
A Conceptual Framework of Wrong View on Self (sakkāya-Diṭṭhi) and Its Transformative Approaches for a Peaceful Society

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Abstract

This qualitative study examines sakkāya-diṭṭhi, commonly translated as identity view or wrong view of self, and develops a Theravāda Buddhist framework for transforming its individual and social consequences. The study had three objectives: (1) to analyze the concept of sakkāya-diṭṭhi in Theravāda Buddhist scriptures; (2) to examine its causes, manifestations, and impacts from Theravāda and scholarly perspectives; and (3) to propose transformative approaches that may contribute to a peaceful society. Documentary research was combined with semi-structured interviews with nine purposively selected experts, including Buddhist scholar-monks and specialists from modern academic disciplines. The data were examined through content and thematic analysis.

The findings show that sakkāya-diṭṭhi is classically expressed through twenty modes of identification with the five aggregates and can be interpreted at three levels of manifestation: transgressive behavior, active mental domination, and latent tendency. The study further identifies ignorance, attachment to the five aggregates, unwise attention, misleading external influence, and unwholesome association as conditions that can reinforce self-centered interpretation. Rather than treating sakkāya-diṭṭhi as a psychiatric diagnosis, the article interprets its consequences within a Buddhist ethical-psychological framework, including attachment, hostility, rigid self-protection, and conduct that may contribute to interpersonal and social conflict. The proposed transformative framework links three levels of practice to three domains of peace: ethical transformation through bodily and verbal restraint; mental transformation through cultivation of non-greed, non-hatred, mindfulness, and concentration; and insight transformation through right view, wise attention, and insight into the five aggregates. The study argues that reducing reified attachment to self may support ethical conduct, psychological balance, and peaceful coexistence, while recognizing that the

proposed framework remains conceptual and requires further empirical evaluation.

Keywords: Sakkāya-diṭṭhi; Identity view; Five aggregates; Right view; Buddhist transformation; Peaceful society.

Introduction

The Buddhist teaching of not-self (*anattā*) challenges the assumption that an enduring, independent, and controllable self exists within conditioned experience. In the *Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta*, the five aggregates—form, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness—are examined as impermanent, unsatisfactory, and inappropriate to regard as “mine,” “I,” or “my self.” Modern Theravāda interpretation emphasizes that this teaching does not deny conventional personhood but critiques the reification of changing psycho-physical processes into an intrinsically existing self (Sīlānanda, 1999). Recent scholarship similarly cautions against reducing not-self to a therapeutic slogan; its meaning belongs to a broader soteriological transformation of how identity and experience are understood (Ennen, 2024). Contemporary Buddhist psychology also increasingly interprets selfhood as a dynamic pattern of interrelated processes rather than a fixed substance, creating a useful point of dialogue with process-based theories of selfhood (Gallagher & Ransom, 2023).

Within this doctrinal framework, *sakkāya-diṭṭhi*, commonly translated as “identity view” or “personality view,” refers to erroneous identification with the five aggregates. It belongs to the broader Buddhist critique of *diṭṭhi*, or grasped views, which distort experience and ethical judgment (Fuller, 2005). Commentarial sources further distinguish wrong views according to their ethical and karmic consequences (Buddhaghosa, 1921). *Sakkāya-diṭṭhi* is distinctive because it concerns the basic structure of self-identification: regarding an aggregate as self, possessed by self, contained in self, or containing self.

Theravāda teachers consequently associate the identity view with craving, defensiveness, rivalry, and harmful conduct. Mogok Sayadaw (1966) presents *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* as a powerful condition underlying destructive behavior, while Mahatthanadull (2016) places it among the fetters binding beings to suffering. The *Samyutta Nikāya* likewise presents abandonment of identity view as fundamental to the path (Bodhi Bhikkhu, 2000). These doctrinal claims, however, should not be converted directly into clinical or sociological causation.

Contemporary research provides a cautious comparative context. Selfhood is increasingly understood as processual and conditioned by bodily, cognitive, and social factors (Zhang et al., 2024), while rigid forms of collective identification can, under certain conditions, predict extreme pro-group orientations and outgroup hostility (Varmann et al., 2024). Yet conflict is multidetermined by threat, narratives, emotion, norms, institutions, and social context (Čehajić-Clancy & Halperin, 2024). Accordingly, this study examines *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* as a Theravāda ethical-philosophical framework for understanding self-centered attachment and develops ethical, mental, and insight-oriented approaches that may contribute to individual and societal peace.

Research Objectives

1. To analyze the concept of Wrong View on Self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) as depicted in the Theravada Buddhist Scriptures
2. To examine the problems, causes, and impacts of Wrong View on Self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) from the perspective of *Theravāda* Buddhism and Buddhist scholars
3. To propose transformative approaches to Wrong View on Self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) for a peaceful society

Literature Review

Theravāda sources define *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* through the relation between self-view and the five aggregates. Nārada Mahā Thera (1987) explains the classical twenty modes by applying four forms of identification to each aggregate: regarding the aggregate as self, regarding self as possessing the aggregate, regarding the aggregate as existing within self, or regarding self as existing within the aggregate. This framework clarifies that *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* is not merely a vague sense of egoism but a structured cognitive view concerning the relation between identity and conditioned experience. Fuller (2005) similarly emphasizes that *diṭṭhi* in early Buddhism concerns a mode of grasping or holding to views rather than opinion in a neutral sense.

Commentarial and practice-oriented literature further describes different levels at which wrong view may operate. Ledi Sayadaw (2004) associates self-centered wrong view with bodily, verbal, and mental misconduct, while Buddhaghosa's (1921) commentarial framework distinguishes transgressive, actively dominating, and latent levels of defilement. These distinctions matter because they allow transformation to be discussed in graduated terms rather than as a single event. At the behavioral level, ethical restraint limits harmful

expression; at the mental level, wholesome cultivation weakens active greed, hatred, and wrong view; and at the latent level, insight is required to challenge the underlying identification with the aggregates.

Modern Theravāda writers have extended the discussion from doctrinal analysis to its ethical and social implications. Rahula (1959) argues that belief in a substantial self underlies craving, possessiveness, hatred, and conflict, while Kundala (2022) identifies ignorance, attachment to the five aggregates, unwise attention, misleading external influence, and unwholesome association as conditions that reinforce self-view. Dhammapiya (2004) emphasizes progressive purification through morality, concentration, purification of view, and insight as a means of overcoming belief in an enduring self. These works collectively support the article's three-level transformative structure, although most are doctrinal or interpretive rather than empirical studies of social outcomes.

Recent scholarship has reopened the problem of selfhood in ways that are relevant to Buddhist studies. Ennen (2024) argues that Buddhist not-self should be understood as a transformation of self-understanding within the path rather than as a simple experiential technique. Zhang et al. (2024) compare Buddhist aggregate analysis with contemporary constructivist approaches to the self, emphasizing the processual and conditioned character of self-experience. These interdisciplinary parallels are useful, but they should not be treated as proof that Buddhist and cognitive-scientific theories are equivalent. The present study therefore uses contemporary self-research only as a comparative context for clarifying why a non-substantialist account of identity may remain philosophically significant.

The link between self-identification and social conflict also requires careful qualification. Buddhist texts and modern Buddhist writers frequently connect attachment to self and view with hostility and harmful action. Contemporary social psychology provides partial analogs: a meta-analysis of identity fusion found a strong but highly heterogeneous association with extreme pro-group orientations, including collective extremity and outgroup hostility (Varmann et al., 2024). Yet identity processes are context-dependent and can also support trust and cooperation. Likewise, current intergroup-intervention research emphasizes that peaceful relations are shaped by emotion regulation, social norms, threat, motivation, and institutional context, not by one psychological variable alone (Čehajić-Clancy & Halperin, 2024). These findings reinforce the need to treat *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* as a Buddhist interpretive framework for self-centered rigidity rather than as a sufficient empirical explanation of war or social violence.

The research gap lies in integrating these strands into a coherent Theravāda model that connects doctrinal analysis with differentiated transformative practice and a cautiously framed account of peace. Existing literature explains the twenty forms of identity view, levels of defilement, and insight-based eradication, but it has paid less attention to aligning different levels of *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* with ethical, mental, and wisdom-centered responses and then examining their possible relevance to peaceful coexistence. The present study addresses this gap through a three-level transformative framework.

Conceptual Framework

This qualitative research study aims to explore in depth the conceptual framework of Wrong View on Self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) and how it can be transformed to build a peaceful society. This study draws on analyses of Wrong View on Self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) from the perspective of Theravāda Buddhism and Buddhist scholars. Meanwhile, this study presents transformative approaches to Wrong View on Self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) for a peaceful society, as described below.

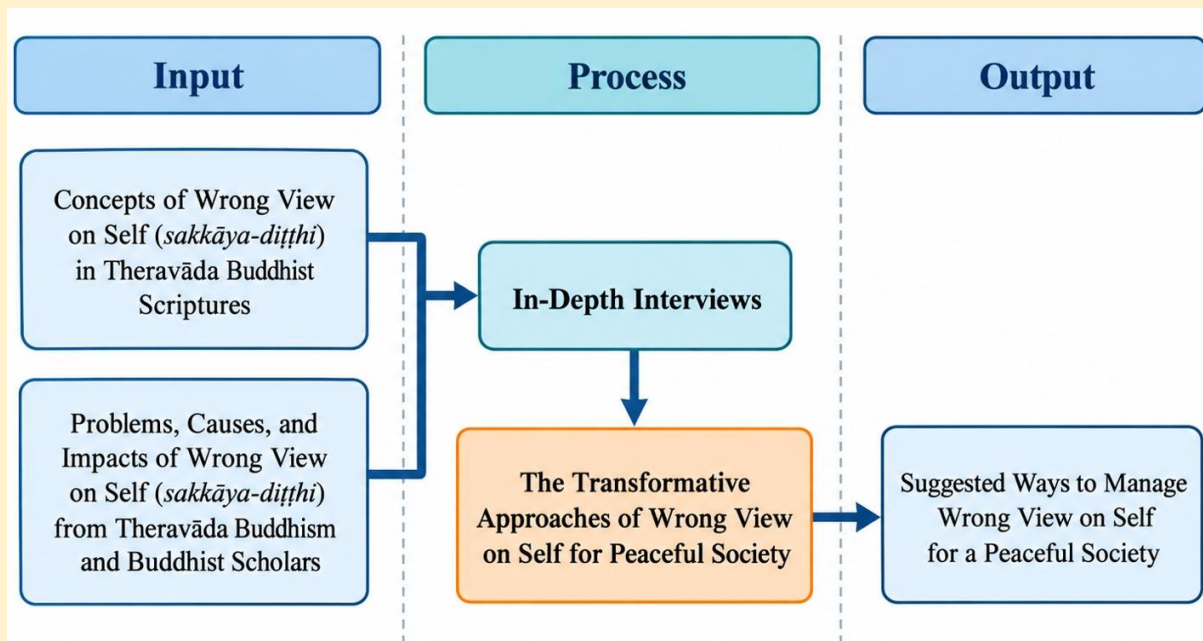


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Methodology

The methodology of this dissertation applies a qualitative research method, an approach comprising documentary research that collects data to explore the concepts of Wrong view on Self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) what the Buddha really means, the problems, causes and impacts of Wrong View on Self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) and the transformative approaches of Wrong View on Self for peaceful

society using Buddhist scripture research methods and in-depth interviews by means of interpretation.

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative exploratory approach, which allows for a deep look into complex and subtle ideas. It combines two methods: document analysis (to understand theories from written sources) and in-depth interviews (to get expert opinions that help explain and confirm how these ideas work in practice).

Data Sources

Primary Sources

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a purposively selected panel of experts, comprising seven Buddhist scholar-monks with extensive expertise in Theravāda Buddhist canonical and commentarial literature, and two lay specialists in modern disciplines. Experts were selected based on their academic publications, professional reputation, and practical experience. The study drew on classical Buddhist texts, including commentaries and works by modern Buddhist scholars, relevant to the concept of wrong view on self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) and its management.

Secondary Sources

Academic books, theses, dissertations, and scholarly articles published in peer-reviewed journals, with a particular focus on those addressing the concept of wrong view on self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*), its associated problematic issues, and its management.

Data Collection

Data will be collected and critically analyzed from the primary source of the Pali Canon (*tipiṭaka*) using the pāli Text Society's pāli version and English translation series. In addition, Buddhist literature based on the original sources of Pali texts and commentaries in Theravada Buddhism will be used as primary sources. In this study, the views of earlier and later scholars will be included, and, if necessary, doctoral dissertations, articles, magazines, journals, newspapers, online websites, and other sources related to this title will be used as secondary sources.

1. Data Analysis

An analysis of knowledge from Buddhist scholars to show the series of knowledge and the process gained from the study in organizations and

universities. Data analysis will also use qualitative methods. In addition to data analysis, data synthesis will bring results from various areas together.

2. Validation

The interview process will follow a flexible, semi-structured format with open-ended questions customized for each expert's specific area of knowledge. Each session will last between 30 and 50 minutes. I will use note-taking templates to record key ideas, recurring themes, and observations. Additionally, the researcher will use a voice recorder to capture every detail for accurate transcription later.

Research results

Objective 1. To analyze the concept of Wrong View on Self (sakkāya-diṭṭhi) as depicted in Theravada Buddhist Scriptures

The term *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* in Pali is a combination of two words: *sakkāya* and *diṭṭhi*. According to the *Culavedalla Sutta*, *sakkāya* refers to the grasping of the five aggregates: materiality, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness. (Maurice Walshe, 1987) This definition implies that these five aggregates are not created by an eternal Lord or a Brahma living forever in heaven. The word *diṭṭhi* is usually translated as “view,” “belief,” or “opinion.” Regarding the combination of the two words in *sakkāya-diṭṭhi*, Venerable Narada Maha Thera explained in detail how a wrong view of the “self” or “soul” develops. He identified twenty different theories of the soul related to the five aggregates. For the first aggregate (the body), there are four specific views: 1) The soul is the same as the body. 2) The soul owns or possesses the body; 3) The soul exists inside the body; 4) The body exists within the soul. The same four theories apply to each of the remaining four aggregates (feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness), resulting in twenty variations in total. (Nārada Mahā Thera, 1987) Therefore, *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* can be defined as the mistaken belief that the five aggregates, form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness, constitute a permanent “self” or a fixed identity. It is the misconception that these elements represent an individual's essence, leading to the false idea of a “person,” “man,” or “woman.” Regarding the different stages of wrong view on self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*), it can be studied in the commentary to the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* (Dhs.a.) that the three stages of fetters are diversified according to their level, namely: the level of transgression (*vītikkaṃma-kilesa*), the level of tyranny (*pariyutṭhāna-kilesa*), and the latent level (*anusaya-kilesa*) (Buddhaghosa, 1921).

Table 1. Twenty types of Wrong View on Self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*)

Five aggregates	Wrong view on Self	Three stages
The matter aggregate	1. The aggregate is the self 2. The “self” possesses the aggregate 3. The aggregate is in the self 4. The self is in the aggregate	1. The level of transgression (<i>vītikkama</i>) 2. The level of tyranny (<i>pariyuṭṭhāna</i>) 3. The level of latent (<i>anusaya</i>)
The feeling aggregate		
The perception aggregate		
The mental formation aggregate		
The consciousness aggregate		

In summary, *sakkāyaditṭhi* is formally defined as the emergence of the concept of “self through twenty distinct perspectives. Each of these perspectives is derived from the “five” aggregates, based on the mistaken belief that the aggregates are identical to the self, that the “self” possesses the aggregates, or that the self and the aggregates exist within one another.

Objective 2. To examine the problems, causes, and impacts of Wrong View on Self (sakkāya-diṭṭhi) from the perspective of Theravāda Buddhism and Buddhist scholars

This research find that it is not deniable that Wrong View on Self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) has surely ability to generate the mental unhealthy conditions such as stress and depression under the name of taints (*āsava*), floods (*ogha*), bonds (*gantha*), clinging (*upādāna*), dispositions (*anusaya*), and defilements (*kilesa*) due to this statement “ten kinds of fetters (*saṃyojana*), four kinds of cankers or intoxicants (*āsava*), four kinds of floods (*ogha*), four kinds of bonds (*yoga*), four kinds of knots (*gantha*), four kinds of clinging (*upādāna*), six kinds of hindrances (*nivarana*), seven kinds of latent dispositions (*anusaya*) can also be considered as the mental illnesses in accordance with the Buddhist psychology. (Ashin Sumanācara, (2010). The problematic issues mentioned above can be recognized as mental disorders at the level of the tyranny of Wrong View on Self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*), based on the following statement taught by the Buddha himself: “Here, householder, the uninstructed worldling... With the change and alteration of form, there arise in him sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair.” (Bodhi Bhikkhu, 2000).

Based on such wrong thoughts, a person who clings to the notions of “permanence, happiness, self, and purity” in relation to the five aggregates may

engage in various forms of misconduct, including violent acts such as killing. This behavior often stems from the belief that “this is my self,” leading individuals to act without remorse to safeguard their perceived self from harm. Conversely, some individuals refute the idea that anything or anyone could hold greater significance than their own self. Consequently, they may pursue the welfare of loved ones through ethically questionable means, such as killing, stealing, lying, or even committing matricide, patricide, or shedding the blood of the Buddha — this corresponds to the stage of transgression level of Wrong View on Self (*sakkāya-ditṭhi*) (Ledi Sayadaw, 2004). Regarding the causes of Wrong View on Self (*sakkāya-ditṭhi*), internal conditions—such as ignorance (*avijjā*), (Bodhi Bhikkhu, 2000) attachment rooted in clinging to the Five Aggregates, (Bodhi Bhikkhu, 2000) and a lack of wise attention (*ayonisomanasikāra*)—together with external conditions, namely indoctrination by others (*paratoghosa*) and association with bad friends (*pāpamitta*) (Buddhaghosa, 1921), play an essential role as causes of Wrong View on Self (*sakkāya-ditṭhi*). In Buddhist psychology, the psychological conflicts or internal disturbances arising from the influence of the Wrong View on Self (*sakkāya-ditṭhi*) refer to mental states characterized by distress, agitation, confusion, and suffering. These states frequently emerge from attachment, craving, aversion, ignorance, and unwholesome mental formations. They manifest in various forms of negative affect, such as anger, greed, jealousy, anxiety, and despair, all of which are rooted in the misconception of a permanent, independent self (*sakkāya-ditṭhi*). (Gombrich, Richard, 1996) Moreover, social conflicts, such as fights, wars, unfair treatment, and misunderstandings, often come from deep beliefs that the self and others are fixed and separate. The idea of an eternal self persists even though our physical and mental experiences, such as feelings, ideas, thoughts, habits, and attitudes, are always changing, interconnected, and temporary. Because of this, if we hold on to the idea of a self, we will feel the need to defend ourselves, our belongings, status, opinions, and even our words. In addition, when we see ourselves as a separate being, we create a division between ourselves and others, as well as between ourselves and the world around us. (Santina & Della, 1984). To understand the harmful effects of having a Wrong View on the Self (*sakkāya-ditṭhi*), it is helpful to first recognize how important the idea of self is in some religions. Many religions are built on the concept of a self, a view that the Buddha did not share. We can see that two ideas are deeply rooted in people's minds: self-protection and self-preservation. All religions, in one way or another, can be included under these two ideas. (W.Rahula, 1959)

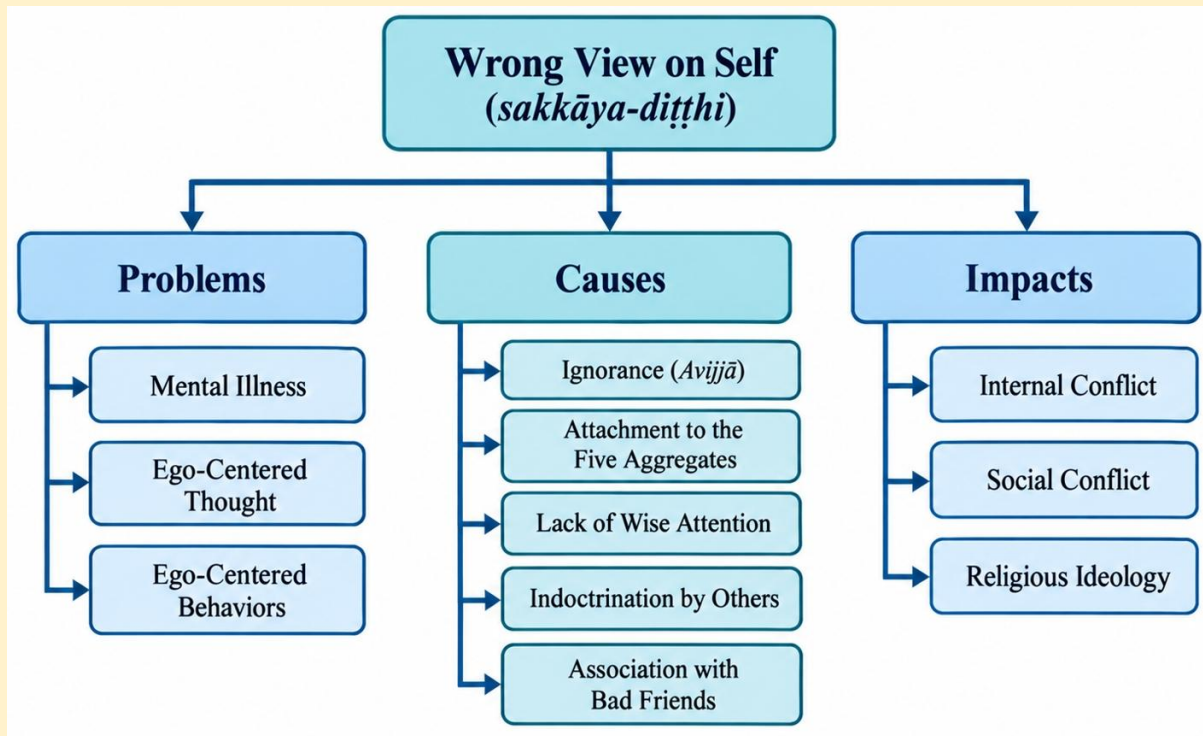


Figure 2. Problems, Causes, and Impacts of Wrong View on Self (sakkāya-diṭṭhi)

Objective 3. After examining the concept of Wrong View on Self (sakkāya-diṭṭhi) from the perspectives of Theravāda Buddhism and Buddhist scholars, it is understood that the transformative approaches to this wrong view and their social implications must be presented to fulfill the objectives of this study. It is necessary to apply the principle of “character transformation” to address the ethical decline resulting from sakkāya-diṭṭhi, that is, the transgression-level manifestation of Wrong View on Self. The Buddha himself emphasized the importance of character transformation in the Dhammapada, stating: “Restraint of the body is good. Restraint of speech is good. Restraint of the mind is good. Restraint everywhere is good. A bhikkhu who is restrained everywhere is released from all suffering.” (Norman, 1997) This encompasses three bodily deeds: refraining from killing, refraining from stealing, and refraining from sexual misconduct. It also includes four verbal expressions: refraining from false speech, refraining from divisive speech, refraining from harsh speech, and refraining from idle chatter. These seven moral practices serve to manage the transgression level of Wrong View on Self in the Buddhist framework.

To manage the covetousness, ill-will, and wrong views that can be described as the tyranny level of Wrong View on Self (sakkāya-diṭṭhi), mental transformative approaches must be developed. The Buddha taught that mental

discipline and transformative practices can regulate psychological afflictions, such that “passion does not penetrate a well-developed mind.” (Norman,1997)

In particular, the three components of the Noble Eightfold Path’s concentration group, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration, should be cultivated. The core of training in higher mind is to develop and strengthen the mind’s qualities and potential, thereby enabling the practitioner to live virtuously and to employ wisdom in the most effective way. (Payutto,2021)

To effectively address the latent level of wrong view regarding self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*), it is essential to recognize that the establishment of right view (*sammā-diṭṭhi*) through study (*pariyatti*), wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*), and insight practice (*vipassanā bhāvanā*) plays a crucial role in restraining the emergence of self-centered defilements within *Theravāda* Buddhism. The evidence that learning, wise attention, and insight practice can prevent the arising of wrong view—namely, the mistaken belief in a self that is controllable and everlasting, is demonstrated in the *Cūḷavedalla Sutta*, as described below:

“Friend Visākha, a well-instructed noble disciple who respects the noble ones and is trained and steady in his understanding of the Dhamma, who honors true humans and is skilled and disciplined in their Dhamma, does not identify material form with the self, nor the self with something possessed by material form, nor attribute material form to being part of the self, nor treat the self as something contained in material form.” (Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu & Bodhi Bhikkhu, 2001) Consequently, establishing right view through study, wise attention, and insight practice should be recognized as an approach to insight transformation in managing the wrong view of self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) within *Theravāda* Buddhism.

In examining the concept of peace to articulate what constitutes a peaceful society within Buddhism, researchers consistently identify three dimensions of peace.

(1) Ethical Peaceful society: A society that coexists in peace and order. It is free from violence in physical actions, speech, and online interactions. Cities and homes are clean, organized, and safe. The environment is preserved, and natural resources are utilized in a balanced and sustainable manner. (Harvey, 2000)

(2) Psychological Peaceful society: A supportive society characterized by public consciousness (public spirit). People in the society are happy, and the foundations of family and community are strong. (Hare,1973)

(3) Social Peaceful society: A society where people live together with mutual respect and honor. People lead honest lives guided by wisdom and sufficiency. There is harmony and unity without division. The society accepts cultural and religious diversity. (Walshe,1987)

Of the three types of peaceful society in Buddhism, avoiding the three physical wrong actions (killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct) and the four verbal wrong actions (lying, harsh speech, idle chatter, and gossip) is essential for an ethical peaceful society, as these directly lead to social instability (Walshe, 1987). Mental transformative approaches support a psychologically peaceful society because concentration overcomes hatred, produces tranquility, and frees the mind from defilements (Upatissa, 1961). Insight transformative approaches establish peaceful coexistence by eradicating the illusion of a permanent self, which otherwise fosters self-centeredness and immoral acts, such as murder, theft, and fraud, that constitute crime (Mehm Tin Mon, 2007).

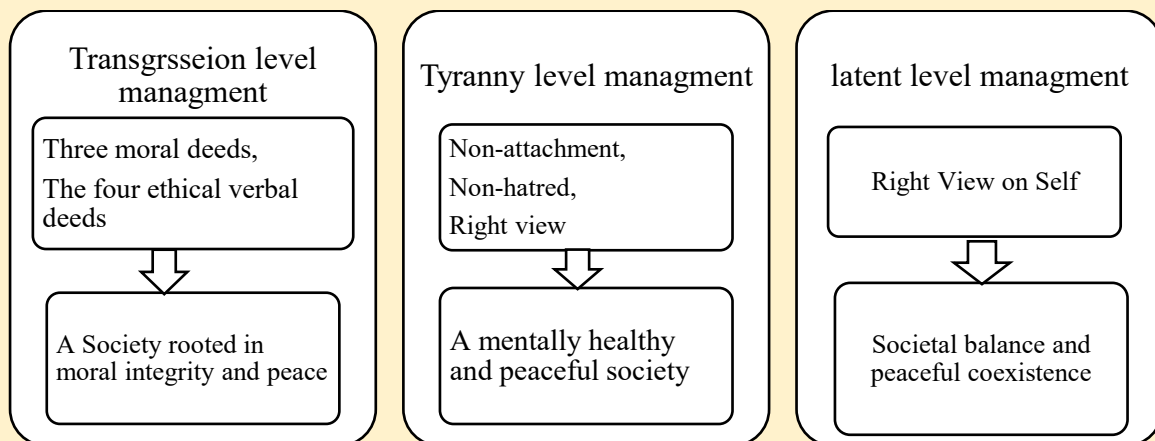


Figure 3. Right View on Self as a Structural Factor in a Peaceful Society

In conclusion, three transformative approaches correspond to three levels of Wrong View on Self: ethical transformation, psychological transformation, and insight practice. Correspondingly, Buddhism identifies three types of peaceful society: a society rooted in moral integrity and peace, a mentally healthy and peaceful society, and a society characterized by balance and peaceful coexistence. These three transformative approaches can each contribute to establishing the three types of peaceful society.

Discussion

The first finding clarifies *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* as a specific doctrinal structure rather than a general label for selfishness. Consistent with the *Cūḷavedalla Sutta* and later Theravāda explanation, the view arises when one or more of the five aggregates are interpreted through four self-relations, producing twenty modes of identity view (Walshe, 1987; Nārada Mahā Thera, 1987). The further classification into transgressive, actively dominating, and latent levels (Buddhaghosa, 1921) is analytically useful because it distinguishes observable misconduct from active mental defilement and deep-seated dispositional tendencies. This three-level distinction provides the structural basis for the study's proposed transformation model.

This finding also resonates with contemporary philosophical debate concerning the self. Recent Buddhist scholarship argues that not-self is not adequately understood as the mere disappearance of subjective experience, but as a transformation in the way selfhood is known and appropriated (Ennen, 2024). Similarly, contemporary constructivist accounts describe the self as an ongoing process emerging from interacting bodily, cognitive, and relational conditions rather than as an isolated substance (Zhang et al., 2024). The convergence is conceptual rather than evidentiary: modern self-construction theories do not verify the Buddhist doctrine of *anattā*, and Buddhist aggregate analysis should not be reduced to a cognitive-scientific model. Nevertheless, both bodies of work challenge simplistic assumptions that a stable, independent essence is required to explain personal continuity.

The second finding concerns the causes and consequences attributed to *sakkāya-diṭṭhi*. The Buddhist sources analyzed in this study associate self-view with ignorance, attachment to the aggregates, unwise attention, external influence, and unwholesome association, while Buddhist scholars connect it with craving, hostility, defensive conduct, and interpersonal conflict (Kundala, 2022; Shraman, 2003). These findings should be interpreted as doctrinal and ethical claims, not as evidence that *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* is a psychiatric disorder or a singular cause of depression, criminality, or war. The article therefore reframes earlier language of “mental illness” as Buddhist descriptions of mental affliction, agitation, attachment, and unwholesome states unless independently supported by clinical evidence.

The social implications require similar caution. The study's claim is strongest when it proposes that reified self- and group-identification can provide

one condition for defensiveness, exclusion, or hostility, not when it treats self-view as the sole cause of social conflict. Contemporary identity research supports this more limited interpretation. Varmann et al. (2024), in a meta-analysis of 90 studies, found a strong but highly heterogeneous relationship between identity fusion and extreme pro-group orientations, including outgroup hostility. At the same time, other research shows that strong identity bonds can promote trust and cooperation under supportive conditions. Thus, the relevant comparison is not “identity equals violence,” but that rigid, threat-saturated forms of identification can interact with situational conditions to intensify conflict.

The third finding is the proposed correspondence between levels of *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* and levels of transformation. Ethical transformation addresses transgressive manifestations through restraint of bodily and verbal misconduct. Mental transformation targets actively dominating states through non-greed, non-hatred, right effort, mindfulness, and concentration. Insight transformation addresses the latent structure of identity view through study, wise attention, right view, and insight into the five aggregates. This sequence is consistent with the broader Theravāda logic of *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* and avoids treating insight as disconnected from behavioral and mental preparation.

The article’s principal contribution is to connect this three-level Buddhist transformation with three domains of peace: ethical order, psychological balance, and peaceful coexistence. This contribution should, however, be described as a normative-conceptual framework rather than an empirically validated peace intervention. Modern intergroup research shows that effective peacebuilding requires attention to the target population, conflict context, social norms, motivation, historical narratives, institutions, and intervention mechanisms (Čehajić-Clancy & Halperin, 2024). The Buddhist framework can therefore add an intrapersonal and ethical dimension, especially by examining attachment to self, status, possessions, and views, but it should complement rather than replace social, political, and institutional approaches to conflict.

Taken together, the findings support a more defensible formulation of the study’s thesis. *Sakkāya-diṭṭhi* is a foundational Buddhist account of misidentification with conditioned experience; its transformation is pursued through ethical restraint, mental cultivation, and insight; and these practices may plausibly support less reactive, less self-centered, and more peaceful forms of conduct. What remains to be tested empirically is whether and how a structured intervention based on this model affects measurable outcomes such as hostility, psychological flexibility, interpersonal conflict, prejudice, or prosocial behavior.

Future work should therefore operationalize the three transformative levels and evaluate them using mixed-methods or intervention designs rather than relying on textual inference alone.

New Knowledge from the Research

This study introduces new knowledge demonstrating that managing the Wrong View on Self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) at different levels yields progressive contributions to peace. Managing it at the transgression level (*vītikkaṃa*) promotes individual and social peace, particularly in ethical conduct. Managing it further leads from individual peace to psychological peace at the societal level. Managing it at the latent level (*anusaya*) fosters social balance and peaceful coexistence. Based on these findings, this study presents transformative approaches to *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* for achieving a peaceful society, derived from examining its problems, causes, impacts, and conceptual understanding from the perspective of Theravāda Buddhism and the views of Buddhist scholars.

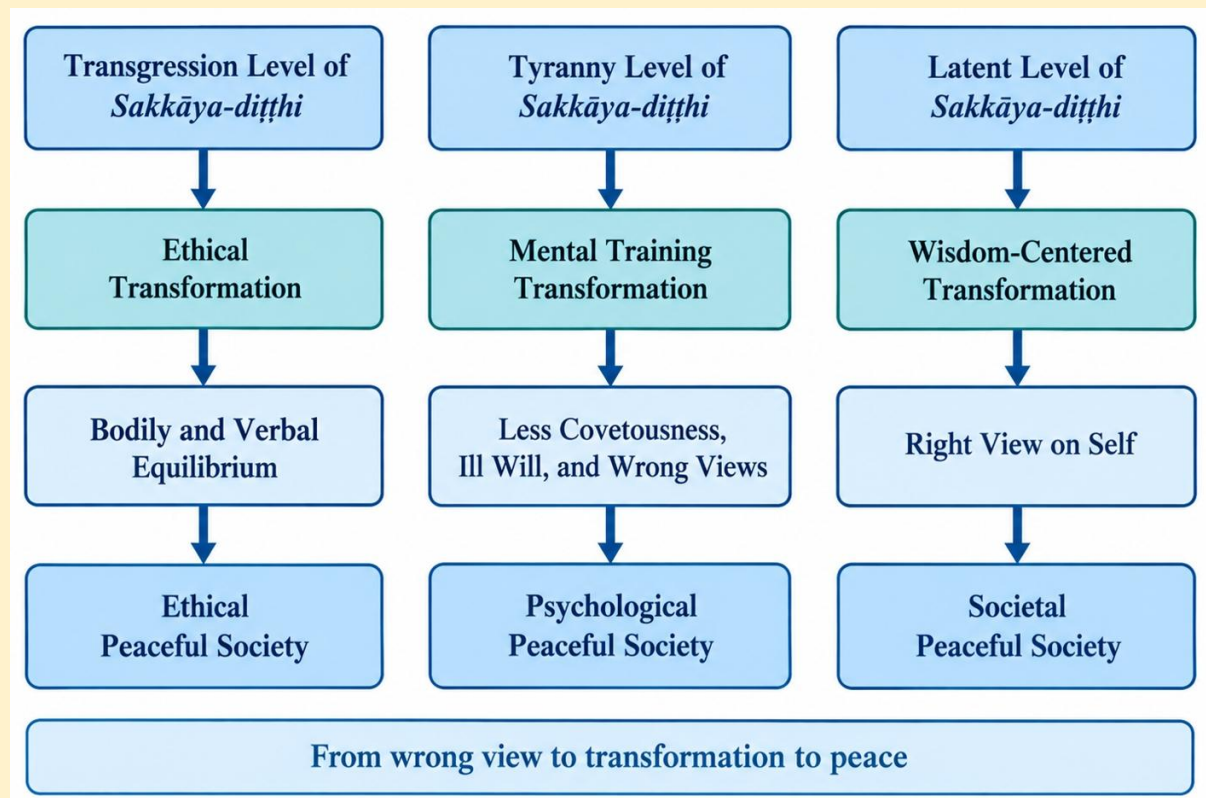


Figure 3. New Knowledge from the Study

Conclusion

This study examined *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* as a Theravāda Buddhist account of mistaken identification with the five aggregates and developed a three-level framework for its transformation. The analysis shows that identity view is classically expressed through twenty modes of identification and can be understood at transgressive, actively dominating, and latent levels. In Buddhist sources, it arises from ignorance, attachment, unwise attention, misleading influence, and unwholesome association, and manifests as self-centered attachment, hostility, defensive conduct, and other mental and behavioral disturbances.

The proposed framework responds to these levels through three corresponding forms of cultivation. Ethical transformation restrains harmful bodily and verbal conduct; mental transformation develops non-greed, non-hatred, mindfulness, effort, and concentration; and insight transformation cultivates right view, wise attention, and direct understanding of the five aggregates as impermanent and not-self. In this model, peace develops progressively from ethical restraint to psychological balance and, ultimately, to forms of coexistence less dominated by rigid self-centered identification.

The study's main contribution is conceptual rather than causal. It offers a Theravāda framework for linking self-view, graded transformation, and peaceful society without claiming that *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* alone explains mental disorder or social violence. Social conflict is multidetermined, and the Buddhist model should be understood as one ethical and contemplative contribution within a broader field of psychological, social, political, and institutional approaches to peace. Future research should operationalize the three transformative levels, examine their cultural applicability, and test their relationships with measurable psychological and social outcomes.

Suggestion for Further Research

The findings of this study reveal insights that extend beyond the original objectives. Based on these results, four areas are proposed for future investigation:

1. Deconstructing the 'Default Mode Network': A Comparative Analysis of *Sakkaya-ditthi* and Modern Neuropsychological Models of the Self.

2. From Self-View to Social Conflict: The Role of *Sakkaya-ditthi* in the Proliferation of 'Papañca' (Conceptual Diversification).
3. The Evolution of *Sakkaya-ditthi*: From Early Buddhist Suttas to the Commentarial Tradition of *Buddhaghosa*

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