CHAPTER 2

Buddhism

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What Is Buddhism?

In the American presidential election held in November 1988, the Republican candidate, George Bush, defeated the Democratic candidate, Michael Dukakis. Although it was Michael Dukakis who was ultimately nominated as the Democratic candidate, at one stage in the nomination process the governor of New York, Mario Cuomo, was deemed a serious contender. Throughout this phase of the nomination campaign, however, Mario Cuomo kept denying that he would run. Yet the more strenuously he denied his intention, the more of an issue his likely candidacy became, leading a political analyst to comment: "*Cuomo is very Zen. He runs by not running!*" Who would have thought half a century ago that a Buddhist term from Japan would enter the political discourse of the United States of America?

The Diversity of Buddhism[1]

And yet, if one examines the word *Zen* itself closely, one should not be surprised. The English language adopted the word, of course, from Japanese. The Japanese form itself, however, is an adaptation from the Chinese (*ch'an*). The Chinese form, in turn, is an adaptation of the Sanskrit (*dhyāna*). And the Sanskrit is a reappropriation from the Pali form (*jhāna*), which goes back to the Vedic Sanskrit form (dhyāna) again, the same as in classical Sanskrit. The word means meditation or meditative trance.

What is in a name? There is quite a lot in this one. In its journey through time this word, *Zen*, has spanned more than three thousand years; in its journey through space it has traveled from the foothills of the Himalayas to the highrises of Manhattan after passing through the deserts of central Asia, the ricefields of China, and the monasteries of Japan. The net of Buddhism has been flung far and wide in time and space—like the net of Indra (the king of the gods), to use one of its famous metaphors—with a shining gem studded at each point of the intersection of its lines. Each intersection represents a facet of the teaching in a different part of the world. Let us now, for a moment, turn our gaze from the net to the network of which Buddhism consists. A net *is* a network: Each part of the net is related to all and all to each. Each gem of the net is reflected in every other gem and these gems in turn are again reflected in one another ad infinitum. This illustrates a crucial Buddhist doctrine: the interpenetration of a concatenation of causes and conditions apart from which there is nothing (read *no-thing*).

Now let us turn our gaze from the network to the ocean over which a net is typically cast. This vast body of water which the ocean represents washes many shores and contains numerous currents within it, but every bit

of it, every sip of it, contains the same saline flavor. The Buddha, the historical founder of Buddhism as we know it, declared: "As the great ocean has but one flavor, the taste of salt, so does the Doctrine and the Discipline of the Buddha have but one flavor—the flavor of emancipation" (*Aṅguttara-Nikāya*, VIII.II.ix). Although an ocean may have one flavor, it touches many diverse land masses. Or to use a more modern example, Coca-Cola may have one flavor, but it comes in many bottles with labels in different languages.

What impresses the Buddhist no less than the non-Buddhist is the striking diversity represented by Buddhism in comparison to the other major missionary religions of the world such as Christianity and Islam. At the heart of Christianity is a person—Jesus Christ. At the heart of Islam is a text—the Qur'ān; at the heart of Buddhism is a story—that of Buddha's realization. The Christians carried the figure of Jesus Christ to the far corners of the globe and the Muslims did the same with the message of God as delivered to the prophet Muḥammad. But for almost five hundred years before the Christians got into the act and two thousand years before the Muslims followed suit, the Buddhists were already out there offering the gift of *dharma*—the teachings of Buddhism—to whoever was willing to accept it, in their own language, and in their own culture. Unlike the Christians, the Buddhists did not have a definitive physical event such as the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ to talk about. Rather, they talked of an elusive if enchanting experience called *Nirvāṇa*. Unlike the Muslims, the Buddhists did not have a fixed canon in one language. The Buddha, right from the beginning, allowed his followers to record his teachings in their own languages. Thus Buddhism, in comparison with Christianity and Islam, allowed much greater scope for expansion and even proliferation in the realm of both doctrine and scripture from its very inception. This greater latitude, combined with a longer historical record in relation to Christianity and Islam, naturally enabled Buddhism to assume forms more diverse than those assumed by these two religions.

Skillful Means

The diversity displayed by Buddhism is not an accident. It represents the operation of a conscious factor in the history of Buddhism. This factor is represented by the Buddhist doctrine of *upāya-kauśalya*, often translated as "skill in means" or "skillful means" and sometimes referred to only as *upāya*. According to this doctrine, the teachings of Buddhism should be preached in consonance with the spiritual, moral, and intellectual level of the audience; Buddhism must speak to its condition. In the beginning, this doctrine was primarily applied to individuals, as in the moving story about

a young girl named Kisā Gotamī. ("Kisā," which means "the lean one," may even have been a nickname suggested by her thinness.) Kisā got married and in due course had a son; in the patriarchal but matrifocal society of the times her status within the family immediately rose. Unfortunately, her son died when he was just old enough to run about, leaving her distraught with grief. Kisā Gotamī placed the dead child on her shoulder and went from house to house asking for a medicine to revive him. "And people said, 'she has gone mad.'" One sympathetic person sent her to the Buddha as the only person who might be able to help her. Buddha promised to revive her son through a ritual, the performance of which required a handful of mustard seeds—but the seeds had to come from a house where no one had ever died. Kisā Gotamī ran to the village but soon discovered that there was no house to be found in which no one had ever died. In this way the Buddha made her realize that mortality was an inevitable feature of the human condition, that even a Lazarus, once raised from the dead, had to die again. She cremated the dead child, came back to the Buddha, and asked to be ordained. The verses she uttered upon attaining enlightenment are part of the Buddhist canon.

Buddhism applied this principle of skillful means not just to individuals but to whole cultures. To the Hindu elite it presented its teaching in Sanskrit, to the Chinese in Chinese. In Tibet, where the pre-Buddhist religion of Bön contained magical features, it presented itself in a magical guise. In South Asia it accommodated itself to the popular worship of spirits. One is therefore entitled to ask, How does one draw the line between adaptability and opportunism? Because one's actions are to be judged by one's intentions, one doesn't; for underlying all these bewildering adaptations to local conditions was a single aspiration: to share with everyone the gift of dharma, the teachings of the Buddha—a gift not to be excelled.

Defining Buddhism

Given the diversity of Buddhism, which is consciously espoused, one is naturally led to ask, What holds this vast system of diverse beliefs and practices together? Let us stretch-test some of the threads that are said to hold the fabric of Buddhism together.

THE TRIPLE REFUGE

The Buddhist profession of faith is known as the Triple Refuge (*triśaraṇa*), which came later to be known as the Three Jewels (*triratna*) and even as the "Three Treasures." It constitutes the basic profession of faith in Buddhism, and every Buddhist, monastic and lay, man and woman,

repeats it to this day. It runs as follows: "I go for refuge to the Buddha; I go for refuge to the Doctrine [*Dharma*]; I go for refuge to the Community [*Saṅgha*]." One formally becomes a Buddhist by reciting the Triple Refuge three times.

It would be tempting to regard this as the unifying core of Buddhism and to define Buddhism as the religion of the followers of the Buddha. In Tibet, however, a fourth profession—going for refuge to the Lama (teacher)—was added. Even the first profession remains somewhat ambiguous in view of the ineffability of the postmortem state of the Buddha. In later Buddhism, which allowed for a plurality of Buddhas, the profession seems to lose the pristine clarity of seeking refuge in the one historical Gautama Buddha. However, strictly speaking, Buddhism is older than the triple profession, just as Islam is older than the *shahādah* (which is really a composite of two halves that occur separately in the Qur'ān and proclaim: "There is no god but God and Muḥammad is His messenger") and Christianity is older than the Apostles' Creed ("I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord:..."). Originally a monk was admitted to the Buddhist Community simply by being addressed by the Buddha thus: "Come, O Monk!..."

THE FIGURE OF THE BUDDHA

It would be equally tempting to argue that as there was no Buddhism before the Buddha, and as all Buddhism ultimately appeals to the authority of the Buddha, here we have the thread that is spun into the warp and woof of Buddhism. Strictly speaking, though, Buddha is one in a series, as much a type as a person. There have been Buddhas before him and there will be Buddhas after him. In fact we already know the personal name of the next Buddha: Maitreya. Even if this is disregarded as a later development in imitation of Central Asian messianism or perhaps as an influence of Jainism (a rival religion that allowed for a series of twenty-four holy figures called *tīrthaṅkaras* comparable to the Buddha), we have to contend with the fact that the word Buddha is not a name but a title, and that the title means "the enlightened one." In other words, when we speak of Gautama Buddha we must realize that the Buddha minus enlightenment is just an ordinary person, who could not have founded Buddhism; the appeal to the authority of the Buddha is an appeal to the enlightenment of the Buddha. Even the insights of Buddhism in its earliest forms were considered to exist independently of the Buddha. The texts proclaim this boldly, even proudly, as when it is declared in the part of the canon of early Buddhism known as *Aṅguttara-Nikāya*, a text from which was also cited earlier: "whether there be the appearance or non-appearance of a Buddha, this causal law of nature, this orderly fixing of things prevails, namely that all phenomena are devoid of self (or substantiality)" (III.14.134).

THE FOUR GREAT TRUTHS

Is there some other unifying strand within Buddhism? It could be maintained that it is provided by the Four Great Truths of Buddhism enunciated by the Buddha in the very first sermon delivered at Sārnāth near Banaras. The tradition itself recognizes that something sensational happened then; it celebrates the momentousness of the event by referring to the sermon as the Turning of the Wheel of Law, as if something mighty had now been set in motion. After his enlightenment, the Buddha could have decided not to preach. In the nomenclature of Buddhism he could have decided to remain a private Buddha (*Pratyeka-Buddha*), and the world would have been deprived of the religious tradition now called Buddhism. Hence the significance of his decision to preach, and hence too the significance of the first sermon. The first sermon is so quintessentially Buddhist that it must be summarized here: It enunciates the Four Noble Truths that are accepted by all Buddhists.

The first noble truth preached by the Buddha is that of the existence of suffering, a fact that becomes painfully obvious at the time of birth and death, in sickness and old age, through association with the unpleasant and dissociation from the pleasant, that is, when we feel frustrated and attacked. The second noble truth identifies the cause of suffering as desire, whether for pleasures, for life, or even for death. The third noble truth directs attention to the fact that if suffering has a cause then it can be removed by removing the cause; the fourth great truth supplies a detailed blueprint of the life-style to follow to remove the cause. This eight-point program is technically known as the Eightfold Path consisting of: right view; right aspiration; right speech; right action; right livelihood; right effort; right mindfulness; and right meditation. The tradition explains what is meant by *right* in each case. For instance, right speech means avoiding harsh, mendacious, frivolous, or malicious talk. The Eightfold Path leads to Nirvāṇa, the summum bonum of Buddhism, which involves the cessation of all suffering.

And yet to identify the Four Noble Truths with Buddhism would amount to destroying Buddhism in the name of Buddhism, for even these Truths were merely meant to serve as *provisional* teaching, to be regarded as a raft that is discarded once one has reached the shore.

DHARMA AND DHARMAS

We are again, in typically Buddhist fashion, brought back to experience. To the extent that we can identify this experience, we can pinpoint Buddhism; we can indicate the primal point out of which the ever-expanding universe of Buddhism has emerged. It seems to us that this core, as is already implied in the first sermon, lies in the doctrine of *Anattā* or *Śūnyatā* or *Anātmavāda*, or in the doctrine of the absence of Self. It is the realization

of "No-Self" that constitutes enlightenment or realization. Walpola Sri Rahula, a well-known exponent and an adherent of the Theravāda tradition, remarks: "Buddhism stands unique in the history of human thought in denying the existence of such a Soul, Self, or *Ātman*. According to the teaching of the Buddha, the idea of self is an imaginary, false belief which has no corresponding reality, and it produces harmful thoughts of 'me' and 'mine,' selfish desire, craving, attachment, hatred, ill-will, conceit, pride, egoism, and other defilements, impurities and problems."[2] Edward Conze elaborates: "The specific contribution of Buddhism to religious thought lies in its insistence on the doctrine of *'not-self' (an-attā in Pali, an-ātman in Sanskrit)*. The belief in a 'self' is considered by all Buddhists as an indispensable condition to the emergence of suffering. We conjure up such ideas as 'I' and 'mine,' and many most undesirable states result."[3]

Conze illustrates his point with the help of a very common experience—that of a toothache. "If there is a tooth, and there is decay in that tooth, this is a process in the tooth, and in the nerve attached to it. If now my 'I' reaches out to the tooth, convinces itself that this is 'my' tooth—and it sometimes does not seem to need very much convincing—and believes that what happens to the tooth is bound to affect *me*, a certain disturbance of thought is likely to result. The Buddhist sees it like this: Here is the idea of 'I,' a mere figment of the imagination, with nothing real to correspond to it."[4]

This becomes clear when one examines the words Buddhists use to describe what we in English have taken to calling Buddhism. The Buddhists, from right after Buddha's death, grouped his teaching under the headings of *Vinaya* (Discipline) and Dharma (Doctrine). Hence they were alternatively called the *Buddha-Śāsana* or the Instructions of the Buddha and the *Buddha-Vacana* or the Words of the Buddha. But if asked to refer to this totality, the Buddhists simply use the word dharma (Pali: *dhamma*), which has at least four different connotations. We must clearly distinguish among these if we are to define Buddhism properly, if briefly and somewhat cryptically, as dharma. Dharma can mean, among other things, the Absolute truth; right conduct; and doctrine. These three senses of the word Buddhism more or less shares with other religions of Indian origin. Yet a wholly unique fourth sense is imparted when Buddhism uses the word to refer to the ultimate constituents of experience, the way atomic and subatomic particles have come to be regarded as the ultimate constituents of matter in modern physics. "A *'dharma'* is an impersonal event, which belongs to no person or individual, but just goes along on its own objective way, and it was regarded as a most praiseworthy achievement on the part of a Buddhist monk if he succeeded in accounting to himself for the contents of mind with the help of these impersonal dharmas, of which tradition provided him with definite lists, without ever bringing in the nebulous and pernicious

word 'I.' No other religion has included anything like this in the mental training of its adherents, and the originality of Buddhism is to be found largely in what it has to say about these elusive dharmas."[5] Dharmas may be elusive, but they are ultimate, even if ultimately elusive. "There is no term in Buddhist terminology wider than *dhamma*. It includes not only the conditioned things and states, but also the non-conditioned, the Absolute, Nirvāṇa. There is nothing in the universe or outside, good or bad, conditioned or non-conditioned, relative or absolute, which is not included in this term."[6] By combining the first and the fourth senses of the word dharma, we may describe Buddhism as a religious system that defines dharma in terms of dharmas.

What Do We Learn about Religion from the Study of Buddhism?

Buddhism as Orthodoxy

Buddhism stands in such stark contrast to the concepts associated with the word *religion* in the West that what we *un*learn about religion in the study of Buddhism becomes far more significant than what we learn about it in the study of religion. One brought up in the West, for example, takes it for granted that religion involves the concepts of God, prophets, and revelation. The great religions of the West—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—all believe in one God even though they may have different views regarding this "one God"; in prophets, even if they debate who may and may not be accepted as one; and in revelation, even though they may not agree which is the "true" one. Though they might differ as to the contents of these concepts, they do not differ as to what the structure of religion is supposed to be in terms of these concepts. If we use the word *orthodoxy* to signify belief in such a construct on the part of the religions of the West, then, in a word, Buddhism "deconstructs." Buddhism does not believe in God, but it does believe in gods. These gods, however, are beings who have achieved a special status in the cosmic bureaucracy and there is nothing special about them, except that they performed exceptionally virtuous acts in their past lives, thereby accumulating exceptionally good karma.

With God out of the picture, ideas of prophecy and revelation also have to be abandoned, or at least radically altered, if they are to be applied to

Buddhism. Buddha is a teacher rather than a prophet, and what he says constitutes teaching rather than revelation. Thus the words of the Buddha may be compared to the Torah, since the word denotes "Teaching," but the parallel must cease here as these teachings in Buddhism are those of a human being who speaks not for God but of his own experience. Curiously enough, Buddhism, though philosophically opposed to *mono*theism, is not practically opposed to theism, inasmuch as theistic beliefs may be conducive to leading a good moral life. Buddhism even concedes that some teachers may indeed speak of gods (and even of revelation) so long as only moral excellence is claimed for them, and not the attributes of creatorship, omniscience, and omnipotence. In other words, Buddhism rejects the metaphysical attributes of God while accepting the moral attributes. As for revelation, statements thus made may be considered worthwhile unless dogmatically asserted to be immune from critical examination.

Buddhism thus connects the idea of "right belief" or orthodoxy not merely with its truth but also with its usefulness or value. It might be insisted that it has its own form of "right belief," which constitutes the first step of the noble Eightfold Path. But such belief is only provisional, as we saw earlier, to be subsequently abandoned like a raft once the river has been crossed, thereby celebrating its own dispensability. Buddhism offers teachings (or instruction); it does not proclaim dogmas.

Buddhism as Orthopraxy

It could be claimed that though Buddhism dispenses with orthodoxy in the acknowledged sense of the word, it replaces orthodoxy with orthopraxy. It replaces the right word with the right deed, so that in the beginning was the deed, not the word.

There is an element of truth in this assessment, since conduct counts for more than belief in Buddhism, which is in contrast to both Western religion and philosophy. Typically, adherence to a religion like Judaism or Christianity takes the form, primarily, of acceptance of its dogma; this is less true of Judaism where religious identity takes a more communal rather than dogmatic form. But compared to Judaism, conduct in Buddhism possesses a more individualistic dimension, even within the context of the Buddhist community. In Western religions, this gap between doctrine and practice is at least deplored; in the case of Western philosophy it is simply ignored. Such an attitude just wouldn't do in Buddhism.

It is true, then, that the scales are tipped in favor of orthopraxy as compared to orthodoxy in Buddhism. But this becomes increasingly less true in a formal sense as the history of Buddhism unfolds. For instance, the

monastic ideal dominated the Theravāda form of Buddhism to the point that, around the beginning of the Common Era, the belief that being a monk was a sine qua non for realization gained widespread acceptance; if perchance a householder attained Nirvāṇa, he or she was to immediately enter the monastic order or else would die. In the Mahāyāna form of Buddhism, however, the monk, as representing orthopraxy, ceased to possess any inherent advantage over the householder, a position illustrated by the text called *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*. In this text, the householder Vimalakīrti humbles well-known monks in philosophical encounters to such a degree that they were reluctant to go to his bedside to inquire about his well-being when he was ill, lest they be humiliated again. Now available only in Chinese and Tibetan, the text was extremely popular in China, and scenes from it are often depicted in Buddhist art and architecture. With the development of antinomian Buddhism in some forms of Tantra, the earlier concept of orthopraxy itself, in the sense of adherence to the Eightfold Path, came to be questioned. Finally, in the form of Buddhism known as Zen one encounters cases of scandalous rather than pious behavior!

Defining Religion as a Soteriological System: Two Types of Religions

What we learn about religion from the study of Buddhism boils down to this: A religion that is essentially a system of salvation from individuated existence can wreak havoc with the more usual categories in the study of religion. It is, of course, true that all religious systems possess a soteriological component, along with dimensions of myth, ritual, and so on. But in most of these systems salvation is regarded as a postmortem state, so that all the other dimensions of the religion serve as pillars that uphold the system as a whole. Buddhism, however, emphasizes salvation here and now; it calls itself a "Come and See for Yourself" religion, so that all its other dimensions are bent toward this overarching purpose. It is in the light of this unique aspect of Buddhism that much of what has been said in this and the previous section must be understood.

Once the primacy of premortem salvation in Buddhism as a soteriological system (rather than as a religious system of which soteriology is a part) is recognized, elements that originally seemed glib or bizarre appear in a new perspective. For instance, the famous Buddhist emperor of India, Aśoka (273–236 B.C.E.), declared in one of his edicts: "Whatever is Buddha-said is well-said." When Buddhism reached China this saying had been dialectically metamorphosed into: "Whatever is well-said is Buddha-said." In a word, Buddhism is a living repudiation of the genetic fallacy that the

(soteriological) value of a statement derives from its source. Rather, the statement derives its value irrespective of source, from the help it renders in attaining enlightenment. Similarly, the various transformations of Buddhism can be seen in the same light. It will be recalled that in Buddhism desire is identified as the cause of suffering. For desire to exist, the following must exist: someone who desires; something that is desired; and a relationship between the two—that of attachment. Buddhism, by denying the reality of a permanent substratum anywhere, tries to undermine this framework by emphasizing that: *Really* there is no one who desires. Then it presses the point further by pointing out that: *Really* nothing exists on its own *to* be worthy of being an object of desire. Tantra focuses on the magical or illusory nature of the relationship between the subject and the object so that the relationship dissolves in mist, whereas Zen refuses to fall into the trap of making any formulation whatsoever and nips the whole illusionary process in the bud.

Once Buddhism is viewed as a soteriological system, other elements associated with it as a religion become clear. "A soteriological doctrine like Buddhism becomes a 'philosophy' when its intellectual content is explained to outsiders," and it becomes a "religion" if it is adopted by a state or a society, where it must play other roles, even though these must ultimately subserve the soteriological system.

A residual sense of puzzlement might still persist. How can a system that ultimately denies the existence of either a person or a thing continue to exist? Is the formulation of such a system itself not a recipe for self-destruction? It is, but as an end, not as a means.

A simple example may clarify the matter. Suppose that the teacher of an evening class at a university enters the classroom and finds a note addressed to her marked "confidential," which informs her that "No class should be held today." Let us now first examine the form and then the content of this message. The teacher receives this message on a slip of paper. Is the message identical with the slip of paper? It is not, as the message could have been conveyed orally. However, let us ask again: Is there any other way in which the teacher can, in *her* situation at that moment, have access to the message, other than through a piece of paper? The answer is no, because the office is closed and the building is empty. The slip of paper is not identical with the message and yet is necessary—in fact the only available means for its delivery. In this sense Buddhism as a religious system constitutes the form; it may not be the only form, but it is the indispensable form to be dispensed with ultimately.

Now we turn to the content of the message. Because of the message, the teacher dismisses the class. Now was the content of the message consistent with this development? Yes. The class is dismissed. We noted earlier, however, that the form was not identical with the content but, rather,

conveyed it. The slip of paper that bore the inscription "No class should be held today" is still lying on the desk, where the teacher left it after leaving the room with her students, for the sake of the teacher who is going to take the class in the next hour and must dismiss his class too by reading the same note.

Buddhism is that religious system which keeps relaying its self-eliminating soteriology. Alternatively, it is that soteriological system which keeps echoing its message, with each echo giving rise to a new one as it goes out of existence itself through the corridors of time in the resonating chambers of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha.

To describe Buddhism as a soteriological system is not to deny it as a historical system but to recognize the fact that both these statements are really alternative statements of the same fact. A Buddhist accepts the fact of the absence of the Self and aims at the extinction of the Self *while* functioning as a dynamic organism. What is true of the Buddhist is also true of Buddhism. It will become apparent from the subsequent sections that:

> Throughout its history, Buddhism has the unity of an *organism*, in that each new development takes place in continuity from the previous one. Nothing could look more different from a tadpole than a frog, and yet they are stages of the same animal, and evolve continuously from each other. The Buddhist capacity for metamorphosis must astound those who only see the end-products separated by long intervals of time, as different as chrysalis and butterfly. In fact they are connected by many gradations, which lead from one to the other, and which only close study can detect. There is in Buddhism really no innovation, but what seems so is in fact a subtle adaptation of pre-existing ideas. Great attention has always been paid to continuous doctrinal development, and to the proper transmission of the teachings.[7]

But this unity is the unity not of a rock but of a river. In other words, it is a continuity rather than a unity. It is not Buddhism that evolves; the evolution is Buddhism. It is not the river that flows, the flow is the river; and there is no riverbed—the flow is therefore "empty." This is how the continuity of Buddhism as a system is coterminous with its teleology as a system—that of Emptiness—for "all Buddhists have had one and the same *aim*, which is the 'extinction of self,' the dying out of separate individuality, and their teachings and practices have generally tended to foster such easily recognisable spiritual *virtues* as serenity, detachment, consideration and tenderness for others. In the scriptures, the dharma has been compared to a *taste*. The word of the Buddha is there defined as that which has the taste of peace, the taste of emancipation, the taste of Nirvāṇa. It is, of course, a peculiarity of tastes that they are not easily described and must elude those who refuse actually to taste them for themselves."[8]

Buddhism in the World Today

The Geography and Demography of Buddhism

Buddhists constitute approximately 6 percent of the population of the globe according to the data available for 1988. South Asia and East Asia represent areas of maximum concentration, although Buddhists are also represented in Latin America, Europe, North America, and the former USSR in smaller numbers. They are minimally represented in Africa and Oceania.

The situation was quite different at the beginning of this century. In 1900, forms of Mahāyāna Buddhism could credibly be asserted as major religions of China, Tibet, Korea, Mongolia, and to some extent Japan, and most of Southeast Asia could be said to follow some form of Theravāda Buddhism, as it does to this day. Thus virtually the whole of Asia, with the major exception of India and Indonesia, could have been characterized as Buddhist, and Buddhists would well have accounted for more than 30 percent of the world's population.

The political upheavals of this century have not been favorable for Buddhism. The loss of China and Tibet to communism on the one hand and of Mongolia on the other reduced the number of its adherents sharply. In Japan it continues to be a vital force, notwithstanding the revival of Shinto, but in South Korea it has lost ground to Christianity, which is now the major religion in terms of adherents; in North Korea it has yielded to communism.

On the other hand, Buddhism has made a much more powerful impact on the West through Zen and Tibetan Buddhism than might have been expected. Some see in the movement of Tibetan Buddhism to the West the fulfillment of a prophecy made by Padmasambhava (eighth century), who is credited with having first introduced it into Tibet on a firm basis.

Buddhism and Communism

The relative ease with which communism replaced Buddhism in China has induced considerable introspection among students of Buddhism and comparative religion. As the interaction between the two continues, somewhat violently in Tibet, more unobtrusively in Mongolia, and intermittently in Śrī Laṅkā, two questions arise: How is Buddhism as a whole to be related to communism? and How are the two distinct forms of Buddhism—Theravāda and Mahāyāna—to be related to communism?

Buddhism and communism offer points of both convergence and contrast, though in general the contrastive elements would probably appear more significant. The convergence occurs because both Buddhism and communism are atheistic and seem to have a similar, though not identical, view of the nature of the relationship between matter and mind. Communism is alternatively known as scientific materialism because it regards mental consciousness as an epiphenomenon of matter. Buddhism, especially early Buddhism, emphasizes the mutual dependence of mind and matter. In fact, the Buddha is believed to have said that if one had to choose between identifying human personality with mind or matter, then matter might be a better choice. The material body is a relatively stable entity while mental consciousness changes from moment to moment.

The Buddhist view on property, especially as owned by the Saṅgha, is also communitarian and potentially communistic. The difference is one of attitude and scale. Mao's commune and a Zen monastery were not as apart as might appear at first sight. Moreover, communism tries to apply the concept of public ownership on a national scale. The recent collapse of communism in the former USSR raises the question of whether such change in scale invariably involves shifts in values as well, which carry it beyond the Buddhist system of values.

Despite such metaphysical and organizational similarities, however, and a recognition of economic factors as forces in themselves, the two systems diverge in their view about the nature and destiny of human beings. The Communist doctrine of blanket egalitarianism, denial of postmortem existence, and primacy of materialism comes in conflict with the Buddhist recognition of temperamental differences among individuals, the doctrine of karma and rebirth, and the goal of doing away with desires. The Marxist idea of confrontation between the classes does not sit well with the general Buddhist preference for concord and harmony.

The success of communism in China in the face of Mahāyāna Buddhism has aroused the suspicion that Mahāyāna Buddhism for some reason may be particularly vulnerable to communism. R. C. Zaehner suggests that the identification of Nirvāṇa and *saṁsāra* in Mahāyāna Buddhism, an identity that is explained in detail later in this chapter under the heading "Identity of Saṁsāra and Nirvāṇa," in the "Emptiness" section, paved the way for the triumph of saṁsāra over Nirvāṇa in China; that is to say, the triumph of communism over Buddhism.[9]

Buddhism and Science

The discovery of a nontheistic religion like Buddhism by the scientific and secular West, which was in the process of freeing itself from the

trammels of theism, led to its projection as a rational and scientific religion consistent with modern science. Even when allowance is made for a certain measure of overenthusiasm displayed by both the Buddhists and their modern scientific admirers in the matter, it still seems possible to maintain that the worldview of Buddhism, among all the major religions of the world, may be more in harmony with science than that of any other religion. The reasons for holding such a view are the following:

1. The Buddhist attitude toward reality is open-minded rather than dogmatic;
2. Buddhism tends to favor a naturalistic rather than a supernaturalistic view of the universe;
3. The Buddha arrived at Nirvāṇa through a process of experimentation analogous to that of modern science; and
4. Certain specifically Buddhist views such as those of time, space, and matter have been confirmed by, or are at least consistent with, those of modern science.

It is further argued that even if such were not the case, the Buddhist doctrine of skillful means combined with the undogmatic nature of Buddhism provides enough room for accommodation with the scientific culture of the West, of the kind achieved, for example, with the cultures of China or Japan in the past.

Yet our identification of Buddhism as a soteriological system raises some interesting points in this context. Let us consider only two here, one historical and the other philosophical. Let us assume that modern atomic physics has disclosed a world as much characterized by "emptiness" as the Buddhist worldview. Despite more than two centuries of scientific progress, however, this has not, with the possible exception of Hume, led to the analogous development in psychology that the human personality is also "empty," as the Buddhists claim. Moreover, in the Buddhist case the doctrine of the emptiness of the person achieved philosophical maturity first and was *succeeded* by the doctrine of the emptiness of the universe with which science *begins*. The search for an explanation as to why the process of discovering the emptiness of the universe did not lead to postulating the emptiness of the person in modern science—that is, in reverse in comparison to Buddhism—provides an interesting clue. In Buddhism it is consistently maintained that the whole is not greater than the sum of the parts: That is why there is no soul *over and above* the sum of the various elements constitutive of the human personality. It is, however, the consistent experience of modern science that the whole *can* be greater than the sum of the parts, as when two gases—hydrogen and oxygen—come together and produce water. Water possesses the quality of liquidity, which does not belong to either of the gases.

The Buddhist point of view differs from that of modern science in that it aims at exposing the tendency of language to talk of dynamic "processes" as if they are static "things." For instance, we say: "The water of the river is flowing." But in reality there is no "river" that flows; the flow is the river. By saying that the "river flows," we first convert the flowing body of water into a fixed "entity" called river, which does not exist as a fixed entity, and then proceed to compound the error by making the act of flowing an attribute of this really nonexistent entity.

The Many Forms of Buddhism

The Doctrinal Forms of Buddhism: Theravāda, Mahāyāna, Tantra, and Zen

THERAVĀDA

To begin with, Buddhism was one of the many "new religious movements" that arose in the wake of the breakdown of the Vedic sacrificial religion around the sixth century B.C.E. It is because it was adopted by Aśoka as virtually the state religion in the third century B.C.E. that you are reading this chapter today. Numerous other movements of the same period became obsolete rejects in due course through the benign neglect of history, but its espousal by Aśoka placed Buddhism in the forefront of Indian religious history. Scholars are not quite certain as to exactly what doctrinal forms Buddhism possessed prior to this period. Aśoka's son Mahinda, however, became a monk and carried one brand of Buddhism to Śrī Laṅkā. According to tradition, he was accompanied by his sister, who carried with her a sapling of the tree under which the Buddha had attained enlightenment. Of the many formulations of early Buddhism, the one that survived is the one that was transplanted in Śrī Laṅkā. Thus the earliest doctrinal form of Buddhism with which we are now most familiar owes its survival to an accident of history: It is the sole surviving formulation out of many, which numbered eighteen according to tradition and close to thirty according to modern historians.

The Buddha preached in all probability in a language called Ardhamāgadhī, the language of the region he was born in, which was then known as Magadha and is now known as Bihar. However, right from the beginning his followers began to record his teachings in their own language, and so the

various sects alluded to above came to possess their canon in a different language. The Dharmaguptakas, a relatively obscure sect, kept it in Gāndhārī (the language then spoken in the region around modern Kandahar), the more popular Sarvāstivādins kept it in Sanskrit, and the best known, the Theravādins, whose views we shall be discussing, kept it in Pali—the language in all probability of the region around Ujjain in western India.

The teachings of the Buddha, however preserved, are associated with the word Nirvāṇa. Thus the Buddha claimed that the holy life was lived "for the plunge into Nirvāṇa, for going beyond to Nirvāṇa, and for culminating in Nirvāṇa." Thus if the doctrine of early Buddhism were to be summarized in one word, it would be Nirvāṇa.

When asked to describe the nirvāṇic state, however, the Buddha answered with silence, for it was beyond verbal description. But although beyond the range of words, it was not beyond the range of experience. Although the experience could not be described, the consequence of having undergone it was quite manifest: freedom from suffering (*duḥkha*; Pali: *dukkha*). Indeed, we could alternatively condense what the Buddha taught into two clauses: of suffering, and the cessation of suffering. These two clauses, when elaborated into four, constitute the basic formulation of Buddhism, the Four Noble Truths—already described—which may briefly be referred to as the truth of:

1. the existence of suffering (*dukkha*);
2. the arising of suffering (*samudaya*);
3. the cessation of suffering (*nirodha*); and
4. the way leading to that cessation (*mārga*; Pali: *magga*).

In a famous dialogue with a disciple, Māluṅkyaputta, Buddha was plied with metaphysical questions regarding the size and origin of the universe, and so on. The Buddha refused to answer them on the ground that they did not lead to Nirvāṇa. Once he grabbed a fistful of leaves from a tree and compared what he had told the monks to the sheaf of leaves in his hand and what he had not told them to the foliage on the tree. And then he explained that "of what I have known I have told only a little because what I have not told you... is not useful... does not lead to Nirvāṇa."

One is thus thrown back onto the Four Noble Truths. The doctrinal form that Theravāda Buddhism finally assumed took the following shape. One could be a lay disciple of the Buddha, which involved accepting the Three Refuges and the five *śīlas* or rules of moral conduct; namely, abstention from killing, lying, stealing, sexual misconduct, and intoxicants. As a lay follower, one earned religious merit by observing these and catering to the needs of the Community. This resulted in propitious rebirths. If, however, one wished to break the chain of rebirths forever and break out into the freedom of Nirvāṇa, this was best attempted by becoming a monk, for a monk's

life is untrammeled by the obstructions that professional and domestic life present to a single-minded quest for salvation. In modern parlance it amounts to the difference between being a part-time student and a full-time student. As a novitiate one took five additional vows to the ones mentioned above, which involved abstention from eating after midday, partaking in secular amusements, using perfumes, and so on, sleeping on luxurious beds, and accepting money. On the more formal side, the monk accepted the 227 rules of the Monastic Order known as the *pātimokkha* (Sanskrit: *prātimokṣa*), which were recited fortnightly in order for the monks to confess any breach thereof. As a monk, one's possessions were minimal (three robes, one girdle, one alms bowl, one razor, one needle, one water strainer), and the property of the Order was held communally.

On the spiritual side, with more time and energy at his or her disposal, the monk or nun could quickly progress right through the steps of the Eightfold Path to the last two—those of right-mindfulness and right meditation. These are discussed in detail in the texts. Right meditation consisted of several stages of which three schemes are encountered—a fourfold one, an eightfold one, and a ninefold one. In terms of the last scheme, the unique contribution of the Buddha lay in reaching the ninth, as the other eight had been experienced by his contemporaries. It was in this last—called *saññā-vedayita-nirodha*—that consciousness becomes "completely void." These states of absorption could be quite profound. Once Buddha walked through a thunderstorm oblivious of it, though it caused considerable damage all around him.

The approach to Nirvāṇa progressively involved four stages of sanctification, known as the *sotāpanna* (stream-entrant); the *sakadāgāmī* (once-returner); the *anāgāmī* (never-returner); and the *arahant*, who had achieved Nirvāṇa. The "stream-entrant" had entered the stream that was ultimately to carry him or her to Nirvāṇa in the course of not more than seven lives. The "once-returner" was destined to one more human birth prior to attaining Nirvāṇa. The "never-returner" would no more have to be reborn in the human condition but would achieve Nirvāṇa after being reborn in a celestial realm. The Arahant or *Arhat* has made it—as an Arhat "one had accomplished whatever was to be accomplished." An Arhat would never be reborn and nothing could be predicated of what became of him or her after death, for one was now "immeasurable, unfathomable like the ocean."

This form of doctrinal Buddhism, however, came to be questioned as the normative formulation of Buddhism at the Second Council held at Vaisālī a hundred years after the death of the Buddha. The First Council is widely believed to have been held, after Buddha's death, at Rājagṛha, at which Upāli had recited the rules laid down by the Buddha as he recalled them, and Ānanda had recited the Sermons. These recitations provided the nucleus of the canon, which was transmitted orally. At the Second Council

a split developed of which several versions are extant. If these accounts are viewed in conjunction, they suggest that the breach may have had both doctrinal and disciplinary bases. The seceding group was known as the Mahāsāṅghikas or those of the Great Assembly. The nomenclature seems to imply a group with broader sympathies, involving perhaps a closer contact with the laity, in contrast to the perhaps somewhat confining monasticism of the Theravādins. In any case, the Mahāsāṅghikas, who were also inclined to transfigure the Buddha into a superhuman being, seem to have set forces in motion that culminated in the emergence of Mahāyāna as a form of Buddhism by the first century B.C.E.

MAHĀYĀNA

The Mahāyāna was a self-conscious movement, as its very designation suggests. Just as the Muslims developed self-consciously as a distinct community, much more so than the early Christians, the Mahāyāna developed as a movement distinct from the earlier sects with far greater self-consciousness than the earlier Buddhist movements. It deliberately designated itself as the Mahāyāna, or the Great Vehicle, by way of contrast with the earlier forms of Buddhism, which were called Hīnayāna (Small or Inferior Vehicle). On what, then, precisely, did its claim to greatness rest?

The Buddhist philosopher Asaṅga (fourth century) noted the following points of greatness to establish its superiority:

1. it accepted the teaching of not one but all the Buddhas;
2. it aimed at the salvation of *all* sentient beings;
3. it taught the emptiness not only of an individual's personality but also of all dharmas;
4. it regarded the activity of all Bodhisattvas and not just Buddhas as salvific; and
5. it advocated the ideal not of Arhathood but of Buddhahood itself.

Before one could become a Buddha, however, one had to be a *Bodhisattva,* a sentient being who has resolved to become a Buddha. The ultimate stage of sanctification in Theravāda Buddhism was represented by Arhathood. This Arhat ideal was replaced by the Bodhisattva ideal in Mahāyāna Buddhism. Who, then, is a Bodhisattva?

Buddhism has always believed that though in principle the potentiality of becoming a Buddha lay dormant in every sentient being, its actualization is an achievement of such breathtaking magnitude that it cannot possibly be accomplished within a single lifetime. The founder of Buddhism, Gautama Buddha, in a previous aeon, took the vow to become a Buddha, then spent several lives perfecting the moral and mental skills necessary to

accomplish his vow. His achievement of Buddhahood marked the culmination of an effort sustained over several aeons, perhaps even involving intergalactic sojourns in several parts of the universe. During the period that extended between undertaking the vow to become a Buddha and its actual accomplishment—however gigantic the interval may be—the Buddha is referred to as a Bodhisattva or a Buddha-to-be. The word means one whose entire essence is bent on attaining enlightenment.

To fully appreciate the doctrinal point involved here one needs to ask two questions: What is the difference between an Arhat and a Buddha? and What is the difference between an Arhat and a Bodhisattva?

A Buddha achieves enlightenment on his or her own, by his or her own efforts, unaided, while the Arhat achieves enlightenment through the guidance of the Buddha. This point needs to be understood carefully. Early Buddhism is full of statements such as: "One is one's own refuge, who else could be the refuge?" Buddha's valedictory exhortation to his disciples is well known in both its renderings: "Be islands unto yourselves" or "Be lamps unto yourselves." Does this not mean that the Arhat, like the Buddha, makes it on his or her own? Yes, but with the benefit of the Buddha or his teachings as the guide; the Buddha himself made it entirely on his own, unaided. As the Buddha proclaimed to the wandering Upaka in his first postenlightenment encounter with a human being: "I have no teacher" (curiously, when Buddha then went on to claim he was "enlightened" Upaka merely said: "Maybe" and went his way!). In the Pali canon, the Arhats are called *buddhānubuddha*, that is, those who became enlightened in the wake of Buddha's enlightenment, as distinguished from the Buddha who became enlightened on his own.

But if an Arhat has achieved enlightenment while a Bodhisattva is still striving toward it, is the Arhat not a notch above the Bodhisattva? How could the Mahāyāna possibly claim that the Bodhisattva ideal is superior to that of the Arhat?

The key to the answer lies in the fact that whereas the Arhat had only his or her own enlightenment in mind, the Bodhisattva vows to achieve enlightenment not only for him- or herself but also for the sake of all sentient beings. It is the universality of the Bodhisattva's aspiration that is contrasted with the Arhat's more personal inspiration. Once again the point needs to be understood carefully. An Arhat may also, during his or her postnirvāṇic ministry, lead many other sentient beings to Nirvāṇa, just like the Bodhisattva. The crucial difference between the two lies in the nature of the *intention* underlying the original resolve to secure enlightenment. This is particularly significant in Buddhism in which intention is closely associated with the concept of *karma*. The following statement of the Buddha is often cited on the point: "O monks, it is volition [*cetanā*] that I call *karma*. Having willed one acts through body, speech and mind."

The Bodhisattva is typically described as a being who stands on the threshold of Nirvāṇa but postpones entry into it, because once one finally enters Nirvāṇa, one is of no more use to other sentient beings, for individuality has no place in Nirvāṇa. Such is the Bodhisattva's surpassing compassion, however, that the Bodhisattva puts off his or her own Nirvāṇa so that others may enter it. It is as if a group leader were to locate a lost building and, to make sure that all the students in his or her custody found a safe haven there, were not to enter until all the students in his or her charge had first entered it. A complicating consideration could, however, arise at this point: How could one who is not yet fully enlightened lead others to enlightenment?

This consideration was accommodated in several ways. It was pointed out that being a Bodhisattva is as good as having arrived. It also led to the evolution of three models of the Bodhisattva: the Bodhisattva as king, the Bodhisattva as helmsman, and the Bodhisattva as shepherd. A king is first crowned and then looks after the welfare of the subjects. According to this model, a Bodhisattva first achieved his own enlightenment and then guided others to it. A helmsman alights from the boat along with the passengers. A Bodhisattva of this type attained enlightenment simultaneously with the followers. A shepherd goads the sheep inside the stockade first and then enters it, locking the door. Bodhisattvas of this type made sure that those in their flock achieved Buddhahood before they achieved it for themselves.

Ultimately, however, such considerations led to a revision of the concept of the Buddha itself, who was identified with the Absolute. This eternal Buddha was ever present everywhere in the cosmos within everything as its Buddha-nature. As the Buddha, in this understanding, was identical with Emptiness, it is to an analysis of this doctrine that we must now turn.

To grasp the doctrine of Emptiness, it is necessary to form a correct idea of the Buddhist view of the arising of suffering. According to Buddhism, desire is part of a nexus of factors whose relationship is described as *pratītya-samutpāda*, or dependent coorigination, a concept that is explained with the help of the following stylized formula: When this is, that is; this arising, that arises; when this is not, that is not; this ceasing, that ceases. If this concept is now applied to a human being, all the constituents of whose being—body, sensations, perceptions, volitions, and acts of consciousness—are in a state of flux, then with respect to this person, indeed any person, "One thing disappears, conditioning the appearance of the next in a series of cause and effect. There is no unchanging substance in them. There is nothing behind them that can be called a permanent Self (*Ātman*), individuality, or anything that can in reality be called 'I.' Every one will agree that neither matter, nor sensation, nor perception, nor any one of those mental activities, nor consciousness can really be called 'I.' But when these five physical and mental aggregates which are interdependent are working

together in combination as a physio-psychological machine, we get the idea of 'I.' But this is only a false idea...."[10]

Thus the individual could be viewed as empty when put under the microscope of pratītya-samutpāda. Early Buddhism also regarded the external universe as *anitya* (impermanent), as *anātma* (lacking in permanent substratum), and as *duḥkha* (characterized by suffering), "whether the Buddhas arise or do not arise," to declare this to be the case. It also viewed the operations of the external universe no less than that of human personality as characterized by pratītya-samutpāda. Yet in early Buddhism, though the emptiness of the individual was asserted, the same was not asserted of the universe. The question arises: If the individual no less than the universe is characterized as *anitya*, *anātma*, and *duḥkha*, by pratītya-samutpāda, and is empty as well, and the external universe is equally characterized by these features, why is the universe also not "empty"?

The early Buddhist answer to the above question was negative because of its concept of dharma. In this context the word does not mean morality or doctrine. It is used here in a special and technical sense. The early Buddhists believed that though "existence did not consist of a primary substance, whether material or spiritual," it consisted of "a number of elements" or dharmas. They are "not things but elements of things" that actually *exist*. Though the exact nature of the existence was a matter of debate, they may be described "as flashes of reality."

Mahāyāna Buddhism took the position that if one examined the issue closely, the dharmas also were empty like the individual, inasmuch as they were also characterized by pratītya-samutpāda, and were ever in flux, with the preceding accounting for the succeeding ad infinitum. Thus both the individual and the world were empty. Nāgārjuna (second century) put the matter in a nutshell. It is his doctrine of Emptiness that became central to subsequent developments in Buddhism and is explained in detail later in this chapter under "Emptiness."

Issues such as these gave rise to philosophical disputation within Mahāyāna, but the doctrine of Emptiness also created the climate for a third major doctrinal development in the history of Buddhism.

TANTRA

To appreciate this development one must consider the implications the concept of emptiness has for the nature of reality. The doctrine of Emptiness is, as is obvious, highly subversive of our commonsense notions of reality. This subversion, however, created room for the creation of a new option, which was exercised by Tantra. If, on closer inspection, it turns out that the so-called *objective* world is empty, and my *subjective* world of dreams and fantasies has no reality and is thus empty, then the possibility of life in a new dimension is generated. I can, with equal validity, now choose between

living in the *objective* world and living in the *subjective* world, as both are ultimately empty or illusory. And I may prefer to live in my subjective world either because it is more easily manipulated by me in accordance with my worldly wishes or because I can manipulate it more easily and effectively to achieve my spiritual goals or ends. The ideal type in this form of Buddhism was no longer the Arhat or the Bodhisattva but the Siddha—the adept in these manipulative techniques. In the end, Tantra is essentially a soteriological manipulation of the subjective world. If it is remembered that many Tantrika practices were esoteric and that leading a monastic life involved withdrawal from the world of "objective" reality anyway, the phenomenon of Tantra begins to appear less puzzling. Some of these practices, especially the ones containing sexual elements—either by way of symbolic or ritual practice—have been criticized as perverted. But another perspective can be presented when Tantra is seen as a doctrinal development lineally connected with Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism.

> Since it is obviously wrong to conceive the impermanent as permanent, one might well believe that it is right to regard the impermanent as impermanent. In the Hīnayāna this inference had indeed been intended. But, so the Mahāyāna argues, it would be clearly untrue to attribute impermanence, ill, etc., to Emptiness, or to dharmas which are empty of own-being, or to dharmas of which the own-being has never been produced. Both permanence and impermanence are misconceptions indicative of perversity. "Since there is thus nothing that is not a perverted view, in relation to what could there be a perversion?" The implication here is that correlative terms give sense only in relation to one another, and that one of the pair alone and by itself can neither exist nor be conceived. In other words, in a universe where there is *only* perversion there can be no perversion at all, at least by way of an attested fact.[11]

The earliest pre-Mahāyāna form of Buddhism that has come down to us is the Theravāda. And it can be seen as undergoing three cycles of development: an early cycle in which it was one of many sects; a second cycle in which it was transplanted to South Asia and took root; and a third cycle of its consolidation in the medieval period. Similarly, three cycles can also be identified in relation to the Mahāyāna: the first cycle representing proto-Mahāyāna developments in India; a second cycle representing its full-fledged emergence in India, dramatized by the conversion of Vasubandhu (who as a pre-Mahāyānist composed the still venerated *Abhidharma Kośa*, or *The Treasury of Higher Subtleties*, before being converted by his brother Asaṅga in the fourth century); and a third cycle representing the diffusion of Mahāyānist modes of thought outside India.

It is possible to describe the doctrinal development of Tantra similarly in three cycles. The first cycle is represented by Mantrayāna, which es-

sentially represents the accommodation of the magical elements in the tradition; the second by Vajrayāna, when this material is systematized in terms of Buddhist categories in which magical procedures are refined into "the art of living which enables us to utilize each activity of body, speech and mind as an aid on the path to liberation." This is followed by a third cycle, the Sahajayāna, when all this paraphernalia is shed and a spiritual supernaturalism yields to a simple but salvific naturalism. From this to Zen is but a step.

ZEN

The fourth major doctrinal formulation is Zen and it also seems to go through a triple cycle. Its first phase is represented by its development in India; the second by its development in China once it was established there as Ch'an; and the third phase by its development in Japan. We saw earlier how, once the principle of the emptiness of the human personality had been introduced, the inner logic of Buddhism extended it to the universe, then to the manipulation of the universe, and then to the abandonment of such manipulation as itself empty. If there is really nothing, then all that is needed is the experiential recognition of this sheer simplicity. The sheer simplicity of the situation also suggests its immediacy—with the corollary that realization can come in an instant. That realization could thus be instantaneous was not instantly realized in the Buddhist tradition, although instances of such realization are found scattered as far back as the Psalms of the Elders in the Pali canon. It was in the hands of Zen that it received due recognition, when it was grasped that if the mind is the main obstacle to realization and the pride of the mind is its rationality, then by undermining such rationality by, for example, bewildering it with a constant mental impasse in the form of a *koan* or confronting it with the immobilizing enigma of an ever-existing realization, the Gordian knot did not have to be untangled, it could be cut. Small wonder then that Zen sums itself up in these words:

> A special transmission outside of doctrines
> Not setting up the written word as an authority
> Pointing directly at the heart of man
> Seeing one's nature and becoming a Buddha

The Canonical Forms of Buddhism: The Tripiṭaka, the Mahāyāna Sūtras, Tantra, and Zen Texts

The doctrines discussed in the previous sections are derived from texts in which they have been propounded. These texts are voluminous. "Make no mistake, the volume is colossal. Just the collection of Chinese translations of the Prajna Sutras takes up four volumes of the most recent Taishō

edition of the Buddhist canon, each volume about the size of a copy of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, and numbering about a thousand pages. The English translation of the *Lotus Sutra* runs to about two hundred fifty printed pages. As for the *Avatamsaka*, the original Sanskrit version is said to consist of about one hundred thousand stanzas of four lines each, and one of the Chinese translations, which is more correctly an abridgement of the original, has eighty chapters, or about four hundred fifty printed pages in the Taishō edition."[12] The sacred literature of Buddhism, like that of Hinduism, is immense; but whereas Hinduism entertains, like Islam, the concept of a sacred language—Sanskrit (even though in Hinduism various languages are employed in sacred discourse)—Buddhism from its very inception avoided exclusive or even primary association with one language. In one famous dialogue, although the exact meaning of it is disputed, the Buddha is believed to have allowed the monks to preserve his teachings in their own languages. Hence while Hinduism may be described as multilingual, Buddhism is polyglot. The comparison with Christianity is happier in the sense that at the heart of both Christianity and Buddhism lies a story and a story can be told in any language. In the case of Christianity, it is the story of the divine passion of a person and in the case of Buddhism the story of the enlightenment of a person; but both are stories, and the words themselves are not as important as in Hinduism and Islam, for instance. It is the salvific tale that is all-important—told in any language. But even here there is a dissimilarity, for "unlike the Christians, the Buddhists had no small, portable, definitive though extremely ambiguous gospel, recognized and accepted by all. In consequence they had some difficulties in arriving at a criterion of the authenticity of the sacred text," with "resulting embarrassments."[13]

THE TRIPIṬAKA

Early Buddhism is saved from this embarrassment by the providential hand of history. We know that pre-Mahāyāna Buddhism possessed several distinct sects. It is also known that these sects or schools had their own canons, which were preserved in their own languages. However, it is the canon of the Theravāda school that alone has survived intact and is now available to us, in the language called Pali. The canon is known as the *Tripiṭaka* or the "three baskets." It has been suggested that it came to be so called because the long strips of prepared palm-leaf on which the texts were written were originally stored in baskets, after the canon had been committed to writing during the time of King Vaṭṭagāmaṇī (89–77 B.C.E.) in Śrī Laṅkā. However, the word *piṭakasampadā*—in the sense of the "authority of the sacred texts"—appears in the Pali canon itself in relation to Brahmanical lore. The early suggestion of T. W. Rhys Davids that the word *piṭaka*, or basket, denoted transmission of material, the way building material is

passed on along a line of workers, rather than an article of storage thus gains in credibility.

The nucleus of the canon is said to go back to the recitation, by Upāli and Ānanda respectively, of the rules (Vinaya) and the Sermons (*Sutta*) at the gathering where they were approved by five hundred Arhats, with the sole exception of Purāṇa, who preferred to remember Buddha's words as he himself recalled them. This corpus gradually grew in size and by the time it was committed to writing, after a lapse of several centuries after the death of the Buddha, it had achieved a formidable dimension. We shall discover that by contrast with the Mahāyāna canon, it is fairly well organized. It could well be the case that other sources, now lost, preserved the buzzing, blooming, and confounding vitality of the original movement more faithfully, whereas the Pali canon represents a systematic redaction of the materials, the compilers of which had the gift to know what to omit.

The canon consists of three parts called baskets (piṭakas); these are known as the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, the *Sutta Piṭaka*, and the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*.

The *Vinaya Piṭaka* deals with the 227 rules of the Monastic Order with additional rules for nuns and recounts in detail the exact circumstances in which the rules came to be promulgated, indicating the ad hoc nature of the process. For instance, one rule lays down that a nun shall reveal the contents of her begging bowl when asked by a monk to do so. The origin of the rule lies in the attempt of a nun to smuggle an aborted fetus out of a home concealed in the begging bowl. According to some scholars, at least some of these accounts may represent postfacto rationalizations of existing rules.

The *Sutta Piṭaka* (Sanskrit: *Sūtrapiṭaka*) is the largest of the three and is subdivided into five *Nikāyas* or groups. These are the *Dīgha-Nikāya* (a collection of long sermons); the *Majjhima-Nikāya* (a collection of medium-length sermons); the *Saṁyutta-Nikāya* (a collection of connected sayings); the *Aṅguttara-Nikāya* (a collection of graduated pronouncements in groups of two to eleven items); and the *Khuddaka-Nikāya* (or minor anthology).

It is the *Khuddaka-Nikāya*—the minor collection—that ironically contains some of the more significant sections of the corpus. To mention only five: It contains the *Jātakas* or 547 stories of Buddha's past lives; the *Dhammapada* or verses on dharma, virtually the Buddhist gospel; the *Theragāthā* or psalms of the elder monks and the *Therīgāthā* or psalms of the elder nuns and the *Sutta-Nipāta* or collected discourses. On linguistic grounds, the *Sutta-Nipāta* is believed to represent the oldest stratum of the canon wherein Buddhist egalitarianism already makes its appearance in contrast to Hindu hierarchicalism in the following verses: "For worms, serpents, fish, birds, and animals there are marks that constitute their own species. There is difference in creatures endowed with bodies, but amongst human beings this is not the case; the differences among human beings are nominal only" (*Sutta-Nipāta*: 602–611). It also contains a description of Nirvāṇa, which was

paradigmatic in later discussions of it (1074, 1075) and which ends with the statement:

> When all conditions are removed,
> All ways of telling also are removed.

The third part of the canon—the *Abhidhamma* (Sanskrit: *Abhidharma*)—emerged later. It consisted of an effort to specify and categorize the various dharmas or ultimate constituents of experience to which reality is reduced in Buddhism and of which the Theravādins counted 174. It is here that Buddhist sectarian differences in the pre-Mahāyāna period took their sharpest form, some even contesting the authenticity of the *Abhidhamma* as a canonical category itself, with others content to differ over specific contents.

The authoritative commentary on these works was written by Buddhaghosa in the fifth century. In keeping with the triadic approach of this section, the names of the three major commentators of the Pali canon may be mentioned—Buddhadatta, Buddhaghosa, and Dhammapāla. They translated the old Sinhalese commentaries into Pali, and all three ironically were non-Śrī Laṅkan. Among them, Buddhaghosa is specially known for his *Visuddhimagga*, a compendium of the entire canon, as it were, and a work widely venerated in the Theravāda tradition.

THE MAHĀYĀNA SŪTRAS

It is extremely difficult to make a systematic presentation of the Mahāyāna canon. It is a fact worth noting at the outset that the Vinaya rules basically remained unaltered with the spread of Buddhism. As against the 227 rules of the Pali canon, the Chinese consists of 250 and the Tibetan has 253. The major changes in Buddhism occurred in the realm of doctrine, and though they were not without consequences for the role of the Community, the structure of the Community by and large remained identifiable—even when in Japan monks started marrying to show their faith in the saving grace of the Buddha called Amitābha.

Doctrinal diversity, however, found its expression in a crop of fresh *sūtras*, but the Mahāyāna canon was not systematized the way the Theravāda was, although several catholic Chinese sects, such as the T'ien-t'ai and the Hua-yen, made remarkable efforts in this direction. So one might say that several attempts were made at systematization—in India, China, Tibet, and Japan, for instance—with the result that one is left again without a system, because there are too many. The simplest approach might be to begin identifying what came to be known as the nine dharmas, the word dharma now denoting not merely a doctrine but a doctrinal text. These nine dharmas, also known as Vaipulya Sūtras, or Elaboration of the Doctrines,

again seem to represent a traditional formalized number. By retaining the number and altering the enumeration to suit our needs, the method might still be usefully employed.

1. *Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka* (second century C.E.), or the Lotus of the True Law, is one of the most popular, significant, and characteristic of the Mahāyāna Sūtras. For some schools of Mahāyāna in China and Japan, it represented the acme of Buddha's teaching. It is placed around 200 C.E., as it came to be translated into Chinese from around 250 C.E. onward, and represents the Buddha as an eternal reality whose earthly manifestation was merely a device to lead people to salvation. It has been said that if for the early disciples of Jesus Christ the miracle was that one who dwelt among them should have been the Son of God, the marvel for St. Paul was that the Son of God should have come down and chosen to live among humans. If for the Theravāda Buddhists the marvel was that a human being—one like them—could become a Buddha, the marvel for the Mahāyāna Buddhists was that the supramundane Buddha should have descended—or condescended—to appear as a human being. This spirit pervades the Lotus of the True Law, which also considers all the teachings of Buddhism—*Hīnayāna*, *Mahāyāna*, and other *yānas*—to be united in one single vehicle (*ekayāna*), just as it reduces the multiplicity of the Bodhisattvas and the Buddhas to the one eternal Buddha.

2. The body of literature called the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras* (second century C.E.), or the Perfection of Wisdom, represents a genre in itself, of which the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñā-Pāramitā-Sūtra* or the Perfection of Wisdom in eight thousand verses may be taken as representative. The text is usually placed in the second century when the doctrine of Emptiness, which it expounds, began to catch on. Sūtras of 100,000; 25,000; and 18,000 verses are also known. The famous *Vajracchedikā* or Diamond Sūtra and the *Hṛdaya-Sūtra* or Heart Sūtra represent condensations of such sūtras. The former concludes by comparing all activities to "a dream, a phantasm, a bubble, a shadow, a drop of dew or a flash of lightning."

3. As the title of *Laṅkāvatāra-Sūtra* (third century C.E.), or the Sūtra of Descent to Laṅkā, suggests, the teachings of this sūtra are believed to have been expounded by the Buddha on a visit to Śrī Laṅkā at the invitation of Rāvaṇa. It was translated into Chinese in the fifth century and is highly regarded for its exposition of Buddhist idealism.

4. *Kāraṇḍavyūha-Sūtra* (third century C.E.), or the Sūtra of the Manifestation of Karaṇḍa, is a sūtra devoted expressly to one Bodhisattva, perhaps the most popular, Avalokiteśvara by name, who became a female figure in China (Kwan-Yin) and Japan (Kannon). The sex change is variously explained as the result of assimilation with a goddess figure

or the identification of compassion, the main quality of the Bodhisattva, with the feminine principle. In any case, not only do the Bodhisattvas transcend sex-specific identifications, but they also can assume any form they choose. The famous and precious mantra, *Om maṇi padme hūṃ* (the jewel is in the lotus), is his/her gift to humanity.

5. *Sukhāvatīvyūha-Sūtra* (first century C.E.), or the Array of the Happy Land, is devoted to celebrating the glory of the Buddha Amitābha who according to the sūtra has created a pure land (by contrast with the impure universe) where those with faith will be reborn.

6. *Samādhirāja-Sūtra* (fifth century C.E.), or the Sūtra of King of Meditations, deals with the art of meditation in which a Buddha instructs a Bodhisattva on how to attain enlightenment through meditations countless as sand.

7. *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-Sūtra* (ca. fifth century C.E.), or the Sūtra of the Golden Light, was another popular sūtra that reflects the popular dimension of Mahāyāna teaching, combining the doctrine of Emptiness with magical elements.

8. *Avataṁsaka-Sūtra* (second century C.E.), or the Garland Sūtra, emphasizes the interrelatedness of all phenomena and the interpenetration of the Absolute with all phenomena. According to both the T'ien-t'ai and the Hua-yen Schools, this sūtra was preached by the Buddha immediately after enlightenment. In its final form it incorporated the *Daśabhūmika* and the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtras*. *Daśabhūmika-Sūtra* (fourth century C.E.) describes the ten stages of Bodhisattvahood. In early Buddhism, the accomplishment of Buddhahood on the part of the Buddha involved the perfecting of six virtues, of which wisdom or *prajñā* was the coping stone, hence the significance of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras*. In Mahāyāna Buddhism, however, as early as 400 C.E., for by then this text had been translated into Chinese, the Bodhisattva's career came to span ten stations. After the sixth, one became a "celestial" Bodhisattva who could engage in the task of leading others to salvation. *Gaṇḍavyūha-Sūtra* (second century C.E.), or the Sūtra of the Splendid Manifestations of Dimensions, focuses on the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, as it relates the attainment of Buddhahood by the youth Sudhana. "The *sūtra* also stresses the interconnectedness of each individual being and the whole universe; it asserts that the altruistic spirit of benevolence or compassion is the fundamental principle of Mahāyāna."[14]

9. *Mahāratnakūṭa* (fifth century C.E.), or the Pinnacle of Jewels, is a collection of forty-nine sūtras, each of which stands alone but all of which taken together are said to constitute a comprehensive expression of the dharma.[15]

Mahāyāna literature, in addition to sūtras, also includes many śāstras. The Mahāyāna distinction between sūtras and śāstras is somewhat in line with the distinction in Hinduism between śruti and smṛti—the former representing "revealed" texts; the latter representing works of human authors.[16]

TANTRA

The Pali canon purports to record Buddha's own words. The Mahāyāna canon claims to report the sermons of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and, however dubious the claim may appear, it at least shows an attempt to acknowledge the authority of Buddhas or Buddhas-to-be. Tantrika literature betrays no such anxiety, although a few texts are ascribed to the historical Buddha. Unlike the Mahāyāna, Tantra literature tends to be esoteric rather than exoteric, but like the Mahāyāna texts, Tantrika texts have also been severally classified. The safest course to follow, therefore, would be to enumerate a few leading ones, bearing in mind the distinction between left-handed and right-handed Tantra, the former taking the repudiation of conventional morality literally and the latter figuratively. Among the earliest and best-known left-handed Tantra texts are the *Guhyasamāja-Tantra*, or the Treatise of the Secret Society, and the *Hevajra-Tantra*, or the Treatise of the Buddha Hevajra. Tantrika literature is still being identified and systematized, but it is interesting that its categorization sometimes utilizes the categories of *kriyā tantras, caryā tantras, yoga tantras,* and *anuttara tantras*, which resemble the Hindu stages of Tantrika progression described as *caryā* (external care of temple, etc.), *kriyā* (performance of ritual), *yoga* (meditation), and *jñāna* (knowledge). The two Tantras mentioned earlier belong to the *anuttara tantra* class, as does the *Kālacakra-Tantra*, or the Treatise on the Wheel of Time, where the Buddha is cast in the role of the creator. This Tantra serves as an example of a right-handed Tantra text.

The Tantra school emphasized the role of the occult in religious life to the point that it used deliberately opaque language (*sandhyā* or *sandhā bhāṣā*), the true meaning of which could only be revealed by the master to the disciple. Although it is true that, according to the Theravāda tradition, the Buddha disclaimed having the "closed fist" of the teacher, even in Theravāda Buddhism, monks were forbidden from teaching "the scripture word by word to an unordained person"; this trend achieved unforeseen extensions in Tantra.

ZEN TEXTS

In Theravāda Buddhism at least the text was settled, if not as open to all as the general egalitarianism of Buddhism would suggest; in Mahāyāna

Buddhism the texts were almost too many to cope with; in Tantra they receded out of general reach into esoteric circles; in Zen their value itself was called into question. Sometimes the texts are kept close to the lavatory in the monasteries, which should tell us something. Soto Zen is less radical in its rejection of texts than Rinzai Zen, but despite such biblioclasm, some texts are venerated, like the *Platform Sūtra* of the sixth Chinese patriarch Hui-neng (638–713), who is said to have attained enlightenment on listening to a recitation of the Diamond Sūtra. It is interesting that another sūtra respected in Zen circles, the *Śūraṅgama-Sūtra*, although a putative translation from a Sanskrit original, exists only in Chinese. In a sense Zen falls into the prajñā (or insight) tradition of Buddhism, and it has been remarked that it is the manner in which Zen uses Mahāyāna Sūtras, rather than the texts' scholastic content, that sets it apart. D. T. Suzuki notes that the *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya-Sūtra* is "daily recited in the Zen monasteries." Zen, of course, has its own collections of koans, a famous one being the *Wu-men-kuan* (The Gateless Gate), as well as the texts of the Zen masters themselves, such as Dogen's *Shōbōgenzō* (The Treasury of the Right Dharma Eye) or Hakuin's *Orategama* (Embossed Teakettle).

Conclusion

Attempts were made to collect and organize this mass of literature into an ordered whole. The Chinese catalog, dated 518 C.E., lists 2,113 works of which 276 are extant. A well-known collection of the Buddhist corpus as a whole, with its codification in the *Kanjur* (a collection of sūtras) and the *Tanjur* (a collection of śāstras), was made in Tibet in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, respectively, and printed for the first time in Peking in 1411. The Japanese *Taishō Issaikyō* (1924–1929), referred to earlier, contains 2,184 works in 55 volumes of about 1,000 pages each. The unity of this vast corpus of the literature of Buddhism is perhaps best identified with the help of a metaphor—that of taste. The metaphor of taste is helpful here for it is this intangible taste that, according to a leading Buddhist scholar, really unifies the vast and diverse corpus of Buddhism. He writes: "Furthermore, all Buddhist writings have a *flavor* of their own, and for thirty years I have not ceased marvelling at its presence in each one of them. The Scriptures themselves compare the Dharma to a taste, saying that the Buddha's words are those which have the taste of peace, the taste of emancipation, the taste of Nirvāṇa. Tastes can unfortunately not be described, and even the greatest poet could not tell the taste of a peach and say how it differs from that of an apple. Those who refuse to taste the Scriptures for themselves are therefore at a serious disadvantage in their appreciation of the unity which underlies all forms of Buddhism."[17]

The Structure of Buddhism: The Wheel of Dharma

The triple confession of faith in Buddhism—of seeking refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha—reveals the basic triadic structure of Buddhism. Each confession is capable of further elaboration in a way that coincides with the development of the various forms of Buddhism discussed in the previous section.

The Buddha

Buddhism as we know it traces itself to a historical founder, Gautama Buddha, whose given name was Siddhārtha. Gautama or Gotama was his eponym and the Buddha an honorific that means "enlightened," that is, "one who has awoken to the nature and meaning of life."

The date of the Buddha is a matter of controversy, as may be judged from the range of chronological speculation about the century in which he lived: from the tenth century B.C.E. according to some Chinese sects, to the fourth century B.C.E. by some Japanese calculations. Most scholars so far, however, have been content to place him in the sixth century B.C.E. and, more precisely, date his life as extending from 563 to 483 B.C.E. This consensual reckoning is adopted in this chapter.

The life of the Buddha can be presented in at least three broad versions: human, superhuman, and suprahuman.

The earliest details of the life of the Buddha can be gathered from the Pali canon—that is, from the material contained in the *Vinaya Piṭaka* and the *Sutta Piṭaka*—from the episodic accounts narrating the circumstances in which the rules of the Monastic Order were framed according to the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, and from biographical and autobiographical references contained in the *Sutta Piṭaka*.

The biography of the "historical" Buddha thus revealed is easily summarized. He was born a prince. His father ruled a kingdom on the border of modern India and Nepal. His given name was Siddhārtha. He was married at the age of sixteen to Gopā, or Yaśodharā and had a son named Rāhula, but he renounced the world at the age of twenty-nine. Six years of vigorous quest lead to enlightenment at the age of thirty-five under a tree in Bodh Gayā. Thereafter he became an itinerant monk. His public ministry lasted for forty-five years, during the course of which he founded a Monastic

Order of monks and nuns. He died at the age of eighty at Kusinārā in modern Uttar Pradesh in India.[18]

This human version of the life of the Buddha actually also contains many marvelous features already in the earliest accounts. With the passage of time it underwent further edifying embellishment, with the result that within a few centuries of his death, the Buddha had captured the imagination of his followers as a superhuman being. This is evident from the three main biographies, or more properly hagiographies, available to us: the *Mahāvastu*, or the Great Story (second century C.E.); the *Lalitavistara*, or the Extended Narration of the Sports (of the Future Buddha) (second century C.E.); and the *Buddhacarita*, or the Deeds of the Buddha, ascribed to Aśvaghoṣa (first century C.E.) and composed in the classical epic style. These texts include some traditional material, such as the Buddha's triumph over Māra, the Buddhist counterpart of Satan, and elaborate on it or incorporate new material such as his prodigious and precocious intellectual gifts as a student.

The suprahuman version of the life of the Buddha does not regard him as a human being at all. This version emerged around the fourth century B.C.E. under the influence of the doctrine that there was an ever-existent eternal Buddha who had merely assumed the form of the human Buddha and carried out a celestial charade as an exercise in skill in means to lead people to salvation as described in the *Lotus Sūtra*.

An examination of how the life of the Buddha has been treated within Buddhism discloses that several approaches toward it were adopted. The following six approaches deserve special mention.

1. According to one approach the details of the life and person of the Buddha are inconsequential. There might as well not even have been such a person. What is important is that we possess a body of saving doctrine to which his name has been tagged, from which it might as well be clipped, for what is of supreme importance is the doctrine. This, in our view, is the real import of the violently iconoclastic Zen saying: "If you meet the Buddha, kill him." This attitude finds expression early in Buddhism. Buddha himself discouraged personal adoration as a distraction from salvific practice, as when he asked Vakkhali: "What do you see in this vile body of mine?" Later, in the *Milindapañha*, when the Greek King Menander (Sanskrit: Milinda) asks a Buddhist monk to adduce proof for the historical existence of the Buddha, he is blithely told that none is needed—all that matters is that a body of doctrine which passes under the name of the Buddha exists and its saving property alone is our concern.

2. Another approach emphasizes not Buddha's dispensability but his humanity. This approach may have some ancient antecedents, as when

the divinization of the Buddha was resisted by some Buddhist sects less disposed in that direction, by asking the telling questions: "Was he not born at Lumbinī? Did he not attain enlightenment under the Bodhi tree? Did he not set the wheel of law rolling at Banaras? Did he not pass away at Kusinārā?" Over the past century, such a presentation of the life of the Buddha has gained much vogue. A parallel here is suggested by the life of Muḥammad, who is now considered human in every respect except one—that he became the conduit of God's revelation, the Qur'ān constituting his "sole miracle." Similarly, Buddha is now considered human in every respect except for his unique experience of Nirvāṇa. But unlike Muḥammad, who is the last of his kind, Buddha in a sense is the first. All human beings have within themselves the potential to become a Buddha, if they so will and endeavor. We can call the Buddha a human being par excellence: "He was so perfect in his 'human-ness' that he came to be regarded later in popular religion almost as 'super-human.'"[19]

3. Early Buddhism, however, attached as much importance to Buddha's previous life as to his present one. The fact that the Buddha was a Bodhisattva or a Buddha-to-be before he became a Buddha is not lost sight of. It is as if under popular pressure the "present" life of the Buddha began to be pressed out to cover his premortem and postmortem existences as well. The extension of the Buddha's life in the premortem direction is evident in the development of the 547 Jātaka tales, which deal with the previous lives of the Buddha. The flavor of a Jātaka story may be savored with the help of an example, after a word of explanation.

Once a human being resolves to become a Buddha, a set of virtues must be perfected before that goal can be achieved, and several lives may be involved in the process. An original tradition listed six such virtues, called *pārāmitās*, usually translated as perfections: charity (*dāna*); edifying conduct (*śīla*); patience (*kṣānti*); vigor (*vīrya*); concentration (*samādhi*); and insight (*prajñā*). The list was finally extended to ten in Buddhism, to include skill in means (*upāya-kauśalya*); resolution (*praṇidhāna*); strength (*bala*); and knowledge (*jñāna*). The following Jātaka story displays the Bodhisattva perfecting the virtue of charity. While roaming in the forest with his fellow princes in a past life the Bodhisattva came upon a tigress who had just given birth to cubs, was too weak to even stir as a result, and was about to perish from hunger. To perfect the virtue of charity, "The friendly prince then threw himself down in front of the tigress. But she did nothing to him. The Bodhisattva noticed that she was too weak to move. As a merciful man he had taken no sword with him. He therefore cut his throat with a sharp piece of bamboo, and fell down near the tigress. She noticed the Bodhisattva's

body all covered with blood, and in no time ate up all the flesh and blood, leaving only the bones."[20]

Our modern taste might find the ideological excess exhibited by the Bodhisattva repelling despite its altruism, but the Buddhists would see in it another attempt at a moral assertion, through self-sacrifice, of the ontological doctrine that there is in fact no Self to sacrifice.

4. In later Buddhism, this interest in the previous lives of the Buddha was retained, but metaphysical interest now focused on the postmortem state of the Buddha. Early Buddhism had refused to answer or even ask the question of the postmortem existence of the Buddha as not "fitting the case" (just as the question, In which direction does the fire go—east, west, north, or south—upon being blown out? does not fit the case). Mahāyāna Buddhism, however, had developed what came to be known as the *trikāya* doctrine, or the doctrine of the three bodies, by the fourth century. According to this formulation, the Buddha possessed three bodies: a body of essence (*dharma-kāya*); a body of communal enjoyment (*saṁbhoga-kāya*); and a manifest body (*nirmāṇa-kāya*).

The dharma-kāya or Buddha's body of essence was what the Buddha really was, is, and will always be: an eternal and cosmic reality identical with everything. The other two bodies are emanations from this body. The second body came in handy to explain the origin of the vast corpus of literature Mahāyāna Buddhism had developed, which could only be attributed to the "historical" Buddha by straining credibility to the breaking point. These sūtras, by this device, were made "Buddhonymous" as it were, instead of being left anonymous or pseudonymous. It was believed that they were sermons delivered by the Buddha or the Buddha-to-be at celestial gatherings of the elect, when they enjoyed the bliss of his presence. The nirmāṇa-kāya was a phantom conjured up by the Buddha to playact the drama of being born, renouncing the world, achieving salvation, and leading others to it, whereas in fact Buddha had achieved his realization ages ago.

5. In later Buddhism the universe came to be peopled by a plurality of Buddhas. Such a development had already occurred *temporally* in Theravāda Buddhism. The figures of the Buddha-to-be Maitreya, and a past Buddha Dīpaṅkara, following whose example the present Buddha, aeons ago, resolved to become a Buddha, are clearly mentioned in early Buddhism. Originally the historical Buddha was one of a series of seven, which was extended to twenty-four—with Buddha being the twenty-fifth, preceded by Dīpaṅkara. Subsequent series exceed the half-century mark, then the century mark. In Mahāyāna Buddhism, however, the concept was also extended *spatially* so that several Buddhas could exist simultaneously, busying themselves with the noble task of

guiding all sentient beings to salvation. They were also spatially organized, somewhat like the *lokapālas* or guardians of the various directions in Hinduism, and had their own "heavens" in the ten directions.

6. Various further developments pertaining to the concept of the Buddha took place in Tantrika Buddhism as well, but of greater interest is the relationship that came to be established between a Buddha and a Bodhisattva. The development of Tantrism in Tibet illustrates this point well. The extension of the career of the Bodhisattva to cover ten rather than six pārāmitās has been alluded to. After perfecting the sixth pārāmitā, that of prajñā (insight), the Bodhisattva stands face to face with enlightenment but decides to continue in the universe for the sake of others, thereby becoming what has been called a "celestial" Bodhisattva. Avalokiteśvara is one such Bodhisattva, who is the protective deity of Tibet. The emergence of a set of new Buddhas has already been alluded to—Amitābha being one of them. Now Avalokiteśvara as a Bodhisattva has Amitābha as "his spiritual sire," whose image he wears in his crown. But of even greater interest is the development of the reincarnatory ideas around the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, of whom it was claimed that he would appear thirteen times to rule over Lhasa in succession—the succeeding births to be identified by special signs. These ideas were developed within the Yellow Church of Tibet in the fifteenth century.

Hand in hand with an altered concept of the Buddha went an altered concept of seeking refuge in the Buddha. The proper attitude one adopted toward the Buddha in the triple profession was that of faith or *śraddhā*. In the first approach to the Buddha identified earlier, faith has little role to play as such, as the entire emphasis is made to rest on the teaching: Faith in the teaching takes the place of faith in the teacher. In the second approach identified, in which the Buddha is viewed as a human being, faith in the teacher means little more than faith pending realization, for in Buddhism as a soteriological system the emphasis has always been on the "question of knowing and seeing, and not that of believing. The teaching of the Buddha is qualified as *ehi-passika*, inviting you to 'come and see' and not to come and believe."[21]

However, once we get past the purely personal or historical notions of the Buddha and view him in the broader perspective of Buddhism as a whole, the concept of faith rapidly begins to change to that of devotion. But the change was gradual. For instance, one of the issues that arose in Buddhism after Buddha's passing away was the following: If the Buddha or other Arhats have passed into Nirvāṇa, then how could worship at the *stūpas*, or tumuli, enshrining their relics produce any result at all? The answer offered was that the results are a consequence of the faith of the believer and were

not personal responses to the worship as such by the Buddhist sages. It is clear, however, that such an argument was not required in the case of the Bodhisattvas who had *not* passed into Nirvāṇa but were already present in the universe, ever so full of compassion and ready to respond to the prayers of the faithful. The same would apply to the *dharma-kāya* of the Buddha, and to the multiple Buddhas who were really only its manifestations.

This altered conception of faith was also accompanied by an altered conception of karma. In Theravāda Buddhism, despite some exceptions, karma was not considered transferable. Everyone was heir to their own karma, good or evil. It was, however, also a part of the Theravāda view of karma that the concept was closely tied to intention or volition. Thus the view emerged in Mahāyāna Buddhism that by an act of resolution it was possible to transfer karma to someone else or to take over someone else's karma. This doctrine, which is known as *parivarta*, particularly applied to the Bodhisattvas and the Buddhas who had over the aeons stored up vast reservoirs of good karma and who, filled with compassion, were willing to transfer it to those who petitioned them. Moreover, out of compassion they were prepared to take on themselves the evil karma of others.

Thus while in Theravāda Buddhism the word *śraddhā* (Pali: *saddhā*) meant confidence in the teaching of the Buddha, which was a matter of progressive self-realization, in Mahāyāna it changed to faith in the sense of *bhakti* or devotion through which one became the recipient of the karmic grace of a Buddha or Bodhisattva. The emergence of the Pure Land schools can thus be genetically located in the changing concepts of the Buddha and the changing modes of seeking refuge. According to these schools, one completely gave up relying on one's effort to achieve salvation and relied entirely on the grace of the Buddha. Such reliance on the Buddha is in direct opposition to the Theravāda tradition, according to which the Buddha's dying words were: "strive for your salvation with diligence." In this form of Mahāyāna, associated particularly with devotion to the Amitābha Buddha, otherwise known as Amida, one did not strive for salvation at all but left it to Amida to save one. At first it was thought that one might at least constantly repeat Amida's name. This was eventually taken as indicative of a lack of faith in the compassionate grace of Amida by Shinran and his followers, and saying his name only once was deemed enough. Finally, faith was even given an acoustic interpretation. As in the mysticism of the name in medieval Hinduism, the sound of "Amida" by itself was considered salvifically potent.

The Dharma

The Buddha was the source of the Dharma at one level, but at another level the Dharma was the source of the Buddha. To resolve this paradox one

must once again refer to the different senses in which the word dharma can be used in Buddhism. When it is said that the Buddha is the source of the Dharma, what is meant is that the teachings of Buddhism (dharma = doctrine) can be traced back to the Buddha. When the statement is reversed and it is claimed that the Dharma is the source of the Buddha, what is meant is that Buddhas appear in the universe at regular intervals in keeping with certain cosmic laws (dharma = law). We are fortunately living in one such interval. Be that as it may, the Buddhas show us the path to the supreme Dharma or realization (dharma = Nirvāṇa) through the practice of Dharma or morality (dharma = moral conduct), enabling us to grasp the significance of the dharmas or the constituents of the universe correctly. These various connotations of the word enable us to make the following convoluted statement: that Dharma revealed by Dharma guides us with Dharma through a proper understanding of dharmas to Dharma. Translation: Doctrines revealed by the cosmic laws in accordance with which Buddhas appear enable one to lead the life that leads one to grasp the true nature of things as they are (*yathābhūtam*), thus enabling one to achieve Nirvāṇa.

In the rest of this section, for the sake of consistency, the word dharma will be used in the sense of doctrine, as it is in the course of this doctrinal exposition that the other connotations of the word appear and gain cogency.

The basic teaching of the Buddha is said to consist of the Four Great Truths. Just as a physician identifies the symptoms of a disease, offers a diagnosis, suggests a cure, and prescribes a treatment, the Buddha identified the symptoms of the disease of life itself, offered a diagnosis, suggested a cure, and prescribed a course of treatment. The First Great Truth identifies the symptoms. It is known as the truth of the existence of suffering (dukkha): "birth is sorrow, age is sorrow, disease is sorrow, contact with the unpleasant is sorrow, separation from the pleasant is sorrow, every wish unfulfilled is sorrow—in short all the five components of individuality are sorrow." These five components of individuality are identified as the body, feelings, perceptions, emotions and volitions, and acts of consciousness. All these are said to represent suffering because they are continually changing, and to be liable to change entails being liable to suffering.

How then do we come to acquire these components of individuality? The Second Noble Truth provides the answer: It is the desire for existence, for annihilation, and for sense pleasures that causes us to be reborn and assume a life-form, which, as we saw earlier, inescapably involves suffering. It should be noted that the Buddhists do not admit that individuality contains any permanent element such as the soul; thus, when an individual is reborn, no soul passes from one body to another as in Hinduism. Rather, the process is similar to the way a series of echoes is produced. Just as one echo, in ceasing to exist, gives rise to another, so also one psychophysical organism (comprising the five components of individuality) in ceasing to be

gives rise to another. The cause underlying this arising is desire, hence the Second Noble Truth is known as the truth of the arising (*samudaya*) of suffering. Thus suffering has a cause. However, since it is logical to assume that the effect would cease if the cause ceases, we are led to the Third Noble Truth—the truth of the cessation (*nirodha*) of suffering.

How is the cessation of suffering to be brought about? The answer to this question leads us to the Fourth Noble Truth, known as the *middle* path or the Eightfold Path. Both these terms as used for the path reveal the structure of Buddha's teaching.

Let us first focus on the Fourth Great Truth understood as the middle path. In this sense the word has two clear connotations in the teachings of the Buddha, a moral one and a metaphysical one. The moral connotation is clearly stated in the first sermon delivered at the Deer Park itself, when the Buddha prescribes a middle path for his followers; middle, that is, because it avoids the two extremes of overindulgence and self-mortification. One can hear an echo of Buddha's own life in this—as a prince he had led a life of indulgence, as an ascetic of mortification—and did not gain the ultimate end through either but rather by leading a life that avoided these extremes.

Metaphysically the Buddha had struggled with two doctrines: one which held that the Self and the universe are eternal (*sassatavāda*) and the other which held that neither was so (*ucchedavāda*). The Buddha identified the correct approach as one that steers the middle course between eternalism and annihilationism. For according to the Buddha it is not correct to say that the constituents of the universe are eternal, because the universe is obviously changing all the time, a fact confirmed by even a cursory observation. However, neither is it possible to say that the constituents are annihilated, for in ceasing to be they at the same time give rise to another set of causes and conditions. This view of the Buddha is otherwise known as that of pratītya-samutpāda (Pali: *paṭicca-samuppāda*).

The moral understanding of the middle way essentially remains the same through the history of Buddhism, as manifested in the rules of the Monastic Order (Vinaya) and even more so in the prātimokṣa (Pali: *pātimokkha*) contained therein. The prātimokṣa showed a remarkable constancy even in comparison to the rest of the Vinaya. The *Vinaya Piṭaka*, through all the elaborations of doctrine and proliferations of sects in Buddhism, displayed in turn far greater stability as a whole in comparison to the *Sutta Piṭaka* and this in turn was relatively more consistent and stable when compared with the third part of the canon, the *Abhidharma* (Pali: *Abhidhamma*).

The evolution of the understanding of the middle way in its philosophical or metaphysical sense provides a clue to a series of successive developments within Buddhism that might otherwise remain opaque.

The Theravāda movement of Buddhism understood the doctrine of the middle way—understood as pratītya-samutpāda—as essentially applying to

the individual and explaining the individual's bondage to saṁsāra or the process of rebirth. The explanation took the form of a chain of causation consisting of twelve elements explained in direct order (*anuloma*) as follows: Ignorance (*avidyā*) causes volitional actions (*saṁskāras*), which cause acts of consciousness (*vijñāna*), which cause mind and body to appear (*nāma-rūpa*), which are the cause of the six sense-organs (*ṣaḍāyatana*). These cause contact (*sparśa*) with sense objects, which cause sensation (*vedanā*), which causes desire (*tṛṣṇā*); which causes grasping (*upādāna*), which in its own turn results in the desire for continuing existence (*bhava*), which is the cause of birth (*janma*). Birth in turn causes old age and death (*jarā-maraṇa*).

In the popular account of the life of the Buddha, he is believed to have beheld four signs prior to renouncing the world: a sick man, an old man, a dead man, and a monk—symbolizing the decrepitude of aging, the pathology of sickness, the phobia of death, and in the monk, the hope of transcending them. If traumatized by these experiences the Buddha renounced the world to find an answer to the question of suffering in life and death, then here we finally have the answer formulated for us, which could also be read in the reverse order (*pratiloma*) as follows: "old age and death" are caused by "birth," which is caused by "becoming"...and so on. There is, however, also a third perspective from which this causal nexus can be viewed—that of the process of rebirth. According to this interpretation of these twelve factors (*nidānas*), the first two belong to past existence, the next eight to the present, and the last two to future birth.

Thus the process of saṁsāra can be explained in terms of the middle way understood philosophically, the way out of which is also provided by the middle way understood morally. It is clear that there is an opposition here between saṁsāra and Nirvāṇa: One is in saṁsāra and in the end one steps out of it and attains Nirvāṇa by following the middle way or the Eightfold Path.

In Mahāyāna Buddhism the doctrine of the middle way was interpreted in a revolutionary way so as to eliminate the distinction between saṁsāra and Nirvāṇa. This point is explained in detail later under "Identity of Saṁsāra and Nirvāṇa."

The Saṅgha

It is vital to the proper understanding of Buddhism that the real *witness* to Buddhism is the Saṅgha, just as the Catholic church is the witness to Christianity in Catholicism. The most telling fact that confirms this view is the following: When we say that Buddhism disappeared from India, what we really mean is that the Buddhist Community is no more to be found in India, not that people there do not revere the Buddha or accept many of his doctrines.

The Buddhist Saṅgha plays a key role in the structure of Buddhism in relation to society and polity, despite its limited numbers, because it constitutes an elite corps. The proportion of the monks to the population varied with place and time. In the seventh century, Hsüan-tsang estimated that India had 520,000 monks, of which 80,000 belonged to Mahāyāna. In the fifth century, Śrī Laṅkā had 60,000 monks, according to Fa-hsien. In the same century China is believed to have had around 77,000 monks and nuns, the figure rising to 2,000,000 in the sixth century. Śrī Laṅkā had only about 8,000 monks left when Buddhist fortunes were at a low ebb in the nineteenth century, but the situation has since improved. In Tibet, prior to the Chinese occupation, a third of the male population is believed to have lived in monasteries, and in the heyday of Buddhism in Mongolia, the monasteries absorbed almost 45 percent of the population. But Thailand leads the world today in the size of the Saṅgha, which had around 250,000 members in 1959. Korea had 7,000 monks in 1947.

The latest figures available for some of the representative Buddhist countries are presented below in the form of a table, in which the figures for Śrī Laṅkā are an approximation.

Country	*Year*	*Monks*	*Nuns*
Japan	1989	64,809	48,490
Korea	1983	14,206	6,549
Thailand	1985	338,441	11,928
Burma	1990	143,072	23,017
Śrī Laṅkā	1992	30,000	3,000

It is also worth noting that in the Buddhist Community of North America there are at least as many women lay followers as men.[22]

The discussion of the Saṅgha as a structural element in Buddhism may be divided into three parts: its own structure; its structural relationship with society; and its structural relationship with polity.

The Buddhist Saṅgha is essentially a decentralized body. Even a handful of monks can start a chapter on their own, and they do not have to technically owe allegiance to any external authority. After his death, Buddha did not appoint a successor or any machinery for regulating the various chapters, except for the rules of the Vinaya. The existence of a monastic order, however, clearly demarcates it from the laity, without whose support the Order could not exist. The order, then, is seen as existing in a symbiotic relationship with the laity. The laity provides for the needs of the order, however minimal, and the order looks after both the spiritual and material welfare of the laity. The administering to spiritual welfare is obvious through sermons and so on, but it was also a matter of popular belief in Asia that

the monks possessed occult powers that affected the material well-being of the region. As an extreme example, one may cite the fact that on occasion the monks accompanied the army in Śrī Laṅkā, as the sight of Bhikkhus was "both a blessing and a protection." Though the distinction between the laity and the order was clear, it did not mean that the laity were totally outside the soteriological ambience of Buddhism. They could take the five vows instead of the ten for the monk, and for limited periods even observe the eight vows. Moreover, apart from the triple confession being common to all Buddhists—ordained or lay—the laity could earn merit and secure a better rebirth both in material and spiritual terms by serving the order. The construction and worship of relics was another way in which popular religiosity could be expressed; architectural remains from all over Asia attest to this. Three terms are significant in this connection: the stūpa, the *dagoba*, and the *pagoda*. The stūpa was a commemorative mound enshrining a relic; the dāgoba (Sanskrit: *dhātu-garbha*) referred to a stūpa distinguished by a spire while the pagoda, said to have evolved from the Chinese watchtower, was a storied structure. All are venerated.

Pilgrimages remained a major mode of religious participation for the monks, laity, and royalty alike. The following account of the Chinese monk Fa-hsien's visit to such a site in the fourth century evokes the sentiments associated with such pilgrimages before the world became a global village.

> When Fā-hien and Tao-ching first arrived at the Jetavana monastery, and thought how the World-honoured one had formerly resided there for twenty-five years, painful reflections arose in their minds. Born in a borderland, along with their like-minded friends, they had travelled through so many kingdoms; some of those friends had returned (to their own land), and some had (died), proving the impermanence and uncertainty of life; and to-day they saw the place where Buddha had lived now unoccupied by him. They were melancholy through their pain of heart, and the crowd of monks came out, and asked them from what kingdom they were come. "We are come," they replied, "from the land of Han." "Strange," said the monks with a sigh, "that men of a border country should be able to come here in search of our Law!" Then they said to one another, "During all the time that we, preceptors and monks, have succeeded to one another, we have never seen men of Han, followers of our system, arrive here."[23]

Numerous visits by the devout are attested to while king Aśoka had memorials erected at all the four main places sanctified by the Buddha story: where he was born (the Lumbinī Garden); where he achieved enlightenment (Bodh Gayā); where he preached the first sermon (Sārnāth); and where he passed away (Kusinārā). Aśoka commemorated his visit to the birthplace of the Buddha with the following inscription:

> By his sacred and gracious Majesty the King, consecrated 20 years, coming in person, was worshipped this spot, inasmuch as here was born the Buddha Sakyamuni. A stone bearing a figure was caused to be constructed and a pillar of stone also set up, to show that the Blessed One was born here.[24]

Because the Buddhist Saṅgha was not an ecclesiastical organization, it was open to the influence of the state, benign or malign, to a degree and extent that would not have been possible had it possessed its own structure. The state had to intervene at times to regulate the affairs of the church. Several patterns of relationship may be identified here: 1. mutual noninterference; 2. the assertion of autonomy vis-à-vis the state; 3. assertion of state authority vis-à-vis the Saṅgha, either through regulation or persecution; and 4. identification of the two.

The survey of the history of Buddhism discloses that all four were actualized in history.

1. Mutual noninterference: This was the pattern prior to the adoption of Buddhism virtually as a state religion by Aśoka;
2. Assertion of autonomy is represented by Hui-yüan's successful protest in the fifth century against monks having to bow to the Emperor during the period of the Chin dynasty;
3. The assertion of state authority over the Saṅgha in terms of support, regulation, or persecution is exemplified by the experience of Buddhism under the T'ang dynasty in China; and
4. The identification of the two is illustrated by the case of Lamaism in Tibet; the virtual fusion of the two in Korea (550–664); and by the northern Wei Empire of China, especially during 460–464.

In this last case, T'an-yao had five gigantic figures of the Buddha carved at Yün-kang, which were identified with the five emperors of the dynasty who were regarded as contemporary manifestations of the Buddha. To take a more modern example, the King of Thailand still appoints the Saṅgharāja or the Head of the Order.

The Buddhist Saṅgha was a vital presence in many cultures in the context of both society and polity, which often involved it in certain kinds of tension that had to be contained or resolved. This is most immediately apparent in the political sphere from the instances mentioned above; it was equally so in the social sphere, where the question of its relationship with the laity has always needed defining—as with the political authorities—and was defined in different ways. The Saṅgha had to mediate between being too far removed from the laity and being too closely involved with it, just as in the case of the political powers-that-be. In its own way it has been guided by the middle way here, interpreted in a dynamic sense, with movement in one direction often being corrected by movement in another.

One might thus contrast the eremitic ideal of living alone like "the horn of a rhinoceros" in early Buddhism with the laicization of the monastic order in Jodō Shinshū, in which the priests get married and lead a householder's life in order not to set themselves apart consciously—for Amida's grace, like rain and sunshine, falls on all alike. Nevertheless, these extreme examples apart, a more common phenomenon was an attempt at the assertion of the monastic ideal whenever it tended to be compromised by laicization or politicization. In Śrī Laṅkā, for instance, in the ninth century, the *paṃśukūlikas* revived the tradition of "from rags to robes," as opposed to the "rags to riches" approach of the settled monasteries. Similarly, when some monks became so prone to settling down as to be called city-dwellers (*grāmavāsī*), a movement toward living in the forests was initiated by other monks. When the monastic isolation of Theravāda started appearing excessive, on the other hand, Mahāyāna, with its greater concern for the laity, appeared as a corrective movement.

Even when the Saṅgha was founded it had to face problems of self-definition in Buddha's own lifetime. It is well known that Buddha permitted the ordination of nuns only hesitatingly and that some residue of resentment survived even its establishment, as is indicated by the charge brought against Ānanda for having influenced the Buddha's judgment in this matter. The trends within the Saṅgha can be epitomized in three words: accommodation, expansion, and purification. The introduction of women into the order was an accommodation, which also characterized its spread in the various cultures outside India. Expansion was the concomitant of accommodation and required occasional purification. The activities of Atīśa (eleventh century) and Tsoṅ-kha-pa (fifteenth century) in Tibet are well known in this connection. Similarly, the Lu-tsung or Vinaya school in China (sixth century) and the Ritsu or *Vinaya Piṭaka* school in Japan (eighth century) tried to retain an emphasis on monastic discipline.

Each major phase of development in Buddhism involved some monastic modification. For instance, the Theravāda movement was constantly on guard against the dilution of the monastic ideal and resisted change. There was resistance to compromises and subsequent attempts at modification toward earlier ideals, when such compromises occurred. However, the Mahāyāna signaled not only a change in attitude toward the laity but also introduced de facto changes in the monastic order, the most significant of which was perhaps the relaxation of the rule against keeping medicines. Tantra seemed to alter the basic ethos of the Saṅgha itself by developing cultic rules for closed groups and by inculcating a new morality, which from the earlier standpoint amounted to immorality. Finally, under Ch'an, a new set of rules was developed by Po-chang (720–814), the most significant feature of which was represented by the motto: "A day without work—a day without eating." Thus doctrinal, canonical, and monastic developments within Buddhism went hand in hand.

For Whom the Wheel Rolls? The Telos of the Structure

The three refuges—the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha—help us not only to explain the structure of Buddhism but also the changes it underwent. To carry the architectonic metaphor further: If the formal cause of a building is its concept, the material cause the substances involved in making it, and the efficient cause the architect, then one might identify the Dharma as the formal cause, the Saṅgha as the material cause, and the Buddha as the efficient cause of the edifice of Buddhism. But what about the final cause? Whatever it might be in the case of the building, in the case of Buddhism it is Nirvāṇa. In a sense, a house is a very appropriate metaphor for Nirvāṇa, which consists of the realization of Emptiness, for it is precisely the emptiness of a house, the emptiness within its walls, which makes it habitable—which makes it a house!

Emptiness

The Meaning of Emptiness

The ultimate reality in Buddhism is not God, or Being, or Substance; it is *Śūnyatā*, which is often translated as "Emptiness." Why does Buddhism take "emptiness" as the ultimate reality? What does Buddhism indicate by the term "emptiness"? To understand the real meaning of "emptiness," one must begin by emptying one's mind of the negative connotations the word has in the English language. In this regard the etymological explanation of the term Śūnyatā will be helpful. As Garma C. C. Chang discusses in his book *The Buddhist Teaching of Totality: The Philosophy of Hwa Yen Buddhism:*

> ... Śūnyatā is a combination of the stem *śūnya*, "void or empty," and a participle suffix, *tā*, here rendered as "ness." Śūnyatā is therefore translated as "Voidness or Emptiness." It is believed that *śūnya* was originally derived from the root *svi*, "to swell," and *śūnya* implies "relating to the swollen." As the proverb says, "A swollen head is an empty head," so something which looks swollen or inflated outside is usually hollow or empty inside. Śūnyatā suggests therefore that although things in the phenomenal world appear to be real and substantial outside, they are actually tenuous and empty within. They are not real but only appear

> to be real. Śūnyatā denotes the absence of any kind of self, or selfhood. All things are empty in that they lack a subsisting entity or self-being (Svabhāva).[25]

This is the connotation of the term Śūnyatā. The realization that "although things in the phenomenal world appear to be real and substantial outside, they are actually tenuous and empty within" was intuitively realized in *Prajñāpāramitā* literature and was logically or philosophically formulated by Nāgārjuna, especially in his important writing, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās*.[26] The basic purport of *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* and *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās* is that if a phenomenal thing is real as *svabhāva* (self-being or self-existent thing), then we cannot understand the world of causality and change in terms of arising and ceasing—which we are, in fact, constantly experiencing. Accordingly, the phenomenal thing does not exist as svabhāva. In terms of a self-existing thing, the phenomenal thing is empty.

The Buddhists believe that to be called "substantial or real" a thing must be able to exist on its own. However, if we look at the universe, we find that everything in it exists only in relation to something else. A son is a son only in relation to the father; and a father similarly in relation to the son. Fatherhood does not exist on its own but only in relation to something else. The Buddhists use the word svabhāva to denote existence on its own, that is, nondependent existence, which alone, according to them, qualifies as true or genuine existence. But if everything in the world depends on something else for being what it is, then nothing in the universe can be said to possess svabhāva or genuine self-existence; hence it is empty. For instance, we are familiar with the phenomenon of fire. We also know that fire requires fuel to burn. However, can fire ever exist without fuel? It cannot. And can fuel exist without fire? We may be tempted to say yes, but Buddhism asks us to pause for a moment before we do so. A log of wood cannot qualify as *fuel* if the phenomenon of fire did not exist. A log of wood would then remain merely a log of wood—it is the possibility of using it for fire that makes it into fuel. Hence it possesses no svabhāva or self-nature as fuel.

Through these examples of Nāgārjuna, we are led to a definition of svabhāva. That is: Svabhāva is that which is self-existing because it is not something that is produced dependently by something else. It is an enduring, permanent being without change, birth, and death. Svabhāva is a singular being without partition. In short, svabhāva in Nāgārjuna's sense is a self-existing, enduring, singular substance. Such a self-existing svabhāva is nothing but a substantialization or reification of the concept and does not exist anywhere outside of the realm of thinking and language. In our daily lives the role of language is so great that people easily reify or substantialize the word or concept as if there is an enduring, unchanging reality

corresponding to the word or concept. In other words, people often apply the universality and constancy implied in the meaning of a word to the object. Especially those who have entered into the realm of metaphysics constructed through reification of concepts think that the self-existing svabhāva is truth, while the realm of fact is merely phenomenal. In the days of Nāgārjuna, various forms of metaphysics of language, such as that of the Abhidharma philosophy, were prevailing. The *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* and *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās* were composed to break through such an attachment to metaphysics.

Concept, Language, and Reality

Let me explain this issue further by citing from our daily experience. People of America are used to calling California the "West Coast"; thus, they often think that California is an entity called "the West Coast," or a substance corresponding to the notion of "West Coast." However, although California may be called the West Coast from the viewpoint of Washington, D.C., New York, or Boston, West Coast is merely a relative notion, not a self-existing entity. If we look at California from the point of view of Hawaii or Japan, California is not the west coast but the east coast. Again, if we look at California from the point of view of British Columbia, California is not the west coast but the south coast. East and west, south and north—all are relative notions without enduring reality. There is neither absolute east nor absolute west; neither absolute south nor absolute north. Such a notion of absolute east or absolute west is simply a human conceptual construction; it is not real. Rather, it is nonsubstantial and empty. This is easily understood. Exactly the same understanding can be applied to the notion of right and left, high and low, big and small, and so on. There can be no absolute right, absolute high, or absolute big in reality.

However, when we move to the notions of good and evil, true and false, or beauty and ugliness, the situation is not so simple. Many philosophies and religions talk about the absolute good (for instance, the Supreme Good, or summum bonum) and absolute evil (original sin and eternal punishment). This is because, unlike the notions of east and west, high and low, big and small—which refer to the physical, objective, value-free dimension—the notions of good and evil, true and false, and beauty and ugliness denote the existential, subjective, value-oriented dimension. They are situated not merely in the ontic, or ontological, dimension (a dimension concerning how something *is*) but also in the axiological dimension (a dimension concerning how something *ought* to be). Due to this axiological nature, the notions of good and evil, true and false, and beauty and ugliness inevitably lead us to

the notion of absolute good, absolute evil, absolute truth, absolute falsehood, and so forth. Thus people believe, for instance, in the notion of absolute good as the enduring, unchangeable, and universal reality, and they take it to be the ultimate goal of their ethical life. However, Buddhism, particularly Nāgārjuna and his Mādhyamika philosophy, insists that such a notion of absolute good (and similar notions) is not unchangeable or enduring, but nonsubstantial and empty. This is because in the axiological dimension, the notion of absolute good, for instance, is nothing but a reification, or substantialization of the notion of good. To begin with, the very distinction of good and evil is, to Nāgārjuna, nothing but a reification or substantialization of a human concept that is devoid of reality. In short, all value judgments are, after all, unreal human conceptual constructions.

In Nāgārjuna all value judgments arise from *vikalpa*, human thinking, which is a discriminating, bifurcating, and dualistic way of thinking. To him, this vikalpa is the source of human suffering because people are attached to it and grasp discriminating and dualistic thoughts as true and real. If we are free from vikalpa and awaken to the emptiness of dualistic discrimination, then we are emancipated from suffering through the realization of Śūnyatā. In the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās*, chapter 18, Nāgārjuna[27] states the following:

> On account of the destruction of pain (*kleśa*) of action there is release; for pains of action exist for him who constructs them. These pains result from phenomenal extension (*prapañca*); but this phenomenal extension comes to a stop by emptiness. (18:5)
>
> When the domain of thought has been dissipated, "that which can be stated" is dissipated. Those things which are unoriginated and not terminated, like *nirvāṇa*, constitute the Truth (*dharmatā*). (18:7)
>
> "Not caused by something," "peaceful," "not elaborated by discursive thought," "indeterminate," "undifferentiated"; such are the characteristics of true reality (*tattva*). (18:9)

Prapañca, here translated as phenomenal extension and discursive thought, originally indicated diversity or plurality including complex development of thinking and language. To Nāgārjuna, prapañca implies verbal pluralism or fiction of language. Vikalpa arises from prapañca because human thinking is nothing but a fiction unrelated to reality. The process of human knowledge based on language is a perversion. It is necessary for us to retrogress from attachment to thinking and judgment to the realm of nondiscursive intuition. In so doing we face reality prior to language. This is the realm of "emptiness." Emptiness indicates the reality of the world in intuition apart from language; therefore, there is emancipation from suffering caused by attachment to discrimination. Accordingly, Emptiness is not only a philosophical notion, it is also a religious and soteriological one.

Reification in the Religious Dimension

Earlier in this section we saw the problem of reification and substantialization of human concepts in the ontic, or ontological, dimension and in the axiological dimension as well. Also, it was suggested that we must be liberated from such reification of human concepts through awakening to the nonsubstantial emptiness of phenomenal things to realize true reality.

Exactly the same issue is involved when we move from the realm of ethics to the realm of religion. In the axiological realm, or the value-oriented realm—such as good and evil, truth and falsehood, beauty and ugliness—the criteria for value judgments are crucial. Therefore, a value judgment and its criteria are easily reified, or substantialized. However, the realm of religion is beyond such value judgment because it is based on the unconditional love of God or the unlimited compassion of Buddha, which are supported by the divine will of God or supreme wisdom. Unlike the realm of ethics (good and evil), the realm of learning (the true and the false), and the realm of aesthetics (the beautiful and the ugly), the realm of religion is free from the reification or substantialization of value judgments. For instance, in Christianity Jesus says, "I have not come to call respectable people, but outcasts" (Matt. 9:13, *Good News Bible*). In Buddhism, Shinran (1173–1262) emphasized the unconditional compassion of Amida Buddha. He declared, "Even a good person is saved in the Pure Land. How much more so is an evil person."[28]

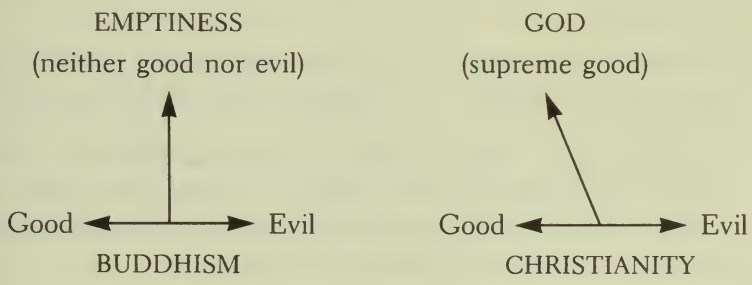
Thus, in both Christianity and Buddhism, value judgment is not only transcended, but it is also reversed. However, if we go a step further, we see a significant difference between Christianity and Buddhism in regard to value judgment and the understanding of ultimate reality. In Christianity, although all human-made value judgments (including wisdom in the sense of the Greeks) are transcended by God, God himself is believed to be the "only wise God" (Rom. 16:27) and the "judge of all" (Heb. 12:23). Indeed, God, the ultimate reality in Christianity, is believed to be the Supreme Good beyond the duality of good and evil and the source of all value judgments. The will of God is believed to be self-existing. By contrast, in Buddhism the ultimate reality, Nirvāṇa, is not the supreme good or the judge of all, but that which is *neither* good *nor* evil. This is because in Buddhism the ultimate reality is to be realized as nondual by *completely* overcoming all duality.

It is clear that the Christian notion of God is not merely transcendent. In terms of *homoousia*, God is fully immanent and fully transcendent in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. However, this paradoxical identity of immanence and transcendence, the human and the divine (both truly human and truly God), is realized without the clear realization of *neither* immanent *nor*

transcendent, *neither* human *nor* divine. The paradoxical identity is realized somewhat objectively without the negation of negation, that is, absolute negation. Hence, although through faith in Jesus Christ a Christian *participates in* the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, he or she does not become *identical* with God except in some forms of Christian mysticism. In this sense the Christian notion of God is fundamentally transcendent and is not completely free from reification and substantialization. Here I am using the terms reification and substantialization in a special sense. It is definitely clear that the Christian notion of God is not a reification or substantialization of the divine—especially in the Trinitarian notion of God, which is dialectical, reciprocal, and necessarily understood in terms of Father, Son, and Spirit. However, are this Trinitarian God and the human self completely reciprocal; are this Trinitarian God and each and every nonhuman creature also completely reciprocal?[29]

On the other hand, Buddhism clearly realizes the possibility of reification and substantialization in the religious dimension. In the first place, when Buddhism transcends the axiological dimension, it overcomes all duality completely and attains a nondualistic position. This means that both ends of duality, for instance good and evil, are equally overcome through the double negation of the two ends—i.e., good and evil. This double negation of both ends of duality does not entail the supreme good, but that which is neither good nor evil. This is the reason why in Buddhism ultimate reality is not God as the supreme good, but Emptiness, which is neither good nor evil.

The preceding is the first important difference between Christianity and Buddhism. This difference derives from the fact that Buddhism *completely* overcomes the duality of value judgment in the axiological dimension through the negation of negation, and thus reaches the religious dimension, which is entirely free from even the notion of absolute good. Christianity, however, transcends value judgment in the axiological dimension, not necessarily through the realization of negation of negation; that is, not through completely overcoming duality itself, but by moving toward the extreme point of the good.



Again, this difference takes place because, in Buddhism, the nonsubstantiality and emptiness of the notion of good and evil are clearly realized, and reification and substantialization of any sort are carefully rejected; whereas, in Christianity, the nonsubstantiality and emptiness of the notion of good are not categorically recognized due to Christianity's emphasis on divine justice. And, when the notion of good is absolutized, some reification and substantialization are inevitable. Here we must notice how crucial the realization of nonsubstantiality and emptiness of the notion of good is, even when it is absolutized, for us to attain ultimate reality by going beyond any possible reification and substantialization.

Self-emptying of Emptiness

The second important difference between Christianity and Buddhism concerning ultimate reality is as follows. In Buddhism, Emptiness as ultimate reality must be emptied. However important Emptiness may be, if it is represented and we attach ourselves to it as "emptiness," it is not true Emptiness. In Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, emptiness that is dimly perceived is likened to a snake wrongly grasped, or (magical) knowledge incorrectly applied.[30] Emptiness that is objectified and conceptualized must be emptied. The self-negation, or self-emptying, of Emptiness is essential for the authentic realization of Emptiness. By contrast, in Christianity the *kenosis* (self-emptying) of Christ is emphasized (Phil. 2:5–8), but not necessarily the *kenosis* of God.[31]

Christian theology generally states that the Son of God became a human being without God ceasing to be God. In his book *Does God Exist?* Hans Küng says:

> The distinction of the Son of God from God the Father, his obedience and subordination to the Father, is of course upheld everywhere in the New Testament. The Father is "greater" than he is and there are things that are known only to the Father and not to him. Neither is there any mention anywhere in the New Testament of the incarnation of God himself.[32]

From what has been discussed, it is hoped that the following three points become clear in regard to the Buddhist notion of Emptiness.

1. To attain ultimate reality, Buddhism rejects the reification and substantialization of human-made concepts and emphasizes the importance of realizing the nonsubstantiality and emptiness of all dualistic notions in the ontic and axiological dimensions.

2. Thus, ultimate reality in Buddhism is not God, Being, or Substance; rather, it is "Emptiness," which is freed from any reification and substantialization in the religious dimension.
3. This Emptiness itself must be emptied by rejecting any attachment to emptiness. True Emptiness is not a static state of everything's nonsubstantiality, but rather a dynamic function of emptying everything, including itself.

When Buddhism declares that everything without exception is empty, these three points are implied.

Emptiness and Dependent Coorigination[33]

The notion of Emptiness is not nihilistic. It has a positive and affirmative aspect. What is ultimately negated in the teaching of Emptiness is the Self (Ātman) and any self-substantiated entity (svabhāva). Through the negation of the Self and the self-substantiated entity, true reality manifests itself. Although negation is an essential factor of Mādhyamika philosophy, if it is a mere negation, Mādhyamika philosophy would be nihilistic. It is the law of dependent coorigination (pratītya-samutpāda) that manifests itself through the negation of Ātman and svabhāva, that is, through the realization of the emptiness of everything. In Nāgārjuna, emptiness and dependent coorigination are synonymous. This is why he states in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās*, chapter 24,[34] that:

> The "originating dependently" we call "emptiness"; this apprehension, i.e., taking into account [all other things], is the understanding of the middle way. (24:18)
>
> Since there is no *dharma* whatever originating independently, no *dharma* whatever exists which is not empty. (24:19)

Indeed, it is the central task for Mādhyamika philosophy to penetrate into the truth of dependent coorigination.

Dependent coorigination presents the fundamental standpoint of early Buddhism and is its most basic teaching. Historically speaking, the teaching of dependent coorigination has been continually maintained from early Buddhism to Mādhyamika. In this process of development, contrary to the Hīnayāna interpretation of dependent coorigination, which had been stereotyped, Mādhyamika philosophy revived the original dynamic nature of dependent coorigination on the basis of the full realization of Emptiness. Although the teaching of dependent coorigination indicates causality (i.e., a causal relationship from cause to effect), the dependent coorigination

as understood by Nāgārjuna does not signify a process from a self-existing cause to a self-existing effect. As he states in *Kārikās* 24:19, "there is no *dharma* whatever originating independently, no *dharma* whatever exists which is not empty." Both the dharma called the cause and the dharma called the effect are equally devoid of a self-existent entity. We know that fuel is the cause of fire and fire the effect of fuel. Let us now ask the further question, Which came first, fire or fuel? If we say fire came first, we face the logical absurdity of fire burning without "fuel." If we say fuel came first, we face the logical absurdity of identifying a cause without knowing about the effect. If we say they appeared together, then all fuels will have to be simultaneously on fire. In Nāgārjuna, dependent coorigination in the true sense is realized when the self-existent entity of each and every thing is completely negated and realized to be empty.

In the first chapter of the *Mūlamadhyamikakārikās*, which may be entitled "An Analysis of Conditioning Causes (*pratyaya*)," [35] Nāgārjuna states:

> Never are any existing things found to originate from themselves, from something else, from both, or from no cause. (1:1)

However, this statement does not deny "originating." Fire does empirically "originate" in fuel. Rather, it denies the existence of any self-substantiated entity. In other words, that statement simply indicates the function of originating dependently without any independent entity. Thus we come to know that in Nāgārjuna, the realization of Emptiness is inseparably connected with the law of dependent coorigination.

The Two Truths Theory

In Mādhyamika philosophy, this identity of emptiness and dependent coorigination is always linked with the two truths theory.[36] You might respond to what has been said above with bafflement and complain that all this philosophizing runs counter to your daily experience of life. No amount of theory can refute the fact that you actually use fuel and fire to barbecue. It is the nature of the fire to cook (however, can it cook itself?), and you enjoy your steak, despite all this talk about both fuel and fire being empty.

The Buddhists do not deny that our everyday ideas of things such as fire and fuel possess practical efficacy. All they say is that they cannot stand philosophical scrutiny. We see the sun rise every morning. The astronomer sees it rise too, but the astronomer knows that this experience will not bear scientific scrutiny because the sun is a fixed star. It cannot rise. It only appears to rise because of the rotation of the earth. Thus we are operating at two levels: From the pragmatic viewpoint, we see the sun rise and also say the sun rises, but from an astronomical viewpoint we deny that this happens.

The Buddhists similarly speak of two levels of truth: the conventional and the ultimate. Conventionally, the sun rises; really, it does not. Conventionally, objects exist; really, they are empty.

Dependent coorigination, before or without the realization of Emptiness, indicates the worldly, conventional truth of birth and death transmigration—that is, the realm of saṁsāra. Speaking from the standpoint of ultimate truth, this realm of transmigration, or saṁsāra, is the realm of suffering based on ignorance. However, in our everyday life, the notion of dependent coorigination, as understood in terms of causality and transmigration, is useful and true conventionally. Speaking from the worldly, or conventional, standpoint, saṁsāra is not merely unreal but includes conventional truth. But the process of saṁsāra (however conventionally true it may be) is rooted in fundamental ignorance and full of suffering, because the causal relationship is understood there without the realization of Emptiness. Thus, it is necessary to overcome ignorance in order to awaken to wisdom; it is essential to be emancipated from transmigration to attain Nirvāṇa—a blissful freedom from birth and death.

This is why Buddhism emphasizes not abiding in saṁsāra, or being attached to the realm of transmigration. In this detachment, the transsaṁsāric realm is opened up, and ultimate truth is fully realized. However, this does not entail the denial of dependent coorigination; rather, the notion of dependent coorigination is restored in a higher dimension. If ultimate truth is simply distinguished from conventional truth, and the goal of Buddhist life is taken to be beyond mundane life, then it is not the *true* realization of ultimate truth. For this kind of ultimate truth still stands in a relative relationship to conventional truth and is nothing but an extension from conventional truth. Ultimate truth is not merely transcendent, apart from mundane life. Without attaching to the distinction between ultimate and conventional truth, ultimate truth encompasses mundane life and validates its conventional meaning. The two truths theory is not intended merely to be a refutation of worldly, or conventional, truth in favor of ultimate truth, but rather, it indicates the dynamic structure and interrelationship of the two truths.[37]

Identity of Saṁsāra and Nirvāṇa

The identity of emptiness and dependent coorigination and the dynamic interrelation between the two truths in Mādhyamika philosophy are realized fully and religiously in the Mahāyāna teaching of "Saṁsāra-as-it-is is Nirvāṇa."[38]

The goal of Buddhist life is Nirvāṇa, which is to be attained by overcoming saṁsāra. To be emancipated from suffering, one should not be attached

to saṁsāra. "Throughout its long history, however, Mahāyāna Buddhism has always emphasized 'Do not abide in Nirvāṇa' as much as 'Do not abide in *saṁsāra*.' If one abides in so-called Nirvāṇa by transcending *saṁsāra*, it must be said that one is not yet free from attachment, an attachment to Nirvāṇa, and is confined by the discrimination between Nirvāṇa and *saṁsāra*."[39] One is still "selfish because that person loftily abides in his or her own 'enlightenment' apart from the sufferings of other *saṁsāra* bound sentient beings. True selflessness and compassion can be realized only by transcending Nirvāṇa to return to and work in the midst of sufferings of the ever-changing world."[40] "Therefore, Nirvāṇa in the Mahāyāna sense, while transcending saṁsāra, is nothing but the realization of *saṁsāra* as *saṁsāra*, no more no less, through the complete returning to *saṁsāra* itself. This is why, in Mahāyāna Buddhism, it is often said of true Nirvāṇa that, '*saṁsāra* as-it-is is Nirvāṇa.'" Nirvāṇa is the real "source of *prajñā* (wisdom) because it is entirely free from the discriminating mind and thus is able to see everything in its uniqueness and distinctiveness without any sense of attachment. It is also the source of *karuṇā* (compassion) because it is unselfishly concerned with the salvation of all others in *saṁsāra* through one's own returning to *saṁsāra*."[41] Thus, Mahāyāna Buddhism emphasizes "not abiding in *saṁsāra* for the sake of wisdom; not abiding in Nirvāṇa to fulfil compassion." This complete no-abiding and free moving from saṁsāra to Nirvāṇa, from Nirvāṇa to saṁsāra is the true Nirvāṇa in the Mahāyāna sense. And this is the soteriological meaning of "Emptiness."[42]

How Buddhism Works

The Importance of the Saṅgha

In the study of Buddhism, the analysis of its monastic institutions seems dull and pale when compared with the charismatic glamour of Buddha's life or the panoramic grandeur of his teachings as they unfold through the ages. But just as the foundation of a building almost invisibly supports the grand superstructure, it is the Saṅgha that sustains Buddhism. So long as the Saṅgha functions, Buddhism works; when the Saṅgha falls, Buddhism collapses.

The role of the Saṅgha in the context of Buddhism is, of course, apparent even to a casual observer. In fact it is quite visible, whether it be in the orange robes of the monks in Śrī Laṅkā, the mauve robes of those in Tibet, the dark brown robes of those in Vietnam, or the black robes of the Zen

monks in Japan. But what tends to get overlooked is the Saṅgha's crucial role in sustaining Buddhism as a religious system. To gain a full appreciation of what is involved here, the following points need to be borne in mind.

1. Buddhism was the first major religious tradition in history (with the possible exception of the Jainas, a sect of ancient India) to institutionalize monasticism. Wandering religious mendicants were known in India as far back as the ṚgVedic period, but it was the Buddha who organized a regular community of monks. It was a major development in the history of religious ideas and one that, like all useful innovations, caught on rapidly causing other religions to follow suit. Although eremitic asceticism had become part of Hinduism by the time Buddhism arose, Buddha's contribution lay in providing it with a cenobitic dimension.[43]

2. Many scholars have made observations to the effect that "the continuity of the monastic organization has been the only constant factor in Buddhist history" or that "what unifying element there is in Buddhism, Mahāyāna and non-Mahāyāna, is provided by the monks and their adherence to the monastic rule." This is an observation so elementary in its nature that it risks being overlooked on account of its obviousness. Buddhism is not designed to function as a religious system without a monastic order—even if the monks themselves decide to lead the life of householders, as in some Pure Land sects.

3. When the Buddha predicted the decline of Buddhism, the main emphasis in the description rested on the decline of the Saṅgha, so that first "monks will not be able to practise analytical insights,"[44] then proper conduct will disappear with "the breaking of the moral habit by the last monk or on the extinction of his life,"[45] and so on.

4. When the Buddha died he did not appoint a successor. The *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* (VI.1) contains the decisive proclamation: "The Doctrine and Discipline, Ānanda, which I have taught and enjoined upon you is to be your teacher when I am gone." According to J. Kashyap, "within the lifetime of the Buddha, the rules governing the *saṅgha*—not only for the individual but also for the community as a whole—had been so framed and the conduct so perfectly outlined, that there was no need to have a supreme chief, or so to say, a Buddhist pope, after the passing away of the master." Kashyap also regards the Buddhist Saṅgha as "the earliest monastic institution governed by perfect democratic principles which continues to this day."[46] Even after a certain element of exaggeration is allowed for, it is clear that the Buddha did have sufficient confidence in the Saṅgha as a communal body to dispense with the role of a personal leader after him. History, by and large, has justified that confidence.

5. It is clear from the accounts of the Buddhist pilgrims, especially Buddhist pilgrims to India, that often monks who followed *different* sects or systems resided in the *same* monastery side by side. "In theory a monastery could happily contain monks espousing quite different doctrines so long as they *behaved* in the same way—crucially, so long as they adhered to the same monastic code."[47]

6. The heinousness associated with causing a split in the Saṅgha is also an indication of the significance attached to it as the structural foundation of Buddhism. The reasons for the split also often have more to do with differences regarding rules than differences regarding doctrines.

7. It may be argued that the laity always comprised a sizable number of Buddhists. It, however, always took its moral cues, if not its code, from the monks and was never disjoined from the Saṅgha. In fact, technically it constitutes part of it. It seems clear, therefore, that "in spite of considerable diversity in Buddhism there is a relative unity and stability in the moral code and in particular in the order of monks (and, in Mahāyāna countries, nuns)."[48]

8. The Buddhist use of skillful means was alluded to earlier. It might justly be asked: What, if anything, prevented "skillful means" from degenerating into rank opportunism or mere laxity? The crux of the matter here was to chart a middle way between the Scylla of moral laxity and the Charbydis of arbitrary doctrinal speculation. In the matter of doctrinal speculation there "was one factor which limited and restrained the 'skill in means' of these men, and that was the fact that before they wrote their books their minds had been remoulded and disciplined by many years of meditation on traditional lines."[49] In the matter of moral laxity, one can now understand why Tantra has so often been blamed—fairly or unfairly—for Buddhism's decline in India. The persistence of the Vinaya sects and the periodical purifications of the monastic order may reflect a recognition of the crucial significance of the Saṅgha as well.

It must be constantly borne in mind that the Buddhist Saṅgha is regularly described as *Cātuddisa Bhikkhu-Saṅgha* or the Saṅgha of the Four Quarters. It never forsook its claims to universality either in terms of admission or in terms of mission, despite the fact that it consisted of many separate and self-contained communities and of self-governing colonies of monks and nuns. In a very vital sense, the Saṅgha through history has been an extended presence of the Buddha, just as the Christian church is of Jesus Christ. Religions retain a semblance of unity through their doctrinal and historical variety by acknowledging the shared source of authority, which for the Buddhists was represented by the Buddha, the Dharma, and the

Saṅgha. In Buddha's lifetime, that sequence represented the actual order; after the Buddha the order still held, but in reverse.

The Importance of Skillful Means

It is quite clear then that Buddhism works through the exercise of skillful means by the Saṅgha as a corporate body and by its individual members.[50] "The foundation of Buddhism is compassion; its door is convenience."

Four patterns of the exercise of such skillful means by the Saṅgha can be identified for each of the four main faces, facets, or phases of Buddhism we have singled out for a closer look: Theravāda, Mahāyāna, Tantra, and Zen.

In Theravāda Buddhism, though the Arhat ideal was in the forefront of the tradition, we find the Arhats employing skillful means. One must keep in mind that skillful means and compassion were always closely associated. For instance, when one Arhat, Pūrṇa, wanted to go to a somewhat rude frontier area known as Śroṇāparānta to propagate Buddhism, the Buddha warned him that he might be abused, struck, beaten up, and even killed—in that order. It was when the Arhat replied that if abused he would be thankful the inhabitants did not strike him, if struck he would be thankful that they did not beat him up, and so on, that the Buddha permitted him to preach among them.[51]

Mahāyāna Buddhism placed the Bodhisattva ideal in the foreground. There too the Bodhisattva is described as practicing skillful means, to the extent that in one case a Bodhisattva forsakes celibacy cultivated over "four billion two hundred million years" to not disappoint a passionate admirer. He yields to passion out of compassion.[52]

Tantra gave pride of place to the *Siddha*. The Siddha practices his skillful means by taking a personal interest in the spiritual development of his pupil, as Mar-pa did in the case of Mi-la-ras-pa or Milarepa (1040–1123), when he forced him to labor for twelve years to overcome the evil karma of practicing sorcery.[53]

In Zen Buddhism, the *Roshi* is the ideal type who embodies sudden enlightenment and employs skillful means to provoke it in the disciples. "Zen created the method (*upāya*) of 'direct pointing' in order to escape from this vicious circle [of abstract thought], in order to thrust the real immediately in our notice. When reading a difficult book it is of no help to think, 'I *should* concentrate,' for one thinks about concentration instead of what the book has to say, likewise, in studying or practising Zen it is of no help to think about Zen."[54] Alan Watts relates how "Professor Irving Lee, of Northwestern University, used to hold up a matchbox before a class, asking 'What is this?' The students would usually drop squarely into the trap and

say, 'A matchbox!' At this the professor would say, 'No, no! It's *this*—' throwing the matchbox at the class, and adding, '*Matchbox* is a noise, is *this* a noise?'"[55] Zen is replete with such applications of skillful means.

The Saṅgha and Skillful Means

In the previous section, various instances of the application of skillful means at the individual level were provided, and this is indeed one way and one level at which we can see how Buddhism works. Buddhism as a religious system works at a corporate level through the application of upāya by the Saṅgha to a whole society or culture. This is done through an elite corps constantly reorganizing itself and devising new skills to deliver the message of the Buddha in different times and climes. The movement is always toward Nirvāṇa, which is achieved by ridding one at the moral level of selfishness, and at a profounder level of a perceptual error of belief in Self, of which selfishness is a psychological expression. The work began with the Theravāda tradition and was continued by Mahāyāna, which called itself "great because it comprises such a wealth of *upāya*, or methods for the realization of *Nirvāṇa*. These methods range from the sophisticated dialectic of Nāgārjuna, whose object is to free the mind from all fixed conceptions, to the Sukhāvatī or Pure Land doctrine of liberation through faith in the power of Amitābha, the Buddha of Boundless Light, who is said to have attained his awakening many aeons before the time of Gautama. They include even the Tantric Buddhism of Medieval India,"[56] and the Way of Zen.

The Saṅgha and the Doctrine of "No-Self"

Not only does Buddhism work through the Saṅgha, utilizing skillful means to ultimately lead one to the doctrine of No-Self and through it to emancipation, but also the Saṅgha might itself be a product of this doctrine. Many religions in ancient India observed the practice of settling down at one place for the duration of the rainy season (*āvāsa*), but none of these except Buddhism developed the institution of the monastery or *vihāra*. Although why this should have happened is not clear, the suggestion is worth considering that "the characteristically Buddhist doctrine of selflessness (*anatta*) may have had, on its reverse side, an emphasis on a wider community of being where the notion of *anatta* could be strengthened, and where a common life could be enjoyed which reduced need for personal possessions and hence personal identity to a minimum."[57]

Buddhism in the Study of Religion

Buddhism as a Missionary Religion

By one account, the religions of the world can be divided into two categories: missionary religions and nonmissionary religions. Three religious traditions can be unambiguously placed in the category of missionary religions: Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. As missionary religions, each one of these came into contact with many different local and national cultures, and mutual interaction between these international religions and the various national cultures they spread over was inevitable. Although all the three missionary religions have accommodated themselves to the national cultures in which they found themselves, these three religions defined their missionary roles in slightly different ways. These self-definitions affected their patterns of accommodation with national cultures.

By developing a hint provided by Max Weber (1864–1920), a famous sociologist of religion, we can distinguish between emissary, promissory, and commissary missionary activity, depending on the degree of pressure with which the obligation to convert others is felt by those belonging to the tradition. It is clear that, on this reckoning, Buddhism would fall into the emissary category, Christianity would fall into the promissory category, and Islam into the commissary, if the distinction among the three is drawn as follows. Emissary missionary activity involves establishing a presence and minimizing the differences between one's own religion and the religion one encounters while retaining one's commitment to one's own tradition. Promissory missionary activity involves not merely establishing a presence but also promising more to the proselyte; it also involves emphasizing the differences between one's religion and those of others. Commissary missionary activity places the followers of a religion under a commission to convert and maximizes its difference from other religions.

This typology creates room for the suggestion that with whichever cultural tradition Buddhism interacted as a religious tradition, because of its emissary character, it assumed a national form to a far greater extent than missionary religions of the promissory or commissary types. This suggestion may be examined in light of the view that Buddhism underwent more or less five clearly defined stages as it spread outside India to other countries, especially to the north. The first stage was marked by the translation of Buddhist texts into the languages of the cultures involved. This laid the foundation for the second stage when Buddhist thought had to be brought

into meaningful relationship with systems of thought already prevalent in the culture. The third stage marked an attempt to retain the Indian connection as Buddhist thought was assimilated to the local condition. Then came the "fourth phase, which is perhaps the most important of all, and normally took 600 years to reach. A truly Chinese, Japanese, Tibetan Buddhism, which no longer did violence to the national character, asserted itself—in China with the Ch'an sect, in Japan in the Kamakura period, in Tibet with the Kahgyudpas and Gelugpas."[58] This was usually followed by a period of decay or inertia.

As it underwent these phases, however, Buddhism went through a cycle of sorts. It started as a cult, then became a sect, then a denomination, then a church, and then a sect again (or even a cult) as a variation of a theme with which the sociologist Ernst Troeltsch (1865–1923) has made us familiar. This process, however, was not as colorless as it might seem, and Buddhism acquired its own particular hue in the different countries and cultures where it made itself at home. These hues may be identified with broad strokes.

Buddhism has acquired a characteristically different hue in the various parts of the world where it has established itself. In *Śrī Laṅkā*, for instance, it has become strongly tinged with Sinhalese nationalism, to the extent that when an emperor mourned the loss of life involved in repelling an invasion, he was told by the Saṅgha that no injury or loss of life was involved except for the injury accidentally caused to some monks in the course of the campaign. In *Burma* it has taken a conservative hue and has preserved the ancient tradition of holding Buddhist councils. The Sixth Great Council was held in Rangoon in 1956. Indeed, of all the Theravāda countries, Burma is said to preserve the tradition in its purest form. In *Thailand* the institution of temporary ordination of monks has become well established, which is also allowed in Burma but not permitted in Śrī Laṅkā. Thailand is also distinguished by possessing the largest number of monks and novices among the Theravāda countries and by the insistence that the King must be Buddhist. *Cambodia* seesawed between Hinduism and Buddhism and then between Buddhism of the Mahāyāna and Theravāda varieties. *Vietnam* ultimately became as much if not more Confucian than Mahāyāna in its orientation.

In other parts of Asia a similar pattern can be identified. If in Śrī Laṅkā Buddhism became an ally of nationalism, under Nichiren (1222–1282) in *Japan* it almost became a form of expansionism. The sect he founded aimed at spreading true Buddhism from Japan all over the world, thus presenting us with "a uniquely Japanese form of Buddhism, having no prototype in China." In *China*, Buddhism became one of the Three Teachings—a very different mode of accommodation—with the understanding that Taoism provided the model for relating to the natural realm, Confucianism to the human realm, and Buddhism to the transcendental realm.

Buddhism and the Dialogue of World Religions

The various ways in which Buddhism adjusted to its host cultures are a tribute to its "skill in means" or, in more modern idiom, to its ability to engage in constructive dialogue with other religions and cultures. The subject of dialogue is moving into the forefront in the study of religion, and in this respect the study of Buddhism acquires special significance. For above all, Buddhist thought emphasizes the interrelatedness of everything and thus provides a philosophical grounding for dialogue. It not only prepares us in this manner philosophically to engage in dialogue, but it also prepares us practically to face the consequences of dialogue. The dialogical interaction of religions invariably, if imperceptibly, involves change. Any encounter, however subtly, changes both the parties involved; by emphasizing the fact that "there is nothing which changes, change is the thing," Buddhism prepares us mentally to be ready for such change. It is perhaps not an accident that the two religions which have been most effectively engaging in dialogue in recent times are Buddhism and Christianity—two traditions with prolonged experience of functioning in religiously plural environments. Buddhism, however, has tended to feel more at ease with such plurality, and its contribution to dialogue is the attitude that it brings to it. A leading living exponent of the tradition, the eminent Buddhist leader of Thailand, Buddhadāsa, represents this attitude, which may be illustrated through the example of water. He points out that at one stage one can distinguish between different kinds of water such as rainwater, ditchwater, well water, underground water, and so on. However, if the pollutants from the water are removed or its location overlooked, these differences disappear and all of them can equally be called water. If one proceeds further along this course, pure water itself turns out to be two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen. "Hydrogen and oxygen are not water. The substance we have been calling water has disappeared. It is void, empty."[59] David C. Chappell uses this simile to point out that Buddhadāsa distinguishes among three levels in terms of which religious pluralism may be understood: 1. conventional distinctions, 2. shared essence, and 3. voidness. According to him it is the identification of the second level which separates Buddhadāsa from the nondualists who see no difference whatever among religions.

We noted the distinction drawn in Mahāyāna Buddhism between two levels of truth. "It is this intermediate stage between conventional truth and the highest truth that is Buddhadāsa's contribution to our quest for a Buddhist attitude toward other religions. At this level, the distinctions between religions are seen as temporary, partial, and secondary in comparison to the more important understanding of the kinship between different religious people. This provides the most complete approach to other religions ever articulated by a Buddhist and provides a basis for differentiation, for parity

and collaboration, and for transcendence. Accordingly, we who work in the field of interreligious study and dialogue are deeply indebted to Venerable Bhikkhu Buddhadāsa for his clear leadership in our new world of religious pluralism."[60]

To the process of dialogue in a world characterized by religious pluralism Buddhism brings two rare commodities: a passion for realization and compassion for all living beings, which can blend in an unexpectedly edifying manner. This becomes clear from an incident recounted by Edward Conze:

> Once I had lunch with a Mongol Lama, and tried to get him vegetarian food. He declared that it was quite unnecessary, "We Mongol monks always eat meat, because there is nothing else." So I said, "Well, I only thought of the *Vinaya*," meaning the monastic disciplinary code. But he rejoined at once, "Yes, we know that by habitually eating meat we act against the ordinances of the Lord Buddha. As a result of our sin we may well be reborn in hell. But it is our duty to bring the dharma to the Mongol people, and so we just have to take the consequences as they come."[61]

Should the Mongols be deprived of heaven (read Nirvāṇa) just because one will go to hell?

Recommended Reading

Masao Abe. *Zen and Western Thought.* Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985. A modern introduction to Zen.

Kenneth K. S. Ch'en. *Buddhism: The Light of Asia.* Woodbury, NY: Barron's Educational Series, 1968. A remarkably lucid exposition of Buddhism in general as religion and culture.

Edward Conze. *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development.* New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959. A valuable survey of Buddhism especially in terms of doctrinal developments.

———. *A Short History of Buddhism.* Bombay: Chetana. 1960. A comprehensive and incisive survey of Buddhism as a historical phenomenon.

———. "Buddhism: The Mahāyāna." In *The Concise Encyclopedia of Living Faiths,* edited by R. C. Zaehner. Boston: Beacon Press, 1959. The best short single introduction to Mahāyāna Buddhism without going into its philosophical complexities.

Roger J. Corless. *The Vision of Buddhism: The Space Under the Tree.* New York: Paragon House, 1989. An engaging introduction to a vast tradition that presents Buddhism as a process of "transformation disguised as information."

Keiji Nishitani. *Religion and Nothingness.* Translated by Jan van Bragt. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982. A pioneering work by a renowned philosopher on the larger implications of the doctrine of Emptiness.

Walpola Sri Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught* (revised edition). New York: Grove Press, 1974. The best single introduction to the key concepts of Theravāda Buddhism.

Edward J. Thomas. *The Life of Buddha as Legend and History.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949. The life of the Buddha presented in its changing perceptions within Buddhism in the light of critical scholarship.

———. *The History of Buddhist Thought.* New York: Barnes & Noble, 1971. A standard and useful account of the history of Buddhist thought.

Paul Williams. *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations.* London and New York: Routledge, 1989. A sophisticated attempt at tackling the formidable task of charting the intellectual currents of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Notes

1. I would like to thank the editor for his cooperation in the preparation of this chapter apart from the section on Emptiness.
2. See Walpola Sri Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught* (New York: Grove Press, 1974), 51.
3. Edward Conze, *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), 18.
4. Conze, *Buddhism.*
5. Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught,* 26.
6. Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught,* 58.
7. Conze, *A Short History of Buddhism,* xi–xii.
8. Conze, *A Short History of Buddhism,* xi. Some words have been cited in the lowercase.
9. R. C. Zaehner, ed., *The Concise Encyclopedia of Living Faiths* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959), 416.
10. Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught,* 26.
11. Edward Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India; Three Phases of Buddhist Philosophy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967), 206.
12. Kenneth K. S. Ch'en, *Buddhism: The Light of Asia* (Woodbury, NY: Barron's Educational Series, 1968), 234.
13. Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India,* 30.
14. Nakamura Hajime, "Mahāyāna Buddhism," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion,* ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan, 1987), vol. 2, p. 464.
15. For the sake of completeness the following texts may also be mentioned:
    1. *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* (first century C.E.), or the Instructions of Vimalakīrtī, glorifies a householder as a Bodhisattva.

2. *Mahāparinirvāṇa-Sūtra* (fourth century C.E.) (to be distinguished from the *Mahāparinibbānasutta* in Pali) is remarkable for its willingness to talk of Buddha-nature in terms of Self, albeit as a concession.
3. *Tathāgatagarbha-Sūtra* (third century C.E.) deals with the question of Buddha-nature.
4. *Śrīmālādevīsiṁhanāda-Sūtra* (third century C.E.), or the Sūtra of the Lion's Roar of Śrīmālā, deals with the *dharmakāya* with which the *tathāgatagarbha* is identified. This last term, which means the "womb of the Buddhas," was another formulation of the ultimate in Mahāyāna Buddhism.
5. *Sandhinirmocana-Sūtra* (fourth century C.E.), or the Sūtra of Emancipation from the Connection (of rebirth), which claims to represent the final teaching of the Buddha, deals with the question of *ālayavijñāna* or substratum consciousness (often translated as storehouse consciousness), to explain both the continuity of the subject and the multiplicity of objects in the context of Buddhist idealism.
6. *Śūraṅgamasamādhi-Sūtra* (second century C.E.) deals with the figure of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī like the *Aṅgulimālīya-Sūtra* and *Mañjuśrīparinirvāṇa-Sūtra*.
7. *Śūraṅgama-Sūtra* (fourth century C.E.), found only in Chinese, deals with various techniques of meditation and their relative merits.

16. Among these the better known are:
    1. *Mahāyānaśraddhotpāda* (first century C.E.), or Awakening of Faith in the Great Vehicle, sometimes ascribed to Aśvaghoṣa but found only in the Chinese version and, according to some scholars, also composed as a putative translation at a later date.
    2. *Madhyamakakārikās* (second century C.E.), or aphorisms on the Mādhyamika System, composed by Nāgārjuna, in which Emptiness, a fundamental doctrine in Mahāyāna Buddhism, is philosophically expounded.
    3. *Mahāyānasaṅgraha* (fourth century C.E.), or Acceptance of the Great Vehicle, composed by Asaṅga.
    4. *Vijñaptimātratā* (fourth century C.E.), or Ideation Only, by Asaṅga's brother Vasubandhu, expounding the view that external objects are mental representations.
    5. *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* (fourth century C.E.), or the Memorial Verses on Reunion (with the Absolute), ascribed to Matsyendranātha and particularly favored in Tibet, which offers a summary of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*.
    6. *Yogācārabhūmiśāstra* (fourth century C.E.), or The Treatise on Stages of Yogācāra, said to have been recited by Maitreya himself to help Asaṅga convince people of the truth of the doctrine of Void, which also charts the course of a Bodhisattva's career.
17. Edward Conze, "Buddhism: The Mahāyāna," in *The Concise Encyclopedia of Living Faiths*, ed. R. C. Zaehner (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959), 308.
18. Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, xv–xvi.
19. Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, 1.
20. Edward Conze, trans., *Buddhist Scriptures* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1959), 26.

21. Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, 9.
22. Information kindly provided by Richard P. Hayes, Jérôme Ducor, H. L. Senaviratna, Rita M. Gross, and the Embassy of Myanmar in Washington, D.C.
23. James Legge, trans., *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms* (New York: Dover Publications, 1965; first published 1886), 57–58.
24. Ch'en, *Buddhism: The Light of Asia*, 28.
25. See Garma C. C. Chang, *The Buddhist Teaching of Totality: The Philosophy of Hwa Yen Buddhism* (University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971), 60. Please note that in the following pages the famous treatise of Nāgārjuna, otherwise cited as *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* or *Mūlamadhyamakakārikāḥ*, has also been referred to as *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās*, that is, in the English plural.
26. In the fifteenth chapter of *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās*, Nāgārjuna examines *svabhāva* as follows:

    > The production of a self-existent thing by a conditioning cause is not possible, [For] being produced through dependence on a cause, a self-existent thing would be "something which is produced" (kṛtaka). (15-1)
    >
    > How, indeed, will a self-existent thing become "something which is produced"? Certainly, a self-existent thing [by definition] is "not-produced" and is independent of anything else. (15-2)
    >
    > If there would be an existent thing by its own nature, there could not be "non-existence" of that [thing]. (15-8)
    >
    > [An opponent asks:] If there is no basic self-nature, of what will there be "otherness"? [Nāgārjuna answers:] If there is basic self-nature, of what will there be "otherness"? (15-9)

    See Frederick J. Streng, *Emptiness: A Study in Religious Meaning* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967), 199–200.
27. Streng, *Emptiness*, 204.
28. *The Tannisho* (Kyoto: Ryukoku Translation Center, 1966), 22.
29. See J. Cobb and C. Ives, eds. *The Emptying God: A Buddhist-Jewish-Christian Conversation* (New York: Orbis Press, 1990), 162–169.
30. *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (24-11). See Streng, *Emptiness*, 213.
31. Cobb and Ives, *The Emptying God*, 9.
32. Cobb and Ives, *The Emptying God*, 14. See also Hans Küng, *Does God Exist?* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), 684–685.
33. In the last two subsections the author is indebted to Nagao Gadjin, *Chukan to Yuishiki* (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1978), 6–21; G. Nagao, *The Fundamental Standpoint of Mādhyamika Philosophy*, trans. John Keenan (New York: SUNY, 1989) and Yuichi Kajiyama, *Kū no Ronri* (Tokyo: Kadokawa, 1980).
34. Streng, *Emptiness*, 213.
35. Streng, *Emptiness*, 183.
36. Mādhyamika philosophy recognizes two levels of reality: the conventional (*samvṛti*) and the ultimate (*paramārtha*). As Gadjin Nagao explains:

    > The two terms, worldly convention and ultimate meaning, correspond respectively to the ideas of the worldly (*laukika*) and the world transcendent, or that which is beyond the world (*lokottara*). The world of ordinary, everyday consciousness is here referred to as the worldly, which includes not only the

biological world but also the human world of culture and society. The higher, transcendent world is regarded as a religious, numinous world, and ultimate meaning is established as a negation of the everyday world, beyond it and transcendent to it.

See Gadjin Nagao, *The Fundamental Standpoint of Mādhyamika Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 23.

37. This dynamic interrelationship of the two truths is explained by Nagao as follows (*The Fundamental Standpoint of Mādhyamika Philosophy*, 31, with adaptation):

    Each of these two truths is useful, and as such true: each is true, and as such useful. The two truths are simultaneously dependently cooriginating and empty. Indeed it was in virtue of insight into the two truths that Nāgārjuna was able to identify emptiness with dependent coorigination. Put conversely, emptiness is not simply the silence of ultimate meaning, but is also the actual functioning of worldly conventions; dependent coorigination is not simply conventional, but is the dependent coorigination of awakening to ultimate meaning.

38. Masao Abe, *Zen and Western Thought* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), 178 (with adaptation).
39. Abe, *Zen and Western Thought*.
40. Abe, *Zen and Western Thought*, 49 (with adaptation).
41. Abe, *Zen and Western Thought*, 178 (with adaptation).
42. See also Cobb and Ives, *The Emptying God*, 29–33.
43. See Sukumar Dutt, *Early Buddhist Monachism* (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1960), 12.
44. Edward Conze, ed., *Buddhist Texts Through the Ages* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954), 47.
45. Conze, *Buddhist Texts Through the Ages*, 48.
46. Bhikkhu J. Kashyap, "Origin and Expansion of Buddhism" in Kenneth W. Morgan, ed., *The Path of the Buddha* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1956), 35. Some words cited in the lowercase.
47. Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 4.
48. Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 6.
49. Conze, *A Short History of Buddhism*, 46.
50. Conze, "Buddhism: The Mahāyāna," 307–308.
51. Conze, *Buddhism*, 71. Italics dispensed with.
52. Garma C. C. Chang, ed., *A Treasury of Mahāyāna Sūtras* (University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983), 433.
53. W. Y. Evans-Wentz, ed. *Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa*, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), 130–131.
54. Alan Watts, *The Way of Zen* (New York: Vintage Books, 1957), 127.
55. Watts, *The Way of Zen*, 130.
56. Watts, *The Way of Zen*, 59.
57. T. O. Ling, "Saṅgh," in *A Dictionary of Comparative Religion*, ed. S. G. F. Brandon (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 555, with some words cited in the lowercase.
58. Conze, *A Short History of Buddhism*, 46.

59. Donald K. Swearer, ed., *Me and Mine: Selected Essays of Bhikkhu Buddhadāsa* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 147.
60. David C. Chappell, "Six Buddhist Attitudes Towards Other Religions," in *Radical Conservatism: Buddhism in the Contemporary World*, ed. Sulak Sivaraksa et al. (Bangkok: Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development, 1990), 551–552.
61. Conze, "Buddhism: The Mahāyāna," 307–308.