An Exploratory Study of a Counselling Framework:
Four Noble Truths and Their Multi-Interactive Cause-and-Effect*

Cheng, Fung-Kei

Doctoral Student, Department of Social Work and Social Administration

The University of Hong Kong

Abstract

Purpose: The present exploratory research aims to develop a counselling framework based on the theory of the Four Noble Truths and its multi-interplay of causality among the four elements.

Structure: This paper composes of two main themes. The first part is to delineate the theory of the Four Noble Truths from *Āgama*. It then displays the process-focused models, and discusses the three-dimensional model. The second part is the introduction of the counselling framework in a multi-interactive cause-and-effect perspective, its concepts, features, implications, and counselling skills and techniques discovered in *Āgama*.

Methodology: This study adopted the discourse on the Four Noble Truths from *Āgama*, one of the earliest collections of Buddhist scriptures. It is because *Āgama* keeps abreast of the closer meaning and interpretation of Early Buddhist teachings. In order to maintain the consistency of understanding and interpretation, it used only the Chinese version of *Āgama*. Meanwhile, employing primary data, this paper indicated the sources of data though it did not exhibit the sources in a form of in-text quotations.

Findings and Results: The theory of the Four Noble Truths, one of the core Buddhist teachings, elaborates the nature of suffering, its cause, its cessation and the way of cessation. The conventional process model of the Four Noble Truths was procedural-based and linear relationship. This study analysed the inter-relationship

among the components of the Four Noble Truths. Emphasising the causality, it developed a three-dimensional model in which it depicted the cause-and-effect between nature of suffering and causes of suffering, between ways of extinguishing suffering and eradication of suffering, and between the experience world and the ideal world. The three-horizon about their inter-relationship constructed a multi-interplay approach to elaborate the Four Noble Truths for healing industry. In addition, this paper also explored intervention skills and techniques in light of *Āgama*. It discovered that most of them are being widely used by the current counselling practitioners.

Significance: Moving beyond the traditional process mode, this paper adopts the notion of hierarchical causality of the Four Noble Truths which is little noted and discussed in counselling context. In accordance with this concept, a multi-interplay counselling framework is illustrated. This framework provides the research and counselling fields with an alternative means. It may stimulate academia and counselling practitioners to look into the practicality and applicability of the Four Noble Truths from another vision. The peroration is that this cross-disciplinary study refers western counselling theories to explore the counselling components in Buddhist teachings. Positive results support the healing functionalities of Buddhist teachings. It further reveals that helping people liberate from suffering is the major mission of the Buddha. This research attempts to revitalize his original aspiration in a contemporary context.

【**Contents**】

A Fact: Living With Suffering

Suffering has long been a common subject across different academic disciplines. Suffering, according to *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*[1], *Encyclopædia Britannica*[2] and *Oxford Dictionary*[3], refers to 'the state or experience of one that suffers' or 'the state of undergoing pain, distress, or hardship' in relation to 'endure death, pain, or distress', or 'sustain loss or damage', or 'be subject to disability or handicap'. The spectrum of suffering covers from physical or physiological hurt to psychological, emotional, mental or intangible dissatisfaction. Going further, academia from various disciplines has been examining this subject from their own lens. For example, Aristotelian philosophers assess that suffering is experience and an incident[4]. In the meantime, they admit that this incident is an avoidable experience. Schopenhauer[5] has succeeded to this notion but with a taste of pessimism[6]. Yalom[7], an existential psychotherapist, asserts that freedom, meaning or meaninglessness, existential isolation and death are the thoughts affecting production of suffering. Palliative caregivers[8] observe the relationship between physical pain and suffering. Some of the social service professionals discuss the unpleasant feeling due to loss[9]. Regardless of what they argue or what the debate is, the confluence is that suffering and tragedies are inevitable in our life[10]. It is just what Buddhism highlights as the nature of life[11]; and life is bitter[12]. The painful fact is that the 'subjectivity of the suffering subject'[13] is the only subject who is experiencing suffering and the feeling of suffering. This distasteful experience and feelings have a great impact on the

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[1] *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*. "suffering," accessed December 23, 2010, *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, http://www.britannica.com.eproxy1.lib.hku.hk/ bps/dictionary?query=suffering&header_go=.

[2] *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s.v. "suffering," accessed December 23, 2010, http://www.britannica.com/ EBchecked/topic/571734/suffering.

[3] *Oxford Dictionary Online*. "suffering," accessed December 23, 2010, http://oxforddictionaries.com/ definition/suffering.

[4] van der Cingel (2009, 126).

[5] Zhao (2000).

[6] Wicks (2007).

[7] Yalom (1980, 9).

[8] For instance, Strang, Strang, Hultborn, and Arne´r (2004, 247).

[9] For example, Chan, Ng, Ho, and Chau (2006, 824).

[10] Gilbert (2009, xxii).

[11] Lao (2009, 39).

[12] For example, *Saṃyuktāgama*, T 99, 87c32, 92c18.

[13] Marder (2006, 53).

perception of the sufferer about the present and the future[14].

It seems that releasing suffering is a whole life career for each person. Helping professionals such as social workers, psychiatrists have studiously been struggling to help clients relieve suffering. Counselling is one of the significant players in the human service or human care arena. One of its major accountabilities is to make an effort to abate suffering of clients. Theories of counselling provide a wealth of decoding of suffering. Different schools of counselling theories focus on different perspectives in relation to suffering. Psychoanalytic approaches look into personal anxiety and conflicts counting on the dynamic among id, ego and superego implying impulsivity, rationality and morality[15] in order to cope with suffering. The central belief of humanist theorists involves the inborn reflexivity of human beings to solve their problems including suffering if they are properly facilitated[16]. Behaviourism concentrates on the deterministic relationship of external environment and behaviour, and therefore devises techniques for behaviour modification[17]. Constructivist paradigm considers that counselling is a process of re-organisation and re-construction of self and worldview[18]. The result of the re-construction inspires a new perception of self, and re-evaluates happy and unhappy experiences. Religious contributors also participate in the merging of religious doctrines, counselling and spirituality for emotion health[19]. Buddhism, one of the prominent religions, places the ultimate care to the relief from suffering and then to the arrival of the highest happiness[20]. From this point of view, counselling and Buddhism can communicate with the same language[21].

Developing This Research

The present paper investigates the feasibility of adopting Buddhist teachings in a counselling setting in order to cope with suffering. The theory of the Four Noble Truths, one of the core and fundamental concepts of Buddhist thought, has been ascribable to one of the important ingredients in Buddhist psychology, for instance,

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14　Strang, Strang, Hultborn, and Arne´r (2004, 247).
15　Nye (2000, 11).
16　McLeod (2003, 142).
17　Nye (2000, 49).
18　Winter (2003, 248).
19　Hayes and Cowie (2005, 33).
20　Wu (1994, 38).
21　Mikulas (1978, 60).

Brazier's work[22]. Many psychotherapists have been adopting Buddhist concepts for their practices, for example, Groves and Farmer[23], Young-Eisendrath[24]. Most of the previous works have focused on applying Buddhist teachings as a fragmented manner or a counselling technique such as mindfulness[25]. In addition, those works have discussed the theory in a basic process model. The examination of the counselling functionality and practicality of Buddhist teachings may have room for development from other Buddhist perspectives.

The objective of this study is primarily to formulate a counselling framework based on the Four Noble Truths. The discussion of the theory is in a *hetu-phala* (Cause-and-Effect) model, and inspects their dynamics of the four components in counselling context. The framework may offer a possible alternative to contemporary counselling practitioners.

The organisation of the present paper contains two major parts. The first half is to elaborate doctrines of the Four Noble Truths sourced from the Chinese version of *Āgama*. The second half is to apply the Four Noble Truths to counselling. It firstly reviewed the traditional process approach, and tried to re-arrange its sequence for having another angle to understand the model. It then referred cause-and-effect to develop the causality in a multi-interplay counselling theory. A note is that the interpretation of the Four Noble Truths in causality has been elaborated by scholars, for example, Master Yin-Shun[26], Wu[27]. However, using this concept in counselling theory may be worthy to attempt while the mainstream of the relevant discussion in the West is about the process model.

In the sense of theoretical framework, this exploratory study used the hermeneutics approach. Hermeneutics has been defined in many different ways. This study assented to the ideas of textual understanding and interpretation[28] on the Four Noble Truths without further examination of philology. It employed first hand or primary sources in order to achieve closer original meanings and retain the credibility of adopting Buddhist notions. Another reason of using primary source in this research was to discourse and develop the counselling framework from direct evidences. It aimed to show the therapeutic elements of Buddhism from its original

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22 Brazier (2003, x).
23 Groves and Farmer (1994, 186).
24 Young-Eisendrath (2008, 541).
25 Kabat-Zinn (1982, 33-47).
26 Yin-Shun (1994, 146).
27 Wu (1994, 38).
28 Palmer (1988, 33).

data. It had no intentions to employ or compare with the existing counselling models. However, the western counselling theories might help understanding Buddhist teachings in counselling language. It therefore directly extracted the ideas and connotation from *Āgama* for textual interpretation. However, this paper had no plan to proceed with the study in view of philology. In order to maintain the literary fluency, the excerpts were shown only the sources of data in the form of in-text footnotes.

Regarding Buddhist scriptures, there is an ocean of material in which interpretation varies from different versions or schools of thought. Using Buddhist teachings from only source will keep the consistent understanding and interpretation of Buddhist doctrines. This paper employed the contents of *Āgama*. It is because *Āgama* is one of the earliest collections of Buddhist texts collated in the fourth century before Christ, and is one of the important canons of Early Buddhism. In addition, it only adopted its Chinese version. *Āgama*, thus, together with its presentation of the Four Noble Truths, is the supportive source of this study to construct the counselling framework.

Moreover, this paper focused on the discourse of the Four Noble Truths and its interaction formulating a counselling framework. It was not an outcome or process research, or an investigation of intervention effectiveness, or a clinical study. It was not a hypothesis-testing or application-verifying, either. However, it was a ground work. It might provide a plausible reasoning to study the Four Noble Truths counselling framework in its causality dimension. This attempt might furnish an option with the counselling researchers and practitioners. It was merely an inception of this theme.

Although the present work used Buddhist thought to formulate a counselling framework, it did not prepare for establishing a religious theory. It was not an investigation for religious teachings either. Instead, it did purposely apply Buddhist teachings to counselling with little religious barriers. Its emphasis was to enrich the practicability or applicability of Buddhist teachings in a contemporary context, even though preaching remains important for disseminating Buddhist knowledge.

Here are a few Buddhist terminologies. English translation for them is inconsistent; and the translations from different scholars or authors vary. In fact, translation for Buddhist concepts is particularly difficult. It is not easy to find exact wordings partly because of cultural variations. This paper adopted the original Sanskrit terms showing in italics. Meanwhile, the English translations were also

given for cross references[29]. However, one exception is that the English translation of the Four Noble Truths, instead of employing its Sanskrit, was used in the paper although some scholars translate it as the 'Four Absolute Truths'[30]. It is because its English translation is usually known and widely used.

Four Noble Truths: From Understanding to Liberation

A Collection of Buddhist Canons

The theory of *catvāri-ārya-satyāni*, that is, the Four Noble Truths, is one of the fundamental and nuclear Buddhist teachings. It has been elaborated from various levels, angles, sects and schools of thought in Buddhism. This paper adopts the interpretation from *Āgama*, which is the cornerstone and suitable for explaining the theories of Early Buddhism.

Āgama is a collection of Buddhist canons. It has been published in many language versions translated from ancient Indian languages either Sanskrit or Pāli. The Pāli version, normally used by Southern Buddhism, contains five sections. They are *Aṇguttara-nikāya*, *Dīgha-nikāya*, *Khuddaka-nikāya*, *Majjhima-nikāya* and *Saṃyutta-nikāya*. The Sanskrit version, widely prevalent in Northern Buddhism, is composed of four sections which are *Dīrghāgama*, *Ekottarikāgama*, *Madhyamāgama* and *Saṃyuktāgama*. The discussion in this paper is based on the Chinese version of *Āgama*, which was translated in the fifth century directly from the Sanskrit version.

The Four Noble Truths

The Four Noble Truths, praised by Conze[31] as 'the Old Wisdom School'[32], are addressed throughout the entire *Āgama*, in which the elaboration and discussion are particularly detailed in *Saṃyuktāgama*. The Sanskrit of the Four Noble Truths is *catvāri-ārya-satyāni* or simply *ārya-satyāni* where '*satya*' denotes the universal truth. It also delineates its real or actual nature[33]. Here 'Truth' refers to the real

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29 The Sanskrit terms and the English translation are referred from the website of Buddhist Door retrieved http://glossary.buddhistdoor.com.
30 For example, Conze (1953, 43).
31 Conze (1953).
32 Conze (1953, 90).
33 Gethin (1998, 60).

nature correctly perceived[34]. The theory of the Four Noble Truths is also named as 'Four Wisdoms'[35] because it navigates a bright prospect to transcend suffering. The 'Truths' are the highest principles[36] and pertain to four dimensions[37]: *duḥkha* or *duḥkha-satya* (Suffering or Nature of Suffering), *samudaya* or *samudaya-satya* (Cause of Suffering), *nirodha* or *nirodha-satya* (Ceasing of Suffering) and *mārga* or *mārga-satya* (Path of Ceasing of Suffering). There, additionally, is an independent canon in *Madhyamāgama*[38] designating to depict these four dimensions.

It, in *Āgama*, is a noticeable metaphor that the Buddha is a 'Great Doctor'[39] or the 'Supreme Doctor'[40]. Being a 'Doctor', the Buddha pays most of the attention to psychological, emotional, mental and spiritual cures. He shows the road to those who lose life direction, comforts those who are in fear, and calms down those who are upset[41]. As a result, people can find the ways to escape from the predicaments and eventually reach a peaceful state[42]. The Buddha, like a physician, diagnoses the nature of suffering, the causes, the fact of ceasing suffering, and the methods of ceasing suffering[43]. He makes effort in more than forty years in helping people know what *duḥkha* (Suffering) is and how to extinct suffering based on the Four Noble Truths. Conventionally, the Four Noble Truths are called the First (*duḥkha*), the Second (*samudaya*), the Third (*nirodha*) and the Fourth Noble Truth (*mārga*). However, an alternative logical order may better be arranged as *duḥkha*, *samudaya*, *mārga* and *nirodha*. The theory starts from the proper understanding of what life is from Buddhist beliefs, and ends at the eradication of suffering. This paper will follow this logical array.

Duḥkha (Suffering or Nature of Suffering)

Understanding suffering or nature of suffering leads the move to freedom from suffering[44]. Understanding *duḥkha* (Suffering) is the most important step to

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34　For example, *Saṃyuktāgama*, T 99, 109b24-25, 112c13.
35　For example, *Dīrghāgama*, T 1, 51a15, 53b18.
36　*Madhyamāgama*, T 26, 464b21.
37　For example, *Dīrghāgama*, T 1, 51a13, 53b17-18; *Madhyamāgama*, T 26, 460b24-25; *Saṃyuktāgama*, T 99, 308c23.
38　*Madhyamāgama*, T 26, 814b11-816c28.
39　For example, *Madhyamāgama*, T 26, 610a12, a19.
40　For example, *Saṃyuktāgama*, T 99, 105a25, b10, 332c21; *Ekottarikāgama*, T 125, 615b30, 677a13.
41　*Ekottarikāgama*, T 125, 564b26.
42　*Ekottarikāgama*, T 125, 615b27.
43　*Saṃyuktāgama*, T 99, 105a25-31.
44　Dowd and McCleery (2007, 70).

understand the correct meaning of the Four Noble Truths from the view of Buddhist teachings [45]. It is commonly translated as 'suffering' in English. The word 'suffering', in accordance with Merriam-Webster Dictionary, usually implies victimisation of losing something physically or psychologically and then of falling in mental or emotional hurt. In Buddhism, the term '*duḥkha*' discreetly articulates different levels of suffering and more than physiological and psychological painful experience. It is mainly classified in eight types[46]. The eight types of *duḥkha* (Suffering) may be analysed within three categories. The first category is suffering from living, ageing, sickness and death. It relates to the process of physiological changes from birth to end of life. People will go through this life cycle although the duration of the whole process varies from each person. Some people gain a more lengthy life such as a hundred years old; but some have only a hundred hours. Furthermore, the duration of each stage varies. Some people last youth energy much longer; but some degenerate earlier or even die prematurely. Some people endure many illnesses; and some endure less. The common rule is that people experience the same flow. *Duḥkha* (Suffering) arises because ageing and sickness are kinds of loss or damage. The more painful one is that these kinds of loss or damage are irreversible. A universal demand from generations keeps finding antidote to maintain the young state. The fact tells that this demand is a delusion. People are disappointed and feel suffered.

The second category is suffering from meeting those people you hate, or encountering those things you dislike, or leaving those people or things you love, or losing those people or things you desire. This type of suffering involves psychological dissatisfaction. Suffering from this category is incurred by personal feeling. It may be none of the relation to the occurrence. The one you hate, for example, may not be the one other people hate; or even the one you hate is the one other people love. However, his or her showing up makes you unhappy, fear or threatened. On the other side, suffering comes from losing. For instance, a child is eager for having a toy car. When he gets it, he is happy. When the toy is destroyed, he is unhappy. More often, when the toy is still in good conditions, the boy may be unsatisfactory once he is no longer interested in it. For him, the dissatisfaction is also a suffering because he cannot be happy with it anymore. This suffering comes from gaining. It paradoxically comes from happiness. Buddhism does not deny happiness. It, however, sees through the truth that suffering originates from deterioration of happiness. Gains and losses are no differences in essence as they are continually changing. These changes trigger people's emotional up-and-down. The

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[45] Conze (1953, 44).
[46] For example, *Madhyamāgama*, T 26, 435c24-25, 462a26, 600b08.

emotional wave makes people feel distressful.

The third and worse category of suffering, going deeper to the second category, is incurred by powerlessness or helplessness. People always wrongly perceive that they are powerful and able to manage all things. From aeons, human beings have been trying hard to control everything. Controlling embraces deciding. Deciding is to exercise power. Power makes us feel satisfied. Many kings and emperors from the East and the West demonstrate the needs of control power. As a matter of fact, it is an uncontrollable world; and people even cannot control their own bodies and mind. The threat of uncontrollable reality is a kind of suffering. The uncontrollable mind is a severe suffering, indeed. People are unconsciously fettered by endless wishes and desire. The chase of fulfilling desire creates intrinsic suffering. They often misperceive this chasing is a joy but not a trap. They consume their whole life to fulfil their infinite desires. They have not yet known that their body, mind and spiritual are becoming exhausted until symptoms show up. In addition, even satisfaction will eventually return to the second category of suffering. They form a suffering circle—*saṃsāra* (Cycle of Births and Death) of desires.

Analysed as the root of the three categories, *duḥkha* (Suffering), in short, happens when people are incapable and out of control but they have strong desire to control. They then feel frustrated, powerless, incompetent or even hopeless. It infers that the problem is not the suffering itself, but the perception, feeling and response towards the suffering. It implies that suffering includes not only the suffering itself but also suffering towards the suffering. The puzzle therefore is the reason people perceive, feel and respond towards suffering like this way.

Samudaya (Cause of Suffering)

Samudaya (Cause of Suffering) answers the puzzle. Many scholars[47] propose that the origin of suffering comes from desire, thirst, attachment, craving, clinging and delusion. It is true that these are causes of suffering and feeling of suffering[48]. This understanding reports only the phenomenon but seems to lack an in-depth explanation on the key barricade, that is, the absence of knowing the reality of truth[49]. When people do not really know the reality, they react on desire, craving and so on. The reality of truth comprises numerous Buddhist principles such as *dvādaśāvgapratītya-samutpāda* (Twelve Links in a Chain of Existence) manifesting the elements of non-stop life cycles and their relationship, *pañca-skandha* (Five

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47   For example, Brazier (2003, 12); Conze (1953, 42); Gethin (1998, 71); Leung and Chan (2010, 163); Rahula (2001, 29).

48   Sogyal (2000, 54-55).

49   For example, *Saṃyuktāgama*, T 99, 105c16-17, 106a05.

Aggregates) depicting elements of mind and body, *sad-indriyāni* (Six Senses) describing tools of human perception and their operations. Among these, the concepts of *tri-doṣa* (Three Poisons), *anitya* (Impermanence) and *anātman* (No-Self) are the foundations. *Tri-doṣa* (Three Poisons) admits human weaknesses. *Anitya* (Impermanence) articulates from the perspective of external facts whilst *anātman* (No-Self) expounds the reality of beings. The followings analyse these notions.

Tri-doṣa (Three Poisons) are the sources of *kleśa* (Trouble and Bother) perceived. They are *rāga* (Greed), *dveṣa* (Hatred) and *moha* (Ignorance)[50]. *Rāga* (Greed) is endless thirst for all, particularly those things people like. When people fail to fulfil their wants, loathing will arise. *Dveṣa* (Hatred) is resentment or anger at what people dislike. They keep away from it. When they fail to depart from it, abomination, complaints and dissatisfaction will result. *Moha* (Ignorance) is the total unknown or wrong understanding of *paramārtha* (Absolute Truth). The unconscious operation of *tri-doṣa* (Three Poisons) substantially influences their emotional reaction from which they feel vexed or would respond with negative or devastating behaviour.

A case example is about Esther's[51] personal experience. Esther, a lady with depression for ten years, is a demonstrative example illustrating how painful she suffered from *tri-doṣa* (Three Poisons) and how she is liberated from it after sincere and frank self-reflection. She acknowledged that her suffering from depression was caused by *tri-doṣa* (Three Poisons). She admitted that she was greedy to pursue everything, especially for family love. She thought that she would have been happy if she could have got what she wanted. Her limitless greed stimulated her fears and doubts to grow stronger. Fears and doubts increasingly affected her daily life and self-failure produced. The feeling of self-failure made her feel very unconfident. The more she failed, the more lack of confidence she suffered. Gradually, her hatred grew heavier and heavier. She hated everything she did. She hated herself and attempted suicide several times when she was in severe depression. She was ignorant of herself, of the reality and of *paramārtha* (Absolute Truth). Her example shows how *tri-doṣa* (Three Poisons) affects psychological interaction from a Buddhist perspective. Her autobiographies also describe how she re-discoveries *paramārtha* (Absolute Truth) that heals her depression and psychological wound. When she understands her problems, she can let unhappiness go.

In Buddhist thought, *paramārtha* (Absolute Truth) is *anitya* (Impermanence).

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[50] For example, *Dīrghāgama*, T 1, 32c21; *Ekottarikāgama*, T125, 650b24, 700c28; *Saṃyuktāgama*, T 99, 61a42.

[51] Lee (2011, 27-31).

Anitya (Impermanence) discusses impermanence due to continuous motion and changes. Nothing stays static. Changing is nature. Changes occur from time to time. The constant and normal condition, therefore, is the changing; and change is the true state. Change comes from *pratītya-samutpāda* (Law of Dependent Origination). Desire is always perceived as the source of suffering but it may not fully explain the reasons of people attaching desire. Pruett[52] is one of the few scholars who understand that ignorance is the deep root of suffering. People are unable to understand *paramārtha* (Absolute Truth), *pratītya-samutpāda* (Law of Dependent Origination), *anitya* (Impermanence) and *anātman* (No-Self). People thus live with *rāga* (Greed) and *dveṣa* (Hatred). People want to grasp the eternity. It is only because of their *moha* (Ignorance)[53], they suffer but not of the suffering. The fact is that happiness will fade and decay resulting in suffering[54]. Disappointment and discontentment follow. The effect will vigorously strengthen *tri-doṣa* (Three Poisons). The more *tri-doṣa* (Three Poisons) arises, the stronger desire yields, and the more bitterness will be tasted. If people can properly know *paramārtha* (Absolute Truth), they accept the reality of ever changing. When they accept the truth that change is usual, they will relax and let things go. When they let things go easier, they will reduce tensions caused by attachment.

The same rationale applies to *anātman* (No-Self). Many scholars translate it in other terms, for example non-self[55], devoid of self[56]. Yet, these translations focus on explaining the 'self'. The attention to the 'changing' might be more accurate and appropriate to its original connotation. The self is part of the existence. Changing of the self is natural such as gradual deterioration of the physical body. However, suffering arises from the psychological tug-of-war between the uncontrollable fact of degeneration and people's desire for escaping from degeneration. They want to be energetic forever but it will never be like that. They will then spend most efforts in keeping the best condition. The more they wish, the more frustration comes.

Anitya (Impermanence) is based on *pratītya-samutpāda* (Law of Dependent Origination). The Law is the most basic horizon of Buddhist thought. It expounds that all existences result from the appropriate formation of *hetu* (Primary Cause) and *pratyaya* (Secondary or Supplementary Cause). Demise of any factor, either primary or supplementary, leads the thing to evaporate. In other words, any occurrence is a relative and inter-dependent phenomenon; and nothing can exist on its own. Plants

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52　Pruett (1987, 9).
53　For example, *Madhyamāgama*, T 26, 450a17-18, 525b17.
54　Khema (2009, 174).
55　Dhammananha (2000, 5).
56　Mizuno (2003, 47).

grow, for instance, when all the conditions adequately match including seeds, soil, water, air and sunshine. Thus, the nature of existence is *śūnya* (Voidness) without eternal features. Matters are not constant but inter-dependent and uncontrollable. Many veterans[57] usually translate it in 'Emptiness' or 'Nothingness' that may not reach the hub of the original meaning but may be misinterpreted, in general, as nihilism.

The relationship (refer to Fig. 1) among *pratītya-samutpāda* (Law of Dependent Origination), *anitya* (Impermanence) and *anātman* (No-Self) presents the changing reality in different layers. *Anātman* (No-Self) describes the nature of an individual. The nature of 'Self' is ever-changing, indeed. 'Self' is hence changing in body, mind, emotion, cognition and so forth. The ever-changing nature also applies to all existence while an individual is a part of existence. It situates in the most inside set. That means, *anātman* (No-Self) is part of *anitya* (Impermanence). It becomes the subset of *anitya* (Impermanence). *Pratītya-samutpāda* (Law of Dependent Origination) is the principal theory explaining why and how existence including individuals keeps changing. Their relationship is from a smaller premise to a larger premise, and from the inner perspective to the outer perspective.

Fig. 1 Relationship among *Pratītya-samutpāda* (Law of Dependent Origination), *Anitya* (Impermanence) and *Anātman* (No-Self)

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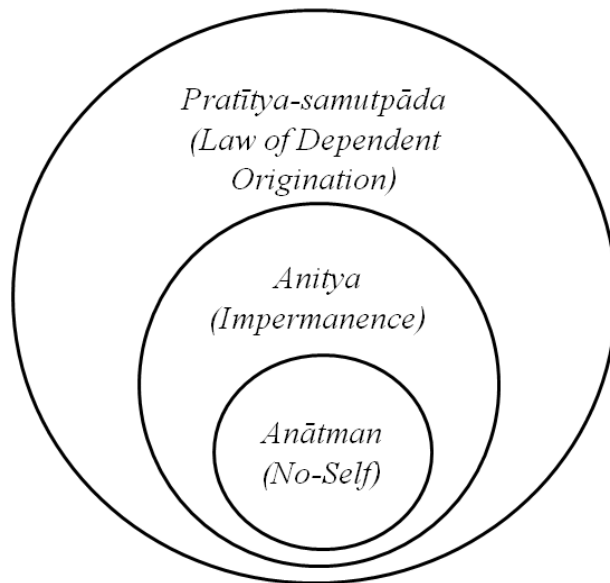
57   For instance, Brazier (2003, 175); Gethin (1998, 236); Mizuno (2003, 116); Rahula (2001, 17).

The attribute of ever-changing is an aggregate of factors in right conditions. All beings are not staying at an eternal state but are keeping on altering. Thus, the essence of existence is a junction of inconstant, temporary and incorporeal ingredients. However, people ignore the nature of constant changes. They believe that things will be static without changing so that they can owe the possessions forever. However, the fact is cruelly and totally different. Even if people understand the fact, hardly can they accept it. The stronger they reject it, the more difficulties they face; the harder they face the fact, the more they suffer.

Mārga (Path of Ceasing of Suffering)

Cognitively knowing the rationale of *nirodha* (Ceasing of Suffering) is not simple, indeed. Taking action for cessation of suffering is much more difficult even though *mārga* draws a detailed roadmap. The road is *āryāstāvgika-mārga* (Eightfold Path)[58] in Early Buddhism involving the practices[59] of *samyag-dṛṣṭi* (Right Understanding), *samyak-saṃkalpa* (Right Thought), *samyag-vāc* (Right Speech), *samyak-karmānta* (Right Action), *samyag-ājiva* (Right Livelihood), *samyag-vyāyāma* (Right Effort), *samyak-smṛti* (Right Mindfulness) and *samyak-samādhi* (Right Concentration). The Path puts the emphasis on 'right' which pinpoints the direction to *nirvāṇa* (Perfect Stillness) and ends affliction[60].

Nirodha (Ceasing of Suffering)

Ever-changing is, indeed, not pessimism. Happiness is not eternal; and neither is suffering. Only because is the existence ever-changing, suffering is therefore possible to perish. The teaching of *nirodha* (Ceasing of Suffering) affirms the plausibility. It is plausible if and only if people decide and take action to make it happen. In other words, it will not happen if they do nothing in pursuit of extinguishing suffering. The Buddha and buddhas are the vivid evidences. The Buddha successfully proves that people are able to liberate themselves from suffering in the experiential world. The state of extinction of suffering is *nirvāṇa* (Perfect Stillness); that is, the total and thorough end of affliction. When people completely accept and realise *pratītya-samutpāda* (Law of Dependent Origination), *anitya* (Impermanence) and *anātman* (No-Self), they will reach *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi* (the Highest Wisdom or Saintship)[61]. They will be capable of removing

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58　For example, *Saṃyuktāgama*, T 99, 40a29-30, 126a15.
59　Rahula (2001, 45).
60　For example, *Madhyamāgama*, T 26, 423c23-424a08; *Ekottarikāgama*, T 125, 775c27.
61　For example, *Saṃyuktāgama*, T 99, 106b18.

tri-doṣa (Three Poisons)[62]. They, thus, let desire go, and enter into tranquillity.

The theory of *catvāri-ārya-satyāni* (Four Noble Truths) illustrates suffering, its causes, its extinction and the ways of extinction. The relationship of the four dimensions is another theme to understand the complexity of the Four Noble Truths. The theory of the Four Noble Truths provides a logical structure with a counselling theory and model. This study fabricates a multi-interplay understanding of causality among the elements of the Four Noble Truths. It then constructs a Four-Noble-Truths-based counselling framework.

Four-Noble-Truths Models

Before constructing a counselling framework, this paper elucidates different models interpreting the Four Noble Truths.

Process Model

Traditionally, the Four Noble Truths are drawn in a process approach[63] to explain the sequence from symptom of illness, diagnosis, recovery and treatment[64] (refer Fig. 2). This metaphor represents people from being suffering to extinction of suffering. In between, there are stages of finding out the causes of suffering and the way out. This discourse is popularly adopted by many academic researchers and psychotherapists[65]. The process model imitating physician's practice is procedure-oriented stating the step-by-step and the linear relationship between the former factor and the latter one. Its advantages are straightforward and can be easily understood.

Fig. 2 Traditional Process Model of the Four Noble Truths

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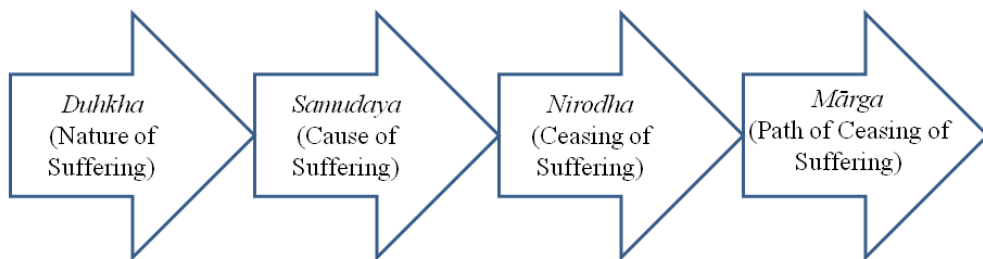
62   For example, *Ekottarikāgama*, T 125, 775a27.
63   Brazier (2003).
64   *Saṃyuktāgama*, T 99, 105a25-31.
65   For example, Brazier (2003, 26); Gethin (1998, 61-80); Harvey (1990, 47); Rubin (1996, 17); Xie and Pan (2011, 27-28).

Brazier[66] attempts to break through this linear fashion and moulds a half circular process model. The focal issue of that model, from psychological taxonomy, is *samudaya* (Cause of Suffering). Its reaction pertaining to 'sensory pleasure'[67], 'identity formation'[68] and 'non-being'[69] figures out the reasons forming addiction and compulsive behaviour. This modified process model is half circular describing the loop between *duḥkha* (Suffering) and *samudaya* (Cause of Suffering) while *nirodha* (Ceasing of Suffering) and *mārga* (Path of Ceasing of Suffering) are out of the loop[70]. At the same time, it also retains the procedural order of the traditional process model. However, both the traditional and Brazier's models[71] are in the order of *duḥkha* (Suffering), *samudaya* (Cause of Suffering), *nirodha* (Ceasing of Suffering), *mārga* (Path of Ceasing of Suffering) (refer to Fig. 2). This sequence seems to divorce from practical experiences. When people have already relieved from suffering, they have no reasons to practise the removal of suffering. The logic seemingly needs to be re-arranged.

This paper suggests a revised sequence in the order of *duḥkha* (Suffering), *samudaya* (Cause of Suffering), *mārga* (Path of Ceasing of Suffering), *nirodha* (Ceasing of Suffering) (refer to Fig. 3). The only difference is in the order of the last two steps. It may more align with the empirical experience from symptom to recovery. The fourth metaphoric step about 'the Path' is resulted from the third metaphoric step, that is, cessation of suffering. This revised model advocates that practising the 'Path of Ceasing Suffering' is essential to uproot suffering. Without actions, people will not attain the benefits. This may keep closer abreast of the spirit of Buddhist practices. Nevertheless, an argument may be raised that 'recovery' may happen without 'treatment'. That means suffering removal may happen without actions taking to relieve suffering. Regardless of which sequence, the traditional or Brazier's or the revised model will have difficulties in solving this challenge. It is because they relate little to the network or complex of the inter-relationship among the Four Noble Truths. Referring to *pratītya-samutpāda* (Law of Dependent Origination), everything is constituted with factors. Existence is conditional. Any single factor does not suffice to make things happen. This paper attempts to delve into another possibility of conceptual framework. It involves a web of the Four Noble Truths, which will be applied to a counselling framework afterwards.
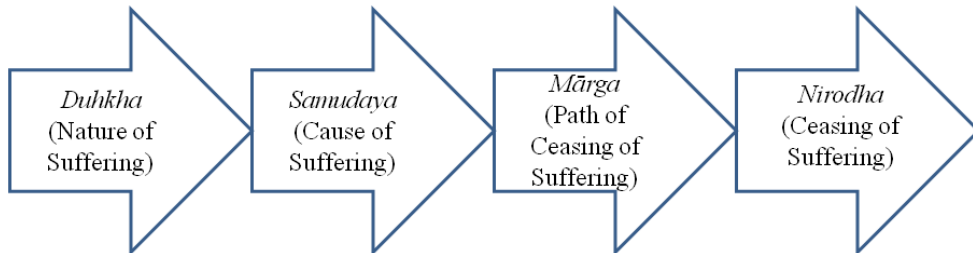

66　Brazier (2003, 188).
67　Brazier (2003, 27).
68　Brazier (2003, 28).
69　Brazier (2003, 30).
70　Brazier (2003, 188).
71　Brazier (2003, 26 and 188-189).

Fig. 3 Revised Sequence of Process Model of the Four Noble Truths

It is agreed that discussion of *duḥkha* (Suffering) is the inception of the theory of the Four Noble Truths[72]. More than it is, from the cognitive perspective, the process model will be fortified with the effect of 'knowing'[73] (refer to Fig. 4). The Buddha emphasises the importance of knowing; and knowing is the common initiative of the four steps[74]. Understanding the nature and the causes of suffering is the necessity before halting the repetition of suffering[75]. Cultivating and exercising the practices aim at achieving extinction of suffering that will eventually be actualised[76].
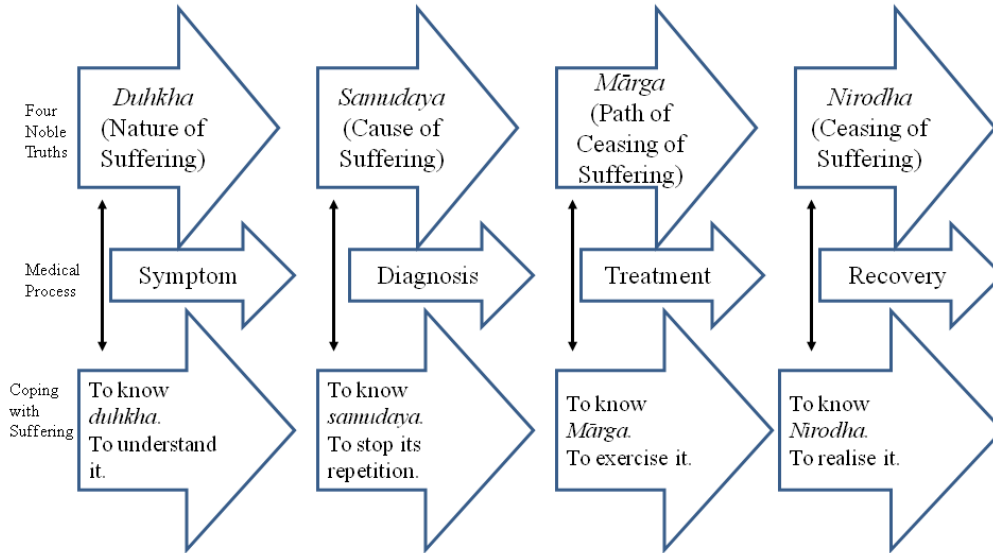
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[72]   Khema (2009, 172); Lao (2009, 15).
[73]   *Saṃyuktāgama*, T 99, 104b15-16, b22-23.
[74]   *Saṃyuktāgama*, T 99, 104b15-16, b22-23.
[75]   *Saṃyuktāgama*, T 99, 104b15-16, b22-23.
[76]   *Saṃyuktāgama*, T 99, 104b15-16, b22-23.

Fig. 4 Analysis of the Revised Process Model of the Four Noble Truths

Four Noble Truths:
- *Duhkha* (Nature of Suffering)
- *Samudaya* (Cause of Suffering)
- *Mārga* (Path of Ceasing of Suffering)
- *Nirodha* (Ceasing of Suffering)

Medical Process:
- Symptom
- Diagnosis
- Treatment
- Recovery

Coping with Suffering:
- To know *duhkha*. To understand it.
- To know *samudaya*. To stop its repetition.
- To know *Mārga*. To exercise it.
- To know *Nirodha*. To realise it.

'To know' here is a critical cognition which guides to understand the Four Noble Truths. This cognition obviously is not only to know the Truths, but more importantly to aware the reality, introspect and enlighten the self. A thorough understanding of *duḥkha* (Suffering) comes from knowing the nature of suffering. Because of understanding of its nature, it leads to know *samudaya* (Cause of Suffering). Knowing the cause of suffering possibly makes the termination of its repetition. Knowing the plausibility of extinguishing suffering is not enough. Realising the cessation of suffering is the ultimate purpose. Thus, taking action to cease suffering is more pivotal than just knowing it. Without knowing (or cognition of every step in this sequence), however, the process will unlikely move forward.

In summary, the traditional process model portrays the procedures from knowing to liberation, that is, from suffering to extinction of suffering. The process is linear that describes procedural relationship between the former element and the latter element. However, their relationship is more complicated and insightful when the theory of the Four Noble Truths is investigated from a self-reflection premise.

Three-Dimensional Four-Noble-Truths Model

The initiation of the three-dimensional model places *duḥkha* (Suffering) as the centrality of the Four Noble Truths theory. *Duḥkha* (Suffering or Nature of Suffering), meaning unease or unsatisfactoriness, resides at the core. In Buddhism, suffering is natural but it is not the nature of life. Being suffered is throughout the

life; however, extinction of suffering is plausible. Thus, knowing and understanding of existing of *duḥkha* (Suffering) are significant. Freud's Pleasure Principle[77] restates that human beings are pleasure-seeking and pain-avoiding. Yet, avoidance is passive. The uncomfortable feeling instinctively pushes to get rid of those undesirable feelings. Hence, understanding the reasons of suffering helps clarify the problem, and then makes a choice solve it. *Mārga* (Path of Ceasing Suffering) provides strategies to cope with *duḥkha* (Suffering). It spells out that *duḥkha* (Suffering) is not fixed though it is natural. It is observed that the theory of the Four Noble Truths is not deterministic but proactive. It helps people tackle changes and challenges. It helps people respond to avoidable unsatisfaction. Liberation from suffering is the result of ceasing suffering. This dimension examines the inter-relationship among the Four Noble Truths where *duḥkha* (Suffering or Nature of Suffering) situates at the centre.

The next facet studies the inter-relationship among *samudaya* (Cause of Suffering), *duḥkha* (Suffering), *nirodha* (Ceasing of Suffering) and *mārga* (Path of Ceasing of Suffering). Knowing *samudaya* (Cause of Suffering) is a cognitive understanding. The understanding is critical to devise the means to eradicate *duḥkha* (Suffering) on a tactic level. Through practices, *mārga* (Path of Ceasing of Suffering) enlightens to understand the root cause of suffering. That is, awakening of the root cause of suffering will arise during the process of relieving of suffering. Because of the enlightenment and awakening, practising *mārga* (Path of Ceasing of Suffering) will arrive at the final destination, that is, eradication of suffering.

The implementation, action and drive will then result in the end of suffering. The attainment of ceasing suffering properly responds to the cause of suffering, and extinguishes suffering. It also realises the effectiveness of ways of eliminating suffering. The relationship between *nirodha* (Ceasing of Suffering) and *mārga* (Path of Ceasing of Suffering) is bilateral. The aim of the path is to eliminate suffering while the achievement of ceasing suffering is to realise the effectiveness of the path. The ultimate goal is to uproot suffering. It responds to *samudaya* (Cause of Suffering) where the cause can be removed.

In a nutshell, this three-dimensional landscape illustrates the network of the Four Noble Truths (refer to Fig. 5). It is not process-driven. It is focus-oriented. That means each of the noble truths is counted. Each of them contributes to the understanding of themselves and the interplay. When *duḥkha* (Nature of Suffering) is focused, for instance, the other three noble truths are also in effect in relation to *duḥkha* (Nature of Suffering). Similarly, when *nirodha* (Ceasing of Suffering) is

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77   Bischof (1970, 32-33).

focused, as another example, the other three noble truths are also in effect in relation to *nirodha* (Ceasing of Suffering), and so forth. The same practice applies to *samudaya* (Cause of Suffering) and *mārga* (Path of Ceasing of Suffering). This is because all of the Four Noble Truths are inter-related. It is hard to understand the full picture of the Four Noble Truths by singling out any one of them. However, this three-dimensional model is insufficient to develop a counselling framework unless *hetu-phala* (Cause-and-Effect) is introduced.

Fig. 5 Interrelationship among the Four Noble Truths
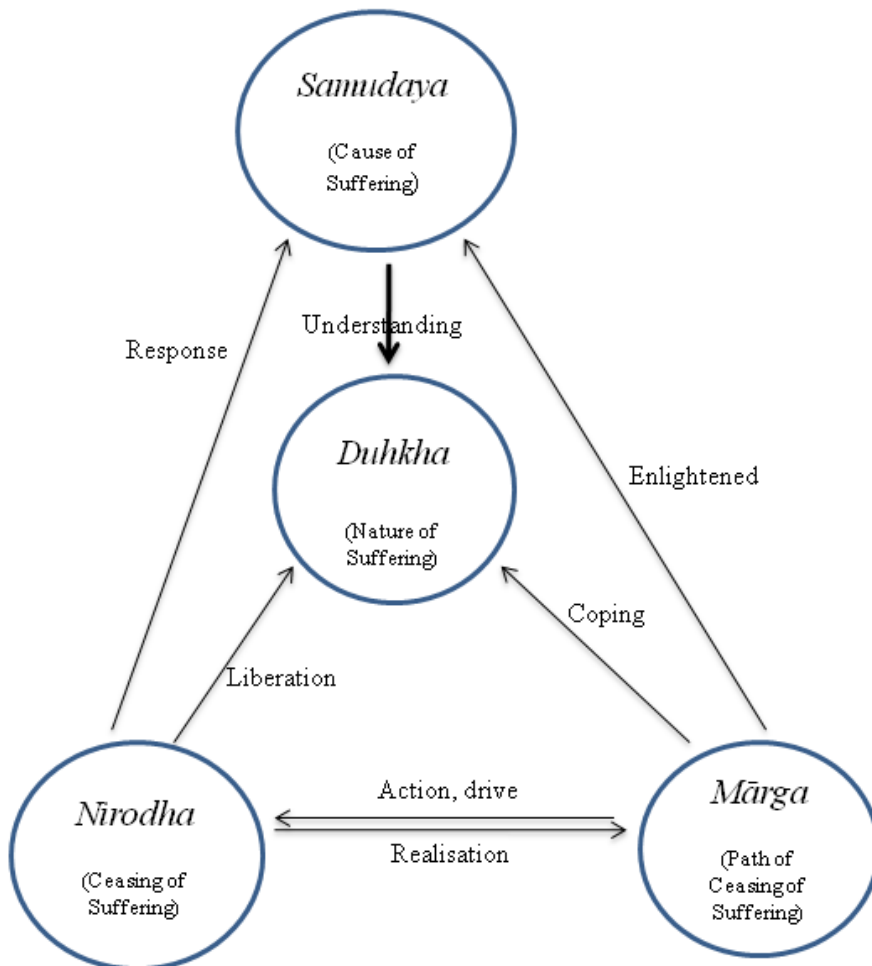
Hetu-phala (Cause-and-Effect) is always linked with the concept of karma, which explains the entire circle of cause-and-effect. This paper will not discuss the karmic principle or its causal mechanism. Rather, it will delve into *hetu-phala* (Cause-and-

Effect), which is a simpler but practical direction to understand how phenomenal world would work. A point to note is that in Buddhism, *hetu-phala* (Cause-and-Effect) is operating in a network of multi-cause-multi-effect. The formula is too much intricate and will be out of the scope of counselling practices. The present study makes a direct approach of cause-effect-relationship for discussion. Reviewing their inter-relationship, *hetu-phala* (Cause-and-Effect) will reflect a multi-interplay canvass. Considering this underlying interlock, there are three domains of *hetu-phala* (Cause-and-Effect) (refer to Fig. 6).

Fig. 6 *Hetu-phala* **(Cause-and-Effect) of the Four Noble Truths**
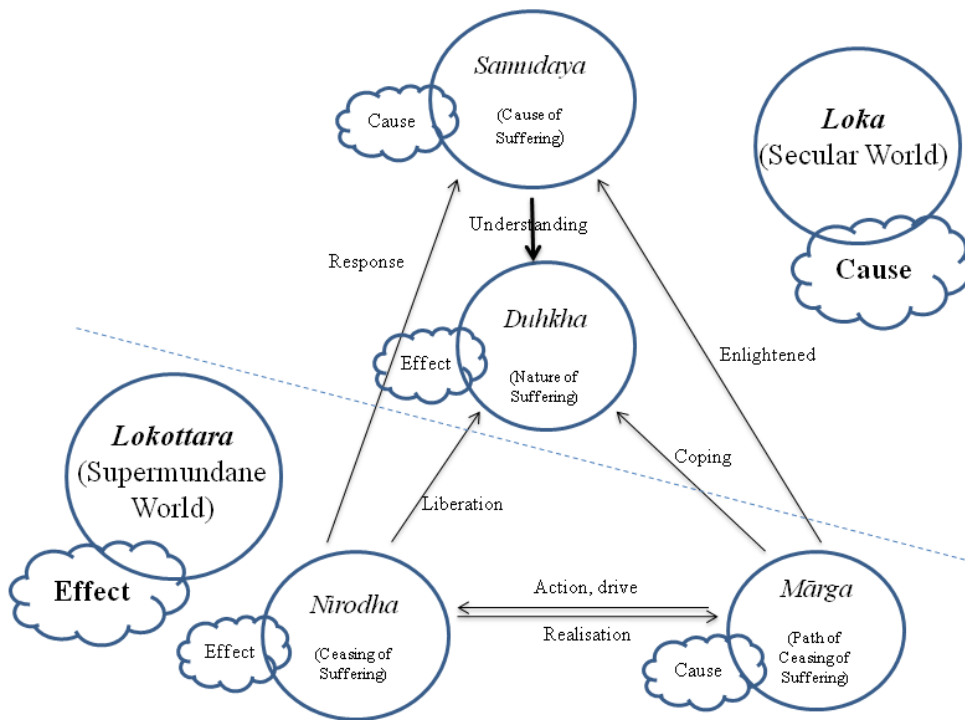
First of all, in *loka* (Secular World), in which people live and experience, *samudaya* (Cause of Suffering) is the cause and *duḥkha* (Suffering or Nature of Suffering) is the effect [78]. Buddhist theories of *pratītya-samutpāda* (Law of Dependent Origination), *anitya* (Impermanence), *anātman* (No-Self) and so on are the principles explaining formation of existence. People who ignore these principles and

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[78] Yin-Shun (1994, 146).

laws will induce *duḥkha* (Suffering). In other words, *duḥkha* (Suffering) occurs because people deny or do not understand *samudaya* (Cause of Suffering). When they know, face and accept the real causes, they can find the solution for freeing from suffering; or at least they are able to alleviate suffering. It is difficult to remove *duḥkha* (Suffering) without better understanding of *samudaya* (Cause of Suffering). The relationship between *samudaya* (Cause of Suffering) and *duḥkha* (Suffering) is that between the cause and the effect respectively. Extirpating *samudaya* (Cause of Suffering) is to resolve *duḥkha* (Suffering).

The second domain of *hetu-phala* (Cause-and-Effect)[79] will study *lokottara* (Supermundane World), in which suffering has been resolved. In Buddhism, *lokottara* (Supermundane World) is not another physical world. Instead, it is an upper realm of our mental state in which *kleśa* (Trouble and Bother) has totally been vanished. People will not be affected by emotional, mental or psychological interferences. It is 'absolute freedom' without ties of *kleśa* (Trouble and Bother). However, reaching *lokottara* (Supermundane World) needs a series of practices. Hence, *mārga* (Path of Ceasing of Suffering) is the cause and *nirodha* (Ceasing of Suffering) is the effect—the ultimate goal of the Four Noble Truths. This level emphasises that practising is the only measure to achieve the success. If there is no work to plant *mārga* (Path of Ceasing of Suffering), there will be no fruit of *nirodha* (Ceasing of Suffering). *Nirodha* (Ceasing of Suffering) is an ideal region where people can be free from emotional difficulties, desires and temptations.

The entire picture of the two domains exhibits the process of transcendence from *loka* (Secular World) to *lokottara* (Supermundane World). Hence, the third domain indicates the cause of transcendence in the real world and the effect of transcendence in the ideal world[80]. From the first two domains, it is inferred the *hetu-phala* (Cause-and-Effect) between *loka* (Secular World) and *lokottara* (Supermundane World). People are capable of reviewing and modifying their behaviour, feeling and life. They have choices whether they keep on being suffered or freeing from it. Once they decide to cease suffering, they will take action. The Buddha teaches people the methods for relieving suffering. It is optimistic, in Buddhism, that everyone can be free from suffering. Thus, experiencing *loka* (Secular World) with *samudaya* (Cause of Suffering) and *duḥkha* (Suffering) is the cause while reaching *lokottara* (Supermundane World) with *nirodha* (Ceasing of Suffering) or without *duḥkha* (Suffering) through *mārga* (Path of Ceasing of Suffering) is the effect. Without facing *samudaya* (Cause of Suffering) and *duḥkha*

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[79]　Yin-Shun (1994, 146).
[80]　Wu (1994, 38).

(Suffering), seldom do people work on *mārga* (Path of Ceasing of Suffering); and never will *nirodha* (Ceasing of Suffering) be accessed. *Duḥkha* (Suffering) and understanding of *samudaya* (Cause of Suffering) drive to *mārga* (Path of Ceasing of Suffering) and eventually to *nirodha* (Ceasing of Suffering). It indicates a map of personal transformation.

Summing up the cause-and-effect model of the Four Noble Truths, it shows a three-dimensional landscape. The first domain explains experience of suffering. The experience pertains to cognition, feeling and behaviour while the second domain adheres to achievement and success of relieving suffering. The third domain is at a higher level to investigate the dynamics between the previous two domains. It describes the relationship between *loka* (Secular World) and *lokottara* (Supermundane World); that is, the relationship between the first and the second domains. The three domains organise in a hierarchical outlook—from experience to accomplishment to transcendence.

The features of the three-dimensional model of the Four Noble Truths include several aspects. First, this model is non-linear but inter-relationship-directed. Unlike the process-based model, it does not explain the relationship between the former factor and the latter. Rather, it studies the web relationship among the four components of the Four Noble Truths. Each component inter-relates to other three factors. Second, it examines the causality from different dimensions—the causality between *duḥkha* (Suffering or Nature of Suffering) and *samudaya* (Cause of Suffering) in *loka* (Secular World), between *nirodha* (Ceasing of Suffering) and *mārga* (Path of Ceasing of Suffering) in *lokottara* (Supermundane World), and between *loka* (Secular World) and *lokottara* (Supermundane World). This *hetu-phala* (Cause-and-Effect) is in a three-hierarchical structure. Third, the multi-dimensional comprehension investigates the dynamics among not sheer the individual factors but also its network in a holistic posture. The posture places more concerns on the interaction between *duḥkha* (Suffering) as the beginning and *nirodha* (Ceasing of Suffering) as the perfect attainment. This interactive architecture may be utilised as a skeleton to build a multi-interplay counselling framework.

Four-Noble-Truths-Based Counselling

The Buddha spends nearly half a century on giving teachings to all classes and levels of people because he knows that people are afflicted by suffering and feeling of suffering. This is why he teaches the Four Noble Truths as the first lecture. In

Buddhist texts, it is crowned as the 'First Turning of Dharma Wheel'[81]. His personal experience has realised and testified the feasibility of freeing from suffering if people follow his way though it is a tough one. The one and only one way is to see and understand what it is without addition or deletion[82], that is, simply to 'see it as it is'[83]. However, *viparīta* or *viparyāsa* (that is, wrongly seeing and understanding as the opposite) is the commonality[84] of people. People perceive the world relying on their sensory organs and senses. Senses may easily be interrupted; and the facts will be distorted. Suffering will therefore be produced. The teaching of the Four Noble Truths basically aims at relieving suffering; and this is one of the core values of Buddhism[85]. From this view, it aligns with the purpose of counselling[86] while counselling is to help people alleviate sorrow, if not completely resolve it. The attempt of using the theory of the Four Noble Truths in counselling framework sounds reasonably supportive.

Framework Structure

The Four Noble Truths framework of counselling (refer to Fig. 7) imitates the three-dimensional theory and structure of the Four Noble Truths introduced in the above sections accordingly. The adoption together with adaptation of the theory will be: *duḥkha* (Suffering or Nature of Suffering) is the presenting problem in a counselling case; *samudaya* (Cause of Suffering) is assessment or assessing procedures evaluating the causes of the presenting problem; interventions and treatment replace *mārga* (Path of Ceasing of Suffering); and *nirodha* (Ceasing of Suffering) is substituted by achievement or outcome of counselling. Previously, elaborating the three-dimensional model of the Four Noble Truths does help readers understand the Four Noble Truths counselling framework more convenient; and repeating the description of its structure and contents in detail will be redundant. However, a brief portrait will enable readers to further understand the conception of counselling vistas.

81　*Saṃyuktāgama*, T 99, 103c13-107c09; Hsing-Yun (2006, 32); Khema (2009, 170).
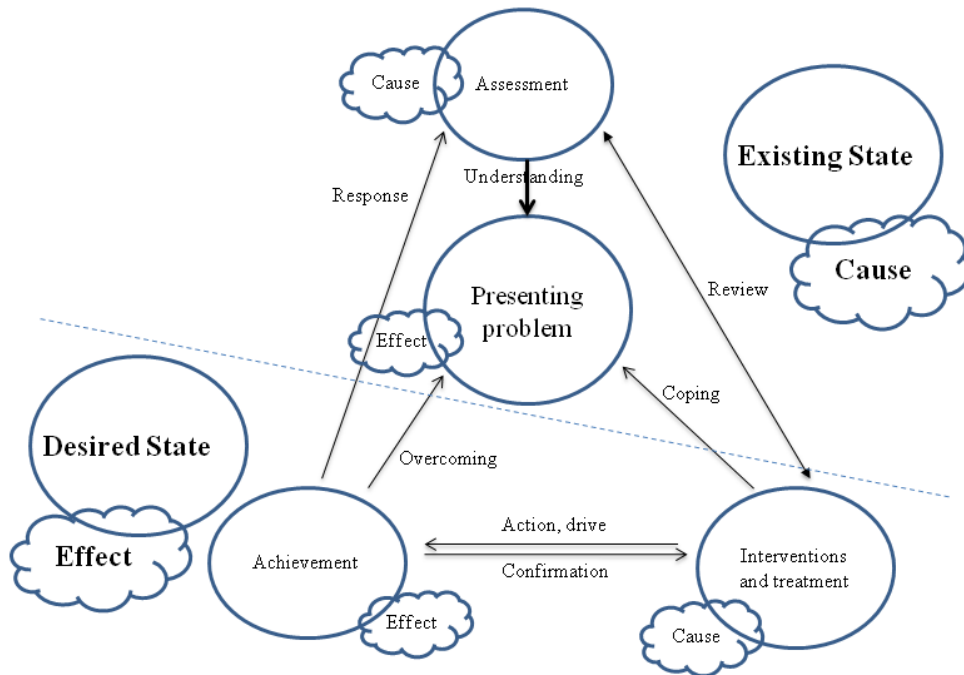82　For example, *Saṃyuktāgama*, T 99, 6c07-15, 17b27-28, 80a03.
83　Conze (1953, 44).
84　For example, *Dīrghāgama*, T 1, 72c17, c29, 135b12, 144b26; *Saṃyuktāgama*, T 99, 2c02, 271c09.
85　Lao (2009, 10 and 15); Wu (1994, 38).
86　Corey (2009, 6).

Fig. 7 Four-Noble-Truths-Based Counselling Framework

The Four-Noble-Truths-based counselling framework starts from the client coming with a presenting problem or problems which may be or not be the real disturbance. This stage is at *duḥkha* (Suffering). The client feels discomfort but most likely may not fully know what the problem is. The counsellor will assess the problem and may come out with a hypothesis. Although the postmodern therapists assert the unimportance of assessment[87], the assessment is, in a broad sense, an exploration process but not necessarily a diagnosis process. This procedure is to understand the reasons behind the presenting problem, and is the stage of *samudaya* (Cause of Suffering). The interventions and treatment will be devised in accordance with the interferences producing the presenting problems. This is *mārga* (Path of Ceasing of Suffering). The interventions and the assessment always work in pairs. Adjustment of treatment will be calibrated in line with further exploration or continuous assessment. Interventions and assessment therefore create a feedback loop until termination of the counselling case. The purpose of interventions is to cope with the presenting and actual problems. The achievement will be attained through adequate

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87   Corey (2009, 375).

treatment. As a result, it overcomes the problem and responds appropriately to the assessment. The fruit of problem-solving is *nirodha* (Ceasing of Suffering). The achievement is a positive consequence to manage the problem or affliction. It is also a confirmatory response to the assessment. Meanwhile, it recognises the appropriateness of the intervention and treatment.

The inter-relationship among the four elements of this counselling framework is based on the structure of the three-dimensional model of the Four Noble Truths. Assessment diagnosing the presenting problem is the cause while understanding the real reason of the presenting problem is the effect. This is the existing state in which the client asks for counselling service. Proper utilisation of interventions and treatment is the cause through which the achievement is the effect. This phase is the desired state in which solutions are expectedly concluded. In view of the complete counselling process, the existing state with the presenting problems is the cause why counselling is required by a particular client. The desired state is the effect of the counselling provided. However, the achievement will not be generated unless collaboration is in effect through the efforts by both the client and the counsellor, especially for the former. The client needs to be committed to striving for changes. The change process is often not an easy avenue. Whether the effect, *nirodha* (Ceasing of Suffering), obtained will depend on devotion and effectiveness of assessing the cause, *samudaya* (Cause of Suffering). The willingness of the client plays a material role in this collaborative business. A skilful counsellor competently motivates or elevates the voluntary devotion to the counselling participation.

Achievement in counselling may not be a leap-frog change. The change may be too trivial to be observed but prepare for changes later on. From this point, the stage of achievement in counselling noticeably is always not equivalent to *nirodha* (Ceasing of Suffering). The latter is cessation of suffering. However, the logic of the three-dimensional model of the Four Noble Truths may become the foundation to establish the multi-interplay counselling model with reference to the Four Noble Truths.

Features of Multi-Interplay Four-Noble-Truths-Based Counselling Framework

The features of the multi-interplay Four-Noble-Truths-based counselling framework consist of the counselling theory based on the Four Noble Truths and Buddhist teachings, implications, intervention skills and techniques.

Leading Rationales of the Counselling Theory

The Four Noble Truths based counselling theory is structured in a three-dimensional framework composed of existing world, desired world of the client and the causal relationship among presenting problem, assessment, interventions and achievement. The understanding of the reasons behind it comes from Buddhist teachings. The teachings have already been elaborated and can be retrieved from the above-explained sections. The following is the application of the teachings to counselling.

Among the Buddhist teachings, four basic but prominent ones are discussed with counselling relevance.

1. *Pratītya-samutpāda* (Law of Dependent Origination)

The notion of *Pratītya-samutpāda* (Law of Dependent Origination) reminds people that every phenomenon contains a cluster of factors or causes. The presenting problems or real difficulties do have reasons. The apparent presentation displays the major or accidental factors or the compound of the factors. Supported by the Law, the resolution is also a set of factors or causes. On other hand, one single factor will not create the problem; and one single factor will not solve the problem. The counsellor helps the client explore the possible assembly of causes of the problems and methods to overcome them. Assessment or exploration of precipitating, predisposing, contributing, perpetuating and social-cultural factors[88] influencing the presenting problem, whichever approach used, is a necessary practice. Without it, hardly will the presenting problem be accurately understood.

The Law also reminds people of the inter-relationship of the factors, either main or supplementary or both. A small change of any changes of a factor will directly or indirectly affect other factors. The result will completely become another story. Chaos theory is evident to this concept from a scientific stance[89]. More often, the problem is affected with a distant or unknown impact, as a butterfly effect[90], which is difficult to be investigated. That explains why the causality in Buddhism forms a multi-cause-multi-effect system unnecessarily with immediate and instant effects. Hence the counsellor needs to be sensitive to the interaction with and changes of the client during the entire counselling process from exploration, assessment, treatment plan, intervention, termination to follow-up. Changes occur because of *anitya* (Impermanence) and *anātman* (No-Self).

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[88]   Corey (1996, 14-17).
[89]   Smith (2007, 22 and 30).
[90]   Gleick (1987, 21-23).

Because of *pratītya-samutpāda* (Law of Dependent Origination), people have opportunities for creation[91]. They can coin good conditions to attain the expected results. They can prevent disadvantageous conditions from ruining the anticipated outcomes. They have no excuse to await fruits without planting. Without effort, fruits will not come automatically. Without effort, the factors, primary or secondary, will not congregate. Fostering factors and shaping the result will be the intervention goal. On the other hand, effort is not the single factor for achievement. Peripheral conditions will also affect the result. One of the tasks of the counsellor is to lead the client to think positively when encountering failure. Complaints do not help. Thoroughly reviewing the insufficient conditions and making compensation for them will be more constructive.

However, planting does not guarantee to gain a fruit when main and peripheral factors do not come across simultaneously. The stakeholders of the counselling need to be peaceful and see as what it is. When the counselling is successful, the stakeholders accept it. When it fails, the stakeholders accept it as well. Success and failure are also changing. They are not fixed. Because of changing, clients may be motivated with hope.

2. *Anitya* (Impermanence)

The concept of *Anitya* (Impermanence) explains that all beings are changing every *kṣana* (an ancient India measurement of time describing a very tiny span of time, like one of thousands of seconds). Living in the past is loafing. Living in the far future is delusive. Living in here-and-now is real but it goes away promptly if the client does not master every chance. However, during the counselling process, tracing history is necessary if 'looking backward in order to look forward'[92] is the objective. The counsellor will be mining more hidden agenda when keeping an open mind and minimising boundaries.

Change implies uncertainties. Fear of changes seems one of people's major reasons of anxiety. Simultaneously, expecting changes is one of desirables. Taking an example, because of fear of changes, change management has been becoming part of strategic business management[93]. It helps people constructively adapt changes. It is considered one of the determinants for business success. It therefore exhibits how changes threaten people. People want stability most of the time. Stability implies security. However, they expect changes all the time. For instance,

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[91] Lin (1998, 34-35).
[92] Talseth and Gilje (2007, 634).
[93] Walker (1992, 327 and 329).

they expect job promotion. Job promotion is a change. They usually do not refuse this change. Similarly, they want their children to grow up. Growing up is a continuous change. Hence, changing is not a problem. The problem is the 'negative involuntary change'[94] they encounter. Whether the change fits for their needs or desire and how they respond to the negative change if it does not fall in our planning or anticipation are the troubles. The role of the counsellor is to facilitate the client to positively face and utilise the chance of changing. Helping clients to identify the impacts of changes will be a counselling strategy. It will be a technique for them to use in most of their difficulties.

3. *Anātman* (No-Self)

The theory of *anātman* (No-Self) unveils that the decay of the body is uncontrollably occurring. People's mind is also changing. The only difference is that the mind can be transformed rather than changed if one is willingly to do so. Degeneration of physical body is naturally inevitable. Changing of mind is to unbind fetters. People are unconsciously exhausted to fulfil their infinite wishes, desires and expectations. The counsellor guides the client to reflect his or her deepest disturbance. The client, under the principle of self-determination, makes the right choice that best fits for him or her. The counsellor is also a facilitator to transform the mindset, mentality and perception of reality. Changing the mindset will be easier and more effective when there is a change of view[95] or perception. Perception is changing in light of conditions and context. One of the counsellor's tasks is to assist the client in managing perception, that is, managing the mind.

Meanwhile, *anātman* (No-Self) liberates *ātma-grāha* (Self-Attachment). Because of self-centredness, people pay all the attention to the self; and therefore the duality of self and not-self brings up *mama-kāra* (Possession of the Self). People will feel despair when losing our possession. They will be angry when their possession was robbed. The counsellor will assist the client in understanding the relationship between the self and the possession. In Buddhist teachings, the self and the possession are the phenomena of a constellation of factors. Grasping either one or both will make people be distress. However, Buddhism does not ask people who are living in the secular world to give up the self or the possession. Instead, it teaches people how to skilfully make use of the self and the possession for the sake of themselves and other people.

To summarise, understanding of *anātman* (No-Self) is a thorough review of the

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94   Markham (1993, 2).
95   Salzberg (1995, 7).

nature of self—the ever-changing self. Proper understanding of ever-changing self will be helpful for alleviating suffering.

4. Coping with *Moha* (Ignorance)

Moha (Ignorance), in Buddhist thought, is the root of suffering. Because of ignorance, people cannot truly understand *pratītya-samutpāda* (Law of Dependent Origination), *anitya* (Impermanence) and *anātman* (No-Self). The negative effect is that people are controlled by *tri-doṣa* (Three Poisons). Negative emotions then explode. Over-attachment leads to fear and missing of loss, obsession, over-worry of trouble and so forth[96]. Attachment leads to suffering. Reverting to the root, the dissolution of suffering is to know the reality as it is. It is not suppression or repression of suffering. It is dissolution or transcendence of suffering that is the goal of counselling. The counsellor plays a prominent role to personal transformation of the client.

Implications of the Four Noble Truths on Counselling

The theme of the Four Noble Truths is to emphasise the fact of suffering and the plausibility of removing it. Counselling enables the sufferers to rescue themselves. The implications of the Four Noble Truths may inspire the counsellors with several forces.

1. Giving Hope

Hopelessness is the worst scene challenging both the client and the counsellor. Hope is an effective motivator. Instillation of hope is a high rank subject in counselling field. It is also one of the critical components of existential therapy[97]. The Four Noble Truths state the factual plausibility of dissolving the root of suffering[98]. Knowing that the reality is ever-changing and expunging the unfounded perception from clinging and accepting 'non-attachment to pleasure and pains'[99] will be the threshold of suffering-free if decisive actions follow. The narratives of ever-changing break the misunderstanding that Buddhism is determinism. It is because of continuous change that hope can be instilled. Hope is the motivation of accepting and facing tomorrow and the future, even residing in the present miserable moment.

Hope comes also from right perception and life wisdom. It is out of people's control to the external environment. The only control power they attain is to make

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[96] Ng, Chan, Ho, Wong, and Ho (2006, 471).
[97] Yalom (1980, 243).
[98] Groves and Farmer (1994, 191).
[99] Leung and Chan (2010, 163).

choices how they feel and respond to the problems[100]. They may positively challenge the problems. They may negatively escape. The outcomes will then be distinct from the different responses. Hope will always be when they have a chance to face the difficulties.

A counsellor needs to have the belief about the power of giving hope. Giving hope is not only to the clients but also to counsellors themselves. Otherwise, they will easily become burnout.

2. Responsibilities

Even though the concept of *hetu-phala* (Cause-and-Effect) is not only shown in the theory of the Four Noble Truths, the interrelationship among the Truths enumerates the notion from various layers of the network. The concept does not only invite notices on causes and consequences, but more chiefly, it invites attention to the significance of responsibility. Every movement or behaviour will create consequences. People, therefore, shoulder up responsibility for their decisions and behaviour. When an undesirable consequence comes, they have to accept it because it reflects what they did or have done. On the other hand, they also have to accept the unpleasant effect because they might not do what should be done. Excuses for wrongdoings become null and void because 'no one has the right to do wrong, not even if wrong has been done to them'[101]. Understanding *hetu-phala* (Cause-and-Effect) is a pull strategy from which people take responsibilities of what they think, do and behave. It can also be beneficial to dilute feeling of suffering resulted from faults when they honestly take responsibilities. Frankl[102] conceives that a counsellor will be a facilitator reminding clients that life is showing a series of continuous tasks to find out the right ways to tackle the difficulties.

A fact, without compromises, is a fact; and impossibly to return to the original state. The encouraging news is that improvement will hopefully reduce destruction. Commitment and sense of responsibility will lead to adjustment of cognition, behaviour and mindset to a positive direction.

3. Total Resolution

The objective of the theory of the Four Noble Truths is to help sufferers dissolve the root of suffering but not only for one particular issue[103]. This is a total resolution which contains two spheres. The first, it does not escape from the natural world or

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[100] Frankl (2006, xi and 66).
[101] Frankl (2006, 91).
[102] Frankl (2006, 138).
[103] Ng (1994, 32).

the objective world but from the subjective world [104] or the 'disvaluable suffering'[105]. The suffering comes from the subjective world while the subjective world always disvalues suffering. Suffering may be meaningful for personal growth that will be discussed later on. The second, to be authentic to oneself and reality, creation of meaningful suffering will be a suggested dissolution. In this regard, meaningfulness and suffering intertwine. Being suffered may be a path to discover the authentic self.

Dissolution herein is 'a cognitive response to objective circumstances: it is a way of understanding what has happened in one's life, and more broadly, of appreciating the nature of the world in which our lives take place'[106]. The achievements include the change of mindset to know the reality[107], re-prioritisation of life goals and re-arrangement of a new life[108], 'renewed strength'[109], review a deeper meaning[110], re-evaluation of life meaning and re-defining happiness. Frankl[111], being a 'wounded healer'[112], has reaffirmed the meaning of suffering and his re-birth from the meaning of suffering. From suffering, Frankl[113] has found the specific meaning of life including realising existence through taking responsibility. From re-acquiring life meaning, he has alleviated suffering. Suffering is meaningful for him in 'a tragic optimism'[114]. The meaning of suffering leads him to heal suffering. The endurance learned from suffering becomes a process of personal growth, and sharpens the resilience that will lead to life transcendence. Thus, Nietzsche[115] conceives that life is a continual process to transcend and refresh. The possibility of suffering-free instils hope[116]. Hope is a strong motivator for suffering liberation.

4. Rich Variety of Skills and Techniques

The theory of the Four Noble Truths is ancient Indian wisdom with a history more

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[104]　Holder (2007, 123).
[105]　Jollimore (2004, 333).
[106]　Jollimore (2004, 345).
[107]　Ng (1994, 23).
[108]　Arman and Rehnsfeldt (2007, 372); Chan, Ng, Ho, and Chau (2006, 825).
[109]　Marder (2006, 59).
[110]　Leung and Chan (2010, 163).
[111]　Frankl (2006).
[112]　Feltham (1995, 164).
[113]　Frankl (2006, 138-139).
[114]　Frankl (2006, 137).
[115]　Chen (2006, 15).
[116]　Leung and Chan (2010, 163).

than twenty-five centuries. The cluster of skills and techniques is not new. However, wide adoption of the similar techniques is relevant even nowadays. It may give a hint that one particular type of skill and technique may not be decisive for successful treatment; or some researchers put emphasis on other curative components rather than techniques, for example, Lambert and Barley[117]. No matter how, proper and appropriate use of a mixture of skills and techniques may be more effective. There is a Buddhist saying that the 'Eighty-Four Thousand Dharma Doors' open for various kinds of people. It means that different people may benefit from different methods. Referring to counselling practice, the counsellor will be recommended in being well-equipped with a collection of counselling theories, skills, techniques and cross-disciplinary knowledge. An eclectic counselling approach is therefore a growing trend. Interestingly, many of the popular counselling skills and techniques are found in *Āgama*.

Principles of Intervention Skills and Techniques

The practice of *āryāstāvgika-mārga* (Eightfold Path) conventionally plays a vital role to extinguish *duḥkha* (Suffering) as it is the major content of *mārga* (Path of Ceasing of Suffering) taught in *Āgama*[118]. Most of the Buddhist-related counselling theories follow it such as Brazier[119], Jason and Moritsugu[120]. The practice of *āryāstāvgika-mārga* (Eightfold Path) embraces three areas. Firstly, *samyag-dṛṣṭi* (Right Understanding) and *samyak-saṃkalpa* (Right Thought) are at the cognitive level. Secondly, *samyag-vāc* (Right Speech), *samyak-karmānta* (Right Action), *samyag-ājiva* (Right Livelihood) and *samyag-vyāyāma* (Right Effort) are at the behavioural level. Thirdly, *samyak-smṛti* (Right Mindfulness) and *samyak-samādhi* (Right Concentration) are at the spiritual level. The notion of *āryāstāvgika-mārga* (Eightfold Path) interweaves numerous Buddhist teachings while its implementation and effectiveness may not be achieved within a short period of time. The practice of *āryāstāvgika-mārga* (Eightfold Path) used in counselling may be better studied separately in another paper. Instead, this paper will make efforts to discuss the principles of counselling skills and techniques traced in *Āgama*. The discussion may exhibit the practicality of Buddhist teachings from two thousand and five hundred years ago to the contemporary counselling field, especially in cognitive and behavioural approaches.

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117   Lambert and Barley (2001, 359).
118   For example, *Ekottarikāgama*, T 125, 761c03; *Saṃyuktāgama*, T 99, 40a27-30, 126a15.
119   Brazier (2003, 15-16).
120   Jason and Moritsugu (2003, 202).

1. Role Model

The Buddha has demonstrated a vivid role model to all the people across the tide of time. He has verified by himself the fact that people are able to free ourselves from suffering as long as they are willing to be devoted to the ultimate objective. Meanwhile, the Buddha never denies the extreme difficulty of achieving this aim. He, without exception, strived against enormous challenges and hurdles before ceasing suffering.

Role modelling is a common skill in behavioural approaches. The counsellor is always as a role model. The key is to show professionalism and commitment and to work with the client. At the same time, the counsellor may not knowingly cover the difficulties, if any, for the treatment proceedings. Frank and knowledgeable guidance will be more beneficial to build the rapport with the client.

2. Example

There are countless examples in Buddhist canons displaying success in relieving suffering. In Buddhism, successful people who can completely extinguish suffering are called *arhats* in Sanskrit. They are no longer bound by *tri-doṣa* (Three Poisons) but have reached the total elimination of affliction. The examples clearly assert the fact that freedom from suffering is feasible as long as people are committed to moving toward and working on the extinction of suffering.

While behavioural approaches focus on behaviour modification, achieving it is not as easy as saying it. The effectiveness will shift back and forth. Sometimes it will be better. Sometimes, it will fall back. The client will hesitate and lose confidence. It will be helpful if the counsellor can show the real examples or successful stories to re-glue the loosen scatters.

3. Metaphor

Metaphor is common and frequently used in Buddhist scriptures. It makes the teachings expressive and understands easier. An example[121] is talking about kinds of buckets—perfect without defects, with a few flaws and with leaks[122]. The perfect one is good for water storage. The one with a few flaws can be usually accepted. The one full of leaks will always be thrown away. However, the text captures our re-thinking that the leaky bucket should be used to store water temporarily, and be used before water runs out. The leaky bucket is like a body. It implies that people should make their life meaningful before the body decays. They have to enrich their life

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[121]　Wang (2002, 50).
[122]　*Saṃyuktāgama*, T 100, 424a21-25.

before end of the life. At the same time, they need to discreetly take care of their body in order to have a longer meaningful life.

Another illustration is about a spiral shell[123]. Beautiful music from the spiral shell comes from the combined effect of hand movement, lip movement, air movement and so on. The spiral shell staying alone does not create sound by itself. The metaphor emphasizes that existence is an aggregation of many factors working together. Any good single seed will not germinate flowers unless all the adequate factors come together and manufacture the output. This metaphor expounds *pratītya-samutpāda* (Law of Dependent Origination) in a simple expression.

Metaphorical insight is always powerful. Clients may be motivated when they find it difficult to shake off clinging cognitive thoughts. This technique is also commonly adopted by the postmodern therapists like solution-focused therapy.

4. Fable and Parable

Fables, stories and parables are the main instruments to explain Buddhist doctrines. A famous fable is the *Arrow Sutra*[124] talking about a man who was shot by a poisonous arrow. The man was at the borderline of living and dying when the poison was in effect. His friend tried several times to pull the arrow out but was stopped by him asking a lot of impractical questions. He eventually died. This story seems ridiculous but points out that people often waste efforts for a quest of irrelevance to meaningful life. They then lose lives in chasing the irrelevant things. In Buddhism, those are illusory. Stories, indeed, are spread in Buddhist scriptures. The technique of story-telling enables most of people to understand the teachings.

The skill of story-telling will possibly enhance counselling techniques of the practitioners. It is an indirect technique but useful. In addition, it may make the therapeutic rapport easier and stronger. Both the counsellor and the client may then dismantle the interpersonal wall. Breaking the fence is a breakthrough to enter the inner world of the client. The breakthrough may be a determinant of a successful therapy.

5. Directive Guidance

In spite of a variety of indirect techniques involved, direct instruction is abundantly retrieved in Buddhist canons. *Singalovada Sūtra*[125] is one of the well-known scriptures. The text explicitly educates Singalovada, a young noble, in morality and

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[123] *Dīrghāgama*, T 1, 45a16-20.
[124] *Madhyamāgama*, T 26, 804c24-805a19.
[125] *Dīrghāgama*, T 1, 70a20-72c06.

ethics to different levels of relationship such as parents, seniors, youngsters, siblings, subordinates and so on. The practice of *āryāstāvgika-mārga* (Eightfold Path), another example, is direct guidance teaching a concrete journey to extinguish suffering starting from correctly knowing the reality to the mindfulness realising the reality truth.

Although humanistic and postmodern counselling theories advocate self-exploration through therapeutic relationship, it does not imply abandoning directive guidance when it is adequately used. On the contrary, an eclectic approach, in terms of techniques, is prevalent to utilise a combination of skills and techniques, containing appropriate directive guidance, in the current counselling practices.

6. Psychoeducation

From the Buddhist viewpoint, people all suffer from not exactly knowing the reality. People, to some extent, are fooling around with those which are not real or not eternal. The Buddhist scriptures put the theme on psychoeducational literature expatiating repeatedly on what the truth of reality is and the ways to respond to it.

During counselling, psychoeducation is always part of the process, especially important when the client seeks ideas returning to a better scenario. Psychoeducation is often used in cognitive behavioural therapies. It gives relevant information to the client. It is education-driven. However, it normally is supplementary and will be used together with other techniques.

7. Experiential Learning

'Contextual guidance'[126] is usually found in Buddhist canons. The Buddha does not only preach but crucially also asks the followers and laymen to work and experience his teachings. Meditation is one of the central exercises for experiential learning. The teachings and discussion about meditation are numerous throughout *Āgama*[127]. Meditation is a theory, but it needs to be practised regularly. The purpose of meditation is to realise what the Buddha has taught, for instance, *paramārtha* (Absolute Truth), the Four Noble Truths. The practice is experiential learning that will give a chance to have reviews and reflections.

Experiential learning is a stream of counselling. It focuses on the actions and exercises meeting counselling purposes through briefing, debriefing and self-reflection. This measure has actually been used more than two millennia in Buddhist

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[126]　Ng (1994, 26).
[127]　For example, *Dīrghāgama*, T 1, 38c02-05; *Ekottarikāgama*, T 125, 737c07;
　　　Madhyamāgama, T 26, 434a25-26, 560c05-06; *Saṃyuktāgama*, T 99, 187c19, 286a28.

practices.

8. *Upāya* (Expedient Means)

The Buddha's teaching methods are sophisticated and adaptive to particular individuals or group of laymen or followers in line with their education level, intelligence or problems. The rationale behind adaptive teaching recognises and respects individual features. It also believes that everyone is able to learn, and then to change towards goodness. It is a recommended reference for counselling practitioners. Eclectic approach will be good at integrating counselling theories, skills and techniques across counselling schools in order to furnish clients with best benefits.

9. Repeated Explanation

Throughout *Āgama*, the Buddha has been explaining the Four Noble Truths over and over in various contexts. It also happens in other Buddhist scriptures. The goal of the repetition is to teach people and draw their attention to the Truths.

Repeating key points during counselling may be adequate, particularly using it together with directive guidance or psychoeducation. However, overusing it may be annoying.

10. Contrast Explanation

It is common that the Buddha discourses from contrast views. For example, in *Madhyamāgama*[128], the Buddha explains seven dimensions to achieve holy happiness. The Buddha articulates the positive and negative dimensions simultaneously so that the disciples can understand and identify the differences. Applying to counselling, a counsellor may use this technique to ensure proper deliverables to the clients.

The variety of intervention skills and techniques discussed above is shown in Buddhist canons. It is observed that the Buddha used these skills and techniques more than two and half millennia ago; yet, they are not outdated. They are being employed in the current counselling arena.

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[128] *Madhyamāgama*, T 26, 421a13-427a07.

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of the present study attempts to explore practicality and applicability of Buddhism in counselling language and develop a discourse on shaping a counselling framework from the theory of *catvāri-ārya-satyāni* (the Four Noble Truths), one of the central Buddhist teachings. Many academic professionals, for example, Conze[129], Wu[130] concur with the pragmatic functionality of Buddhism. Some perceive that Buddhism is a spiritual therapy[131]. Some focus on self-awareness with the aid of cognitive and behavioural techniques[132]. Some treat it as life education and preventive work[133]. To summarize, it agrees that Buddhist thought is care-centred aiming at liberating from suffering[134]. Suffering-transformation[135] and awakening[136] are the most significant goals of Buddhism. They are also the goals of counselling[137]. Hence, this is the convergence of the two disciplines. The convergence is the base of this research.

Referring to Peacock's[138] understanding of the theory of *catvāri-ārya-satyāni* (the Four Noble Truths), he proposes an argument of the 'Four Ennobling Truths'[139]. He asserts that the Four Noble Truths depicts a process of suffering transcendence; and transcending suffering is an 'ennobling'[140] attainment. Unlike Schopenhauer's pessimistic mentality on suffering[141], he observes that the theory of the Four Noble Truths furnishes people with hope if they are willing to make efforts to help themselves. His observation aligns with Buddhist teachings.

In the meantime, the theory of *catvāri-ārya-satyāni* (the Four Noble Truths) links up important teachings and thought of Buddhism such as *pratītya-samutpāda* (Law of Dependent Origination), *anitya* (Impermanence) and *anātman* (No-Self). It augments the elaboration from meaning of suffering to achievement in meaning of life. *Catvāri--ārya-satyāni* (the Four Noble Truths) can be traditionally viewed from

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129　Conze (1953, 15).
130　Wu (1994, 39).
131　For instance, Holders (2007, 123).
132　de Silva (1993, 34).
133　de Silva (1993, 34).
134　Wu (1994, 38); de Silva (1984, 662).
135　Young-Eisendrath (2008, 541).
136　Leung and Chan (2010, 163).
137　Bien (2006, 143); de Silva (1993, 437).
138　Peacock (2008).
139　Peacock (2008, 212).
140　Peacock (2008, 212).
141　Zhao (2000, 97).

a process model in terms of therapeutic functions. This study tries to examine it from a network of multi-dimensional angle. The network mode does not divorce from the understanding of suffering according to the four basic vignettes of *duḥkha* (Suffering or Nature of Suffering), *samudaya* (Cause of Suffering), *mārga* (Path of Ceasing of Suffering) and *nirodha* (Ceasing of Suffering). Based on this foundation, the concept of *hetu-phala* (Cause-and-Effect) is injected and subsequently collated a multi-interplay Four-Noble-Truths-based model. Although the descriptive relationship of *hetu-phala* (Cause-and-Effect) and *catvāri-ārya-satyāni* (the Four Noble Truths) has been explained by other scholars[142], adopting it in counselling context seems very little discussed. This framework may be an alternative philosophy and repertoire for counselling. More alternatives will help cater for different needs of clients because there is no single approach or technique for each or all clients[143]. Further, this research also discusses counselling skills and techniques discovered and compiled from *Āgama*. It is observed that most of them are being applied to the modern counselling practices. Thus, this discovery supports strong evidence for the healing functions of Buddhist teachings.

This exploratory discourse of the Four Noble Truths is solely based on the source and contents from the Chinese version of *Āgama*, one of the distinguished collections of Buddhist texts. Since there is a vast ocean of Buddhist scriptures, academia who feel interested in this topic have countless opportunities to explore from the treasure of other Buddhist canons, not only *Āgama*, and from various sects or schools of Buddhism.

The application of the Four Noble Truths to counselling theory is insufficiently discussed within an article. This paper serves as a prelude to open up this arable area, and creates a platform for further debates and empirical research. For instance, the fundamental explanation of the Four Noble Truths in Early Buddhism is the basic one. There are other views on it in accordance with different schools or sects of Buddhism. Scholars may build another base to explain the Four Noble Truths and develop their counselling theories. Moreover, other Buddhist teachings or practices may be relevant to explore curative components in Buddhism. Apparently, mindfulness, one of *āryāstāvgika-mārga* (Eightfold Path), is a prevalent technique used in counselling in recent decades. Many scholars[144] have been studying its practices and effectiveness. Despite of the fact that many studies report results of using mindfulness in counselling, attention to study mindfulness in *āryāstāvgika-*

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142   For example, Yin-Shun (1994, 146).
143   Corey (2009, 4); Hansen (2002, 315); McLeod (2003, 140).
144   For example, Kabat-Zinn (1982, 34).

mārga (Eightfold Path) seems not as much as deserved. Studying mindfulness in *āryāstāvgika-mārga* (Eightfold Path) may reach a deeper understanding of mindfulness. This could be a potential scope for further investigation.

Although there are numerous topics about the Four Noble Truths incorporating into counselling theories and practices, the proposal of the multi-interplay Four-Noble-Truths-based counselling framework contributes to micro and macro significances. The traditional process model is one feasible view to the Four Noble Truths. The three-dimensional approach driven by studying inter-relationship is another possibility. Its multi-facet examination displays an interactive operation. The interactive operation leads deeper understanding of the dynamics among the elements of the Four Noble Truths. Their causal relationship will inspire ideas for counselling application. Moreover, the discourse tries to attract more research on the practicability and applicability of Buddhism, serving healing professions not merely for Buddhists. In addition, this paper, in term of research methodology, refers to the first hand or primary source from *Āgama* that will strengthen the credibility of conceptual formulation.

Apart from the micro-view, this cross-disciplinary study amalgamates Buddhist doctrines and counselling in a non-religious fashion. It consequently extends the practicality of Buddhism beyond not only religious studies, in the sense of academic disciplines, but also non-religious stance. It is, in view of time, an integration of ancient wisdom and modern practices. It reflects that true wisdom will last millennia. It also, in cultural perspective, raises a dialogue between oriental thought and western theories. It represents communication of values between the two major cultures. Through the communication, it allows greater compatibility among different cultures.

In conclusion, this research provides counselling practitioners and academia with an alternative counselling framework. The last emphasis on the objective of this research is to rejuvenate the original aspiration of Buddhist teachings in helping people alleviate distress. Buddhist teachings asserts that people are capable of relieving suffering by themselves and creating a meaningful life.

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心理諮詢架構之初探
——四聖諦及其多重因果互動

鄭鳳姬
香港大學社會工作及社會行政學系博士生

摘要

研究主旨：本研究旨在初步的探索，目的是建立一個以四聖諦為基礎的多重因果互動的心理諮詢架構。

論文結構：本文涵蓋兩大主題：第一部分以《阿含經》為藍本，闡釋四聖諦的義理，然後展示以過程為核心和立體的兩種演繹模式；第二部分介紹以四聖諦為中心的多重因果互動的心理諮詢架構，並討論其觀念、特色、啟示和在《阿含經》中發現的輔導方法及技巧。

研究方法：本研究採用阿含經對四聖諦的解說為立論根據；原因是：《阿含經》是原始佛教的重要經典之一，它保持早期佛理的原貌。本文只用漢文版的《阿含經》，目的是要對義理的理解和解讀維持統一性。同時，本文運用第一手資料，並說明原文的出處，但不使用內文引句的寫作方式。

研究結果：四聖諦是佛教的核心思想之一，解釋苦的事實、苦的形成、苦的消滅和滅苦的方法。傳統是以過程模式解說，是程序為本的、直線關係的。本文卻分析四聖諦間的相互關係，即是苦與集、滅與道、世間與出世間的幾項因果關係；這三層相互關係及其立體結構，進一步勾畫以四聖諦為基礎的多重因果互動心理諮詢架構。而且，根據《阿含經》的內容發現：佛陀教化的手段或方法仍然廣泛地應用在現今的心理諮詢技巧中。

研究的意義：本文的重要性包括幾方面：首先，四聖諦的因果階系和四諦間的

相互作用，在心理諮詢界內鮮有關注和討論。本文卻以此理論建構一個多重因果互動的心理諮詢架構，而這架構跨越傳統的過程模式，為心理諮詢界提供另一個選擇。其次，希望透過這論述引起學術界和心理諮詢專業對四聖諦的實用性和應用性，從另一個角度有更多的研究。再其次，本跨學科的研究參考西方心理諮詢的理論，發掘佛法含藏心理輔導的功用，顯示正面的結果。結論是：教化眾生滅苦，正是釋尊的本懷，本研究嘗試在現今的處境中重現佛陀原來的抱負。

關鍵詞：《阿含經》、心理諮詢、四聖諦、苦