



The Selfless Mind: Personality, Consciousness and Nirvana in Early Buddhism

By Peter Harvey

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This careful analysis of early Buddhist thought opens out a perspective in which no permanent Self is accepted, but a rich analysis of changing and potent mental processes is developed. It explores issues relating to the not-Self teaching: self-development, moral responsibility, the between-lives period, and the 'undetermined questions' on the world, on the 'life principle' and on the liberated one after death. It examines the 'person' as a flowing continuity centred on consciousness or discernment (vinnana) configured in changing minds-sets (cittas). The resting state of this is seen as 'brightly shining' - like the 'Buddha nature' of Mahayana thought - so as to represent the potential for Nirvana. Nirvana is then shown to be a state in which consciousness transcends all objects, and thus participates in a timeless, unconditioned realm.

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