

Candidate 6 evidence

Evaluate the significance of Buddhist beliefs about the Three Marks of Existence. 20

The first mark of existence is Anicca which means impermanence. Everything in existence is in a constant state of change. The second mark of existence is Dukkha which means suffering or unsatisfactoriness. Life is illustrated by suffering or dissatisfaction due to its impermanent nature and the craving for permanence. This suffering is not just physical pain but also the deep dissatisfaction that arises from attachment and ignorance. The third mark of existence is Anatta which means no-self. There is no unchanging, permanent self or soul in living beings. What is seen as "self" is a collection of ever-changing physical parts known as the five skandhas and clinging to the idea of a fixed self leads to suffering. The Three Marks of Existence are closely tied to the Three Root Poisons (greed, hatred, and ignorance) because the root poisons continue confusion and resistance to the reality revealed by the Three Marks of existence and as a result causes suffering.

An implication of belief in Anicca is that recognising this truth allows Buddhists to practice non-attachment and mindfulness, helping them to let go of craving and clinging. For example, understanding Anicca can shift a Buddhist's perspective on loss or change. Instead of resisting or grieving excessively over something impermanent, such as the death of a loved one, Buddhists can accept it as a natural part of existence. An implication of dukkha is that Buddhists are encouraged to seek liberation from the cycle of samsara by following the Noble Eightfold Path. Recognising that life is unsatisfactory due to craving and attachment motivates Buddhists to show mindfulness and wisdom. An implication of Anatta is letting go of the self leads to a deeper understanding of the nature of existence and aids in breaking free from the cycle of samsara.

Dukkha is significant to Buddhists because it lies at the heart of the Buddha's teachings, helps Buddhists understand the human condition and forms the foundation of the Four Noble Truths, which are central to Buddhist practice. Dukkha helps Buddhists develop compassion by recognising the shared nature of suffering and the need to support others in their spiritual journeys. Anicca remains a significant Buddhist belief as understanding impermanence is a stepping stone toward achieving nibbana, as it helps Buddhists break free from the cycle of craving and hatred that attaches them to the cycle of suffering. Anatta is significant to Buddhists as it impacts how they view themselves and the world around them as by understanding the self is impermanent and not separate from the rest of existence, it helps reduce attachment and the craving that fuels suffering.