free of charge, most but not all in both English and German language)

- [Non-Self and the Five Aggregates](#)
- [The Here-and-Now-Interpretation of Dependent Origination \(*Paṭiccasamuppāda*\) - An attempt to explain the arising of the self-concept in the human mind -](#)
- [Karma and Merit in \(Thai\) Buddhism](#)
- [Free will in Buddhism and Western Philosophy](#)
- [Bhikkhunī-ordination controversy in Theravāda Buddhism](#)
- [Meditation – postures and practices](#)
- [Meditation in daily life](#)
- [Aging and Yoga](#)
- [Breathing and Yoga](#)
- [and more ...](#)