

Monistic Metaphysics of the Sakya disciples

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The Tathagata

Of what religion are you?

I am a Buddhist who follows the teachings of the law of illumination laid out by Shakyamuni Buddha 2500 years ago.

What is this Buddhist faith that you speak of?

Put simply I should state that the paraphrasable core of Buddhism is: Every Being possesses a deathless essence (Atman), but that they are afflicted with lustfulness for this world they are in a constant flux of rebecoming within rebirth due to their ignorance of the supreme truth; such that they are continuously refocusing on the unreal realm of phenomena and temporal aggregated existence. Such as them are perpetually destined to befall suffering in states of painful womb birth, otherworldly sufferings, and renewing their own endless cycle of manifold aggregated existence at the hands of their own ignorance. Utmost deathlessness in supreme fulfillment is only achieved through the Perfection of wisdom concerning the nature of all phenomena and antecedent-recollectiveness in the disembodied collecting of oneself within Samma (Perfection) fulfillment and extraction from aggregated existence in painful realms of suffering. Only then is one able to see the hypostatic-matrix of totality, and having seen this, to strive unswervingly in the vigilance of unfolding wisdom's Perfection at meeting that goal in its fulfillment before befalling death and rebirth once again. Even more simple than this however is that Buddhism teaches that one must wake up as it were to the light which animates them and take full refuge in it and disembody themselves from that which is suffering, namely the five Skandhas (forms, feelings, perceptions, impulses, and mental machinations). The point of reference of Buddhism is to conjoin with the Unific (totality of bliss and Perfection) by escaping samsara (round of rebirth, pain, suffering, unreal existence, manifold being). Everything within the teachings of Buddhism is either to point out that which is unreal and phenomena as such which should not be clung to, or to point out once this is realized, how to disembody from the unreal and conjoin with the real, the blissful light of deathlessness within indivisibility of wisdom's Perfection and winning the goal of sublime attainment and differentiate the real from the unreal and see that the unreal is painful, suffering, must not be clung to, must be forsaken and to make oneself (True Self) part of that which is no longer suffering as such.

What summation did the Buddha make about his own path in a pithy form?

O' monks. I have suffered many and various rounds of painful rebirths. I've run to and fro not finding it, seeking out the builder of this house, my body. Great woeful pain indeed is it to suffer rebirth over and over, again and again! Lo! Builder of this house, my body! Free! I now see you truly! Never again will you build another painful body to dwell in for me. I have broken apart entirely its foundation beams and its roof support; they are now forever utterly destroyed! Disembodied from it, no more will my Spirit's Essence go back into that vile phenomenal aggregated existence, having finally gone into that abode of indivisible fulfillment, that very sweet Perfection supreme! Here! Know you all! Behold from whence you sprang, your utmost abode that sweet source deathlessness! By wisdom see it from all four corners. By vigilance in recollective penetration O' the source, know all that is both in the heavens and in the hells, see it all deeply! Perfect your True Self and forever ascend vile rebirth into the womb. Be that chief of sages, utmost of highest accomplished transcendental supreme essence become! All forms and phenomena have come to utmost end for you in this world by supreme wisdom's awakening! Highest of high indivisible utmost excellent supreme fulfillment! That one! Indeed I call him great Brahman! (KN 2.153-154, 423)

What school of Buddhism do you belong to?

Buddhasana (Buddhism) has only one school and only one teaching. The various divisive sects and oriental ritualisms are a much later development that crept into Buddhism long after the historical Buddha's passing. There is no Theravada (School of the Elders), Mahayana (The Great Vehicle), Vajrayana (The Diamond Vehicle), nor Zen (comes from a Chinese character which in turn came from the Pali Buddhist word jhana which means burning-penetrating-meditative-bliss-fulfillment-abiding; but this meaning has been stripped from modern Zen) mentioned within Buddhism's teachings. There is at its core only the doctrine of the Buddha that ends sweetly in emancipation from all sufferings and ignorances. Those who wish only to inquire into sects, dogmas, and oriental ritualism are obviously less interested in the illuminating law of Buddhism than they are in belonging to either a sect or even worse, that of a cult whose only purpose is to mislead one and take either their money, their minds or both.

But I thought that there is the lesser vehicle of Buddhism, the greater vehicle of Buddhism, Zen, and that of Tibetan Buddhism headed by the Dalai Lama. Is this not the case?

Indeed all those sects exist as such today, and are a sad result of 2500 years of sectarian divisiveness amongst the monks very long ago and the breaking apart of the great Sangha after the murder of the Buddha at the various Buddhist councils, but essentially it cannot be stated that any of those vehicles exist whatsoever within Buddhism as it was taught. Quite obviously as pointed out in the holy scriptures of non-sectarian Buddhism, that being the five sections of the Nikayas (Digha, Majjhima, Samyutta, Anguttara, and Khuddaka), there is no such entity as any of these vehicles but only, as previously mentioned, that of the doctrine of the Buddha. The suttas (scriptures) of the Nikayas, wrongfully, are associated sometimes with the Theravadans (the school of the elders, a specific sect of Buddhism) because within the Tipitaka (the 3 baskets of the teachings) there exists the Vinaya Pitaka (rules for the monks, as well as some history of the life of the Buddha), the Nikayas (the five nonsectarian sections comprising the corpus of the teachings of the Buddha), and the Abhidhamma (commentary on the Nikayas and the Vinaya, a very proprietary Theravada sect specific work). Of those 3 sections, only the Nikayas are completely clean and free of any sect, for they were recorded at the first Buddhist council after the passing of the Buddha. The Abhidhamma and the Vinaya are sectarian works that are Theravada specific and belong to that sect only. Without knowing Buddhist history it may seem confusing, but it is all really quite simple. The five Nikayas are the authentic doctrine of the Buddha and the oldest works on earth as it pertains to what the Buddha actually taught as such.

Why do the Theravadans claim to be the only authentic school of Buddhism?

The Theravadans are the oldest surviving school of Buddhism, but they in fact are very much so removed from the doctrine of the Buddha in their commentarialist views which run contradictory to much of the recorded sermons of the Buddha as found in the Nikayas, their mistranslation and misinterpretation of the Pali texts contained within it were much of the reason for the formation of Mahayana in one among many of the fights and splits within Buddhism over the centuries. Theravadans, while old, do not fully reflect the Nikayan doctrine of the Holy Dharma as laid out in the five sections of the Nikayas which they claim as their own. The Nikayas, simply put, are the point of reference for the entirety of the ancient teachings of Buddhism, regardless of sectarian divisiveness in this great age of decline of Buddhism's authentic teachings. They exist as the pinnacle and the only non-sectarian reference of scriptural work of Buddhism that is completely free of any and all slant as to what Buddhism actually teaches.

But I had heard that the teachings of Buddhism were an oral tradition for many centuries before finally being recorded? Is this not the case?

That is an incorrect myth that is well spread within Zen most often, which itself is at many levels repulsed by the notion of the necessity of study of the suttas, even though early Zen found penetration of the suttas not only very helpful but mandatory in the comprehension of Buddhism's teachings. The Buddhist suttas of the Nikayas we know at the least existed 100 years prior to 250 B.C. King Ashoka himself was converted to Buddhism in earlier half of the 3rd century B.C. by an oral reading of the second book of the Dhammapada, which had already been in written record for at least 100 years prior to his conversion, and most likely very much

earlier. Buddhist suttas, and the stone pillars of King Ashoka which boasted of Buddhism's profound truth, are in fact far and away the oldest records we have in all of Indian history. Brahmanical (Hindu) literature only became a written record dating back until the 1st century A.D.

Cannot it be said that scripture is circumstantial as it pertains to the attainment of enlightenment through practice as expounded by the Buddha?

Any navigator can attest to the efficacy of the use of a navigation map. Such is the case within Buddhism, such that you may arrive at the goal without the use of a map, namely the suttas, but it is infinitely more useful and fulfilling to use them to comprehend what Buddhism actually teaches and follow his instructions by putting them into use. Every doctrine or faith must have a fulcrum, or point of reference to say what that teacher or faith in fact professes to be the way and the means. Oral traditions are quickly corrupted and forgotten and the Buddhist Sangha realized this immediately and so recorded the doctrine of the Buddha for later generations who certainly would not wish to know the teachings of Buddhism by means of opinions, sectarianism (namely Theravada) and conjecture as such. Very many thousands of monks over the centuries have dedicated their lives, in addition to their comprehension of Buddhism, to the preservation of these scriptures that we have today and we should realize and applaud the importance of the sacrifice of those many peoples over the centuries to preserve the doctrine of Buddhism for us to study and put into practice today.

What is the refuge of Buddhism that I hear Buddhists take?

I take refuge in the honorific Buddha. I take refuge in the honorific true law Dharma of the supremely awakened that leads to salvation. I take refuge in the honorific Order, the Sangha

What does this solemn and wholehearted declaration mean for the Buddhist?

He who utters the formula, publicly admits that he considers the Buddha to be the Grand master who is fully awake among all the worlds, who is above average afflicted men lost in ignorance, above gods, and is the Grand teacher of wisdom. He affirms that the specific Dharma taught by the Buddha to be genuine and the only method by which to obtain complete release from cyclic suffering and to embody within bliss. The true Sangha are the faithful followers of the Buddhist Dharma; are the teachers of the true Dharma and have dedicated 100% of their being to the full comprehension through Sati and Samadhi practice to obtain the goal. Namely they must possess the vision of the Unific before they can strive towards it.

Is this formula obligatory for all Buddhists or just the monastic community?

For all Buddhists this is the case. There is no distinction in authentic Buddhism as to whether or not one is a monk but that the Ariyasavaka understands and has perceived by revelation (Sammadiṭṭhi) the unconditioned bliss of deathlessness. The distinctions between monastic and laypersons is mostly a secular one of Theravadan Abhidhamma invention since many of the sermons are being addressed to the Ariyasavakas and not specifically to those who were monks as such. Buddhism makes no distinctions originally as to whether one was a monk or not, but that at its core the sublime principle the Buddha laid out was fully understood. Any such trite initiation into a brotherhood which would immediately convey mastery of any principle would run against the many sermons against externality and blind ritual that Buddhism detests and says are not genuine nor conducive to insight into the sublime truth of things.

How should the Holy Triad (The Triple Gem) of Buddhism be properly called?

They are the unswerving guiding stars in the most north of sky which never move from their fixed position and guide by the truth of their illumination those deluded and lost peoples that probe the nature of all things of this world and the next by wisdom's exertion. Reverence to the Blessed One (Buddha), who has overcome the world and its phenomena, the supremely self-enlightened one, the Sammasambuddha (supreme Buddha that dwells in Samma-Perfection) unsurpassed among all being both on earth and in the heavens. Reverence to the holy Dharma of the Buddha, that unequaled truth which ends sweetly in deathlessness within no rebirth and escaping forever all sufferings and delusions. Reverence to the Brotherhood of truth seeking Buddhists who possess otherworldly insight, who are Samadhi penetrating warriors along the path to salvation, and dwell sweetly in the bliss of everlasting illumination through the practice of the Buddha-dharma.

Who is the Buddha?

The word "Buddha" itself is a generic name well known in times before the historical Buddha, its meaning is "A noble ascetic who has attained superior enlightenment above all others in the world by his divine knowledge and otherworldly meditative skills". The Buddha was born to our best current knowledge of retrogressive astronomical investigation in the year 572 B.C. on April 11th at 10:30 AM. He was born a noble prince to Ksatriyan warrior class of nobility of the Sakya clan. His father was named Suddhodana, and his mother was Queen Mayadevi. He was named Siddhattha (Siddhartha [supremely accomplished purpose]) Gotama (gone utmost north from darkness and suffering). He is often called Shakyamuni (The body of light of the supremely enlightened sage) Buddha. We are unsure as to the validity of the Buddhas parents names since they mean "holy insemination" and "magic womb, holy godlike birth", such that they could actually be allegorical representations of the Buddhas spiritual awakening as such when he became supremely enlightened to the world and was essentially born anew as the supremely enlightened one. We know that his father was the king of a warrior class of the Shakyian race who it seems to be, were not indigenous to India but rather invading warriors who settled in the area and whose roots hail back to Europe from Manu kingship.

Is the Buddha a God who has revealed himself to mankind?

No, the Buddha is above the Gods in every respect as stated in scripture. The Gods themselves only serve a limited time in the heavens and are ignorant of that which animates themselves and how the entirety of the cosmos operates. They dwell in heaven for a time and fall back into aggregated existence again when their good works have been exhausted as such. Only throughout the entire cosmos is a perfectly enlightened Sammasambuddha (Samma [hypostasis, Perfection] dwelling Buddha) supremely awake to all things seen and unseen and unaffected by the need for favorable rebirth by performing meritorious deeds or the desire for any heaven. A Buddha in this human realm possesses his last corporeal body and no long shall return to the vileness and pain of this world.

Then he was a man?

Yes indeed, he suffered common maladies and sickness as any other person of this aggregated realm. His superhuman ability to prolong life is of little consequence since, irrelevant of possibly living to be 120 or more, the body must inevitably pass away back into the earth and dust. All things that arise must pass away; this includes the body of the Buddha's corporeal form here on earth, but not his Attan (True Self), which is ab-extra to the aggregated body as such. At the end of his life, he was cremated and his remains divided up and buried under man made earthen mounds called stupas.

So, the name Buddha is not a proper name?

Correct, the word Buddha existed long before the birth of the historical Buddha that everyone is so familiar with, Buddha meaning: "A noble ascetic who has attained superior enlightenment above all others in the world by his divine knowledge and otherworldly meditative skills". In the case of Buddhism however, the practice is known as Sammasamadhi and Sammasati, which cannot objectively be called "meditation" as such, but refers to something much more special and specific as it relates to proper attainment in the methodology as Buddhism teaches it.

Was the Buddha's destiny in any way foretold?

The Brahmins who were the priestly astrologers of the great Chieftain Suddhodana's court foretold indeed his birth. They proclaimed that if the prince continues in the world, he would become a mighty monarch, a king of kings. But if he renounces the world, he will become a supreme sage and liberator by wisdom of the entire world. The holy recluse Kaladevala came down from the wilds of the Himalayas and prostrated himself before the child, and said: "Verily this child will become a supreme Buddha, and will show men the way to Perfection and salvation." And he wept to think that he would not live to behold his teachings.

Was King Suddhodana glad to hear this prediction?

No; on the contrary, he tried by all possible means to prevent its coming to pass. His utmost desire was that Prince Siddhartha should become a mighty monarch.

By what means did he try to gain this object?

He kept out of the prince's sight everything that might have given him an idea of human suffering and death. He surrounded him with every enjoyment and royal luxury. Meantime the best masters had to instruct him in all arts and sciences and princely accomplishments. When Prince Siddhartha was grown up his father gave him three palaces, one for each of the Indian seasons: the hot, the cold, and the rainy season. These palaces were fitted up with every imaginable luxury, and surrounded with beautiful gardens and groves, where grottoes, fountains, lakes, all lovely with the lotus, and beds of fragrant flowers lent enchantment to the scene. In this delightful abode the prince passed his young life, but he was not allowed to go beyond the boundaries, and all poor, sick and aged people were strictly forbidden entrance.

Did Prince Siddhartha live quite by himself in these palaces and gardens?

No. A great number of young nobles were in attendance on him, and when he was sixteen his father gave him to wife Princess Yasodhara, the daughter of King Suprabuddha. Many beautiful maidens, too, trained in the arts of music and dancing, were always in waiting for his amusement.

How could the idea of leaving the world occur to the prince amidst all these delights?

During his chariot drives he saw four most impressive sights that enlightened him as to the real nature of human life

What were these sights?

A decrepit old man, broken down by infirmity; a sick man covered with sores, and a decaying body and a venerable hermit.

What impressions did these visions make on Prince Siddhartha?

They moved him to the heart's core, and showed him the utter vanity and nothingness of unreal life. Its deceptive, transitory pleasures, to be followed by old age, sickness and death, had no longer any attraction for him. Henceforth he discarded all amusements, and he came to the conviction that life is not a gift to be desired and wasted, but rather an evil that must be surpassed and overcome, and that it is unworthy of our higher nature to seek for sensual enjoyment as highest. All his efforts were now directed towards the attainment of a higher aim.

What was the aim?

To find out the cause of suffering, of death, of birth-renewal, and to discover the means of overcoming it. In imitation of the venerable recluse he had met, he resolved to retire from the world into the wilderness.

Was it a great trial for him to carry out his resolution?

Yes; for he rejected most all that is generally the most prized by men: royalty, riches, power, honor, delights, and even the companionship of his beloved wife and his infant son Rahula. Later he attains the revelation that such rejection in and of itself is mere externality and in no way has any bearing on genuine wisdom and penetration which would emancipate any true seeker.

Did his father and his wife try to dissuade him from this purpose?

He kept them in ignorance of his designs and went away secretly for fear the entreaties of his aged father and the tears of his wife might make him swerve from his resolve.

How did he effect his escape?

One night, when everybody was asleep, he softly got up, took a last parting look at his wife and child, woke up his attendant Channa, ordered him to saddle his favorite horse Kanthaka, and rode away. The sentry at the gate did not notice him, and he hastened off in the darkness as fast as his horse could carry him.

How old was Prince Siddhartha when he rode off for the forest?

He was in his twenty-ninth year.

Where did he first go?

To the river Anoma. There he cut off his beautiful long hair with his sword, and gave in charge to the faithful Channa his arms, his jewels, and his horse, to take them back to Kapilvasthu, and to tell the king and the princess what had become of him. After Channa's departure, Siddhartha passed seven days near the banks of the river Anoma, lost in deep meditation, and rejoicing to have taken the first and all-important step in the attainment of knowledge, and to have cast off the shackles of a worldly life. He then exchanged clothes with a passing beggar, and proceeded to Rajagriha, the capital of the kingdom of Magadha.

Why did he go there?

There were two Brahmans living there. Alara and Uddaka, both reputed to be very wise and holy men. He became their disciple, under the name of Gotama.

What did they teach?

They taught that the soul may be purified by prayer, sacrifices, external rituals, and various other religious observances; and may thus, by divine mercy, attain redemption.

Did Gotama find what he sought?

No; he learnt all these Brahmans could teach him, and joined in all their religious exercises without gaining the knowledge he sought; and he became convinced that their teaching could not ensure him deliverance from suffering, death, and birth-renewal. Neither did their doctrine convey mastery by wisdom into the penetrative comprehension of matters.

What did he do after this failure?

There were other Brahmans, who taught that deliverance could be attained by mere processes of self-mortification. Gotama made up his mind to practice asceticism in its severest form, and for that purpose he retired into a jungle not far from Uruvela, where, in utter solitude, he gave himself up to all kinds of penances and tortures. The fame of his sanctity soon began to spread, and he was joined by five other ascetics, who, full of admiration for his fortitude and perseverance, remained with him, in the sure conviction that such a life of self-mortification would lend him speedily to the attainment of supreme knowledge and Perfection. Then they would become his disciples.

What are the names of these five ascetics?

Kondanya, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahanama, and Assaji.

How long did Gotama remain in the wilderness near Uruvela?

Upwards of six years. His bodily strength at last gave way under these continued self-inflictions, vigils, and fastings, but he did not relax. One night, when lost in deep meditation, he was pacing up and down, he suddenly fell down, utterly exhausted in a fainting fit. His companions thought he was dying, but he soon revived again.

Did he nevertheless persevere in his ascetic life?

No. He was now convinced that asceticism, instead of giving him the peace of mind and the knowledge he desired, was only an external mortification and more vile than that it was purely a morality based stumbling block in the way of truth and Perfection. He discontinued his fastings and penances, and was in consequence deserted by his companions as an apostate.

Did Gotama despair of reaching his end?

No, not for a moment. Left entirely to himself and his own devices, he was determined to follow henceforward exclusively his own inner light. He abandoned all his ascetic practices, and, whilst restraining worldly thought and desire, was intent alone on the highest development of his mental faculties. One night he was apprised, in prophetic dreams, that he was approaching the goal. He awoke, bathed in the river Niranjara, and took some boiled rice, presented to him by a beautiful young maiden named Sujata. He spent the whole day in deep meditation near the bank of the river. Towards evening he sat down beneath a mighty Nigrodha-tree that stood not far off, and there remained sitting with his face to the East, firmly resolved not to leave the spot until he had attained supreme knowledge and understanding. Here it was that he won the victory after a final struggle, the fiercest of all.

What struggle?

The struggle against human wishes and desires, which came back upon him with renewed force, though he had supposed himself to have gained already a complete mastery over them: the struggle against delusions and love of unreal existence, against that craving, that will to live a life of corruption in chasing the senses, which is the motive power of our being and the chief source of all our sufferings. The charms of wealth and power, and honor and glory, the sweet delights of home and love, and all the enjoyments that the world has in store for its favorites, which began to glow again in their most brilliant light. An agonizing doubt seized upon him. But Gotama never wavered in his resolve, rather choosing to die than to give up his high purpose. He wrestled with those terrible emotions and desires, and was victorious. The last remnants of human frailty and of worldly desire were consumed in him. Then the deep peace of Samma Perfection within emancipation (Nirvana) entered his heart, and the full light of truth rose within him. The goal was reached, the veil destroyed, and all knowledge attained. He had become a self-enlightened supreme Sammasammudha (utmost perfectly enlightened Buddha that dwells in Samma-Perfection).

Had he now discovered the cause of sorrow, of old age, of death, and of birth-renewal?

Yes, in the words of the Nikayan holy books, there opened within him the bright clear eye of "supreme truth." and he found what was the cause of birth and decay, of sorrow and death and birth-renewal, but he also found its remedy and the true way to deliverance within Samma by entering Nirvana. The supreme light of the eternal law suffused his body and he dwelled for some time within the boundless bliss of the fruit of his wisdom's cultivation. The holy truth that he had won by his vigilance was sublime, not tainted by worldly merits, nor thought of loss or gain; he essence was truly free of all further desires and he saw deeply into all things. He had become the supreme awake above spirits, men, and even the Gods themselves.

I recall that the Buddha was hesitant to teach what he had won?

Yes indeed this is the case, he was vexed to do so. The Buddha spontaneously thought " To end is this teaching of my sweet Dharma that I found so hard to reach. For it cannot be penetrated by those men who are deeply lost in lust and evil; those very men who are died to the core in lusts and who are deep within pitch darkness and will never penetrate that most sweetly sublime which goes against the stream, is sublime, deep and most subtly hard to perceive." A God named Brahma Sahampatri became aware of the Buddha's state of vexation to teach the sweet law and proclaimed to himself "The world will be lost, most perfectly lost if the wisdom of the Perfect One who is supremely illumined above all others favors inaction to teach his true Dhamma." He spontaneously appeared before the Buddha and knelt before him and pleaded " Lord, let the Blessed One teach the Dhamma. Let the Sublime One teach the Dhamma. There are beings with little dust in their eyes that are wasting away in misery upon not hearing the Dhamma. Some of them will gain supreme knowledge of the Dhamma!" The Buddha now set out to teach to those who could see the sublime truth that he had won.

So the Buddha did not preach to anyone that would listen?

No, that would be akin to sowing seeds where no cultivation would be made, the Buddha only taught to those with sufficient faith and wisdom and little dust in their eyes to see the sublimely true message. Buddhism does not preach those ignorant puthujjanas (fools who are completely lost in sensory attachments) who cannot comprehend the message of Buddhasasana (Doctrine of the Buddha). To seek the fellowship of fools is itself foolhardy and nothing that Buddhism advocates. Those who joined the order of the light makers of the Buddhist order were not those that took vows and precepts, but those that saw deeply into the great matter and shared with the Buddha that sublime fruit of perfect wisdom in great attainment through personal vigilance to penetrate the matter deeply. To take vows, shave the head and wear the yellow robe does not make one a Buddhist. Unlike other religions that try to make converts and increase the numbers of followers, Buddhism does not wish to have such foolish people who cannot penetrate the message and cultivate the doctrine, to do so would cause great harm to the doctrine such that these peoples would quickly corrupt the message and twist the doctrine of the Buddha into a form of morality based good deed doing ecumenical Christian like doctrine, which sadly, Buddhism has become today. By the acceptance of those unfaithful commoners into the holy order of the light-bringers who understood the sweet truth, the doctrine of the Buddha quickly became corrupt after the passing of the Buddha and many unhealthy sects were formed which led to the great decline of Buddhism. The Buddha himself prognosticated this fact to his disciples proclaiming that his true teachings would not last past 1000 years after his passing, and would be quickly corrupted to a greater degree even before then. His prediction turned out to be lamentably altogether too true.

So you are saying that one is not a Buddhist even though he may be a monk who has taken vows and entered the Order?

Correct. There is nothing within the externality of a shaved head and yellow robes which can convey unto anyone the initiatory insight in the great matter. To say otherwise would be condoning Brahmanical external ritualism that Buddhism has no part of. If taking precepts and wearing the robe with a shaved head conferred upon anyone the comprehension of penetration into the great matter, then Buddhism would be nothing more than Christianity or Brahmanism. Such as: Woeefully, there are many necks that are draped with saffron robe who are unrestrained and follow after wicked dharmas. They are evil by the works they do. Those wicked monks will surely be reborn in hell! That man! Him who is wretched and defiled, but in hypocrisy wears the Saffron robe of the adept, and is deprived of control and determination in vigilance of wisdom. O' monks, he is indeed unworthy to wear the noble robe of the adept! Whosoever has renounced unclean desirous impulses, having become well established in the precepts and what is right. There! They go into that deathless realm of supreme truth. That one indeed O' monks, is fit to wear the Saffron robe of the Arahant! (KN 2.307, 9,10). There can never be any external vow, robe, trinket, mantra, and saying which can make one a penetrator into the sweet sublime truth which is expounded by the Buddha in the Nikayas, to say otherwise is to cast despair and treachery upon the doctrine of the Buddha.

Is this the compassionate spreading of the doctrine?

Yes, but compassion is the much overused incorrect word within Buddhism, rather it is philanthropy to propagate the Dharma; the philanthropy of the Buddha was to spread the doctrine of his emancipating law to the peoples who saw his message. The notion today of compassion in a Christian sense of feeding the poor, assisting the afflicted, and doing general deeds of merit based seeking actually has no part in Buddhism. The Buddha's act of philanthropy was the dissemination of his doctrine and nothing more, he himself rejected the seeking of merit and the path that only leads to favorable rebirth within vile samsara. This altogether missed sublime point is ever pervasive in wholly corrupt Buddhism of today that have the false notion that Buddhism is some form of "help your neighbor" morality, which is not the case at all, but rather the transcendence by disembodiment from this existence into that place where sorrow and death no longer reach. This very sublime point is hard for some people to grasp and some think it rather heartless but it is rather logical and completely in line with emancipation. To concern oneself in life only with the red-cross first-aid station type of humanism is only within the sphere of this world and in no way escapes it, such that you may assist many peoples in this life through external means, which may prolong life and gain favorable rebirth but not truly help that person where it really matters. All beings suffer and die, to prolong the inevitable through feeding and clothing the needy in no way addresses their root of true suffering which is ignorance and delusions which cause them to endlessly be reborn in this world and in far worse realms. This does not mean that the Buddhist will step over the man on the road who is bleeding, indifferent to his needs; rather it means that the Buddha understood that it is a horrific waste to falsely believe that working a soup kitchen for the homeless for example can make any lasting difference in the world as it pertains to the destruction of desires, lusts, and clinging to the unreal realm of aggregated existence which ends only in painful rebirth within samsara (the round of

suffering and rebirth). This body is racked with decay and all who are born are bound to suffer and die, the futility of attempting to window dress this corpse is foolish and what is important is emancipation into supreme bliss before befalling death and rebirth once again, or worse still to fall into disembodied limbo or into hell itself.

That sounds sort of fatalistic and almost like giving into the bleak inevitability of death doesn't it?

On the contrary. Buddhism, more so than any other religion, has a higher view of the potential of man and his abilities. Along with the great potential for gain is also the great potential for failure as well. Buddhism places no power for one's own salvation within that of the Gods or the grace of any God as such. The universe in its befuddling complexity to the average man of wisdom is in fact quite fair in that you do indeed reap what you sow for yourself. There can be no last minute pardon from the warden (God) as it were when having committed a lustful life racked with plentiful perversions and sensory attachments one is racked with regrets at the end and wishes not to befall the inevitability of either hell or limbo and another painful rebirth. Buddhism is neither a philosophy, nor a dogmatic belief system where things are taken to be true without investigation by wisdom's exertion. Buddhism's teaching is rather simple but it requires great effort on your part to literally push yourself to the brink in order to obtain that which the Buddha had won.

How long did the Buddha remain under the Bodhi-tree?

He remained there seven days absorbed in deep antecedent-recollective penetration within Samma-Perfection. Then he rose and went to the fig-tree Ajapala. Then Mara the tempter came to him and said: "Pass away now, my Lord, from existence, satisfied with the blessed truth, which you have realized and which but very few can attain. Men are governed by selfish motives only. Earth is their dwelling-place, and there only do they find satisfaction. They are unable to grasp the eternal law of the Universe and of causation, and they refuse to listen to the great doctrine of absolute renunciation of the desire to fare on in aggregated existence, of the conquest of earthly wishes and desires, and of the way to final deliverance. Desist, then, from the resolve to preach this doctrine and pass on to eternal peace."

Did the Buddha listen to the adversary's words?

No, he spurned him with contempt. "Get thee hence, Evil One," he said. "I shall not pass out of existence until this pure doctrine of mine is firmly implanted in the hearts of my followers, until I have succeeded in winning a number of true disciples, who, when I am gone, will, in my stead, spread abroad the saving truth out of pity for the afflicted multitudes, for the good, for the salvation, the deliverance of both gods and men." Then the tempter left him. The Buddha remained three weeks longer near the fig-tree Ajapala, enjoying the perfect bliss of his deliverance and absorbed in the definite preparation of his doctrine. At the end of that time he rose and said: "Welcome to all who enter the gates of salvation. He who has ears to hear, let him hear and believe." This turned out not to happen however that the Dharma of the Buddha was fully spread to completion to his disciples since he was murdered by Cunda in a plot with Mahakashyapa in order to take over the monastic community.

Who were the first people that heard him preach?

The five ascetics who had stayed with him, and deserted him when he no longer practiced externalisms and fruitless asceticism.

Where did he find them again?

In a grove near Benares, at the hermitage of Migadaya.

Did the ascetics lend a willing ear to his discourse?

They intended not to do so, as they considered him to be an apostate; but the majesty of his appearance and the sublime expression of his countenance made such a deep impression on their minds, that against their own will they bowed down before him and listened reverentially to his words.

What is this first preaching of the Buddha called?

The Establishment of the Order of the Universe, or the Foundation of the Kingdom of Righteousness. This sermon contains the fundamental truths of the whole doctrine, the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path.

What effect did this sermon have on the five ascetics?

They acknowledged the Buddha to be the perfectly enlightened one, the giver of truth, the guide to Samma-Perfection within Nirvana, and they desired to become his disciples. Then the Blessed One admitted them as the first members into the Brotherhood of the elect (Sangha), with the following words: "Welcome, brethren, the truth is clear. Live henceforth in holiness, and thus put an end to all suffering."

Which of the five disciples first realized the supreme truth?

The aged Kondanya. There opened within him the clear eye of truth and he attained the state of Arahant (supremely awake to the nature of all things by practice of Sati and Samadhi within wisdom's exertion). The other four disciples soon followed.

Did the Buddha gain any more disciples at Benares?

Yes. The next convert was Yasa, a young nobleman. But the common people, as well as the higher classes, listened to the words of the sublime teacher; for he made no distinction of caste or rank or position as the Brahmans do, but preached the doctrine of salvation to all those disposed to hear him with little dust in their eyes to behold his message of emancipation, and his words were all powerful, searching the innermost heart. At the end of five months the number of his disciples amounted to sixty, not including any lay adherents. The Buddha then began to send forth the brethren in various directions.

What is meant by the sending forth of the brethren?

The Buddha called them all together and bade them go out into the world, each separately by himself, and preach the doctrine of salvation to those with the proclivity to hear its sublime truth. They did not try to teach to those ignorant many that are blinded by their senses.

What was the formula he made use of?

The Buddha, addressing the brethren, said: "You are free from all fetters, either human or divine. Depart, then, and preach the saving truth to all living beings, by philanthropy towards suffering humanity, and for the benefit and welfare of both gods and men. There are many persons of pure heart and willing mind, who must perish if they do not hear the doctrine of redemption. These will become your supporters and confessors of the truth."

Did the Buddha remain, alone at Benares?

No, he returned to Uruvela, where a great number of Brahmans lived in huts in the wilderness, kept up the sacred fire, and performed the religious rites and ceremonies prescribed in the Vedas. The Buddha preached to them of the consuming fire of sensual desires, of passions and lusts. He converted many and they became his disciples. He then proceeded to Rajagriha, where King Bimbisara and a great number of his nobles professed themselves his adherents. Thus the doctrine of salvation continued to gain ground. Such as regarding the Brahmans: Month after month, a thousand offerings can he make a thousand times; but far better should he honor but for a moment that one who has perfected his True Self! Far better is it to honor that man, than to make offerings for a hundred years! He may for a century attend to the sacred flame in the sacrificial woods. But far better should he honor, if but for just a moment, that one who has perfected his True Self! Far better is it to honor that wise man, than to make offerings for a hundred years! Just so the man who makes offerings and performs sacrifices all year long, seeking vainly after merit. Not worth a fourth has he attained, compared to that one who pays respect to the vigilant upright men of the way! (KN 2.106-108)

Did not the Buddha return to his former home at Kapilavasthu?

From Rajagriha he went on to Kapilavasthu, and the fame of his doings went before him. In obedience to the rules of the Brotherhood of the light makers he stopped in a grove outside the town, instead of returning to the royal palace. King Suddhodana and all his male relations came to welcome him, but when they saw him in the poor

dress of a mendicant (Bhikshu), with shaven hair and beard, they were scandalized. Early next morning the Buddha set out, accompanied by his disciples, carrying his alms bowl, to beg his daily meal from door to door, as is the custom of the Brotherhood. When his father heard this he came in great haste and said reproachfully: "My son, why do you bring such disgrace upon me, asking alms like a common beggar?" The Buddha replied: "Great king, this has been the custom of all my race of the supremely awake." But King Suddhodana did not understand the meaning of these words, and exclaimed: "We are descended from a line of kings and noble race, and none of us has ever fallen so low as to beg for meal from door to door." The Buddha said with a smile: "You and yours are right to claim descent from kings, but my descent is from the Buddhas of long past centuries, and they were inclined to do as I do." Then King Suddhodana was silent, took him by the hand and led him to the palace.

Did not the Buddha meet his wife and child once more?

That same day he went to see the Princess Yasodhara, accompanied by two of his disciples. And when Yasodhara saw him in the garb of a mendicant, she burst into tears, and falling down before him clasped his knees. The Buddha raised her up, trying to comfort her with gentle words, and explained the doctrine to her. His words fell on good ground and took root in her heart. After the Buddha had left her, Yasodhara dressed her son Rahula in his best attire and sent him to his father to ask for his inheritance. And when the boy had come into the presence of the Buddha, he said: "Father, one day I shall be king, and rule over the Sakyas. I pray thee, give me my inheritance." Then the Blessed One took him by the hand and led him outside the town to the Nigrodha grove, where he had taken up his abode with the disciples, and said: "My son, thou asketh me for an earthly inheritance, which is perishable and fraught with sorrow. I have none such to give thee. The inheritance I leave thee is the treasures I have gathered beneath the tree of knowledge; these can never be snatched from thee." He then gave orders to Sariputta to admit Rahula into the Brotherhood of the Elect, and with him many of the Buddha's relatives, among them Ananda, Devadatta, Upali, and Anuruddha.

Who were the most distinguished disciples of the Buddha?

Sariputta, Mogallana, and Ananda.

How long did the Buddha remain at Kapilavasthu?

He spent the four months of the rainy season there, in the second year of his public teachings. Then he set out to pursue his great work elsewhere.

How long did he go on preaching the holy teachings?

Up to the hour of his death, forty-five years altogether. During the eight months of the dry season he used to go from place to place, accompanied by a number of his disciples, exhorting the people, and teaching them by parables and sermons. But the time of the rainy season he always spent at one place, either at the house of one of his disciples or in the gardens and groves bestowed upon the Order by some of the rich believers.

What were the favorite resorts of the Buddha?

The bamboo grove (Veluvana) near Rajagriha, which had once been a park of King Bimbisaras, and had been presented by him to the Buddha; and the Jeta grove (Jetavana) near Sravasti, a gift of the rich merchant Anathapindika. In both these places there were hermitages for the use of the Bhikshus. They have become famous in the history of Buddhism as being the spots where the Blessed One expounded most of the truths contained in the holy books of the Nikayas.

Did the Buddhist religion become firmly established within these forty-five years?

Yes, the fame of the Buddha and his holy doctrine spread rapidly. Thousands of people of all ranks and conditions saw the principle in its simplicity of what the Buddha taught and were received into the Brotherhood (Sangha) as mendicants (Bhikshus, Samanas), and countless numbers professed as laymen believe in the Enlightened One's very sublime doctrine so simple and yet so important to obtain. But during and very quickly after the passing of the Buddha his monks caused great dissension to occur and corruption of the Dhamma, thankfully not before the recording of the Blessed One's sermons.

Had not the Buddha to suffer any persecution or hostility on the part of the followers of the dominant Brahman religion?

No, all intolerance of nonconformists, all religious fanaticism are equally averse to both Buddhism and true Brahmanism. It was some of the Buddha's own disciples who rose up against him and Cunda the Kammaraputta that murdered him.

Who was it?

Cunda (his name meaning betrayal or also serpent who envenomates) who was called the Kammaraputta (son of the Great Evil One [Mara], or also meaning son of the great evil deed) was one of the Buddha's monks that poisoned him with "pig's demise" (poison mushroom most likely, or a type of tree fungus growth). This is found in the Mahaparinibbana Sutta account. It is believed to be Cunda that murdered his older brother Shariputra with poisoning since he was beloved above all others in the Buddhas order and the Buddha sang his praises above that of anyone else which of course would make Shariputra the natural leader of the Sangha after the Buddhas natural death; and Cunda also spurned Channa to commit suicide rather than to live on further, he caused great dissension in the Buddhist Sangha and the Chief of the Jains was most likely murdered by Cunda at his home. It is gathered from scripture that the Buddha was murdered essentially by but a few of his own monks that plotted his murder in order to take over his Sangha, namely that of Cunda whose fathers name was "death" and his mothers name was "pestilence". The Buddha later in his years found much of his Sangha to be involved in petty arguments about monastic rules and other such unimportant matters that had no bearing on their own enlightenment. The Buddha himself left his own followers for a long period of time because he found them so corrupt.

Have we any account of the Buddha's last days?

Yes: the Mahaparinibbana Sutta, or the Book of the Buddha's final passing, gives a full account thereof.

What is the account?

When the Blessed One was in his eightieth year he felt his strength ebbing away. And he said to his constant companion, Ananda: "I am a town bowed down by age, Ananda. The measure of my days are full and my life is drawing to a close." Then Ananda was sorely troubled, and he entreated the Master not yet to depart. But the Buddha rebuked him, saying: "Have I not on many former occasions taught you, that it is in the very nature of all things, however near and dear to us, that we must lose them, leave them, separate from them? There is no such thing as an eternal duration within this aggregated body. Everything born, brought into existence and organized, of necessity inherits dissolution. How, then, could it be possible that any human being, yea even a supreme Buddha in this form should not be dissolved from this body." Behold! I tell you true, this day three months from now the Tathagata will pass away out of this existence. Therefore, brethren, ye to whom I have made known the truth, be always the true doers of it; practice it; be earnest in effort to work out your own Perfection, and proclaim the doctrine to all when I am gone, that it may be instilled into the hearts of the hearers and be preserved in its purity. The Dharma will be the teacher after I am gone. He who keeps in the path of true holiness, will safely cross this dreary ocean of life, and reach the heaven of eternal peace, where all suffering and all birth-renewal is at an end." And though the Blessed One was very weak and suffering, he still went on from place to place, gathering round him his disciples and followers, exhorting them to persevere and to keep in the right way that which leads to salvation. On his arrival at Bhoya-nagara he stopped at the Ananda-Vihara, and there he addressed his disciples: "When I have departed, brethren, there will be some amongst you, elders or brethren or hermits, who may say: From the mouth of the Tathagata I have heard it, from his own mouth have I received it. This is the truth, the doctrine, the teaching of the Master. Such words you are neither to receive indiscriminately nor treat them scornfully, but without prejudice you are to listen to each word and syllable, and compare them with the fundamental doctrines and rules laid down for the Brotherhood. If after careful examination they do not agree with the doctrine and the rule of the Brotherhood, reject them; otherwise receive them as my own words. This is my instruction to you." The Buddha went to Bhoya-gama, and from there to Pava, where he stayed at the mango grove of Cunda, the "son of the Evil One". When Cunda heard it he was glad, and he came to salute the Enlightened One, and to ask him to take his meal with him at his house, together with the brethren. And the Buddha gave a silent assent. Then Cunda made ready the best he possessed, rice and sweet cakes and some "pig's demise". When the Buddha saw it be addressed Cunda and said: "As to the 'pigs demise' you have made ready, Cunda, serve it to me alone, and the rice and the sweet cakes give to the brethren." And Cunda did as he desired. And when the Buddha had finished his meal, he

turned again to Cunda, and said: "Whatever is left over of the "pigs demise" put that death in a hole (so that no animal would die if it found it and ate it), for there is none in heaven, hell and earth, among the Samanas or Brahmanas, among gods or men, by whom could make use of it for the going forth unto the fulfillment of Samma-dwelling-Perfection, save alone the Tathagata."

Give, some further account of the Buddha's last hours.

After the Buddha had gladdened and edified Cunda by his religious discourse, he went on to Kusinara. On the way a dire sickness, bloody death spasms and sharp pain came upon him, but he bore it all with fortitude and without complaint. Soon his weakness became so great that he had to sit down under a tree by the wayside. And he addressed Ananda and said: "Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water, for I am thirsty." And Ananda answered: "Master, a caravan of carts has just gone over the brook. The water has become stirred up by the wheels, and has become turbid and muddy." But the Blessed One repeated his request. Then Ananda took his bowl and went down to the brook. And behold! The water that but now had been turbid and muddy, flowed clear and free from all turbidity. Ananda wondered but he filled his bowl and brought it to the Buddha, who drank it and felt refreshed. Now, a young Mallian, by the name of Pukkusa, the owner of the caravan, was passing along the road. When he saw the Blessed One sitting under the tree, he went up to him and saluted him full of reverence. Then he gave orders to one of his attendants to fetch him two suits of cloth of gold, burnished and ready to wear. And addressing the Buddha, he said: "My Lord, do me the favor to accept these suits from my hands." The Buddha answered: "Then give me one of them, and Ananda one." And Ananda put one of the robes of cloth of gold upon the Buddha, and when he had done so it seemed to have lost all its glitter. Ananda was astonished, and said: "Master, what a wonderful thing is this! Your countenance is of such marvelous beauty and brightness that the robe of gold cloth seems to have lost all its glitter." The Blessed One answered: "Even so, Ananda. There are two occasions on which the face of a Tathagata becomes exceedingly bright and otherworldly-illuminated: on the night in which he attains supreme and perfect illumination, and again on the night when he passes away out of this existence. And now this night, in the third watch, the final passing away of the Tathagata will take place." Then the Enlightened One rose, greatly refreshed, and with his disciples went to the Sala grove of the Mallas near Kusinara, on the banks of the river Hiranyavati. And, addressing Ananda, said: "Put for me, I pray thee, the couch between the two sala-trees, for I am tired and would lie down." "I do so, Master," replied Ananda. Then he made the couch ready between the twin sala-trees. And the Blessed One lay down, with his head to the north. And behold! The sala-trees were one mass of blossoms, though it was not the season for flowers. They fell like rain on the body of the Blessed One, and sweet music came wafting from the skies. And the Buddha said: "Behold, brethren! Heaven and earth vie with each other to do reverence to the Tathagata. But it is not thus that the Tathagata is duly honored and revered. Those of my disciples who continually live in spirit and in truth, and who walk always in the light of my law, those alone do rightly honor and reverence the Tathagata." And after awhile he turned again to his disciples, and said: "There may be some among you, who might think after I am gone: Our teacher is dead; we have no longer any guide. But it is not thus you should think. The doctrine I have taught you and the rules of the Brotherhood I have laid down for you, these are to be, after I am gone, your teacher and guide." And the Buddha lifted up his voice once more and said: "Brethren, keep in mind those words of mine: Whatever is born perishes. Strive unceasingly for your deliverance." These were the Buddha's last words. Then his spirit sank into a deep Samadhi-conjointment repose, until all ideations and thinking-consciousness of false self ceased, and so he passed into the supreme Samma-Perfection within Nirvana. When the Buddha finally passed from this world there was a tremendous earthquake and the heavens made a cracking sound that was deafening and that was so frightful that peoples hair stood on end. Sakka, ruler of the Gods proclaimed at this moment "Phenomena are truly impermanent, their very nature is to arise and pass away. There is no corner where they do not arise and pass. True sweet bliss lies within transcending them!" Some of the followers of the Buddha who had not fully comprehended the Dhamma fell to the ground, tore out their hair and rolled in the dirt wailing to the heavens in great sorrow with their hands over their eyes saying "Woe, so soon has the blessed one departed this world unto Nibbana! So soon has the great center of all things vanished from the world!" Outside the eastern gates of Kusinara the Mallas set fire to the Blessed One's funeral pyre, and paid him the entire honor due to a universal-king. His remains were divided up in eight different sections over which peoples fought to possess and monuments were built over the vessels containing the remains of the warrior, the Blessed One. An urn at Piprahwa containing part of the remains of the Buddha was unearthed not long ago, it is a spherical urn with writing around the top stating: "This is the urn of the relics of the Bhagavat (Lord), the Buddha of the Shakya tribe contained within."

The Dhammamagga

What is the doctrine, or more specifically the Dharma?

It is the true way of salvation intuitively perceived and announced by the Buddha; preserved to us in the tradition of the Arahats and recorded in the holy scriptures of the Nikayas. Dhamma (Dharma) is a very tricky word for peoples who automatically think it just means "truth" which is incorrect. Dhamma is literally a pesky word for any reader since it has so many variations on its usage in context and translation. The word Dhamma (Sanskrit: Dharma) literally has the same meaning as the Latin forma, meaning "forms and phenomenon", i.e. "what is your form? (Dharma, [teaching])." To use an analogy for elaboration, we use the word "home" to mean many things, including literally a home, or our soul, or our body, or "home" in a heavenly context, or to refer to our mind, or nature as a whole, or even in the context of "love". Such is the case also of Dhamma, which is literally "form (teaching)". The manner in which we ideate Dhamma (Dharma) in translation as Buddha's teachings of "truth", is that the entirety of Buddhism in the Nikayas, is the laying out of the nature of all "things", and this is of course the "truth". The Buddha's Law Dhamma, is literally "the truth on the nature of all things and phenomenon". This is where confusions sets in for some, as to how the word Dhamma means "highest truth" in one context, and "vile path of wickedness" in another. Simply put, Dhamma is nothing more than "a thing" or the "teachings on the entirety of all phenomenal things". Such that the Buddha is preaching the Dhamma, it is "the truth on the nature of all things"; but in the vernacular, referring to a foolish man following after "Dhamma(s)" (transitory ephemeral, unreal points of references or teachings), it has a negative connotation. People would often ask ascetics and holy men: "what is your Dhamma?", in other words, "what is your point of reference?" One persons Dhamma (point of reference) might be that a God controls everything in the world and gave life to everything, another might be that Zeus and his pantheon controlled the world and so on. Dhamma empirically means nothing other than the point of one's teaching; in the case of the Buddha's dhamma that is true, then it is "the truth".

What are the holy scriptures of the Buddhists called?

The five divisions of the Nikayas that are free of all sectarianism and external ritualism so woefully pervasive today. The Digha Nikaya, the Majjhima Nikaya, the Samyutta Nikaya, the Anguttara Nikaya, and the Khuddhaka Nikaya.

What are, the contents of the Nikayas?

The Nikayas contain religious discourses, addresses, and sermons of the Buddha, intended for the instruction of the Exalted brethren as well as of the Exalted laity, all of which who comprehend the doctrine are the Ariyasavakas. It contains too, a number of parables in illustration of the doctrine. The Nikayas, the earliest stratum of the Pali Canon, alone amount to more than five thousand pages in translation. It is only a fortunate few who, unencumbered by the other pressures of life, can find the time to read and reread them in the original Pali, for once is not enough to grasp them in these texts in their entirety; but when they do they are likely to find that not only are the majority of such generalizations and books which exist on Buddhism out in the world not substantiated by the texts but also that they are often contradicted by the wealth of doctrine lying between the Suttas. What is woefully lamented by a few who are skilled in the translation of the Suttas is that most all translations of the Pali are incoherent and highly inaccurate insofar as accurately conveying the paraphrasable core of the true Buddhist faith.

What are the most important sections or books to read within those Nikayas?

Firstly would be the Turning of the wheel of the law discourse, often called The First Discourse of the Buddha where all the tenants and pith of Buddhism is elaborated on, namely the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path and the Middle Way. Secondly would be the Dhammapada (The Law of Illumination) which is the second book of the Khuddhaka Nikaya; it is comprised of 423 verses on most every aspect of the teachings of the Buddha and is the single most popular work of Buddhism to be familiar with. Thirdly would be the Sutta Nipata which is very old and somewhat similar to the Dhammapada but much more advanced in its contents. Then one should read the second book of the Digha Nikaya called the Mahanidana Sutta that elaborates on causation; and the entire Majjhima Nikaya that is a collection of many smaller suttas on all aspects of the teachings of the Buddha. You should at all costs and fear of corruption stay away from the vast multitude of "pop" Buddhism books

which are riddled with inaccurate contradictions to Buddhism and are nothing more than non scriptural and opinion filled diatribes which cannot help you as it pertains to what Buddhism teaches. These books are too numerous to mention and are the sad status quo for the day.

What is the significance of the Wheel of the Law in Buddhism?

The Dhammacakkhu (the eye of the holy wheel of the Buddhist law) has a special meaning as it relates to the teaching. The eight or ten spokes of the wheel refer to the Noble Eightfold or Tenfold Path of Buddhism which all point to the center (akka: axle of a chariot, the Unific, the Samma-Perfection); these make up the various aspects of the goal which all point an instruct one to gain that highest point of Samma-Perfection within that of Nirvana (retraction from aggregated existence). On the periphery of the wheel there is constant turning (samsaric existence, rebirth, suffering) that one must indeed escape. To follow this Noble Eightfold Path is to have the holy insight into the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism and follow those to fruition which are the Eight (or Tenfold for the Arahant) aspects which point and lead to bliss abidance of the center where there is no more samsaric "turning" within suffering and rebirth. This is the symbology and significance of the Wheel of the Law.

Are there any reference books that you would recommend that are accurate regarding Buddhism and its history?

Certainly, of the thousands of books I own on Buddhism, there are really only four books to own regarding the history and reference of Buddhism. Divine Revelations in Pali Buddhism by Peter Masefield, Studies in the Origins of Buddhism by Pande, Indian Buddhism by A.K. Warder, and Buddhist Sects in India by Dutt.

What is this Pali you were speaking of earlier? Is it a language?

Pali is a dialect of Magadhi Prakrit and the language that the Buddhist scriptures are recorded in. It is variant of the Brahmi Prakrit languages.

But isn't Sanskrit the oldest language of the Vedas?

Sanskrit is for all intents and purposes, a dead language. The Brahmins are in the habit of glorifying the era of Anglo-Brahman colonialism. This golden age of Sanskritology when the likes of Max Mueller helped propagate the study of Sanskrit throughout the world, a mere handful of people spoke it. Nor was it, even during the hypothesized Gupta Golden Age spoken outside the closely-knit circle of Brahmins, who jealously hid all knowledge, including that of Sanskrit, to themselves. As will be shown later on, nor did it exist during the Vedic Dark Age; Sanskrit arose as a mongrel language much later on. As per the 1951 Census, out of a total population of 362 million Indians, only 555 spoke Sanskrit! Even languages like Italian and Hebrew, spoken by a handful of travelers, were more widely spoken than 'Mother Sanskrit'. When European scholars developed an interest in India, their main focus was to understand Indian religion. Thus, their primary source in all fields of Indology were the Brahmins. These fundamentalists hence became the main source of knowledge about first Indian religion, and later all of Indology in general. Hence the entire field of Indology dating from the colonial era has been highly biased, being essentially a regurgitated version of Vedic-Puranic versions of history as seen through the eyes of the Brahmins. The word Sanskrit does not occur anywhere in the Vedas. Not a single verse mentions this word as denoting a language. The Buddha was advised to translate his teachings into the learned man's tongue the Chandasa standard; there is no mention of any Sanskrit. The Buddha refused, preferring the Prakrits. There is not even a single reference in any contemporary Buddhist texts to the word Sanskrit. This shows that Sanskrit did not even exist at the time of the Buddha and that the people at that period, even the Brahmins themselves, were not aware of themselves as speaking Sanskrit; they referred to their language as Chandasa. The word Sanskrit occurs for the first time in the first century A.D. as referring to a language in the Ramayana : "In the latter [Ramayana] the term samskrta 'formal, polished', is encountered, probably for the first time with reference to the language". The first inscriptions in Indian history are in Prakrit and not in Sanskrit. These are by the Mauryan King Ashoka (c.273 BC - 232 BC). Prakrit is the Vernacular; the term Prakrta or Prakrit means common, natural, while the term Samskrta or Sanskrit natural means polished, refined. Thus Prakrit refers to any of the natural languages, while Sanskrit refers to the purified language. This etymology itself indicates that Sanskrit is derived from Prakrit rather than the other way around. This necessarily implies that Sanskrit is, like Old Church Slavonic, a polished version of various vernaculars. The notion that Sanskrit is older than the Buddhist Pali has been proven incorrect by modern linguists, this now disproved Mother Sanskrit Theory (MST) is for all purposes a dead horse.

What are the Vinaya and Abhidhamma that I hear spoken of?

They are completely secular works of the Theravadans who formed long after the passing of the Buddha and arose out of many sectarian splits within the Sangha that the Buddha himself re-negotiated would indeed happen. As a Buddhist who is supremely interested only in what the doctrine of the Buddha teaches, these sectarian works serve no usefulness outside of the sect that created them to serve their own purposes. Only the Nikayas themselves are the corpus of the doctrine of Buddhism as such, and should therein rely only. There can be no other point of reference to refer to what Buddhism teaches other than the Nikayas which is a part of non-sectarian doctrinal Buddhism.

Do, then, these collections contain any divine revelation?

Yes, the entire doctrine of Buddhism is a divine revelation. It is a groundless assumption, utterly rejected by Buddhism, that truth should be revealed by a God, or an angel, to a few inspired favorites, namely that of grace from some God. The only revelation men have ever received is from the mouth of those sublime teachers of mankind, who themselves have worked out their own Perfection and deliverance, have shown others the way to it, and are for that reason called self-enlightened supreme Buddhas. The Buddha himself is above the Gods in that he has awakened to the animus-light of both Gods and humanity alike, and only the perfectly enlightened Tathagata is awake to this highest revelation as such.

What are your views on rebirth?

Well, it is undeniable that the Buddha during the first night watch came to recollect his previous births.

Yes, I know. But wasn't he just accepting the outlook of his day? Didn't many of his contemporaries just assume that each person had a former existence and that, owing to karma will continue to have more rebirths? Jayatilleke pointed out in his book, "Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge", that it is false to conjecture that rebirth was generally accepted in India during the Buddha's time.

How so?

The theory can't be found in either the Rigveda or the Atharvaveda. Nor do even the early Upanishads endorse it, being only one of many such theories. So, I can't agree with you that 'rebirth' was the accepted outlook of that day. The Buddha's insight seems to me to be quite original and only finds parallels in ancient Greece. In fact, explicit mention of rebirth is only found in Hellenic culture and in Buddhism.

But I was under the impression that he just adopted it as a ploy to get people to act in a certain way. Isn't it true that rebirth served as the basis for responsibility?

It was hardly a ploy in the Buddha's mind! In fact, the Buddha's own recognition of rebirth proved that Samadhi in the sublime Perfection of wisdom is necessary. If there is nothing upon which to base Samadhi, why, therefore, bother to practice Samadhi at all?

Is there some kind of consciousness field that exists between the consciousness, which leaves the body, and the embryo into which it enters in the next life?

Certainly. For example, when a sodium atom oscillates at 510 billion times to the second, there is an interval between the atom's death and its subsequent rebirth. In that interval, or zero phase, there must be a pattern of the sodium atom if it is to reappear after one of its periodic deaths. If the pattern is kept inside the atom, then when it ceases, so should the pattern for the atom also cease. If not, then you must be open to the idea of a "consciousness field" between sodium atom events that conserve the pattern of the atom. Let me say that I think the Buddha was well within science to universalize birth, death, and rebirth. It is the mode of everything. Indeed, this happens at the micro level of our universe as I have shown. So, why shouldn't we assume the rebirth of consciousness after death? Maybe this is the true meaning behind the Buddhist idea of a conservatory of consciousness that perhaps mediates between discontinuous phenomenal events. But whatever the opinion on this matter, it is better to have an open mind.

Is it really necessary to believe this stuff? I am an agnostic.

What do you mean by agnostic? If you mean by agnostic, "I don't want to know," then we shouldn't be agnostics. An agnostic, in that case, would be promoting positive ignorance! Buddhism accepts without assumption that factually there are ghosts, gods, demons, and various spirit-entities, most unseen and some seen. To ignorantly base everything upon that which is narrowly seen in the visible human spectrum to be whole of totality is asinine at best. Agnosticism at best is nothing more than the half twin of atheism which is empirically humanism at its core which professes that since there is no soul or god, the best of man is his own mental identity and individuality. At its very core this is the antimatter against which Buddhism teaches. Most lamentably many atheists and agnostics flock to Buddhism such that they see some form of religious pseudo-psychology within its teachings that do not exist. This by and large has led to the quickest decline of Buddhism, more so even than the dozens of sectarian splits at the Buddhists councils.

What is the basis for your teaching?

The basis, if you wish to call it that, is Mind's luminous originative power that can also be characterized as an intelligible light. Its other name is Buddha who is a "light-maker" and divine seer among Gods and men who is supremely awake above any other and free from rebirth or suffering outside of leaving this body.

I've read that the mind is luminous. But I am afraid that I have never heard that the Buddha is a "light-maker". Is this mentioned in the Buddhist canon?

Yes. In the earliest scriptures, for example, the Buddha is sometimes described as "the bringer of light". In one account, he was described as a "newly arisen sun" who has a "corona around him." It is also said that the Buddha could "make the world bright." Now, if you strip away all the poetic imagery, what is left? I can only see an originative power that is prior to all things.

But what about the fact of a lineage going all the way back to the Buddha as found in the book, *The Transmission of the Lamp*?

It is a tall tale. It's a non-scriptural creation by Sung Dynasty Buddhist who took selections from older works and made a singular work befitting of their theory. But it all falls apart when we compare it with the Sutra entitled *The End of Transmitting the Dharma Basket* upon which *The Transmission of the Lamp* is largely based. The Sutra provides us with a list of 23 Indian ancestors, beginning with Mahakashyapa and ending with Simha Bhiksu. There is no mention of Bodhidharma or his master, Prajnatarata. In fact, the Sutra is about transmitting the canon (Dharma) it's not about Buddhism. It is also noteworthy that in the *Avatamsaka Sutra* (the *Gandavyuha* chapter) it is mentioned that great disciples such as Mahakashyapa "were not capable of perpetuating the lineage of Buddhas." Obviously, something is wrong. This passage doesn't square with the later theory that Mahakashyapa was transmitted by the Buddha. Why then would the Buddha transmit to Mahakashyapa if he were incapable of perpetuating the lineage of Buddhas? As I read between the lines, Mahakashyapa is only worthy, like Ananda, to transmit the canon. Nothing more. He was incapable of transmitting the Buddha lineage that is the light of supreme illumination by wisdom's exertion.

So there really is no lineage mentioned in the Suttas of Buddhism?

There is no lineage in Buddhism, this is the single most wide spread heresy in Buddhism, the Dhamma teachings are the refuge as the Buddha himself stated not long before his passing. In the second book of the *Digha Nikaya* he states: "The Dhamma I have taught will be the teacher after I have passed". In addition to this, Ananda who waited on the Buddha hand and foot and was privy to every single last word that came from the Buddha's mouth stated unquestionably that there was no successor specified by the Buddha as one who would after his death become the leader of the Order. Then Ananda stated, "We are not without a refuge, the Dhamma is our refuge." *Samyutta Nikaya* 5.163: "Therefore Ananda, have the True Self as the holy illumination, dwell within the True Self as the only refuge, with no other as the refuge; have the sweet Law Dhamma as the holy illumination unto thee, let there be no other refuge than the sweet Law Dhamma (S 5.163)!" The Lord Buddha said to Ananda "Ananda, it may be that you would think: The Supreme Teacher's doctrine has vanished from the earth (after I am gone), now we have no teacher! It must not be thought of like this Ananda! For what has been well taught and explained to you as my Dharma and to my disciples will, after my death, be your true teacher (D 2.154)!" In addition to this the Buddha says: "If the Order so wishes, they may abolish the unimportant rules (of the Order) after my passing (D 2.154). Ananda stated several times after the Buddhas passing that the Blessed One named no successor to his place after he was gone.

But what about Mahakashyapa who led the first Buddhist council and took over the Order?

Kashyapa made a strong-arm power play for the position immediately before and after the Buddha's passing. Kashyapa himself was not, in spite of being well thought of by the Buddha, an Arahant of the highest order within the Sangha. If not for Shariputra and Mogallana's murder not long before that of the Buddha, Shariputra would have been named the head of the Order since the Buddha himself stated that Shariputra was the far and away the most accomplished of his disciples. After Shariputra and Mogallana's death, the Buddha remarks sadly that he finds his Order quite empty and is no longer gladdened by it anymore since the accomplished pupils had passed on. Mahakashyapa was a rather poor teacher, as evidenced by the fact that several nuns left the Order on account of his rough and foul teachings. Kashyapa himself detested women on a whole and belittled Ananda at almost every occasion and most vehemently for allowing women to take refuge within the Order of Buddha's disciples. Kashyapa is stated in the *Buddhavatamsaka Sutra* that he is not capable in the least of perpetuating the Dharma of the Buddha. A few of the nuns in the Order say that Kashyapa is a heretic of old to lecture on the Dhamma in the presence of Ananda and are quite vehemently upset at his so doing. From *Samyutta* 2.215 and on, Kashyapa puffs his own chest endlessly (after the death of the Buddha) about the reasons why he should and must be the new leader of the Order, which of course runs contrary to the Buddha's deathbed request that only the Dhamma is to be the teacher after he is gone, not any person, and most certainly not Mahakashyapa. There is actually very much more evidence regarding not only the unfitness of Mahakashyapa to lead the Order, but also grounds for the fact that he himself damaged it irreparably by making precepts and sectarian monastic rules more important than the Dhamma itself which also runs 180 degrees opposite to the Buddha's last requests in the *Mahaparanibbana Sutta* which states that the unimportant rules of the Order are not important next to the penetration of the Dhamma he so taught.

What led mostly to the great decline of Buddhism?

The Buddha's disciples were vehemently fussing over petty doctrine long before the Buddha was even murdered, but immediately after his death there were numerous hints in the record of the First Buddhist Council (*Vinaya* 2.286) that there was impending schism to befall the order, such as the need for the much less the importance of the monastic codes which Mahakashyapa argued for, thankfully there was enough agreement for the Suttas to be recorded accurately before the Sangha became completely perverted beyond recognition. The main reason for the decline of Buddhism was and still is the acceptance of puthujjanas into the order as Buddhists, when they lack Exalted vision to behold the true Dharma much less the motivation to strive to behold it. The puthujjana (ignorant unlightenable commoner) monastic community of the Sthaviras (sect), and later the Theravadans, caused great rifts and divisions to occur within the order, sect after sect after sect was formed with its own beliefs and rituals. The one thing that kept Buddhism alive and thriving during the days of the Buddha was that non Exalted were not admitted into the order, haphazardous admissions of anyone with the wish to take precepts and join the order was not the method. What occurred shortly before the Buddha's murder was that numbers were increasing at an exponential rate who lacked vision to behold the message and quickly corrupted the Sangha by changing the aim from one of penetration by exertion into Sati and Perfection of Samadhi, into one of petty rule observance and merit seeking which ran contrary to the *Buddhavacana* (doctrine of Buddhism) of the Blessed One. The fact that puthujjanas were accepted into the Sangha is the single largest reason for the rapid decline of the true Dhamma of the Buddha by far.

Can you describe this so-called supreme illumination of which you speak?

It's an intractable subject, I must say. If I describe it by saying that all constructed things flow from this principle while it, itself, remains unconstructed and unmoved, what can such words really explain? At this stage it is a far off goal, like some great mountain seen in the distance. You, as a person, must still make the journey on your own.

Isn't this just the problem of our need to think too much?

Yes, of course, over-thinking can be a problem. On the other hand, some Buddhists teach that we should repress our thoughts and be like a dead tree. This is wrong. Information can help guide us in the right direction. Sometimes it leads us in the wrong direction. Often, it is true, we have to reconsider our former thoughts and question this information. We may find that they weren't much after all.

Yes, I tend to agree with you. But back to the principle. Could you at least sketch it out?

First of all, each of us has access to this principle. All of us can tap into it. This is a given. However, owing to our habit of following appearances, we have lost the ability to communicate with it even though it is coexistent with us. Now, in the case of the Buddha, with regard to the dark principle, when he reached complete enlightenment he entered into what might be called primordial light. But more than just mere light, it is sheer productive power, or the same, sheer potentiality. Naturally, it is free and independent of phenomena although without it, phenomena would not be. With that I can't say much more.

How does this apply to Bodhidharma's teaching?

When Bodhidharma spoke of the Two Entrances, one was called the entrance by principle. This principle, of course, is the dark principle. To realize it was by means of wall-contemplation (biguan). Wall-contemplation means to turn to the real by rejecting phenomena, so as to abide in the primordial light. In this light there is nothing further to cultivate. This light, or I should say, this principle is a sheer productiveness and is equally self-knowing. In Buddhism we call this the Great Perfection of the Path that was first mentioned in the work, the Records of the Lanka Masters. When the Buddha converged with this dark principle, as you allege, could he influence the weather or change the economic conditions of his country? We are talking about two different worlds. The Buddha's world is the unconditioned world of potentiality before our senses cut it up and our brain conceptualizes it. The one of which you speak with its weather conditions and poverty is the highly conditioned human, samsaric world. Here sentient beings choose to look at this mysterious, unconditioned world in a certain, predetermined way, assembling it into a plurality of things and conditions. Furthermore, they crave this particular exotic view that ironically ends with their suffering. But if beings elect to transcend the human world, eventually reaching a higher plane of being.

Well, I'm not sure I understand you. I only see the human world. It is the one I care about. But let me ask you this question: How do you understand all this in your daily life? This is what really interests me.

When we tap into this dark principle, what little we can at first, it leads us to its fullness in time. As a result, one becomes blissful as this light gradually de-conditions unwholesome states of being. Even if you are in pain, for example, this light is at work aiding you to win your freedom. It is like an angel who insures that part of you will join the Buddhas.

That is interesting. I like what I hear you saying. So, this is not some intellectual exercise after all. Something actually happens in one's inner being that helps them in their ordinary lives?

It is most extraordinary. Let me also say that one senses at all times an illuminating energy present within them. In my case, as I turn to it, I become more of this dark principle. All the human gloominess fades away you might say.

Why is it that we don't experience this within us right now?

I think it is because we are glued to appearances, both sensory and mental. When one faces the world of appearances, one is actually looking away from their true source. One is, in fact, merging with the world of birth and death only to suffer in proportion as they cling to this world. The Buddha said it is like a great king, who spending too much time with his subjects, forgets he is a king. Well, in our case, we have total amnesia. This is why we don't experience it.

So, by engaging with phenomena we become conditioned by it and get amnesia?

Yes. And then we get hooked even more as we act towards our conditioning.

Like a vicious circle?

Yes. As the Buddha pointed out, humans are always dependently linked with phenomena in ignorance; they almost never get free. However, for Buddhists, they must learn to disembodify with phenomenal arising. But this is a hard road to travel.

Does Buddhism have a Sangha? Most Buddhists that I am familiar with have a congregation. Do you have one?

The Sangha is made up of those who have experienced the Buddha's true Dharma by revelation through their own perception by wisdom's exertion within Sati and Samadhi. These beings have become a witness to his pure teachings. Those who wish to belong to a particular Sangha are no better than any other feeble minded person of any religion who seeks not emancipation, but to belong to a support group. Since misery loves company, most Sanghas are horrific social groups for the mentally unstable. Having personally visited more "Sanghas" in America than any one else, I can tell you most regrettably that Buddhism has no resemblance to that which was taught in the days of the Buddha without question, there can be no mistaking this for those that are familiar with the doctrine of the Buddha in sad contrast to that which exists and is being taught today in the many and various houses of oriental ritualism which go under the guise of teachings of Buddhism.

But shouldn't the teachings change to fit the times and the needs?

That is a fallacy known as historicism. The same deluded fool of 500 B.C. is the same deluded fool of today. The Buddha himself said that his teachings were timeless, and in reading and penetrating the sermons of Buddhism, this is very apparent. Lacking fancy electronics and synthetic materialism, man is the same naked fool who lusts foolishly after sex, money and power; as the man not only in the days of the Buddha, but long before throughout time immeasurable throughout this world and others. The degree of intelligence in inventiveness to split the atom and reach the stars is no reflection upon the sublime wisdom that is generated by penetration through Sati and Samadhi practice as Buddhism teaches it.

So, this is not a community then, am I right?

Let's say that it is a community of like minds. In the Avatamsaka Sutra it tells us to "observe the Buddha's power of energy" which is his true Dharma. In observing it, we at once become members of his Sangha. The Order is made up entirely of those that have made the distinction between the made and the unmade, the phenomena of samsaric cyclic suffering and that of the deathless light of indivisible bliss unequalled.

What is the Buddha-nature which is spoken of so often? Does not everything possess it?

There is a real danger for many Buddhists who have been misled by deviant teachings which insist that temporal conditions are Buddha-nature itself. Make no mistake about it, mountains, rivers, and earth are not Buddha-nature. A mountain is a mountain because it is not Buddha-nature, having never completed the six paramitas. A river is a river because it is not Buddha-nature. And earth is not Buddha-nature. If earth were Buddha-nature, having completed the six paramitas, then nothing with a body made of earth would ever suffer or perish. Clearly, this is not the case. Only those entities that possess animus and are illumined by the Buddhist light have Buddha-nature, not as some sects preach that inanimate objects possess this nature. There can be no animus, i.e. Buddhist light within phenomena, which your temporal and corporeal body is constructed of. What you are truly lies ab-extra to this. To confuse the body or any of its constituents for what is truly real is to confuse the radio for the signal as it were. The grand error made by many sects, most especially that of all of Theravada, parts of Mahayana, and most of Zen, is that upon destruction of this "receiver" they find no "signal" or non-corporeal entity which is visible by any one of the senses, they heretically assume that there is nothing everlasting within Buddhism, and that its ultimate goal is one of annihilation or "void", or more succinctly that of the Theravada "extinction" principle which runs contrary to the Nikayas at every level.

Could you elaborate on that point of the senses a little more?

I beg you to surpass the six senses that are empty of Buddha-nature. Don't imagine that Buddha-nature can be seen. Don't search for it as if it were a sound. Do go after it like a dog tracking a scent. Don't imagine that the tongue can taste it or speak of it. Don't believe that it can be touched or felt. Don't be misled and take Buddha-nature to be a mental representation. Surpass all the senses. Leave everything behind so that you might awaken to that which is the very source of all things. What is

more horrific than can be imagined is that modern Buddhism has become nothing more than trite pseudo-psychology which perceives the goal to be nothing more than analytical examination of mental formations and to subdue them, something akin to a slave driver whipping the prisoners. Buddhism in such minds is a degenerate and perverted formalism with nothing as a higher goal to strive for than trite morality and external appearances. This has no part in what Buddhism teaches.

Could you elaborate on the Ariyasavaka and the puthujjana?

The spiritual division of the Buddhist world was represented in the Nikayas not by that of monk and layman but by that of ariyasavaka (true Buddhist with possession of vision of the way) and the puthujjana (ignorant and unenlightened commoner, not denoting layman or monk but any common fool lacking vision of the path). It was the ariyasavaka alone who was in possession of the holy revelation of Samma-Perfection, in the sense that he had seen the impermanence of the phenomenal world, the existence of a sanctuary lying beyond that realm of impermanence and also the path leading to that sanctuary. Only the ariyasavaka is on the path to Samma-Perfection within Nirvana, to the cessation of rebirth. The puthujjana, on the other hand, lacking this vision of the ariyasavaka remains ignorant of the supreme truth. This spiritual division transcends the purely social one of monk and layman since many laymen and devas were ariyasavakas and many monks were puthujjanas. Moreover, there is no doubt that there were puthujjana monks during the Buddha's own lifetime whilst at other times during his lifetime individuals became monks only as a result of becoming savakas. The real situation may be that, although those going forth under the Buddha only did so as a result of becoming savakas, there was a tendency for these monks, with or without the Buddha's permission, to ordain others who were still at the level of the puthujjana. Thus leaving the term puthujjana for the present we find that the puthujjana is one who has not heard the Dhamma, one who is unable to discern who are Exalted (Noble true Buddhists with holy revelation of vision into Perfection), one who is not guided in the Dhamma of the Exalted. The main point of difference between the puthujjana and the savaka is therefore that the former, unlike the latter, has not comprehended or penetrated one iota that of the Dhamma. Thus either because he does not get to hear the Dhamma or, if he does, because he remains unaffected thereby, the puthujjana lacks the insight that arises on hearing that Dhamma and thus fails to see things as they really are. As a result he remains a fool and opposite of the true Exalted (M iii 219) and continues to take delight in the five strands of the sense pleasures (S iv 196, 201) that are elsewhere styled the puthujjana happiness, the unExalted happiness and the dung like happiness (M i 454 = iii 236; ep A iii 342). Moreover, it is through this continued attachment to the sense pleasures that he remains subject to Mara and as a consequence does not pass beyond old age, decay, disease and death he is troubled by such sights of impermanence (A i 145f), remaining ignorant of the eightfold path that leads to passing beyond these (A i 180). In short the puthujjana, unlike the ariyasavaka, is still subject to dukkha (plurality of existence) in all its forms (S iv 206-210; A iv 158); he is still subject to repeated rebirth, often of an unpleasant kind (A i 267; A ii 126ff), and even though he may temporarily gain a good birth, he continually gives rise to the skandhas (S in 152). The puthujjana, then, unlike the ariyasavaka, is no endmaker to Perfection within Samma (A ii 163). Therefore, only the Exalted warrior with vision and wisdom can be a true disciple of the Blessed One, much less could anyone who is not such a Exalted win the fruit of supreme awake in wisdom's Perfection gained by the Buddha himself.

What exactly is the Tathagata that I hear spoken of so much, and its relationship to the Buddha?

Tathagata: [(Tathan.) Tatta+San.(Samma')+gata] Tatta (glowing, illumination, truth)+San.(Samma'[hypostatic nexus of unity Perfection, abode of Nirvana, pith, core, highest Perfection of indivisible unity-conjoiment within deathlessness])+gata (gone to, gone unto [Samma']), can go from [to help others in Buddhist Scripture]). Same meaning as the Sammagata. (Sammagato) the Tathagata is the Sammagata exact same meaning and usage. The Buddha himself is the Tathagata that has a special meaning relevant to Buddhism and has a much deeper meaning than the word Buddha does which is a generic term that is also used by other religions as well. The Sammagata (Tathagata) literally means the Samma-dwelling supremely awake Buddha who can come and go by his Samma abode. This is why the Buddha is called the Sammasambuddha. This is also important as it relates to the Noble Eightfold Path (Tenfold Path for the Arahant), which ends lastly in 7. Sammasati and 8. Sammasamadhi. Tathatta or Tatha have been incorrectly translated as "suchness, thusness" only to fit the context since the Pali translators were unsure what the meaning of Tatha was other than it was the supreme dwelling state of the Buddha. It turns out to be the hypostatic pith or center of all things or akkha (eye, core, axle, center) from which the Buddha speaks, dwells, and resides in Perfection. Samma is the Unific-supreme principle in Buddhism in so much as it means totality, Perfection, all that is, the potential of all things, fulfillment in the highest sense, the summit. Nirvana is the boundary between the aggregated suffering of samsara and the dwelling within the only desirable abode of Buddhism that is the attha (abode) of Samma-Perfection.

Does modern Buddhism resemble the Buddhism of old?

It doesn't. While many modern day practitioners, who frequent American Zen (sect) centers believe, to the contrary that it does, there is no historic evidence that this is the case. First, it is a fallacy to think that early Buddhism was a school of meditation (P. Jhana, C. Ch'an, J. Zen). The word "Ch'an" (J. Zen) was reinterpreted in the Sung period to mean "enlightenment", not meditation. In fact, followers of Ch'an (J. Zen) in the Sung denied that their tradition taught meditation. They argued that Zen (sect) was synonymous with Buddha Mind, as an enlightenment tradition transmitted outside the common teaching; and had little or nothing to do with practicing meditation (C. hsi-ch'an). Even a close examination of the word "jhana", in light of traditional Buddhist practices, reveals that seated meditation is not suggested in the meaning of this word. In Pali, the word merely expresses the ideas of penetrative investigation by burning vigilance of antecedent dwelling by initiatory anamneses within Samadhi practice. What is lost sight of in the modern day practices of the Zen sects that claim to preach Buddhism but do not, is that Zen's traditional goal is the realization of Buddha Mind. Consequently, any and all forms of meditation must be subordinate to the goal at hand, namely, enlightenment. Meditational forms can never become the goal itself. Historically speaking, many Zen priests became enlightened during work, rather than during seated meditation; or from reading suttas, as was often the case.

What does this statement mean? "A special transmission outside the scriptures..."

Right off the bat let me say that "scriptures" is the wrong word. It should read "outside religion".

But that is the way most all Buddhist teachers today translate this stanza. Is it wrong?

Misleading. Buddhism is not antinomian. We are not here to burn or ignore the scriptures. Those so-called Buddhists who are into that sort of interpretation are off the track. That is "wild fox Buddhism". Getting back to your question, which has to do with the so-called "transmission", let me say that in Buddhism there occurs a spiritual transmission outside of the religious institution itself, by which we intuitively see our true nature. It is an inconceivable transmission. You can't actually transmit it to another that is not only impossible but also denied within sutta.

As I understand it and I am probably wrong but isn't what is transmitted actually the secret that everything is Buddha-nature?

I guess you have been reading bubblegum Buddhism pocketbooks. No, that is incorrect in this neck of the woods. More specifically, what is transmitted is the fundamental nature of all things, which are beyond the range of thought and figurative thinking. When you fully see this nature for yourself, you become a Buddha; you are transmitted. By the way, it is really not a transmission at all, since you have always had this nature. It is rather like finding something you lost long ago.

That is a somewhat funny phrase you used "bubblegum Buddhism", what do you mean by this?

It is quite simple, also known as buffet Buddhism. This is a label a few Buddhists and scholars use to describe the nature of modern so-called Buddhism that picks and chooses what it likes out of Buddhism and incorporates what it likes, and rejects what it doesn't. For example, there are a many books out there that claim to marry Buddhism with Christianity or to reject rebirth within Buddhism but to embrace the remainder; this is all quite sad and would be laughable if it wasn't a major point of Buddhism's decline in this age. It is quite impossible to reject rebirth within Buddhism, that would be akin to rejecting Christ in Christianity, the possibility is unfathomable, rather some type of befuddling inconsistency like "Buddhism without Buddhism." These many and varied New Age esotericisms have as their point of reference for what Buddhism teaches to be whatever their mind wishes Buddhism to be to them personally, irregardless of whether or not this runs contradictory to the doctrine or not. Some have called this "my own personal Buddhism" mentality where anything goes and can be labeled as Buddhism even if it is 180 degrees counter to the actual teachings. The reason for much of this within America, is that most Buddhists in name only were once Christians and most likely since birth as well, which is fine that that wish to convert if they have the vision of differentiation that makes one a Buddhist, but what happens is that the mere mention of the necessity to

comprehend and penetrate the Buddhist scriptures as such smacks of Christianity and its Bible in their minds and as such, and they are immediately repulsed by this notion outright.

This brings up an interesting question. Isn't it necessary to have this transmission confirmed by an authorized master?

Yes, and he is sitting on top of your head right now. There is no master that can confirm your attainment when you have penetrated Sati and Samadhi deeply.

I don't get it. How do you mean?

It means that verification is within you at this moment. A real transmission must be independent of external verification, this includes ecclesiastical institutions with their so-called certifications. If you have to run to a teacher to verify your enlightenment to become transmitted, what kind of transmission is that? It cannot be legitimate. Further, what kind of certitude is that which depends on another to be certain?

But what about the problem with self-delusion?

There are many kinds of self-delusion. One kind believes that having a certificate in your possession amounts to enlightenment. Surely you don't believe that every person who says they are transmitted has actually received the authentic transmission? Today, there are some teachers who claim to be transmitted, but who have no idea of what Buddha-nature is. They think Buddha-nature is sensory consciousness or just being aware of some finite matter, like pulling a weed. If that is the case, then we are all transmitted—even wild animals! If the truth be known, according to Zen master Huang Po, nothing was transmitted to anybody that could be recognized by the senses. The only source to confirm your attainment outside of yourself is that of the suttas.

Are you saying that it's all a hoax?

Indeed the modern concept of transmission is a complete farce and would be laughable if not for the fact that so many fools are hoaxed by fancy robes and calligraphy certificates of so-called transmission. Buddhism is about supreme enlightenment by empowering yourself to behold all that is and it not within this sphere of our being, there is nothing that can be given to you. Anyone that claims that they can enlighten you without any effort on your part is the highest order of fools. Our ignorance is real enough. Equally, the correction of ignorance is real enough, too. What the masters are saying is that when we see our true nature as it really is, that is the transmission we attain Buddhahood. But nothing substantial is actually transmitted which can be viewed with the six senses or by another. In addition, this transmission is also effortless. It doesn't even require that you practice being aware of pulling a weed or chopping an onion. Who transmitted the Buddha? It was the confirmation by supreme wisdom perfected in Samadhi that he had beheld the pinnacle that is strove so hard to ascend.

But all teachers get some kind of transmission document, don't they?

Yes. But it means nothing. Deluded teachers get transmission documents, too, and so do Kami (spirits). Former high school bullies get such documents, then go on to become masters in name only who treat their students like beasts of burden. Receiving a transmission document is part of conventional false Buddhism, it is not part of ultimate Buddhism. People who are attached to such forms need these kinds of things, while real students don't. When a superior student, going beyond conventional Buddhism, sees his true nature, that is verification it is the transmission. Transmissions came from Chinese Zen, where mastery of Buddhism's principle was not the deciding factor of who was given transmission, but who attracted the most money to pour into the coffers of the temple and was able to handle the paperwork and matters of the temple the best, this is the birth of the transmission so highly heralded in perverse Buddhism in name only of today.

I think you need proper certification if you are going to teach. Do you agree? You can't practice medicine without a license, for example.

Buddha-nature certification is not the same as getting a license to run a sewerage treatment plant, for instance. A person who has seen Buddha-nature can help you to distinguish between mental images of it and that nature directly. But a certified master who has no idea of what Buddha-nature is can only point out a false path of metal images, based on what he has put into his memory.

I know I shouldn't ask about this modern sect, but what would you say about further about Zen?

Modern Zen, its practice, is chiefly Soto. But more specifically, it revolves around the strange teachings of Dogen Zenji. The often murky writings of Dogen, have their appeal to a certain type of Zennist; but what Dogen says about Zen, nevertheless, has to be examined and tested against Zen's historical and spiritual culture. Japanese Zen has another tradition besides that of Dogen Zenji, the father of that lineage being Bu'nan Shidoo (Munan) whose vision gave birth to Hakuin Zenji. Bu'nan, to change the subject somewhat, reads differently than Dogen. To illustrate the strangeness of Soto "sitting methodologies", I am sure all of you remember the anecdote where Nan-yueh likens his disciple Ma-tsu's zazen to the futility of polishing a tile in order to make a mirror, pointing out the limitation of seated meditation (knowing whether to whip the cart or the horse). So what does the genius Dogen Zenji say about this particular anecdote? He argues that the act of polishing, in fact, creates a mirror out of a tile! Just in the same way that sitting on a zafu makes one a living Buddha! Actually, here are Dogen's words: "We truly know that when we make a mirror by polishing a tile, Ma-tsu becomes a Buddha. When Ma-tsu becomes a Buddha, Ma-tsu immediately becomes Ma-tsu. When Ma-tsu becomes Ma-tsu, zazen immediately becomes zazen." Maybe the foregoing explains the general irrationality of modern Zen temples. It would also seem that Dogen is quite ignorant of Buddhism. Generally speaking, the Five Aggregates (skandhas), making up the physical body, including the senses and mental machinations, are not regarded to be vehicles (yanas) through which enlightenment is accomplished. The real question for orthodox Buddhism was held up this half-alive corpse? And who is fixated to the Five Aggregates (name and form), constituting the unreal.

What is the meditation of being mindfulness of in-and-out breathing?

First of all, mindfulness is an incorrect word that does not refer to anything in the Pali as it pertains to the word Sati (anamnesis), but rather antecedent recollective disembodiment. The breath itself is meant to be a metronome by which to practice this yoking collectiveness outside of the body. Nowhere within the teachings of Buddhism is the following of the breath advocated, anything else is a mistranslation of the Pali scripture. One cannot disembodiment from the breath (i.e. the body) by following it. Why would the Buddha, who is detached from his corporeal body, teach his students to be dependent on the breath cycles, as if to be led by them? Below is an excerpt from the Anapanasati-sutta (Antecedentness by Breath): Breathing in long in-breaths he so discerns, "These are but only long in-breaths." Breathing long out-breaths he so discerns, "These are but only long out-breaths." Breathing in short in-breaths he so discerns, "These are but only short in-breaths." Breathing short out-breaths he so discerns, "These are but only short out-breaths." He wisely trains thusly, "I shall breathe in supremely beholding the entire body in recollective antecedentness to it." He wisely trains thusly, "I shall breathe out supremely beholding the entire body in recollective antecedentness to it." He wisely trains thusly, "I shall breathe in beholding that which lies before the arising of the body's formation." He wisely trains thusly, "I shall breathe out beholding that which lies before the arising of the body's formation." (MN 3.82)

So what about mindfulness and concentration?

Those are two terms of common usage that are employed to translate Sati and Samadhi very incorrectly. As per the specific dictionary definition of mindfulness and concentration, these words have no bearing on the precise meanings of Sati and Samadhi (more specifically Sammasati and Sammasamadhi). Unfortunately very poor Pali translators have tried minimalism in translation and used a single word to translate Sati and Samadhi, and within English that is impossible in the extreme. There is nothing within the connotation of mindfulness and concentration that have any bearing on the actual meanings of Sammasati and Sammasamadhi as such.

What is the practice of Buddhism precisely, everyone talks about it but no one ever mentions or understands what it is as it relates to what scripture teaches, could you elaborate on this?

Firstly you should know what is the sum of teachings of Buddhism, namely the paraphrasable core mentioned earlier. This having been said, the practice of Buddhism is threefold: #1. The Dithi (revelation) into Samma-Perfection which is the differentiation by supermundane wisdom between that which is unreal and what is wholly real and blissful and of the light of deathlessness; supreme penetration into the actuality of the supreme truth of the Four Noble Truths, which is not to know them in an

analytical and rational sense but to make them part of your very being without cognizing it in the mind like a mental laundry list to know but not understand. #2. Sati, more specifically Sammasati (anamnesis, recollective-penetration into Samma and into what is Samma-Perfection) namely: He has extricated himself in proper guiding from both desirous covetousness and rejection of this world, and has possessed himself of vigilant unity in burning meditateness of recollective-conjoining of the origin, he so extricates himself by wisdom's blazing vigorousness of intent in beholding what is the body and what is antecedent in origin before the arising of the body, what are feelings and sensations and what is antecedent in origin before the arising of feelings and sensations, what are mental formations and what is antecedent in origin before the arising of mental formations, and what are phenomena and what is antecedent in origin before the arising of phenomena. Thus one antecedently disembodies unto the supermundane otherworldly vision of that which is the Unific, the animator of this corpse that is blood, flesh, decay, transitory, and of phenomena only. This is done by several methodologies, most namely that of The Sutta on Antecedentness by Breath, as mentioned in brief earlier. Incorrectly this sutta has been translated as "mindfulness by breath", but that is an inaccuracy, one cannot disembody from the body by following it and its various putrid qualities of flesh and blood; this is a false doctrine which has nothing to do with Buddhism in sutta and everything to do with esoteric sectarianism which has not seen that which is ab-extra to the body and that Buddhism teaches that one must see its various aspects as that of phenomenality and must disembody to that which is not subject to decay and is the light of pure bliss as such. #3. Lastly having perfected the supreme otherworldly wisdom's Perfection as to the clear differentiation between the made and the unmade, the real from the phenomena, the transitory from the everlasting, the bliss from the sorrow, the Unific with the samsaric; one then does slowly disembody within the conjunction-abiding within this Samma-Perfection through Samadhi [Samma (the Unific Perfection, the summit of all that is bliss and deathless) +a (to be conjoined with) +dhatu (the realm of)] or Sammasamadhi [samma+samma+a+dhatu], which the Buddha has perfected, thus he is called the Sammasambuddha since he is now a supremely awake one within Samma-bliss indivisibility. There can be no "practice" in Buddhism without the Revelation of the goal. To those who think they can "practice" Buddhism while lacking the Revelation into the Unific that they are to strive towards, is to say that one may ascend the mountain without knowing where the mountain is, this is lacking direction and vision which is impossible to head towards the goal of Buddhism. So there must be vision, Perfection of that differentiation in supreme wisdom's exertion and not mental constructs, and lastly incremental disembodiment into this Unific bliss of the indivisibility of Samma-Perfection.

Could you give me a practical example?

When one practices Sati, they are antecedently disemboding themselves from this aggregated nexus within the corporeal form. This anamnesis is the practice just before Samadhi wherein one retracts back into the light-animus of sheer potentiality within fulfillment Perfection (the attha [abode] of Samma [Perfection]). They recollectively disembody themselves in the pure and true shelter of that which never changes, the hub, the matrix of totality. Such is how they use the breath as one means of a type of metronome to be antecedent, it is not the breath itself, but the methodology, of which there are many, to disembody oneself and yoke to the everlasting bliss of deathlessness within Samma-Perfection. In this state, when breathing is going on, they maintain a recollection which is prior to the totality of breathing which is most imperceptible and certainly the sublime principle missed all these many years by the fools that are trapped into focusing upon the unreal realm of temporal and aggregated existence.

Could you be more specific with an analogy?

Without embracing new age esoteric terms, Buddhism teaches that one must seek first by anamnesis then by penetration, then by penetration-abiding that which is completely antecedent to all things, which is the source of all things, i.e. the pure bliss unmatched within the entire universe. If you were to imagine a rainbow with its visible spectrum as well as invisible spectrum, we know that this optical illusion is the end result of the scattered diffraction of the Light thorough water droplets during a storm in which the sun is still visible. This beautiful display is a good analogy of a very simple Buddhist model for the goal. Those colors, while beautiful, are "animated" by one single potential or source, that being the Light from the Sun. Humans in their petty ignorances, lustings, and graspings fall prey to this scattering within the multitudinous diffractions of the pure light (animus, Samma-Perfection potential). In so doing they now lust endlessly after these colors (aggregates) of sensory titillations, clinging to the wholly unreal, the transitory, the ephemeral, the phenomenal; just as you can never truly catch or own the rainbow itself, so does Buddhism say that which is decay, phenomena, and unreal causes you suffering because you lack the insightful wisdom to behold that which animates those myriad colors. Such as a spectator at a puppet show that sees the doll move and humors him, but lacks the penetrating revelation to see the man behind the box that yanks the strings to make it move. So too does Buddhism by means of the Exalted Noble Eightfold Path after the revelation of the Four Noble Truths show you what is truly real, the Light, the Bliss unequalled, the truth of all things, that which you must eventually take refuge in if you wish to escape sufferings forever from this realm of divisive pain and sufferings which is unending. So long as you cannot behold the Light that animates you, and disembody from the unreal realm of Samsaric existence into the real of Samma-dwelling-Perfection by Samadhi conjunction in jhanic exertions, then you are lost, shall suffer, and are ignorant of the way and the means by which to liberate yourself. So this rainbow if you will, even though very beautiful is unreal in the strictest sense. You may say that the rain, which diffracts the Light, represents your ignorance that made you befall the unreal, the division from the Unific-Perfection. Jhana, Sati and Samadhi antecedent-recollectiveness is not just to recollect from whence you came, that which you truly are, which would be like remembering your childhood fondly, but actually disemboding yourself into it, thereby circumventing all future sufferings within manifold Samsaric existences, both this one and the million to follow if you do not wake up. Sammaditthi (Revelation into Samma-Perfection) which is the first step along the Noble Eightfold Path is literally nothing more than holy insight into the fruition of wisdom's exertion of the validity of the Four Noble Truths, which is otherworldly and supermundane, is not rational or intellectual cognition, but is born or true Exalted sight. Only then is one a follower of the Blessed One, the Buddha, and an Ariyasavaka of the lineage, those holy Tathagatas through time immemorial. But fruition is required to perfect this. The summit now seen from after is still a summit afar and must be sought with all vigor and magnitude that muscle, brain, and spirit can muster. Possessing the Otherworldly revelation of the Light (Samma-Perfection) of that which is aggregated and unreal and that which is bliss and deathlessness, the Exalted warrior can now differentiate the real from the unreal. The difference between the puthujjana and the new Exalted who now has revelation of Samma-Perfection is that the Exalted warrior can see that which is unmade and that which is made, manifold, and phenomena; and the puthujjana is ignorant of this, he can only see and lust after the "colors" phenomena, he is wholly ignorant as to the light of the universe, the Unific utmost highest deathlessness. The puthujjana is a son without a mother who cannot behold his own creation, demise, and certainly not its escape. The Exalted now beholds the Light to which he must disembody and that which is the source of his suffering; he did not acquire this through rationalization, mental cognition, or other mind science, but through direct perception within his core which is wordless and otherworldly just as the Buddha himself stated so many times. If one were to imagine a room of peoples who have spent eons with their backs to a light bulb and were focused entirely on the shadows on the wall and had never turned around to see the light, this is the nature of the puthujjana in this world, the spirit world, and the realm of the Gods themselves, their own aggregated bodies block the light and creates shadows on the wall that they chase after, lust, desire, cling, muse over, and confuse themselves with and therein they do so suffer endlessly. The Exalted warrior knows now what makes those shadows; he knows what is the light and what are the shadows. His first deep insight is that of differentiation that the puthujjana cannot make. The Exalted warrior is now of the Blessed One's doctrine and he sees that the shadows are unreal, are pain, so he does so seek vigilantly to enter into the light, disembody within it; he strives for it until even his flesh falls off, for therein is the maker of all things, the bliss, the Unific Samma-Perfection which is unmanifest, supreme and highest. There is no peace in death for the puthujjana who has not beheld the supreme and made it his with every ounce of his true being, for in ignorance he will arise in hell and or be reborn again.

How do the sects of Buddhism see this analogy?

The difference now between the lamentable Theravadans, Mahayanists to a greater degree, Vajrayanists, and Zen is that their notion is to eliminate the shadows onto destruction by moral behavior and precepts, and that there is no light, nor any entity which enters into it, which is a nihilistic non-Buddhist teaching, and this is simply not the case at all.

I keep hearing about Vipassana meditation endlessly, could you explain it?

Vipassana is identical with Sammasamadhi and means specifically [vi (to remove from, back unto, extract from one thing into another, always with the connotation of removing from something into another in a neutral sense of direction) +passa (backwards, antecedently; also meaning to "see spiritually into something with your inner being") +sati (anamnesis, antecedent-recollectiveness of a point of penetration)]. What is a horrific error is that people talk about Vipassana endlessly as the practice of Buddhism in and of itself; but this can never be the case and it never occurs in that manner in the entirety of the suttas. Vipassana can only be a modifier of another word at which Vipassana is aimed. As a separate word that modifies a point of focus (Samatha) it occurs exactly 161 times in sutta, 157 times as the phrase "samatho ca vipassana", and 125 times as Samathavipassana. There is no such existence of just Vipassana as a practice in and of itself within the entirety of the Buddhist suttas.

Vipassana can only be a modifier as a point of focus upon something else, namely 99% of time that of Samatha [Samma (hypostasis, Perfection) + attha (abode [of], otherworldly dwelling-abode, resting place in perfect sense)], meaning the supreme abode of Samma-Perfection. The non-scriptural and heretical notion of the practice Vipassana as taught in many so-called Buddhist centers today runs opposite of the definition of Vipassana. To say that one practices Vipassana is akin to saying that you "ride", both are modifiers for a subject of focus, for instance you need say that you ride a car, ride a bike, ride a bus etc., but to say that you just ride has no meaning as such. This is exactly same case with Vipassana which means only "to extract (disembody) antecedently by Sati-anamnesia into X", X being the point of focus and disembodiment which is usually the Samma-attha (samatha) or "the abode of Samma-Perfection." The notion that Vipassana is somehow "insight" meditation is to do a vast injustice to sutta that teaches otherwise regarding the practice of Samathavipassana. Heretical non-Buddhist factions that have gained a great favor from the uninformed masses have gone so far as to call Vipassana "self-psychotherapy", this notion is absurd and is a product of New Age esotericism which places fame and money over accuracy to Buddhist scripture. Vipassana is best analogized by saying that Vipassana is a magnifying glass, but in sutta it is used to focus upon (disembody) into something, namely the Samma-attha. Those who have woefully taken Vipassana out of context to mean a practice that Buddhism teaches as a standalone methodology have done a great disservice to those who are genuinely interested in what Buddhism teaches. To say otherwise cannot be proven by even a single occurrence of the word Vipassana in scripture.

I can see now how sublime this principle really is, and I seem to have some insight now as to how Buddhism is not a path of negation, would you agree?

Contrary to popular belief, the Buddha's doctrine is not about the elimination of desires and ignorances by negation. Rather it is the "displacement" of those very same vices and lusts that bind one to rebirth, which should be done. Displacement or "transfusion" by wisdoms Perfection is the sublime, and further missed message among most Buddhists today. What is misunderstood is that Perfection by "elimination" is only a contrivance, in the most perfect and awful sense of the term. What is witnessed today among many a monk and Buddhist is that, by elimination alone, one is perfected. But this is not the message of the Buddha found anywhere. When one is focused only on "elimination" only of all that is negative, they are not replacing it with anything better. Their very being is but nothing more than a set of moralist piety of "don't do that just because"; and what one has as a result is the epitome of a living human contrivance wherein which wisdom does not grow but rather wickedness instead, by no other accord than elimination, as is its own means to an end. If I may use an analogy for the doctrine; you are a deathless "seed" (Atta'), and that seed is filled with black oil "desires, lusts, ignorance, and constituents for rebirth". What must be done, as taught by the Buddha, is not to empty that seed of its blackness, but start pouring in it clean pure water "wisdom, recollective insight into the nature of all things" which will displace that black oil "desires, ignorances". Rightly so if one, only by contrivance were to, for morals sake alone, empty that "seed" without replacing it with something better, you have not perfected wisdom, but have tried to perfect some fashion of contrived emptiness akin to senseless moralist piety, or worse still nihilism. This is where much of inept secular Buddhism goes wrong in the reading of the doctrine; with blinders on and shortsightedness, they focus only on what must be eliminated alone. They fail to see that Buddhism is about fulfillment Perfection by wisdoms growth, thereby transfusing and displacing all that binds you to rebecoming and to suffering as a whole. In such a case, they attempt vainly to "empty" themselves as a contrivance, and this is not fulfillment but rather emptiness, and that foolish man who has not "replaced" it with anything better, which will illuminate him in this world and the next, is bound to be reborn again by his lack of wisdom as taught by the Buddha himself. Defilements are to be passed through by Perfection of Sati and Samadhi; negation in no way confers either mastery or enlightenment upon the adept.

What is shunyata and emptiness that is spoken of often in Buddhism?

Shunyata literally means that where you expect to see substantiality there is none, not emptiness in a broad sense, but only applicable to phenomena. As far as emptiness is concerned, there is nothing said to be empty in the entirety of Buddhist scripture other than phenomenality (the aggregates). The altruistic nihilism of Theravada, Vajrayana, Mahayana and Zen has hyperextended this term past its narrow and specific definition as used in sutta, which is to outline that which is unreal and cannot be construed as everlasting and genuine with which to dwell in.

What is this Samma that you speak so much about?

Samma is Perfection, or the hypostasis. The Tathagata is in fact the "Hypostatic self-possessed entity who dwells in "thusness" (Samma)". Samma is best understood possibly by saying that Nirvana is the realm and Samma is its Matrix-Perfection. Such that Florida (Nirvana) may be the destination of one's vacation, but relaxation in peace is the goal therein (Samma). Nirvana in fact appears by itself only a handful of times in the Nikayas, although many more times in compound; however Samma' in standalone and compound occurs over 21,000 times. Samma in fact is the Nexus-potential Perfection unmanifold indivisibility as a product of Sammasamadhi (Unity-Conjoinment of Perfection) in the fullest sense of the term. Samma may also be said to be the animus-field for all fulfillment and Perfection in the most pregnant sense of the term, and is fact the pith, nexus, and matrix of Nirvana's attainment in the most perfect sense of Samadhi's Perfection. It is always an aspect of conjoinment-Perfection in the most extreme and superlative sense of the term. Samma' is the unmanifold indivisibility of the Perfection of Buddhahood, hence Sammasambuddha and Sammasambodhi. As of course must fit the paraphrasable core of Buddhism, the entire Magga (Path) of Buddhism culminates in conjoinment in Perfection of Samma' and disembodiment from manifold existence of aggregated being in this world or any other. Since it has now been uncovered that the Tathagata is in fact the Sammagata, equally interchangeable and called the Sammasambuddha, we now know that it is impossible to call Samma "right", either in the Noble Eightfold Path or any other aspect of compound. Samma, in translation, has been now for the past 2100+ years, a mistranslation and butchering of the genuine meaning. Such that in much the same "best car" is a Rolls Royce, but "best" in no manner describes what is/are Rolls Royce vehicles or where they are, and what are its aspects. The same translation fallacy applies to Samma from eons ago when (Buddhaghosa most likely) Samma and its constituent compounds were translated as "right" or "best", this is well only so far as Samma is indeed "not wrong" or "best"; but however that is only an appellation of a property of Samma's quality, but is not a translation of Samma itself. Nirvana is the peach and Samma' is its "womb" seed at its center where the Buddha and the Tathagata (Sammagata) abide in supreme bliss unequalled. What is spoken of concerning Samma in scripture is that it is fulfillment, and that through Sammasati and Sammasamadhi, one attains fulfillment in its Perfection wherein all potentiality is achieved and one is supremely perfected not only in wisdom but also in being now forever separated from both rebirth and suffering in the endless embodiment back into some form or womb rebirth or other such pain. Samma was lost (the Samma attha, or Samma abode) as the crux of Buddhism when the sectarian dogma of Theravada took precedence in India over 2000 years ago, replacing Buddhism's goal to be that of Nibbana (Nirvana).

This is quite fascinating! So you're saying that Nirvana is not the goal of Buddhism? Surely what evidence is there that proves this?

The greatest and most prolific Pali translator of our time stated that it was nothing short of supremely absurd to consider that Nirvana was the "goal" within Buddhism, that being Mrs. Rhys Davids who co-founded the Pali Text Society with her husband; and she was more correct than even she knew. Nirvana (Nir+vattati) literally means "contraction from the sphere of aggregation". Every occurrence of Nirvana is not used to describe the highest attainment, but rather the complete destruction of desires and ignorances, such as: Those wise men! Indeed having perfected wisdom, and in whom are fully guarded their deathless Essence. Those same in whom take no more part of this world, having desires cast off and attachments forever gone. Passions are extinct in such shining brilliant ones; such is their great realm of supreme deathless Nirvana! (KN 2.89). The Buddha himself said that to try to describe Nirvana objectively was impossible, not only because we lack a proper frame of reference to speak of it by means of experience, but that there is nothing objective of Nirvana whatsoever at all. Nirvana, to use a more succinct analogy, is but a "state line" between defilements, ignorances, and delusions about the nature of all things. This "line" exists as a dividing point between Perfection and that which is common and vile; but it lacks inherently any substantiality within which to "dwell" or rest forever in. Every instance of Nirvana is used to describe this invisible and empty line of separation, but never as it is so very commonly assumed to be the fundamental goal and final abode-dwelling as taught within the scriptures of Buddhism, to say otherwise is absurd and to attempt to prove so by scripture is quite impossible at best. Nirvana quite literally is just the dividing line drawn in the sand between Samma-Perfection and Samsara-suffering, nothing more. The Theravadans themselves are almost wholly responsible for the massive perversion of Buddhism to have as its goal that of Nibbana (Nirvana) which they have so cleverly translated as "extinction". To have anything else which would indicate that there is not only a place to dwell apart from aggregated existence but most importantly a entity-being outside of that aggregation, most assuredly flies in the face of sectarian non-Nikayan Theravadan nihilism of "no self empirically" which is not scriptural.

What about the point I hear endlessly that Buddhism teaches about the rejection of the Ego as such?

This is a completely modern concoction that is the birth child of political correctness and has no place within Buddhism as such. There is nothing within the Pali scriptures that can have any correlation with the western notion of the "ego" as such which is ideated as selfishness or identity as special or somehow self-importance.

The only relation Buddhism has to the "self" within its teachings is that the True Self (Atta) must not be identified with that of the unreal and phenomenal as such. Next to "concentration", "mindfulness", and "compassion", the "ego" is that additional word which is used very frequently within the talk circles of Buddhism, but indeed has no place in its dictionary definition as it relates to Buddhism as such.

This self-noself doctrine is an incredibly hot topic in Buddhism, I've strained myself to find someone who can elaborate on this topic without rehashing personal opinions into the matter and speak intelligently from scripture on the topic rather than from sectarian dogma they were fed from their master-teacher, could you speak of this?

Nowhere within the Scriptures of Buddhism is the True Self denied, but only that it must not be identified with the transitory and ephemeral aggregates of phenomena. Such that forms, feelings, perceptions, impulses, and mental machinations of the mind are temporal, unreal, arise and pass, and are of the realm of phenomena and cannot be construed as what is everlasting, best, real, and most dear of the True Self and therefore must not be identified with the Atta as such. The greatest mistake made after the passing of Gotama Buddha was the arising of the non-doctrinal notion that Buddhism somehow preaches empirical-extinction. The much discussed doctrine of Anatta [an (not) Atta (True Self)] which occurs exactly 248 times in the entirety of the Buddhist Nikayas is used only to describe that which cannot be identified with or clung to as genuinely real and everlasting, or possessed of the True Self in its proper identity such as: O' monks, form is not the Self (anatta), feelings are not the self (anatta), phenomena are not the self (anatta); in no other context than this throughout the entirety of Buddhism is anatta used. In some secular translations, the Atta has been translated in its various forms and compounds as a reflexive, i.e. oneself, himself, themselves; but no such reflexive terminology exists within the Pali language in which the Buddhist canon is recorded. The Atta (True Self) or the Atta, both in standalone and compound occur more than 23,000 times within scripture. The much debated and secular notion of "no-self empirically" cannot be supported in even a single instance within the entirety of all Buddhist scripture and it is a latter development of secular Buddhist schools after many divisive splits within the Buddhist Sangha after Gotama Buddhas passing on. To place anatta outside of this context is impossible to show by scripture. This particular topic of Buddhism has been the single most heated topic of debate for 2300 years. Nothing within Buddhism is more bitterly debated. Sadly, all of this argument, if based on scripture, would be quickly resolved. Nowhere does Buddha deny the Atta as such, but only rejects that which cannot be identified with it, namely phenomena. Even now the world standard for Pali-English translation reference being the new "A Dictionary of Pali" by Margaret Cone states about the Atta (atta): [Sanskrit Atman], The self, the soul, as a permanent unchangeable, autonomous entity; p.70, Pali Text Society. Without an entity that fares on, there are no grounds for rebirth, nothing which could be perfected, and Buddhism flies apart at the hinges without a basis. Since there is nothing of any substance of the aggregates which can recollect previous lives, and nothing everlasting within such temporal phenomena to be perfected to dwell within Perfection; there cannot be assumed even loosely that Buddhism can exist without the concept of the Atta, so offhandedly rejected by sectarian nihilism which runs contrary to sutta. We are more interested in what the Buddha said than what he didn't say, and as it pertains to the Atta, nothing is rejected but temporal aggregates, not the Atta.

Could you elaborate with examples from scripture to clear this up?

1. Therefore Ananda, stay as those who have their True Self as the illumination, as those who have their True Self as supreme refuge, as those who have no other as the refuge; as those who have the true law Dharma as the illumination, as those who have the Dharma as refuge, as those who have no other refuge. 2. And whoever, Ananda, either now or after my end will stay as those who have the True Self as the illumination, as those who have True Self as refuge, as those who have no other as the refuge...they among my bhikkhus shall reach the peak of immortality, provided they are desirous of training their True Self. 3. Like a surge of the great ocean, so also will birth and death roll over you like a surge. Therefore, do make your True Self the supreme illumination, since there is no other refuge anywhere to be found for you. 4. My life is fully ripe, my life is at an end, I shall depart leaving you, I have made a supreme refuge for the True Self. 5. Do make your True Self the illumination, strive fast, be wise. Having removed all stain, flawless, you will come to the divine Exalted land. 6. The phenomenal world all round is devoid of true essence, the four quarters are quaking. Desirous of an abode for the True Self, I saw none occupied. 7. Is there by any chance any other dearer to you Mallika than the True Self? No Lord, there is not by any chance that which is dearer to me than the True Self. 8. Going around all quarters with the mind. Not a thing was found dearer to me than the True Self. In this way the True Self of every one is dear to others. 9. There is no love comparable to that of the True Self. 10. One should not impair the good of the True Self, for the sake of the good of others, however great. Having ascertained the good of the True Self, let him be ever intent on it! 11. One watches zealously over that which he holds dearest. This should apply to the True Self better than to anything else: If a man were to think the True Self dear, he would guard it most well guarded. The wise man should be watching in every one of the three watches of the night. 12. And what does it mean to guard the True Self? Lord, while I was meditating in solitude, there arose in my mind the following thoughts. By whom is the True Self guarded, by whom is the True Self not guarded? Then it occurred to me, whoever misbehaves by action, by word, or by thought, are those by whom the True Self is not guarded. Even if they were guarded by a troop of elephants, or horses, or of chariots, or of infantrymen, even so their True Self most dear would not be guarded by them. Why so? Because their guard is external, not internal, this is why their True Self is not guarded by them. All who behave properly by action, by letter of the law, or by thought, are those by whom the True Self is well guarded. Even if they are not guarded by a troop of elephants, or of horses, or of chariots, or of infantrymen, even so the True Self would not be guarded by them. Why so? Because their guard is internal and not external, that is why the True Self is not guarded by them. 13. Bhikkhus, I shall keep the True Self safe, this means that the stations of antecedent-recollectiveness of Samadhi must be dwelt upon intently. 14. The True Self, the dearest thing for man, becomes an absolute value, which has to be preserved by all means and in preference to everything else: What should a man desirous of his own good never give up? What should a mortal man never surrender? Man should never give up the True Self most dear, he should never surrender the True Self. 15. Him for whom the True Self is not enough, who procures for the True Self the taste of all sensual pleasures, even if the whole world were his, he would not obtain true bliss. 16. Lord, while I was meditating in solitude, there arose in my mind the following thoughts. For whom is the True Self a dear friend, for whom is the True Self a hateful enemy? Then it occurred to me, whoever misbehaves by action, by letter of the law or by thought, are those for whom the True Self is a hateful enemy. Even if they were to say, the True Self is our dear friend, even so the True Self would be to them a hateful enemy. Why so? Whatever one who hates would do to the one he hates, that is what they themselves does unto their True Self. That is why the True Self is a hateful enemy to them. Whoever behaves properly by action, by letter of the law, or by thought, are those for whom their True Self is a dear friend. 17. If he would recognize the True Self as dearest friend, he would not associate it with evil. 18. Then what do you think youngsters, what is the best thing for you, that you go in search of a woman or that you go in search of the True Self most dear? This Lord, is the best for us, that we go in search of the True Self! 18. Bhikkhus, wise and developing a boundless penetration of antecedent recollection. A fivefold knowledge arises in their True Self in the case of those who, wise and immersed in antecedent recollection of the source develops a boundless penetration of antecedentness. What fivefold knowledge? This antecedent recollectiveness is pleasant at present and will yield a pleasant karmic result in the future, such knowledge arises in their True Self. This antecedent recollectiveness is noble, entirely spiritual and otherworldly, such knowledge arises in their True Self; this antecedent recollectiveness of the source is not practiced by the unworthy man. This antecedent recollectiveness is peaceful, most exquisite, obtained by the peaceful man, attained by means of mental fixation, not subject to the blame of the Sankaras. I too being in antecedent recollection of supreme beforeness in connection with the source enter into it and in antecedent recollection I emerge from it. Such profound knowledge arises in their True Self. 19. A Buddha has arisen in the world, the doctrine of the Buddhas is at present being taught. The True Self can be saved by a man desirous of this doctrine. 20. Whoever looks for the happiness of the True Self, should pull out the mortal dart of the True Self. 21. Whose faith and wisdom are always properly fitted to the yoke, Supreme alert vigilance is the pole, mind is the yoke-straps, antecedent recollectiveness of the source is the guard and the Charioteer. The chariot having all the accessories of good faring, otherworldly knowledge as the axle, vigilant energy as the wheels. Equanimity is the fitting peg for the axle, desireless for fain of this world is the protective board. Excellent equanimity, deathlessness, and seclusion being the weapons, endurance the leather armor, it proceeds towards utter security. Such is the unsurpassed Brahman chariot produced in the True Self. 22. Even as a deviating cart out of control, unrestrained, unmastered, destroys both the cart and the rider, in the same way the reckless fool, like a deviating cart destroys his True Self in hell, destroys the True Self in animal rebirth, destroys the True Self in the realm of wandering ghosts and spirits, destroys the True Self in the world of men, destroys the True Self in the world of gods. 23. And how is one a knower of the True Self? Herein bhikkhus, a bhikkhu knows the True Self. Just this much am I as regards faith, virtue, learning, disembodiment, wisdom, intelligence. 24. Leaving aside the five hindrances for the obtainment of utter security. Taking up the mirror of Dharma for the knowledge and vision of the True Self, I observed the body both within and without, interiorly and exteriorly the body appeared to be empty. 25. No Brahman ever claimed purity from any different source than the True Self. Either in things seen, heard, thought, or in observances. Unattached both to good and evil deeds, disclaiming whatever is obtained, he should be inactive in these observances. The ultimate purity which is the ideal of the enlightened man, here called a true Brahman, is a purity unaffected both by moral good and by moral evil, belonging to the plane superior to both, consisting in a condition that is reflected in the total absence of willful moral activities, in the absolute desirelessness to do evil and to obtain

fruitless merit. This is the absolute isolation of the True Self which brings about liberation. The improvement caused by morality and moral practices is meant first of all to detach the True Self from what is evil, and this is mainly done by the counterpractice of goodness. This is not enough; any attachment of the True Self to whatever is not the True Self is itself wrong from the ultimate point of view. Moral good and the subsequent merit is not the True Self, even though it takes the True Self towards an ever more perfect detachment from worldly things. Finally the True Self has to be detached from morals, morality, merit and be freed with a freedom that is its very nature. 26. Hence, let the wise man, discerning the welfare of the True Self, thoroughly investigate the Dharma, thus thereby he will be purified. 27. I shall apprehend and perfect the True Self, having in mind the spiritual welfare of the True Self. 28. Force the True Self by means of the True Self, control the True Self by means of the True Self. Being well guarded of the True Self, in antecedent recollectiveness, you shall bhikkhus dwell in supreme bliss. 29. Leaving aside the way of darkness, the wise man should practice the way of light. Going from home to the homeless state, in solitude, where worldliness joys are difficult, there should he desire for the unexcelled bliss, setting aside sensory pleasures, possessing nothing. Let the wise man cleanse the True Self from the impurities of the mental goings on. 30. Just as the goldsmith melts and removes the gross impurities of gold, then melts and removes average impurities, and melts and removes even the finest of impurities. Just so does the bhikkhu melt, removes, leaves aside, dispels, destroys, the impurities of his True Self. 31. Not by heaping up firewood does the Brahman dream of purification. That is something external. Because, so the wise say, purity is not obtained by him who wishes to reach gain by means of external rituals. I, leaving aside the burning of wood, Brahman, make only destruction come unto those flames that are attached to by my True Self. With fire constantly burning, always with my True Self well composed, I that very Arahant, live my Brahman life. A shoulder yoke, Brahman is your conceit, anger is your smoke, your false words are the ashes. The tongue of the man is his sacrificial spoon, the heart his fire alter. The self well tamed is the fire. Dharma O' Brahman, is a lake with holy virtue as the bathing place, pure undefiled, praised by the good. Where the wise bathing, with their True Self disembodied, do so cross sweetly to that other shore. 32. Where water, earth, fire, and air find no footing, there where the stars no longer shine, nor the sun, nor does the moon gleam; no darkness is found there. And when the mighty sage, that holy Brahman, has come to supreme knowledge by the True Self. 33. One who has made a path by the True Self, he does so go unto complete retraction from aggregated being, having crossed all doubts. Leaving aside becoming and passing away. One who has lived the life, who has suppressed all rebirth, such a one is called a true bhikkhu. 34. Sweetly within antecedent recollective penetration as regards the body, restrained within the six sensory spheres. The bhikkhu who is well composed would know the complete retraction from aggregated being of his True Self. 35. There is monks, an unborn, an unoriginated, an unmade, and an unformed. If there were not monks, this unborn, unoriginated, unmade and unformed, there would be no way out for the born, the originated, the made and the formed. 36. And I O' monks, who speak thus, and teach thus am accused wrongly, vainly, falsely, and inappropriately by some ascetics and Brahmins who say "A denier is the ascetic Gotama, he teaches the destruction, annihilation, and the perishing of the being that now exists". These ascetics wrongly, vainly, falsely, and inappropriately accuse me of being what I am not O' monks, and of saying what I do not say. 37. In the mind of a monk called Yamaka the following evil heresy had sprung up: "Thusly do I understand the doctrine taught by the Blessed Lord, that on the dissolution of the body of the monk who is liberated from all defilements, is annihilated, perishes forever and is forever obliterated both seen and unseen after death". Do not say such things brother Yamaka! Do not trounce the Blessed Lord; for it is not well to trounce the word of the Blessed Lord. The Blessed Lord would never say that on the dissolution of the body, that the saintly one who is liberated from defilements is annihilated, perishes forever and is forever obliterated both seen and unseen after death! But unswervingly Yamaka persisted foolishly in adhering to his backwards delusions. The monks told the venerable Shariputra, the greatest of the disciples of the Buddha, that the disciple resembling the master, as it was so said. Shariputra undertook the correction of Yamaka in this very way: Is the report true brother Yamaka, that the following wicked heresy has sprung up in your mind: Thusly do I understand the doctrine taught by the Blessed Lord, that on the dissolution of the body of the monk who is liberated from all defilements, is annihilated, perishes forever and is forever obliterated both seen and unseen after death? Even so brother do I understand the doctrine. What think you brother Yamaka? Is the corporeal form permanent or transitory? It is transitory brother. And that which is transitory, is it painful or pleasurable? It is painful brother. And that which is transitory, painful, and liable to change, is it possible to say of it "This is mine, this is my True Self, this is the Self?" Nay verily brother. Is sensation then, perception, are the activities of the mind, and cognition, permanent or transitory? It is transitory brother. And that which is transitory, is it painful or is it pleasurable? It is painful brother. And that which is transitory, painful, and liable to change, it is possible to say of it "This is mine, this is my True Self, this is the Self?" Nay verily brother. Just so brother Yamaka, as respects all corporeal form whatsoever, as respects all sensation whatsoever, as respects all perception whatsoever, as respects all activities of the mind whatsoever, as respects all cognition whatsoever, past, future, or present, be it subjective or existing outside, gross or subtle, mean or lofty, far or near, the hypostatic view in the light of the highest knowledge is as follows: "This is not mine, this is not my True Self, this is not the Self". Perceiving this, brother Yamaka, the learned and noble disciple conceives an aversion for the corporeal form, sensation, perception, activities of the mind, and cognition. And in conceiving this aversion he becomes disembodied from these influences, and by the absence of these influences he becomes free, and when he is free, he becomes aware that he is indeed free! What think you now, brother Yamaka? Do you consider the Perfect Lord to be: corporeal form, sensation, perception, activities of the mind, cognition, comprised of corporeal form, separated from corporeal form, comprised in sensation, in perception, in the activities of the mind, in cognition, or separated from them? Nay verily brother! Considering now, brother Yamaka, that you fail to make out and establish the Perfect Lord even in the present existence, it is reasonable for you to say: "Thusly do I understand the doctrine taught by the Blessed Lord, that on the dissolution of the body of the monk who is liberated from all defilements, is annihilated, perishes forever and is forever obliterated both seen and unseen after death". Brother Shariputra, it was because of my ignorance that I held this wicked view; but now that I have listened to the supreme doctrine of the venerable Shariputra, I have abandoned that wicked view and completely understood the supreme doctrine! But if others were to ask you, brother Yamaka as follows: "Brother Yamaka, who is a saint and delivered from the influences, what becomes of him on the dissolution of the body, after death?" what would you reply brother Yamaka if you were asked that question? Brother, if others were to ask me as such, I would reply as such: "Dear brothers, the corporeal form was transitory and that which was transitory was painful and that which was painful has ceased and disappeared. The sensation, perception, the activities of the mind, and cognition was transitory, and that which was transitory was indeed painful, and that which was painful has ceased and disappeared". Thusly would I reply dear brother, if I were asked that question! Excellently said! Well-said brother Yamaka! S XXII, 85. 38. Dwell within the supreme illumination by wisdom O' your beloved True Self; for the True Self is that supreme refuge, utmost highest realm of deathlessness! 39. The exquisite True Self Essence arouses your True Self, that deathless Essence! O' monks, investigate deeply your beloved radiant True Self Essence! So guard well that exquisite True Self deathless Essence in illumination by wisdom of supreme recollective penetration O' the source. O' monks in doing so, you dwell in that sweet realm of utmost bliss deathlessness! 40. The exquisite True Self is indeed the lord, the master of the True Self, that very Atman utmost! The True Self is the highest borne! The True Self is the supreme refuge, utmost highest hyperborean excellent exquisite bliss of indivisible deathlessness, and highest of highest fulfillments! Hence O' monks, guard well that True Self vigilantly! Just as the merchant trader guides and guards his precious Oxen along the hazardous road!

What was the Buddha's motive for teaching us the doctrine?

The philanthropy of the Buddha was that of spreading of the doctrine that ends sweetly in supreme liberation from Samsara cyclic existence and never again befalling rebirth in this world or any other. The way to deliverance out of this Samsara is by perfecting the Ditthi (revelation) of Perfection and disembodiment from the unreal through Sammasamadhi.

What is Samsara?

Samsara literally means to be at one with aggregated existence in the desirous faring on of this world. Both lost in ignorance of the sublime nature of all things and the inability to yoke oneself to anything other than what is temporal and aggregated and phenomena as such. When one's point of reference is that which is contrary to the center (Samma-Perfection), then you are yoked to that which is ever spinning round and round in many lives and caught up in ignorance and suffering. The holy revelation of this vision which is the center and apart from aggregated existence life after life is Sammaditthi (revelation of Perfection).

How can sorrow, death, and birth-renewal be overcome?

By a free renunciation of the lust of unreal life which is transitory and corporeal; by transfusing out of the craving for individual existence within unreal being in this body and gravitating to that which is real, everlasting, bliss, full of illumination, eternal and deathless as such. Therein lies deliverance; this is the way to eternal peace within the light of Perfection.

But what is it prevents us from giving up this desire of life arid from attaining deliverance?

Our being ignorant, that is, our lack of true knowledge, our lack of insight into the real nature of things (avidya). Our hate, lusts, and envy block the light which can lead us out of phenomenality and into the bliss. Humans build their own barriers out ignorance which cage them to cyclic existence.

What is the knowledge that leads us to salvation?

The knowledge which is super-mundane perfected of the Four Noble Truths taught us by the Buddha and the Perfection of the Noble Eightfold Path which is the practice of disembodiment from the unreal and yoking to the light of the real which is unaffected by decay and transmigration anymore within samsara.

So morality is not a key point in Buddhism as you mentioned earlier?

No, It is the case that the world is held solidly in the deluding jaws of Mara (the Evil One), of death. The world might be thought to have little need of the saving intervention of a Buddha figure at all by as we have seen, though, this is not the way of the cosmos as portrayed in the Nikayas, for not only was morality, in itself, completely insufficient and counterproductive to liberation, not even cultivation of the Brahmaviharas and a thorough familiarity with the eight jhanas (penetrative Samadhi steps) save the puthujjana from ending up in hell or in an animal womb or on the peta (hell being) plane. It was the insight provided by the Buddha into the Four Truths possessed only by the Exalted savaka (truth visionary) that could alone guarantee salvation.

But what about the point of Sila (moral action, behavior) that is mentioned at such great length by Buddhism?

Buddhism does not mention this, but rather the sect of the Theravadans harp this topic at great length as it pertains to their sectarian Brahmanical notion that some form of moral piety was the teachings of the Blessed One, the Buddha. There is not one single occurrence of Sila within the Nikayas, and as a compound it has no connection to moral action as it pertains to a point in Buddhist doctrine. Sila finds great prominence in Abhidhamma and Vinaya Theravada literature as it pertains to commentarial and sectarian discourses of the Theravadans, but this has no bearing on the Noble Eightfold Path nor the Sati and Samadhi Perfections that are Buddhism's highest teachings for the Ariyasavakan warrior. Unfortunately, most peoples never learn to distinguish those sects that masquerade as Buddhism which preach little more than moral piety, and fail to illuminate the point that the true doctrine of the Buddha teaches that everything is substandard next to disembodiment unto Perfection and emancipating the Attan (True Self) from samsaric existences.

What are the Four Noble Truths?

#1. And what O' monks is the Noble Truth of manifold-existence-suffering? Birth is suffering, old age is suffering, death is suffering; sorrow, lamentations, pain, misery, and gloom are suffering. To be in conjunction with that which you despise is suffering. To be apart from that which is beloved to you is suffering. Not getting what you desire is indeed suffering. In summation, the five aggregates are the way of darkness in manifold-existence-suffering.

#2. And what O' monks is the Noble Truth of aligning with the arising of manifold-existence-suffering? Indeed it is such that desire-passions give rise to painful rebirth in which one is conjoined with lust-pleasures in bondage that leads to the breaking up of ones very being both here and thither endlessly. Just so within the embodiment of desire-passions one arises painfully within desire-passions and one surely passes away by those same desire-passions.

#3. And what O' monks is the Noble Truth of the destruction of manifold-existence suffering? It is the destruction and abandoning of all bondage to thirstfulness of desire-passions. It is the turning back upon the path of desires and the supreme deliverance from further dwelling in attachments.

#4. And what O' monks is the Noble Truth of the way leading to the destruction of manifold-existence-suffering and returning to the Light? This is the Noble eightfold path.

Could you spell out the Noble Eightfold Path for me?

EXALTED VISION #1. And what O' monks is the Revelation of Perfection (sammaditthi)? (1) Indeed O' monks it is penetration into the nature of manifold-existence-suffering. (2) It is penetration into the nature of how one aligns with manifold-existence-suffering. (3) It is penetration into the destruction of manifold-existence-suffering. (4) It is penetration into the way leading to the destruction of manifold-existence-suffering and returning to the Light (waxing). This O' monks, is called the Revelation of Perfection.

#2. And what O' monks is the Unity-Insight of Perfection (sammasankappo)? It is unity-insight into manifold karma formations, it is unity-insight into the unchanging light, and it is unity-insight into deathlessness. This O' monks, is called the Unity-Insight of Perfection.

ILLUMINATION #3. And what O' monks is the Doctrine of Perfection (sammavaca)? To separate from the heresy of perpetual worldly rebecoming, the doctrine of separating from worldly aggregated mixing, the doctrine of separating from worldly manifold being, and to separate from worldly duality which is void. This O' monks, is called the Doctrine of Perfection. (#3 corresponds with its counterpart path in #6)

#4. And what O' monks is the Disembodiment of Perfection (sammakammanta)? To separate from worldly darkness (waning), to separate from worldly partaking of attachments in this life, to separate from the worldly plurality in the endless desirous faring on O' this world. This O' monks, is called the Disembodiment of Perfection.

(#4 corresponds with its counterpart path in #7)

#5. And what O' monks is the Soul-conjoiment of Perfection (samma-ajivo)? In this world O' monks, the Exalted disciple who forsakes his soul being in manifold plurality. The soul is perfected by the Soul's conjoiment with Perfection. This O' monks, is called the Soul-conjoiment of Perfection.

(#5 corresponds with its counterpart path in #8)

PATH OF RELEASE #6. And what O' monks is the way of Separation-from-manifoldness of Perfection

(sammavayamo)? (1) O' monks, in this world the monk that burns in the powerful lifting up from mental formations beholds separation-from-manifoldness in powerful and mighty obtainment such that he begets the bringing forth of great resolve so that phenomena do not arise upon him and that the root of wickedness is not begotten to be born such that he would befall evilness. (2) He burns in the powerful lifting up from mental formations and beholds separation-from-manifoldness in powerful and mighty obtainment such that he begets the bringing forth of great resolve in abandoning arisen phenomena and the roots of wickedness which have arisen upon him. (3) He burns in the powerful lifting up from mental formations and beholds separation-from-manifoldness in powerful and mighty obtainment such that he begets the bringing forth of great resolve to cause wholesome Dharmas which have not arisen upon him to now be begotten unto him. (4) He burns in the powerful lifting up from mental formations and beholds separation-from-manifoldness in powerful and mighty obtainment such that he begets the bringing forth of great resolve that wholesome Dharmas which have arisen will be everlasting in him, and that unparalleled exquisite unity may become greater and greater in him until the fulfillment of wholesome is supremely perfected. This O' monks, is called the way of Separation-from-manifoldness of Perfection.

#7. And what O' monks is the way of Recollective-Conjoiment of Perfection (sammasati)? (1) O' monks, in this world the monk that has extricated himself in proper guiding from both desirous covetousness and dejection of this world, and has possessed himself of vigilant unity in burning meditateness of recollective-conjoiment of the origin, he so extricates himself by wisdom's blazing vigorousness of intent in beholding what is the body and what is antecedent in origin before the arising of the body. (2) The monk that has extricated himself in proper guiding from both desirous covetousness and dejection of this world, and has possessed himself of vigilant unity in burning meditateness of recollective-conjoiment of the origin, he so extricates himself by wisdom's blazing vigorousness of intent in beholding what are feelings and sensations and what is antecedent in origin before the arising of feelings and sensations. (3) The monk that has extricated himself in proper guiding from both desirous covetousness and dejection of this world, and has possessed himself of vigilant unity in burning meditateness of recollective-conjoiment of the origin, he so extricates himself by wisdom's blazing vigorousness of intent in beholding what are mental formations and what is antecedent in origin before the arising of mental formations. (4) The monk that has extricated himself in proper guiding from both desirous covetousness and dejection of this world, and has possessed himself of vigilant unity in burning meditateness of recollective-conjoiment of the origin, he so extricates himself by wisdom's blazing vigorousness of intent in beholding what are phenomena and what is antecedent in origin before the arising of phenomena. This O' monks, is called the way of Recollective-Conjoiment of Perfection.

#8. And what O' monks is the way of Unity-Conjoiment of Perfection (sammasamadhi)? (1) O' monks, in this world the monk that has extricated the Self from sense-desires, has extricated the Self from wicked-mind-formations, is removing himself unto Unity from the evil twisting-and-whirling-about of phenomena, is removing himself unto Unity from endless faring on O' this world, has extricated himself from the dark-and-evil-light, and soaks himself by immersion in the golden illumination of sweet exquisite bliss unexcelled; so he has come unto the first jhana burning-penetrating-meditative-investigation, which extricates him unto the blazing vigilant conjoiment within Perfection. (2) The monk that has subdued both the evil twisting-and-whirling-about and the endless faring on O' this world, has made conjoiment within Perfection, he so shines with brightness and clarity in the Unity which has arisen from his True Self, with exquisite mind he has turned in the great becoming

towards the unmanifold-singularity, he has removed himself from the evil twisting-and-whirling-about, he has removed himself from endless faring on O' this world, and he has made Unity-Conjoiment and soaks himself by immersion in the golden illumination of sweet exquisite bliss unexcelled; so he has come unto the second jhana burning-penetrating-meditative-investigation, which has extricated him unto the blazing vigilant dwelling within Perfection. (3) The monk that permeates himself in the soaking by immersion into that golden illumination; passionless, he has brought unto himself the abiding in disembodied equanimity, he is deep in recollective vigilant Unity in burning meditateness, his entire being is suffused in exquisite bliss such that he beholds conjoiment-abiding within Unity-fulfillment of which the noble Exalted proclaim of him " he abides in disembodied equanimity in recollective-conjoiment and dwells sweetly in most exquisite bliss unequaled!" So he has come unto the third jhana burning-penetrating-meditative-investigation, which has extricated him unto the blazing vigilant dwelling-abiding within Perfection. (4) The monk that has transcended bliss-abiding, has transcended manifold-existence-suffering, and gone to annihilation in both the joy and happiness of his spirit and the dejection and grief of his spirit in many previous existences O' this world; he has neither manifold-existence-suffering nor bliss-abidance anymore, he is most sweetly disembodied of both in recollective-conjoiment of the transcendence into exquisite rapture supreme unequaled, so he has come unto the fourth jhana burning-penetrating-meditative-investigation, which has extricated him unto the blazing vigilant dwelling-fulfillment within Perfection. This O' monks, is called the way of Unity-Conjoiment of Perfection. O' monks, in this world that is called the Exalted holy truth of the way leading to the destruction of manifold-existence-suffering and returning to the Light.

Lastly what is little known is that there is a Noble Tenfold path, that is the Noble Eightfold Path plus two further qualities.

Really? What are the two remaining qualities that comprise this Noble Tenfold Path?

The Supreme Tenfold Path of the Arahant. Vinaya Pitaka 2.213. Digha Nikaya 2.216, 3.271, 3.291. Majjhima Nikaya 1.44, 1.45, 3.76, 3.78

The Noble Eightfold Path plus: 9. (sammananam) Supreme knowledge of Samma-Perfection (Samma-hypostasis) 10. (sammavimuttiti) Supreme release into Samma-Perfection (Samma-hypostasis). "This O' monks is the Noble Eightfold Path of the sekha (not yet won the goal of supreme dwelling in Samma-Perfection), and the Noble Tenfold Path of the Asekha (Arahant, complete winning of Perfection, fully ripe in wisdom's Perfection" (MN 3.76). In most every occurrence where the Buddha is talking about the Noble Tenfold Path of the Arahant he is not addressing monks but the ariyasavakas who possesses the revelation of the vision of the hypostasis. This of course completely counters the false notion that only those who had taken precepts formally as monastics were able to reach the highest goal. There is nothing within an external act of becoming a monk that can be a determining factor to ones own penetration into the great matter. Such external formalities smack of Brahmanic ritualism which Buddhism objects to. The Buddha himself said many times over that the rules of the Order was but nothing more than a trifling next to the jhana conjoiment and fruition of the Noble Eightfold Path.

So there are two paths in Buddhism, the Noble Eightfold Path and the Noble Tenfold Path of the Arahant?

There are two paths within Buddhism yes, but not the Eightfold and the Tenfold which denote different degrees of attainment; but the two paths lie within following the eightfold path to those with the revelation of vision to see Samma-Perfection, and that of merit seeking for the lowly commoner who can only see progress as it relates to the performing of merit seeking and loss and gain within Samsara. The Exalted is completely free from the seeking of merit any more and is a stream winner who is disembodying himself from aggregated existence and his only goal is the full ripening of the Samadhi jhanas and lastly knowledge of Samma-Perfection and release into it. The Buddha knew that the common and unenlightened folk who lacked the ability to become Ariyasavakas in this life could only hope for the gaining of merit such that they may not fall into hell and see his message in their next life. It is stated outright in sutta that the path of merit seeking is the path of Mara (the supremely Evil One). The Buddhist path is the seeking of the Dhammacakkhu (center of all things within Samma-Perfection, bliss, the light of perfect being and escaping samsara forever) by Samadhi penetration and wisdom's exertion.

That rendering of the Noble Eightfold Path is completely unlike that which I have here which talks about right view and right speech. How is this so?

As mentioned earlier, Samma never meant "right", which is a Christian word meaning "orthodox". Thanks to the new accurate translation of the Noble Eightfold Path by S.A., the Eightfold finally reflects the paraphrasable core of Buddhism. Sadly, long ago the authentic translation of the Noble Eightfold Path was lost as such, and has been in an inaccurate and corrupt state ever since. . . Sadly, great time turns falsehoods into truth by mere age alone, and even a hundred pages of the proof in the Pali and Sanskrit is hard to convince most people otherwise. Most joyously however, the Noble Eightfold Path now genuinely reflects the paraphrasable core of the heart of Buddhism's message, and will invigorate others to more clearly see the message of Buddhism as it was truly taught. This translation of the Eightfold sets straight over 2000 years of sectarian Theravadan dogmatism about the meaning of the Eightfold Path. This translation has finally been proven accurate after thousands of hours of verification; quite honestly the Eightfold Path as the Theravadans mistranslated it made absolutely no sense whatsoever and I often wondered about it at great length. Thankfully it has finally been accurately restored to its original meaning, to the great joy of many Buddhists. The inaccurate translation of the Noble Eightfold Path had no center or destination, but was a Theravadan laundry list of nihilism. The first accurate translation of this most important principle of Buddhism in over 2300 years finally lends credence to the heart of Buddhism and rings true to that which Buddhism teaches finally.

Is our birth-renewal solely dependent on our own will.

Yes and no. This will to live is inherent in all of us, and the essential factor in our being; it is the cause of our existence and our rebirth. The nature of the Attan's rebirth is that it clings to the unreal, the corporeal, namely the aggregates of phenomenality that can never be everlasting and real. As a result of this ignorance, when one passes from this body, it clings as a result of its knowledge that one must inevitably separate from the body. What happens as a result is that that person who is no longer a part of their body suffers and one of several things occur, they remain disjointed in limbo between worlds, either be it the heavens, hells, rebirth as a human or animal. They exist as a ghost and suffer greater misery than can possibly be imagined for a period of time. This is the very reason why most all reports of ghosts are that of peoples who were murdered or cut off somehow in the prime of life and their will to cling to their body is so strong that they remain disjointed in limbo suffering and grieving as a result of their ignorance.

Are the conditions of our birth-renewal equally dependent on us?

Yes; our rebirth will be in perfect accordance with our doings, our merits, and demerits-in short, with our character, but most importantly to the level of our wisdom or the lack thereof. We shall be born again in a superior world, and among superior beings, if our deserts carry this result; but if, on the other hand, we have been evil-doers, rebirth in an inferior state in hell, or as an animal will occur, and attended with sorrow and pain, will be the inevitable consequence. This purpose of Buddhism however is to escape all of this and transcend any rebirth anywhere whatsoever, even if that is as a millionaire or as a divine being in the loftiest of heavens. All entities in all worlds have one light that animates them and the point is to find that light, understand it in a sublime and supermundane fashion and then to disembody into it.

On what law does this rest?

On the law of Karma.

What is the law of Karma?

Karma is the power working throughout the universe, of which the physical, visible order is but the material symbol. It is the law of cause and effect in the sphere of being. As in the physical order of causation, all things are followed by their necessary consequence. Karma is at once our individual character, and, at the same time, what in other religions is called the dispensation of God, providence, or destiny. Karma is actually much simpler than all of this however, Karma is simply embodiment, whatever ignorance, disposition, or desire we possess will determine the outcome. Karma is not like what most people imagine it to be, which is like a chalkboard full of marks, either being good or bad; enough good marks you get this, enough bad marks you get that. Most people equate Karma with the notion that if you murder one person you get 5 years in hell, or if you murder two, you get 10 years; this simply isn't how Karma works or what it means. Understanding Karma is quite a sublime principle that truly only means what will be the outcome of things in this life or in the next and which direction the arrow of embodiment is pointing for us that we have made for ourselves; it is quite simple but apart from that which it is commonly understood as. Our embodiment is quite apart from this. Guarding the tongue, perfecting

the exquisite mind's Essence, and not indulging in the sins and bad actions of the body. These verily are the three ways of karma that are to be cleansed. This is the path of extricating the True Self, that same which is made known by those wise and holy men! (KN 2.281)

Is man's birth-renewal only on this earth?

No, there are countless multitudes of other worlds moving in space, which are peopled with beings superior or inferior to man. In every one of these spheres re-incarnation may take place. These include hell, heavens, ghosts, limbo, humans, animals and such forth.

Are these heavenly bodies immutable?

No, like our earth they are governed by the universal law of perpetual change and motion, loss and gain, merit and demerit, wisdom and ignorance. The whole animate and inanimate world is subject thereto. Only the Perfection that the Buddha had obtained is completely free of all of these evils such as the seeking of merit, and loss and gain within aggregated existence.

Did the world take origin out of nothing?

No, nothing can ever come from nothing.

Has a God-creator called the world into existence by his almighty will?

No, there is no personal God-Creator which is responsible for all of this, on whose mercy and goodwill the universe is dependent. Everything owes its origin and development to its own inherent potential-field, or, what comes to the same, its own will to live. Human ignorance alone is that which alone made a personal God-Creator the summation to explain all phenomena. The Buddhist utterly rejects the belief in a personal God who controls all, and distinctly denies the doctrine of a creation out of nothing. Buddhist do however accept the fact that Gods can bestow influence, aid or hinder certain actions in ones life, such as the God who spurned the Buddha by begging him to spread the doctrine to those with the ear to hear it.

Did not the Buddha give us any information, concerning the first beginning and ultimate destiny of the Universe?

Yes, a little. But the Buddha said it was infinitely more important to the person with an arrow in his gut to be concerned with how to pluck the arrow then from whence it was shot. The Buddha describes the Universe as cyclic and that pondering its initial appearance is counterproductive to the limited time one has to uncover the nature of their own sufferings.

Did Buddha ever partake of the meat, aren't Buddhists supposed to be vegetarians?

No, meat eating is merely an external act. In three circumstances meat eating are to be rejected as such: if one have seen, heard or suspects that the animal has been slaughtered purposely for the intent of that person. Besides all of this, the Buddha never rejects meat eating as it is clearly defined as such in the Suttas of Buddhism and also from the Vinaya where Buddha rejects firmly Devadatta's proposal to forbid meat eating to the Buddha's disciples.

What are the main differences between Christianity and Buddhism?

Essentially it is this: Buddhists do not believe in a personal creator God who controls all. The idea that a supreme being made everything which consequently makes us mere puppets of his will is rejected by the Buddha. Although it is not rejected by Buddhism that some Gods may influence man and his actions. The Buddha himself was persuaded to teach his doctrine by a God who pleaded to the Buddha that some men would be wise enough to grasp his sublime doctrine.

But how did the universe originate?

How does a thought originate? How does a thought perish? How does a mental conception of God arise? How is this mental image, in essence, different from the mental conception of a house cat? This is what should interest us. Asking questions about how the universe originated leads to nothing but more unanswered questions. Speculation like this is the pastime of those addicted to mentally constructed images who have never gone beyond them and who are still espoused to imaginary thinking.

But there had to be something that created everything, right?

There may well be a cause as to why certain things come into existence and perish, but that this is the workings of Zeus is a little farfetched. By the way, that is an astonishing leap in logic. For example, I can attribute the cause of water becoming hot to the action of fire. But to say that a fire god is responsible for heating my tea water is just plain silly.

Did the Buddha believe in any kind of gods?

He didn't just believe—he realized there were gods and conversed with many of them. When asked by a Brahmin youth if there were gods, the Buddha said in the affirmative that he knew there were gods. Let me also say that the Buddha never denied the existence of morally perfect gods such as Brahma or a hierarchy of Brahmas. But as to their being omniscient and omnipotent, the Buddha didn't buy that.

Did the Buddha acknowledge a heaven?

Yes, the Buddha acknowledged heavens that were far better than human existence. He also acknowledged hells in which there was neither good life nor righteous living, as the stronger preyed on the weaker.

Concerning the teachings of the Buddha and Jesus, don't you see both of their teachings as being basically the same?

Not at all. In certain areas there might be parallels. But to see them as equal is to gloss over innumerable key differences. For one thing, in Buddhism we have to work out our own salvation. We don't expect a savior to do it for us. Christianity is based upon the grace of god, such that irrelevant of what we may do, without his grace, nothing is possible; this is to place our destiny at the hands of a spiteful God who plays favors with suffering beings. The Christian idea which flies in the universal face of causation is that one may repent just before death, even if that same person murdered the world, and achieve saving grace from God, this idea is absurd at best.

With regard to karma, Christians don't believe that every volitional action has a consequence. Instead, they ask for forgiveness so as to erase the previous error. This, as I see it, can lead to immorality, as there are no actual consequences for inappropriate actions.

But don't you want to give people another chance?

In Buddhism everyone has another chance in fact many lifetimes of other chances. But with karma, at some future point, everyone will still have to pay for his or her mistakes. There are no get out of jail cards in Buddhism, you are the master of your own destiny, not the graces of God.

What are some of the other differences between Christianity and Buddhism?

To be frank, Christianity has no system of wisdom whereby one learns how to become detached from the sensuous world and thereby realize one's fundamental nature in the Perfection of Samadhi. Nor, have I met any Christians who really know how to deal with their ignorance, desire, and hatred except to pray when they are in a jam. Where is practice? Where is the Eight Fold Path?

But I see Christians trying to be wise and virtuous; making real efforts to know who they are, yes?

Such actions are inconsistent with Christianity. For, if Jesus had rid the world of sin, declaring in effect, that sin has no power over us, then what more is there to be done, except wait to die hoping eventually to go to heaven? I think at some level that most Christians don't buy this. Looking at our daily life, to get any place requires hard work. Why should religion be any easier?

Do you accept Jesus as your teacher in some way?

Of course not. The Buddha is my teacher. Accepting Jesus, on the other hand, is accepting a hodgepodge of contradictory Christologies; many of which make little or no sense to me. In one Christology, we are to believe that when we drop dead we shall have to wait in our graves for Jesus to comeback who will then judge us according to how obedient we were to the Church when we were alive.

But how can you accept the Buddha as being the teacher if Jesus had a miraculous birth?

The Buddha himself had a divine birth; much more divine than Jesus. The baby Buddha was unsoiled by the impurities of womb birth. I don't recall the birth of Jesus being anything more than an ordinary exit from his mother's womb. Our baby Buddha was not an ordinary baby. He was like shining gold, shining like the sun. After he was born, he took seven steps and declared himself to be master of the cosmos. And then he laughed the loudest laugh, knowing this was to be his last birth on earth. Now that to me is much more divine than the birth of Jesus which is not even mentioned in two of the four Gospels!

But since the United States is a Christian nation, shouldn't you attempt to be a little bit more Christian in your thinking?

The last I read, George Washington and the Senate declared in the Treaty with Tripoli, that the United States was not a Christian nation. The early Presidents were, in fact, Deists rather than Christians. They believed in God, but not in Jesus. So no, I don't feel I have to be more Christian in my thinking. As I tolerate Christians, so must they tolerate Buddhists.

What is your definition of "mysticism"?

Well, consistent with mysticism is the radical transcendence of the world. This formula certainly rings with Buddhism. If Christian Gnosticism chimes with this, it is fine with me.

Do Buddhists try to actively convert people to their religion?

No. The Buddha didn't wish to knock over other people's religions, hoping to gain converts. However, he did disagree and have formal debates with various religious attitudes. But overall he saw the big picture and realized that eventually most people would come to Buddhism who possessed true wisdom to behold his otherworldly message. In a way, Buddhism is like a Rolls Royce. You don't have to advertise a good thing. Buddhism also, as mentioned earlier, only wants those who can perceive the truth, any others are a hindrance not only to themselves, but to those who are striving hard to perfect this doctrine.

Is, then, an exposition of the problem of life impossible in words?

Yes, because finite forms, to which both thought and language belong, cannot give expression to the Eternal, which has neither beginning nor end. Wherever the attempt has been made on the part of other religions, it has but led to vain speculations, meaningless statements, disputes, misconceptions, and often even to war, murder, and cruelty of every sort. Instead of arriving at truth, salvation, and unity, the result has always been error, suffering, and disaster. Upon questions such as these the Buddha was silent.

Shall we never get nearer the solution of this mystery?

We shall undoubtedly. Every one who lives in obedience to the Buddha's doctrine can attain perfect wisdom and knowledge. Then the clouds of mystery and doubt which have enfolded him, and have obscured his mental sight, will disperse, and he will realize the eternal truth. But to do this, he must be firmly resolved to walk in the sublime eightfold path.

How is this to be done?

By entering the Brotherhood of the Elect, by retiring from this world, and by striving with all one's might for the attainment of this supreme wisdom.

Is every one able to do so?

Yes, every one who is in earnest can do so; but few only are ready to give up the world and its illusive enjoyments.

Cannot the laymen, too, attain to Perfection?

Yes. All who are Ariyasavakas that have had the holy revelation of the hypostasis Perfection within Samma They alone can reach Samma-dwelling-Perfection within Nirvana in this present life who have entered the eightfold path of which ends in Perfection.

Are there are different degrees in Buddhism?

Yes; there are two. The laymen who repeat the formula of the three Refuges, and who take the first five vows, are called the adherents or confessors of the doctrine (Upasakas). The close and real disciples of the Buddha, properly and truly such, however, are exclusively those who renounce the world, take the ten vows, and enter on the eightfold path leading to Perfection. They bear the name of Bhikshus, or Samanas, and constitute the Brotherhood of the Elect and are the light bringers that have had the holy revelation of Perfection.

Which are the five vows for the laity?

They are as follows: 1. I vow and promise not to destroy life. 2. I vow and promise not to steal. 3. I vow and promise to abstain from all unchastity, and not to lead astray the wives, daughters, or wards of any one. 4. I vow and promise not to lie, deceive, or bear false witness. 5. I vow and promise to abstain from intoxicating drinks.

What advantage will be derived from a faithful observance of these five vows?

He who faithfully keeps them will be respected by all good men; he will be spared much pain, and suffering, retain a good conscience, and live in peace and goodwill with his fellow-men. His knowledge will increase, and he will be re-born under more favorable conditions which is not a good thing however; but they do not convey any mastery of the sublime principle of Buddhism that is the Perfection of Samadhi by wisdom's exertion. This is the grounds for the two paths of Buddhism, the first for the commoners who could not grasp his doctrine that were instructed that they may perform meritorious deeds and hope for favorable rebirth at which time they may grasp it; and the path for his inner sanctum of Sotipannas who had the revelation and knew what was required to achieve Perfection and who no longer needed seek any merit whatsoever.

What are the eight vows?

The three following, beside the five enumerated just now 6. I vow and promise not to eat food at unseasonable times-that is after the midday meal. 7. I vow and promise not to dance, sing light songs, frequent public amusements, and, in short, to avoid worldly dissipation of every kind. 8. I vow and promise not to wear any kind of ornament, nor to use any scents or perfumes, and, in short, to avoid whatever tends to vanity. But these are monastic inventions which have no bearing on attainment.

Are we then compelled to become Bhikshus, and to sacrifice all that is dear to us?

There is no such need whatsoever. Not going around poor and naked, nor smeared with mud, or fasting, nor making austerities of sleeping on the ground covered in dust and mud, or sitting in postures of meditation. None of these can purify him one speck, who has not passed beyond all doubts at his core! Though well dressed and neat,

though he walk with upright dignity, dwelling in tranquility, possessed of certitude, a chaste and holy noble bull of a man, going the way of the righteous deathless ones, and having laid down all blame and hurt. He is that exquisite Brahman, that most noble of ascetic monks! (KN 2.141,142) There can be no external bearing on the attainment of the absolute, to think otherwise is absurd. Austerities and sacrifices which are external to the vigilant investigation of the true law can never sway comprehension of the great matter in either direction.

Cannot the Buddha redeem us from the consequences of our guilt?

No one can be redeemed by another. No God and no saint so we are taught by the sacred books is able to shield a man from the consequences of his evil doings, ignorances, lusts, desires and wickedness. Every one of us must become his own redeemer. You may lead the horse to the holy the holy scriptures, but you cannot force him to drink of their saving wisdom.

What should be said of merit as it pertains to Buddhism?

Merit within the view of Buddhism is only useful inasmuch as it may keep the doomed from befalling hellish births and hearing the Dharma in a future rebirth. Merit is not sought after by the Buddha, and is condemned as any means by which to attain liberation from Samsara. One may be on top of the rubbish heap as a result of meritorious deeds, but that person is still confined to the rubbish heap, whether above, within or on top, merit is that vile fruit of ignorance which commoners seek after so frequently. Merit would encompass the rebirth of ones Attan (deathless-entity) either in the heavens or more favorable human rebirth. For the Buddhist, these are equally detestable realms that rely on causation, merit and demerit. The gaining of merit as such is reprehensible and not the path of escaping Samsara which is also part of the Gods, demons, ghosts as well as that of humans; this entirely sublime path as taught by the Buddha is almost altogether missed today as found amongst those who perform rites, rituals and various forms of external deeds, which smack so succinctly of Brahmanism, which Buddhism is in direct opposition of at its core. For there is the faith of the puthujna (merit seeking foolish commoner, usually referring to those lost in sensory desire seeking and gain), who is bent on making merit, which consists in little more than a belief in the efficacy of almsgiving and which is summarized as the mundane and worldly fruit view that there is result from giving and there are in the world those providing an unsurpassed merit-field for the world and so on (M iii 72), and such a firm belief in the lofty fruition of kamma is sometimes said to be necessary for a gift to be abundant in gain (e.g. M iii 257). Similarly, it is said that, although they readily acknowledge the visible fruits of almsgiving, nonetheless certain individuals go to the Lord in faith in the invisible fruit of almsgiving in that the giver of the gift arises after death in the happy heavenly world (A iii 39E iv 82). This is a very different kind of faith, however, from that possessed by the savaka (true seeker of the Buddha's Law). It may be illustrated in this following passage from scripture, of which there are many against merit: The Two Visions of Perfection. Majjhima Nikaya 3.72: And what O' monks is the Vision of Unity-fulfillment (hypostasis)? Vision of Unity-fulfillment O' monks I say is a twofold realm. There is the Vision of Unity-fulfillment that is tainted with vile outflowings, is connected with merits and good deed making and which is woefully connected with vile rebirth; but O' monks there is the Exalted Vision of Unity-fulfillment which possesses no vile outflowings, which is supremely exquisite in its transcendental nature, and which is the holy path. And what O' monks is the Vision of Unity-fulfillment that is tainted with vile outflowings, is connected with merits and good deed making and which is woefully connected with vile rebirth? It is the realm of meritorious alms-giving, it is the realm of merit based offerings, the realm of personal sacrifices, the realm of desire-passions both joyous and suffering, it is the wicked fruit of embodiment in the realm of this world as a consequence, it is the realm of this painful world and the next world in rebirth, it is the realm of mother, the realm of father, the realm of entities disjoined in the spirit-world; but there are holy wise Sramana Brahmans who are Supreme Thus-come-Thus-gone ones within Samma (sammagata, matrix of supreme exquisite bliss-Perfection, hypostasis) that have turned back and gone unto the going forth into Samma (hypostasis Perfection unexcelled) who proclaim of this world and the next world; themselves do they declare the supreme truth which is made known. This O' monks is the Vision of Unity-fulfillment that is tainted with vile outflowings, is connected with merits and good deed making and which is woefully connected with vile rebirth. #2. And what O' monks is the Exalted Vision of Unity-fulfillment (hypostasis) which possesses no vile outflowings, which is supremely exquisite in its transcendental nature and which is the holy path? It is O' monks the Exalted mind, the Exalted path endowed with a mind free of conjunction with vile outflowings, the Exalted path which gives rise to profound wisdom and supreme wisdom both otherworldly and exquisitely powerful, burning investigation by antecedent-recollection into Samma-Perfection in powerful wisdom, and it is the path within the Vision of Unity-fulfillment (Samma, hypostasis). This O' monks is called the path of Exalted Vision of Unity-fulfillment which is free of vile outflowings and is transcendental in its otherworldly nature. There is knowledge in the ways of merit, and there is knowledge in the way of supreme release into that sweet deathlessness, utmost bliss Nirvana. When this is well learned of the monk, that follower of Buddha's true law, no longer does he seek merit. Rejoicing in the dwelling of that true radiant center, he exists in the solitude of his perfected mind's Essence! (KN 2.75) Some Spirits are born by the womb into this world, the wicked arise into vicious hells, and the righteous merit makers go to heaven. But above all of those are the wise men, for they are free of all defilements and attachments, and they go into supreme perfect bliss deathlessness Nirvana! (KN 2.126) But him having discarded both wickedness and the seeking of merit, he leads that superhuman existence! Such as him can roam amongst this afflicted aggregated realm in ease. He is worthy of monk to be called! (KN 2.67)

What are the two extremes that are to be avoided?

The Two Extremes. Samyutta Nikaya 5.421: O' monks, there are two extremes which should not be followed after. Which two? The embodiment within the conjunction of desires and joyous pleasures of this world which is low, vile, of ignorant fools, ignoble, and is not the exquisite abode of supreme bliss within Samma-Perfection. The conjunction with painful self-mortification that is suffering, ignoble, and not the exquisite abode of supreme bliss within Samma-Perfection. Without following after any of these two extremes O' monks, the Tathagata has turned back into the light of the middle-way, which gives rise to the hypostatic-nexus of the Samma-dwelling Buddha, which gives rise to transcendental vision, which gives rise to transcendental knowledge, which brings about the arising of Samma-wisdom, and at the end of the contraction from aggregated existence (Nirvana), is the arising within Samma-Perfection (Samvattati).

What is the middle path?

Turning back into the light of the Middle Way. Samyutta Nikaya 5.421: And what O' monks is that which the Tathagata has awakened to in turning back into the light of the middle-way, which gives rise to the hypostatic-nexus of the Samma-dwelling Buddha, which gives rise to transcendental vision, which gives rise to transcendental knowledge, which brings about the arising of Samma-wisdom, and at the end of the contraction from aggregated existence is the arising within Samma-Perfection? It is the Noble eightfold path! This O' monks is the turning back into the light of the middle-way which the Tathagata has awakened to which gives rise to the hypostatic-nexus of the Samma-dwelling Buddha, which gives rise to transcendental vision, which gives rise to transcendental knowledge, which brings about the arising of Samma-wisdom, and at the end of the contraction from aggregated existence is the arising within Samma-Perfection.

In what single word can the whole doctrine be summed up?

In the word "disembodiment" this complete escaping from samsaric cyclical existence is the most important point in Buddhism. The law of absolute, inviolable justice holds sway in the whole realm of animate and inanimate nature. Each good and each evil deed bears its own fruit. So personal Gods in their mercy and grace can never deliver the trembling sinner from the consequences of his evil doings. No arbitrary power of as almighty Lord of heaven and earth can curtail the actions of a good man's actions and wisdom's attainment.

What is an evil deed?

An evil deed is that action which any just man would regret after having committed it. Having lived life ignoble and unholy, and having not acquired wisdom's wealth while still vital; they are consumed by old age and regret. Like a broken old warrior's bow lying on the battlefield are they, bemoaning the glories of yesteryears! (KN 2.156)

But surely there are selfish acts that are not injurious to others?

Such acts are neither good nor bad in themselves. They are prudent if they promote a man's temporal welfare; they are wise if they further his spiritual and development; they are foolish if they injure his mind and body.

Is it wrong to return evil for evil?

Yes; the true Buddhist never retaliates the injuries of others; it is also wrong to allow pure evil to exist also. The Buddha himself recalls a previous life when he learned a man was about to kill many peoples, so the Buddha kills him before he can do so and earns great favor and merit and favorable rebirth. He usually however leaves the evil-doer to eternal justice (Karma), he forgives him, and pities him as one who must suffer the effects of Karma in this life, or the next, in proportion to the hardness of his heart. . Woe! That man, he abused me, he harmed me, and he pushed me down then defeated and robbed me! O' monks, just so being wrapped up in this enmity, there is your very undoing! There can never be any purity in this! He abused me, he harmed me, and he defeated and robbed me! O' monks, just so being free from this enmity you are purified and sweet peace is attained. (KN 2.3,4)

Has the inveterate sinner to suffer, eternally?

No guilt incurred under conditions of time, however grievous it may be, is followed by eternal punishment. Such order of the universe would be most cruel and unjust. The kingdom of righteousness, which the Buddha proclaimed, has its foundation in eternal justice. In accordance there with every evil deed can of necessity only bring its corresponding temporary punishment, in this or a succeeding life; finite guilt and finite punishment.

Is there no heaven, no hell?

Not in the Christian, Jewish, and Islamic sense of the words; there are many heavens and hells however in Buddhism. But there are dark worlds or conditions of anguish and despair, where not a ray of hope of deliverance can penetrate, and where the sufferer has to remain until he has reaped the bitter fruit of his evil doings. Not till then has his Karma been expunged, does it bring about rebirth as a human being, nor is the opportunity afforded him to acquire fresh knowledge, and by a righteous life, to re-enter the path of salvation. There are equally bright worlds of joy, where the good man, who has not yet arrived at full redemption, may enjoy the fruits of his virtues. But if these fruits are consumed whilst the will and desire to live an unreal existence is still within him, he has to be reborn under a human form. There are tormenting hells, where sorrow is a hundred fold greater than we can experience here, but they are not necessarily Karma dependent, but rather depend on very great ignorances and delusions which entrap one therein.

Are there any evil deeds requiring more than one birth-renewal?

Certainly, there are such of which the offender must bear the penalty in a succession of rebirths in a lower state, or in hell, or a finite period of expungement as a ghost in a realm of limbo.

Are the misdeeds of the parents visited on the children?

No, indeed; no one has to suffer for the wrongs of others; it would be contrary to the laws of eternal justice, whereby guilt and suffering are so closely interwoven that one cannot exist without the other.

Still we see that children, as a rule, are like their parents in mental and physical qualities, and that they inherit from them good and evil propensities, health and disease, riches and poverty. Does not this fact seem to refute the doctrine of Karma?

On the contrary, it proves it. It is because we are like our parents in our innermost being, our individuality, that we have become their children, not the converse, as is generally believed; it is because at the moment of our rebirth we have greater affinity with them than with any other living being, that we have taken flesh from them. Similar causes produce similar effects. The inward resemblance between parents and children must necessarily find its expression in outward form, in inclinations and aversions, circumstances and the like. The D.N.A. makeup and birth appearances have no bearing on the essence contained within that aggregated heap. The qualities of the parents are never hereditary in other words and never can be transmitted from parent to child. Heredity is but a name, and the doctrine of Karma and rebirth can alone give a satisfactory explanation of the fact that parents and children have many qualities in common physically.

Why has the upright and just man often so much to suffer here on earth?

He suffers for the wrong committed in his former lives or for the wrong of others actions upon him and for the simple fact that he is in aggregated existence and is ignorant to this fact. There can never be peace within the unreal realm of aggregated existence except for the supremely enlighten Buddha or Tathagata and Arahant. What is this laughter! How is it that you are joyful! When the minds of the entire world are perpetually lost ablaze in wickedness. How so being bathed in most pitch of evil blackness, do you not quest for illumination by cultivation in wisdom's Perfection! Behold! That painted puppet this body, riddled with oozing sores, an erected façade. Diseased heap that fools fancy and swoon over; True Essence is not part of it! For the body befalls utter destruction. This body is soon worn out. It is that very same abode for disease and sicknesses that is broken apart. The body is soon cast away, that very putrid heap. It is always in death that life meets its end! Just as men throw away those gourds in the fall, so too are those sun bleached gray-white bones! What is there in that refuse, which is anything to delight in! Behold! This city of bones, plastered together with flesh and blood. Within its walls are old age and death. Pride, arrogance, and hypocrisy are its townsfolk! Even the noble King's well-adorned chariot decays, so too the body undergoes the same fate. But know you that the spirit of the supreme truth shall never decay! Just so, the pure make it well known to the pure! (KN 2.146-151)

How is it that the wicked and unjust man often enjoys pleasures and honors?

It is in consequence of the merit won in his former lives, of his favorable Karma. When, however, the fruits of his well-doing have been enjoyed, the bitter harvest of his misdeeds will have to be reaped in a succeeding rebirth. Do not take evil triflingly, thinking it will not befall you. Just as the water pot is filled drop by drop, so too is the fool filled by his wickedness. Bit by bit it makes a woeful heap upon him! (KN 2.121)

Can one escape the consequences of wrong by committing suicide?

No, the eternal justice is inexorable and all-powerful. It cannot be evaded.

Is it wrong to commit suicide?

Yes, suicide is a very foolish act, for it violently cuts a thread of life which, according to the law of Karma, has to be taken up again immediately, and under still less favorable conditions than those which the deluded man tried to escape by it. To cut the fruit from the vine before it is ripe is a misdeed that can never be of benefit to anyone.

Why under less favorable conditions?

Because our whole existence, with all its conditions, its joys and sorrows, is entirely the result of our own doings and our own faults, but more importantly our ignorance of the great matter of things. As long as error is not dispelled and guilt is not expiated, no birth-renewal under more favorable circumstances can possibly take place. Whoever is convinced of this truth will patiently bear the evils of life, intent only on perfecting wisdom in Samadhi and on gaining knowledge, in order to become worthy of a happier birth. But he who, by foolishly committing suicide, tries to escape the suffering which is conducive to his amendment, gives proof of great deficiency of self-knowledge, and of want of capability and will to improve and become wise and good. In his delusion he destroys that fragile, evanescent form which he takes for his real being, and he enters that downward path which, if persisted in, leads him to the dark states of anguish and despair.

How long does the individuality continue to renew itself in repeated births?

Until perfect knowledge and Samma-Perfection within Nirvana is attained. Then, and not till then, is that haven of rest attained where there is no more suffering, no more death, birth-renewal, or ignorance.

How is it that we have no remembrance of our former lives?

We can recollect previous lives as the Buddha did on the morn of his awakening by deep yoking within the Samadhi practice.

Can you illustrate this in any way?

In the night we dream, and in our dreams we are at one time kings, and the next beggars or captives: sometimes poor and beset with difficulties, at other times in the full tide of prosperity and darlings of fortune. Nevertheless, it is one and the same self that takes on all these different characters. Again: whilst dreaming we do not remember other dreams we have had, but when awake, we remember the dreams of many a night. It is the same with our different lives. The same individuality, the same self, is reborn under different forms; each rebirth is a remembrance of the individual before, now terrible, now full of joy. As long as we are dreaming one of these dreams of life, we do not remember our former life-dreams. But a Buddha, who has attained deliverance, dreams no longer. He is awakened, and he remembers all his former births. The Arahats, too, possess the gift of remembering many of their former births. This knowledge is not, however, attained until they have completely thrown off the ten fetters, and have received the full fruition of enlightenment.

What are the ten fetters?

1. The delusion of the false self that is unreal and not eternal, not the Atman, namely the aggregates which are corporeal phenomena. 2. Doubt of the order of the world, and of the way of deliverance. 3. The superstition that salvation can be gained by outward religion, practices, rites, prayer sacrifices, worship of relics, pilgrimages, and various other forms and ceremonies. 4. Sensuality, with its passions and desires. 5. Hatred and ill-will towards our fellow-men. 6. Love of life on earth. 7. Desire for life in Heaven or Paradise. 8. False pride. 9. False self-righteousness. 10. Ignorance (avidya).

Are not repentance and expiation conducive to Perfection and deliverance?

Yes, they are so, but repentance and expiation cannot bribe eternal justice. Nothing can be won or wrung from this by prayers and penance. Repentance is of value only so far as it is the expression of a deeply felt sorrow for the wrong we have committed, and so far as it prompts us to make amends for such wrong to the limit of our power and do better for the future. Passive repentance, however, and idle lamentations are of no good whatever. Equally profitless is the belief in the efficacy of all outward acts, such as penance, self-mortifications and the like. The true repentance of the Buddhist consists in his resolute determination to forsake his evil ways and to enter the path of salvation and perfect wisdom, and his true atonement at his conquest over his evil passions and desires.

Did the Buddha teach that only followers of his own religion could attain redemption?

No, the Buddha declared the reign of order in the universe and of eternal justice, which does not regard the belief or unbelief of man, but his inward state of mind, his good or bad intentions. Every one meets with the recompense due to him, whether he is Buddhist or not. Deliverance is, therefore, equally attainable by non-believers, but the difficulties are greater, and there is the ever-present danger of missing one's aim. We may liken this to a man who follows a bad guide, and possibly yet reaches the end of his journey after long and weary wanderings through bogs and mires, across wastes and rivers, mud and mountains; whilst another, walking in the steps of a good guide, has only to go straight on, turning neither to the right nor the left, to arrive quickly and safely at his journey's end. The best and safest guide is the Buddha only. This is why it is important to seek deeply and penetrate the suttas of the Buddha, for they are the teachings of the Buddha, and as a Buddhist one can have no other teacher than the Buddha as their guide.

Does Buddhism teach its followers to hate, despise, or persecute non-believers?

Quite the reverse. It teaches us to love all men as brethren, but neither should we embrace heretics and their false notions of salvation, for they are lightless fools lost in darkness and lest we fall in favor with them we should not associate with them. Even where dominant, it has never oppressed or persecuted non-believers, and its success has never been attended with bloodshed. The true Buddhist does not feel hatred, but only pity for him who will not acknowledge nor listen to the truth, to his own loss and injury only.

Are prayers, sacrifices, rites, and other religious ceremonies requisite to reach Samma-Perfection within Nirvana?

The Buddhist religion does not prescribe prayers, sacrifices, mantras, rituals, external acts, sacrifices, self-mortification or any other such ignorant practices in the literal sense of the word. But the repetition of passages from the sacred books, the reading and devout listening to sermons, and discourses, are considered to be of great help in raising the spirit of the believer in the hour of temptation only so far as one may penetrate their meaning in reciting them, but recitation in and of itself does no one any good whatsoever. All outward rites and ceremonies serve the same purpose, and are important only to the ignorant commoner layman who is repulsed by investigation and exercising of their wisdom if any. But the Exalted savaka who has entered the path of deliverance and who aims at higher development stands no longer in need of such means of assistance.

Does the doctrine prescribe the worship of images, statues, relics of the Buddha and his disciples?

No, according to the Buddha's teaching these practices are of no help to the furtherance of true knowledge, and may easily lead to error and superstition. The Buddha did however recognize the shallow needs of the layman and authorized the creation of some statues and images for veneration while he was still alive, knowing the different needs of the various peoples who were too daft to grasp his doctrine and needed an image to pay reverence to.

Why, then, are the Buddhists in the habit of offering flowers and burning incense before the Buddha's statues?

The lay adherents commoners want to do so in order to give expression, by an outward act, to their veneration and gratitude. Europeans in the same way place flowers and wreaths on the monuments of their great men, and on the graves of their departed. Such a custom has therefore nothing objectionable in it, but it is a great mistake to attach any special merit to it, and infinitely more horrific to give any credence to it.

Are there such occurrences as miracles?

Yes, there are several minor miracles performed by the Buddha in scripture, but these are only a reflection of the state that he had obtained which is one of being supremely awake. No such miracles as bringing back the dead or causing extraordinary magic to occur.

But are there not many facts and occurrences quite inexplicable to us?

Yes, a great many, only they must not be looked upon as miracles. They are brought about by natural laws that are yet unknown to us, but are fully understood and recognized by the Buddha, namely many powers that are possessed by one who is supremely awake to all things in this world and the next.

Wherein does Buddhism essentially differ from other religions?

Buddhism teaches the reign of Perfection through one's own efforts and wisdom without a personal God. Essentially there are only two types of religions on earth; subject religions and object religions. Subject religions would include Buddhism which teaches that by Sati and Samadhi one is able to achieve the pinnacle of all things, that being deathlessness within Samma-Perfection. Object religions would be Christianity and Judaism that say such beings as God (the object of worship) are the ways and means through their saving grace to give one everlasting peace in this world and the next. Buddhism is devoid of the need of any prayers, sacrifices and penances, without the ministry of ordained priests, without the intercession of saints, without Divine mercy. Finally, it teaches that supreme Perfection is attainable even in this life, and on this earth.

Did the Buddha recognize these truths in the night of enlightenment under the Bodhi-tree?

Yes, these and many others which have become the fundamental doctrine of the Buddhist religion and are written down in the holy books.

Were these holy books composed and written by the Buddha himself?

Not by him but by first disciples at the first Buddhist council. It happened that most of the monks realized that the doctrine of the Buddha was very quickly becoming corrupted and that it proved very necessary to record them before they were lost to schism or forgetfulness. In King Ashoka's reign, the sacred writings were inscribed on palm-leaves by the Arahats in great number and were spread far and wide throughout Afghanistan, China, Southeast Asia and southwards to Sri Lanka.

Who was King Ashoka?

One of the most powerful monarchs of India. He reigned from 272-232 B.C. and he became a convert to Buddhism upon a recitation of the second chapter of the Dhammapada, and was greatly devoted to the spread of his newly adopted religion throughout the world. To this day the stone pillars on which by his order, the doctrine of the Buddha were engraved, bear witness of King Ashoka's energy, and his name is held in veneration and respect by every Buddhist even today.

Do the holy books contain anything that is not the pure truth?

Everything in the holy books regarding the subject of religion. Human suffering, Karma and the way to Samma-Perfection within Nirvana are the pure unadulterated truth. But there are certain portions of the scriptures that contain various errors and interjections by the sectarian Theravadans who somewhat backwards-engineered parts of their Abhidhamma into the Suttas of the Nikayas, thankfully however these are very few.

Did the Buddha teach anything erroneous?

No, a Buddha does not teach anything untrue. In the course of many ages however, certain sections and passages not originally part of the Nikayas were added, and these contain a vast number of horrific sectarian Theravada erroneous statements and tripe which are sect specific and has nothing to do with the doctrine of the Buddha.

What books and passages are these?

Most all of the Vinaya and all of the Abhidhamma. These have nothing to do with Buddhism and everything to do with the Theravada sect as it exists which sprang from many splits within the Sangha over the past 2300+ years.

You seem to take a rather harsh stance on the Theravadans do you not?

I would presume no stance on the Theravadans, Mahayana, Vajrayana, and Zen. Only that which runs contrary to the doctrine of the Buddha as found in the Nikayas must be outrightly rejected as being counterproductive to comprehension of the truth the Buddha proclaimed as such. Irrelevant of which flag it flies under, if it cannot be confirmed to be in accord with the teachings, then it cannot be said to be Buddhism and would serve no purpose to investigate it as anything other than a sect which Buddhism has nothing to do with. The oldest scripture on earth must be the point of reference to that which the Buddha taught, and any later sectarian or New Age esotericism which flies under the flag of Buddhism that runs contrary to those suttas cannot be logically deemed to adhere to the teachings laid out by the Blessed One.

The collective wisdom-seekers

What is the Order or Brotherhood of the Elect?

It is the assemblage of all those true disciples and followers of the Buddha who have withdrawn from the world and entered the sublime eightfold path of Perfection by wisdom's exertion, are Exalted warriors who are now savakas that possess holy insight into the deathless, penetrating the great matter by exercising Sati and Samadhi.

Who is entitled to admission to the Order?

Every one, without distinction of rank or sex, who by given testimony of his resolute determination to enter the path, provided he is free from those impediments which exclude from admission into the Brotherhood. This person must possess the vision of the hypostatic pith of Samma-perfection.

What applicants are refused admittance into the Order?

All those suffering from infectious or incurable diseases; all children below the age of fifteen; all slaves and bondsmen not yet freed; all debtors and persons answerable to the lama and not yet acquitted; all officials and soldiers engaged in attics service; and all minors who have not obtained the consent of their parents and guardians and those puthujjana fools that are unable to grasp the sublime message as so stated in sutta.

What are the preliminaries to reception into the Brotherhood?

The novice first enters the Order as a pupil (Samanera) and has to pass through a time of probation under the superintendence of a Master, chosen by the pupil himself from amongst the brethren.

Can a brother leave the Order after once having been admitted into it?

Yes, at any time. The Buddhist doctrine and the rules of the Brotherhood forbid any compulsion. If any one wishes to return into the world, he has merely to confess his want of self-control to the Superior. He is not detained by the Order, but free to retract his vows without incurring any disgrace or dishonor. That Samana, however, who disgraces the robe he wears and the Brotherhood he belongs to by some grave transgression of the vows, is liable to the severest punishment, expulsion from the Order.

Are the brethren free to live wherever they like?

Yes, but they are enjoined to live in monasteries, or as hermits or any place conducive to the practice of Samadhi-conjoinment.

How are the Laymen to behave towards the Brotherhood?

They are to show the members of the Order due respect and reverence, and provide for their daily sustenance, clothing and the like. By so doing they are doing what is proper, and they are promoting their own happiness.

Does the Order possess any spiritual power over the Laity?

No, the Buddhist knows of no excommunication, no ecclesiastical laws and penances, no rigorous disciplinary system. But the Order repudiates all communion with an Upasaka who has been guilty of some grave offence, or who has spoken contemptuously of the Buddha, the doctrine, or the Order, in token of his being henceforth unworthy to provide for the wants of the brethren, they upset before him the alms bowl they are in the habit of carrying about with them.

What in the words of the doctrine should the true Bhikshu be?

If a Bhikshu should desire, so the Holy Scripture says, to attain the state of perfect bliss within Samma-Perfection within Nirvana let him be without guile, upright and conscientious, gentle-spoken, kind, modest, content and having few wants, not overanxious, keeping repose of heart, without presumption, without desire. Let him do nothing unworthy, let him live in thought, word, and deed in the spirit of the doctrine and the precepts; let him strengthen himself in the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths, and walk without blame in the sublime eightfold path, Let him not rejoice in good fortune, nor despond in calamity; let him not be elated by approbation, nor cast down by dishonor and disgrace; but let him ever keep that equanimity which results from the cessation of all desire. Let him be penetrate and disembody himself by Sati and Samadhi immersions that it is not the dress which makes the Samana, not the outward observance of the vows and precepts; not a life of retirement, poverty and lowliness, nor any amount of learning: but that he alone, who is pure of heart and free from all concupiscence and desire, is a true disciple of the Tathagata. Therefore, let him pursue knowledge, increase in holiness and self-control, and in charity. Let him be kind and merciful towards all living beings, far and near, the strong and the weak. Let him not deceive nor hurt, nor threaten, nor despise any one. Like a mother pitying her own child, so let him look with pity and on every being who is lost in ignorance. Serene and unruffled, like a deep Alpine lake, must be the mind of him who walks in the sublime eightfold path. For he who has overcome

error and delusion, hope and fear, passion and desire, love and hatred, who lives in purity, who has got rid of the lust of life and the gaining or merit or the accumulation of deeds which lead woefully only to rebirth, and obtained supreme wisdom intuition, he has reached the end of suffering and rebirth, has entered on Samma-dwelling-Perfection within Nirvana.

What is left as summation regarding the woeful decline of Buddhism?

The savakan monk was soon to give way to the puthujjana monk and, moreover, to one frequently of bad behavior, since as non-savakan he lacked otherworldly vision that was possessed by and dear to the Exalted. Such monks were, given the Buddha's criteria above, no better than the Brahmins before them. The true Brahmin was to be followed by a monk as spiritually sterile as his former Brahmin counterpart, no more knowing the supermundane path than the Brahmin had known. Having lost contact with the Dhamma as the sound of the deathless he turned increasingly to the Dhamma as formulated in the sutta commentary which was false and just as the Brahmin had vacuously chanted the mantras of old without understanding their true meaning, so did the puthujjana monk misunderstand the collected utterances, addressed originally to savakas with vision, coming to believe that anyone who could see as it really was that the cessation of becoming, falsely, was Nibbana and that must be an Arahant. That is, he came to believe that the revelation of Samma-Perfection lay at the end of the path rather than at its beginning and in his search for the means of acquiring this he resorted, in time, to the scholastic analysis of the sectarian Abhidhamma as had the Brahmin, in his search for a substitute for the lost Soma, resorted to an intricate analysis of the sacrifice in such Vedic texts. The truth seekers of the Buddha have gone from the Earth and very little is left outside of the suttas than trite oriental ritualism and Bramanic ritualism which Buddhism rejects. But the Buddha said that as long as his doctrine remained preserved accurately and those who had the wisdom to see deeply into its truth and follow his teachings, then his message for the attainment of the deathless would remain and be used by those with vision to penetrate and cultivate it to fruition.

