

The Selflessness of the Individual

All Buddhist traditions consider it important to understand the selflessness of the individual in order to gain liberation from suffering. The reason for this is that all suffering comes from believing the self is truly existent. For example, when we think “I am angry,” “I am afraid,” or “I am in pain,” we suffer because we believe this “I” is truly existent. This results in taking the self and everything that affects it very seriously, and we become fixated on pursuing happiness and avoiding suffering. But in fact, the self does not truly exist; it is appearance-emptiness, like the self that appears in a dream. This is called “the selflessness of the individual.”

— From “Heart of the Definitive Meaning” in *Stars of Wisdom: Analytical Meditation, Songs of Yogic Joy, and Prayers of Aspiration*, pages 21-2, translated by Rose Taylor

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