

Various. *Buddhist Scriptures. Selected and Translated Edward Conze. London: Penguin Books, 1959.*

Siddhartha Gautama (arguably 5th century B.C.), also called Shakyamuni (the wise man of the people of Shakya) and The Buddha (a person fully enlightened about the nature and meaning of life, but here reserved for Gautama alone), left an aristocratic life for that of peripatetic beggar and teacher of spiritual truth. Gautama reformed the Brahmanism of his native land, intellectualizing that faith. Gautama invited all to recognize their suffering as illusion, and free themselves spiritually in perfect emptiness. Gautama is revered as one of history's great teachers, and founder of one of humanity's great religions.

Edward Conze (1904-1979) chose, interpreted, and translated selections from the Dharmapada, the Buddhacarita, the questions of King Milinda, and the Tibetan Book of the Dead for inclusion in this summary text. Conze conducted a long academic career in Germany, England, and the United States. According to Conze, the words of Siddhartha Gautama himself are overlaid by centuries of commentators in a manner that makes the contributors inextricable. Most of the texts selected for this anthology were written 600-900 years after Gautama's death. Conze claimed to aim at the core traditions of Buddhism in his selections, and asserted that no sect would reject these texts.

PART I: THE TEACHER

Chapter 1. The Buddha's Previous Lives.

1. *Shakyamuni's Meeting with Dipankara.* Megha, a Brahmin student, left the hills. On the way to Dipavati, he encountered a girl with lotuses. He bought five of her seven, and made her his wife. The lotuses Megha used to worship Dipankara, a Buddha. They threw their lotuses at Dipankara, who levitated them as a canopy. Dipankara knew Megha, and told him, after a long while, Megha would become a Buddha.
2. *The Bodhisattva [one who seeks to become a Buddha] and the Hungry Tigress.* Three brothers rest in a bamboo forest. One fears beasts. A second misses loved ones. The third relishes the isolation for its spiritual promise. These three come upon a starving tigress with seven cubs. None wishes to sacrifice himself to feed the tigress, for self-sacrifice is difficult. The spiritual brother chides himself, then sends his brothers away. He kills himself before the tigress, filled with thoughts of his rebirth and propriety of self-sacrifice of earthly bodies and possessions. The tigress consumes him.
3. *The Bodhisattva as the Preacher of Patience.* With patience and correct knowledge, nothing is unbearable. The Bodhisattva recognized that family life distracts one from Dharma [ultimate reality]. He retreated to a blissful forest, where he dwelt. A king brought himself and harem to that forest for swimming. When the king slept, his wives happened upon the Bodhisattva, and he taught them. Waking, the king fell in a rage upon the Teacher of Patience, one due to hatreds spilling from former lives. The king slashed off Bodhisattva's right hand. The seer had compassion and remained silent. The king cut off the other hand, then arms, ears, nose, and feet. The Bodhisattva maintained patience, and entered heaven. The king died of a violent fever.
4. *Outline of Bodhisattva's Progress.* Bodhisattvas become such when their path to enlightenment is certain. All proceed through three incalculable aeons, which cannot be measured. When they become Bodhisattvas, a hundred aeons follow, though Gautama achieved perfection in only ninety-one aeons. He learned six perfections: giving, morality, patience, vigor, meditation, and wisdom. He was then able to perform marvels of self-control.

Chapter 2. The Legend of the Buddha Shakyamuni.

1. *The birth of the Bodhisattva.* King and queen of Shakya bore a son. In dream, a white elephant entered the queen's body. The child issued through her side miraculously, as befits Buddhas. The child was born with an adult mind, since he had been mediating for aeons. His skin glowed and he walked at birth. The child announced that he was born for good, and this was his last birth.

2. *Asita's visit.* A famous seer visits the child who will become Gautama. He prophesies Buddha's greatness, which shall enlighten the world, and grieves that, being old, the seer shall never hear Buddha's teaching.
3. *The Bodhisattva's youth and marriage.* Gautama's mother died, and his aunt cared for him. As a child, he never got sick and learned years worth of material in days. Gautama's father, arranged Gautama's marriage to a beautiful maiden, and set himself to prevent his son from ever seeing the harshness of life. The king arranged that his son should live in the upper floors of the palace, and women attendants should seduce and care for him. Gautama's wife bore him a son. All Bodhisattvas experience pleasures of the senses and birth of a son before retreating to the forest.
4. *The awakening.* Gautama sought to visit a grove outside the palace. The king gently drove away all who suffer from the prince's path, the cripples, crazy, old, sick, and wretched. But gods gave prince Gautama a vision of an old man. The prince's charioteer explained what old age is, and Gautama feared it and returned to the palace. On a second outing, these same gods showed the prince disease. The prince quaked and returned to the palace. On a third outing, the gods showed Gautama a corpse, which disheartened the prince. He returned to the palace, lamenting that one could not endure knowing that such dissolution awaits all.
5. *Withdrawal from the women.* Gautama ceased relating to the palace women. Since all is impermanent, nothing brings pleasure. One must control himself completely to grasp high morality. Sensual pleasures distract.
6. *The flight.* Peace fled Gautama. He rode into the forest on his grand steed. Thousands of insects and worms lay dying in a freshly plowed field, and the oxen pulling the plow waned, and the farmer baked in the sun. Gautama grieved the death and suffering.
7. *The apparition of a mendicant.* Gautama sees a ghost in the form of a pious beggar, who recounts life without a home, seeking a state of mind in which death holds no terror. The vision rose into the sky; he was an adviser to Buddhas. Gautama takes his advice and lays plans to leave the palace and become homeless. Gautama rode out on his horse to discover deathlessness.
8. *The dismissal of Chandaka.* Gautama gives his jewels to his charioteer, and sends that man to speak with Gautama's father, the king. Gautama bids him to tell his father Gautama seeks Dharma, and will remain homeless until old age and death have been banished. Or until he dies. The charioteer debates with Gautama, to no avail.
9. *The practice of austerities.* Gautama undertook harsh discipline to gain his goals. Five mendicants joined and served him. He starved himself for six years, until he saw that the self-torture served no important purpose. Weakness of body prevents inward calm, which is the doorway to Transic concentration, and the trance states that lead to the highest spiritual states.
10. *Nandabala's gift.* So, Gautama nourished himself, beginning with milk rice from a cowherd's daughter. His body rounded out again. Gautama's mendicant companions left him, thinking he had abandoned the path. Gautama sat on grass beneath a great fig tree. A serpent praised him. Gautama crossed his legs, vowing not to move until he gained enlightenment.
11. *The defeat of Mara.* Mara, the enemy of Dharma, and his children, Flurry, Gaiety, Sullen Pride, Discontent, Delight, and Thirst, quaked in fear of Gautama defeating their realm. Mara seeks to distract Gautama, to no avail. Mara is defeated.
12. *The Enlightenment.* Gautama perfects his trances. In the first night watch, Gautama reviewed his previous lives and deaths, and grew convinced that this world of reincarnation is an illusion. In the second watch, Gautama saw that mortal deeds affect one's reincarnations. In the third watch, Gautama understood that acquiring certain knowledge freed one from successive reincarnations. Gautama achieved perfection, and saw that there is no self. He became a Buddha. In the fourth watch, Gautama gained all-knowledge. The world rejoiced and revered him. Gautama's desire to set the world free is confirmed by two gods, Indra and Brahma. Gautama receives a begging bowl, and his first alms. Gautama first takes his message to his five mendicants.

13. *The meeting with the mendicant.* Gautama meets a mendicant, who asks the name of Gautama's teacher. Gautama responds he has no teacher, but has achieved Nirvana and seized the Dharma by himself. He now lives to free others from their suffering.
14. *The meeting with the five mendicants.* In Deer Park, Gautama met the five mendicants. They determined to show him no respect, but relented. Still, they used his family name, which was disrespectful, and chided Gautama for abandoning austerities.
15. *Turning the wheel of Dharma.* Gautama explains the middle way to the five mendicants, the path that lies between sensual indulgence and torturing austerities. Gautama teaches the eightfold path and four holy truths.
16. *The meeting of father and son.* Gautama teaches his father the Dharma. His father the king praises him for choosing a better path than that of earthly kings.
17. *Further conversions.* Gautama ascends to the thirty-third heaven and preaches the Dharma to his deceased mother. Then Gautama traveled, converting those ripe for his message.
18. *Devadatta.* Gautama's cousin is jealous, and sows dissent among Gautama's followers. He tried to kill Gautama by rolling a great rock down upon Gautama, but the rock split before reaching him. The cousin sends a rogue elephant to kill Gautama, who tames it with his compassion. The cousin dies despised.
19. *The desire for death.* Years later, Mara tempts Gautama to enter final Nirvana. Gautama puts the demon off for three months. Gautama relinquishes his bodily life, and lives for three months in a special spiritual state. Portents and omens and earthquakes and lightning rend the earth, for Gautama could have lived to the end of the aeon.
20. *The leave-taking from Vaisali, the final couch, instructions to the Mallas.* Gautama takes his bed between two Sal trees to enter the final Nirvana. The Mallas people grieve, but Gautama rebukes them. He has overcome becoming, and enters final Nirvana. This is no time for tears! Gautama is a man escaping from a burning house. Gautama comforts them. Salvation comes through great effort in Yoga. Salvation does not come from Gautama, but from his teaching. So, find calm, seek high things, control your minds, do good deeds.
21. *Parinirvana.* Gautama addresses his disciples, telling them the time for him to enter Nirvana has arrived. Gautama proceeds through the nine trances, and then back to the first, then up to the fourth, where he finds everlasting peace. The earth shudders, gods and men show reverence. But Mara rejoices.
22. *The Relics.* The Mallas put Gautama's body on a bier and try to cremate him. But the fire will not start. A monk who wants to see Gautama's body prevents it. He arrives, shows honor, and the fire blazes. But Gautama's bones will not burn, so they are placed as relics in the Mallas' city. Seven kings seek a portion of the relics, and, after resisting, the Mallas distribute them.
23. *The Scriptures.* 500 scholars meet to collect Gautama's teachings. They get some sermons from Ananda, Gautama's faithful companion. The scriptures are assembled.

PART II: DOCTRINES

Chapter 1. Morality.

1. *The Five Precepts.* Kill no life, do not steal, avoid sexual indulgence, avoid deceiving others, and eschew intoxicants. Killing ends life force; killing complex or intelligent life exceeds killing simple life. Abstention may be by barely conscious habit, by life vow, or by being so holy that killing never occurs to one.
2. *Rules of Monastic Restraint.* Monks should be expelled from their communities for 1) having sex of any sort, 2) theft, 3) murder, and 4) claiming to possess powers he lacks. Monks should be suspended for a) masturbation, b) touching a woman, c) talking sexually to a girl or having intercourse with a woman, d) using guilt to induce sexual intercourse, e) serving as match-maker, f) building a fancy temporary hut, g) building a fancy permanent house, h) falsely accusing another, i) stretching small matters into large accusations, j) causing divisions in the community, k) to conspire with a monk causing divisions, l) refusing to move elsewhere when the community demands such, and being defensive about the problem, and m) refusing to be disciplined for breaches of the

monastic code. Suspension consists in probation, six days of penance, and a ceremony of reconciliation. Monks cannot wear the Order's garments and will suffer unfavorable rebirth for thirty offenses, mostly involving wealth. Monks will suffer an unfavorable rebirth for ninety offenses, mostly involving belittling monks, conversing with women, pride and boasting, disparaging the monastic community, killing vegetation, eating well when not ill, looking at armies ready for battle, to abandon wandering and begging, digging earth, drinking alcohol, and having a chair or bed standing over eight inches high. There exist also four offenses requiring confession, seven dispute resolution rules, and 113 rules of etiquette.

3. *The Monk's Life. Buddha's Advice to Sariputra:* Fear nothing. Endure hardship. Befriend all men. Avoid disquiet. Avoid anger and arrogance. Find joy in wisdom. Avoid anxiety about food and bed. Be homeless. Avoid harsh talking. Avoid discouragement. Ignore gossip. Avoid sensual stimulations. *The Rhinoceros:* Live alone, as does the rhinoceros. Avoid intimate attachments. Friends distract one from holiness. Family distracts one. Wander and stay free. If one finds a friend who does not distract, that is well. Avoid pleasures; they distract. Welcome obstacles and pains. Crowds dim spirituality. Abandon wanting. Wander, stay reticent, and maintain equanimity. Avoid fine clothing. Be steadfast. Face death calmly. Avoid self-serving men.
4. *Verses from the Sanskrit Dharmapada. The chapter on Karma:* One evil leads to many. Avoid immorality. Avoid evil acts. Ill deeds cause suffering. Karma captures every evil act, and recompenses. Deeds cling to their doers. Do business honestly. Crafty businessmen are undone by other crafty businessmen. Undetected evils catch up with one in future lives. Good acts deliver no suffering. As iron invites rust, so evil does invite calamity upon themselves. *The chapter on morality:* Be moral. Morality bestows peace, relaxation, good sleep, joy, vision, prosperity. No thief can steal one's wisdom. Do good and give gifts. Vigilant temperate monks find Nirvana. Mediate to become a person of thoughtful habits. The odor of good acts blows everywhere. Mara is defeated, and such a monk will not be born again.
5. *Popular Moral Buddhism. Tibetan Dharma of the Birds:* Buddha taught the Dharma in all languages, so none would be ignorant. One lord became a great cuckoo bird to teach the feathered creatures. He spoke to the parrot of Samsara, the impermanence of all of physical existence, all riven by death. The parrot asks the great bird to teach the feathered ones the Dharma. The great bird tells them to meditate upon death and impermanence. The goose notes that ignorance, woe, errors, distractions, poor judgment, niggardliness, frustration, and hoping prolong karmic suffering in the illusory world. The raven notes that happy life among men, wealth, guardian angels, fairies, keepers of the Dharma, and meditation all help. The cock notes that life in this samsaric world, endless toil, impermanence, Mara, isolation, death, powerlessness, passing of loved ones, and karmic punishment all create misconceptions. The parrot notes that our unhappiness derives from karmic evil deeds we commit; our minds cloud. He again asks to be taught the Dharma. The great cuckoo said the samsaric world is illusory. Cling to nothing, not even family and friends. All are passing phantoms. The birds celebrated together, and the cuckoo returned to India.
6. *Laymen and Monks. Their respective attainments.* King Milinda asks Nagasena why one should be ascetic when a husband and householder can win Nirvana without privations? Nagasena replies that the homeless wandering monk lacks impediments; his progress is rapid and efficient. Householders who find Nirvana reap the benefits of monkish austerities in former lives. A hell of fire and disease waits the monk who enters an Order from bad motives. For the monk with right motives, mindfulness, psychic power, virtue, enlightenment, the eight-fold path, insight, fruits, and all manner of knowledge become his. *Their respective tasks, and the question of the adoration of relics.* Milinda asks whether or not to worship the remains of dead Buddhas, for the authorities conflict. Nagasena replies that monks are not to worship relics, for their task is to seize the essence of reality, to shackle their passions, and seek goodness. Princes and other gods should worship the relics of Buddhas.

Chapter 2. Meditation.

1. *The Advantages of Meditation.* Twenty-eight advantages benefit one who practices secluded meditation. These are: long life, strength, preclusion of error, avoidance of bad reputation, contentedness, confidence, vigor, avoidance of greed, hate, pride, distractions, and other delusions. Meditation makes the mind supple, glad, worthy, joyous, able to grasp the true nature of things, avoid rebirth, and supports asceticism. All Buddhas recommend meditation as the path to holy states.
2. *The Practice of Introversion.* Find perfect concentration. Avoid deliberation. Stillness with insight annihilates passions. Friends are not worth losing one's stillness. They die. They change. Friends leave. They make one lose focus. Friends anger when corrected; they offer useless advice. When fools meet, evils follow: envy, narcissism, disparagement of others, and praise for sin. Live alone; keep you mind pure. Flee fools. When you must speak to them, do so kindly. Keep life tremendously simple. Each life is just a stop on the train of samsara. Delight in solitude.
3. *The Progressive Steps of Meditation.* *Senses.* Avoid sense experience. It is unreliable, and voracious, ever seeking more objects to experience. The five senses are poison-tipped arrows seeking your heart. Deflect them with mindfulness. When sense experience creeps in, see it for what it is. Add or subtract nothing from it. Avoid coveting, which derives from thinking one knows what one sees or hears. Sense experience is not itself sufficient to cause you harm. It must be conjoined with imaginations about the sense-object. Then the injury begins; one gets attached to objects, which perish, causing suffering and ultimately reincarnation. *Eating.* Eat moderately. Too much makes one sleepy. Too little makes one unfit for demanding trances. Eat as much as your own body requires. Avoid pride in starving yourself. Maintain your body; it is your carriage through life's deluge of suffering. *Sleep.* Avoid sleep as much as possible. Use terror, enthusiasm, and sadness to control sleep. Your house is ablaze. Who can sleep? Sleep only during three hours of the night; rest for six. *Postures.* Remain mindful of all your postures and activities. One who is mindful has the holy method on the true path that leads to Deathlessness, and so frees one from suffering and rebirth. *Seclusion.* Live in a quiet place alone. Shun social familiarity. *Concentration.* Sit cross-legged alone, erect, and focus on your nose or forehead. Be occupied only with that object. Shake off other thoughts. Possessions bring striving, not contentment. Hatred must be countered by friendliness and compassion. A holy person treats others tenderly, knowing how they suffer. Focus on the good; your mind becomes habituated to its thoughts. So abandon whatever is unwholesome. *Family and homeland.* Friendship and family ties delude one. These ties are impermanent. You and your loved ones are just staying overnight at the same inn; tomorrow, all depart. See the world as karma towing people through samsara. Family and friends disappear. All bonds soon dissolve. Strangers are as close to you as spouses, in samsara. No refuges exist. All suffer in some way. *Death.* You will die. From birth, death stalks you. It will one day take you, young or old. Make no plans that presume your continued living. The world is a water bubble, ever ready to pop. *Four Holy Truths.* All suffer, samsaric rebirth causes suffering, one can extinguish suffering, and one can be saved by following the path. Ignoring these four truths causes samsaric becoming, the wheel of perpetual rebirth. Penetrate the truths. Grow no roots in this world of cyclical becoming; avoid worldly activity. Following the path extinguishes cravings. Death comes, but takes the holy person nowhere—not to rebirth, not to heaven, not to hell. The Dharma leads one to the Eightfold Path: as to morality, a) right speech, b) right bodily action, and right livelihood; as to wisdom, d) right views, e) right intentions, and f) right effort; as to meditation, g) right mindfulness, and h) right concentration. The person on the Eightfold Path inculcates ten qualities in himself: 1) steadfastness, 2) sincerity, 3) self-respect, 4) vigilance, 5) seclusion, 6) simplicity, 7) simple tastes, 8) non-attachment, 9) avoidance of humdrum activity, and 10) patience. One sees correctly when one knows his bodily existence should be terminated.

4. *The Six Types of Persons.* Meditation must match persons. People are of types, dominated by greed, hate, delusion, faith, intelligence, or discursiveness. Faith and greed are similar. Hate and intelligence are similar. Discursiveness and delusion are similar. One's character is known by posture, approach to tasks, attitudes about food, his perspective, and mental states. In postures, gait and standing and sitting and sleeping are described for each character type. In approach to tasks, sweeping is described for each. In attitude toward food, fatty and sweet, rough and sour, and lack of preferences are described for each. In perspectives, looking at attractive things is described for each character type. In mental states, the greed character hides, lies, and likes praise. The hate character angers, lacks charity, bullies, and envies. The delusion character is lazy, excitable, anxious, and confused. The faith type is generous, spiritually-oriented, cheerful, truthful, and confident. The intelligent type is gentle, friendly, mindful, appropriately bothered, acts wisely, and moderate in eating. The discursive type talks too much, loves company, gets bothered, worries, is aimless, and has bad habits. Meditations are prescribed for each character type, though any meditation is likely to help every character type in some way. Seek the intention that lies behind, and is sometimes obscured by, words.
5. *The Five Miraculous Powers.* For those with advanced meditation skills, five Mundane Superknowledges emerge: magic, the heavenly ear, mind reading, recall of prior lives, and knowledge of the death and rebirth of others. *In magic*, one may multiply oneself, becoming many, becoming one, as illustrated by the story of Panthaka and his unskilled brother. One can make things visible or invisible, as Dhammadinna made hell and Brahma-world visible to normal people. One can move through solid objects, transmute ground into water and dive into it. One can walk on water. One can transform air into earth so that one flies through the air. One can touch sun or moon, or shrink them and hold them in one's hand. One can make distant things near or near distant, and can travel to Brahma-world physically. Kakavaliya received a single blow of gruel with which he fed a large number of monks, making little into much. One can turn things into other things at will. One can take the form of others or chimeras or animals or rocks. One can make a mind-body mirroring his own physical body. *With the heavenly ear*, one can hear sounds, earthly and heavenly, near and far. *Of mind-reading*, one may see another's heart blood, and judge character from that sight. Later, one just reads the mind. *In recalling former lives*, one can recall, if a Buddhist, up to 100,000. Even non-Buddhists can recall forty, if trained. *Of knowledge of the death and rebirth of others*, one sees with the heavenly eye the fate of others, their deeds, their outcomes.
6. *Zen. Zen Meditation.* Meditation destroys weights of past misdeeds. To sit in meditation is to quietly see one's inwardness and not flee. (*Za-sit*, *Zen*-meditation). Continuity of meditation matters more than raw time. Sit for a session; watch one incense stick burn.

Sit in a quiet place, erect, on a thick cushion. Protrude the abdomen, breathe gently, and enter a concentrated trance. To improve one's meditation, read a classic on the subject. An hour of meditation is an hour of being Buddha. Meditate to save yourself. Do not merely dabble. Part of going anywhere is stopping and getting one's bearings. Life can become a constant going without stopping. As one progresses in meditation, one can learn to meditate while acting. Meditation brings meaning to life, which comes from the inward, not the outward, vision. The writer recounts the dragon painting at Myoshin Temple. Having never seen a dragon, the artist found the model for the creature in a meditation.

Buddha showed people how to arrange body and mind. The Zen teachers say one should think of thinking of nothing. Be thought-less. Being a Buddha means to be perfectly vacant of thoughts. One grasps this truth not by analysis, but by launching oneself into death, by giving up on life. Karma treats existence as an effect, the cause of which is previous acts of now-reincarnated persons. The human heart is neither good nor bad, but free to do either. Thinking expresses the ego. The Buddha heart is absent thought. This is our natural state. Thinking is a corruption. Sense experience invites impurity, and gives power to the impure heart. Cutting off thought renders sense

experience impotent to corrupt. One ends thought by meditating. Koans help.¹ They crowd out analysis. Each moment of enlightenment is unique; never attempt to repeat one. All who, with his entire heart, devotes himself to meditation reaches enlightenment.

Chapter 3. Wisdom. *The Chariot.* Milinda, king of Bactrian Greece, pestered monks with questions. The monks, bothered, implored Nagasena to answer Milinda. Nagasena invited Milinda to his hermitage. Milinda asks Nagasena's name, who responds that no real person is present with the group today. Milinda objects that all evidence is to the contrary. Is Nagasena his parts, or combinations thereof? Nagasena replies he is none of these. Nagasena asks if the king's chariot is its parts. Nagasena asserts that he, and the chariot, are what they are in dependence upon their parts, but not summed by their parts. Ultimately, one cannot find a Nagasena anywhere. *Rebirth.* King Milinda asks Nagasena about rebirth, whether the person reborn is the same as he who just died. Nagasena says he is not. No person is the same from moment to moment, but rather a series of successive dharmas. One changes from baby, to child, to adolescent, to man, to elder, to dead, to reborn. Each differs, just as a flame burning all night is not the same flame at dawn as it had been at dusk, or as milk is not the same when curds, then butter, then ghee. *Karma.* One's deeds follow one from life to life. Is it theft to steal fruit, though the fruit planted by a farmer is not the fruit stolen? The fruit of deeds of former lives travels with the reborn one. *The Five Cardinal Virtues.* Wise attention and other wholesome dharmas free one from the karmic cycle. Wisdom and attention differ. Attention seizes things; wisdom knows what to do with that seized. The five virtues are morality, faith, vigor, mindfulness, and concentration. Morality is the foundation upon which other virtues are built. Faith subdues hindrances and leaps forward; it makes one clear-headed, and anxious to explore the unknown and dare feats which outcome is uncertain. Vigor makes dharmas endure. Mindfulness brings some dharma to mind, the good and the ill; one tends the wholesome dharmas and eschews the unwholesome. Concentration is a goal of virtue. Wholesome mental states all lead one to growing states of concentration. Wisdom cuts off the superfluous or unhelpful, and illuminates what remains. *Nirvana.* Finding nirvana, one ceases rebirth by evading the confusions of sense experience and ensuing cravings, finding cessation from karmic cycle of rebirth, suffering, and death. All do not attain nirvana, but all know it is a happy state. Nirvana is not difficult, but remains hard to describe. Nirvana is pure, cools passions, extinguishes cravings, removes karmic torment, provides security, is without beginning or end, is a spiritual path for those seeking the infinite, brings joy and illumination, and never erodes. Only space and nirvana are not illusions of the karmic cycle of passions and suffering. Both have no beginning or end. This is a great mystery. Entering nirvana, one travels to that place. He does not import into this place. Only the mind can perceive nirvana, and then only under precise circumstances. *Arhats.* Fully enlightened persons (arhats) still feel some unpleasantness. Physical pain, but not mental, touches him. He transcends pain, waiting patiently for release. Arhats view their bodies as does a soldier his battle wounds. He dresses them, does not wish to keep them. *Greed.* A greedy person lusts for more of his object. *Suffering.* One suffers because his thought is undeveloped. The tamed thought of arhats relies on contemplation to thwart the impermanence of sense experiences. The arhat is a tree trunk. Though his branches whip in gusty storms, the trunk remains unmoved. After these conversations, King Milinda became a lay follower of Nagasena.

The Heart Sutra. We worship perfect wisdom. 1) Form is empty; even emptiness itself is an empty form. 2) All dharmas are perfectly empty. 3) Emptiness contains no feeling, perceptions, or impulses; it contains no consciousness or senses, knowledge or ignorance, no death, no suffering, no achieving. 4) Seeing emptiness, the Bodhisattva steps past what perturbs, entering nirvana. 5) Buddhas rely on perfect wisdom. 6) One awakens when one goes beyond, utterly beyond.

The Diamond Sutra. No dharma makes a seeker (Bodhisattva) into a Buddha. Though every seeker tries to bring all living things to nirvana, he in fact never does so. Among the enlightened, all know there are no individuals. The seeker who gives gifts should

¹ 1,700 anecdotes, moral or mysterious, intended as objects of meditation.

give perfectly, without connection to external supports of any sort. His merit is limitless. A Buddha has no ideas, neither of self or being or non-being; he even has no notion of notions. The thoughts of a Buddha require no support from ideas; they are unsupported thoughts. His ideas are non-ideas, his truths also non-truths. No one can detect a Buddha by outward appearances. Buddhas come from nowhere and are going nowhere. Deep truths cannot be demonstrated. Buddhas offer no proofs. Buddhas set no one free. They do not see the world in these terms. Buddhas merely are. Common people think themselves set free. At the end of time, seekers will honor the hundreds of thousands of Buddhas and rely on all. Buddhas have no sense of self or other, being or non-being, dharma or non-dharma. They perceive nothing. They live above all such distracting distinctions.

Rahulabhadra, Hymn to Perfect Wisdom. Perfect wisdom transcends thought. It is like celestial space itself, extended and empty. Buddhas see perfect wisdom. Virtues flow from perfect wisdom. The teaching of Buddhas leads to majesty. The pure in heart see perfect wisdom. Perfect wisdom leads to caring for others. Buddhas are the sons of perfect wisdom, and she bears all beings of every sort. Buddhas extol things, but in the end all virtues derive from perfect wisdom. Perfect wisdom banishes theorizing. She inspires fear in fools and confidence in the wise. Those who eschew perfect wisdom exude greed and hatred. Wisdom has no physical location. She binds all things, everywhere but unseen, always the lone path to salvation. No language describes perfect wisdom. May the world, hearing our deficient words, learn devotion to perfect wisdom.

Seng-ts'an, On Believing in Mind. Persons in the Way lack prejudices about the world, fixed thoughts of any sort. To want or reject diseases the mind; peace flees. All things are one; what seems outside you and what seems inside are not excepted. Amateurs extol emptiness or deny phenomenal experience; they miss their underlying unity. Avoid thinking and talking; they lead one astray. Enlightenment transcends perceptions. Do not pursue truth; just abandon opinions. Right and wrong confuse. Mind slips away. Let things flow over you; you will stay in the Way, calm and easy. Do not despise sense experience, but stay inactive. Like nothing; hate nothing. Universal unity is a deep mystery; it is the origin from which we wrongly imagine ourselves alienated. Even oneness itself vanishes when one rests. In the Way, striving subsides. Perfect emptiness self-illuminates. It is timeless, boundless. One is All. Mind and minds are one. Words fail.

Saraha, Treasury of Songs. Avoid attachment to sense experiences, but do not just sit around concentrating on emptiness either. What you think spills out of you. One finds bliss in knowing oneself. In self-knowledge, mind ceases and the innate depths shine. Bliss flees thinkers. Non-thought is the path. All scriptures reveal one god. The Lord is actionless, unknown. The body, mind, and speech are one thing. Living this reveals the innate depths. Women monks abandon mind and dwell in the innate. Words torment mankind, yet one understands words only after abandoning them. In the innate, one knows only one word and forgets even it. Seeking bliss in sex is like a thirsty deer chasing a mirage of water. He dies. Seek innate depths. Bliss purifies. Bliss leads to perfection. Abandon the elephant of the senses. Just slip away unnoticed. Nirvana and samsara are the same. Enlightenment transcends both. There is no you, no others. Everything that exists is Buddha. The enlightened person serves others with acts of compassion, but also avoids doing so. The two acts are one. In the illusion world of samsara, people are stingy. They should abandon their notions of self. One does compassion, and avoids it too. Such a person reaches the highest echelons, and sees that nirvana and samsara are superseded.

Chapter 4. Doctrinal Formulas.

1. *Faith. The triple refuge.* Repeatedly, one seeks refuge in the Buddha, the dharma, and the samgha (monastic community). *The Buddha.* Buddha is enlightened, perfect in knowledge and conduct, universal, first among many, leader of men and teacher of gods. *The Dharma.* The dharma surpasses time, welcomes people, and leads to nirvana. Dharma is Buddha, Buddha is dharma. *The Samgha.* The life of a Buddhist monk is well-ordered and moral. All should support them. The monk in community is unshakeable.

2. *Vigor. Four right efforts.* A disciple prevents potential evils, forsakes actual evils, creates potential goods, and supports and encourages existing good. *Bodhisattva's Vow.*

To preserve sentient beings. To combat what hinders enlightenment. To master dharmas. To attain enlightenment.

3. *Mindfulness. On guarding the senses.* One restrains the eye so that unwholesome dharmas do not flood him; so too, with sounds, smells, tastes, touch, and mind-objects. Guard against evils; restrain the senses.

4. *Concentration. Four trances.* In transic concentration, one progresses through four stages: joyful thought, serene exaltation without thought, evenminded mindfulness, and purity of evenminded mindfulness. *Four formless trances.* The focus of formless trances ascends from form and complexity, to a) endless space, b) unlimited consciousness, c) nothing whatever, and finally to d) a state of non-perception of any sort. *Four unlimited.* The disciple, in his meditation, projects himself into the entire world in friendliness, then compassion, then shared joy, then evenmindedness. *Unlimited Friendliness.* The good, peaceful man works hard at virtue, without conceit, joyfully. He avoids the trap of possessions, and controls his sense experiences. He wishes all life well-being, and avoids anger. Cherishing all life, he projects friendliness over the planet with boundless good will. In this way, he avoids rebirth.

5. *Wisdom. Four holy truths.* Life is ill, when one grasps after bodily things. Ill derives from rebirth due to craving. Ill dies when one stops craving. One stops craving by the eightfold path: right views, right intentions, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. *Conditioned co-production.* Karma grows from ignorance, sense experience, feelings, contact, craving, grasping, becoming, birth, decay and death and grief. One stops ill by stopping all these things. *View of self.* Misinformed people think they are form. *Absence of self in everything.* Men are not form. All form is impermanent. When one perceives something, he can say with assurance, "That is not me." Dispassion sets one free from rebirth. *Illusory nature of the world.* The world deceives; it is changing, passing. View it as ephemeral.

Chapter 5. Doctrinal Disputes.

Personalist Controversy. None who believes self exists can depart the karmic wheel of samsara. Personalists object that the person exists as more than its appearances. Vasubandhu counters that personal facts change, and if one speaks of a person that does not change, then one has adopted a purposeless hypothesis. The personalist rejoins that the person is not an independent entity, but the juxtaposition of personal appearances united. The person is neither consumed nor defined by his elements, but is rather ineffable. Vasubandhu notes that of ineffable objects, one can say nothing. Can one be certain that of which nothing can be said exists? The authorities agree; there is no self. Personalists counter that these authorities are not theirs. Buddha believed in the person, as the Burden Sutra demonstrates. Vasubandhu claims that these references were mere accommodations for commoners. The personalist explains that a person arises when at a given time he acquires given characteristics. Vasubandhu cites a contrary quote of Buddha's. The two exchange conflicting citations. The personalist objects that there must be someone who is wandering in samsara, aggregating karmic loads. Vasubandhu rejoins that what appears continuous is in fact a series of connected instants, as many fire moments burn through a log, appearing as one fire. The personalist notes that Buddha claimed to have been a former Buddha. His person must have persevered, though all physical elements differed. Vasubandhu asserts that Buddha meant only to say that his series of dharmas is contiguous with those of former buddhas. The personalist says that those who believe in persons do not crave experience because they see the true self, not a distorted one.

Mahayana versus Hinayana. There have been many more Buddhas than the Hinayana acknowledge. The deep truths to which the Buddhas have awoken are marvelous. Sariputra asks why the Buddha so teaches, since all acknowledge these facts. Offended, many conceited monks, believing they had nothing to learn, departed. Then the Buddha explained. He has taught in part many ignorant people, but today the moment has arrived to teach more advanced sutras. All in his hearing will become Buddhas. Buddhas exist to reveal the mind of Buddhas in its perfection. No lesser task suffices. Buddhas, however, cannot do this straightforwardly. People's ignorance and bad habits are too excessive. They live to grace

cemeteries. Their misconceptions are a bramble. Despite its apparent multiplicity, there is only one truth in all reality. Buddha tells of different vehicles to truth, but in fact there is only one vehicle. Buddha tells a parable: A man lives in a great, decrepit house with a single small door, along with his many sons. That house catches on fire, and the man flees. But his young sons, too ignorant to recognize the danger, flit about in the burning structure. The man would grab the boys and save them, but the door is too small for him and the boys at the same time. So, the father calls to his sons, "Come out. I have many marvelous toys and carts for you to play upon." The children rush outside. When the fire burns down, all ask for their toys and vehicles. The man contemplates, then provides for each identical extravagant carts. It is not what he promised, but better than promised. Sariputra, to whom Buddha speaks, finds no ethical fault in lying to the sons under these circumstances. Buddha notes the men in this world are like those sons, in mortal peril, but heedless. Like the father, the Buddha induces men to flee the burning house of the world by various means, though the actual reward vastly exceeds the promises made. The final reward is to find nirvana by the sole great vehicle, the one nirvana that embraces all.

Can There Be More Than One Buddha At A Time? Hinayana: Two Buddhas cannot exist at the same time. The presence of the second would un hinge the world, destroying it. The followers of two might dispute with one another. The supremacy of either Buddha would contradict the scripture that portrays Buddha as the most excellent. It is natural for only one Buddha to exist at a time. *Mahayana:* There is only one Buddha per galaxy, but many in the universe. How else might all beings be saved? An objector notes that Buddhas appear only after great intervals. The Mahayana agree, but note that this pertains only to each galaxy. Universally, many Buddhas co-exist. An objector says, if there are many Buddhas, why can we not see them? The Mahayana rejoins that tremendous karmic guilt clouds vision of the Buddha.

Quietist Controversy. Indian Buddhist monks claim the Chinese Buddhist teaching of sudden enlightenment is not a doctrine of Buddha. The Indian monks lost that debate, and resorted to political intrigues. Tibetan monks committed suicide, and others threatened to hide in the wilderness. Great perfection over thousands of lifetimes is necessary to become a Buddha. Sudden enlightenment teaches that mere suppression of false views suffices. The Zen monk responds that false ideas tie one to the samsaric world. Rid yourself of them and you are free. Working hard at virtue and being lazy about it are both false ideas. When false ideas fall, vast understanding blooms automatically. One must stop thinking. This may be hard for normal people; all the meditation practices of Buddhist monks are useful expedients only. Normal truth and ultimate truth are the same, once one abandons false ideas. One sits quietly with perfect emptiness. The objector argues that such an approach makes one useless to others. The Zen monk counters that Buddhas are like the sun, illuminating all. The objector asks how the innate Buddha-nature in all is not like the self, which does not exist. The Zen monk answers that the Buddhist knows that the world is unreal; all is mind. Non-thought and non-reflection heals all spiritual diseases. When one grasps Suchness without thinking, he gains all spiritual virtues in the bargain.

PART III: OTHER WORLDS AND FUTURE TIMES

Chapter 1. Other Worlds. *The Bliss of the Heavens.* Buddha takes Nanda, a monk sexually tempted by his wife, to the paradise of king Indra, where Buddha shows Nanda the great beauty of the place. Celestial nymphs are available for sex with monks who endured austerities in their lifetimes. These, all of whom exceed the beauty of any woman, surrounded Nanda. But all, even the gods of this paradise, die into rebirth. One best seek permanent release from the karmic cycle. *Torments of Hell.* Wardens drive stakes through sinners' bodies, harness them to a chariot which he pulls across fire, force them to climb hills of embers, and boil them in molten copper. From there, sinner enter the great hell, a gigantic steel building with a molten floor, where sinners burn. The sinner runs toward a door, aflame. As he arrives, the door closes and another opens. From there, sinners enter the hell of filth where animals tear their flesh, and sinners are forced to climb sword trees, severing hands and feet. Sinners swim the Caustic River, pulled out by fishhooks of the wardens. Sinners are

given molten copper to eat and molten lead to drink. Then all go back to the great hell. Buddha himself has seen these things. *Life After Death, and "The Book of the Dead."* A monk reads to dying people. The text instructs about what one needs to know in dying and rebirth. These teachings come from gurus. Stay watchful; ignore pain. Your mind will separate from your body, entering an intermediate existence. You will see the colorless light of perfect emptiness. Recognize yourself in that light, and dive into it. The light is the true you. If one recognizes oneself in this death moment, he receives salvation. Few, however, do. After a time, a dream-body emerges, pregnant with past desires and able to walk though matter and travel vast distances. The dream-body is not real, but an illusion. Persevere evenmindedly. Three and one-half days after death, buddhas appear for seven days to the decedent. Do not fear. Pray to them, and you may be saved. If you miss this chance, seven days of angry deities follow. These, like all else, are not real. All is a projection from your own mental conflicts upon the mirror of the eternal void. If you recognize this, your dream-body will evaporate, and you will be in paradise. Failing that, still desiring to be an individual, you will enter the wheel of becoming. Yama, king of the dead shows you the mirror of karma. You judge yourself, and choose rebirth. In truth, there are no judging gods or demons. Just karma. Being insubstantial, you desire rebirth. Good karma leads one to life among gods for a time. Bad karma leads to lesser existences: warring peoples, humans, animals, ghosts, hells. Ultimately, you seek the refuge of rebirth. Visions of copulation swarm. You find yourself conceived. *Celestial Paradises: The Pure Land of Amitabha.* The heaven of bliss is final, bedecked with mile-spanning lotuses from which sprout the millions of buddhas. No hills poke through the Buddha-field. The ground is jewels; the rivers flow with perfume. The river sounds are pleasant and pervasive. There are no punishments or suffering. All who enter the heaven of bliss do so by seeking nirvana.

Chapter 2. Maitreya, the future Buddha. One longs for life in the presence of the future Buddha, Maitreya, the perpetual friend. In the time of Maitreya, the oceans are less full, and a world ruler can cross easily. All please themselves by doing good, and ill-deeds are absent. People grow old, but are otherwise unafflicted. Shanka will rule the world from Ketumati. Dharma will be law. Maitreya will be born to the beautiful wife of Shanka, called Brahmavati. Maitreya will be delivered from Brahmavati's right side, and will walk upon birth and have the marks of a superman. He will learn that all life suffers. Maitreya will mature into a gigantic body, and leave for homeless life and find perfect enlightenment. All who hear him will seek refuge in the Buddha, the dharma, and the samgha. Maitreya will preach for 60,000 years, disciplining hundreds of millions. After entering nirvana, his dharma will prevail another 10,000 years.