

THE PRACTICE OF ANATTA FOR WORLD PEACE

Abstract

Anatta, or non-self, is a core concept in Buddhism. The theory of anatta, or non-self, indicates a Buddhist perspective that the world, including the self, is impermanent and constantly changing, rather than hypothesizing the absence of self. It suggests that beings and phenomena in the world do not exist as isolated entities, but they coexist and mutually support each other for survival. In other words, life is about cooperation and development, rather than fighting to assert one's ego. War has occurred in the world due to opposing views and the struggle for benefits. However, war is less beneficial than cooperation and mutual support, as it causes losses at all times. It is the practice of anatta that supports the coexistence of entities among opposing views, suggesting the role of anatta in world peace. This article argues for the importance of understanding the characteristics of the self (atta) and the role of realizing selflessness in reducing conflicts and struggles. At the same time, the article also sheds light on the connection between the realization of selflessness in harmony and the practice of bringing personal peace to world peace. Wars and conflicts will vanish on earth, and world peace will be maintained when there is peace in individuals' minds, resulting from the practice of anatta.

Keywords: anatta, coexistence, cooperation, no-self, selflessness, world peace

1. Introduction

Anatta, in Buddhism, is the teaching that human beings do not possess an eternal essence or any inherent potential that can be considered a soul, or a doctrine that denies the existence of the self (Gombrich, 2009). Instead, each individual is made up of five elements (Pālikhandha; Sanskrit skandha), which are ever-changing and impermanent. The concept of anattā, or anatman, departs from the Hindu belief in atman ("self"). In fact, people tend to view

31 everything as fixed, clinging to external events, which leads to suffering and dissatisfaction
32 (MacKenzie, 2012).

33 Anatta is closely related to three important concepts in Buddhism: ethical behaviors (*sīla*),
34 concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*). Buddhist ethics refer to the principles that guide
35 human behavior (Barnhart, 2012). This realization is a system of moral responsibility that
36 describes what a person can and cannot do (Davis, 2016). In contrast to ethics, concentration is
37 primarily concerned with focusing one's attention. People need to focus on what they are doing
38 to overcome personal problems, suggesting that mindfulness can be a beneficial tool (Bucknell,
39 2022). Both ethics and meditation are core Buddhist practices that help people understand
40 themselves and the world around them. When they understand themselves and their
41 surroundings, they can empathize with and respect the events that occur in life (Sayadaw,
42 2016). In general, the specific practices of precepts, concentration, and wisdom are based on the
43 doctrine of selflessness, which supports personal development and helps people solve their own
44 problems, ultimately leading to harmony with the world.

45 The Buddhist perspective on peace emphasizes the importance of compassion,
46 nonviolence, and inner harmony (Harvey, 2000). Buddhism argues that peace begins within
47 each person's mind, free from the attachments of greed, hatred, and delusion. Moreover,
48 recognizing the non-self as a practice reduces attachment to the self and promotes healthy
49 relationships, especially among politicians who have a general influence on the world.
50 Recognizing that there is no fixed ego or self-centeredness does not lead to a distinction
51 between right and wrong; this perspective, or that of others, helps people see it more generously
52 and sympathetically. The Buddha taught that all activities and actions must be based on moral
53 mindfulness and the development of compassion to destroy hatred and violence. An
54 understanding of selflessness is essential to attaining absolute liberation of the mind (Kang,
55 1999). Overall, the theory of not-self (*anattā*) helps people recognize their true nature, rather
56 than letting the illusion of their self consume each person. From there, they are liberated from
57 ignorance and gain an objective, correct view, known as the right view (*samma-ditthi*).

58 According to a 2023 report by Escola Pau, armed conflicts have reached record levels,
59 with more than 120 million people forcibly displaced worldwide (Escola Pau, 2024). Similarly,
60 the Geneva Academy currently monitors over 110 armed conflicts worldwide, documenting the
61 actors involved, recent developments, and the relevant international legal frameworks
62 applicable to them. While some of these conflicts dominate international headlines, many
63 others remain largely unnoticed (Geneva Academy, n.d., para. 1).

64 From these figures, it becomes evident that global instability is closely tied to the
65 instability of the human mind—including the minds of political leaders and decision-makers.
66 This perspective highlights the importance of the Buddhist principle of anattā (not-self): by
67 cultivating inner balance, mitigating ego-driven impulses, and fostering compassion,
68 individuals and societies can establish the psychological foundations necessary for enduring
69 peace. Greater understanding and application of anattā could therefore contribute meaningfully
70 to both inner harmony and global stability.

71 The main object of this article is to understand the characteristics of the ego (atta) and the
72 role of the awareness of the self (anatta) in bringing about inner harmony and world peace. The
73 understanding that nothing, including human beings, has an immutable self-nature reveals an
74 important relationship between transforming perception and behavior through ethical practices
75 and meditation.

76 The following questions will guide the in-depth discussion in the article:

- 77 •How can the doctrine of anattā and related practices be considered solutions that help
78 people resolve conflicts and lead to world peace?

79 **2. Theory of Selflessness**

80 **2.1. Concept of selflessness (anattā)**

81 In the context of India's rich cultural and religious diversity, the Buddha's remarkable
82 discovery regarding human nature and the entire world as non-self is considered a unique
83 insight. Anatta is one of the most profound teachings of the Buddha, yet it is also a foundational
84 principle of Buddhist teachings. Understanding the concept of non-self (anattā) enables one to
85 grasp other related topics in Buddhist teachings.

86 "Anattā" in Pāli or "anātman" in Sanskrit is widely defined as "not-self." This term is a
87 core concept in Buddhism, stating that nothing is unchanging or permanent (Gombrich, 2009).
88 In fact, because humans tend to perceive things as permanent, they become attached to
89 phenomena in the outside world, which often leads to suffering and dissatisfaction.
90 (MacKenzie, Matthew, 2009).

91 According to Collins, anatta presents itself in three primary forms (Collins, Steven, 1990).
92 First, "no self" means no identity, indicating the absence of both a self and an identification of
93 who we are or what a phenomenon is. Second, when humans understand that there is no self,
94 they are not conceited. In other words, they do not recognize themselves as better or worse than
95 others. Ultimately, since there is no self, humans should refrain from labeling things as right or
96 wrong. That means they do not believe they are right, and opposing views are wrong. These

97 three forms of anatta are not separate but interrelated. The first two forms incorporate the third
98 one.

99 Anatta is generally related to three important concepts in Buddhism: Buddhist ethics,
100 concentration, and understanding. Buddhist ethics outline a person's behavior or activity. It is a
101 system of moral duty and obligation that describes what a person can and cannot do. Unlike
102 Buddhist ethics, one-pointedness primarily focuses on one's thoughts and mental processes.
103 One is supposed to concentrate on what they do or are doing to overcome their personal
104 problems, suggesting that mindfulness may be a tremendous help. Buddhist ethics and
105 concentration are believed to develop one's understanding of oneself and the external world.
106 They can empathize with and respect their surroundings when they understand themselves and
107 the world. In general, Buddhist ethics, concentration, and understanding work together to assist
108 personal development, helping individuals resolve their problems and align with the external
109 world.

110 In Buddhism, the definition of the self is the doctrine that no permanent or fundamental
111 entity can be called the soul (Alexander Wynne, 2009). Instead, each individual is constituted
112 from *pañcakkhandha* (five aggregates), which are regarded as human nature and constantly
113 change, being impermanent. The word 'anatta' differs from the Hindu tradition of 'atman,' which
114 is related to 'self.' Realizing the non-self (*anattā*) that is associated with impermanence (*anicca*)
115 and suffering (*dukkha*) enhances one's ability to have the right view or direct knowledge in
116 Buddhism (Thomas William, 2008).

117 Anattā emphasized selflessness through the specific analysis of the Buddha's existence.
118 Accordingly, *anattā* is denied for anything considered 'self' or 'what belongs to self' in any
119 human or other object. In other words, faith in 'self' or attachment to the self is
120 *dukkhasamudaya* (the origin of suffering) (Harvey, Emmanuel, 2015), which assumes that
121 things in the world remain unchanged. However, in reality, as change is unavoidable and
122 sometimes unpredictable, humans are sometimes unsatisfied, resulting in suffering, which
123 Buddha mentioned in the *Saccavibhanga Sutta* (the exposition of the truths) (Bodhi,
124 *Saccavibhangasutta*, 2000). Liberation occurs when the practitioner comes to realize the reality
125 of existence.

126 The Buddha denied the existence of an endless and immutable soul because he believed
127 the body and mind were constantly evolving (*anicca*). The Buddha did not accept both
128 *sassatadiṭṭhi* (eternalism) and *natthikadiṭṭhi* (nihilism). Therefore, the thought that there will be
129 a regenerated soul in the next life and death is *micchādiṭṭhi* (wrong view). Accepting rebirth in
130 the next life leads to understanding that the soul separates from the body after death and moves

131 to another realm or existence. The belief that nothing remains after death leads them not to
132 believe in the fruit of kamma. No concept of 'self' exists independently, but only *nāma-rūpa*
133 (name and form) changes continuously according to predestined conditions. The feeling of 'self'
134 when we have invested a lot in life, our cognition, our desires - everything, is also a form of
135 defilement due to *taṇhā* (craving) arising from *avijjā* (ignorance).

136 In predominantly Buddhist texts, the term "*Attā*" or "*Attan*" describes the ego; many
137 synonymous words, such as "*Atuman*," "*Tuma*," "*Puggala*," "*Jiva*," "*Satta*," "*Pana*," and
138 "*nāmarūpa*," have similar meanings. The use of the terms *Atta*, *Purisa*, and *Puggala* in various
139 contexts naturally reveals the ego's denial in ancient Buddhist texts. Later, the appearance of
140 terms such as '*puggala*', which means immutable subject or eternal soul, contributed to the
141 formation of the *anattā* doctrine in later Buddhist documents (Steven et al, 1990).

142 The Buddhist viewpoint of anatta, which rejects the existence of an immutable self,
143 differs significantly from those of Christianity and Indian religions. Moreover, this doctrine is
144 the root of Buddhist practice, leading to enlightenment and awakening. In conclusion, a deep
145 understanding and application of *anattā* could contribute meaningfully to both inner harmony
146 and global stability.

147 2.2 Two kinds of selflessness

148 To gain an in-depth grasp of the selflessness doctrine, the writer analyzed two typical
149 suttas in the *Nikāya*, including the *Anattalakkhaṇasutta* (The characteristic of not-self) and the
150 *Suññatālokasutta* (Empty is the world). These two suttas illustrate how the Buddha
151 contemplated and discussed the truth of selflessness in humans, focusing on the five elements
152 of *nāma-rūpa* (name and form), which make up a human being without an intrinsic entity, as
153 well as the emptiness of the world arising from various dependent conditions.

154 2.2.1 Selflessness of the Person

155 The *Anattalakkhaṇasutta* (the characteristic is non-self) is the second discourse of the
156 Buddha, aimed at helping disciples abandon the clinging to the false belief that there is an
157 existence of 'self' and 'what belongs to self.' This term refers to the concepts, emotions, or
158 attributes that people often assign to themselves; however, from a Buddhist perspective, these
159 concepts, states of the mind, do not have a fixed entity and cannot exist independently. The
160 Buddha explained thoroughly and pointed out that contemplating the real body-mind of the five
161 aggregates as not-self is essential. The Buddha constantly raises the problem through questions
162 and answers to the five mendicants:

163 *Is 'form' permanent or impermanent? Nevertheless, if it is impermanent, is it*
164 *suffering or happiness? But if something is temporary, causes pain, and is*
165 *perishable, can it be mine or my true self? (Bodhi, Anattalakkhaṇasutta, 2000).*

166 Through asking the listener, the Buddha also creates opportunities for the other person to
167 contemplate and evaluate whether what he has raised is right or wrong, appropriate or
168 inappropriate, specifically in relation to the observation of *pañcakkhandha* (five aggregates).

169 The Buddha slowly outlined the truth in the five elements, cleverly peeling away the
170 layers like a banana peel. At the beginning of the sutta, he asserted, 'Form is not self.' The first
171 reason is given for this assertion: 'If the form were itself, it would not lead to affliction.' He then
172 stated that people hope their physical form will resemble certain ideals, but it often does not
173 meet those expectations. Therefore, witnessing the spontaneous evolution of the physical body
174 causes one to feel disappointed and despair. For instance, a woman often experiences fear due
175 to changes in her appearance over time, which can contribute to the aging process. This change
176 may affect her husband's ability to remain dispassionate toward their relationship. This case
177 illustrates the close association between misery and the transformation of form.

178 As mentioned in *the Anattalakkhaṇasutta*, the second factor in the five aggregates is
179 *vedanākkhandha* (feeling), which is also not-self. *Vedanā* means feelings, sensations, or
180 awareness anywhere in the body and mind, such as hot, cold, aches, numbness, happiness or
181 pleasantness, misery or unpleasantness, etc. *Vedanāsutta* distinguishes three types of feelings:
182 (1) "Unpleasant feeling" means the sense of discomfort, (2) "pleasant feeling" means a sense of
183 comfort and happiness, and (3) neutral feeling means neither joyful nor miserable. (Bodhi,
184 *Vedanāsutta*, 2000). Under the guidance of the Buddha, one could understand that such feelings
185 and those feelings are also not-self, rising and ceasing constantly. Moreover, according to the
186 law of dependent origination, *vedanā* (feeling) was born by the *phassa* (contact)
187 '*phassapaccayāvedanā*' (contact leads to feeling). For example, when a man meets a beautiful
188 woman, he tends to consider her attractive or likable. It is a kind of pleasant emotion, and it is
189 reversed when one encounters an unpleasant situation. These two individuals, whether beautiful
190 or ugly, are just two sets of five aggregates, but different ways of expression indicate that even
191 feelings are non-self.

192 The third element of the five aggregates, *saññā* (perception), is also not-self. *Saññā* are
193 the thoughts and perceptions, that is, the ideas that arise in the mind because there is contact
194 between the five sense-organs and the five external objects, recognized, and labeled (the shape
195 of a house, fear of a ghost) (Peter, 2013). *Saññā* is a complex Buddhist concept with various
196 meanings in English as follows: mental formations, dispositions, reactions; conditioned

197 phenomena, subliminal impressions; karmic impulses; inherited forces; constructing activities;
198 habitual potencies; 'habits or tendencies' (Nagapriya, 2004). *Saññā* is considered a factor
199 characterized by not-self (*anattā*) because mental formations are a process of interpreting
200 sensory information to understand the world around us. *Saññā* (perception) arises from the
201 contact between objects and the sense-organs correspondence. It represents awareness and
202 perception, distinguishing the world through the senses. In addition, *saññā* also labeled the
203 object and formed experience. For example, when someone mentions 'the sea,' we immediately
204 imagine the waves and white sandy beaches. Similarly, when we smell a scent, our mind
205 distinguishes it as the smell of incense, not the smell of flowers. Similarly, when listening to the
206 temple bell, the mind is immediately aware of the chanting or meditation time and defaults to
207 responding when listening to such sounds. *Saññā* is not fixed and changes over time and
208 circumstances. It arises and depends upon many sensory and mental processes. This result
209 indicates that perception is also impermanent and lacks a fixed entity. Therefore, *saññā* is
210 definitely selfless.

211 The fourth factor is *saṅkhāra* (formation). *Saṅkhāra encompasses conditioned*
212 *phenomena, volition, constructive activities, thought processes, and psychological actions that*
213 *contribute to the creation of karma.* An object triggers all types of mental imprints and
214 conditioning (Kalupahana, 1992). It includes conditional reactions that lead to bodily action,
215 speech, and mental factors. For example, when one is young, they meet beggars and have to
216 wonder why they are in that situation. However, as they grow older, stumble in life, and
217 sometimes face financial struggles, they turn to understand more about the beggars they met in
218 their childhood. During this period, individuals become more compassionate and understanding
219 of the beggars' situation, as they observe themselves in similar circumstances. The individual's
220 *saṅkhāra* from childhood has evolved due to increased open-mindedness. This awareness
221 fosters their willingness to lead, motivating them to take action now and help anyone without
222 discrimination. The example demonstrates that *Saṅkhāra* constantly changes over time and
223 under various circumstances, depending on the experiences people encounter. Humans can
224 develop more in every stage of life by acquiring such experiences. *Saṅkhāra* changes so quickly
225 that we are unsure how to recognize our level of maturity. This explains why we can be honest
226 at times yet feel hate at others. Therefore, *Saṅkhāra* is not a fixed entity but is subject to many
227 factors from the living environment and external impacts. *Saṅkhāra* is non-self.

228 The fifth factor is *viññāṇa* (consciousness), the last factor in *Pañcakhandha*, representing
229 the distinction of its components and aspects, specifically the perception, which is the primary
230 stage of consciousness of objects through the six senses (Harvey, 2013). This factor helps

231 identify what we hear, smell, taste, touch, and feel. *Viññāṇa* receives information from the
232 recognition senses. When there is eye contact with an image object, eye-consciousness
233 (*cakkhuvīññāṇa*) receives data on information about that picture. In the next stage,
234 *Manovīññāṇa* (consciousness) arises and distinguishes each of the objects. For example, when
235 the ear receives any sound, *sotavīññāṇa* (ear-consciousness) arises to distinguish the various
236 types of sound and inform the brain what is heard, such as the sound of the wind, the sound of
237 thunder, or the sound of rain. This fact is available for distinguishing images, colors, tastes,
238 pleasant or uncomfortable feelings, and wholesome or unwholesome thoughts. *Viññāṇa* cannot
239 operate independently but requires a combination of several other factors, such as *rūpa* (e.g.,
240 body, eye, and ear), *vedanā* (e.g., feelings), *saññā* (e.g., perception), and *saṅkhāra* (e.g.,
241 formation and volition). When one is fast asleep, *Viññāṇa* also works more weakly when that
242 person wakes up. Therefore, *viññāṇa* is also impermanent and non-self because it changes
243 continuously.

244 Overall, human beings have clung to the five aggregates and become attached to the
245 concept of 'self' and 'what belongs to self'; however, in fact, humans are constituted of five
246 aggregates, none of which is considered essential. The statement "*This is not mine; I am not*
247 *this; this is not myself*" (Bodhi, *Anattalakkhaṇasutta*, 2000) demonstrates that the self can be
248 expressed in various forms, including "mine," "I," and "myself." When the wrong view arises,
249 suggesting that something belongs to 'mine' (such as my house), individuals believe that all
250 external phenomena are real. Additionally, a Buddhist follower reflects on the essence of
251 existence, examining what constitutes the self and what is associated with it, in light of the
252 selflessness of the five aggregates, which suggests that all conditioned factors coexist. This
253 reflection disillusioned practitioners by freeing them from attachment to form, feeling,
254 perception, choices, and consciousness (Bodhi, *The Connected Discourses*). Therefore, learning
255 to abandon clinging to any conditional phenomena or form allows one to be freed from all the
256 defilements. The meditator who attained enlightenment, the truth of selflessness (*anattā*), and
257 reached the fruit of liberation (*nibbāna*), as the first five of the *Bhikkhus* (mendicants) attained
258 the fruit of freedom and enlightenment after listening to *Anattalakkhaṇasutta*.

259 **2.2.2. Selflessness of the phenomenon**

260 In the *Suññataloka Sutta*, the Buddha denied 'what belongs to self' that involves material
261 elements or external phenomena. When Venerable Ananda asked the Buddha why this world
262 was empty, he answered that even the cognitive subject, which means the eye, and the cognitive
263 object, which is the appearance, were empty, because the eye-consciousness (*cakkhuvīññāṇa*)
264 and form (*nāma*) were empty (Bodhi, *Suññataloka Sutta*, 2000). These phenomena illustrate the

265 interconnectedness of perception and point to the importance of a structured analysis of
266 perceptual experience. The presence of the eye raises awareness of itself, allowing it to perceive
267 objects. Moreover, the Buddha explained that *loka* (world) consists of six sensory experiences
268 entirely of not-self because there is not-self (*anattā*) and 'what belongs to self.' The central
269 meaning of this sutta emphasizes the emptiness of the world because the absence of 'self'
270 negates the concept of an existing 'self,' meaning the five aggregates, six sense organs, and six
271 external objects are non-self.

272 Through the analysis of the selflessness of the five aggregates in the *Anattalakkhanasutta*
273 and the selflessness of the world in the *Suññatalokasutta*, the Buddha systematically and
274 logically argued to build an *Anattā* (not-self) doctrine closely. Both the cognitive subject and
275 the object of awareness imply that the existence of humans, encompassed within the five
276 aggregates, is nonself, and the world is also empty. But it's important to note that the Buddhist
277 not-self concept means something exists, and it implies afterlife, reincarnation, or karma's
278 effects. According to Peetush, the ego is understood as an atomic form, similar to a point form
279 that has no extension in space (Peetush, 2018). This understanding fundamentally distinguishes
280 Buddhism from annihilationist schools, as it refutes the existence of a permanent self
281 susceptible to destruction (Harvey, 2013). When Buddhists understand *anattā* practice methods
282 at a deeper level, the attachment to the views on 'self' and 'what belongs to self' is less. They
283 begin to realize that life is impermanent, which leads to non-attachment to the external world,
284 and they seek peace of mind. They accept letting things go when they are no longer needed and
285 minimize their personal life. The ultimate enlightenment is the disappearance of this invisible
286 but mysterious 'self.' The Buddha witnessed that there was no authentic self. However, it is
287 complicated for people living in a solid physical world to understand and accept the concept of
288 'selflessness.' What is perceived as a 'self' is merely a collection of momentary, conditioned
289 dhammas that arise and pass away in rapid succession. Thus, the idea of an immutable, eternal
290 self is a misconception.

291 The theory of selflessness (*anattā*) is the fundamental doctrine that can build peace and
292 harmony in the world. The practice of selflessness is a method that enables one to notice an
293 individual's 'better' or 'worse' change, or to observe one's constant change, without relying on
294 mystical or sublime doctrine (Pedulla, 1999). The practical methods emphasize behavioral
295 techniques, cognitive processing, self-reflection, and growth, encouraging individuals to take
296 responsibility for themselves and their communities. The understanding that one's existence is
297 related to others and the surrounding environment reveals interconnected relationships between
298 beings and individuals, as well as between beings and the world. Understanding the importance

299 of an individual influences communication, and vice versa, which may, to a certain extent, lead
300 to a particular behavior and equilibrium attitude, as guided by specific instructions. This
301 awareness of selflessness relates to the role of individuals, especially politicians, in the
302 negotiation process as well as the conduct of security and peace operations in different regions.
303 Selfless awareness provides individuals with the opportunity to engage in dialogue and listen to
304 one another, while also fostering a more selfless perspective. Therefore, we should seek
305 beneficial solutions that promote cooperation, coexistence, and development instead of
306 engaging in destructive conflict.

307

308 **3. The role of the practice of selflessness (anattā) in the reduction of conflict and struggle.**

309 Well over two thousand years ago, the Buddha pointed out that the root of all suffering
310 and conflict is attachment—or, in other words, clinging to the notions of 'self' and 'what belongs
311 to self.' He also acknowledged that there is absolutely no self within man but only a collection
312 of twelve elements of the chain of dependent origination (Mejor, 2016). While humanity
313 constantly seeks the path of peace through diverse means, including politics, economics, and
314 cooperation, etc. Buddhism, on the other hand, proposes a deeper path that begins with inner
315 transformation, namely, starting from the realization of selflessness. Selflessness is not only a
316 philosophical concept but also a practical approach to resolving conflicts and addressing
317 contradictory issues. It turns out that every dispute stems from the attachment of the self and
318 what belongs to the self. Awareness of selflessness, that is, awareness of un-becoming, is
319 necessary and timely to create world peace in the 21st century (Carlisle, 2006a).

320 As analyzed above, selflessness means that there is no immutable or independent "self" in
321 man (Gombrich, 2009). Human beings are just a set of five elements called the five aggregates
322 (pañcakkhandha), including form (rūpa-kkhandha), sensation (vedanā-kkhandha), perception
323 (saññā-kkhandha), mental formation (saṅkhāra-kkhandha), and consciousness
324 (viññāṇakkhandha). The Buddha explained that the world (loka) is made up of six sensory
325 experiences, all of which are selfless because there is no self (atta) and nothing that truly
326 belongs to the self (Christian, 2017). This explanation means that the five aggregates, the six
327 senses, and the six external objects are all selfless (Mathers et al., 2013). Awareness of anattā
328 can help one develop a right view and direct understanding of Buddhism, as it is associated
329 with impermanence (anicca) and suffering (dukkha) (Harvey, 2013). When one sees this clearly,
330 they understand that all phenomena, including oneself and others, are unreal and transient, and
331 thus let go of attachment and arrogant self.

332 Every conflict or struggle stems from the thought of 'self': 'I am right,' 'I am offended,' 'I
333 have to win.' People are often deceived by the illusion they create because they always have the
334 potential to become something, surpass others, or surpass themselves with their existing
335 passions and desires. (Carlisle, 2006b). An illusory state that encompasses the entire inner
336 mind, dominated by the three toxic roots of greed (lobha), anger (dosa), and delusion (moha),
337 clouds reason and causes unconscious actions, words, and thinking. In order to protect their
338 own views, thoughts, and wills, they are willing to dismiss the views and thoughts of others by
339 using force or the voice of big countries to crush small countries. This attitude is readily
340 apparent in meetings of global political leaders at international conferences. Peace and
341 prosperity cannot occur if nations lack respect for one another. The lack of respect stems from
342 too much personal ego, making it difficult for leaders to negotiate bilaterally. From here,
343 regional wars or world wars can occur due to a lack of dialogue between political leaders, and it
344 is clear that this stems from a personal ego, which is invisible yet has undeniable destructive
345 power for peace.

346 Contemplating selflessness through mindfulness meditation helps us realize that
347 emotions and thoughts are merely phenomena of birth and death, without a fixed subject. This
348 technique is considered a method of practicing selflessness to address the problems of the
349 times. According to Thich Nhat Hanh, a renowned peace activist and Buddhist Zen master who
350 also leads retreats worldwide on the "art of mindful living." In his lectures, Thich Nhat Hanh
351 emphasizes the parallel combination of 'stopping,' or concentrating, and 'observing in the
352 present moment.' (Nhat Hanh, 1990). He encouraged the practice of controlled breathing,
353 which involves focusing the mind on the breath to return to oneself and regain balance between
354 body and mind. While "observing", each person discerns the body and mind with the practice of
355 mindfulness to look deeply into their true nature. Through the pure practice of consciously
356 monitoring the breath and paying attention to the body during the breathing process, a time will
357 come when the breath, body, and mind become united inherently. We are then ready to observe
358 clearly and deeply the sensations (vedanas), sankharas, and psychological objects (dharmas)
359 that arise in the field of cognition. During this observation, Thich Nhat Hanh stated that to
360 observe means to become one with the object being observed. We observe the power of
361 mindfulness, which illuminates and transforms. By directing one's attention to phenomena such
362 as breathing, sensations, thoughts, and emotions, one gains a direct understanding of these
363 experiences. By experiencing the truth of suffering, impermanence, and most especially,
364 selflessness, this type of wisdom allows one to see these qualities more clearly in everything
365 outside oneself (Carlisle, 2006b). The practice of mindful observation, based on the doctrine of

366 selflessness, is indeed an important technique that needs to be promoted to help individuals
367 practice, master, and control their own minds, thereby bringing inner peace.

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371 **4. Selflessness and global peace**

372 On the social level, collective self-grasping (in the form of extreme nationalism, selfish
373 religion, or political power) is the cause of war and division of the world. Here, the author will
374 examine various perspectives on religion and peace issues related to the topic. Overall, the
375 abovementioned texts from the sacred scriptures of the world's religions consistently
376 demonstrate that peace is a fundamental principle shared by all religions. For example,
377 Christianity appeals: "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of
378 God." (Matthew 5:9); or Islam with the following slogans: "Peace, mercy, and blessings of
379 Allah be upon you" — *Assalāmu' alaykum warahmatullāhiwabarakātuh* (The Qur'an, 24:61).
380 However, the question arises: if religions promote peace, why are there wars around the globe
381 that stem from conflicts involving these peaceful religions?

382 It is possible to provide several causes and reasons behind this. Undoubtedly, one reason
383 stems from the contradiction between theory and practice, where the original spirit of these
384 religions emphasized peace and harmony. However, their followers often deviated from their
385 cherished religious principles and practices, instead fighting in the name of peace. Similarly,
386 partly due to a misguided approach to belief and understanding, and partly due to religious
387 extremism, coupled with a cautious approach to every problem facing humanity, world peace
388 seems to be at a stagnant stage even at the dawn of the 21st century, in which commitments to
389 maintain and keep peacekeeping have been implemented by the international community. In
390 short, the world's significant religions still cannot see each other as a brotherhood, coexistence,
391 and development, but rather view themselves as individuals with distinct characteristics that
392 cannot be mixed with other belief systems.

393 Therefore, it is essential to mention that the message of peace, as interpreted by different
394 religions, can be disseminated to the human family to promote global awareness of the
395 necessity and importance of peace. A key aspect of achieving justice and equity in international
396 affairs is ensuring global peace. Similarly, on both individual and national and international
397 levels, a peaceful attitude will pave the way for the creation of a secure global community.
398 According to the United Nations statement, a culture of peace is one where values, attitudes,

399 and behaviors are governed by tolerance, justice, freedom of thought, fair play, respect for life,
400 and diversity, along with a rejection of violence.

401 The doctrine of selflessness reminds us that there is no absolute "self" or "themselves",
402 but that they are all interdependent—coexisting together in a dependent way. People cannot
403 survive without food, water, sunlight, plants, and so on. Humans should inevitably learn how to
404 protect and respect all beings, including sentient beings that do not possess the same level of
405 awareness as humans. This knowledge is one of the recognitions leading to harmony and
406 coexistence, essential for survival and development, from the perspective of the wisdom of an
407 enlightened being. This awareness fosters compassion (*mettā*) and wisdom (*paññā*), which
408 enables people to respect and sympathize with one another. It is a mutual understanding that
409 leads to an attitude of cooperation and dialogue, jointly finding solutions for each country and
410 nation, rather than imposing views from one large country on a smaller one. It is the non-
411 discrimination between friend and foe that demonstrates that people work with an impartial,
412 pure perspective, one that is not dominated by greed, hatred, and ignorance. Furthermore, it is
413 the ego's absent perspective and communal thinking that leads to a shared responsibility for the
414 entire community, society, and the world, not the selfish, narrow-minded individual ego.
415 Therefore, selflessness does not lead to passivity but opens up a global ethic based on
416 relationships, mutual assistance, and harmony. When each person behaves in a spirit of non-
417 selflessness, all borders of discrimination and hatred will gradually dissipate.

418 **5. Conclusion**

419 World peace will not be possible if each individual continues to fight within themselves.
420 Selflessness is the foundation of peace, because it eradicates attachment and hatred – the two
421 leading causes of all conflict and struggle. In the face of some of the world's most tense
422 situations, such as those in the Middle East and the borders around India today, it is time for
423 leaders to recognize a familiar voice calling for harmony between communities and parties,
424 especially the voice of the United Nations in maintaining peace. Such an urgent task can be
425 carried out through various means, one of which is the education of selfless awareness through
426 ethical methods and meditation as an academic approach, along with social peace through the
427 media. The doctrine of selflessness, which emphasizes the inner peace of each individual, can
428 therefore make global peace a reality. It can be done by starting with awareness education that
429 defines the self as fluid. This immediate solution will help create a new wave of awareness of
430 the 'Culture of Inner Peace' – a slogan of the 21st century. When people understand that "there
431 is no separate self," they will live with love, wisdom, and understanding, seeing themselves in

432 others. This whole life is a series of interrelated processes that coexist, in which there can be no
433 figure of a single individual or an ego that can rule the world. It is this awakening that the
434 Buddha opened – the path from inner peace within the individual to universal peace for all
435 humanity – the path leading to the realization of not-self, encompassing both internal and
436 external phenomena.

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