

FAXIANG

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Fo Guang Shan
International Translation Center

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FAXIANG

A Buddhist Practitioner's
Encyclopedia

Venerable Tzu Chuang

Translated by Robert Smitheram Ph.D.

Fo Guang Shan International Translation Center

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Contents

Editor's Noteix
Preface to the 1997 Chinese Editionxi
List of Articlesxiii
Encyclopedia	1
List of Articles by Chinese Title	396

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Editor's Note

The present volume is a full English translation of Venerable Tzu Chaung's *FaXiang*. However, a great deal of Chinese text has been provided to assist English-language readers who wish to deepen their understanding of Chinese Buddhist writing, as well as Chinese-language readers who wish to learn about Buddhist doctrinal terms in English.

Articles are organized alphabetically by English title and are accompanied by their corresponding Chinese titles. English translations of article titles were chosen to allow an English-language reader to most easily find what he or she is looking for and as such are not direct translations. The corresponding Chinese titles are provided as they appeared in the 1997 Chinese edition of *FaXiang* to allow Chinese-language readers to easily reference the source text. Chinese characters provided in the body text and the article subheadings are much more directly translated.

The Chinese edition of *FaXiang* was organized numerically, in the tradition of the Numerical Discourses. Articles with two major doctrinal topics were grouped together, followed by articles with three topics, and so forth. A list of all the articles in the order they appeared in the Chinese edition with their Chinese titles, English titles, and corresponding page numbers is provided as an appendix.

Preface to the 1997 Chinese Edition

Many people interested in gaining some understanding of Buddhism often face a perplexing problem: the vast array of Buddhist sutras contain complex doctrines expressed in an arcane terminology, and people are left not knowing how to appreciate their profound insights. Making the Buddhist sutras more accessible to the average reader has always remained the long cherished goal of Venerable Master Hsing Yun as embodied in his promotion of Humanistic Buddhism. In order to put this ideal into practice, he edited the *Essential Guides to Buddhism* reference series so that people would no longer regard Buddhist studies as a daunting task to be avoided.

In fact, as early as 1964 after the founding of the Shoushan Buddhist Seminary, Master Hsing Yun was already vigorously engaged in encouraging a more practical and simplified Dharma for everyday life. Whenever one learns a new language, a new area of knowledge or scholarship, or a new skill, each of these entails its own specialized vocabulary and terminology, and religion is no exception.

Buddhism originated some 2,600 years ago on the plains of India, and the Buddha's teachings were preserved in Indic languages like Sanskrit and Pali. Since the time of the Han, Wei, and the Northern and Southern dynasties, many monastics have engaged in the work of translating the Buddhist sutras from Sanskrit and Pali into Chinese.

The sutras were translated into Chinese in a terse yet precise manner. This style can be yet another obstacle that fosters

incomprehension for modern people schooled in reading modern vernacular Chinese. For this reason, the compilation of a simple and clear dictionary for Buddhist studies or a glossary of terminology has become a matter of utmost urgency.

Thirty-three years ago, I took charge of the teaching work at the Shoushan Buddhist Seminary, just as interest in studying Buddhism was beginning to grow in Taiwan. To allow those many students who were interested in being able to study the Dharma directly to develop a solid foundation, Master Hsing Yun asked me to teach Buddhist terminology using a vivid and dynamic style, in hopes that these lectures could later be published in the monthly journal *Awakening the World* for the benefit of all.

Owing to my busy administrative duties at the temple, as well as my trips all around the world over the past ten odd years to establish more than one hundred Fo Guang Shan branch temples, I had no time to sift carefully through my lecture notes. On the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of Fo Guang Shan, Master Hsing Yun asked me to edit my teaching materials, now long covered in dust, into a book that can serve as a reference to others. Consequently, I have put together this volume by carefully selecting one hundred and twenty-one items from my lectures. This book is my offering to the thirtieth anniversary of Fo Guang Shan.

Given the shifting of conditions, mistakes and errors are unavoidable. It is my hope that the great practitioners and scholars of the world will be generous in their feedback. I would also like to express my gratitude to Venerable Man Yi who helped me prepare the manuscript and to my colleagues working at Fo Guang Cultural Enterprises Ltd. for editing and printing this work.

Tzu Chuang, April of 1997

List of Articles

A

Accomplishments, Six	1
Ages of the Dharma, Three.	4
Aggregates, Five	7
Arhats, Eighteen	11
Ascetic Practices	15
Assembly, Sevenfold	18
Attendants	21
Avaivartika	23
Avici Hell	26

B

Bodhisattva Path, Ten Grounds of	31
Buddha's Progress, Eight Stages of.	35

C

Chan Schools	38
Comportment, Four Kinds of.	43
Consciousness, Eight Kinds of	46
Contemplations, Five	49
Continents, Four Great	52

D

Decay, Five Signs of	56
--------------------------------	----

Dedication	59
Dependent Origination	62
Desires, Five.	65
Dharma Friends.	68
Dharma Realms, Ten	71
Dharma Seals, Three	75
Dharma Wheel, Three Turnings	77
Difficulties, Eight	81
Disciples of the Buddha, Ten Great	84

E

Effects of Karma of the Three Time Periods	88
Elements, Four Great	90

F

Field of Merit	95
Friends, Four Kinds of	98

G

Gem, Triple	101
Giving	103
Gratitude, Four Kinds of	106

H

Harmony, Six Points of Reverent.	110
Heaven	112
Heaven of the Thirty-Three Gods	116
Hell	119
History of Buddhism	124
Human Realm.	127

I

Ichchantikas Can Attain Buddhahood.	130
Ignorance	133
Immeasurable Minds, Four.	135
Impermanence	138
Intrinsic Nature.	140

K

Kalpa	145
Karma of the Three Time Periods	148
Karma, Three Types of	150

L

Labor, Communal.	154
Lower Realms, Three	157

M

Mahayana and Hinayana.	162
Maitreya Bodhisattva.	165
Marks of Excellence, Thirty-Two.	168
Masters of the Ming Dynasty, Four	170
Meal Contemplations, Five.	179
Means of Embracing, Four	181
Merit and Wisdom	183
Mind.	186
Mindfulness, Four Bases of.	190
Mountain Gate	193
Mountains, Four Great	195

N

Names of the Buddha, Ten	201
Namo Amitofo	205
Nirvana	207
Noble Ones of the West, Three	209
Non-Buddhist Schools, Six	212
Non-Duality.	215

O

Offerings, Four	219
Om Mani Padme Hum	222
Omniscience (of the Buddha)	224
One Mind Opens Two Doors	225
One Thought Contains the Three Thousandfold	228
World System	
Ordination	231

P

Parables of the Lotus Sutra.	234
Path, Noble Eightfold.	238
Perfections, Six	242
Poisons, Three.	244
Practice, Four Stages of.	246
Prajna	250
Precepts, Eight	253
Precepts, Five	256

Q

Qualities, Ten	260
Questions of the Buddha, Four.	263

R

Realms of Existence, Six	265
Rebirth in the Pure Land, Nine Grades of	269
Refuge	273
Reliances, Four	275
Retreat	278
Right Effort	281
Robe and Bowl	283

S

Saha World	287
Samadhi	290
Schools of Chinese Buddhism, Eight	294
Sense Objects	301
Shrine, Main	304
Small Things Not to Be Taken Lightly, Four	309
Spiritual Wealth, Seven Kinds of	311
Stopping and Seeing Meditation	314
Structures and Buildings	318
Suffering, Eight Kinds of	321
Supernatural Powers, Six	324
Supports, Three	327
Sutras, Twelve Divisions of	329
Swastika	332

T

Teaching, Four Modes of	336
Temporary Monastic Lodging	339
Thus Have I Heard	343
Training, Threefold	345

Translators, Four Great Chinese	347
Tripitaka.	353
Truths, Four Noble	356

U

Untranslatable Terms, Five Kinds of	359
---	-----

V

Vehicles, Five	363
Violations, Five Great.	368
Virtues of the Buddha, Three.	370
Vows, Four Universal	372
Vulture Peak and Jeta Grove	374

W

Wandering Mendicant	378
Winds, Eight	382
Wisdom, Four Kinds of.	384
Wisdom, Three Kinds of	388
World System, Three Thousandfold	390

A

Abhidharma

阿毗達磨

See: Gem, triple; Tripitaka.

Accomplishments, Six

六成就

The Buddhist teachings state that an effect can only manifest when all the necessary conditions are complete and present. This is the doctrine of dependent origination, an eternal truth which the Buddha realized when he attained awakening. Even when the Buddha gave teachings, the necessary conditions had to be present, and these conditions are called the six accomplishments: faith, hearing, time, teacher, location, and assembly. Only when these six accomplishments are present can the Dharma be taught.

All sutras begin with the phrase “Thus have I heard.” This phrase shows that the six accomplishments are present:

1. *The Accomplishment of Faith* (信成就)

This accomplishment is signified by the characters *rushi* (如是), “thus,” at the beginning of a sutra. The ocean of the Buddha’s teachings can only be entered through faith. At the beginning of each sutra, we accept through faith that the Dharma was spoken by the Buddha “thus” as it is written, and we do not doubt it. It is by relying on the Dharma in this way that we can practice.

2. *The Accomplishment of Hearing* (聞成就)

The next characters are *wowen* (我聞), “I heard.” This is to show that Ananda, the Buddha’s attendant, was present to hear the Buddha give such a teaching.

3. *The Accomplishment of Time* (時成就)

The next characters in a typical sutra are *yishi* (一時), “one time.” This refers to the time that the teaching was given. Whenever an assembly had gathered, if sentient beings were present, had the proper conditions, and made an appeal to him, the Buddha taught them the Dharma.

4. *The Accomplishment of the Teacher* (主成就)

The accomplishment of the teacher refers to the Buddha himself being present to teach. The Buddha is the teacher who gives teachings and guidance for both the mundane and supramundane worlds.

5. *The Accomplishment of Location* (處成就)

After the Buddha is mentioned, next comes the characters *zai mouchu* (在某處), “at some certain place.” This refers to the location where the teachings were given. With the exception of the time when the Buddha gave teachings to his mother in the

Heaven of the Thirty-three Gods, the Buddha always gave teachings in the human world, at such places as Magadha and Sravasti in India.

6. *The Accomplishment of the Assembly* (眾成就)

Sutras continue with the characters *yuzhong ruoganren ju* (與眾若干人俱), “along with a certain gathering of beings,” followed by a list of those in attendance. This refers to all those present in the assembly who have come to listen to the Dharma. Bodhisattvas, *sravakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, heavenly and human beings would gather in multitudes to listen to the Dharma.

The Dharma could only be taught because the six conditions above were present. If even only one was lacking, the transmission of the true Dharma could not have taken place. Therefore, teaching at a Dharma assembly is not something that any single individual can accomplish, for the conditions of faith, hearing, time, teacher, location, and assembly must be present. Those who teach the Dharma today should retain a sense of graciousness and sincerity when they teach, so those who are assembled can increase their understanding and gain the benefits of the Dharma. Those who listen to the Dharma should understand how rare it is to have such an opportunity, and furthermore, they should vow to uphold the true Dharma and continue to attend Dharma assemblies. This way, the Buddha’s light and the water of the Dharma will spread far and wide.

Ages of the Dharma, Three

三時佛法

When the Buddha was in the world, I was lost,
After the Buddha passed into *nirvana* was I then
born;
I repent for all my many karmic obstacles,
That have prevented me from seeing the
Tathagata's golden body.

The above verse gives a portrait of sentient beings in this current age of declining Dharma and how they regret missing the time when the Buddha was in the world. Cultivation is more difficult in the era after the Buddha's *nirvana*, such that "being born when no Buddha is present" is even mentioned as one of the eight difficulties for practicing Buddhism.

Though it is impossible now to go back and be present when the Buddha was in the world, the Buddha's teachings have been passed down for generations since the Buddha entered *nirvana*. Sentient beings still have the opportunity to hear the Dharma and practice according to the teachings; however, the conditions following the Buddha's *nirvana* change over time. These changes can be divided into the three ages of the Dharma: the Age of Right Dharma, the Age of Semblance Dharma, and the Age of Declining Dharma.

1. Age of Right Dharma (正法)

The Age of Right Dharma is the period not long after the Buddha has passed into final *nirvana*, during which his disciples are still able to maintain monastic discipline and uphold the Buddha's

teachings in form and essence without misinterpretation. During this age, sentient beings are provided with the Right Dharma and have a great capacity to learn. Many of those who have the will to practice diligently will attain awakening.

2. *Age of Semblance Dharma* (像法)

The Age of Semblance Dharma is the period after the Buddha's final *nirvana* has receded into the past, and the esteem and admiration that sentient beings hold for the Buddha's teachings has waned. Different ideas and understandings of the Buddha's teachings appear, and this leads to ideas about the Buddha's teachings which only *resemble* the Right Dharma. During this age, sentient beings lack the solid foundation of positive karma possessed by those alive during the Age of Right Dharma, and as a result, even though the teachings still exist, very few attain awakening.

3. *Age of Declining Dharma* (末法)

The Age of Declining Dharma is the period when the Buddha's teachings go into decline. Sentient beings misunderstand and cannot distinguish between true teachings and false ones, and they become stubborn and difficult to teach. Meanwhile, non-Buddhist teachers that invoke the name of the Buddha do as they please. During this age, the Buddhist teachings remain in the world, but most people have no faith in them, do not practice, and attain nothing. During this age, the Dharma has weakened, and Mara has become stronger.

According to the Buddhist sutras, the Age of Right Dharma and the Age of Semblance Dharma each last about one thousand

A years, while the Age of Declining Dharma lasts for ten thousand years. According to the Buddhist calendar, the year 2011 of the common era is 2,555 years after the Buddha's final *nirvana*, so we have already entered the Age of Declining Dharma.

In the work *Inspiration for the Bodhicitta Pledge*, the eighteenth-century monastic Master Xing'an wrote: "The Age of Right Dharma and the Age of Semblance Dharma have already passed. What remains is only the Age of Declining Dharma." He went on to say that during the age of declining Dharma, the teachings will exist, but no one will practice them, no one will be able to distinguish true teachings from false ones nor tell right from wrong, and people will struggle and fight amongst themselves in pursuit of fame and fortune. The Age of Declining Dharma is lamentable indeed. Over twenty-five hundred years ago, the Buddha said to Ananda that, during the Age of Declining Dharma, sentient beings will attempt to outmaneuver and betray one another as they contend for power, wealth, fame, and fortune, to the point where they will even brutally kill one another. Such people are as senseless as crows fighting over a piece of rotten meat.

In particular, there are many non-Buddhist groups who proclaim to be Buddhist, dress themselves in the guise of Buddhism, and do all kinds of harm to Buddhism. In today's society, selfishness, fame, and fortune reign supreme. Greed has become ingrained in the human heart, and our morals have declined. There is little distinction between the teachings that are right and those that are wrong. People with dangerous doctrines about supernatural powers and spirits now assume the name of "Buddhism" to cheat others out of their money to the point that real Buddhists have become victims. We can see the fulfillment of the Buddha's prediction today.

Moreover, the government lacks the proper policies to make things right. The media, too, disregards morality and only concerns itself with commercial profit. The media often reports exaggerated and unsubstantiated stories that mislead their audience, resulting in an ever more chaotic society with more and more social problems that will plague the future for generations. Venerable Master Hsing Yun once remarked, “The government has no law, the media has no morals, Buddhism has committed no fault, and the believers have no choice.”

To address the above abuses, the world’s governments should truly create some policies regulating religious organizations as soon as possible so they will have some legal basis and illegal activity will be thwarted before it happens. This will also allow orthodox Buddhism the space it needs to disseminate its teachings. The media, too, should develop its professional ethics and report more on the brighter side of human character to edify its audience. Buddhist followers should be more self-aware and united as a whole, and should actively spread Buddhism to develop the contributions that Buddhism can make in purifying the mind and giving people guidance. There is no way to avert the decline of the Dharma, but in this way, we can lay the groundwork for the Right Dharma to return in the future. This would be a great blessing for Buddhism and for all sentient beings.

Aggregates, Five

五蘊

The five aggregates are also known as the “five heaps” or “five components,” for they are the five factors that make up the self. What are the five aggregates? “Aggregate” here refers to accumulation,

A
and the term refers to the accumulations of five kinds of conditioned phenomena: form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness.

1. *Form* (色)

“Form” refers to anything that obstructs. The aggregate of form includes anything that occupies space, can hinder or obstruct, or can be divided into parts. This includes all matter that has shape and can be broken down, as well as the five sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body) and the five sense objects (sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch).

2. *Feeling* (受)

“Feeling” refers to sensation, the function whereby the mind grasps external phenomena to produce a response. Feelings can be either painful, pleasurable, or neither painful nor pleasurable.

3. *Perception* (想)

“Perception” refers to cognizing an object, including conceiving of objects from external phenomena, conceptualizing, making associations, remembering the past, and imagining the future. These are the mental functions through which we perceive all objects. One could say that perception is the formation of mental concepts.

4. *Mental Formations* (行)

“Mental formations” refers to our fabrications. These are the activities that are fabricated from the apprehension of objects, the various actions that are relegated to one’s body or speech after mental deliberation and judgment. Mental formations can be either wholesome or unwholesome.

5. *Consciousness* (識)

“Consciousness” refers to awareness. Consciousness is what recognizes, understands, and distinguishes between various mental states. For example, the eye can recognize and distinguish between blue, yellow, black, and white; the ear can distinguish between harsh and pleasing sounds; the nose can distinguish between fragrant and noxious smells; the tongue can distinguish what is sour, sweet, bitter, and spicy; and the body can distinguish between hot and cold, hard and soft. The mind and body are an accumulation of the five aggregates, an impermanent combination dependent upon causes and conditions that lacks both inherent essence and autonomy. The mind and body are neither free nor permanent. However, sentient beings remain deluded and unawakened, believing that what they see as “me” and “mine” is real, and thus, they sink into an ocean of suffering.

The *Numerical Discourses* states, “Form is like a patch of foam, feelings are like water bubbles, perception is like a wild horse, mental formations are like a plantain trunk, and consciousness is like an illusion.” The mind and body are an accumulation of the five aggregates; if they were truly the self, how could the self be as impermanent as foam, bubbles, a wild horse, a plantain trunk, or an illusion?

Aging

老

See: Dependent origination.

Ajita

長眉羅漢

See: Arhats, eighteen.

Angaja

Alaya Consciousness

阿賴耶識

See: Consciousness, eight kinds of.

Alms Bowl

鉢

See: Robe and bowl.

Altruism

利行

See: Means of embracing, four.

Amitabha Buddha

阿彌陀佛

See: Namō amitōfo; noble ones of the West, three; rebirth in the Pure Land, nine grades of; supports, three.

Amoghavajra

不空

See: Translators, four great Chinese.

Ananda

阿難陀

See: Disciples, ten great; questions of the Buddha, four; thus have I heard.

Angaja

布袋羅漢

See: Arhats, eighteen.

Anger

憤怒

See: Poisons, three.

Animals

畜生

See: Dharma realms, ten; difficulties, eight; lower realms, three.

Aniruddha

阿那律

See: Disciples, ten great.

Apara-godaniya

西牛貨洲

See: Continents, four great.

Arhats, Eighteen

十八羅漢

In the history of Buddhism, there have been many eminent, awakened monks who were said to have “inwardly kept their bodhisattva practice, while outwardly manifesting the form of an arhat.” Such figures are known for their unrestrained, supernatural powers which they use to liberate beings throughout the human world. For this reason, most Buddhists conceive of an arhat as one who is unconventional, capricious, bizarre, and uncanny.

Actually, there were also arhats who were known for being very reserved and dignified. An *arhat*, or *luohan* (羅漢) in Chinese, is a practitioner who has attained awakening and achieved liberation. Most arhats are described as renunciative,

non-contentious, worldweary, and tranquility-loving. Quite a few of the Buddha's disciples became truly awakened, great arhats. For example, the ten great disciples of the Buddha were each arhats. Listings of arhats grew to include a group of five hundred arhats, as well as 1,250 arhats. Among the various groups, the most common listing of arhats is a list known as the "eighteen arhats."

The sutras contain no such listing of the eighteen arhats as a group. The *Record of Dharma Abiding as Spoken by the Great Arhat Nandimitra* lists sixteen arhats commanded by the Buddha to remain forever in the world and protect the true Dharma. The names of the sixteen arhats are:

1. *The Tiger Subduing Arhat* (伏虎羅漢)

Also known as the Venerable Pindolabharadvaja. He once subdued a vicious tiger.

2. *The Celebrating Arhat* (喜慶羅漢)

Also known as the Venerable Kanakavatsa. He was a great debater in ancient India.

3. *The Bowl Raising Arhat* (舉鉢羅漢)

Also known as the Venerable Kanakabharadvaja. He would carry his alms bowl as he liberated beings.

4. *The Stupa Raising Arhat* (托塔羅漢)

Also known as the Venerable Subinda. He was the Buddha's last personally-ordained disciple. He always raises the Buddha's reliquary *stupa* in remembrance.

5. *The Meditating Arhat* (靜坐羅漢)

Also known as the Venerable Nakula and as the “great strength arhat” because before he become a monastic, he served in the military and was very physically strong.

6. *The River Crossing Arhat* (過江羅漢)

Also known as the Venerable Bhadra. Due to his supernatural powers, he is able to cross rivers like a dragonfly skimming over the surface of the water.

7. *The Elephant Riding Arhat* (騎象羅漢)

Also known as the Venerable Kalika. Before he became a monastic, he was an elephant trainer.

8. *The Laughing Lion Arhat* (笑獅羅漢)

Also known as the Venerable Vajraputra. Before becoming a monastic, he was a hunter but stopped killing living beings when he became a Buddhist. The lions came to express their gratitude, hence the name.

9. *The Open Heart Arhat* (開心羅漢)

Also known as the Venerable Jivaka. He is commonly depicted with a Buddha image on his chest to show that Buddhism lies in his heart.

10. *The Raised Arm Arhat* (探手羅漢)

Also known as the Venerable Panthaka. He would often raise his arms to stretch his tired back after completing his sitting meditation, hence the name.

11. *The Deep Thinking Arhat* (沉思羅漢)

Also known as the Venerable Rahula. He was the Buddha's son and also one of the ten great disciples, known as foremost in secluded practice.

12. *The Ear Picking Arhat* (挖耳羅漢)

Also known as the Venerable Nagasena. He was well-known for his teaching on "purifying the ear sense organ," and is thus often depicted as cleaning his ears.

13. *The Bag Carrying Arhat* (布袋羅漢)

Also known as the Venerable Angaja. He is said to have always traveled carrying a bag on his back, laughing as he went on his way.

14. *The Banana Tree Arhat* (芭蕉羅漢)

Also known as the Venerable Vanavasin. After becoming a monastic, he would often diligently meditate under a banana tree.

15. *The Long Eyebrow Arhat* (長眉羅漢)

Also known as the Venerable Ajita. He was born with two long eyebrows.

16. *The House Guarding Arhat* (看門羅漢)

Also known as the Venerable Cudapanthaka. He was known for his loyalty and faithfulness in performing his duties.

In addition to the sixteen arhats mentioned in the *Record of Dharma Abiding as Spoken by the Great Arhat Nandimitra*, two additional arhats are usually added: the Venerable Nandimitra, the

“dragon subduing arhat” (降龍羅漢), and the Venerable Pindola, the “sitting-on-deer arhat” (乘鹿羅漢). One theory is that the Venerable Nandimitra mentioned above is the same Nandimitra who authored the text describing the sixteen arhats and that the Venerable Pindola is the same monastic also known as the “tiger subduing arhat.” In this regard, there are really only sixteen arhats.

Regardless of whether there are sixteen arhats or eighteen arhats, differences in popular customs and beliefs from ancient times to the present and from India to China have thus resulted in various accounts. However, people today must not become bogged down in arguing over which numbers or names are correct. Arhats are simply those who have gained liberation through their spiritual practice and, as such, are worthy of our respect.

Ascetic Practices

十二頭陀行

Mahakasyapa, one of the Buddha’s ten great disciples, was known as “foremost in austerities.” When Mahakasyapa had reached old age, the Buddha once tried, out of compassion, to convince Mahakasyapa to give up his ascetic practices. But Mahakasyapa did not consider his ascetic practices painful. On the contrary, they made him happy.

Mahakasyapa did not worry about food or clothing, nor did he experience any suffering from success or failure. Mahakasyapa only experienced purity and liberation.

Mahakasyapa regarded ascetic practices as the strictest possible lifestyle. Those who are able to condition themselves to this kind of life are better able to endure hardship and find joy in simplicity and can thus more easily devote their lives to the Dharma

and to helping others. Ascetic practices have a direct effect of bringing stability to the monastic order and thus indirectly bring benefit to sentient beings. It is for this reason that the Buddha also praised Mahakasyapa, for as long as he lived, Mahakasyapa vowed to never abandon his ascetic practice.

The Chinese word *toutuo* (頭陀), “ascetic practice,” means to cultivate the body and mind by sacrificing the comforts of clothing, food, housing, and transportation. Such practices aim to rid one of defilements and afflictions. Prior to his awakening, the Buddha undertook ascetic practices for six years before discovering that they were not the path of ultimate liberation. However, the Buddha felt that excessive craving can overwhelm one’s will to practice. Therefore, as long as one does not engage in ascetic practices to gain notoriety, Buddhism still commends living a life of renunciation and simplicity.

The following are twelve common ascetic practices undertaken by Buddhist monastics, though they can also be applied in our daily lives:

1. *Living in the wilderness* (在阿蘭若處)

Staying in a tranquil and quiet place, far from the homes of worldly people.

2. *Only eating what is given as alms* (常行乞食)

Not having thoughts of preferences with respect to the food placed in the alms bowl.

3. *Collecting alms in order* (次第乞食)

Taking the alms bowl from one house to the next, regardless of whether the households are rich or poor.

4. *Receiving one meal per day* (受一食法)

Taking only one meal per day, in order to prevent multiple meals from becoming an obstacle to one's spiritual devotion.

5. *Eating a limited amount* (節量食)

Practicing moderation in food and drink so that one does not eat too much. Indulging one's appetite leads to a swollen stomach and a bloated belly, which hinders spiritual practice.

6. *Not drinking broth after noontime* (中午後不得飲漿)

Not drinking broth after the noon meal. Doing so would instill pleasure in the mind, and one could not single-mindedly focus on practicing goodness.

7. *Wearing robes of cast-off rags* (著弊衲衣)

Wearing robes with no craving for what is new and fine, thereby preventing any decline in one's practice.

8. *Wearing only the three robes* (但三衣)

Not having any extra clothing except for the three robes: the inner robe, upper robe, and monastic robe.

9. *Dwelling in cemeteries* (冢間住)

Dwelling in or near cemeteries in order to practice the contemplations on impermanence, suffering, and emptiness, so that one may become weary of the three realms and wish to leave them.

10. *Staying under a tree* (樹下止)

Imitating the practice of the Buddha by seeking awakening under a tree.

11. *Dwelling in an open place* (露地住)

Sitting out in the open, allowing the mind to become clear and sharp so that one may meditate on emptiness.

12. *Only sitting and not lying down* (但坐不臥)

One does not lie down, for if one were to rest comfortably, then there is the danger that afflictions would have an opportunity to arise.

Assembly, Sevenfold

七眾弟子

To be a Buddhist disciple, it is not necessary to join the monastic order; one can be a lay disciple as well. There are five different classes of monastic disciples and two different classes of lay disciples, who are together known as the “sevenfold assembly.” Being a Buddhist disciple is also open to both men and women. The sutras say that, “When members of the four castes join the monastic order, they all become part of the Buddha’s family.” Male or female, rich or poor, highborn or lowbred, anyone who believes and practices the teachings of the Buddha can be called a Buddhist disciple. The classes of disciples that make up the sevenfold assembly are as follows:

Bhiksu (比丘)

A *bhiksu* is a monk who has received the full ordination of 250 precepts after joining the monastic order. The term for a monk in India was *bhiksu*, which means a “male mendicant.” They request of the heavens that truth be imparted to them from all Buddhas to nourish their wisdom, and they gather alms on earth from sentient beings to sustain their bodies. With shaven heads and

monastic robes, they shoulder the responsibility for maintaining the true Dharma. They strive to overcome their afflictions and strike fear in Mara. A *bhikṣu* is a model teacher for human and heavenly beings.

Bhiksuni (比丘尼)

A *bhiksuni* is a nun who has received the full ordination of 348 precepts after joining the monastic order. With shaven heads and monastic robes, they look like the male monastics and have all the same associated meanings of *bhikṣu*.

Sramanera (沙彌)

A *sramanera* is a junior monk: one who has joined the monastic order but has yet to receive full ordination. Anyone age seven or older is called a *sramanera*, regardless of age, as long as they have yet to receive full ordination. *Sramaneras* aged seven to thirteen are called “scarecrow” *sramanera*, those aged fourteen to nineteen are called “Dharma responding” *sramanera*, and those aged twenty to seventy are called *sramanera* “in name.” *Sramanera* only undertake ten precepts.

Sramanerika (沙彌尼)

A *sramanerika* is a junior nun who has joined the monastic order but has yet to receive full ordination, and just as the *sramanera*, they only undertake ten precepts.

Sikṣamāna (式叉摩那)

This refers to the novices who are preparing to join the monastic order as nuns. They are above the *sramanerika* but a grade below the *bhiksuni*. The term means a female Buddhist student who

A observes six precepts for a period of two years. This period was developed because some women seeking ordination may have been previously married; the concern here is that they might already be pregnant, in which case their being a *bhiksuni* would invite ridicule and disapproval. If the six precepts are not violated during the two year period, they can then receive ordination as a *bhiksuni*.

Upasaka (優婆塞)

This refers to male lay practitioners who observe the five precepts. It is also acceptable to observe only a subset of the five precepts. Those that observe one precept are called *upasaka* of “one step,” those who observe two precepts are called *upasaka* of “fewer steps,” those who observe three or four precepts are called *upasaka* of “more steps,” and those who observe all five precepts are called *upasaka* of “full steps.” *Upasaka* means “man who serves,” that is, a man who serves the *bhiksus* to learn the path.

Upasika (優婆夷)

This refers to the female lay practitioners of Buddhism who observe the five precepts. As in the above, *upasika* means “woman who serves,” as in a women who serves the *bhiksus* and *bhiksunis* to learn the path.

Within the Hinayana precepts, the seven classes of disciples are strictly differentiated, but the Mahayana bodhisattva precepts apply to all seven classes of disciples as long as they vow to become bodhisattvas. The implications of the monastic bodhisattva vows and the lay bodhisattva vows are the same in both cases. Buddhism as a religion belongs to all seven classes of disciples, for

all Buddhist disciples honor the Buddha's kindness above and alleviate the suffering of sentient beings below.

Asura

阿修羅

See: Dharma realms, ten.

Attendants

左右脅士

As Buddhist temples have grown in popularity, a great variety of Buddha images can be seen in their shrine halls. There are far too many configurations of Buddha images to be listed here, but some of the most common three statue configurations will be listed.

The three image configuration is the most common in all shrines, with a main central image flanked by two attendants on either side. Attendants are most commonly bodhisattvas but can include youths and arhats as well. For example, the main image of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva is often flanked by the youth Sudhana and a *naga* maiden as attendants. The Radiant King Acala is attended by the two youths Cetaka and Kimkara; Sakyamuni Buddha is attended upon by his two direct disciples, Mahakasyapa and Ananda; and Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva is attended on by a father and son: the Elder Min and Daoming.

That being said, the most common configuration is a Buddha as the central figure and bodhisattvas as the attendants. For example, Amitabha Buddha is usually depicted with Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva and Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva, and this grouping is known as the “three noble ones of the west.” The Medicine Buddha is attended by Suryaprabha Bodhisattva and Candraprabha

Bodhisattva (Sunlight Bodhisattva and Moonlight Bodhisattva), or Bhaisajjaraja Bodhisattva and Bhaisajyasamudgata Bodhisattva, and these groupings are called the “three noble ones of the Medicine master.” Mahavairocana Buddha is commonly depicted with Manjusri Bodhisattva and Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, and they are called the “three noble ones of Huayan.”

The attendants indicate the virtue of the central Buddha figure. For example, the attendants who flank Sakyamuni Buddha are the Venerable Mahakasyapa, known as the foremost in austerities, and the Venerable Ananda, known as the foremost in hearing. The Buddha is the noble teacher who emphasizes both understanding and practice, and here, Mahakasyapa and Ananda represent practice and understanding, respectively. The combination of listening and understanding with actual practice represent Sakyamuni Buddha’s perfect practice and awakening.

In the three noble ones of the *Flower Adornment Sutra* configuration, Mahavairocana represents the Buddha’s Dharmakaya, also called the absolute form of the Buddha. To his right stands Samantabhadra Bodhisattva of great practice, while to his left stands Manjusri Bodhisattva of great wisdom. This shows how only the completion of great practice and great wisdom can fulfill the Buddha’s Dharmakaya. Among the three noble ones of the west configuration, Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva represents great loving-kindness and great compassion, while Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva represents great joy and great equanimity. Their combined accomplishment of the four immeasurable minds of loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity is seen in Amitabha Buddha’s infinite merit.

In addition, the youth Sudhana and the *naga* maiden, who are the attendants of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, and Elder Min and

Daoming, who are the attendants of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, indicate Buddhism's equality between male and female, and young and old.

The attendants are significant in another way, for they assist the central figure in the task of liberating sentient beings. This is particularly true in the case of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva and Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva, who are “bodhisattvas in waiting,” which means that, after Amitabha Buddha enters final *nirvana*, these bodhisattvas will be his successors. This relationship represents the continued transmission of Dharma from one generation to the next.

The relationships between each of the three image configurations mentioned above serves to show us the importance of balance in Buddhism, whether it is the balance of practice and understanding, the unity of knowledge and practice, or the cultivation of both merit and wisdom. Just like our two eyes or two feet, these virtues must complement and support one another, for only in this way can they be perfected.

Avaivartika

阿鞞拔致

The *Amitabha Sutra* states: “All sentient beings who are reborn in the Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss are *avaivartikas*.” An *avaivartika* is a bodhisattva who will not regress on the path to Buddhahood. Only if such a person has made a vow to turn around their boat of compassion and return to the Saha world to liberate sentient beings will it be necessary to experience human life and undergo the suffering of birth and death.

Avaivartika means “not regressing.” This means that the faith and understanding realized through practice has reached a point

that it has become irrevocable, and it is no longer possible that someone will turn back from attaining Buddhahood.

There are fifty-two stages on the bodhisattva path: ten levels of faith, ten levels of dwelling, ten levels of practice, ten levels of dedicating merit, ten grounds, the stage of universal awakening, and the stage of wondrous awakening. The seventh level of the ten levels of dwelling is called “non-retrogression,” but there are several ways that a bodhisattva is said not to regress:

1. Bodhisattvas of the seventh level of the ten levels of dwelling and higher do not regress in attainment and will no longer regress to the state of *śravakas* or *pratyekabuddhas*.
2. Bodhisattvas of the eighth level of the ten levels of dwelling and higher do not regress in their practice. Bodhisattvas at this level practice what is conditioned and unconditioned, so they will not regress.
3. Bodhisattvas of the eighth level of ground and higher do not regress in their mindfulness, for they do not need to strive diligently. They naturally advance along the path without giving it any thought.
4. Bodhisattvas reborn in Amitabha Buddha’s Pure Land will not regress in their abiding.
5. Bodhisattvas of the sixth level of faith and higher will not regress in their faith and no longer hold wrong views.

6. Bodhisattvas of the first ground and higher will not regress in their realization.
7. Bodhisattvas at the stage of universal awakening no longer regress in the face of affliction.

The Buddhist sutras often liken the human mind to a field. Learning Buddhism is thus like cultivating the field of the mind, and to do so, one must have mental resolve, or *bodhicitta*, the “aspiration for awakening.” Regarding *bodhicitta*, it is said that “the inception of the aspiration for awakening is more than enough to attain Buddhahood.”

Among the many obstacles along the Buddhist path, those obstacles related to the mind are the most dire. The Buddhist sutras have many names for the obstructed mind, including a mind with closed doors, a shackled mind, a burdened mind, a delusional mind, a sorrowful mind, a dark mind, a narrow mind, a negative mind, an erroneous mind, a greedy mind, a confused mind, and a mind that does not know emptiness. Of particular importance is the obstruction to making the aspiration for awakening, for if doing so is difficult, then persevering to completion will be even more so.

Students of Buddhism should not only develop their minds to make great vows and seek improvement, renunciation, awakening, compassion, and joy, but also develop a mind that is steadfast. Given that the Buddhist path is a long one and the attainment of Buddhahood takes three great incalculable *kalpas*, one’s commitment can be easily lost when encountering difficulties without motivation to stay the course. There is a Chinese saying, “After practicing Buddhism for one year, the Buddha is before your eyes; after practicing Buddhism for two years, the Buddha is up in the

sky; and after practicing Buddhism for three years, the Buddha is nowhere to be found.”

The *Flower Adornment Sutra* says that when learning Buddhism, one must not forget one’s initial resolve. Only by holding to the vow made at the outset of Buddhist practice will one then be able to remain steadfast and patient enough to overcome all the various obstacles along the way and attain awakening. To succeed, one must practice what is hard to practice and bear what is hard to bear, cultivate both merit and wisdom, and put equal emphasis upon practice and understanding.

Being fearful of trouble and lacking patience is like planting a seed without giving it water and fertilizer: one cannot expect it to sprout, much less flower and bear fruit. To go from one’s initial resolve to final completion is the path of achieving Buddhahood. As long as we do not regress in our faith, regress in our vows, or regress in our practice, attaining Buddhahood is not hard at all.

Avalokitesvara

觀世音

See: Mountains, four great; noble ones of the West, three.

Avici Hell

五無間罪

See also: Hell.

To be weary of suffering and gladdened by happiness is human nature. Who does not wish to live a fortunate and happy existence in this lifetime and be reborn in the heavenly realms after death or find rebirth in a Pure Land? Who does not fear falling into hell?

There is a saying in Chinese: “Being reborn in heaven results from its own reward. Immortality is not attained just because one seeks it.” By the same principle, rebirth in hell has its own karmic causes as well. Except from the application of supernatural powers or the power of a vow, sentient beings enter hell due to their negative karma from past deeds. Among these, committing the five great violations in particular will lead one to hell after death—the most painful and horrifying of them all being *avici*, the hell of uninterrupted torment. Just as the five great violations can lead one to suffer in *avici* hell, *avici* hell is characterized by its five kinds of uninterrupted torment:

1. *Uninterrupted suffering* (受苦無間)

The tormented beings suffer the various painful punishments of burning, killing, searing, boiling, roasting, broiling, and so on, one after the other, again and again, without reprieve.

2. *Uninterrupted physical form* (身形無間)

The bodies of tormented beings fill all the hells at the same time, and all the painful sufferings of all the hells are applied to their bodies at the same time, such that their suffering defies description.

3. *Uninterrupted time* (時間無間)

After dying from their torture, the tormented beings are revived again by a gust of their karmic wind so they can be punished some more. In this way, they die and are revived again and again continuously.

4. *Uninterrupted implements of torture* (罪器無間)

Avici hell is filled with all manner of torture implements for punishment. Tormented beings will suddenly climb up a hill of knives,

A then suddenly fall into the vat of boiling oil, and then just as suddenly, they will be hugging a fiery pillar, or force-fed molten copper. The brutality of their suffering cannot possibly be imagined by us human beings.

5. *Uninterrupted categories of beings* (眾類無間)

Different kinds of sentient beings are suffering at the same time, without the slightest separation.

Buddhism's doctrine of karmic effects arising in accordance with causes and conditions may seem fair, impartial, and clear in its application of fortune and misfortune, but what is most wonderful about Buddhism is the practice of repentance. The practice of repentance offers transgressors an opportunity to repent and reform. Repentance is an act of internal reflection and self-inquiry and, like Dharma water, it can wash away our negative karma.

Those who know to repent when they commit a fault will prevent even more serious negative karma from occurring, for those who know the importance of repentance are not likely to repeat their faults again so rashly. Through repentance, even those who commit the five great violations will be able to see the light of day again once the effects of their negative karma have been exhausted. There is a Buddhist saying, "lay down the butcher's knife and become a Buddha right there and then." This explains how rare and supreme the meritorious accomplishments of repentance are.

In contrast, if one commits a fault and does not repent, one may escape the sanctions of the law, but one cannot escape the prison of the mind. That is why the Buddhist belief is not that committing faults is the problem, but committing them and not reforming oneself is. There may be wrongdoing, but as long as

there is sincere repentance, one can wipe away negative karma and receive back one's original, pure nature. Just as when polishing a mirror, once the dust has been cleaned, one can see one's reflection. Therefore, in one's everyday life, there is no telling how many wrongful deeds, how many wrongful words, and how many deluded thoughts have occurred, consciously or unconsciously, through our body, speech, and mind. We must always be mindful of repentance and use Dharma water to clean our mind, for only in this way can we constantly protect our pure, bright mind.

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B

Becoming

有

See: Dependent origination.

Bhadra

過江羅漢

See: Arhats, eighteen.

Bhiksu

比丘

See: Assembly, sevenfold.

Bhiksuni

比丘尼

See: Assembly, sevenfold.

Birth

生

See: Dependent origination.

Bodhisattva

菩薩

See: Dharma realms, ten.

Bodhisattva Path, Ten Grounds of

十地

Students, whether in primary school, secondary school, or college, are all assigned to certain levels, such as first year, second year, third year, and so on, to distinguish degrees of accomplishment. In the same way, the development of a bodhisattva is divided into fifty-two stages. From beginning to end, they are: the ten levels of faith, the ten levels of dwelling, the ten levels of practice, the ten levels of dedicating merit, the ten grounds, universal awakening, and wondrous awakening. In particular, bodhisattvas of the “ten grounds” are truly great bodhisattvas. But what are these levels, and what do they mean?

The Chinese character *di* (地) “ground,” is used because the ground gives rise to all things: trees, flowers, and plants grow out of the ground; gold and copper ore are produced in the ground; and all sentient beings can only live by relying on the ground. Bodhisattvas can be categorized into these “ten grounds,” for just as the ground gives rise to all things, these levels give rise to all merit. Bodhisattvas within the ten grounds are soon to become Buddhas. The ten grounds are:

1. *The Ground of Joy* (歡喜地)

Bodhisattvas of the first ground have eliminated the bonds of views of the body, views that attach to wrong views as truth, and doubt; they are no longer susceptible to fear, error, or illusion. They do not

B worry about life nor do they fear death; and they do not complain when others slander them. Bodhisattvas of the first ground are said to have been “born into the Buddha’s family.” Such bodhisattvas base themselves on helping others, find joy in being generous, are able to perpetuate and enrich the seed of Buddhism, and teach the Dharma to liberate sentient beings. Since they have perceived and experienced the Buddha’s Dharmakaya and are in accord with the aspiration for awakening, bodhisattvas of this ground jump for joy.

2. *The Ground of Freedom from Defilement* (離垢地)

Bodhisattvas of the second ground have cultivated the ten wholesome actions and have also encouraged others to do so as well. They no longer violate the minor precepts and are free from worldly defilement. They have purified the three kinds of karma and are able to reach many with their compassion to benefit sentient beings.

3. *The Ground of Radiance* (發光地)

Bodhisattvas of the third ground diligently seek out the Dharma and put it into practice. Such bodhisattvas are able to bear all external circumstances and remain unperturbed. They thoroughly practice meditative concentration and the four immeasurable minds of loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity. They are no longer blinded by greed, hatred, and delusion, and their noble character grows like a bright light that drives away darkness.

4. *The Ground of Brilliant Wisdom* (燄慧地)

Bodhisattvas of the fourth ground persevere in the cultivation of the thirty-seven aspects of awakening (the four bases of mindfulness, the four right efforts, the four bases of spiritual powers, the five faculties, the five strengths, the seven factors of awakening, and the

Noble Eightfold Path). Except for lingering attachment to the self and phenomena, their understanding is free of delusion, and their thinking is also without error. They are no longer defiled by greed nor disturbed by anger. The light of their wisdom is like a flaming torch, burning brightly, illuminating the path to Buddhahood.

5. *The Ground of Mastery of Final Difficulties* (難勝地)

Bodhisattvas of the fifth ground have not only fully mastered meditative concentration but have also realized the true principles of reality. Such bodhisattvas have abandoned sophistry and have realized the non-duality of emptiness and existence. They abide in neither the cycle of birth and death nor *nirvana*. This is an extremely difficult ground to achieve.

6. *The Ground of Manifesting Prajna-wisdom* (現前地)

Bodhisattvas of the sixth ground have perfected *prajna*-wisdom and often find their repose in meditating upon cessation, where discrimination does not arise in their mind.

Such bodhisattvas have directly experienced the inherent emptiness of dependent origination and have completely realized the nature of all phenomena. Those who have attained this ground are said to have had the true Dharma manifest before them.

7. *The Ground of Proceeding Afar* (遠行地)

Bodhisattvas of the seventh ground find their repose in meditating upon cessation, and they can enter and leave this level of meditation at will. They effortlessly practice all the Buddha's teachings and possess unlimited skillful means, which they use to liberate sentient beings. Bodhisattvas of this stage are about to achieve their long, far-off goal.

8. *The Ground of Attaining Calm* (不動地)

Bodhisattvas of the eighth ground have virtues which increase of their own accord and no longer have any afflictions. These bodhisattvas remain unmoved by fame and fortune and are not tempted by external attractions. For them, all that remains is their great vow to liberate all sentient beings.

9. *The Ground of Finest Discriminatory Wisdom* (善慧地)

The practice of bodhisattvas of the ninth ground is formless and effortless. Not only do they achieve their own realizations without effort, but they are able to effortlessly teach the Dharma to others as well. They apply the power of the Dharma which comes naturally to them for the sake of protecting the Buddhist teachings, that they reveal and proclaim to sentient beings with their superbly excellent wisdom.

10. *The Ground of the Dharma Cloud* (法雲地)

Bodhisattvas of the tenth ground are the true princes of the Dharma. They are still bodhisattvas, but are very near attaining Buddhahood. They possess great compassion and great supernatural powers. They are protected by a cloud of merit and wisdom which, in a hail of lightning and thunder, can release a downpour of Dharma rain to subdue the wicked people and outsiders. In the end, they will attain Buddhahood.

From their initial vow on through the ten grounds, bodhisattvas have completed three great *kalpas* of practice and then wait to take their place as Buddhas.

Breath

息

See: Contemplations, five.

Buddha

佛

See: Contemplations, five; dharma realms, ten; gem, triple; Maitreya Bodhisattva; marks of excellence, thirty-two; names of the Buddha, ten; questions of the Buddha, four.

Buddha's Progress, Eight Stages of 八相成道

The sutras say that, "All Buddhas appear in this world because of one great matter." The Buddha lived in this world for eighty years, and his life can be summed up well in the eight major events of his life, also known as the "eight stages of the Buddha's progress":

1. *Descent from Tusita Heaven* (降兜率)

In a former life, Sakyamuni Buddha's eventual awakening was predicted by Dipankara Buddha, who said that he would become a bodhisattva and then later become the next Buddha of the Saha world. Before attaining his final birth in which he would attain awakening, he dwelt in the inner court of Tusita Heaven for four thousand years as he observed the conditions for bringing liberation to the Saha world.

2. *Entry into the womb* (入胎)

After he had dwelt in Tusita Heaven for four thousand years, the Buddha came down from that heaven riding a white elephant and

B entered the womb of his noble mother, Queen Maya, from the right side of her body.

3. *Birth* (誕生)

On the eighth day of the fourth lunar month, as flowers bloomed in warmth of spring while a brilliant sun shined in the sky, the Buddha was born in the Lumbini Garden. After his birth, the Buddha took seven steps, pointed one hand towards the heavens and his other hand towards the earth, and said, "In the heavens above and the earth below, I am the sole honored one."

4. *Leaving home* (出家)

At the age of twenty-nine, the Buddha was moved by the impermanence of the world, how the weak are at the mercy of the strong, and the injustice of the world. Thereupon, courageously and with determination, the Buddha rode his horse out of the city-gate, leaving his home and renouncing his former life.

5. *Subduing Mara* (降魔)

As he meditated beneath the bodhi tree, the Buddha was plagued by the demon Mara. Mara came internally as the afflictions of greed and anger and came externally as opportunities for carnal pleasure and wealth. Subduing Mara and remaining untouched by the seductions placed before him required great determination, heroism, wisdom, and fearlessness.

6. *Awakening* (成道)

After Mara was subdued, the Buddha attained awakening on the eighth day of the twelfth lunar month, as he sat beneath the bodhi tree gazing into the starry night.

7. *Turning the Dharma wheel* (轉法輪)

After he attained awakening, the Buddha taught the Dharma for forty-nine years and gave teachings at more than three hundred Dharma assemblies. He spread the truth to all of humankind and ensured that the Dharma wheel would always be turning in this world.

8. *Final nirvana* (涅槃)

On the fifteenth day of the second lunar month in the Buddha's eightieth year, his teaching career was complete. In the city of Kusinagara, along the banks of the Ajitavati River, between two sala trees, the Buddha entered final *nirvana*.

The “eight stages of the Buddha's progress” depict the transformative aspects of the Buddha's life. Among these, the major turning point was the Buddha's subduing of Mara: if he had been unable to conquer Mara, he would not have attained awakening, and without awakening, he would not have taught the Dharma and brought liberation to sentient beings. Because the Buddha was able to subdue Mara, the Triple Gem became complete, and the light of the Dharma shone upon the human world. “Mara,” the demon, primarily refers to the demons to be found within the mind. If we can subdue these demons by cultivating the mind, then the light of the Triple Gem will shine forth.

Buddha Statues

佛像

See: Attendants; shrine, main; structures and buildings.

C

Caodong School

曹洞宗

See: Chan schools.

Cause and Condition

因緣

See: Contemplations, five; dependent origination.

Chan Schools

五家七派

The Chan School of Buddhism is traditionally divided into a number of different sects, known as the “five houses and seven schools,” all of which at one time stemmed from the Southern School of Chan.

The Chan School was first brought to China by Bodhidharma (d. 535 CE), the Twenty-eighth Indian Patriarch, where it was passed on through five patriarchs to Hongren (602-675 CE). After that, the school was divided into the Northern School of Shenxiu (605-706

CE) and the Southern School of Huineng. After Huineng, there came the further division into the “five houses” of Linji, Guiyang, Caodong, Yunmen, and Fayan. This period of profusion is historically known as “one flower opening with five petals.”

During the Song dynasty (960-1279 CE), the Huanglong and Yangqi sects developed out of the Linji school. When added together with the previous five sects, they were known as the “seven schools.” These distinctions solidified into what is commonly called the “five houses and seven schools” of Chan.

Each of these sects maintained their own lineage and style. The founders of each sect had their own unique way of transmitting their principal doctrines and their own methods for training their disciples. Each sect can be characterized by its quickness or slowness and its sternness or laxity:

1. *The Linji School* (臨濟宗)

This school was founded by Linji Yixuan (d. 867 CE), a disciple of Huangbo Xiyun (d. 850 CE). Linji would often shout as a way of teaching his students. Chan Master Fayan Wenyi (885-958ce) once described Linji’s style as “a thunderclap upon the five great violations.” This means that Linji’s shout was so powerful, it seemed to split one’s head, just as a thunderclap might split apart anyone guilty of the five great violations. The Linji School’s style is like an iron hammer striking a rock, making sparks fly, or like the crash of a thunderbolt that rattles one’s conscience.

2. *The Guiyang School* (為仰宗)

This school was founded by Guishan Lingyou (771-853 CE) and Yangshan Huiji (840-916 CE), both disciples of Baizhang Huaihai (720-814 CE). The Guiyang School uses a teaching method called

C the “ninety-seven symbolic circles” and has a mild style, unlike the fierceness of the Linji School. The *Eyes of Heaven and Humanity* states: “The Guiyang School is typified by the kindness of fathers and the obedience of its sons, in which those above give orders and those below carry them out. It is said, ‘You want to eat something, then I’ll cook for you; you want to cross the river, then I will row the boat.’ See smoke over yonder hills and you know there’s a fire; see a horn peek out over the wall and you know there’s a bull.” On the *Ten Rules for Disciples by Chan Master Fayán* states, “In the Guiyang School they show their agreement through symbols, like an echo resonating in a canyon or presenting a pass at the gate.” This shows how mild the style of this school was.

3. *The Caodong School* (曹洞宗)

This school was founded by Dongshan Liangjie (807-869 CE) and his disciple Caoshan Benji (840-901 CE). On the *Ten Rules for Disciples of Chan Master Fayán* comments that “the Caodong School employs the method of knocking and receiving an answer.” This implies that the style of this school employed the give and take of questions and answers, which can be refreshingly different from a sharper approach. The third chapter of the *Eyes of Heaven and Humanity* states: “The Caodong School is typified by delicate work, in which words and deeds correspond to each other; where living beings are benefited in accordance with their spiritual capacity, and the right word is employed to initiate the student.” There is an old Chan saying, “Linji for generals, Caodong for farmers.” The style of the Linji School is more like a general who commands thousands of troops, while the style of the Caodong School is more like a farmer who manages a few fields here and there.

4. *The Yunmen School* (雲門宗)

The founder of this school was Chan Master Yunmen Wenyan (864-949 CE), whose style was described as “all-inclusive” and “ending outflows.” This means putting an end to the outflow of merit life after life, as teacher and student become part of all-inclusive suchness. The Yunmen School styled itself after the act of bringing a rushing torrent to a sudden stop. The third chapter of the *Eyes of Heaven and Humanity* states: “The main doctrines of the Yunmen School were ‘stopping all outflows,’ ‘disallowing judgment based upon conjecture,’ ‘negating any path for ordinary or awakened beings,’ and ‘going beyond emotion and logic.’” Such was the style of the Yunmen School.

5. *The Fayan School* (法眼宗)

The founder of this school was Chan Master Qingliang Wenyi (885-958 CE). His style was to guide his students using the “six characteristics” and the “four outlooks.” The fifth chapter of the *Eyes of Heaven and Humanity* states: “For the Fayan School, when teacher and student perfectly interact, words and their meaning are perfectly matched. The beginning is bold and dashing and the end stimulating, for as the human mind is permeated, feelings and conceptualizations are swept aside. Adjusting to capacity and circumstance, blockages are opened up and confusion ground away. All the various teaching stories cannot be fully detailed here. In general, the style of the Fayan School was one in which medicine was applied to treat the illness, and the teacher appeared tailored to the nature of the student’s capacity, so that perception and comprehension were swept aside.” Such was the style of the Fayan School.

6. *The Yangqi School* (揚岐派)

This school was an offshoot of the Linji School, and its founder, Chan Master Fanghui (996-1049 CE), practiced his own style of teaching from Mount Yangqi near Yuanzhou. Later generations called it the Yangqi School. Fanghui's fundamental ideas were drawn from the doctrines of the Linji School, and he once said, "Fog locking away the vast sky; wind stirring across the open wilderness; all the plants and trees grow as tall as the lion roars—these are teachings on the great *prajna*-wisdom, while the Buddhas of the past, present, and future are all turning the great wheel of Dharma right under your feet. If you can realize this, then your efforts have not been wasted." This approach bears a great deal of affinity with the Yunmen School's doctrine on the "all-inclusive universe" in which everything is already done. In this way, the Yangqi School combines the styles of the Linji and Yunmen schools.

7. *The Huanglong School* (黃龍派)

Chan Master Huinan (1002-1069 CE), an eighth-generation disciple of Linji, began as a student of the Yunmen School under Letan Huaicheng (ca. 10th-11th cent. CE). He later taught in the Linji style at Huanglong in Longxing prefecture. Subsequent generations have called this the Huanglong School. He once proclaimed, "Is the Way far off? Whatever can be seen is real! Is sagehood far away? One becomes divine through direct realization!" From these statements, it can be seen that the Huanglong School reflects the Linji view that "whatever can be seen is real."

Classical writers have characterized the teaching styles of the "five houses" as follows:

- The Caodong School gives careful instructions.
- The Linji School overpowers one.
- The Yunmen School is abrupt and fast.
- The Fayen School uses skillful means.
- The Guiyang School applies interpretation.

Although the styles of the five houses vary in their laxity or fierceness, quickness or slowness, each of their varying styles are skillful means through which the masters of these schools guided their students.

Clinging

取

See: Dependent origination.

Compassion

悲

See: Immeasurable minds, four; mountain gate.

Comportment, Four Kinds of

四威儀

The observation of etiquette and comportment are fundamental aspects of what makes us human beings. Buddhists in particular should care about how they conduct themselves in everyday life; they should be courteous and polite, and they should ensure that their every action is in accord with proper comportment.

The sutras mention the “three thousand rules of proper manners and eighty thousand fine practices.” As beginners, of course,

there is no way for us to achieve such perfection, but we should at least follow the four kinds of comportment:

1. *Walk Like the Wind* (行如風)

When walking, one should not look around or let the body sway from side to side. One should lift the head, keep the chest squared, and look straight ahead as one moves forward just like the wind.

2. *Stand Like a Pine* (立如松)

When standing, one should not incline to one side or the other, nor lean against walls to prop oneself up. One should be as steadfast as a pine tree.

3. *Sit Like a Bell* (坐如鐘)

When sitting, one should not bend at the waist, hunch the back, or cross one leg over the other and let it dangle and shake. One should keep the feet firmly planted on the ground, just as a bell is stable and dignified.

4. *Sleep Like a Bow* (臥如弓)

When sleeping, one should not lie on one's back or sleep on one's stomach, nor cover the head and fold up the legs. One should use the right hand as a pillow and lay on one's side like a bow.

The purpose of learning Buddhism is to purify the mind and body, and transform our temperament. Sometimes, when the body is positioned properly, the condition of the mind will become proper, while sometimes the proper condition of the mind can promote the proper positioning of the body. A person who

emphasizes comportment will naturally purify the body and mind, and his moral character will become elevated. We should routinely practice walking, standing, sitting, and sleeping as described above, as well as pay particular attention to our comportment when we recite Amitabha Buddha's name, venerate the Buddha, or chant sutras.

While reciting the Buddha's name be like slow,
flowing water;
When chanting the sutras be orderly as geese in
formation;
Fold your hands together before your chest like
holding water;
Stand still and straight like balancing a pot of oil
atop of your head;
Look ahead and watch behind as you step
lightly;
Turning left or right, look by glancing to the
side;
If you can always conduct yourself like this, in
rest or activity;
You haven't wasted your time as a Buddhist
monastic.

How civilized a person is can be determined by their comportment. The four kinds of comportment mentioned above are not only practiced by monastics, but lay people should observe them as well.

Consciousness, Eight Kinds of

八識

See also: Aggregates, five; dependent origination.

Of eight brothers, one is dimwitted;
While another is the most clearheaded.
Five others do business outside the door;
While one remains indoors and makes all the
plans.

This verse describes the functions of the mind and serves as metaphors for the eight consciousnesses. The eight consciousnesses are as follows: the eye consciousness, the ear consciousness, the nose consciousness, the tongue consciousness, the body consciousness, the mind consciousness, the *manas* consciousness, and the *alaya* consciousness.

The line, “Five others do business outside the door” refers to the first five consciousnesses that serve as the vanguards of the mind. Each of the first five consciousnesses is associated with a particular sense organ and sense object. For example, the eye consciousness relies upon the eyes to discriminate color and shape data. The ear consciousness relies upon the ears to discriminate sound data. The nose consciousness relies upon the nose to discriminate what is fragrant and malodorous. The tongue consciousness relies upon the tongue to discriminate tastes. The body consciousness relies upon the body to discriminate sensations such as pain, itchiness, cold, and heat.

The line, “While one remains indoors and makes all the plans” refers to the sixth consciousness, the mind consciousness. The mind consciousness has the ability to think and discriminate. If

the first five consciousnesses were not processed by the thinking of the sixth or mind consciousness, then whatever the eyes saw, the ears heard, the nose smelled, the tongue tasted, and the body felt could not be processed into perceptions like beauty and ugliness, pleasing or discordant, fragrant or malodorous, sour or sweet, and fine or coarse. We would not cling to desirable objects or reject undesirable objects, and we would not have the afflictions of greed, anger, or ignorance. This constant churning of thoughts is the function of the mind consciousness.

The line, “One is dimwitted” refers to the seventh, or *manas* consciousness. The *manas* consciousness is always focused on the self, and is the origin of selfishness, attachment, and ignorance. That is why it is called “dimwitted.”

The eighth consciousness, the *alaya consciousness*, is the source of all phenomena in the universe. It is referenced in the verse as the “most clearheaded” because it stores within it the potential for Buddhahood.

In this context, these eight are referred to as *bashi* (八識), “eight consciousnesses.” However, when talking about the various faculties of the mind, there are many different words which are used, including *xin* (心), “mind,” *yi* (意), “thought,” and *shi* (識), “consciousness.” In general usage, the first five consciousnesses are referred to simply as “eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body.” The sixth consciousness is referred to as “mind.” The seventh, or *manas* consciousness, is referred to as “thought.” The eighth, *alaya* consciousness is referred to as “consciousness.”

Each of the eight consciousnesses has its own duties. The mind consciousness directs the consciousnesses of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body to engage in various activities. This creates positive or negative karma, and the *manas* consciousness passes these

C

karmic seeds onto the *alaya* consciousness. The *alaya* consciousness is also called the “storehouse consciousness” because it stores up all the positive and negative karma one creates, and thus acts like a storehouse or safe-deposit box. The *alaya* consciousness is the master of our life.

The *Verses on the Structure of the Eight Consciousnesses* states: “It is the master; it comes first and leaves last.” After death, the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body will cease their functioning, but the *alaya* consciousness is the very last to leave the body. When the *alaya* consciousness enters the womb in the next rebirth, the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body will have already matured, but it is only when consciousness enters the womb that there can be any understanding of the external world.

Consciousness is the essence of our lives, for it is never destroyed nor is it ever lost. It is like a thread which links together the beads of a rosary, threading the past, present, and future together. Life in the past, present, and future relies upon it unceasingly to continue its endless cycle.

The *alaya* consciousness is like a field, for one will reap what has been sown. Such is the origin of the Buddhist expression, “Know the causes in your past lives by looking at what befalls you in the present life. Know your future outcome by looking at what you are doing now.” Each one of us can become the master of our fate, for it all depends upon how you plant and cultivate the field of the *alaya* consciousness.

Contact

觸

See: Dependent origination.

Contemplations, Five

五停心觀

There are many sayings which describe the Buddha's wisdom of skillful means in teaching sentient beings, such as "teachings which adapt in accordance with the audience's capacity," and "the right medicine must be given for the right ailment."

Since sentient beings vary in their spiritual capacity, the Buddha gave various teachings to meet their needs. For example, for sentient beings with many desires, he taught the contemplation of impurity. For sentient beings with lots of anger, he taught the contemplation of loving-kindness and compassion. For sentient beings who are especially ignorant, he taught the contemplation of causes and conditions. For sentient beings with many obstacles, he taught the contemplation of the Buddha. For those sentient beings who are confused or distracted, he taught the contemplation of counting the breath. Together these are called the "five contemplations."

The five contemplations are beginning practices for developing meditative concentration. Each is given in detail below:

1. *The Contemplation of Impurity* (不淨觀)

The contemplation of impurity is used as an antidote for desire. One visualizes all the filth and muck contained within the physical body of oneself and others to remove the affliction of desire. Due to desire, sentient beings produce attachment to "me" and "mine," which lead to various forms of pain and suffering. That is why the Buddha taught us to visualize all the dirty filth related to one's own body, including the seed of impurity, abiding impurity, the essence of impurity, and the impurity of external

characteristics. This will reduce sexual desire for one's own body and the bodies of others.

2. *The Contemplation of Loving-Kindness and Compassion* (慈悲觀)

The contemplation of loving-kindness and compassion is used as an antidote for anger. There are some who often get angry for no reason and do harm to sentient beings; this is known as unjustifiable anger. There are others who become angry when they are harmed by others, or see that while they do what is wholesome, others are unwholesome; this is known as justifiable anger. Some people believe that only they are right, and everyone else is wrong, and thus, they angrily argue with others; this is called argumentative anger. Of these three types of anger, the Buddha taught that “loving-kindness for sentient beings” can put an end to unjustifiable anger, “loving-kindness based upon reality” can bring an end to justifiable anger, and “unconditional loving-kindness” can bring an end to argumentative anger.

3. *The Contemplation of Causes and Conditions* (因緣觀)

The contemplation of causes and conditions is used as an antidote for ignorance. For those who are ignorant of nihilism and eternalism and mistakenly think that phenomena are destroyed or exist forever, the Buddha recommended contemplating the causes and conditions of the past, present, and future. For those who are ignorant of existence and non-existence and mistakenly think that phenomena are truly existent or non-existent, the Buddha recommended contemplating the causes and conditions of karma. For those who are ignorant of the nature of the material world and become attached to the four elements, the five aggregates, and the

labels applied to sentient beings and the world, the Buddha recommended contemplating the causes and conditions of a single thought.

4. *The Contemplation of the Buddha* (念佛觀)

The contemplation of the Buddha is used as an antidote to various karmic obstacles. By employing mindfulness of the Buddha's Nirmanakaya, Sambhogakaya, and Dharmakaya, one can clear away karmic obstacles. The negative karma that we have created with our body, speech, and mind will generate negative karmic effects in the future. Before these negative effects manifest themselves, we should cultivate merit and good deeds, for the manifestation of negative karma can often hinder the wholesome path. Such negative karmic effects are the "karmic obstacles" that contemplation of the Buddha can help to relieve. For example, by contemplating the Buddha's Nirmanakaya radiant appearance we can put an end to the obstacles of sloth and laziness. By contemplating the Buddha's Sambhogakaya with its majestic accomplishments we can put an end to the obstacles of negative thoughts and thinking. By contemplating the Buddha's tranquil Dharmakaya we can put an end to the obstacles of one's mental state.

5. *The Contemplation of Counting the Breath* (數息觀)

The contemplation of counting the breath is used as an antidote for confusion and distraction. By counting the in-breaths and out-breaths, one can ease the mental talk that leads to confusion and distraction so that the mind can become settled. The process of contemplating the breath has six stages: counting the breath, following the breath, stopping illusion, contemplating truth, focusing the mind, and purification. This contemplation can only be

considered complete when all six of the stages are fulfilled. These six stages are also known as *liu miaomen* (六妙門), “six wonderful methods.”

C There is a Buddhist saying that, “It does not matter whether the Dharma is high or low; the most profound is that which correlates with one’s spiritual capacity. In the same way, it does not matter if the medicine is expensive or cheap; the best is the one which cures the disease.” The Dharma consists of eighty-four thousand teachings, and though there are many skillful means, they all return to the same source. All Buddhist teachings are meant to guide us along the path to Buddhahood. All one needs to do is find the method of practice that is most suitable for oneself and follow it without distraction. When practicing in this way, one will surely get results.

Continents, Four Great 四大部洲

According to the Jambu-dvīpa chapter of the *Long Discourses*, at the center of the universe is a massive mountain called Mount Sumeru, which rises eighty-four thousand *yojana* above sea level (one *yojana* is between 4.5 and 5 miles). Mount Sumeru is surrounded by four continents, nine mountains, and eight oceans. Above Mount Sumeru lie the sun, moon, and stars, as well as the heavens of the first *dhyana*. Below Mount Sumeru lies a great wheel of wind that is located beneath the earth. All of these structures constitute a single minor “world system,” which is similar to a “solar system.” It includes the human realm, hell realm, hungry ghost realm, animal realm, *asura* realm, the six heavens of the

desire realm, and the three heavens of the first *dhyana*. Buddhist cosmology considers the great three thousandfold world system to be made up of many minor world systems, as described above.

Human beings live on one of the “four continents” that are oriented around Mount Sumeru in each of the cardinal directions. They are located by the salty ocean between the seven golden mountains and the great iron mountains. The four continents are:

1. *Purva-vidēha* (東勝身洲)

This continent is located in the salty ocean to the east of Mount Sumeru. The humans who live in this continent have extraordinarily fine bodies, and as such, the continent is also called *shen-sheng* (身勝), “superlative bodies.” The Jambu-dvipa chapter of the *Long Discourses* says, “To the east of Mount Sumeru there lies a world named Purva-vidēha. The land is laid out in a perfect circle with a diameter that spans nine thousand *yojana*. The faces of the people there are also round, like the shape of their land.” This continent is extraordinary in three ways: it is extremely vast, extremely grand, and extremely wondrous.

2. *Jambu-dvipa* (南瞻部洲)

This continent lies to the south of Mount Sumeru. In Buddhist cosmology, this is the continent that we live on. It is a rich producer of gold and Jambu trees. Jambu-dvipa is shaped like a rectangle, similar to the trunk of a cart, and the people who live here have faces shaped the same way. The people who dwell on this continent have superior recollection and superior bravery. They can cultivate good karma and pure conduct, for Buddhas appear here. For this reason, Jambu-dvipa is said to be superior to the other three continents and the various heavens.

3. *Apara-godaniya* (西牛貨洲)

This continent is situated west of Mount Sumeru. Sheep, cattle, and *mani* jewels are plentiful here, and serve as currency. The land is shaped like a full moon, and the people who live here also have faces shaped like the full moon. This continent is extraordinary in three ways: many cattle, many sheep, and many *mani* jewels.

4. *Uttara-kuru* (北俱廬洲)

This continent is found in the salty ocean north of Mount Sumeru. It is shaped like a square, with each side being two thousand *yo-jana* in length. The overall appearance is one of a lid, and it is surrounded by the seven golden mountains and the great iron mountains. The ground is made of gold, which shines brightly day and night. The land is even, tranquil, clean, and without brambles. The faces of the people who live there are square-shaped, like the continent itself, and they are of even complexion and great height, standing fourteen feet tall. The people of this land live a worry-free life of equality, peace, and joy. The continent is filled with various wonderful mountains, forests, rivers and streams, swimming pools, gardens, and fruited trees. The people use utensils made of gold, silver, glass, and crystal, which are shared by all. There is no robbery or bickering, nor are there any thieves, wicked people, or fighting. The people of this continent live to be a thousand years old, and when they die, they are reborn in Trayastrimsat or Paranirmita-vasavartin heavens. Among all the four continents, their karma is very fine. However, because no Buddha has appeared in this land, being born here is considered one of the eight difficulties for learning Buddhism.

We may live on this earth, but there is a vast number of stars in space with worlds so numerous that we cannot comprehend them. In this same way, Buddhist cosmology posits innumerable worlds. As the Buddha underwent many *kalpas* of practice, he directly experienced the vast numbers of worlds over limitless time and space, so many that they cannot be calculated.

Craving

愛

See: Dependent origination; desires, five.

Cudapanthaka

看門羅漢

See: Arhats, eighteen.

D

Death

死

See: Decay, five signs of; dependent origination.

Decay, Five Signs of

五衰相現

See also: Heaven.

Most people hope to go to heaven after they die, but for Buddhists, rebirth in heaven is not the final goal by any means. Even though the rewards of living in heaven are the highest among the six realms of existence, once heavenly beings have exhausted their merit, they suffer “the five signs of decay” and re-enter the cycle of birth and death among the six realms of existence.

The “five signs of decay” refer to two sets of five unusual phenomena, the five major marks, and the five minor marks that appear when the life of a heavenly being is about to end. The five major marks are as follows:

1. *Clothes become filthy* (衣服垢穢)

The splendid and magnificent clothing of heavenly beings is always lustrous and clean, but once their merit is exhausted and their lives draw to an end, their clothing becomes sullied.

2. *Garland atop the head fades* (頭上華萎)

Heavenly beings are adorned with garlands of jewels whose pearls and jade sparkle with multicolored light. But once the merit of these beings is exhausted and their lives draw to an end, the garland crown atop their head will naturally darken and fade.

3. *The armpits become sweaty* (腋下出汗)

The marvelous and sublime bodies of heavenly beings are delicate and immaculate, but once their merit is exhausted and their lives draw to an end, their armpits begin to sweat.

4. *The body becomes foul-smelling* (身體臭穢)

The wondrous and extraordinary bodies of heavenly beings are always clean and fragrant, but once their merit is exhausted and their lives draw to an end, their bodies begin to exude a foul smell.

5. *The heavenly palace appears unpleasant* (不樂本座)

The pleasures and luxuries of heavenly beings are far superior to those in our human realm, but once their merit is exhausted and their lives draw to an end, they begin to loath the thrones that they delight in.

The appearance of these five signs of decay indicates the imminent death of a heavenly being. There are also five minor signs of decay:

1. *The music stops* (樂聲不起)

The heavenly realms are filled with music produced by self-playing instruments, but when the signs of decay appear, the music stops.

2. *The body's radiance fades* (身光忽滅)

The bodies of heavenly beings radiate a dazzling light that shines day and night, but when the signs of decay appear, this radiance fades away.

3. *Bathwater clings to the body* (浴水著身)

The skin of heavenly beings is smooth, fragrant, and as sublime as a lotus flower, such that water does not cling to the skin. But when the signs of decay appear, the skin of heavenly beings remains wet after bathing and does not dry off.

4. *Attachment to their surroundings* (著境不捨)

Though heavenly beings are surrounded by an extraordinarily magnificent landscape, they are not infatuated with it. But when the signs of decay appear, they become attached to these surroundings and cannot give them up.

5. *The eyes start blinking* (眼目數瞬)

The vision of heavenly beings is such that they can see everything in the universe without obstruction, but when the signs of decay appear, their eyes begin to blink.

If the heavenly being has extraordinarily deep roots of goodness, when the five minor signs of decay appear, then there is still a possibility that things will improve.

It is not only heavenly beings who experience signs of decay. According to the *Long Discourses*, those who break the precepts are beset by their own five signs of decay:

1. They will not gain wealth as they wish.
2. Even if they gain wealth, it will diminish daily.
3. They will not be respected no matter where they go.
4. Their bad reputation will be known throughout the world.
5. When they die, they will fall into hell.

For this reason, Buddhists should uphold the precepts, count their blessings, and foster good merit.

Declining Dharma

末法

See: Ages of the Dharma, three.

Dedication

回向

Those who are new to Buddhism often ask about the practice of “dedicating” merit to others each day. One may think, “My own efforts are not great and I have accumulated very little merit. Wouldn’t there be too little merit left over for me?”

The practice of dedicating merit is actually quite extraordinary and one that is unique to Buddhism. Dedication of merit is much like holding a candle to light another candle: not only is the light of the original candle not diminished in any way, but on the contrary, the light of the newly lit candle will ensure that the room becomes

Dedication

even brighter. In the same way, without diminishing anything of your own, the more merit is dedicated, the more people you will be able to help, and the more extraordinary your own merit will become.

The dedication of merit takes place in two parts:

1. *Storing up merit* (寄存)

One accumulates merit from practice in order to attain awakening. This merit is stored in the Buddha Land's field of merit.

2. *Sharing merit* (分享)

One offers and shares all the benefits of one's merit with all the sentient beings everywhere.

According to the sutras, dedication of merit can be categorized into six types:

1. *Dedicating phenomena to the absolute* (回事向理)

This is dedicating the merit of the phenomenal qualities of one's practice towards the attainment of absolute reality, which neither arises nor ceases.

2. *Dedicating cause to effect* (回因向果)

This is dedicating the meritorious practices which are the causes for awakening to the effect of supreme Buddhahood.

3. *Dedicating self to others* (回自向他)

This is the dedication of the merit of one's own practice to all sentient beings in the universe.

4. *Dedicating the small to the large* (回小向大)

This is the dedication of the Hinayana mind that is oriented towards self-realization and self-liberation to transform into the Mahayana mind of benefiting self and others.

5. *Dedicating the few to the many* (回少向多)

This is dedicating one's merit, as scarce as one's own roots of goodness may be, and sharing them broadly with joy and happiness, such that they can support all sentient beings.

6. *Dedication of the inferior to the superior* (回劣向勝)

This is dedicating the merit that comes from the joy of benefiting ordinary people, *sravakas*, and *pratyekabuddhas* and transforming it into an appreciation for supreme awakening.

Dedication of merit is the finest method of practice and is part of the Mahayana bodhisattva path. It is a direct application of the concept of benefitting oneself and others, and treating friend and foe alike. Since we can dedicate our merit to all sentient beings, it is possible to dedicate merit to friend and foe alike, or even to one's creditors. In this way, negative conditions can be transformed into positive ones, and misfortune can become good fortune. Dedication of merit is the embodiment of unconditional loving-kindness and compassion. Only those who have the spirit that the self and others are the same and that friend and foe should be treated alike can dedicate merit. That is why a single thought of dedication is commended as supreme among all the acts of a bodhisattva. No matter what practice you do or what merit you have achieved, all should be dedicated.

Dependent Origination

十二因緣

See also: Karma.

Where do we come from, when we are born, and where do we go when we die? What is the source of sentient beings' journey through the cycle of birth and death? The Buddha's teaching on the twelve links of dependent origination can help solve this mystery.

The twelve links of dependent origination are twelve stages of life as it moves from past to present, and from present to future:

1. Ignorance (無明)

The Buddhist sutras say, "All phenomena arise through causes and conditions and cease due to causes and conditions. They arise when conditions come together and cease when conditions disperse." Not understanding reality in this way is ignorance. "Ignorance" in this instance is synonymous with delusion and means being unable to understand causes and conditions.

2. Mental Formations (行)

Mental formations are that which generate karma of the body, speech, and mind. This karma is created from the ignorance of past lives.

3. Consciousness (識)

Relying upon previous karma as a cause, the present life comes into being. The moment that thought is embodied in the womb is the arising of consciousness. Consciousness is the entity that unifies one's mental faculties. The distinctions made by consciousness create a greater awareness of the outside world and heighten sensory perception. Consciousness also governs the thought process.

4. *Name and form* (名色)

“Name and form” refers to the five aggregates. “Name” is a collection of the mental aggregates of feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness, while “form” is the aggregate of form. Together, the five aggregates are the mental and material components that make up life.

5. *Six sense organs* (六入)

The six sense organs are the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. They interact with the six sense objects of sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and *dharmas*.

6. *Contact* (觸)

“Contact” refers to the consciousness generated when the six sense organs contact the six sense objects. For example, pleasure and pain, hunger and cold, or soreness and itchiness are all created by interaction between the body sense organ and touch sense objects.

7. *Feeling* (受)

There are three types of feelings generated with contact as a cause: painful feelings arise from things and people that are disliked, pleasurable feelings arise from things and people that are liked, and neither painful nor pleasurable feelings arise from things and people that are neutral.

8. *Craving* (愛)

Generating thoughts of greed towards what is desirable is “craving.” For example, there is craving for wealth, for love, for life, for fame, and so on. Craving is the root of the cycle of birth and death. The increase of craving leads to “clinging,” and clinging manifested

as the conditions for behavior is “becoming,” which leads to further travel in the cycle of birth and death.

9. *Clinging* (取)

“Clinging” refers to focusing on oneself in the mad pursuit of all things to the exclusion of every other consideration. This generates karma. There are four kinds of clinging: clinging to desire, clinging to wrong views, clinging to wrong rules, and clinging to the self.

10. *Becoming* (有)

There are two kinds of becoming: karmic becoming and life becoming. Physical, verbal, and mental actions generated in response to likes or dislikes that are wholesome or unwholesome are known as karmic becoming. Within this process are created effects which act as a force to propel future birth; this is life becoming.

11. *Birth* (生)

When a child is born from its mother’s womb with a cry, this is birth. The subjectivity of the self with its five aggregates of form, feeling, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness begins to develop and proceeds on to old age and death. This constitutes a single lifetime in the ongoing cycle of birth and death.

12. *Aging and death* (老死)

The physiological functions of the body will decline until the breath stops and the causes and conditions for the aggregates disperse and fade away. The reality of impermanence and change has finally arrived. This is old age and death. But this does not mean that the entirety of the person is obliterated. After death and the

separation of the five aggregates, consciousness combines with ignorance, and mental formations once again to begin another life. With one thought of awakening, karma is no longer created by ignorance. Otherwise, life will be just like the hands on a clock: turning round and round endlessly with no beginning and no end.

The element that gives rise to an effect is called a “cause,” and the supporting elements are known as “conditions.” A cause is like a seed, and conditions are those functions that support its growth. The causes and conditions of dependent origination continue in a cycle as each link is the effect of the link that preceded it, and the cause for the next link.

The continuity of causation makes possible the continuity of life. Changes in one’s causes and conditions, whether they be positive or negative, will alter the course of future rebirths: some will ascend to heaven and some will fall into hell, while others will have their fortune or misfortune, their success or failure, and their poverty or wealth. The content of one’s life is formed from these causes and conditions, which are in our hands to create. Therefore, as long as one takes charge of the present by creating good causes and good conditions, then one can certainly create a bright and beautiful future.

Desires, Five

五欲

Once, there was a traveler who was being chased by a crazed elephant. The traveler was finally able to escape by climbing down a vine into an old well, but as he descended into the well, four poisonous snakes appeared and began climbing up the vine towards

D the traveler, ready to bite him. Just when he was about to climb back out again, there appeared above him two mice, one black and one white, who began gnawing away at the vine. The traveler was trapped from above and below, stuck between a rock and a hard place. Suddenly, from the top of the well, five drops of honey dripped into his mouth. At that moment, the traveler forgot all about the things that were threatening him, the crazed elephant and the poisonous snakes, for he had become intoxicated with the sweetness of the honey.

What were these five drops of honey, and how could they have possibly made the traveler forget about the dangers he was facing? In the story, the drops of honey are symbols for the five desires of wealth, sex, fame, food and drink, and sleep.

1. *Wealth* (財)

In today's materialistic society, everything costs money. We cannot pay one dime less than what we owe for the food, clothing, and transportation we enjoy. It even costs money to see a doctor or go to school. You cannot do without money in this life. There is no era in history that is without its greedy, corrupt officials, thieves, and bandits. Fighting and pillaging is all for the sake of money, just as mangling bodies so they are unidentifiable is all for the sake of money. People die over riches; the tragedies spawned by wealth are too many to count.

2. *Sex* (色)

Passionate feelings can sink sentient beings into an ocean of desire and lead them to commit great wrongs. Suitors who have been thwarted have resorted to assault and even murder, and jilted lovers have sometimes resorted to suicide, all because of the desire

for sex. Extramarital affairs ruin families, and rape and seduction lead to courtroom accusations and lawsuits. It is not exterior form which beguiles these people, for they beguile themselves with their desire for sex, which can lead to endless regrets.

3. *Fame* (名)

Fame itself is not bad—it is scrambling for fame, status, and renown that can lead one to heedlessly destroy friendships and make enemies. Many will not care if guns or knives are used if it is to gain power. Enmity and jealousy are generated for the sake of fame and status. Fawning and servile flattery are employed for the sake of fame and status. People behave with arrogance and blatant egotism for the sake of fame and status. People become covetous and obsessive for the sake of fame and status. There are a few sayings in Chinese, such as: “The greatest trees are subject to the winds, the most famous are subject to jealousy” and “the higher the climb, the more serious the fall.” When fame comes to those who have not actually risen to a level of distinction, the consequences can be quite grave.

4. *Food and Drink* (食)

Humans cannot live without food, but craving fine delicacies or gourmet meals will lead to disorders of the stomach and intestines, while the fondness for fine delicacies will poison the body and lead to death. Wars stem from the problem of hunger and scarcity, and human strife is often the consequence of a cup of soup shared unequally. Living beings are killed to satisfy our appetites, while family fortunes are squandered for unbridled gluttony. There is no telling how many crimes and negative deeds are hidden within rich fare and gourmet meals.

5. *Sleep* (睡)

After a day's work, people must rest and recuperate during the night, but too much craving for sleep will make one sluggish and lethargic the whole day through. Work and careers are neglected for the sake of sleep, and spiritual work is not practiced for the sake of sleep. The Buddha once chided Aniruddha, saying, "How well you sleep! A snail in its shell will sleep a thousand years, never even hearing the Buddha's name!"

Sentient beings will become distracted and enamored by some temporary pleasures and become slaves to the five desires so that they are unable to free themselves from the three realms. For human beings, the five desires are like honey on the blade of a knife: trying to lick up the sweetness will cut our tongues. Only by having few desires and knowing contentment can one follow the path to peace and happiness.

Dharani

陀羅尼

See: Om mani padme hum.

Dharma

法

See: Gem, triple; giving; gratitude; harmony, six points of reverent; reliance, four kinds of; teaching, four modes of.

Dharma Friends

善知識

See also: Friends, four kinds of.

The Entry into the Dharma Realm chapter of the *Flower Adornment Sutra* describes how the young Sudhana asked for instruction from fifty-three good Dharma friends so that he could learn to practice the bodhisattva path. “Good Dharma friend” (善知識) here refers to those individuals who have good moral conduct, can teach the true Dharma, and can lead others to follow the correct path. Those who teach in opposition to the Buddhist path and lead others astray are called “bad friends.”

A good Dharma friend must have the right view and understanding of the Dharma, be well-versed in the sutras, and understand their principles. They must teach the Dharma joyfully, compassionately, and to the capacity of listeners, such that they instill faith in their audience. The sutras describe good Dharma friends as “realizing the teachings and knowing true nature, teaching with compassion and skill.” This means that the good Dharma friend must be virtuous, learned, and have practiced and attained realization. Furthermore, they must be able to teach joyfully, teach skillfully and excel in communicating the essentials of the Dharma to lead sentient beings to enter the Buddhist path, give up what is unwholesome, and practice what is wholesome. This is what a perfect Dharma friend can do. However, in the present Age of Declining Dharma, it is difficult to find such good Dharma friends, so as long as someone’s practice and understanding exceeds your own, they can serve as your good Dharma friend.

Within Buddhist circles, teachers are often called “good Dharma friends.” The term is also applied to those who act as companions on the path, or who support the Dharma financially, as both types of people are indispensable to the practice of the Buddhist path. These are known as the three kinds of Dharma friends:

Dharma Friends

1. *Good Dharma friends who give* (外護善知識)

These good Dharma friends provide material assistance and support for the path. They free others from non-essential tasks and from fear so that they can practice the path in peace.

2. *Good Dharma friends who share in practice* (同行善知識)

These good Dharma friends accompany us on the path, so that we can learn from and encourage one another.

3. *Good Dharma friends who teach* (教授善知識)

These good Dharma friends teach the Dharma, help us resolve our doubts, and reveal right view to us. Under their guidance, we can remove what is unwholesome and pursue what is wholesome, and understand cause and effect.

Dharma friends exert the greatest influence on our own cultivation. The sutras offer many analogies to describe Dharma friends, saying that they sustain us like the earth, support us like a tall mountain, protect us like a nursemaid, mend our suffering like a doctor, destroy our fears like a brave general, and ferry us across the sea of birth and death like a ship's captain.

The *Great Assembly on the True Dharma Sutra* says, “The good Dharma is our Dharma friend.” The phrase “good Dharma” here refers to the Dharma that accords with principles and benefits the world. Teachings such as the three Dharma seals, the Four Noble Truths, the six perfections, and the four immeasurable minds allow sentient beings to free themselves from suffering and obtain happiness, as well as create the causes and conditions for awakening. Ultimately speaking, the Dharma itself is the true “good Dharma friend” that can lead us to the good path, and so

students of Buddhism should listen to the true Dharma teachings. In doing so, they will truly get to learn from a good Dharma friend.

Dharma Realms, Ten

十法界

The ordinary and noble beings in Buddhism are divided into the following ten categories, proceeding from the bottom to the top: hell-beings, hungry ghosts, animals, human beings, *asuras*, heavenly beings, *sravakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, bodhisattvas, and Buddhas. Since each of these varieties of beings arises due to its own causes and conditions with clearly delineated boundaries, the collection of these beings is known as the “ten dharma realms.”

1. Hell (地獄)

Among the three lower realms, the pain and suffering of the hells is the most intense. Most of these hells are situated underneath the southern continent of Jambu-dvipa, and they resemble the prisons of the human world. Beings there are constrained by instruments of punishment and cannot act freely. Hell is called *diyu* (地獄) in Chinese but is also known as *kuju* (苦具), “collections of suffering,” and *kuqi* (苦器), “container of suffering.” Sentient beings who often commit the ten unwholesome actions, particularly the five great violations, will be reborn in hell.

2. Hungry Ghost Realm (餓鬼)

The beings of this realm are fearsome creatures who live by begging for food and drink from others, so they are called *egui* (餓鬼), “hungry ghosts.” Those who commit the ten unwholesome actions

and are governed by greed, jealousy, sycophancy, corruption, or even die from hunger and thirst, will be reborn in the hungry ghost realm.

3. *Animal Realm* (畜生)

Beings in the animal realm are inherently ignorant and, in the case of domesticated animals, cannot act independently and must be cared for by others. Animals appear through the six realms of existence and are of many varieties. One way to categorize them is separating them into three groups according to their habitat: those that live in the water, those that live in the air, and those that live on the land. Those who create negative karma because of their ignorance of cause and effect but only feel little regret are reborn in the animal realm.

4. *Human Realm* (人)

Human beings are known for their endurance, since they are able to endure the various forms of pleasure and pain of this world. A human existence is key in determining future rebirth, and it is the hardest rebirth to attain among the six realms of existence. Observing the five precepts and a moderate practice of the ten wholesome actions is the cause for rebirth as a human being.

5. *Asura Realm* (阿修羅)

Rebirth as an *asura* is second only to rebirth as a heavenly being, for *asuras* lack the moral character of heavenly beings. For this reason, the *asura* realm is also sometimes called *wutian* (無天), “non-heaven.” *Asuras* are those beings who at least had a meager practice of the ten wholesome actions in their previous lives, but could not be reborn in the heavenly realm because of

an overwhelming preponderance of hatred, arrogance, and suspiciousness. Furthermore, due to their jealousy of heavenly beings, the *asuras* make war upon Lord Indra. Asuras can be found throughout the hungry ghost realm, animal realm, human realm, and heavenly realm, and can be born from the womb, from an egg, from moisture, or from transformation.

6. Heavenly Realm (天)

Rebirth in the heavenly realm is of the greatest merit among the six realms of existence. There are twenty-eight heavens to be reborn in, depending upon how much one has generated positive karma and removed affliction. Those twenty-eight are divided into the six heavens of the desire realm, the eighteen heavens of the form realm, and the four heavens of the formless realm. Heavenly beings exceed other sentient beings in their beautiful appearance, long lives, superior meditative concentration, and bliss. But even so, when heavenly beings reach the end of their life, they experience the five signs of decay and will be reborn in the lower realms as they continue through the cycle of birth and death. Thus, in the end, though the heavenly realms are truly extraordinary, they are not the ultimate peace.

7. *Sravaka* Realm (聲聞)

Sravaka means “voice-hearer,” for these are the beings who awaken through hearing the teachings of the Buddha. There are four levels of spiritual attainment for a *sravaka*, with the highest being the arhat, which is the highest attainment of the Hinayana. There are many practices associated with the *sravaka*; some initial practices include the attainment of meditative states, focusing the mind on a single point, abiding in right knowledge and right view, and other such practices.

8. *Pratyekabuddha Realm* (緣覺)

Pratyekabuddhas are beings who awakened upon hearing the teaching on the twelve links of dependent origination during the time the Buddha dwelt in the world, and so they are known as “awakened through dependent origination.” There are also *pratyekabuddhas* who awaken on their own without a teacher by contemplating the arising, ceasing, transformation, and change of phenomena in the external world. These are known as “self-realized beings.” Though *pratyekabuddhas* may differ in this way, they all awaken through the contemplation of dependent origination and enjoy their solitary existence.

9. *Bodhisattva Realm* (菩薩)

Bodhisattvas are sentient beings who have an aspiration for supreme awakening, seeking Buddhahood from on high and liberating sentient beings below. Bodhisattvas have a compassionate disposition and an intellect imbued with *prajna*-wisdom. The spirit of a bodhisattva is steadfast and persevering. Unique to bodhisattvas is the practice of the six perfections and undertaking the four universal vows.

10. *Buddha Realm* (佛)

Buddhas are awakened beings who have realized the truth. Not only have they liberated themselves from the cycle of birth and death, but they also understand the causes of suffering and affliction of sentient beings and have helped them to liberate themselves from the cycle of birth and death. Buddhas have awakened themselves, awakened others, and have completed the mission of awakening.

Within a single day, there is no telling how many times an ordinary person travels between the ten dharma realms. For example, a thought of torment and enmity brings you to the hell realm, a thought of hatred and conflict brings you to the hungry ghost realm, a deluded and ignorance thought brings you to the animal realm, a thought of jealousy and arrogance brings you to the *asura* realm, a thought to keep the precepts and do good brings you to the human realm, a thought of bliss and happiness bring you to the heavenly realm, a thought of selfless altruism brings you to the bodhisattva realm, and a thought of universal equality and tolerance brings you to the Buddha realm.

Where are heaven and hell located? In this very mind. The ten dharma realms also provide the philosophical basis for the Tiantai School's teaching on "one thought containing the three thousand-fold world system."

Dharma Seals, Three

三法印

See also: Impermanence.

The Dharma is the truth of the universe and human life. "True" in this instance refers to principles which are universal, inherent, and eternal. The "three Dharma seals" certify that the Buddhist teachings are true in this way. They are:

1. *All conditioned phenomena are impermanent* (諸行無常)

Of all of the many kinds of events and things in the world, not a single one of them remains fixed and unchanging, for each and every one of them shifts and transforms from moment to moment. Since all conditioned phenomena arise into being through a

D coming together of causes and conditions, they are empty and lack an independent “self” or identity. They exist when conditions come together, and they pass away when conditions dissipate. Living things are born, grow old, get sick, and die. Material things like mountains, rivers, and the earth itself are formed, abide, change, and are destroyed. Even thoughts arise, abide, change, and cease. All phenomena arise and pass into extinction from moment to moment; they cannot linger even for an instant. The past is already gone, the future has yet to appear, and the present is arising and ceasing. Since all phenomena shift from the past, present, and future, it is said that they are impermanent.

2. *All phenomena are without an independent self* (諸法無我)

The Buddhist term “self” refers to something’s true essence. For something to have a “self,” it must have agency and be permanent, unchanging, and autonomous. But within this world of conditioned phenomena, nothing like this exists. For example, most people become attached to their body as “self,” but the body is just a combination of the five aggregates. This body is just a collection of karma and affliction; that it could be the “self” is an empty illusion. The body is like a house: a house needs posts and supports, roof-tiles, and cross-beams all working together to make it a house. Without any of these there could be no house at all. The “self” is just a label, nothing more, for it lacks any real substance. Everything in the world came into existence through various causes and conditions and, as such, lacks an independent self or nature.

3. *Nirvana is perfect tranquility* (涅槃寂靜)

Nirvana is the third of the Four Noble Truths and means the end of greed, anger, and ignorance. It is extinguishing the burning flames

of ignorance, affliction, suffering, and the separate self, so that one can reach a state of tranquility without defilement that is filled with happiness, light, freedom, and comfort. This is a state of liberation in which the mind and body are both tranquil, where the body is free of negative conduct, and the mind is free of negative thoughts.

Human life in this world means constantly being disturbed by things and events. We are fettered by greed, anger, ignorance, affliction, and delusion just as a prisoner is confined by his chains and shackles. One can be liberated by removing these shackles, and this liberation is called *nirvana*. In this way, it is important to emphasize: *nirvana* is not death. In Buddhism, it is the most perfect state.

The three Dharma seals—all conditioned phenomena are impermanent, all phenomena are without an independent self, and *nirvana* is perfect tranquility—are the basis upon which the Dharma is verified and are the standard by which one distinguishes between Buddhist and non-Buddhist teachings. Among the teachings of early Buddhism, these three formed the philosophical basis for the doctrine of dependent origination, representing the earliest, fundamental Buddhist teaching. Therefore, by understanding the three Dharma seals, one can understand the basic ideas of Buddhism.

Dharma Wheel, Three Turnings

三轉法輪

See also: Four Noble Truths.

The sutras say, “All Buddhas appear in this world for one great matter.” The “great matter” mentioned here is to spread their

D teachings and demonstrate the benefits and joys of their meaning and practice. The Buddha's purpose is to tell sentient beings the truth he has awakened to so that they, too, can realize the perfect wisdom of the Buddha and overcome their suffering. This is why the Buddha appeared in the human world. After his awakening, he dwelt in this world for forty-nine years, during which he gave teachings at more than three hundred assemblies. "Buddhism" is thus the teachings of the Buddha, and the twelve divisions of the Tripitaka are a record of those teachings given to sentient beings through the Buddha's words and deeds.

Following his awakening, the Buddha first gave the teaching of the Four Noble Truths to the group of five monks, including Kaundinya, at Deer Park on the outskirts of Benares. In Buddhist history, this is known as the "first turning of the Dharma wheel."

The Four Noble Truths are the truth of suffering, the truth of the cause of suffering, the truth of the cessation of suffering, and the truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering. On the day the Buddha first turned the wheel of the Dharma, he told the group of five monks that the world we live in is like a house on fire. It is filled with the pain and suffering of the cycle of birth and death. For this reason, we must not cling to it nor remain here for long. The cause of the pain and suffering of the cycle of birth and death is the accumulation of greed, anger, and ignorance. Fortunately, in each of our minds, there resides a pure intrinsic nature, and once this intrinsic nature manifests itself, we can eliminate afflictions and the cycle of birth and death and attain the state of tranquility and happiness that is *nirvana*. The path that leads to *nirvana* is to cultivate the six perfections, observe the precepts, do good works, practice the Noble Eightfold Path, and so on.

After sharing this teaching, the Buddha was still concerned, and proceeded to give more personal instruction. The Buddha hoped that the five monks would understand suffering as a reality of human life and thus be able to sever the karmic causes that generate suffering. He hoped that they would be able to attain the joy of tranquility and the unconditioned. He wanted them to practice the path with determination and diligence.

To inspire faith in the monks to seek the Dharma and the path to awakening, the Buddha then patiently took up the task once more and taught the Dharma by example. The Buddha taught from his own experience to show: I already know that life is suffering; I have also eliminated all the causes of suffering; and at the same time, I have attained the happiness of liberation because I have already completed the path.

The Buddha then repeated the Four Noble Truths to the five monks in three different configurations, known as the “three turnings of the Dharma wheel.”

The first is called “turning the Dharma wheel for instruction,” in which the content and definition of the Four Noble Truths were given and explained so that the group of five monks could comprehend them. The Buddha said: “Such is suffering, which is oppressive; such is the cause of suffering, which beckons; such is the cessation of suffering, which is attainable; such is the path, which can be practiced.”

The second is called “turning the Dharma wheel for encouragement,” in which the Buddha exhorted the group of five monks to put the Four Noble Truths into practice to remove afflictions and obtain liberation. The Buddha said: “Such is suffering, you should understand it; such is the cause of suffering you should end it; such is the cessation of suffering you should realize it; such is the path, you should practice it.”

The third is called “turning the Dharma wheel to share his realization,” in which the Buddha tells the group of five monks that he himself has already realized the Four Noble Truths, to show them by example that with determination and diligence they, too, can realize the Four Noble Truths. The Buddha said: “Such is suffering, I have understood it; such is the cause of suffering, I have ended it; such is the cessation of suffering, I have realized it; such is the path, I have practiced it.”

When we look at how the Buddha turned the Dharma wheel three times for the group of five monks, we can see the wisdom and compassion with which the Buddha used his teachings to liberate sentient beings. The Buddha was a great teacher with the best understanding of how to teach. The Buddha gently guides with a penetrating analysis of the principle of things; he gives the right encouragement based upon one’s capacity and excels in giving the right medicine for the given ailment. For sentient beings of any spiritual capacity, he can give teachings that are true and in accord with circumstances so that they can benefit from the Dharma.

The Buddha did not abandon any being. There is a saying in Buddhism: “It does not matter whether the medicine is expensive or cheap, the best is the one that cures the disease. It does not matter whether the Dharma is high or low, the most profound is in accord with one’s spiritual capacity.” Only when one understands the method is it possible to do less work and get more results, and in this, the Buddha left us the best example of a model educator.

Difficulties, Eight

八難

A human birth is hard to obtain, and a chance to hear the Buddhist teachings is hard to encounter. Even if one obtains a human birth, one does not necessarily get a chance to hear the Buddhist teachings, and even less so if one is reborn in other realms of existence. According to the sutras, there are eight kinds of difficulty that impede one's ability to learn Buddhism:

1. *Hell* (在地獄難)

Due to their past negative karma, beings reborn in the hell realms dwell in a long night of darkness, for they must endure hell's many forms of suffering without respite. Therefore, they cannot see the Buddha nor hear his teachings.

2. *The Realm of Hungry Ghosts* (在餓鬼難)

Some beings reborn as hungry ghosts do not even hear of water for *kalpas*, and some must wait and beg for wash water, blood, pus, and sewage sludge in the human world. Others may get their fill for a time, only to be driven away by knives and sticks. In multitudes that fill the rivers and plug up the seas, their suffering is infinite. Therefore, they cannot see the Buddha nor hear his teachings.

3. *The Animal Realm* (在畜生難)

There are many classes of animals, with each linked to a particular karmic cause. Some are raised as domesticated animals. Others live in the mountains and oceans or other places. They are beaten and killed or fall prey to one another and are eaten. The suffering they bear is limitless. Therefore, they cannot see the Buddha nor hear his teachings.

4. *The Long-life Heaven* (在長壽天難)

Beings reborn in the Long-life Heaven, also known Unconscious Heaven, live for five hundred *kalpas*. The beings reborn in this realm are completely without thought, like a hibernating animal. Many outsiders who cultivate non-Buddhist practices are reborn here, such that they cannot see the Buddha or hear his teachings.

5. *The Excellent Continent* (在邊地之鬱單越難)

In Buddhism, there is a land adjacent to our own world of Jambudvīpa called *Uttara-Kuru*, the “excellent continent.” Those who are reborn in *Uttara-Kuru* enjoy a lifespan of one thousand years, and no one dies young. Those who live there only crave pleasure, and for that reason, they cannot receive the teachings of liberation, and no sages appear there. As such, they are unable to see the Buddha or hear his teachings.

6. *Physical and Mental Disability* (盲聾瘖啞難)

Though some people may be born in a place where the Dharma exists, their karmic impediments may prevent them from being able to see the Buddha and hear his teachings by being born blind, deaf, or dumb. Such people are not complete in their sense faculties, so even when the Buddha is in the world, they are unable to hear and see him.

7. *Birth as a Philosopher* (世智辯聰難)

Though philosophers may be intelligent, they can easily become enamored with the texts of non-Buddhist teachings. Many do not believe in the true, supramundane Dharma.

8. *Birth Between Buddhas* (生在佛前佛後難)

Burdened with karma and lacking positive conditions, some beings are born at a time when a Buddha has not appeared in the world. Therefore, one cannot see the Buddha nor hear his teachings.

According to the *Agama sutras*, undertaking the eight precepts can ameliorate the eight difficulties. Additionally, the *Establishing the Truth Treatise* states that one can prevent these difficulties through four methods:

1. By dwelling in a good place, one will be born where the Dharma exists.
2. By relying upon good people, one will be born when the Buddha is in the world.
3. By making the right vows, one will be able to have right view.
4. By laying down wholesome roots for the future, one will become complete in physical and mental faculties.

Though these difficulties have been given as eight particular items, in reality, they are each expressions of the fact that it is hard to be born when the Buddha is in the world, it is hard to hear the Buddha's teachings, and it is hard to be born as a human being. For this reason, one should have a penitent mind and remember the verse:

When the Buddha was in the world, I was lost,
 After the Buddha passed into *nirvana* I was born.
 I repent for all my many karmic obstacles
 That have prevented me from seeing the
 Tathagata's golden-hued body.

One should also remember the difficulty of obtaining a human rebirth, as in the couplet:

Hard it is to obtain a human body, but now I
have obtained one;
Hard it is to hear the Buddha's teaching, but now
I have heard them.

It is important to value the rare opportunity to be born as a human being, see the Buddha, and hear the Dharma. If you are not liberated in this life, which lifetime will you be? Only by having this kind of attitude towards Buddhist practice will one ever come in direct contact with the truth.

Disability

盲聾瘖啞

See: Difficulties, eight; field of merit.

Disciples of the Buddha, Ten Great

十大弟子

During the time of Sakyamuni Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, many disciples came to take refuge in him, the most well-known being a group called the “ten great disciples.” Each of the ten disciples was distinguished for being the best in a particular area of the Dharma:

1. *Sariputra: Foremost in Wisdom* (舍利弗)

Sariputra was born in Kalapinaka, in the Kingdom of Magadha. His father was a famous and learned Brahman, while his maternal

uncle was Kausthila. At the age of eight, Sariputra was already well-regarded for his knowledge of the Vedas. Upon encountering the *bhikṣu* Asvajit, Sariputra became a disciple of the Buddha. He was almost eighty-one when he entered final *nirvana*, three months before the Buddha did.

2. Maudgalyayana: Foremost in Supernatural Powers

(目犍連)

Maudgalyayana, a high-minded scholar, joined the monastic order together with Sariputra, and attained awakening in only seven days. Maudgalyayana possessed great supernatural powers, attaining awakening about ten days earlier than Sariputra. He was known for being a filial son. Maudgalyayana was ultimately stoned to death by a group of Nigranthas who attacked him for being Buddhist.

3. Purna: Foremost in Teaching the Dharma (富樓那)

Purna was a pampered son from a rich family. After entering the monastic community, he became a persuasive speaker who would enthusiastically teach the Dharma.

4. Subhuti: Foremost in Understanding Emptiness

(須菩提)

Subhuti was a kind person who found joy in doing good and enjoyed being generous. He practiced the *samadhi* of non-contention and would sit in a cave contemplating emptiness, inspiring heavenly beings to rain down flowers from the sky in admiration.

5. *Mahakatyayana: Foremost in Debating the Dharma*

(迦旃延)

He came from Ujjeni in the southern Indian kingdom of Avanti and was the nephew of the seer, Asita. He excelled at explaining the Dharma and was known for being foremost in debate.

6. *Mahakasyapa: Foremost in Austerities* (大迦葉)

Mahakasyapa was born to an extremely wealthy family. He was married to a beautiful wife for twelve years, though they were married in name only, as they both were celibate practitioners. After he joined the monastic order, Mahakasyapa was steadfast and conservative in his approach and diligently practiced austerities. In the end, he received Dharma transmission from the Buddha, becoming the first Chan patriarch.

7. *Aniruddha: Foremost in Heavenly Vision* (阿那律)

Aniruddha was the Buddha's cousin and a descendent of the royal family. Owing to his diligent practice, he became blind in both eyes, though afterwards attained heavenly vision.

8. *Upali: Foremost in Monastic Discipline* (優婆離)

Upali came from a lower class family and served in the palace as a barber for the royal princes, like Aniruddha. Later, after joining the monastic order, his position put him before the princes, as he was a more senior disciple and thus received the obeisance of the princely monks. This shows Buddhism's egalitarian spirit.

9. *Ananda: Foremost in Having Heard Much* (阿難陀)

Ananda was the younger brother of Devadatta and served as the Buddha's attendant. He was known for being particularly

handsome and also for requesting that the Buddha establish the *bhiksuni* order.

10. Rahula: Foremost in Esoteric Practices (羅睺羅)

Rahula was a very fortunate person, as he was not only the Buddha's son but had Sariputra as his teacher. Rahula was the first novice monk. Pure of heart and energetic, Rahula practiced hard and attained awakening all because the Buddha had severely reprimanded him.

D

Fo Guang Shan
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E

Earth

地

See: Elements, four great.

Effects of Karma of the Three Time Periods

三時業

See also: Karma of the three time periods; Karma, three types of.

Karma, cause and effect, is the law of the universe, as well as the moral law governing pleasure and pain in human life. Karmic effects control human destiny. The effects of karma are created by one's own actions rather than some supernatural power, giving equal opportunity to all without any special considerations. Karma offers us a bright future and limitless hope, and the effects of karma manifest regardless of social status.

There are those who feel that they have been loyal and cheated no one and yet have been poor their whole life, while others took advantage of every opportunity by trickery and became millionaires. There are also those who feel that they have

been good sons and daughters who take care of their parents and yet are often sick, while others act badly towards their parents and yet are always healthy. What is the karmic explanation for this?

This is not the way that karma works. Loyalty and honesty versus opportunistic trickery are moral causes and effects; fame and fortune versus poverty are economic causes and effects; and a sound body versus a sick one are health-related causes and conditions. If a person is loyal and honest but does not take care of his finances, he will certainly end up poor. The unfilial sons and daughters described above pay attention to their health and nutrition, so naturally they have healthy bodies. Karma cannot be understood by mixing these things together.

There is a Buddhist saying, “In the end, good and bad have their reward or retribution. The only question that remains is whether it comes sooner or later.” The time between when an action is performed and its karmic effect reaches fruition varies. Just as some seeds may be planted in the spring and be harvested in the fall, while others may only be harvested next year or even many years after, there are three categories of time in which karmic effects manifest:

1. Karmic effects in this life (現報業)

Do good in this life, and you will enjoy blessings in this life; do bad in this life, and you will suffer disasters in this life. You help others, and others will help you; you harm others, and others will harm you. This is very direct, and as such, karma is very realistic. No matter who you are, karma does not dole out special treatment.

2. *Karmic effects in the next life* (生報業)

In some instances, doing good or bad will only manifest as positive or negative karmic effects in the next life, but there will certainly come a day when the planted seeds will sprout, flower, and bear fruit. If you have yet to experience the negative effects of a bad deed, don't count yourself lucky, for spreading vines grow quickly. Positive and negative causes and conditions follow us just like a shadow, for they cannot be escaped.

3. *Karmic effects in future lives* (後報業)

Everything in this world will one day disappear, except for karma. Whether it is the next life, the one after that, or billions of lifetimes later, if a karmic effect has yet to manifest, it surely will once the causes and conditions have matured. There is a Buddhist saying, "Good is rewarded with good, and bad is repaid with bad. Do not worry that there is no effect, for the time is not yet right."

Karma is absolute freedom, for one experiences the consequences of one's own actions, and no one can exchange theirs with another.

Effort, Right

正勤

See: Path, noble eightfold; right effort.

Elements, Four Great

四大皆空

Once, while Chan Master Foyin of the Song dynasty (1032-1098 CE) was giving a teaching, the great scholar and poet Su Shi (1037-1101 CE)

entered the hall. At the time, all the seats were occupied, so the Chan master spoke to Su Shi in the epigrammatic style of the Chan School: “There’s no seat for the scholar!”

Since Su Shi had studied Buddhism and practiced Chan for many years, he also gave his reply in the Chan style: “How about I borrow the Chan master’s four great elements and use them as a seat?”

The Chan master then countered with a question: “According to the Dharma, ‘the four great elements are fundamentally empty and the five aggregates are without self,’ so just where, sir, are you going to sit?” Despite all his knowledge of state policies and programs, Su Shi was struck dumb by this question.

So, what are the four great elements, and why are they empty?

All the world’s phenomena, be they plants, animals, or non-sentient things, and whether they are as massive as the universe itself or as small as a flower or a blade of grass, all are made up of the four great elements. The four great elements are earth, water, fire, and wind:

Earth (地)

The earth element includes anything that has the quality of hardness and solidity. The earth element can support all things. Solid parts of the human body like hair, teeth, nails, skin, bone, muscle, and soft tissue all belong to the earth element.

Water (水)

The water element includes anything that has the quality of wetness or fluidity. The water element can sustain all things. The fluids of the human body like spittle, mucus, pus, blood, saliva, phlegm, tears, and body fluids all belong to the water element.

Fire (火)

The fire element includes anything that has the quality of heat. The fire element can warm up all things. The human body's warmth and temperature belong to the fire element.

Wind (風)

The wind element includes anything that has the quality of movement. The air element can nurture all things. The parts of the human body that move, like the in-breath and the out-breath all belong to the wind element.

Human beings are not the only thing made of the four great elements; plants like flowers and grasses are as well. For these plants to grow, they require some fertile "earth," a suitable amount of "water," the warming "fire" of the sun, and the "wind" of the air. If any one of these elements is lacking, then the plant will be unable to sprout and develop, let alone flower and bear fruit.

The reason human life can exist is because of the combination of the four great elements. Any imbalance amongst the four great elements will lead to illness, and when the four great elements disperse, death occurs. Another way to look at it is that things which are formed through the combination of conditions are destroyed when those conditions disperse. There are no exceptions.

When it is said that the four great elements are "empty," this does not mean that earth, water, fire, and wind have disappeared. Instead, it means that all phenomena are formed out of a combination of dependent causes and conditions consisting of the four main elements of earth, water, fire, and wind. If this combination of causes and conditions is lacking, then no phenomena are produced. It is because all things arise through this process of

dependent origination that the four great elements are said to be “empty.”

It is important to note that the four great elements do not become empty only when the conditions supporting a phenomena have dispersed. Even when a flower has just bloomed or a person is in the best of health, from the perspective of dependent origination, the flower and the person are fundamentally empty.

Emptiness does not “destroy” existence, nor is it the same as non-existence. If one does not comprehend causality, then one will not understand the truth of the Dharma, that “the four great elements are fundamentally empty and the five aggregates are without self.”

Empathy

同事

See: Means of embracing, four.

Emptiness

空

See: Elements, four great.

Equanimity

捨

See: Immeasurable minds, four.

Esoteric School

密宗

See: Schools of Chinese Buddhism, eight.

F

Faith

信仰

See: Practice, four stages of; spiritual wealth, seven kinds of; supports, three.

Fame

名

See: Desires, five.

Faxiang School

法相宗

See: Schools of Chinese Buddhism, eight.

Fayan School

法眼宗

See: Chan schools.

Feeling

受

See: Aggregates, five; dependent origination.

Field of Merit

八種福田

See also: Merit and wisdom.

The Buddhist sutras often use planting a field as a metaphor for generosity. For example, a farmer must select a good field and work hard at ploughing and weeding before he can bring in a bountiful harvest. In the same way, in order for there to be merit when performing acts of generosity, one must select the appropriate recipient to give to and understand that the giver, the gift, and the recipient are empty.

According to the Buddhist sutras, there are eight categories of people in this world who are worthy recipients of our generosity: the Buddha, sages, the monastic community, individual monks, teachers, one's father, one's mother, and the sick. But in terms of our modern society, these are: the Triple Gem, spiritual practitioners, one's parents, teachers, the sick, the physically impaired, crisis victims, and groups helping the disadvantaged. These constitute the kinds of people worthy of our generosity and support.

1. *The Triple Gem* (三寶)

The Triple Gem is the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. The Buddha is the one who has realized the truth of the universe and human life. The Buddha has awakened himself, awakened others, and completed his mission of awakening. By respectfully making offerings

Feeling

to the Triple Gem, we can obtain all merit and eliminate wrongdoing. This is why it is called a field of merit.

2. *Spiritual Practitioners* (修道者)

The term “spiritual practitioners” includes those who vow to practice the bodhisattva path and liberate all sentient beings, but it also includes teachers of other religions such as pastors, nuns, and priests, as well as experts and scholars who possess specialized knowledge and who can contribute their learning for the benefit of the people. All such people are worthy of our respect and support.

3. *Parents* (父母)

Our fathers are the source of our life and kindly raise us. With discipline and guidance, they provide for us from the time we are toddlers until we grow up; such is the vastness of their kindness. Our mothers bear us in the womb and give birth to us. They expend great effort to feed us, protect us, support us, and raise us with caring thoughts and hard work; such is the vastness of their kindness. If we support our parents with filial love, then we will naturally obtain merit.

4. *Teachers* (師長)

Although parents raise our physical bodies, without the worldly and spiritual teachers to teach us, we would not know about reason and human sentiment; and a person without reason and human sentiment is no different from a wild beast. We should realize that our teachers are the parents of our wisdom, and they should be respected and honored.

5. *The Sick* (病人)

The Buddha said, “Of the eight fields of merit, treating the sick is the greatest.” This shows the Buddha’s emphasis on caring for the sick. Treating the sick is not just a way of seeking merit; it is also a form of practice. Buddhist disciples should vow to become the doctors and nurses of all sentient beings. When we see a sick person, we should reflect upon their suffering and devote ourselves to aiding their treatment and providing medicine. In this way, we will attain merit. Thus, the sick are known as a field of merit.

6. *The Physically Impaired* (殘障)

Often, those who are physically impaired cannot make a living. We can allow them to be more independent by supplying mental and physical treatment, providing them with certain skills, or offering them employment opportunities. In this way, we can provide help.

7. *Crisis Victims* (急難)

There is a saying that “It is better to help those in a crisis than those in poverty.” In this instance, “crisis” refers to natural and human-made disasters such as wars, earthquakes, floods, or sudden emergencies that affect families. To extend a helping hand at the time when it is most needed and to aide those facing imminent disaster is truly a way to bring about infinite merit.

8. *Groups Helping the Disadvantaged* (弱勢團體)

In society today, there are public welfare groups that are actively engaged in the relief work of assisting child prostitutes, providing protection against AIDS, helping mentally impaired children, facially disfigured people, and victims of child abuse or sexual violence against women. Many of these organizations suffer from a

Friends, Four Kinds of

shortage of funds to cover their expenses, and they are unable to carry out their work. By donating funds to assist these groups, we are indirectly engaging in social welfare and helping to solve social problems. The significance of such help is quite extraordinary and should be encouraged.

Fire

火

See: Elements, four great.

Flower Adornment Sutra

華嚴經

See: Schools of Chinese Buddhism, eight.

Food

食

See: Desires, five; meal contemplations, five; offerings, four; robe and bowl.

Form

色

See: Aggregates, five.

Friends, Four Kinds of

友有四品

See also: Dharma friends.

Everyone in the world needs friends, but there are good friends and bad friends. Making good friends is like entering a room full of orchids; after a while, you will no longer smell the sweet fragrance.

Making bad friends is like entering a fish shop; after a while, you will no longer smell the pungent stench. We must be careful about our friendships.

The *Bei Sutra* states that there are four kinds of friendship:

1. *Friendship Like a Flower* (有友如花)

Friends who treat your friendship like a flower praise, flatter, and follow you when you possess power and wealth, but as soon as you are no longer useful or fall on hard times, they will turn their backs and abandon you. This kind of friend despises poverty and curries favor with the rich, treating you like a flower: when a flower is fresh and beautiful, it is treasured, but when the flower wilts, it is discarded. Such people draw near the rich and powerful, and abandon the poor and the lowly.

2. *Friendship Like a Balance-scale* (有友如秤)

There are some friends who treat their friendship like a balance-scale: if you are weighty and important, the scale will shift, and they will bow their heads to you; but as soon as you lose importance, they will tower above you. Just as a balance-scale tips in one direction with a heavy weight and tips the other way with a light weight, when you are successful, hold an important position, and wield power, such a friend will serve you on bended knee, bowing low to you as they flatter you to curry favor. But once your reputation and power are gone, they will hold their heads high and look down upon you.

3. *Friendship Like a Mountain* (有友如山)

Friends whose friendships are like a mountain are broad and open-minded, for they can support many friends, just as a mountain

can support all the plant and animal life that lives upon it. Such friends are as valuable as a mountain of gold, for when they are powerful, they honor others, and when they are rich, they share their enjoyments.

4. *Friendship Like the Ground* (有友如地)

Friends whose friendships are like the ground take on responsibilities on your behalf whenever there is a need. They share in your troubles and even give support regardless of the cost, never expecting anything in return, just like the solid ground. The ground supports all living things and bears flowers and fruit. It even allows people to walk over it, accepting all without the slightest complaint. Friends whose friendships are like the ground are generous and nurturing, just like the ground which provides grain and abundance, unstinting in kindness.

We make friends in order to improve one another's character and help each other out. As the saying goes, "good friends are one's best relations." As the examples stated above, we should stay away from friendships like flowers and balance-scales, and draw near those friendships which exert a positive moral influence, as in the friendships like mountains and ground.

G

Gem, Triple

三寶

What is the Triple Gem? The Triple Gem is the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

Buddha (佛)

Buddha is a Sanskrit word which means “noble awakened one.” The Buddha is one who has awakened himself, awakened others, and completed his mission of awakening. Generally, when “the Buddha” is mentioned, it refers to the founder of Buddhism, Sakyamuni Buddha.

Sakyamuni Buddha attained complete realization under the bodhi tree, attained true, unsurpassed awakening, and brought liberation to infinite sentient beings. With his great compassion, great wisdom, and great supernatural powers, he became the founder of Buddhism for this Saha world and the “teacher of human and heavenly beings.”

Gem, Triple

Dharma (法)

Dharma is a Sanskrit word which refers to the Tripitaka, the collection of the Buddha's teachings, with its twelve divisions.

All the teachings the Buddha proclaimed at more than three hundred Dharma assemblies over the course of his forty-nine year teaching career in this world were compiled together by his disciples Ananda and Mahakasyapa into the sutra, vinaya, and abhidharma divisions of the Tripitaka that have been circulating in the world until today. The Tripitaka contains explanations of the truths of life and the universe. It is a precious raft that ferries one across the ocean of suffering, leading us away from suffering and towards liberation.

Sangha (僧)

Sangha is a Sanskrit word which means community, peace and happiness, and purity. Generally, the male and female monastics are known as the sangha, the monastic community.

The sangha is heir to the work of the Buddha and teaches the Dharma for the benefit of living beings. The monastic community guides sentient beings as they eliminate afflictions and free themselves from the cycle of birth and death.

In addition to this standard formula, there are other groupings of the Triple Gem:

The Manifested Triple Gem (化相三寶)

In this formulation, Sakyamuni Buddha is the Buddha Gem, the Four Noble Truths and the twelve links of dependent origination are the Dharma Gem, and the group of the first five *bhiksus* is the Sangha Gem. This is also sometimes called the "Original Triple Gem."

The Maintained Triple Gem (住持三寶)

This refers to sacred images of the Buddha as the Buddha Gem, the Tripitaka as the Dharma Gem, and all *bhiksus* and *bhiksunis* as the Sangha Gem. This is also called the “Forever Abiding Triple Gem.”

The True Triple Gem (真實三寶)

Here, the Triple Gem is represented by the Dharmakaya, Nirmanakaya, and Sambhogakaya. This grouping has many names, including the “Triple Gem of Intrinsic Nature,” the “Triple Gem of One Essence,” and the “Fundamental Essence of the Triple Gem.”

The Triple Gem possesses unsurpassed merit. When compared to the founder, teachings, and followers of other religions, the Triple Gem is the most perfect and pure. The Triple Gem is a light that shines in darkness, a ship that crosses the ocean of suffering, the sweet rain that douses the blazing house, and the guiding star that points the way for those who are lost. That is why we take refuge in the Triple Gem.

Ghost**餓鬼**

See: Dharma realms, ten; difficulties, eight; lower realms, three.

Giving**三輪體空**

See also: Means of embracing, four; perfections, six.

In order for an act of generosity to occur, there must be three key elements: the giver, the recipient, and the gift. In Buddhism, these are sometimes called *sanlun* (三輪), “three spheres.” A Buddhist

sutra says that, “As the mind, the field, and the object vary, so too can superior and inferior karmic results be distinguished.” In this passage, the “mind” refers to the giver, the “field” to the recipient, and the “object” to the gift. These three components are the causes which determine if the karmic effect of the act of generosity will be great or small. Let us examine each one by one:

1. *The Giver* (施者)

The motivation of the person performing the act of generosity must be sincere and must not be done in the hopes of seeking any favors in return, or any praise or glory. The correct attitude for someone giving a gift involves:

- Joy, such that the gift is given with a happy heart and does not irritate oneself or others.
- Respect, such that the gift is given without pride or disdain and demeans no one.
- Compassion, such that the giver sees all sentient beings as equal with him or herself and wishes that they may be free from poverty and have their hopes fulfilled.

2. *The Recipient* (受者)

Giving is like planting a field: regardless of the seeds being planted, they must be planted in a good field to yield a good harvest. Therefore, when performing acts of generosity, it is important to select the best field of merit. There are two types of “fields” which are the most suitable:

- Those worthy of sympathy, such as helpless people who are in dire need of assistance like widowers, widows,

orphans, childless couples, the poor, the destitute, and the sick who are unable to seek medical attention, as well as those who have passed away but cannot afford a burial.

- Those worthy of respect, such as the Triple Gem, parents, teachers, and elders. Among these, the Triple Gem is the best field of merit.

3. *The Gift* (施物)

There are three main types of gifts: the gift of wealth, the gift of the Dharma, and the gift of fearlessness. There is a saying that “the gift of wealth and the gift of Dharma are equal and without any distinction.” This refers to Buddhists providing the means of support to a Dharma teacher while the teacher reciprocates with teachings of the Dharma. In this instance, both are said to generate the same unsurpassed merit. But speaking in a strictly comparative sense, as the sutras say, “among all gifts, the gift of the Dharma is the best.” The gift of wealth is limited, finite, and defiled; it can only be of benefit in this present life and, even then, only for a short time. The gift of Dharma is limitless, infinite, and inexhaustible; it bestows benefit in this present life which continues on for lifetime after lifetime. That is why it is said in the *Diamond Sutra* that if someone were to give heaps of the seven treasures such that it filled the great three thousandfold world system, the merit of this gift would not be as great as having faith in the sutra’s four-line verse and explaining it to others. The merit of that gift of Dharma would be hundreds of thousands of times greater than merit obtained through the giving of wealth, food, and drink.

Though the merit of a gift will vary depending on the differences between the mind, the field, and the object given, the

greatest act of generosity is “generosity without notions.” There is a Buddhist saying that “Wealth enters the temple gate and merit is credited to the generous benefactor.” Acts of generosity should be empty and free of notions, such that there is no “I” who does the giving, no recipient, and no gift. In this way, there no longer remains any thought of seeking favors in return. The greatest merit of all is generated only when the “three spheres” of giver, recipient, and gift are all empty.

Gratitude, Four Kinds of 四恩總報

Appreciating kindness and showing gratitude is a fundamental part of being human. Buddhists in particular should emulate the Buddha’s spirit of unconditional loving-kindness and compassion by expressing gratitude for the “four kindnesses” and rendering assistance to those in the three lower realms. The four kindnesses are:

1. *Kindness of Parents* (父母恩)

Our parents brought us into the world. They raised and educated us. If it were not for our parents, we would not be here today. In particular, our mothers carried us in the womb for nine to ten months and fed us by hand for three years. They kept us dry and endured much bitterness and suffering for us. The kindness of a mother is higher than heaven, and their love is deeper than the ocean. That is why the *Buddha’s Great Skillful Means of Gratitude Sutra* says that parents show the greatest kindness within the three realms. To express our gratitude for the kindness of our parents, we should give to them true faith in Buddhism and offer them

liberation so that they may grow in wisdom towards awakening and put an end to the cycle of birth and death. This is the highest supramundane way of honoring one's parents.

2. *Kindness of Sentient Beings* (眾生恩)

Since beginningless time, all sentient beings throughout their numerous lifetimes have been each other's parents. In addition, sentient beings have shown us kindness through the various comforts and conveniences that they provide. To show our gratitude for the kindness of sentient beings, we can practice the bodhisattva path in order to help sentient beings be liberated from the cycle of birth and death within the six realms of existence.

3. *Kindness of One's Country* (國家恩)

Our parents bore and raised our physical body, but it was society as a whole which provided for much of our daily needs. It is because of the protection that has been provided to us by our country that we are able to live securely and be happy in our homes and jobs. If a country is destroyed, then its people will become lost as refugees with no place to call home. That is why we should express gratitude for our country. Therefore, each of us should serve our country faithfully and fulfill our duties in whatever position or post we hold. In this way, we can repay the kindness of our country for safeguarding our lives.

4. *Kindness of the Triple Gem* (三寶恩)

The Triple Gem is the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. These three are the light of the world, and exhibit unimaginable kindness. The Buddha is described as having ten kinds of kindness:

Gratitude, Four Kinds of

1. The kindness of his resolve to bring universal liberation.
2. The kindness of his self-sacrifice in previous lives.
3. The kindness of consistent altruism.
4. The kindness of manifesting in six realms of existence.
5. The kindness of pursuing liberation for sentient beings.
6. The kindness of his great compassion.
7. The kindness of appearing as a human being in accordance with the capacity of his audience and concealing his true form.
8. The kindness of teaching provisional teachings before ultimate teachings in accordance with the capacity of his audience.
9. The kindness of entering final *nirvana* to inspire appreciation for the rare presence of a Buddha.
10. The kindness of living only eighty years rather than a full life-span of one hundred so that the remaining blessings could be left to Buddhists of later ages and that the teachings would remain so they could be practiced.

The Dharma is the truth of the world that can guide sentient beings out of the ocean of the cycle of birth and death to the other shore of *nirvana*. All the Buddhas of the past, present, and future practice according to the Dharma so that they may end all obstacles, attain awakening, and benefit sentient beings forever. The sangha persistently brings benefit to sentient beings, for the monastic community is ever mindful of this task. The Triple Gem allows us to achieve ultimate liberation; this in and of itself is a great, vast act of kindness. Therefore, we should respect the Triple Gem with the utmost sincerity, and truly practice the Dharma.

A Buddhist sutra says, “Though those with gratitude are in the cycle of birth and death, their roots of virtue are not destroyed. Those who have no gratitude eliminate the roots of their virtue. That is why all Buddhas praise those with gratitude.” Buddhism emphasizes gratitude, particularly filial piety, for not only should we repay the kindness of our parents of this lifetime, but we should widen our focus to our parents of all our lifetimes. Gratitude should begin with one’s own family but should expand to encompass society as a whole and eventually grow to encompass all sentient beings, so that all one’s parents and family members for all time can attain liberation. Buddhism is an expression of filial piety and gratitude in its ultimate form.

Greed

貪

See: Poisons, three.

Grounds, ten

十地

See: Bodhisattva path, ten grounds of.

Guanyin Bodhisattva

觀音

See: Mountains, four great; noble ones of the West, three.

Guiyang School

為仰宗

See: Chan schools.

H

Hanshan, Master

憨山大師

See: Masters of the Ming dynasty, four.

Harmony, Six Points of Reverent

六和合僧

It is said that, “As long as the precepts abide, so too will the monastic order; and as long as the monastic order abides, so too will the Dharma.” The Buddhist monastic community is called the *sangha* in Sanskrit, which means “harmonious community.” This is because the *sangha* practices and lives in harmony. All must eliminate the same afflictions and realize the same truth. They are unified in body, speech, and mind according to six points called the “six points of reverent harmony.” These points are as follows:

1. *Harmony in view through sharing the same understanding*
(見和同解)

This means to share a common view and share an understanding of the Dharma. The Dharma is accepted as the highest standard for all matters, a proper course that cannot be abandoned.

2. *Moral harmony through sharing the same precepts*
(戒和同修)

Everyone is equal under the monastic precepts, such that by developing the habit of observing the rules, life will be fair and reasonable.

3. *Economic harmony through sharing things equally*
(利和同均)

Equitable distribution of economic resources and sharing together in the benefits and welfare of those resources will ensure that everyone can live safely and contentedly.

4. *Mental harmony through shared happiness* (意和同悅)

Sharing the same goals and ideals, without comparing oneself to others, seeing things in terms of success or failure, or keeping score of who is right or wrong. This creates a harmony that is broad-minded in purpose.

5. *Verbal harmony through avoiding disputes* (口和無諍)

This is the harmony that comes from not using unwholesome speech: no one is dishonest, harsh, divisive, or speaking idle chatter. Instead, people speak to one another sincerely and tactfully.

Heaven

6. *Physical harmony through living together* (身和同住)

This means having conduct that does not violate others and is built upon mutual respect and support so that the community can live together in equality and harmony.

The monastic community is a crucible that molds one's nature and character. It is a force that collectively maintains the true Dharma and brings liberation to sentient beings. This is how important the monastic community is. The six points of reverent harmony not only lay the foundation for the monastic community, but they also establish a family system that has been transformed by Buddhism, is pure and loving, and can be used as a basis for a peaceful and happy society.

Heaven

三界二十八天

See also: Dharma realms, ten; difficulties, eight; heaven of the thirty-three gods.

There are many religions that believe in the existence of heaven and hell, and Buddhism, too, affirms their existence. In Buddhist cosmology, heaven is divided into twenty-eight levels. These twenty-eight heavens exist within three different realms: the desire realm, in which there exists six levels of heaven, the form realm, in which there exists eighteen levels of heaven, and the formless realm, in which there exists four levels of heaven.

1. *Six Heavens of the Desire Realm* (欲界六天)

The beings who live in the six heavens of the desire realm are very similar to human beings. They have material bodies and physical

needs just as we do, and they enjoy the spiritual life. These beings also excessively indulge in the desires for food, drink, and sex; this is why it is said that these heavens are located in the “desire realm.” The six heavens of the desire realm are:

1. Caturmaharajika Heaven (四天王天), also known as the heaven of the four kings.
2. Trayastrimsat Heaven (忉利天), also known as the heaven of the thirty-three gods.
3. Yama Heaven (夜摩天), also known as the heaven of timely restraint.
4. Tusita Heaven (兜率天), also known as the heaven of contentedness.
5. Nirmanarati Heaven (化樂天), also known as the heaven of joyful creation.
6. Paranirmita-vasavartin Heaven (他化自在天), also known as the heaven of robbing others’ pleasure.

In addition to the six heavens mentioned above, there are also five other domains within the desire realm: the human realm with its four continents, the *asura* realm, the animal realm, the hungry ghost realm, and the hell realm.

2. *The Eighteen Heavens of the Form Realm* (色界十八天)

The beings who reside in the heavens of the form realm lack the desire for sex, food, and drink. They also are superior to human beings in beauty, spiritual love, community, and social organization. These beings are sustained by the pleasure of meditation as we are sustained by food. This is why they are known as the heavens of the “form realm”:

Heaven

Heavens of the first *dhyana*:

1. Brahma-parisadya Heaven (梵眾天), also known as the heaven of the followers of Brahma.
2. Brahma-purohita Heaven (梵輔天), also known as the heaven of the ministers of Brahma.
3. Mahabrahma Heaven (大梵天), also known as the heaven of the great Brahma.

Heavens of the second *dhyana*:

4. Parittabha Heaven (少光天), also known as the heaven of limited radiance.
5. Apramanabha Heaven (無量光天), also known as the heaven of infinite radiance.
6. Abhasvara Heaven (光音天), also known as the heaven of radiant sound.

Heavens of the third *dhyana*:

7. Parittasubha Heaven (少淨天), also known as the heaven of limited purity.
8. Apramanasubha Heaven (無量淨天) also known as the heaven of infinite purity.
9. Subhakrtsna Heaven (遍淨天), also known as the heaven of pervasive purity.

Heavens of the fourth *dhyana*:

10. Punyaprasava Heaven (福生天), also known as the heaven produced by virtue.
11. Anabhraka Heaven (福愛天), also known as the heaven of lovers of virtue.

12. Brhatphala Heaven (廣果天), also known as the heaven of bountiful fruits.
13. Asamjnissattvah Heaven (無想天), also known as the heaven without thought.
14. Avrha Heaven (無煩天), also known as the heaven without affliction.
15. Atapa Heaven (無熱天), also known as the heaven without heat.
16. Sudarsana Heaven (善見天), also known as the heaven of skillful vision.
17. Sudrsa Heaven (善現天), also known as the heaven of skillful manifestation.
18. Akanistha Heaven (色究竟天等), also known as the supreme heaven of the form realm.

3. *The Four Heavens of the Formless Realm* (無色界四天)

Those beings who reside in the heavens of the formless realm have already completely transcended the impediments caused by sex, food, and the physical form. They are not attached to any form of appearance and only have a purely spiritual existence. Just as in the form realm, these beings subsist on meditative bliss and consciousness itself. The heavens of the formless realm are:

1. Akasanantyaayatana Heaven (空無邊處天), also known as the heaven of limitless space.
2. Vijnananantyaayatana Heaven (識無邊處天), also known as the heaven of limitless consciousness.
3. Akimcanyaayatana Heaven (無所有處天), also known as the heaven of nothingness.

4. Naiva-samjnanasamjnayatana Heaven (非想非非想處天), also known as the heaven of neither thought nor non-thought.

The twenty-eight heavens mentioned above may be considered superior or inferior to each other in terms of how pleasurable they are, but they are all still realms of delusion, for it is impossible for heavenly beings to escape the cycle of birth and death. That is why the *Lotus Sutra* says, “The turmoil of the three realms is like a burning house, for they are filled with a host of sufferings that are terrible and frightening to behold.” The three realms are full of the suffering of birth, old age, sickness, and death, and these sufferings harass the bodies and minds of sentient beings like a house on fire, preventing us from dwelling in peace. That is why sentient beings should look for a way out of the three realms. Only by attaining *nirvana* can we be completely liberated.

Heaven of the Thirty-Three Gods

三十三天

See also: Heaven.

There is a heaven beyond: the heaven of the
thirty-three gods.

Beyond the sky are the heavenly immortals.

Such heavenly immortals were once ordinary
people,

Though one doubts that the minds of ordinary
people are so resolute.

In Buddhist cosmology, there are many layers of heavenly realms, but these realms are not so far away that they cannot be reached. As long as ordinary individuals strive to do good and accumulate merit, they have the same opportunity to be reborn in heavenly realms as heavenly beings.

There is one heavenly realm called *sanshisian tian* (三十三天), “heaven of the thirty-three,” or “heaven of the thirty-three gods.” This does not mean that there are thirty-three heavens. The heaven of the thirty-three gods is merely one heavenly realm among twenty-eight, including the six heavens of the desire realm, the eighteen heavens of the form realm, and the four heavens of the formless realm. The heaven of the thirty-three gods is one of the six heavens of the desire realm and is ruled by Sakra-devanaminindra, also known as Lord Indra. Within Chinese folk religion, Lord Indra is aligned with figures such as the Jade Emperor or the Lord of Heaven.

This particular heaven is notable in Buddhism because the Buddha once went there for three months to teach the Dharma to his mother, Queen Maya, to repay her kindness for giving birth to him. During this time when the Buddha was gone, King Udayana of Kausambi had fallen sick over his longing for the Buddha. His ministers consulted with the Venerable Maudgalyayana, known as the disciple who was foremost in supernatural powers. Maudgalyayana used such powers to transport craftsmen to where the Buddha was teaching so that they could directly observe the Buddha’s glorious appearance and carve a five-foot tall statue of the Buddha using the best sandalwood. This is said to be the beginning of the tradition of carving Buddha images.

Among the six realms of existence, the heavenly realms are where living beings have the greatest karmic rewards and enjoy

the greatest pleasure. Heavenly beings are still subject to the five signs of decay and re-entry into the cycle of birth and death after they have exhausted their positive karma. But, when compared to the human realm, heavens still have many attractive qualities. For example, the bodies of heavenly beings emit light, and they can fly freely wherever they please. The extreme pleasures of their existence exceeds any pain: palaces and gardens are prepared for their use, and their sublime clothing and food manifest at a single thought. There is no need to work or rush about as there is in human life, nor is there any worry of hunger or want.

The Buddhist sutras say that among the various distinctions of heavenly beings, those who are taller have garments that shine more brightly. For example, beings of the Brahma-parisadya Heaven do not wear clothing at all, for they are naturally cloaked in garments of sublime radiance.

H The levels of meditative concentration that are possible in the heavenly realms are more enjoyable than those of the human realm. Heavenly beings are also considerably taller and live longer than human beings. In terms of height, a height of six feet is about average for modern humans, but beings in the Caturmaharajika Heaven reach a height of nine hundred feet if calculated in our measurements. With each successively higher heavenly realm, the average height of the beings who reside there increases, with the supreme heaven of the form realm being home to beings with the gigantic stature of 265,000 kilometers. The distance from Taipei to Kaohsiung in Taiwan is only 380 kilometers; which should give us an idea of the colossal height of these heavenly beings. If a human being were to gaze up at one, it would be like an ant looking up at one of us—we could not help but marvel at such perfection and likely feel that such a state is far beyond our reach.

Considering the life span of heavenly beings, it is a blessing for a human being to live to the age of seventy, while anyone who lives to be one hundred is respected by all. Even Pengzu, the Chinese sage who was said to live for eight hundred years, would pale in comparison to the longevity of heavenly beings.

How long do heavenly beings live? Beings who reside in the Heaven of the Thirty-three Gods live for five hundred “heavenly years,” which is equivalent of nine million human years. In the highest formless heaven of neither thought nor non-thought, beings live for eighty thousand large *kalpas*. Such longevity is beyond measure.

Buddhism does not say that we should be satisfied with rebirth in heaven, though a heavenly rebirth should still be praised, for it requires many lifetimes of cultivating the ten wholesome actions—entire *kalpas* of performing acts of generosity and upholding the precepts. To be reborn in the higher heavenly realms even requires attaining levels of meditative concentration. For this reason, there is a Chinese saying, “Being reborn in heaven is its own reward. Immortality is not attained just by seeking it.”

Hell

十八地獄

See also: Avici hell; dharma realms, ten; difficulties, eight.

In Buddhism, doing good leads to rebirth in heaven and doing bad means falling into hell. Ideas about hell have long had a great and profound influence upon the folk beliefs of China, in addition to Buddhism having its own concepts of heaven and hell. In Buddhist thought, there are eighteen levels of hell, which are comprised of the eight cold hells of Arbuda Hell, Nirarbuda Hell, Atata Hell, Apapa

Hell

Hell, Huhuva Hell, Utpala Hell, Padma Hell, and Mahapadma Hell; the eight hot hells of Samjiva Hell, Kaslasutra Hell, Samghata Hell, Raurava Hell, Maharaurava Hell, Tapana Hell, Mahatapana Hell, and Avici Hell; the isolated hells; and the adjacent hells. Details for each of the eighteen hells are listed below:

1. *Arbuda Hell* (頹浮陀地獄)

Arbuda means “blister,” and in this hell, sentient beings are so tormented by the harsh cold that their skin breaks out in blisters.

2. *Nirarbuda Hell* (尼羅浮陀地獄)

Nirarbuda means “bursting blister” because the cold has penetrated the skin all the way to the bone, the blisters covering the body burst open.

3. *Atata Hell* (阿吒吒地獄)

Due to the intense cold of Atata Hell, sentient beings suffering there cannot move their lips, and are only able to utter the sound “atata” with their tongue.

4. *Apapa Hell* (阿婆婆地獄)

Due to the even more intense cold of Apapa Hell, sentient beings suffering there cannot move their lips, and are only able to utter the sound “apapa” with their tongue.

5. *Huhuva Hell* (喉喉婆地獄)

Due to the increasingly extreme cold of Huhuva Hell, sentient beings suffering there cannot move their lips, and are only able to utter the sound “huhuva” with their tongue.

6. *Utpala Hell* (漚波羅地獄)

Utpala means “blue lotus.” This refers to how the skin of sentient beings suffering in Utpala Hell bursts open under the extreme cold, resembling blue lotuses.

7. *Padma Hell* (波頭摩地獄)

Padma means “red lotus.” This refers to how the flesh of sentient beings suffering in Padma Hell bursts open under the increasingly extreme cold, resembling red lotuses.

8. *Mahapadma Hell* (摩訶波頭摩地獄)

Mahapadma means “great red lotus.” This refers to how the flesh of sentient beings suffering in Mahapadma Hell splits open under the increasingly extreme cold, such that their whole body appears covered with giant, red lotuses.

9. *Samjiva Hell* (等活地獄)

Samjiva means “being revived.” Sentient beings who have committed serious crimes fall into Samjiva Hell, where there are punished by being cut, stabbed, ground up, and flailed. After they have died, they are immediately revived and brought back to life by a cool breeze so that they may continue to suffer.

10. *Kalasutra Hell* (黑繩地獄)

Kalasutra means “black rope.” Just as a carpenter measures out lumber, the soldiers of hell first use a black rope to measure the bodies of those who have been consigned to this hell for punishment, after which they proceed to chop and saw their bodies into pieces.

Hell

11. *Samghata Hell* (堆壓地獄)

Samghata means “multitude,” referring to the multitude of torture devices that are gathered together in order to punish those sentient beings who have committed serious crimes.

12. *Raurava Hell* (叫喚地獄)

Raurava means “wailing.” In this hell, the soldiers of hell throw sentient beings into a giant cauldron, where they are boiled alive and scream and wail in pain. This hell is filled with those who have committed acts of killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, and consuming intoxicants.

13. *Maharaurava Hell* (大叫喚地獄)

Maharaurava means “loud wailing.” In this hell, after the soldiers of hell have boiled sentient beings alive, the wind of their karma revives them, and they are driven onto a hot iron plate where they are fried alive, screaming and wailing loudly from their extreme suffering. This hell is filled with those who have committed acts of killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, and lying.

14. *Tapana Hell* (燒炙地獄)

Tapana means “roasting fires.” This hell is surrounded by a wall of iron that is heated by intense fires so that everything inside and outside is roasted and broiled, burning the flesh of the wicked beings reborn there.

15. *Mahatapana Hell* (大燒炙地獄)

Mahatapana means “great roasting fires.” Here, the soldiers of hell put wicked beings within a wall of iron, which is then burned with raging fires until it glows red-hot both inside and outside, roasting

them alive. Next, the soldiers skewer the wicked with iron pokers so that they can be burned alive in the flames.

16. *Avici Hell* (無間地獄)

Avici means “uninterrupted torment,” for the wicked condemned to this hell experience infinite suffering without respite or pause. This is the hell of extreme suffering; all those who commit the five great violations or slander the Mahayana fall into this hell.

17. *The Isolated Hells* (孤獨地獄)

The isolated hells are spread throughout the four directions and are generated by the negative karma of each individual. Some are located within the four continents, others are in mountain valleys, on mountain tops, or in the open countryside. In these hells, one is isolated without any companionship.

18. *The Adjacent Hells* (近邊地獄)

The adjacent hells are isolated locations spread throughout the four directions, similar to the isolated hells. Some are near rivers, while others are underground, and some are situated in the open air; they have no set location.

Among the three lower realms, beings in hell receive the most suffering. Sentient beings fall into the hells and experience suffering in accordance with their karma. Buddhas, on the other hand, manifest themselves in the hell realms to liberate sentient beings in accordance with their compassion and vows. For example, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva vowed: “Not until hell is vacant shall I become a Buddha; only when all sentient beings are liberated will I attain *bodhi*.” Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva considered, “If I do not enter

hell, then who will?” enabling him to teach liberation throughout the hell realm, liberating beings from suffering.

History of Buddhism

部派佛教

See also: Chan schools; non-Buddhist schools, six; schools of Chinese Buddhism, eight.

India is the birthplace of Buddhism, but Buddhism disappeared from India after only about sixteen hundred years of development. The history of Buddhism that spanned these centuries can be divided into three periods:

1. *The Period of Early Buddhism* (原始佛教時期)

This period begins from the time of the Buddha until roughly one hundred years after the Buddha's final *nirvana*. This also includes the time when King Asoka was on the throne. During this period, Buddhism retained much of the theory, system, and thought that was present during the time of the Buddha.

2. *The Period of Sectarian Buddhism* (部派佛教時期)

This period covers from roughly one hundred to four hundred years after the final *nirvana* of the Buddha. During this time, the Indian state of Mathura produced Mahadeva, one of the great transmitters of Buddhism. He authored five controversial theses that lead to the first schism within the sangha. Those who approved of these five theses formed the Mahasamghika School, while those who disapproved formed the Aryasthavira School (which later became the Theravada School). These two schools continued a process of division until there were ten sects that descended from

the Aryasthavira School and eight sects that descended from the Mahasamghika School (another source lists eleven Aryasthavira sects and nine Mahasamghika sects). This process following the first schism became known as the “secondary divisions.” Because Buddhism during this time split into many different schools and sects, this is known as the period of Sectarian Buddhism.

3. *The Period of Mahayana Buddhism* (大乘佛教時期)

This period roughly covers from four hundred years after the Buddha’s final *nirvana* until Buddhism disappeared from India. Having gone through the early and sectarian periods, Buddhism had become an academic institution that was strictly focused on the study of doctrine, resulting in a disconnect between Buddhism and society. At this time, there were some who had the great aspiration of the bodhisattva and thus inaugurated a new Buddhist movement with the goal of restoring the spirit of Early Buddhism while also adjusting to contemporary developments. As this movement was predicated on bringing benefit to others, it became known as *mahayana*, “great vehicle” Buddhism.

In contrast to Mahayana Buddhism, the Buddhism of the sectarian period became known as *Hinayana*, “small vehicle” Buddhism. In *An Overview of the Sectarian Buddhist Thought of India*, Master Yanpei (1917-1996) puts forward ten major reasons for the divisiveness of this period:

1. The democratic freedoms of the monastic system.
2. Differences among the various teaching traditions.
3. Differences in each group’s use of language.
4. The impact of current trends.
5. Regional cultural influences.

Huanglong School

6. Lack of unanimity in viewpoint.
7. Growing division and complexity within the oral tradition
8. Diverse personal temperament
9. Disagreements between reformists and traditionalists.
10. Divergent doctrines within sutras themselves.

Regardless of the reasons behind Buddhist schisms, there is still a saying in Buddhism that, “While there are many skillful means, there is only one way back to the source.” Fundamentally, Buddhism is the teachings of the Buddha, which at their core have their own consistent character. Even though there are differences between Mahayana and Hinayana, the Northern and Southern transmissions, esoteric and exoteric teachings, and other such differences, we can still say, “Differences can be found within what is the same, and similarities can be found amid what is different.” Different types of Buddhism should be approached with a spirit of mutual respect and harmony, in which everyone is honored and appreciated. Only in this way can the continued survival of the true Dharma be assured, so that Buddhism will not fade away as it has in India.

Houses, Five

五家

See: Chan schools.

Huanglong School

黃龍派

See: Chan schools.

Huayan School

華嚴宗

See: Schools of Chinese Buddhism, eight.

Human Realm

人勝諸天

See also: Saha world; dharma realms, ten.

Hard it is to obtain a human body, but now I
 have obtained one;
 Hard it is to hear the Buddha's teaching, but now
 I have heard them.
 If I do not liberate myself in this lifetime,
 Then in which lifetime will I ever do so?

The *Agama Sutra* contain the parable of “the blind turtle and the floating ring of wood” which compares the difficulty of obtaining a human rebirth to a blind turtle poking its head through a wooden ring floating on a vast ocean. The turtle in the parable only rises to the ocean's surface once every hundred years, during which the ring of wood floats on the ocean's surface and is tossed around by the wind and waves. The chance of obtaining a human rebirth is as rare as the blind turtle poking its head through the wooden ring when it rises to the surface. This is how difficult it is to be reborn as a human being.

The Buddha has also said, “The chance of not being reborn as a human being is as vast as the great earth; while the chance of being reborn as a human being is as small as the dirt under one's fingernail.” This clearly shows how precious human life is. A human rebirth is the key factor which determines whether one rises or

falls among the other realms of existence; and although the karmic reward of human life is not as pleasurable as that of the heavenly realms, it is superior to all the heavenly realms in three areas:

1. *Superior Bravery* (勇猛勝)

Heavenly beings are addicted to the pleasures of desire and thus make no further progress in cultivation. Human beings, on the other hand, have an incredible propensity to endure suffering. As long as human beings feel that what they do has significance, they can put up with all manner of trials and tribulations as they strive to put it into practice. The moral strength of humanity to carry on bravely and strive unceasingly is superior to heavenly beings.

2. *Superior Recollection* (憶念勝)

Heavenly beings are addicted to the pleasures of desire and are unwilling to use their minds to think and create. As a result, their wisdom is very dim. On the other hand, humanity can ponder and distinguish all phenomena. By remembering the past, contemplating the present, and planning for the future, human beings build up and improve their knowledge. This is what has allowed human civilization to advance by leaps and bounds.

3. *Superior Pure Practices* (梵行勝)

Since heavenly beings are addicted to the pleasures of desire, they no longer cultivate positive karma. The human realm is located on the cusp between what is noble and vulgar. With neither too much suffering nor too much pleasure, humanity is able to be self-aware and can know shame. Even when human beings fall down, they can still produce the energy required to move towards goodness and thereby save themselves from the mire of wickedness.

Due to these three characteristics, not only is the human realm superior to heaven, but no other realm of existence can match it. According to the Buddhist sutras, all the Buddhas of the past became Buddhas in the human realm, and all Buddhas of the future will practice and attain awakening in the human realm as well. Therefore, now that one has been born a human being, one should fully utilize these advantages to make progress day by day: use bravery and perseverance to build up one's bodhisattva practice; use recollection and wisdom to confer benefits upon society; and apply the wisdom of liberation to pursue pure practices with diligence. Only in this way will one avoid being unworthy of this human birth.

Hungry Ghost

餓鬼

See: Dharma realms, ten; difficulties, eight; lower realms, three.

I

Icchantikas Can Attain Buddhahood

闡提成佛

Upon awakening, the Buddha proclaimed: “Marvelous, marvelous! All sentient beings have the Tathagata’s wisdom and virtue.” This means that all sentient beings have “Buddha nature” and can thus become Buddhas. The *Great Nirvana Sutra* goes further and explains that even *icchantikas*, beings said to have no good roots at all, possess Buddha nature, which abides within them unchangingly. They, too, can ultimately obtain Buddhahood.

The earliest proponent of the “*icchantikas* can attain Buddhahood” doctrine was Master Daosheng of the Eastern Jin dynasty. Daosheng was a student of Kumarajiva, and after studying the incomplete, six fascicle *Great Nirvana Sutra* translated by Faxian and Buddhahadra (4th-5th cent. CE), Daosheng proposed the idea that *icchantikas* can attain Buddhahood.

However, at that time, the complete *Great Nirvana Sutra* had not yet been transmitted to China, and the general consensus among Buddhist scholars was that *icchantikas* had no Buddha

nature and therefore could not become Buddhas. Consequently, most orthodox scholars considered Daosheng's views heretical for diverging from the Buddha's teaching, so they excommunicated him from the sangha. Three years later, in 421 CE, Dharmaraksa (385-433 CE) translated the forty fascicle version of the *Great Nirvana Sutra* in Liangzhou. This version of the sutra clearly states that "all *icchantikās* have Buddha nature, and they all can attain Buddhahood." It was only then that everyone felt unanimous admiration for the outstanding intellectual insight and profound achievement of Master Daosheng.

It is said that after Daosheng had suffered the rejection of the other scholars, he went to Mount Huqiu in Jiangsu Province where he gathered stones as disciples. When he explained that *icchantikās* can attain Buddhahood to these stones, so convincing was his argument that the stones bowed. This story has become popularly remembered in the phrase, "When Daosheng teaches even the stones bow in affirmation."

The Sanskrit word *icchantika* has been translated variously into Chinese as *duan shangen* (斷善根), "destroying good roots," *xin bujuzu* (信不具足), "lacking faith," *jiyu* (極欲), "extreme in desire," *datan* (大貪), "of great greed," *wu zhongxing* (無種性), "lacking the seeds of goodness," and *shaozhong* (燒種), "burnt seeds of goodness." In summation, *icchantikās* are considered to be incorrigible beings who have lost all roots of goodness and are unable to attain Buddhahood. According to the *Lankavatara Sutra*, there are two kinds of *icchantika*:

1. *Ichchantikas of Eradicated Goodness* (斷善闡提)

This type of *icchantika* fundamentally lacks the causes for liberation, for they hold wicked views and have eradicated their good

roots through great misdeeds such that they are unable to attain Buddhahood. Such people disparage the Mahayana Dharma, do not believe in the positive and negative effects of karma, and commit the five great violations.

2. *icchantikas of Great Compassion* (大悲闍提)

These are the bodhisattvas who, in accordance with their compassionate vow to liberate all sentient beings, intentionally do not enter *nirvana*. For example, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva vowed, “Not until hell is vacant shall I become a Buddha; only when all sentient beings are liberated will I attain *bodhi*,” and so he belongs to this class of *icchantika* of great compassion.

Besides its presentation in the *Great Nirvana Sutra*, the doctrine that *icchantikas* can attain Buddhahood is also supported by the Tiantai, Huayan, and other Mahayana schools, which advocate that all sentient beings can attain Buddhahood, because Buddha nature always exists and is possessed by all beings. However, the Faxiang School still holds that there are sentient beings who cannot attain Buddhahood and so the question of whether or not *icchantikas* can attain Buddhahood still remains a controversial issue within Buddhist circles. But given the story that when Daosheng taught even the stones bowed in affirmation, one must consider that, if even non-sentient things like stones can bow in affirmation, then clearly Buddha nature permeates the whole world and everything is vitally alive.

People sometimes ask questions like, “Can mountains, rivers, plants and trees attain Buddhahood?” For an answer, we can turn to Chan Master Zhenguan’s (1269-1341 CE) reply to Dharma Master Daowen (ca. 13th-14th cent. CE): “You are so concerned as

to whether plants and trees can attain Buddhahood, but what good does that do you? What you should be concerned about is how you will attain Buddhahood.”

Thus, whether or not plants and trees can attain Buddhahood is not the important issue. As long as we are able to realize that this mind is the Buddha, then the mountains and rivers, plants and trees will attain Buddhahood together with us.

The basic spirit of Buddhism is this: as long as one generates the aspiration for awakening, anyone can attain Buddhahood. Therefore, we should not belittle ourselves, but rather affirm our own ability to attain Buddhahood. This is what is most important.

Ignorance

無明煩惱

See also: Poisons, three; dependent origination; wisdom, three kinds of; wisdom, four kinds of.

The *Notes on Compendium of Mahayana Treatise* states, “The Dharma is nothing other than the practice of transforming ignorance into awakening and transforming defilement into purity, and the key to these transformations is wisdom.” “Wisdom” here means an understanding of principles, most specifically an understanding of the principles of cause and effect. Conversely, not understanding cause and effect and misinterpreting karma is considered “delusion,” or “ignorance.” Ignorance is both the source of affliction, and an affliction itself.

Afflictions have many names. They are called “obstructions” because they obstruct the progress of students of Buddhism. They are called “obscurations” because they obscure our true Buddha nature. Afflictions are also called “entanglements” because they can tie up

the mind like a coiled rope and are called “shackles” because they restrain the freedom of the body and mind. Since afflictions can pollute the nature of the mind, they are also called “stains,” and because they gather like dirt as we do our daily tasks, they are called “dust.” Afflictions can act like a flood that washes away our morality, so they are called “violent torrents,” and since they can propel us into the cycle of birth and death, they are sometimes called a “force.” In the sutras, afflictions are also compared to a burning flame, a poison arrow, a savage beast, and a dangerous chasm. Whatever they are called, afflictions are those things which torment the body and mind, cause us to act out of ignorance, and lead us back to the cycle of birth and death. To practice Buddhism means to fight against the afflictions, for if we wish to obtain the freedom of liberation, we must defeat them.

I An ordinary person has many built up habitual tendencies. For example, we will naturally want to possess the people, activities, and things that please us; this is greed. In contrast, we want to get rid of the people we loath, the activities we don't like, and the things we find displeasing; this is anger. Because of this, we are pleased when things go according to our wishes and are angry when things go awry. This shows a total lack of understanding of reality and is ignorance. Greed, anger, and ignorance lead to a host of other afflictions, such as avarice, stinginess, jealousy, selfishness, hatred, attachment, animosity, carelessness, and tension. Buddhists must cultivate the threefold practice of morality, meditative concentration, and wisdom to eliminate the afflictions of greed, anger, and ignorance.

The sutras say that human beings have eighty-four thousand afflictions. The afflictions of human beings are as numerous as the grains of sand in the Ganges River, and without some form of spiritual cultivation, there is no way that these afflictions can

be corrected. In the *Universal Gate Chapter of the Lotus Sutra*, the Buddha tells Aksayamati Bodhisattva, “If there be countless hundreds of millions of billions of living beings experiencing all manner of suffering who hear of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva and call his name with single-minded effort, then Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva will instantly observe the sound of their cries, and they will all be liberated.”

The Buddha tells us to engage in spiritual cultivation such as single-mindedly focusing on Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva for the sake of liberation, though there are many other forms of practice such as reciting Amitabha Buddha’s name, chanting sutras, paying homage to the Buddha, visualizing the Buddha, listening to the Dharma, upholding the precepts, performing good deeds, and other such things. The faith, power, and joy that comes from spiritual practice can all eliminate and purify the affliction of ignorance.

Affliction is ultimately caused by the ignorant pursuit of things outside of the mind, for we are confused and deluded by external reality. To combat this, we must let go of the self. By forgetting about the self, we can merge our “small self” into the greater self, such that we can expand our self-centered mind into one that cherishes all sentient beings. In this way, we can remove the affliction of ignorance and recover ourselves.

Immeasurable Minds, Four

四無量心

The Buddhist path is a long one. If one lacks an immeasurable aspiration for awakening, it is like driving an automobile somewhere without enough gas: there is no way you will reach your

destination. Therefore, students of Buddhism should aspire to develop the “four immeasurable minds.”

The four immeasurable minds are four qualities that bodhisattvas should equip themselves with to liberate all sentient beings:

1. *Immeasurable Loving-kindness* (慈無量心)

There is a Buddhist saying that “Loving-kindness is what brings happiness.” Loving-kindness is fundamental to Buddhism, for without loving-kindness, all of the Dharma is nothing more than the teachings of Mara.

Immeasurable loving-kindness is the wish that sentient beings be happy. However, many misunderstand the forgiveness of loving-kindness as indulging others. Loving-kindness requires wisdom. True loving-kindness is a kind of purified and refined love, and constitutes service and assistance that is selfless and wise. Loving-kindness is given without seeking anything in return and tries to fulfill the wishes of others. Loving-kindness is the combination of love, wisdom, vows, and generosity.

2. *Immeasurable Compassion* (悲無量心)

There is a Buddhist saying that “Compassion is what relieves suffering.” The mind of immeasurable compassion wishes to free sentient beings from suffering. If a bodhisattva cannot feel empathy and compassion towards those who are suffering, he will not seek to attain Buddhahood and guide those who are unawakened by relieving their suffering and making them happy. It would be impossible for such a bodhisattva to complete the path to awakening. Therefore, immeasurable compassion is a prerequisite for a bodhisattva’s attainment of Buddhahood.

3. *Immeasurable Joy* (喜無量心)

While loving-kindness is to bring happiness to sentient beings, joy is to bring joy to all sentient beings. The distinction is that “happiness” comes from the five sense-objects (of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch) while joy is entirely mental. The Buddha was born into this world for a great purpose, and this great purpose was “to demonstrate the teachings, and the benefits and joy of their meaning and practice.” Therefore, in the Buddhist sutras, we often read how the Buddha’s disciples were “happily eager to hear” when they asked for teachings and how they “jumped for joy” and “joyously gave praise” after teachings were given. Clearly, Dharma joy and meditative bliss are the true treasure of Buddhism.

4. *Immeasurable Equanimity* (捨無量心)

The four immeasurable minds can bring one wondrous happiness. However, as we develop loving-kindness and joy, it is easy to also generate attachment, and as we become more compassionate, it is easy to generate sorrow as well. That is why we must develop equanimity and an even mind so that we can eradicate discrimination and delusion, making it possible for all sentient beings to enter the Buddhist path. The mind of immeasurable equanimity is the unsurpassed wisdom of the essential emptiness of the three spheres. In Buddhism, we commonly talk about “letting go.” This is because one can receive only after having let go of things, just as one can only advance by loosening one’s pace. Those who teach the Dharma and liberate sentient beings should stabilize themselves in equanimity and let go of all attachment to loving-kindness, compassion, and joy, for in this way, even greater accomplishments can be achieved.

Impermanence

The *Flower Adornment Sutra* states: “Always enjoy the practice of gentleness and patience; find your repose in the four immeasurable minds of loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity.” Loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity are what we should rely on and where we can find our repose. The development of the four immeasurable minds begins with the concept of putting ourselves in others’ positions so that we develop the view of considering others. Next, by trying to understand the feelings of others through our own and by imagining what it would be like to be in their place, we will naturally develop the four immeasurable minds.

Impermanence

無常苦空

See also: Mindfulness, four bases of.

“Impermanence,” *anitya* in Sanskrit, is opposed to the concept of eternalism and describes how all phenomena cannot remain fixed and constant but undergo a process of arising, extinction, and change. Conditioned phenomena are impermanent because they arise through the coming together of causes and conditions and pass into extinction once those causes and conditions are finished. The doctrine of “impermanence” means that there is not one single thing in this world that is unchanging and exists forever.

All life must undergo a process of birth, old age, sickness, and death. All the things will exhibit the changes of formation, abiding, destruction, and cessation. Even the thoughts of sentient beings undergo the impermanence of arising, abiding, change, and extinction. Once impermanence shows up, even loving and caring couples

and family members will find it impossible to remain together. Just like a flock of birds roosting together in the forest, once the disaster of impermanence arrives, each bird flies off on its own to save itself. Some people spend their whole lives currying favor as they toil away ceaselessly, and yet, they realize nothing from such effort. Their lives are a constantly changing mirage, for they fully experience the suffering of not getting what they want. Some people achieve fame and fortune through their efforts but can lose it all and become prisoners locked behind bars in a single night, a fate common to many. There are even some who struggle bitterly, barely achieving their long sought honor and riches, and with the sudden intervention of impermanence, their life's work is for naught.

The *Great Perfection of Wisdom Treatise* likens the world's impermanence to a dream, a mirage, a bubble, a shadow, a dew-drop, and a flash of lightning. Impermanence is as terrible as a wolf or a tiger. Like a murderous demon, impermanence can rob the practitioner of his or her life at any time, and so the wind of impermanence, the knife of impermanence, and the messenger of impermanence never leaves our side.

If sentient beings gain a profound understanding that all phenomena entail suffering, emptiness, and impermanence, they will be able to remove themselves from the unreal world with all its many illusions and follow the path to liberation. When we recognize the implications of impermanence, suffering, and emptiness, such an understanding will certainly lead to a more positive attitude towards the path. For example:

- Because of the world's impermanence, suffering, and emptiness, all change is uncertain. This helps us to realize that all beings' true Dharma nature is equal.

Intrinsic Nature

- As we recognize the truth of the world's impermanence, suffering, and emptiness, and know that all phenomena come about through causes and conditions, so we must grasp this present moment and broadly create wholesome connections for a positive future.
- As we have fixed this concept of the world's impermanence, suffering, and emptiness in our minds, so we will not be led astray by the claims of supernatural power and false teachings.

Because the world is impermanent, there is suffering. Because all phenomena lack intrinsic nature, there is emptiness. When success becomes failure, this is impermanence, but when disaster is transformed into a blessing, this is also impermanence. When we understand that even impermanence itself lacks intrinsic nature and practice diligently, we can transform adversity into good fortune and ignorance into awakening. In this way, one can avoid catastrophe and enjoy peace and health.

Impurity

不淨

See: Contemplations, five.

Intrinsic Nature

明心見性

The ancient sages of the Chan School spent their lives journeying, disregarding their own safety as they crossed mountains and forded rivers in their quest to visit famous teachers. Though they

suffered greatly, they did not complain. Their goal was to see their intrinsic nature by illuminating the mind and attain Buddhahood through awakening.

What is meant by the expression “see intrinsic nature by illuminating the mind”?

National Master Zhongfeng (1263-1323 CE) said:

The mind is of several types. The physical mind is part of the body that we inherit from our parents. The conditioned mind creates distinctions between good and bad, and positive and negative in each moment. The spiritual mind is beyond worldly distinctions, is free from confusion, and unchanging. This mind is luminous, preeminent, and unique. The spiritual mind is not greater in sages or lesser among ordinary people. In the ocean of birth and death, it is like a bright pearl that illuminates the sea. On the shore of *nirvana*, it is like a moon that hangs in the sky.

“Intrinsic nature” means the part of us which is unchanging. It is a quality that is originally complete in and of itself, an intrinsic part of us that cannot be influenced or altered by external factors. It is the fundamental essence that pervades the universe and the source of all being. Intrinsic nature has many names, including “Buddha nature,” “Dharmakaya,” “body of inherent purity,” “Tathagata nature,” and “awakened nature.” It is the inherent nature of the Buddha and the awakened nature of sentient beings.

To “see intrinsic nature by illuminating the mind” means that we must reach a clear and thorough understanding of our

intentions and how they change. That is why one must awaken through seeing intrinsic nature in order to attain Buddhahood.

The Buddhist sutras compare the mind to a mirror. If it is clear, it can reflect all things. However, if the mirror is obscured by the dust of affliction, then it cannot reflect what is real. The sutras also compare the mind to a treasure chest that stores many rare and precious gems, such that it can supply us with inexhaustible wealth. It is because the mind is diseased by greed, anger, and ignorance that we cannot be free.

Because sentient beings do not understand or know themselves, we so often hear people lament that they cannot express how they feel, that others cannot know the pain they bear, or that they do not know what they are thinking. But is the mind really that difficult to fathom? The mind produces all consciousness, so we must look for a mental cure to our mental illness.

How can we see intrinsic nature by illuminating the mind?

I There is a saying that “the finest jade must be cut.” The same can be said for polishing the mirror of the mind, for unless we put the effort in to polish it, how can we expect it to reflect clearly? The Buddha said, “All sentient beings have the Tathagata’s wisdom and virtue, but they fail to realize it because they cling to deluded thoughts and attachments.” Just as the light of the sun can be obscured by clouds, only by removing the clouds of affliction can the inherent nature of the mind be revealed in all its glorious brightness. How do we see intrinsic nature by illuminating the mind? The Dharma teaches us that we must practice, for only with practice will we be able to recognize our intrinsic nature.

Since ancient times, many great monks and sages have undertaken such practices as cultivating austerities, reciting sutras, chanting Amitabha Buddha’s name, sitting in meditation, serving

the community, and teaching the Dharma for the benefit of others. In this way, they have refined the nature of the mind, and in the end, they attained supreme awakening, saw their intrinsic nature by illuminating the mind, and attained Buddhahood.

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I

J

Jeta Grove

祇園

See: Vulture Peak and Jeta Grove.

Jivaka

開心羅漢

See: Arhats, eighteen.

Joy

喜

See: Immeasurable minds, four; winds, eight.

K

Kalika

騎象羅漢

See: Arhats, eighteen.

Kalpa

三大阿僧祇劫

The sutras say, “The Buddha spent three great *kalpas* to perfect his merit and wisdom, and one hundred small *kalpas* to perfect his primary and secondary marks.” This passages shows that it takes an incalculable amount of time to practice for the attainment of Buddhahood.

What is a *kalpa*? In the Buddhist reckoning of time, the smallest possible unit of time is the *ksana*, which is a single moment; a split-second. The largest unit of time is the *kalpa*, of which there are three types: small *kalpas*, medium *kalpas*, and large *kalpas*. A medium *kalpas* is the length of twenty small *kalpas*. A large *kalpas* is the length of four medium *kalpas*. A large *kalpa* is the length of time that a world system undergoes a cycle of formation, abiding, destruction, and void.

The sutras offer a metaphor to describe the length of a small *kalpa*. Imagine a ten year-old child. Suppose that this child only grows one year older for every one hundred years that elapse for the rest of us. Now, suppose this child has aged in this manner to be 80,000 years-old. Now that he is 80,000 years old, he grows one year younger for every one hundred years that elapse for the rest of us. When this child is once again ten years old, a small *kalpa* will have elapsed.

Twenty of these small *kalpas* constitute a medium *kalpa*, and four medium *kalpas* equal a large *kalpa*. These four medium *kalpas* correspond to different stages in the life of a world system: one medium *kalpa* in which a world system is formed, one medium *kalpa* in which a world system abides and flourishes, and one medium *kalpa* in which a world system is in decline, and one medium *kalpa* in which a world system is completely destroyed. This cycle constitutes a complete large *kalpa*. The four stages are described in greater detail below:

1. *Kalpa of Formation* (成劫)

During this period of time, all matter arises, such as mountains, rivers, trees and plants, and the earth itself. Sentient beings arise afterwards. According to the *Generation of Worlds Sutra*, the formation of a world system begins with the stirring of the winds of sentient beings' karmic connections. This changes the natural world and creates mountains, rivers, and land. Later, sentient beings are reborn into the world, one after another.

2. *Kalpa of Abiding* (住劫)

During this period of time, the matter and sentient beings in the world system have settled. The various small *kalpas* that occur

within the *kalpa* of abiding may either be characterized by beings living longer lives or beings living shorter lives. Sometime during this *kalpa* will occur the “three minor calamities” of war, pestilence, and famine.

3. *Kalpa of Destruction* (壞劫)

During the *kalpa* of destruction, the world system will be destroyed by the three calamities of water, fire, and wind. First, all sentient beings will be destroyed, followed by all matter. The three calamities of fire, wind, and water will each last for a small *kalpa*, destroying various parts of the world system. The Buddhist sutras say, “fire will burn the heavens of the first *dhyana*, water will flood the heavens of the second *dhyana*, and wind will blow away the heavens of the third *dhyana*.” During the *kalpa* of destruction, the desire realm will be completely destroyed, and only the heavens of the fourth *dhyana* of the form realm and the heavens of the formless realm will remain.

4. *Kalpa of Void* (空劫)

During the *kalpa* of void, the world system has been destroyed. Only those beings in the heavens of the fourth *dhyana* continue to exist, for everything else enters a long period of void. This period of time is when a world system has yet to be formed, and phenomena have not yet come into being.

At the conclusion of the *kalpa* of void, another cycle of formation, abiding, destruction, and void begins. Each stage in the cycle lasts for approximately 320 million years. For the entire cycle to reach its conclusion requires about 1.28 billion years.

Karma of the Three Time Periods

The *Forty-Two Sections Sutra* states that human life hangs between an in-breath and an out-breath, indicating how short and impermanent human life is. But regardless if life lasts for three large *kalpas* or a single instant, we should make the best use of our time so that we can use our limited time to support and realize the value of life.

Kanakabharadvaja

舉鉢羅漢

See: Arhats, eighteen.

Kanakavatsa

喜慶羅漢

See: Arhats, eighteen.

Karma of the Three Time Periods

三世因果

Know the causes in your past lives,
By looking at what befalls you in this;
Know your future outcome,
By looking at what you are doing now.

The verse above summarizes the teaching of karma, one of the most important teachings of Buddhism: the success or failure, wealth or poverty of this lifetime are the result of one's actions created in the past, and the positive or negative actions performed now will determine how fortunate or unfortunate one's future will be.

Buddhism emphasizes that cause and effect are carried throughout the "three time periods," the past, present, and future.

There is a saying that, “The karma one creates does not disappear even after a hundred thousand *kalpas*. One will still garner reward or retribution when cause and condition come together.” Cause and effect in the past, present, and future is the basis of the cycle of birth and death. The karma that one creates does not go away, no matter how much time has elapsed, and will manifest itself when the conditions are right.

Karma of the three time periods does not necessarily refer to past lives, present life, and future lives; it could also mean last year, this year, and next year; or yesterday, today, and tomorrow; or even the previous moment, this moment, and the next moment. In short, the three time periods are the past, the present, and the future.

However, Buddhism teaches that “all conditioned phenomena are impermanent,” and since all phenomena in the world are impermanent, they certainly cannot exist forever and never be destroyed. How is it that karma can persist throughout past, present, and future in an endless cycle?

In the Buddhist sutras, karma is often compared to a seed. Consider a soy plant: through the process of planting, sprouting, maturation, and fruition, a soy plant will produce seeds in reserve. After a period of time, the stem of the soy plant that has flowered and produced seeds will dry up as the whole plant withers and dies. But, once the seeds it had been holding meet the right conditions, they will sprout, put forth shoots, flower, and generate seeds once more. How the karma of sentient beings continues to produce effects is very much like this process.

Karma can also be seen as our habitual tendencies. Just as a bottle of perfume retains its fragrance long after the perfume has been used up, karmic effects will continue to influence future

causes. Whenever there is a cause, once the proper conditions mature, there will surely be a karmic effect.

The doctrine of karma in the past, present, and future not only enables our lives to have a future, to have hope and light, but at the same time, it also proves that Buddhism is not a religion that believes in “predestination.” Buddhism holds that the actions of each individual can determine their own destiny. Whether a person’s life is blessed or cursed is all created by their own karma, and one experiences the consequences of their own actions in terms of positive and negative causes and effects. One who commits many injustices will come to a bad end, while always performing good deeds will increase one’s virtue and wisdom. It is better to perform good deeds than to accumulate wealth, for in the end, you can only take your karma with you. Doing good deeds and creating positive causes is the only everlasting wealth.

Karma, Three Types of

三業

As human beings, we all live in one world together and possess similar learning and abilities, yet there is a wide disparity over the amount of fortune or misfortune we experience. Why is this? This is because of the differences in our past karma.

All sentient beings are endowed with the same life force and inherent nature, yet some enjoy all the freedoms of the heavenly realms while others suffer through cyclic existence in the lower realms. Why is this? Because each and every sentient being has created their own karma.

Karma is the action produced by one’s body, speech, and mind. Thus, karma is often separated into the “three kinds of karma”:

physical karma, verbal karma, and mental karma. Examples of each are as follows:

1. *Physical Karma* (身業)

Any act in which your own happiness is built upon the suffering of others constitutes an unwholesome act of physical karma. Examples include: using knives, guns, or poison to kill living beings; using sticks, clubs, and rocks to injure and wound; using trickery to rob or steal from others; swindling and embezzling; using money or good looks to seduce men and women; and violating ethics and morality.

Any act that is of benefit to others constitutes a wholesome act of physical karma. Examples include: helping others out of difficulty; forgiving others so they can be happy; donating financial resources; giving others any kind of advantage; respecting ethical standards; and refraining from committing any wrongdoing.

2. *Verbal Karma* (口業)

Examples of unwholesome acts of verbal karma include: habitually employing harsh words and sowing discord; regularly spouting falsehoods and worthless chatter; harping solely on the shortcomings of others; reporting solely on the mistakes of others; uttering artful deceptions; harming others through rumors and innuendo; and harming, deceiving, or embarrassing others.

Examples of wholesome acts of verbal karma include: encouraging others; commending others; overlooking the faults of others; making known the good that others do; expressing useful opinions, speaking with honest words; and praising, helping, or benefiting others.

Ksitigarbha

3. *Mental Karma* (意業)

Any mental state that involves greed, anger, or wrong views constitutes an unwholesome act of mental karma. Examples include: scattered and fanciful desires, wishes that benefit oneself by harming others, angry and vicious hatred, personal resentment that blames heaven or other people, wrongheaded and dangerous delusions, and wrong views that deny cause and effect.

Examples of wholesome acts of mental karma include: treating others equally; expressing joy to others; refraining from venomous thoughts of resentment; curbing meaningless rage; holding reasonable and correct views; having pure and good wisdom; and keeping one's mind away from greed, hatred, and wrong views.

Buddhism's doctrine of karma is a wondrous teaching that is both sensible and reasonable. The fortunes and misfortunes of life are all generated by one's own body, speech, and mind. There is no one else who can control our fate; the only one who can control that is ourselves.

There is a saying in Buddhism, "You can take nothing with you except your karma." So let us create more wholesome karma through our body, speech, and mind!

Kindness

恩

See: Gratitude; means of embracing, four; virtues of the Buddha, three. *See also:* Loving-kindness.

Ksitigarbha

地藏

See: Mountains, four great.

Kumarajiva

鳩摩羅什

See: Translators, four great Chinese.

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K

L

Labor, Communal

出坡

Communal labor in a Chan temple, variously referred in Chinese as *chupo* (出坡), *puqing* (普請) or *pupo laozuo* (普坡勞作), refers to a system of rules by which the entire monastic community, including both senior and junior members, perform manual labor together. The system of communal labor was implemented throughout China during the Tang dynasty and encompassed chores like hauling firewood, bringing in water, sweeping the temple grounds, picking flowers and tea, harvesting crops, temple construction, airing out the sutra library, and other forms of manual labor.

During communal labor, everyone from the abbot on down to those living in the monastery dormitories, except those assigned to official monastery business, gathers at the designated location. This practice truly shows what the monastic community can accomplish when they come together as well as exemplifying the ideals of self-reliance, democracy, and equality.

In Buddhism, communal labor is a kind of religious practice and a method of learning. Through communal labor, one comes to understand the sanctity of work, the importance of service, and will come to feel that one is a valuable person.

There are many stories of the great monastics of the past and their achievements through practicing communal labor. For example, Huineng, the Sixth Patriarch of the Chan School, came to know Buddha nature while pounding rice with a mortar and pestle. Chan Master Fayuan (991-1067 CE) served as a monastic cook at Guangjiao Temple in Ye County, Ruzhou, where he attained awakening after suffering many hardships.

Chan Master Baizhang Huaihai's *Rules of Purity for a Chan Temple*, an early system of Chinese monastic rules, features a passage describing communal labor:

The monastic community shall form ranks and proceed to the designated location for communal labor. On both the way out and way in, no one should engage in idle chatter or frivolous behavior; nor shall there be any careless wandering about or whispering among the ranks. Everyone must go out together and come back together; no one is permitted to run off on their own. While engaged in communal labor, everyone should be hardworking and diligent.

Communal labor in a monastery setting is not the same as worldly manual labor. Communal labor is actually a unique form of spiritual practice and is one of many methods for attaining awakening put forth by the Chan School.

Today, the practice of communal labor has expanded beyond the monastic community to include lay volunteers, and the nature of the work itself has also become more varied. Examples include participating in temple mailings and publications, setting up the assembly hall, serving food and tea, working in the kitchen, ushering people during events, and even cleaning the Buddha statues before the lunar New Year and tidying up the temple grounds. All this work requires that members of the laity be sought out to join in such communal labor, thereby ensuring that the monastic community will have more time for the social outreach work of spreading the Dharma.

When members of the laity participate in communal labor, not only do they maintain the upkeep of the temple or monastery, but through such communal work, they can forge connections, develop wisdom, gain experience, and mature in their understanding. This is the best form of practice for developing one's merit and wisdom.

During the time of the Buddha, the elder Sudatta not only donated Jeta Grove Monastery to house the Buddha and support his teachings, but he also went to the monastery every day to sweep the stupas and courtyards and keep the monastery grounds clean. This attitude of treating the monastery or temple like one's own home is the best model to follow for those who help to maintain a temple.

Lianchi, Master

蓮池大師

See: Masters of the Ming dynasty, four.

Linji School

臨濟宗

See: Chan schools.

Lotus Sutra

法華經

See: Parables of the *Lotus Sutra*; schools of Chinese Buddhism, eight.

Loving-Kindness

慈

See: Contemplations, five; immeasurable minds, four; mountain gate.

Lower Realms, Three

三途

See also: Avici hell; dharma realms, ten; hell; realms of existence, six.

Among the ten dharma realms, four are supramundane realms while the other six, also known as the “six realms of existence,” are mundane realms. Among these six realms, three are fortunate rebirths, and three are unfortunate rebirths. The three unfortunate realms are also known as the “three lower realms” and include the animal realm, the realm of hungry ghosts, and the hell realm.

1. *Animal Realm* (畜生)

In Chinese, rebirth into the animal realm is called *chusheng* (畜生), “domesticated birth,” referring to the many animals that have been domesticated by humans. Rebirth in the animal realm is also sometimes called *bangsheng* (傍生), “sideways birth,” because most animals do not walk upright as humans do, and are more often horizontal or “sideways.”

Animals lack knowledge; they injure and kill each other, are made to bear burdens, are beaten, and are killed for food by humans. In this way, they suffer from all manner of pain and torment.

Animals are sometimes categorized by where they live into those that fly, walk on land, or swim in water, or in terms of when they are active into those that are primarily active during the day (diurnal), during the night (nocturnal), or those who can be active during the day or night (cathe-merial). There are five karmic causes that can lead to rebirth as an animal: breaking the precept against stealing, failing to repay loans, killing living beings, disliking to hear and receive the teachings, and using any means to prevent people from gathering to hear the Dharma.

2. Realm of Hungry Ghosts (餓鬼)

Beings in this realm are always starving and are cowardly with many fears; thus, they are called *egui* (餓鬼), “hungry ghosts.” They are impeded from eating or drinking in three ways. First, they are subject to external impediments, for due to their karma, the springs and lakes that they see are transformed into blood and pus, which they cannot consume. Second, they are subject to internal impediments because their throats are as narrow as a pin, their mouths burn with fire, and their bellies are as big as drums; even if they try to eat or drink, they still cannot chew or swallow. Third, even if there are no physical impediments, because of the effects of their karma, whatever they chew and swallow is transformed by fire into burning charcoal, so they still suffer bitterly from thirst and hunger.

There are ten karmic causes that lead one to suffer rebirth as a hungry ghost: minor acts of negative physical, verbal, and mental karma, having many desires, having ill-intentioned desire,

jealously, holding wrong views, dying while still attached to the necessities of life, dying from hunger, and dying from thirst.

3. *Hell Realms* (地獄)

Hell is the most despicable domain of all in the desire realm. In Chinese, it is sometimes called *di* (底), “bottom,” for among all things, it is the lowliest. It is also called *ju* (局), “limited,” for beings reborn in hell feel constricted and lose their freedom. Since hell has no advantages or benefits, it is also called *wuyou* (無有), “non-possession.”

There are many forms of hell known by a plethora of names, but classically, they are divided into a group of eighteen hells. Among these, the pain and suffering of Avici Hell is the most horrifying. The karmic causes that can lead to rebirth in Avici Hell are:

1. Committing any of the five great violations: killing one’s father, killing one’s mother, killing an arhat, shedding the blood of a Buddha, and creating a schism in the monastic community.
2. Malicious slander against the Triple Gem or disrespecting the sutras.
3. Misappropriating the property of the monastic order, insulting monks and nuns, indulging in sexual desire within a monastery, or killing members of the monastic community.
4. Impersonating a monastic, squandering monastic property, cheating the laity, or disobeying the monastic rules and precepts.
5. Stealing property from the monastic order.

Lower Realms, Three

Since the torment of those in hell is so extreme, their minds are in turmoil and cannot spare any effort to receive the Dharma. The minds of animals are dominated by ignorance, and thus, they cannot be inspired by the Dharma. As hungry ghosts are subject to extreme hunger and thirst, and their bodies are burned by great flames, they, too, are unable to accept the Dharma. Even in the heavenly and *asura* realms, beings are able to indulge in so many pleasures that they do not comprehend the value of listening to the Dharma. Only the human realm, where happiness and suffering are roughly equal, offers the best opportunity for diligently listening to the Dharma. That is why it is said that among the six realms of existence, rebirth in the human realm is the most rare and admirable.

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L

M

Mahakasyapa

大迦葉

See: Disciples, ten great.

Mahakatyayana

迦旃延

See: Disciples, ten great.

Mahasthamaprapta

大勢至

See: Noble ones of the West, three.

Mahayana

大乘

See: History of Buddhism; Mahayana and Hinayana.

Mahayana and Hinayana

大乘小乘

See also: History of Buddhism.

In Sanskrit, *yana*, “vehicle,” is symbolic of how sentient beings are transported from the afflictions of this shore over to *nirvana* of the other shore.

The terms “Mahayana” and “Hinayana” appeared sometime after the Buddha’s final *nirvana* with the rise of what came to be known as Mahayana Buddhism. *Mahayana*, the “great vehicle,” is also called the “bodhisattva vehicle,” the “supreme vehicle,” the “excellent vehicle,” and the “foremost vehicle.” In contrast with the Mahayana, *Hinayana*, “small vehicle,” means a minor or narrow vehicle, referring to those teachings that can carry sentient beings with a spiritual capacity for self-benefit to the minor level of realization. It is also sometimes called the “*sravaka* vehicle.”

Hinayana thus became a derogatory reference to the early Buddhist sects. Hinayana Buddhism considers Sakyamuni Buddha its religious leader and denies the reality of an independent self. The main goal for the Hinayana is self-liberation and, as such, the Hinayana constitutes the path for the *sravakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* who only eliminate their own afflictions and liberate themselves. Mahayana Buddhism, on the other hand, conceives of innumerable Buddhas spread across the ten directions throughout the past, present, and future, denies the reality of independent phenomena, and considers *nirvana* to have a positive meaning. The Mahayana advocates the path of the bodhisattva, a mode of practice that can be followed by both monastics and the laity and emphasizes benefiting both oneself and others.

Hinayana Buddhism reveres texts such as the *Agama Sutra*, the *Four-Part Vinaya* and the *Five-Part Vinaya*, as well as the many treatises such as *Great Compendium of the Abhidharma Treatise*, the *Six Treatises of the Sarvastivada School*, the *Generating Wisdom Treatise*, the *Treasury of Abhidharma Treatise*, and the *Establishing the Truth Treatise*, among others.

Mahayana Buddhism reveres texts such as the *Wisdom Sutra*, the *Lotus Sutra*, the *Flower Adornment Sutra*, the *Middle Way Treatise*, and the *Compendium of Mahayana Treatise*, among others. Although followers of the Mahayana acknowledge the value of Hinayana sutras, they still see them as secondary to the Mahayana sutras. Hinayana followers, on the other hand, do not consider the Mahayana sutras and treatises to have been taught by the Buddha.

Generally, we speak of the northern transmission of Buddhism into China and East Asia as Mahayana, with the southern transmission into Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia as Hinayana. Mahayana is the bodhisattva vehicle, which can carry many people with its great capacity and limitlessly powerful teachings. Hinayana Buddhism is only concerned with the individual practice and as a vehicle is more like a bicycle, only able to carry a single person.

Today, Buddhism has spread throughout the world, and Buddhists should not condemn or disparage each other. We should be more ecumenical when referencing Mahayana or Hinayana, and instead use “Southern Buddhism” to refer to the Buddhism of places like Sri Lanka, Burma, and Thailand, and “Northern Buddhism” to refer to the Buddhism of places like China, Korea, and Japan.

Buddhist traditions vary according to the unique historical, environmental, social, and cultural background of the many countries it has traveled to. But in terms of Buddhism’s general principles, everyone is still united. For example, all Buddhists

share a belief in the Triple Gem of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and share a respect for the Buddha as the religious leader of Buddhism. There is a shared acceptance of the Tripitaka with its collection of sutras, vinayas, and sastras preserved in both the Pali Canon and the Chinese Canon, which both contain the teachings of Early Buddhism. The community of practitioners for both traditions include the monastic order and the laity, and in both cases, the monastic order plays the leadership role with the laity serving as protectors of the Dharma. The monastic orders of both traditions must rely upon senior Dharma teachers and the giving and receiving of monastic rules and precepts. Both traditions share the same basic precepts of monastic precepts, the five precepts, and the eight precepts, and share a body of common doctrine including the three Dharma Seals, the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, the twelve links of dependent origination, the threefold training, the five aggregates, the six sense organs, objects, and consciousnesses, the thirty-seven aspects of awakening, and the Middle Way.

All Buddhists take refuge in the Triple Gem and then proceed to receive and observe the five precepts. There is the shared body of ceremonies which includes sutra chanting, *mantra* recitation, veneration of the Buddha, and sitting meditation. All Buddhists celebrate the Buddha's birthday. Both traditions share the tradition of the triple robe and alms bowl and have the ending of affliction and attainment of liberation as their final goal. All monastics in the northern tradition and southern tradition shave their heads and are ranked by the number of years since their ordination and their spiritual attainments.

The monastics of both traditions treat the cultivation of compassion and wisdom as their main spiritual practice, walking the

Middle Way that is neither painful nor pleasurable. Likewise, the monastics of both traditions see teaching the Dharma as their responsibility, and benefiting sentient beings as their career. It is important that the northern and southern transmissions, the Mahayana and Hinayana, stand together in the spirit of ecumenical unity, so that they can marshal an even greater force for the expansion of Buddhism.

Maitreya Bodhisattva

龍華三會

The first day of the first month in the lunar calendar is the birthday of Maitreya Bodhisattva, who will descend to this world in the future. Long ago, Maitreya Bodhisattva and Sakyamuni Buddha practiced together, but because of differences in their vows, Sakyamuni Buddha has already attained Buddhahood while Maitreya Bodhisattva is still cultivating the bodhisattva path in the inner court of Tusita Heaven.

Maitreya Bodhisattva is this world's future Buddha. His awakening was prophesized by Sakyamuni Buddha himself: when Maitreya's four thousand year life in the heavenly realm comes to an end (that is about five billion, seven hundred and sixty million years in the human world), he will descend and be reborn in this Saha world. He will attain Buddhahood under the dragon-flower tree and teach the Dharma in three assemblies, known as the "three dragon-flower assemblies."

During the three dragon-flower assemblies, all of those who have not yet obtained awakening through Sakyamuni Buddha's teachings in the past will obtain awakening in the order of their spiritual capacity: first those of high capacity, followed by medium

and then low. According to the *Bodhisattva Dwelling in the Womb Sutra*, the three dragon-flower assemblies will liberate the following groups:

The first assembly will contain 9.6 billion sentient beings and consist of all members of the monastic order who keep the precepts, since liberation should be brought to this group first.

The second assembly will contain 9.4 billion sentient beings and consist of those who have not yet joined the monastic order but who have already taken refuge in the Triple Gem and conduct themselves in accordance with the precepts and make offerings with respect. All such people in the assembly will be liberated.

The third assembly will contain 9.2 billion sentient beings and consist of those who have yet to observe the precepts, though they offer incense and pay homage to the Buddha, and may perhaps have recited the Buddha's name and made a few offerings, but did so with true faith. All such people in the assembly will be liberated as well.

Belief in both Maitreya Bodhisattva and Amitabha Buddha has been valued by Buddhist followers for centuries. Maitreya's Pure Land in Tusita Heaven possesses the following rare and superlative qualities:

1. Maitreya's Pure Land in Tusita Heaven is not far from this Saha world, and since it is also part of the desire realm, its practice of cultivation is somewhat easier. As long as one takes refuge in the Triple Gem, observes the precepts, acts with proper generosity, and in addition makes the vow to seek rebirth there by reciting "*Namo danglai xiasheng Milefo*," which means "Taking refuge in the future Buddha

Maitreya,” then one can gain rebirth in Maitreya’s Pure Land in Tusita Heaven. It is not necessary, as in the case of Amitabha Buddha’s Pure Land, to recite the name with single-minded devotion before one can attain rebirth there.

2. It is not necessary to generate the aspiration for awakening nor the mind of renunciation to seek rebirth in Maitreya’s Pure Land. Human and heavenly beings with good roots of high, medium, and low spiritual capacities who are intent on self-improvement can be reborn there.
3. Those who are reborn in the Pure Land of Tusita Heaven will come face to face with Maitreya Bodhisattva himself. They can hear him give teachings and will no longer backslide in their progress. Seeing the Buddha and receiving the teachings is much faster there than in Amitabha Buddha’s Pure Land.

Seeking rebirth in the Pure Land of Tusita Heaven does not mean that one wishes to enjoy the pleasures of Tusita Heaven but that one wishes to be reborn to learn from Maitreya Bodhisattva. When Maitreya Bodhisattva descends to the human world, one can hear his teachings during the three dragon-flower assemblies. By seeing the Buddha and listening to his teachings, one can eliminate suffering and liberate oneself from the cycle of birth and death. Only in this way will Maitreya Bodhisattva’s compassionate vow to establish a Pure Land in the heavens of the desire realm not have been made in vain.

Manas Consciousness

末那識

See: Consciousness, eight kinds of.

Manjusri Bodhisattva

文殊師利菩薩

See: Mountains, four great; non-duality.

Mantra

咒

See: Om mani padme hum; schools of Chinese Buddhism, eight.

Marks of Excellence, Thirty-Two

三十二相

It has been more than two thousand years since the Buddha passed into final *nirvana*, and sentient beings living in this Age of Declining Dharma are unable to personally venerate and look upon the major and minor marks of the Buddha's glorious appearance. The "major and minor marks" refer to the Buddha's bodily appearance. Those characteristics that can be observed in a glance are known as "major marks," while those that are not directly perceived but produce a feeling of pleasantness are known as the Buddha's "notable characteristics." As recorded in the *sutras*, the Buddha was endowed with thirty-two marks of excellence and eighty notable characteristics. The thirty-two major marks are as follows:

1. Feet that are planted flat on the ground without hollow spots.

2. Dharma wheels on the soles of the feet like with a thousand spokes.
3. Long, slender fingers that are as white as snow.
4. Flexible limbs that are neither coarse nor stiff.
5. Webbed fingers and toes that have connecting tissue.
6. Perfectly round heels without hollow or protruding spots.
7. Arched insteps that are perfectly formed front and back.
8. Thighs that are fine and round like those of a royal stag.
9. Arms reaching below the knee as stately as a mountain.
10. Retracted male organ that is concealed within the body.
11. The height of the body and the span of the arms being equal.
12. Each and every hair being dark in color.
13. Body hair is fine and curls up.
14. A golden complexion.
15. Light that radiates from the body in all directions for ten feet.
16. Fine, lustrous skin that is as soft as oil.
17. Feet, palms, shoulders, and crown that are perfectly formed and proportioned.
18. Both armpits are full without hollow or protruding spots.
19. Perfectly balanced body of solemn appearance.
20. Firm and erect stature without bends or humps.
21. Full and proportioned shoulders that are extraordinarily well-developed.
22. Mouth containing forty teeth.
23. Teeth that are white, close together, clean, and firm.
24. Teeth that are perfectly aligned with nothing out of place.
25. Full cheeks like those of a lion.
26. Saliva that can make food taste delicious.

27. Broad and long tongue that is soft and thin.
28. Voice that can be heard from afar.
29. Eyes that are dark blue and as clear as the great ocean.
30. Eyelashes that are uniquely special and extraordinary.
31. White tuft of hair between the eyes that emits light.
32. Fleshy protuberance on the head.

In the sutras, it is said that “It takes one hundred *kalpas* to perfect the primary and secondary marks of the Buddha, and the three incalculable *kalpas* to perfect the merit and wisdom of the Buddha.” The Buddha’s thirty-two marks did not simply appear; rather, they were achieved after ninety-one *kalpas* of practice. As stated in the *One Hundred Magnificent Merits Sutra*, a single mark adorned the Buddha’s body only after the practice of each of hundred types of merit. Even the Buddha’s broad and long tongue was only achieved after over hundreds and thousands of lifetimes of practicing the precept against lying. Clearly, becoming a Buddha requires the extensive cultivation of merit and wisdom before one can attain the perfect results.

Masters of the Ming Dynasty, Four

明末四大師

There have been generations of eminent monks throughout the history of Chinese Buddhism who, through their teaching, not only became famous in their own time, but left a model for future generations to emulate. Towards the end of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644 CE), there were four eminent monks who were well-known for both their scholarship and their moral conduct, who later became known as “The Four Great Masters of the Late

Ming Dynasty.” They were masters Hanshan, Zibo, Lianchi, and Ouyi.

1. Master Hanshan (憨山大師)

Master Hanshan (1546-1623 CE) had a given name of Deqing (德清), a courtesy name of Chengyin (澄印), and came from Quanjiao in Anhui Province. At the age of twelve, he studied the sutras with Master Yongning (1483-1565 CE) at the Baoen Monastery in Nanjing. At the age of nineteen, he received full ordination and went to Mount Louxia where he received training in the Chan School from Master Fahui (1500-1579 CE).

That same year, while listening to Master Wuji Mingxin’s (1512-1576 CE) teachings on the *Profound Meaning of the Flower Adornment Sutra*, Master Hanshan Deqing experienced a sudden realization. As the passage “eternal abiding of the ocean-seal array of phenomena” was being discussed in connection with the “ten gates of profundity,” he experienced the perfect non-obstruction of the dharma realm. The following year, he gave his explanation of the *gongan* “reciting the Buddha’s name with depth and sincerity” during a seven-day meditation retreat and, from then on, his training with his teachers began to bear fruit.

In 1583 CE, Master Hanshan Deqing lectured on the *Profound Meaning of the Flower Adornment Sutra* in which nearly ten thousand people attended, for which he was honored by those both inside and outside the imperial court. Moreover, he once wrote out a copy of the *Flower Adornment Sutra* using his own blood to repay his parent’s kindness. Emperor Shenzong praised and commended his effort, and presented him with gold leaf paper.

In 1600 CE, Master Nanshao Daozhu (ca. 1600 CE) invited Master Hanshan Deqing to come to Baolin Monastery at Caoxi

and re-establish the Chan School. He selected monks to undergo ordination, established a monastic seminary, and codified the Chan monastery rules, thereby reinvigorating the Chan tradition. In 1603 CE, Master Hanshan Deqing was implicated in the trumped up charges that imprisoned Master Zibo and was exiled to Leizhou. General amnesty issued in 1606 CE allowed him to return to Caoxi. However, while restoring the main hall of the Nanhua Monastery, he was falsely charged with misappropriation of donated funds and was held on a boat in the Furong River for two years awaiting judgment, during which he fell very ill and nearly died.

In 1614 CE, the empress dowager died, and an imperial edict was especially issued permitting him to return to the monastic order. Later on, he built a small hermitage beneath Wuru Peak, where he devoted himself to the Pure Land practice of reciting the name of Amitabha Buddha.

Hanshan Deqing's thought combines elements of Chan and Huayan philosophy, and he promoted the idea of practicing both Chan and Pure Land Buddhism and the unification of the three religions of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. He was a prolific writer and authored such works as the *General Explanation of the Surangama Sutra*, *Outline of the Flower Adornment Sutra*, *Explanation of the Complete Enlightenment Sutra*, and the *Explanation of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra*, among others.

Hanshan Deqing died in 1623 CE at the age of seventy-eight. Later generations called him "Master Hanshan." This honorific title derives from a particular journey he took to Mount Wutai, in which he was struck by the sublime beauty of Mount Han (*hanshan*) to the north and thus named himself after the mountain. Furthermore, he so admired the personal character of Master Qingliang Chengguan (738-839 CE) that he gave himself the courtesy name Chengyin.

2. Master Zibo (紫柏大師)

Born with the given name Zhenke (真可), his courtesy name was Dagan (達觀), and he gave himself the name Zibo. Later generations would call him Master Zibo (1543-1603 CE). In his youth, he was a wandering hero, driving away the wicked and protecting the good. At the age of seventeen, he joined the monastic order under the direction of Master Mingjue (ca. 16th cent.) at Yunyan Monastery in Huqiu and received full ordination at the age of twenty. He went on a three-year retreat in the Jingde Monastery in Wutang.

Master Zibo arrived in the capital in the first year of Emperor Shenzong's reign (1573 CE) and spent the next nine years as a close disciple of Master Pianrong (ca. 16th cent. CE) of the Huayan School and Master Xiaoyan (1512-1581 CE) of the Chan School.

Master Zibo saw that Buddhists had difficulty reading the old loose-leaf format of the Tripitaka, so he worked towards creating a bound woodblock edition. He started his preparations at Mount Wutai, basing the bound edition on the Ming dynasty Northern Tripitaka with supplementary reference to the Ming dynasty Southern Tripitaka to create what is known as the "Fangce Tripitaka." Four years later, he moved to Jizhao hermitage on Mount Jing, where work on the printing blocks continued. This is why the edition is known as the "Mount Jing Edition."

Master Zibo strictly observed the monastic rules throughout his life as a monk. As abbot of the old Tantou Monastery, he once was visited by an old friend whom he had not seen in many years. The two were enjoying their conversation, and when mealtime arrived, they were still deeply engrossed in their conversation, such that Master Zibo unconsciously picked up his chopsticks and began eating. After taking a few bites, he then realized that he had

forgotten to make an offering to the Triple Gem before the meal. Master Zibo thereupon consigned himself to punishment with the cane, personally ordering an attending monk to give him thirty vigorous strokes of the cane while kneeling on the ground. He used the opportunity to warn others, saying, “The habitual tendencies of sentient beings from beginningless time are like oil that seeps into bread, so difficult it is to break these habits. Without painful punishment, they cannot be easily controlled!”

Master Zibo shared a warm and sincere friendship with Master Hanshan Deqing, and the two of them once discussed working together to expand the *Great Ming Record of the Transmission of the Lamp* as a way of reinvigorating the Chan School. This collaboration regrettably never came to be. Master Hanshan Deqing was falsely accused of unauthorized temple construction and exiled to Leizhou in Guangdong Province. By the thirty-first year of Emperor Shenzong’s reign (1603 CE), internal strife had erupted within the imperial court, and jealous individuals took advantage of the situation to slander and disparage others. As a consequence, Master Zibo was unjustly imprisoned and sentenced to death. Upon hearing his death sentence, he maintained his composure and said, “If this is the way of the world, why remain any longer?” He then composed the following verse:

A smile for some other reason,
Who could know that the great earth would
tolerate no dust?
Now everything is arranged, this life my mother
bore me is done,
For an iron tree to bring forth flowers awaits no
spring.

After reciting the verse, he then sat down, closed his eyes, and passed away. He was sixty-one years old and had been ordained for forty-one years.

3. Master Lianchi (蓮池大師)

Master Lianchi (1532-1612 CE) is considered the Eighth Patriarch of the Pure Land School. Coming from Renhe in Hangzhou, his given name was Zhuhong (祿宏), his courtesy name was Fohui (佛慧), and he gave himself the name of Lianchi (蓮池). He studied Confucianism from a young age and became an imperial scholar at the age of seventeen, having become renowned for his scholarship and upright conduct. Under the influence of a neighbor, he devoted himself to the Pure Land practice, and he would inscribe the words *shengsi shida* (生死事大), “the great matter of life and death,” to encourage himself to move forward.

At thirty-two, Lianchi Zhuhong joined the monastic order under Master Xingtian (ca. 16th cent. CE) of Wumen Monastery in Xishan and received full ordination from Master Wuchen (ca. 16th cent CE) at Zhaoqing Monastery. Not long afterwards, Master Lianchi Zhuhong journeyed around visiting different teachers, living the life of a wandering mendicant. In 1571 CE, he moved to Mount Yunlou in Hangzhou, where he lived in a deserted, ruined monastery and refined his practice of *samadhi* through reciting Amitabha Buddha’s name. Here and there, he taught the Dharma, gathering disciples, and later built a temple.

In 1584 CE, Lianchi Zhuhong composed the *Rebirth in Pure Land Anthology* in three fascicles; and in 1602 CE, he authored the *Impressions of the Surangama Sutra* in one fascicle. At that time, the full ordination ceremony had long been proscribed, so Master Lianchi Zhuhong had those seeking ordination furnish

themselves with a complete set of monastic robes and receive ordination in front of the Buddha image as authoritative confirmation. He also composed *Liturgy for the Water and Land Dharma Service* and *Liturgy for Yogacara Flaming Mouth Dharma Service* to bring relief to those suffering in the lower realms. He established pools for freeing living beings inside and outside the city and wrote *On Freeing Living Beings and Refraining from Killing* to warn against harming life.

All his life, Master Lianchi Zhuhong advocated the practice of reciting Amitabha Buddha's name. He condemned the variety of "crazy Chan" and took pains to explain how Chan and Pure Land could be cultivated together with an emphasis on the sutras. Later in life, he suffered from illness, but this only strengthened his resolve to do good works. He wrote the texts *Three Regretables* and *Ten Lamentables* to give his disciples direction.

In 1612 CE, Lianchi Zhuhong fell ill and died at the age of eighty-one. He became known to later generations as "Monk Yunqi" and "Master Lianchi."

4. Master Ouyi (滿益大師)

Master Ouyi (1599-1655 CE) is considered the Ninth Patriarch of the Pure Land School. His given name was Jiming (際明), his courtesy name was Ouyi (滿益), and he gave himself the name Babu Daoren (八不道人). He came from Mudu in Wuxian and studied Confucianism from an early age. He had written several dozen articles condemning Buddhism, but at the age of seventeen, he read Master Lianchi's *Casual Notes by the Bamboo Window*. These texts made him realize he had been wrong about Buddhism, and he burned all his previous writings. At the age of twenty, he became inspired to join the monastic order while chanting the

Original Vows of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Sutra. He was tonsured under Master Xueling (ca. 16th cent. CE), a disciple of Master Hanshan Deqing, and changed his name to Zhixu.

He received the bodhisattva vows at the age of twenty-six and spent the next year reading widely from the Vinaya. At times, he would fall seriously ill, so he focused his attention on gaining rebirth in the Pure Land. At the age of thirty, he became profoundly aware of the corrupt practices of the various schools of Buddhism, and henceforth was determined to spread teachings on the Vinaya. At the age of thirty-two, he wished to produce a commentary on the *Brahma Net Sutra*, so he put four lots before an image of the Buddha, drew the one indicating the Tiantai School, and then proceeded to make an in-depth study of the Tiantai doctrines.

As a person, Master Ouyi Zhixu was stern and meticulous. He despised fame and fortune, was firm in his observation and the precepts, and widely taught the Vinaya. He spent his days reading sutras and writing. He made a comprehensive study of the doctrines of the Faxiang, Chan, Vinaya, Huayan, Tiantai, and Pure Land schools, but placed special emphasis upon the Tiantai School. He also advocated the unification of Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism. In particular, he was well aware of the schisms and divisions among the various schools of Buddhism of his day and therefore strived vigorously to bring ecumenical harmony to them.

His thought could be summarized in his doctrine of “the three-fold training in a single thought” and the equivalency of reciting Amitabha Buddha’s name with the Buddha’s lifetime of teachings. During the Qing dynasty (1644-1911 CE), the Tiantai School began to rely upon Master Ouyi Zhixu’s sutra commentaries to teach their doctrines, resulting in the formation of the Lingfeng School

that integrated Chan, the sutras, and the Vinaya into the Pure Land teachings. This movement continues to this day.

In 1655, Master Ouyi died at the age of fifty-seven. He would be known by later generations as “Master Lingfeng Ouyi.”

Master Ouyi Zhixu was well-versed in the sutras and honored the Tiantai School in his studies. He was also conversant in the doctrines of the Huayan and Faxiang schools. His thought was a synthesis of nature and form, Chan and Pure Land, Confucianism and Buddhism, and provisional and ultimate truth.

Master Ouyi Zhixu was also deeply concerned with the decline of the Dharma, which he saw as a result of the long neglect of the Vinaya. Thus, he dedicated his life to furthering the spread of the Vinaya. After he received his bodhisattva vows at the age of twenty-six, Master Ouyi Zhixu was determined to read widely from both the Mahayana and Hinayana Vinaya, which laid the foundation for his study of the Vinaya. He also strictly observed the precepts, making him a *bhikṣu* of superb moral conduct. Master Ouyi Zhixu spent his entire life revitalizing the purity of the Chinese Buddhist schools, and for this, he will always be remembered.

Reading about the remarkable conduct of great monastics can inspire the minds of Buddhist disciples, and as such, in addition to reading Buddhist sutras, students of Buddhism should learn more about the lives of great monastics.

Maudgalyayana

目犍連

See: Disciples, ten great.

Meal Contemplations, Five

食存五觀

In the life of a monastic, walking, standing, sitting, and lying down are all forms of practice. Even the most ordinary tasks like getting dressed and eating food are also opportunities for practice. During meals, monastics practice what are called the “five contemplations.” Some monasteries even call their dining halls the “hall of the five contemplations.” The five contemplations are:

1. Assess the amount of work involved, weigh up the origins of the food. (計功多少，量彼來處。)

We should consider that every agricultural product requires the planting, irrigation, weeding, and harvesting of a farmer. Next, merchants ship and sell the food, which is then prepared by a cook into a fine meal. Then and only then is it placed before us. Moreover, all the tools, clothing, and supplies used by the farmers, merchants, and cooks every day are supplied by other groups of people. There is a Buddhist saying that, “In the contemplation of the Buddha, one grain of rice is a big as Mount Sumeru.” Not a single plate of food comes easily.

2. Reflect on one’s own moral conduct, perfect or not, take this offering. (忖己德行，全缺應供。)

During mealtime, one should reflect upon what one has done, even including one’s intentions and thoughts. Do they meet the expectations of proper moral conduct? Are they worthy of the donations of the faithful?

3. *Safeguard the mind against all error, do not give rise to hatred or greed.* (防心離過，不生瞋愛。)

Guarding against faults means avoiding the three poisons. When we eat, we should not generate thoughts of greed, anger, or delusion, but rather generate thoughts of kindness, compassion, joy, equanimity, and wisdom.

4. *Regard this food as good medicine, so as to treat the weakened body.* (正事良藥，為療形枯。)

In this world, hunger and thirst are unavoidable. Buddhism seeks to “practice the supramundane teachings by means of the mundane world,” and as such, the vast variety of foods should be seen as medicine for the body. There is then no need to discriminate as to how good, how clean, or how much food there is.

5. *In order to accomplish the Way, one deserves to accept this food.* (為成道業，應受此食。)

The food and drink is taken for the sake of allowing one to persevere in one’s practice in hopes of fulfilling the Buddhist path in the future and teaching the Dharma for the benefit of living beings.

Though five contemplations specifically mention aspects of monastic life, lay people should perform these contemplations as well. For, only in this way will one be able to express gratitude for the four kinds of kindness and help those who are suffering in the three lower realms.

Means of Embracing, Four

四攝

The four means of embracing are four different skillful means that are cultivated by bodhisattvas to provide benefit and bring relief to sentient beings. The four means of embracing are giving, kind words, altruism, and empathy:

1. *Giving* (布施)

For those who are poor, give them money, clothing, shelter, food, drink, and medicine. For those seeking knowledge to improve themselves, teach them and train them in skills, provide them with Buddhist sutras, and teach them the Dharma. For those who are fearful by nature, eliminate the fears that threaten and torment them, and give aid, comfort, and protection in crises and natural disasters to ensure their security and freedom both materially and spiritually. By giving in this way, people may generate faith, learn the correct path, and practice the Dharma.

2. *Kind Words* (愛語)

Praise those who have a moral character. Console those who have hardships. Give relief to those who are downcast, and encourage them to improve themselves. Help others obtain what they want, and provide them with limitless support. That being said, it is important to emphasize that kind words should not be hypocritical or dishonest. Kind words should be sincere and honest. A bodhisattva should come to know people's interests so he can give teachings that are interesting and in accordance with their capacity. He should praise the accomplishments of the Buddha and of practices such as generosity so that the wealthy are charitable and the

ignorant are awakened. This will lead to faith in the true Dharma and happiness for all.

3. *Altruism* (利行)

Altruism means to help others resolve their difficulties. It means to assist and facilitate the work of others and to help them complete worthy goals. When people become sick, give them medicine; when people fall on hard times, give them financial assistance. Generate a sense of sympathy and empathy. Create job opportunities for people to help and foster their success. In particular, apply the appropriate skillful persuasion to those who do not believe in the Dharma, to those who have broken the precepts, to those who are greedy and stingy, and to those with impaired intelligence. This will allow them to become secure in their faith and to understand how wholesome actions of body, speech, and mind can help to benefit both themselves and others. This will allow others to be happy and to rely upon the Dharma.

4. *Empathy* (同事)

“Empathy” in this sense means to use one’s wisdom to observe the conditions of others and assume the form that is most suitable to liberate them. In the case of soldiers, talk with them about military science, while as for business people, talk to them about business expertise. There is a Buddhist expression, “For those that can be liberated by a certain physical form, then teach the Dharma by manifesting that physical form.” Work with them in the same place, and do their same job, become their good friend, and show them how to turn away from unwholesome conduct. Join with them in practicing good deeds, and share equally with them the benefits of the Dharma.

The first of the four universal vows is, “Sentient beings are limitless, I vow to liberate them.” The hope is that everyone will learn from the compassion of the bodhisattvas and help to liberate all sentient beings by utilizing the four means of embracing.

Medicine

湯藥

See: Field of merit; offerings, four; parables of the *Lotus Sutra*.

Meditative Concentration

禪定

See: Merit and wisdom; path, noble eightfold; perfections, six; *samadhi*; spiritual wealth, seven kinds of; stopping and seeing meditation; training, threefold.

Mental Formations

行

See: Aggregates, five; dependent origination.

Merit

福

See: Dedication; field of merit; giving; merit and wisdom.

Merit and Wisdom

福慧雙修

See also: Dedication; field of merit; giving; perfections, six; *samadhi*.

Merit and wisdom are two qualities that should be cultivated together. “Cultivation of merit” includes all forms of positive

karma that benefit others, such as the first five of the six perfections: giving, morality, patience, diligence, and meditative concentration. Cultivating wisdom is the development of the last of the six perfections: *prajna*-wisdom, and includes those truths and concepts which benefit oneself.

According to the ninth chapter of the *Demonstration of Consciousness-Only Treatise*, those great practices of a bodhisattva which are related to wisdom are the “cultivation of wisdom,” while all others are the “cultivation of merit.” It is often said that to attain Buddhahood, bodhisattvas seek awakening from above (i.e. cultivate wisdom) and bring liberation to sentient beings below (i.e. cultivate merit). Since the cultivation of both merit and wisdom are known as the supreme practices for attaining Buddhahood, they are known as the “supreme practices.”

In Buddhism, there is a saying that one who cultivates merit but not wisdom is like an elephant wearing a jeweled necklace, while one who cultivates wisdom but not merit is like an arhat who receives few offerings. Buddhists should take heed and cultivate both merit and wisdom, for neither one should be discarded. There are passages throughout the sutras that underscore the need to cultivate both merit and wisdom. Even those seeking rebirth in the Western Pure Land cannot do so without merit and the roots of goodness as their causes and conditions. The second chapter of the *Essays on the Fivefold Teachings of the Flower Adornment Sutra* says, “As for the actual practice contained within the final teachings (of the Mahayana), one who makes the initial aspiration for awakening cultivates both merit and wisdom, which is why there is nothing else to cultivate upon attaining Buddhahood.”

There is no special form of practice to attain Buddhahood other than just the cultivation of merit and wisdom. How can we

cultivate merit and wisdom in our everyday lives? The best way is through cultivating the six perfections:

1. *Giving* (布施)

Whether one gives the gift of wealth, the gift of the Dharma, or the gift of fearlessness, to do so in a way that the giver is empty, the recipient is empty, and the gift itself is empty is to achieve the highest state of giving.

2. *Morality* (持戒)

To cultivate morality does not just mean to observe the precepts in their external form. The cultivation of morality is emphasizing the true spirit and meaning of the precepts with their principle of not violating others, but rather respecting and benefiting them.

3. *Patience* (忍辱)

Patience does not mean passively not striking back when beaten or not talking back when cursed. Patience is an attitude for dealing with affairs that is active, accountable, accommodating, engaged, and carefree.

4. *Diligence* (精進)

To correctly apply diligence means to remove unwholesomeness that is present, prevent unwholesomeness that has yet to arise, develop wholesomeness that has yet to arise, and strengthen wholesomeness that is present. Diligently cultivating merit requires the guidance of wisdom, for, in this way, one will not practice blindly.

Mind

5. Meditative Concentration (禪定)

People who have cultivated meditative concentration well do not act rashly, do not speak foolishly, nor think impulsively. Such people do not interfere with others and develop wisdom, thereby gaining the respect and support of others.

6. *Prajna-wisdom* (般若)

By unceasingly cultivating giving, morality, patience, diligence, and meditative concentration guided by wisdom, one will certainly attain great *prajna-wisdom*.

As indicated above, merit must be guided by wisdom, and wisdom requires the accumulation of merit. Merit and wisdom are like the two wings of a bird, for it is impossible to rely upon one alone. That is why we must cultivate both at once.

Mind

一心不亂

See also: Consciousness, eight kinds of.

What we are most intimate and have the closest relationship with is our own mind. The mind is in charge; yet, most people know nothing about the mind. They have no idea about their own intrinsic nature, so they cannot be in charge of the mind. Only by understanding the mind can we know ourselves, and so it is said that “practicing the Dharma requires cultivating the mind.”

The Buddhist sutras speak extensively about the power of the mind and the importance of cultivating and purifying it. The *Connected Discourses* says, “If the mind is afflicted then sentient beings are afflicted. If the mind is pure, then sentient beings are

pure.” The *Vimalakirti Sutra* says, “When the mind is pure, the land is pure.” The *Awakening of Faith in Mahayana Treatise* says, “When the mind arises, all phenomena arise. When the mind ceases, all phenomena cease.” The *Platform Sutra* says, “The deluded mind is mastered by the *Lotus [Sutra]*. The awakened mind masters the *Lotus [Sutra]*.” The *Flower Adornment Sutra* says, “If one wishes to know the Buddha’s state, then purify the mind so it is like empty space.” The *Teachings Bequeathed by the Buddha Sutra* says, “If one can focus the mind in one place, there is nothing that can’t be done.”

The sutras also say, “The Buddha said the mind is primary,” “The three realms are mind-only, and all phenomena are consciousness-only,” “All phenomena in the universe arise from the mind,” “Ignorance and awakening are not separate from one’s own mind,” and “The Buddha taught many kinds of Dharma to cure all minds—without all the different kinds of minds, how could he teach the Dharma?”

The Buddhist sutras describe the mind in many different ways, including offering many metaphors for the mind. Some examples are:

1. The mind is like a monkey, for it is hard to control.
2. The mind is as fast as a flash of lightning.
3. The mind is like a wild deer chasing the sense objects.
4. The mind is like a thief who steals our positive karma.
5. The mind is like an adversary, for it causes us suffering.
6. The mind is like a servant of the afflictions, for it is ordered about by worldly temptations.
7. The mind is like a powerful king, for it has supreme control over the body.

Mind

8. The mind is limitless, like an ever-flowing spring.
9. The mind is like an artist who can paint all things.
10. The mind is boundless, like the vastness of space.

The sutras also offer many other names for the mind, including the Dharmakaya, the dharma realm, the nature of all phenomena, *tathagatagarbha*, Buddha nature, true reality, *prajna*-wisdom, as well as many others. The many names of the mind point to the fact that the ordinary mind is subject to delusion and is ever-changing. The mind is erratic and often leads the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body to engage in all manner of wrongdoing. This causes us suffering, hardship, and leads us to journey further in the cycle of birth and death. That is why the *Eight Realizations of a Bodhisattva Sutra* says, “The mind is the source of unwholesomeness.”

However, the mind is also called “inherently pure,” for the fundamental nature of the mind is pure. The mind is our own intrinsic Buddha nature, which belongs to each one of us and cannot be found externally. The mind is like the surface of a lake: if there are no waves, then the surface is clean and clear and can reflect the full moon hanging in the sky. In the same way, if the mind is undisturbed by deluded thoughts and uncontaminated by the five desires, then the mind will be calm, harmonious, and unmovable. When we maintain the serenity of the mind, it will reflect our intrinsic nature, just as a calm lake reflects the moon. How, then, can we come to know the true mind? The key lies in being able to establish single-minded concentration.

How can we bring this mind that can ascend to heaven or plunge into hell into a state of single-minded concentration? Each of the many Buddhist schools and sutras have their own unique methods for achieving this state. For example, the Pure Land School

encourages the recitation of Amitabha Buddha's name. Through this practice, one is able to achieve single-minded concentration by focusing the six sense organs and maintaining a continuum of pure thoughts. Then, at the time of death, the practitioner will be received by Amitabha Buddha and be reborn in the Pure Land.

The Chan School's main practice is the cultivation of meditative concentration. There is a verse that indicates the primacy of meditation in the Chan School:

Sitting in quiet meditation for even a moment,
Is superior to building stupas of the seven treasures
as plentiful as grains of sand in the
Ganges River.

In the end, the stupas will crumble into dust;
But a single thought from a tranquil mind can attain
awakening.

The Tiantai School has the doctrine of "one thought containing the three thousandfold world system," which shows how a single thought can encompass all phenomena of the dharma realm, such that all things can be contained within the mind. According to this doctrine, one need not seek precious jewels outside of oneself, nor look for some kind of bright light elsewhere, for this distracted, perturbed, and deluded mind of ours actually contains all things.

If we attain single-minded concentration, contemplate the self, return to intrinsic nature, and develop our innate virtue, we can become an awakened being and attain liberation in the here and now. The Consciousness-Only philosophers pulled off a bold stroke by developing the system of the "five categories and the one

hundred *dharmas*” to analyze the activities of the mind, transform consciousness into wisdom, and realize liberation.

Even with all of the methods put forth by the various schools, to truly achieve single-minded concentration is far from easy. This is especially true for those of us living an everyday life and dealing with the confusion and turmoil of worldly events and human emotion. It is difficult not to be affected by such surroundings.

However, there is a way. We can maintain good relations with others by doing good deeds naturally and happily. We can refrain from disputing with others, comparing ourselves with others, and feeling envy. We can strive to remain unaffected by praise or blame, success or failure, and suffering or happiness. We cannot waste our mental energy discussing the arguments and disputes of others or in pursuing fame and fortune. Further, we can find repose in practices that benefit others, like cultivating the four immeasurable minds, feeling gratitude for and contentedness for what we have, and being of service to society. If we regularly practice in this way, then we will not be caught up in the external events or the emotions of others and will have a calm, peaceful life. In this way, one can attain the freedom of liberation.

Mindfulness, Four Bases of

四念處

See also: Impermanence

When the Buddha was about to enter final *nirvana*, it was the general consensus of the four groups of Buddhist disciples that the Venerable Ananda ask the Buddha for instruction:

“Lord Buddha, during your time in this world we have relied upon you for our abiding; after the Buddha’s final *nirvana*, upon

what should we rely for our abiding?”

The Buddha gently replied, “After my final *nirvana*, everyone should find their abiding in the four bases of mindfulness.”

What are the four bases of mindfulness?

1. *Contemplate the impurities of the body* (觀身不淨)

The human body is a stinking bag of skin that is formed from a combination of the four great elements and five aggregates in accordance with causes and conditions. The body is impure both inside and outside, including such things as the skin, bones, blood, flesh, phlegm, and excretory substances. When awaking from sleep, the whole mouth is sticky with saliva and so unbearably filthy. If one gets drunk, the internal organs are obstructed and one vomits. When one is sick, sores and ulcers fester and burst, while pus and blood leak and ooze. When going to the toilet, one excretes feces and urine with offensive odors.

2. *Contemplate the suffering of feelings* (觀受是苦)

There are three kinds of feelings: painful feelings, pleasurable feelings, and neither pleasurable nor painful feelings. Each of these feelings has its own kind of suffering.

Painful feelings create the “suffering of suffering.” Painful emotions such as sorrow, grief, and worry inherently lead to suffering, and thus, they are known as the “suffering of suffering.”

Pleasurable feelings create the “suffering of loss.” Pleasurable things like health, fame, and wealth can make us feel happy, but since the body can become sick, fame can fade, and wealth can be lost, these pleasant things can lead to the “suffering of loss.”

Feelings that are neither painful nor pleasurable create the “suffering of formation.” Through spiritual practice, one can live

a simple and tranquil life. However, our world is still subject to conditions and always changing, and having yet to end the cycle of birth and death, we are still subject to the suffering of formation.

3. *Contemplate the impermanence of the mind* (觀心無常)

The mind is subject to many negative qualities, such as worries, delusion fatigue, defilement, impermanence, discrimination, distortion, and duality. The mind is like a mirage or an illusion that arises moment by moment and is then extinguished. The mind is like the frantic antics of a monkey or a wild horse, for such are their changeable and impermanent qualities. The *Diamond Sutra* states: “The mind of the past cannot be attained, the mind of the present cannot be attained, the mind of the future cannot be attained.”

4. *Contemplate the non-selfhood of phenomena* (觀法無我)

For something to truly be called the “self,” it must fulfill the four conditions of autonomy, permanency, universality, and freedom. However, what we think of as our “self” is formed through a combination of conditions, and therefore, it is not autonomous. Because our “self” is created through dependent origination, it cannot be permanent. Our “self” is obstructed from all angles; therefore, it cannot be universal, and because the self is subject to karma, it is not absolutely free. All that is possessed by the self can be destroyed, all that the self knows can be wrong, and all that the self controls can change. In reality, all phenomena are falsely clung to by the self. The self wanders in the cycle of birth and death, built of the five aggregates. When its conditions are dispelled, just where is this self?

The four bases of mindfulness above teach us that all phenomena in the world are impure, suffering, empty, impermanent, and without a self. As Buddhists, we should regularly recall the four bases of mindfulness, examine our own bodies and minds, diligently cultivate ourselves, and seek to realize *nirvana* which is permanent, blissful, pure, and has an inherent self.

Mountain Gate

山門

See also: Teaching, four modes of.

There is a saying in Buddhism, that “Wealth enters the mountain gate and merit is credited to the generous benefactor.” The term “mountain gate” refers to the main entrance of a Buddhist temple or monastery, since many monasteries were once built in mountain forests. Later, monasteries came to be built on flatter terrain, but the term “mountain gate” persisted as a way of referring to Buddhist monasteries regardless of locale.

It is said that in the past, one could enter the mountain gate of Shaolin monastery but not leave. Only those with superior *gongfu* would be able to traverse the high surrounding walls, and if they could not, they would not be permitted to leave. The mountain gate represents a transition from the ordinary to the sagely, from ignorance to awakening, and from darkness to the light, symbolizing the entrance of the worldly into the Buddhist sphere. So they do not return empty handed, those who enter the mountain gate must leave their habitual tendencies at the door.

The mountain gate is also sometimes called the “triple gate,” as it represents the gate of faith, the gate of wisdom, and the gate of compassion. The gate of faith is entered by means of the Buddha,

the gate of wisdom is entered by means of the Dharma, and the gate of compassion is entered by means of the sangha. This is what it means to enter the Way by the Triple Gem.

The “triple gate” can also represent faith, understanding and practice, or the three ways of liberation: through wisdom, compassion, and skillful means. These “three ways of liberation” are methods used by bodhisattvas to attain awakening. In more detail, they are:

1. *The Gate of Wisdom* (智慧門)

The Chinese word for wisdom, *zhihui* (智慧), is made up of two characters: *zhi* (智), “knowledge,” and *hui* (慧), “insight.” Knowledge means knowing when to advance, when to hold, and when to retreat; insight is knowing emptiness and “non-self.” By relying on knowledge, one will no longer seek out self-pleasure, and by relying on insight, one can turn away from the attachment to desire.

2. *The Gate of Compassion* (慈悲門)

The Chinese word typically used for compassion, *cibei* (慈悲), is made up of two characters: *ci* (慈), “loving-kindness,” and *bei* (悲), “compassion.” Loving-kindness means sharing your joy with others, while compassion means removing others’ suffering. By relying on loving-kindness, one shares peace and joy with all sentient beings, and by relying on compassion, one eradicates the pain and suffering of all sentient beings.

3. *The Gate of Skillful Means* (方便門)

The Chinese word for skillful means, *fangbian* (方便), is made up of two characters: *fang* (方), “straight,” and *bian* (便), “convenience.” “Straight” refers to using a straightforward approach, and

“convenience” means being concerned with others rather than oneself. By relying on a straightforward approach, one is compassionate towards all sentient beings, and by relying upon the exclusion of self, one turns away from self-aggrandizement.

In monasteries of the past, a statue of the smiling Maitreya Bodhisattva was almost always placed at the main gate, representing a joyful welcome to visitors. However, for the more recalcitrant sentient beings who are unable to receive the Buddha’s compassion, more forceful methods must be employed. That is why, in many monasteries, after passing through the main gate, one enters the Hall of the Four Heavenly Kings, which honors those who protect Buddhism such as the four heavenly kings or the bodhisattvas Qielan or Weituo. This shows that although Buddhism emphasizes compassion, it is a compassion that must be powerful. Again and again in this world, the strong abuse the weak, and the weak are at the mercy of the strong. At such times, what is needed is the severe presence of Dharma protectors to counter the violence of the wicked. In addition to having the compassionate heart of a bodhisattva, practitioners must also be equipped with the forceful authority of the Dharma protectors. Only by exerting both compassion and authority and by applying both leniency and strictness can the survival of the Dharma be assured.

Mountains, Four Great 四大名山

Pilgrimage is a common practice among Buddhists, with many Buddhists considering an opportunity to visit the sacred sites

of India to be a dream of a lifetime. In China, four of the main pilgrimage sites are mountains, each associated with a bodhisattva and a Buddhist virtue. They are Mount Putuo, Mount Wutai, Mount Jiuhua, and Mount Emei.

1. *Mount Putuo* (普陀山)

Mount Putuo is located on one of the Zhoushan Islands in the East China Sea near Dinghai County in Zhejiang Province and is also known as Mount Pota, Mount Potalaka, Mount Meiling, and Mount Xiaobaihua. The mountain is known as a site where Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva manifests.

Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, whose name is translated into Chinese as *guanshiyin* (觀世音) or *guanzizai* (觀自在), has vowed to bring relief to sentient beings and is a representation of great compassion. The *Universal Gate Chapter of the Lotus Sutra* mentions that Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva has thirty-three manifestations with which to alleviate twelve kinds of danger. Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva is said to respond to those who call his name, and thus, many Buddhists recite the name of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva in times of distress, wishing for intercession.

The Chinese translation of Guanshiyin (觀世音) literally means “observing the sounds of the world.” Notably, the character *guan* (觀), “observe,” is used rather than *wen* (聞), “hear.” Why? The bodhisattva does not only use his ears to observe the sounds of the world but uses all of his six sense organs together. Hearing may refer to superficially listening with one’s ears, while *guan* refers to deep contemplation.

There is a Chinese saying that, “In every family there is a Guanyin, in every home there is an Amitabha Buddha.” Faith in Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva as “Guanyin” is so deep in China that

it has become integrated with Chinese folk beliefs. In the lunar calendar, Guanyin's birthday is celebrated on the 19th day of the second month, Guanyin's awakening on 19th day of the sixth month, and Guanyin's ordination on the 19th of the ninth month. Each holiday is commemorated with various Dharma services. Even non-Buddhists scramble off to the temples to join in the celebrations and to pray for good fortune.

Depictions of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva in Chinese art tend to be quite varied, given the descriptions of his many manifestations. The most common depictions include Avalokitesvara riding on the back of a dragon or sea turtle, Avalokitesvara with a thousand arms and eyes, Avalokitesvara holding a child, Avalokitesvara holding a fish basket, and Avalokitesvara contemplating the moon in water.

2. Mount Wutai (五台山)

Mount Wutai is located northeast of Wutai County in Shanxi Province. The mountain is named *wutai* (五台), “five terraces,” after the five treeless peaks located in the east, west, south, north, and center that rise high into the sky. The five peaks tower majestically above the surrounding mountains. Atop the peaks, it is never too hot, and there is wind-blown snow even in summer, earning the mountain its other nickname, *qingliangshan* (清凉山), “cold mountain.” Since ancient times, this mountain has been home to manifestations of Manjusri Bodhisattva.

Manjusri Bodhisattva, whose name means “wondrous virtue” or “wondrous auspiciousness,” is the wisest and most eloquent of bodhisattvas. He has served as the teacher of seven Buddhas and symbolizes *prajna*-wisdom. Among the fifty-three pilgrimages of the young Sudhana described in the *Flower Adornment Sutra*, the very first one was to Manjusri Bodhisattva, in which Sudhana

expressed his wish to enter the Buddhist path, and the bodhisattva responded with the guidance of *prajna*-wisdom. Manjusri Bodhisattva is given the title of “Dharma prince,” and his birthday falls on the 4th day of the fourth month in the lunar calendar.

Manjusri Bodhisattva is often paired with Samantabhadra Bodhisattva as attendants on the left and right of the Buddha. Throughout Sakyamuni Buddha’s teaching career, from the teaching of the *Flower Adornment Sutra* at the very beginning to the teaching of the *Nirvana Sutra* at the very end, Manjusri Bodhisattva was present at all Mahayana Dharma assemblies. This shows his incredible contribution to the Mahayana teachings.

Depictions of Manjusri Bodhisattva show him with his hair braided into five coils to symbolize the five ultimate wisdoms and the five wisdoms of non-attainment. His left hand holds a lotus flower which contains a copy of the *Wisdom Sutra*, indicating that *prajna*-wisdom is completely undefiled, while his right hand wields a jeweled sword that represents how great wisdom can cut away ignorance. In some images, he is sitting on a lotus flower that represents purity; in others, he rides a lion and peacock, indicative of his mastery.

3. Mount Jiuhua (九華山)

Mount Jiuhua is located to the southwest of Qingyang County in Anhui Province. It was originally named *jiuzi* (九子), “nine children,” but the name was changed to *jiuhua* (九華), “nine flowers,” during the Tang dynasty because of the resemblance of the mountain’s nine peaks to stone lotus flowers. It is associated with Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva.

The Chinese name of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva is *dizang* (地藏), “earth treasury.” The *Ten Wheels of Ksitigarbha Sutra* explains

the name as follows, “Patient and unmovable like the great earth, quiet and profound like a hidden treasury.”

The *Original Vows of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Sutra* records how Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva was once instructed by Sakyamuni Buddha to liberate beings during the period after the Buddha’s final *nirvana* and before the birth of Maitreya Buddha. Thus he made this vow: “If the hells are not emptied then I vow not to become a Buddha; only when sentient beings have all been liberated, will I attain awakening.” From this, he is known as “Ksitigarbha of great vows.”

The depiction of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva is different from most other bodhisattvas because he is shown in the attire of a Buddhist monk. Representations of the bodhisattva have him sitting cross-legged or standing, the right hand holding a monk’s staff to show his care for sentient beings as well as his strict adherence to the precepts, and the left hand holding the wish-fulfilling mani-jewel that shows his intention to fulfill the wishes of sentient beings. He rides on a white dog named *shanting* (善聽), “Excellent Listener,” for he listens to the hells. The 30th day of the seventh lunar month is Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva’s birthday.

4. Mount Emei (峨眉山)

Mount Emei is located to the west of Emei County in Sichuan Province. It is named *emei* (峨嵋), “arching eyebrows,” because the two peaks face each other like a pair of tall eyebrows. The mountain contains one hundred twenty-four stone niches, eleven major grottoes, and twenty-eight minor ones. On top of the mountain, there is Guangxiang Monastery, which is the site of the Samantabhadra Bodhisattva’s manifestation.

Called *puxian* (普賢), “universally worthy” and *pianji* (遍吉), “all-encompassing auspicious” in Chinese, Samantabhadra encompasses the practices of all Buddhas. He is paired with Manjusri Bodhisattva’s great wisdom, for they both serve as attendants on either side of Sakyamuni Buddha. Samantabhadra Bodhisattva made ten great vows to practice and is thus known as the “bodhisattva of great practice.”

He is depicted riding a white elephant with six tusks. The steady gait and quiet seriousness of a marching elephant is a symbol for the bodhisattva’s progress and learning through practice. The great elephant is also a symbol of the vastness of his vows and the perfection of his merit. The 21st day of the second lunar month is Samantabhadra Bodhisattva’s birthday.

Among the four great bodhisattvas, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva is the only one who appears as a monastic. The other three appear as members of the laity, demonstrating the equality between monastics and laity in Mahayana Buddhism. For this reason, Buddhists today should champion the harmony between the monastic and lay communities to ensure that the true Dharma will long remain.

N

Nagasena

挖耳羅漢

See: Arhats, eighteen.

Nakula

靜坐羅漢

See: Arhats, eighteen.

Name and Form

名色

See: Dependent origination.

Names of the Buddha, Ten

佛陀十號

The Buddha is a great awakened being. So impressive are his achievements that people have given him various epithets to extol his greatness. There are eleven commonly used epithets:

Names of the Buddha, Ten

- | | |
|---|------|
| 1. Thus-Come (<i>tathagata</i>) | 如來 |
| 2. Worthy One (<i>arhat</i>) | 應供 |
| 3. Truly All-Knowing | 正遍知 |
| 4. Perfect in Knowledge and Conduct | 明行足 |
| 5. Well-Gone | 善逝 |
| 6. Knower of the World | 世間解 |
| 7. Unsurpassed | 無上士 |
| 8. Tamer | 調御丈夫 |
| 9. Teacher of Heavenly and Human Beings | 天人師 |
| 10. Awakened One (<i>Buddha</i>) | 佛 |
| 11. World-Honored One | 世尊 |

Among the various sutras, the eleven epithets are typically presented as the “ten names of the Buddha,” by combining some of the above. For example, sometimes “Well-Gone” and “Knower of the World” are combined into a single name. In other instances, “Knower of the World” and “Unsurpassed” are combined, and in others, “Unsurpassed” and “Tamer” are combined. Each name is given a detailed description below:

1. *Thus Come* (如來)

In Chinese, this name is rendered as *rulai* (如來). *Ru* (如), “such” or “thus,” means that the Buddha’s essence is unchanging; that it is such as it is. *Lai* (來), “come,” refers to the Buddha’s ability to change and transform as a skillful means to liberate beings. The Buddha has used his wisdom to know the Way and attain awakening. Because of his experience, he can realistically indicate the path of liberation to others, and in that sense, he has already “come” from intrinsic nature.

2. *Worthy One* (應供)

The Buddha has eliminated all the afflictions within and beyond the three realms and has perfected his virtue and wisdom. Therefore, he is worthy of veneration and offerings, such as food and drink, clothing, bedding, medicine, banners, adorned canopies, incense, flowers, lamps, and fruit. Such offerings are made by all sentient beings, which is why the Buddha is called a “worthy one.”

3. *Truly All-Knowing* (正遍知)

The wisdom of the Buddha is both perfectly true and perfectly complete. It is all-inclusive, extending everywhere and covering all things. For example, the Buddha knows the names of all the world systems. He knows the names of all sentient beings, the causes and conditions of their previous lives, as well as where they will be reborn. He also knows all phenomena in the world, including all the characteristics of the mind, all afflictions, and all roots of goodness.

4. *Perfect in Knowledge and Conduct* (明行足)

“Knowledge” in this instance refers to the three supernatural knowledges of the Buddha: the knowledge of past, present, and future lives, the visual knowledge of all things (heavenly vision), and the knowledge that all defilements have been ended. “Conduct” refers to physical and verbal karma.

5. *Well-Gone* (善逝)

The Buddha’s wisdom has eliminated all confusion. The Buddha has transcended the mundane world and arrived at the other shore of *nirvana*. There is no more returning to the ocean of the cycle of birth and death and in this sense he is “well-gone.”

6. *Knower of the World* (世間解)

The Buddha knows all the characteristics of living beings and material things. The Buddha knows that the material world is neither permanent nor impermanent, neither limited nor unlimited, and neither coming nor going.

7. *Unsurpassed* (無上士)

The Buddha has perfected all merit and wisdom through the three-fold practice of morality, meditative concentration, and wisdom. Because of his level of attainment, none can surpass him.

8. *Tamer* (調御丈夫)

The Buddha excels at applying skillful means to guide sentient beings to liberation. In doing so, he allows them to be happy in this life and the next life, and even eventually attain the happiness of *nirvana*.

9. *Teacher of Heavenly and Human Beings* (天人師)

The Buddha teaches all sentient beings what is proper and improper to do, and what is right and wrong. If sentient beings practice these teachings and do not abandon them, they can gain liberation from affliction. Among all sentient beings, human and heavenly beings are the most inclined towards the Dharma, such that they are most likely to transcend the cycle of birth and death.

10. *Awakened One* (佛)

Buddha is Sanskrit for “awakened one.” The Buddha has awakened himself, awakened others, and completed the mission of awakening. He knows all mundane and supramundane phenomena and is a noble one who has attained unsurpassed, perfect awakening.

11. *World-Honored One* (世尊)

Because the Buddha has accomplished so much to such a perfect degree, there is no one in the world more honorable than him.

Namo Amitofo

六字洪名

See also: Noble ones of the West, three; supports, three.

“Namo Amitofo” (南無阿彌陀佛) is a magnificent phrase containing thousands upon thousands of merits. Though only six Chinese characters in length, it includes endless meanings.

The first two Chinese characters, *namo* (南無), are a transliteration of the Sanskrit word *namo*, meaning “to take refuge.” The phrase “Namo Amitofo” then means taking refuge in and relying upon Amitabha Buddha.

Amitofo (阿彌陀佛) is a Chinese translation of the Sanskrit name of Amitabha Buddha, a name which means “infinite light” and “infinite life.” The infinite light of Amitabha Buddha is not limited by space, and the infinite life of Amitabha Buddha is not limited by time. As Amitabha Buddha is not limited by time or space, he transcends time and space, and as such, embodies the truth of the universe itself.

The noble title of Amitabha Buddha contains within it endless virtue. If one can single-mindedly focus upon this great name, then wrongdoing will decrease, merit will increase, and one will attain rebirth in Amitabha Buddha’s Pure Land, transcend the three realms, and become free of the cycle of birth and death.

The name of Amitabha Buddha contains the heart of all language. When we see each other in the morning and say “Amitofo,” it means “good morning.” When we must part and say “Amitofo,”

it means “goodbye.” If one receives a gift and says “Amitofo,” it is an expression of gratitude. When greeting guests, one may say “Amitofo” to welcome them. Upon seeing pigs or sheep being slaughtered one may unconsciously utter “Amitofo” as a way of expressing sympathy for them. If one is in shock at witnessing murder or mayhem, one may recite “Amitofo” repeatedly as one commiserates over the victims. Amitabha Buddha is compassion and truth and the father of perfect virtue. Amitabha Buddha is one’s arrival at supreme truth and goodness.

There is no other name in this world so beautiful and moving as that of Amitabha Buddha. There is no other name in this world that contains as much meaning as that of Amitabha Buddha.

Amitabha Buddha was originally the ruler of a large kingdom during the time of a previous Buddha named Lokeshvararaja. Later on, that ruler abandoned his kingdom to join the monastic order and became Dharmakara Bhiksu. In order to give to Dharmakara the teachings of twenty-one billion Buddha realms, Lokeshvararaja Buddha used his supernatural powers so that Dharmakara Bhiksu could observe them all. Dharmakara Bhiksu then made forty-eight vows to adorn a Pure Land. After mindfully cultivating for five *kalpas*, he finally attained Buddhahood, and the realm he adorned became the Western Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss.

Chan Master Chewu (1741-1810 CE) said, “‘Namo Amitofo’ is itself the essence of the Buddha mind, for it plumbs the ‘five periods’ and spans the ‘eight teachings.’” These six characters do indeed constitute a great name of thousands upon thousands of merits.

Nirvana

涅槃

See also: Questions of the Buddha, four.

There are various Buddha images that are venerated in Buddhist temples and monasteries, including those that are sitting, standing, and reclining. The reclining posture is meant to represent the Buddha's final *nirvana*, indicating his perfection of merit and wisdom.

“Perfection” here means liberation from the cycle of birth and death, the transcendence of time and space, the extinction of the duality of self and others, and union of the self and others into a single essence. Thus, *nirvana* is not death, but rather life at its most real and valuable. *Nirvana* is the highest, awakened state in Buddhism.

There are many who confuse the Buddhist concept of *nirvana* with death. For this reason, it is common to see “obtained great *nirvana*” written at funerals. There is great misunderstanding of the meaning of *nirvana*.

Nirvana is a Sanskrit word that means “extinction,” “transcendence,” and “birthlessness.” The *Nirvana Sutra* states, “The elimination of all affliction is *nirvana*.” Simply put, *nirvana* is a state of peace and freedom beyond birth and death, a state of perfect brightness without the distinction between the self and outside things. This state can be realized through practice by eliminating afflictions such as greed, anger, ignorance, delusion, wrong view, and discord. *Nirvana* is also the third of the Four Noble Truths and the final goal of Buddhist practice.

Nirvana is realization of awakening, but it is distinguished into various types by different Buddhist schools. For example, the

Tiantai School distinguishes three aspects of *nirvana* based upon their system of essence, form, and function. Thus, the Tiantai School speaks of the full and complete “pure *nirvana* of inherent nature,” which we all inherently have, the “perfectly pure *nirvana*” realized through practice, and the “skillfully pure *nirvana*” which manifests through the guidance of others. The Faxiang School distinguishes four kinds of *nirvana*: pure *nirvana* of inherent nature, *nirvana* with remainder, *nirvana* without remainder, and nonabiding *nirvana*.

Regardless of the many classifications of *nirvana* and what they are called, no type of *nirvana* is the same as death. If *nirvana* was simply death, then all the hard work of Buddhists over many *kalpas* of practice would be just for the sake of achieving death. That would be pointless.

Nirvana is also not something which can only be realized after death. For example, at the age of thirty-one, the Buddha had already achieved *nirvana* while sitting under the bodhi tree. This was “*nirvana* with remainder,” for the karma of his physical body continued to exist. The Buddha realized “*nirvana* without remainder” when he passed away at the age of eighty underneath the sala trees. The Buddha realized “non-abiding *nirvana*” in his forty-nine year teaching career as he responded to the spiritual capacities of all living beings without defilement or attachment. As the Buddha said in the *Lotus Sutra*, “Many *kalpas* ago, as many *kalpas* as all the dust in the universe, I had already become a Buddha. Since that time, I have been constantly teaching the Dharma in this Saha world. I have also been guiding and benefitting sentient beings in other places, domains numbering in the countless millions and millions of trillions.” Manifestations such as the Buddha’s birth, his renunciation, conquering Mara, attaining awakening, teaching

the Dharma, and entering final *nirvana* are all applications of the “skillfully pure *nirvana*” and the “non-abiding *nirvana*.” What we seek when we seek *nirvana* is to recover the “inherently pure *nirvana*” that we intrinsically have.

Nirvana is liberation. It is eternal happiness and the state that is permanent, blissful, pure, and has an inherent self. *Nirvana* can actually be realized in everyday life: when we face a difficult situation, undergo a great deal of suffering and hardship, and finally come to some sort of resolution—one could say that is *nirvana*. How about those who urgently need to use the restroom or those who have been constipated for a long time? Being able to successfully find relief is also *nirvana*. When someone who has no appetite can finally enjoy a good meal or someone with insomnia can get a good night’s rest, this wonderful feeling is not unlike *nirvana*.

Nirvana is when painful problems can be resolved and one is liberated from the cycle of birth and death. When we are no longer bound by the afflictions of greed, anger, and ignorance, that is the liberation of *nirvana*. In this way, *nirvana* can be realized by everyone in this very moment.

Noble Ones of the West, Three

西方三聖

See also: Namó Amitofo.

Among the many Pure Lands of Buddhism, the Western Pure Land is the most well-known and the place where many vow to be reborn. The leader of this Buddha land is Amitabha Buddha, and assisting him in liberating sentient beings are his two attendants: Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, who represents loving-kindness and

compassion, and Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva, who represents wisdom. Together, these three are known as the “three noble ones of the west.” Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva and Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva are also “bodhisattvas in waiting,” for in the future, they will succeed Amitabha Buddha and become leaders of the Western Pure Land.

The Western Pure Land was generated in all its beauty through Amitabha Buddha’s forty-eight great vows over the course of his many lives of pious conduct. The details of this are recorded in *Infinite Life Sutra*, which along with the *Contemplation Sutra* and the *Amitabha Sutra* are collectively known as the “three sutras of the Pure Land School.” Among these, the *Amitabha Sutra* describes the various extraordinary adornments of the Western Pure Land, and functions as a sort of “guidebook” to the Pure Land.

How did Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva obtain his name? Why does he transform himself into billions and billions of manifestations, and why is he endowed with such awe-inspiring spiritual powers that enable him to travel to the various Buddha Lands to seek out those who cry out in pain so that he can liberate them? These questions are answered in the Universal Gate chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*. Due to people’s faith in Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, the Universal Gate chapter was circulated as a separate sutra called the *Universal Gate Chapter of the Lotus Sutra*, which is part of the morning chanting for many Buddhists.

In addition, the *Mahayana Compassionate Flower Sutra* records how during the course of his many lives of pious conduct in the past, Amitabha Buddha was once born as a king. At that time, Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva was the crown prince named *Buxun*, who later came to be called Avalokitesvara after joining the monastic order. Under the guidance of Amitabha Buddha, Avalokitesvara

Bodhisattva attained the thousand-arm and thousand-eye manifestation to assist the Buddha in liberating sentient beings. When Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva attains Buddhahood, he is said to be named “Mountains of All Radiant Virtues Tathagata.”

However, according to the *Great Compassion Repentance Liturgy*, Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva has already attained Buddhahood in the past under the name “Tathagata of Illuminating Right Dharma.” However, the bodhisattva cannot bear to witness the sufferings of sentient beings, so he has returned to the Saha world out of compassion to teach the Dharma. This is why people praise the compassion and great conduct of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva as the “compassionate vessel of universal liberation.”

Among the three noble ones of the west, Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva is the least familiar to most Buddhists. According to the *Mahayana Compassionate Flower Sutra*, before Amitabha Buddha became a Buddha, Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva and Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva served as his attendants. Over the course of his many lives of pious conduct, Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva practiced the *samadhi* or mindful recitation of Amitabha Buddha’s name and developed the “patience of the non-arising of phenomena,” the highest level of patience. This is why he teaches sentient beings how to recite Amitabha Buddha’s name and thereby receives those beings who recite Amitabha Buddha’s name into the Pure Land.

Reciting the name of Amitabha Buddha can gain one rebirth in the Western Pure Land, but single-minded recitation of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva or Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva’s names will also gain one rebirth in the Western Pure Land. The form of practice taught by Mahasthamaprapta is to “Focus the six sense organs and always maintain pure

thoughts, thus attaining *samadhi*. This is the preeminent method.” This method of practice has become a very important one for Pure Land practitioners.

The Pure Land School’s practice of reciting Amitabha Buddha’s name is simple, easy to do, and erases the three roots of negative karma. Whether one is literate or illiterate, lay or monastic, one can recite Amitabha Buddha’s name at any time and in any place as long as one has the right intention. According to the *Amitabha Sutra*, anyone who vows to be reborn in the Pure Land and who recites Amitabha Buddha’s name with single-minded concentration will, upon death, be received by Amitabha Buddha and a host of noble ones bearing a lotus flower to lead that person to the Pure Land. This is why faith in the Pure Land has become deeply rooted in Chinese folk beliefs, and the names Amitabha Buddha and Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva have become so firmly planted in people’s minds. There is a Chinese saying: “In every family there is an Amitabha Buddha, and in every household an Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva.” The omnipresence of these two figures within Chinese folk religion has ensured the continued preservation of Pure Land thought over the generations.

Non-Buddhist Schools, Six

六師外道

Ancient India was a country of advanced philosophy with many non-Buddhist schools. During his time in the world, the Buddha was often tested with questions calculated to confound him and even harassed by these non-Buddhist philosophical schools. Even among the Buddha’s disciples, there were quite a few individuals

who were formerly disciples of these schools, but because they had received the Buddha's teachings and compassion and been transformed by his truth, they went on to join the Buddhist order. For example, both Sariputra and Maudgalyayana among the Buddha's ten great disciples were originally of the Sanjaya-Vairatiputra Sect.

The "Six Major Non-Buddhist Schools" refer to the six non-Buddhist philosophies that were the most influential in India during the time of the Buddha. They were made up of free thinkers who opposed the Vedic philosophy of the Brahmins:

1. *The Sanjaya-Vairatiputra Sect* (珊闍耶毘羅胝子)

Members of this sect were skeptics. They did not think that anything could be truly "known" and promoted agnosticism. They believed that one need not cultivate because spiritual attainment will come automatically after eighty thousand *kalpas*.

2. *The Ajita-Kesakambala Sect* (阿耆多翅舍欽婆羅)

This sect believed in materialism and hedonism. It denied causality and negated the doctrine of an everlasting soul. The sect believed that happiness was the goal of life, and they condemned all strict ethical ideas. This group was thus only concerned with the mundane world.

3. *The Maskari-Gosaliputra Sect* (末伽梨拘舍梨)

This sect was the progenitor of the non-Buddhist school focused on the improper means of livelihood. It promoted the idea of a fatalistic existence and belonged to the Jainism movement. The sect was very influential during the time of the Buddha, and except for the Nirgranthas, it was the most prominent of the schools.

4. *The Purana-Kasyapa Sect* (富蘭那迦葉)

This sect did not believe in any moral system and denied that there were wholesome or unwholesome karmic effects from virtuous or non-virtuous acts.

5. *The Kakuda-Katyayana Sect* (迦羅鳩駄迦旃延)

This sect believed in a type of worldly eternalism; that spirit and matter can never be destroyed. They believed that everything was composed of independent entities of earth, fire, water, air, space, pain, pleasure, and soul.

6. *The Nirgrantha-Jnatiputra Sect* (尼乾陀若提子)

The Nirgranthas were precursors to the modern religion of Jainism, and they believed that pain or pleasure, fortune or misfortune, were all created by one's previous lifetimes. One simply had to accept one's karmic effects, for no spiritual practice of this lifetime could dispel them. In terms of actual practice, this sect was characterized by extreme asceticism and the strict prohibition against killing living beings.

These six non-Buddhist schools mentioned above may falsely hold that phenomena are the same or different, that the world is permanent or impermanent, that causality exists or does not exist, that pain is self-generated or generated outside oneself, and other such speculative views. In terms of their practice, most of these schools either took the approach of extreme austerities or extreme sensuality and hedonism. They differ from Buddhism, which adopts the Middle Way between the extremes of pleasure and pain. It is for this reason that Buddhism sees these six schools as non-Buddhist and sees their teachings as false and operating outside of the Dharma.

Even today, there are many groups that are non-Buddhist but operate under the name of Buddhism. Some of these groups have professed magical and supernatural powers to confuse and seduce people, while others have amassed fortunes through columbarium mausoleum schemes.

When such groups operate under the guise of Buddhism and develop bad reputations, it creates a situation in society today in which people are doubtful of religion. Yet, few Buddhists give it a second thought. If we consider the past, Venerable Master Daosheng was denigrated for his doctrine that “even icchantikas can attain Buddhahood.” Daosheng was the leading teacher of his era, but since his ideas and understanding differed from that of his day, he and his ideas were rejected. This shows how deeply the Dharma was held in esteem at that time. But nowadays, no matter how many pernicious doctrines appear, no one is willing to stand up for the Dharma in stern and forceful terms to prevent such wrongheaded ideas from festering and growing. When we compare the present to the past, one is left feeling nostalgia for the past and regret for the present.

Non-Duality

不二法門

This gate is called “non-duality,”
 Duality or non-duality, both are one’s true face.
 This mountain is Vulture Peak,
 Mountain or no mountain, nothing is not my
 pure body.

The couplet above is within an entryway called the “non-duality gate” inside the Fo Guang Shan monastery in Taiwan. The term

“non-duality,” or literally *bu'er* (不二), “not two,” has several implications, including that there is only one way to enter the Dharma, not two or three, and that there is one truth, not two. In this instance, “non-duality” simply means “one and only.”

But the term “non-duality” can refer to the broader Buddhist teaching of non-duality, which appears in the “Entry into the Gate of Non-Duality” chapter of the *Vimalakirti Sutra*, among other places. The general outline of this chapter is as follows:

When the Buddha dwelt in the world, there was a certain elder by the name of Vimalakirti who lived in the kingdom of Vaisali. It was said of him that, “Though a layman, he is not attached to the three realms. Though married, he always cultivates purity.” He was the very model of a lay Buddhist follower of his day.

One day, the Buddha was giving teachings at the Amra Park in Vaisali when he learned that Vimalakirti was indisposed. He then asked his principle disciples to go as his representative to inquire after Vimalakirti’s health, but as it turned out, none dared to undertake the task. The reason for this was that everyone had at one time or another undergone Vimalakirti’s cross-examination. In the end, the Buddha could only ask Manjusri Bodhisattva, known for his great wisdom, to undertake the trip. Once everyone heard this, they knew that the encounter between Manjusri Bodhisattva and Vimalakirti would surely lead to a brilliant dialogue, so they all came streaming along behind him.

They were not disappointed. As soon as Manjusri Bodhisattva arrived at Vimalakirti’s abode, a series of questions and answers ensued between the two. The sublime profundity of the discussion left everyone with bated breath, as they carefully pondered what had been said. Suddenly, the topic of conversation shifted when Vimalakirti asked: “Gentlemen, how does a bodhisattva enter the

teaching of non-duality? Let everyone speak freely on this question as each one understands it.”

One after the other, the thirty-one bodhisattvas assembled there each answered the question. Finally, no one had anything more to say. Then, Vimalakirti asked Manjusri Bodhisattva, “Manjusri, how does a bodhisattva enter the teaching of non-duality?”

Manjusri Bodhisattva replied, “My understanding is that all phenomena are beyond words, beyond speech, beyond expression, and beyond knowledge. When one turns away from questioning and answering, this is the teaching of non-duality.” This means that the one true path cannot be examined or speculated about by such logical methods as inference, comparison, induction, or deduction. One must have a direct and concrete experience of it, which can only be discovered by looking within. Only in this way will one be able to enter the teaching of non-duality.

After he had spoken, Manjusri Bodhisattva then asked Vimalakirti the same question, “How does a bodhisattva enter the teaching of non-duality?” At that moment, Vimalakirti remained silent and did not answer. This surprised all who were present, but only Manjusri Bodhisattva, with his superior wisdom, was able to understand Vimalakirti’s profound meaning. Manjusri Bodhisattva then spoke to everyone, “Wonderful! This is indeed the way to enter non-duality.”

This shows us that the teaching of non-duality is beyond words or description. How are we supposed to talk about it? Whatever could be expressed through words and speech cannot be the true teaching of non-duality. Vimalakirti’s silence evokes this marvelous path that cannot be expressed in words, for his silence transcends the obstacles of formality and delves directly into the

Non-Self

source. Doing such is the only way for a bodhisattva to enter the teaching of non-duality.

Vimalakirti's silent response conceals within it a profundity of limitless meaning. In this way, it not only negates the answers of the previous thirty-one bodhisattvas, but it even demolishes the response of Manjusri Bodhisattva, leaving to posterity the story of "Vimalakirti's thundering silence."

Non-Retrogression

不退轉

See: Avaiivartika.

Non-Self

無我

See: Dharma seals, three.

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O

Offerings, Four

四事供養

One day, when the Buddha was teaching at the Jeta Grove Monastery, the lay woman Visakha came to pay homage to the Buddha and to beseech the Buddha to grant her eight wishes, which were:

1. That the Buddha would permit her to offer rain clothes to the *bhiksus* to wear when it rained.
2. That the Buddha would permit her to offer support to the *bhiksus* who had newly joined the monastic order.
3. That the Buddha would permit her to offer food and money to those *bhiksus* going out on a journey.
4. That the Buddha would permit her to offer medicine to those *bhiksus* who were sick.
5. That the Buddha would permit her to offer appropriate food to those *bhiksus* who were sick.
6. That the Buddha would permit her to offer support for those *bhiksus* who were looking after the sick.

7. That the Buddha would permit her to regularly send thin porridge to the monastery as an offering to the *bhiksus*.
8. That the Buddha would permit her to offer bathing clothes for the *bhiksunis*.

Upon hearing this, the Buddha was extremely happy and granted her eight wishes.

To “make an offering” means to supply material support. As a Buddhist follower, not only must we offer support to our parents and elders, but even more so, we should respectfully make offerings to the Triple Gem of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, such as offering rice or land. Even things like incense, flowers, lamp oil, and fruits can be offerings. But for those members of the sangha who teach the Dharma for the benefit of sentient beings, the most necessary and practical offerings are Visakha’s eight wishes listed above. The eight wishes above can be summarized as four kinds of offerings: food and drink, clothing, bedding, and medicine.

1. Food and drink (飲食)

People cannot live without eating, and if monastics had to rush about every day to prepare their meals, there would be no way for them to focus their attention upon their responsibilities for carrying on the Buddha’s mission. Therefore, the task of offering food and drink to the sangha is borne by the laity.

2. Clothing (衣服)

To remain dignified and be protected from the cold, people must wear clothing. The robes of a monastic are not elegant dress, but realistically, dressing oneself in rags in today’s society would be

seen as disgraceful. It is said that “the Buddha must be clad in gold,” and in the same way, people must wear clothes. Therefore, the task of offering clothing to the sangha is borne by the laity.

3. *Bedding* (臥具)

This refers to the offering of bedding and cotton quilts to the monastic community. After a whole day of diligent practice, it is necessary to rest and get some sleep at night. Without bedding, one cannot get appropriate sleep and will lack the energy to awaken oneself and others. Therefore, the task of offering bedding to the sangha is borne by the laity.

4. *Medicine* (湯藥)

Sickness is an unavoidable part of life. As the saying goes, “Ministering to the sick is the foremost field of merit.” In order to restore *bhiksus* to good health so that the light of the Buddha’s lamp may continue the task of offering medicine to the sangha is borne by the laity.

As lay Buddhist followers, we must learn from Visakha’s exemplary devotion in making offerings, but we must also remember to make offerings with a sense of equality. Moreover, when offerings are made, we should feel joy in our hearts and respect for the Triple Gem. We must not have an arrogant attitude, nor should we expect any thanks or any reciprocated favors from the recipients of our generosity. If we can make offerings in this way, then not only will we obtain the reward of happiness for ourselves, but the recipients of our generosity will be happy as well.

Om Mani Padme Hum

六字真言

Mantra recitation is the main practice of the Esoteric School of Buddhism. *Mantra*, also sometimes called *dharani*, means “true words,” meaning they are the true language spoken by the Buddha. Another explanation of the word *mantra* is that it means “holding all,” in the sense that a mantra can contain all meaning. There are five virtues to be gained from reciting mantras:

1. One develops wisdom.
2. One increases in right mindfulness.
3. One prevents disasters.
4. One brings together all that is wholesome.
5. One is protected from unwholesomeness.

Among the mantras handed down by the Esoteric School, the most common one is the six-syllable *mantra* of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, also known as the *dharani* of great brightness: *om mani padme hum*. It is known as the mind *dharani* of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva and as such is endowed with deep meaning and virtue and is practiced by many Buddhists.

According to one explanation, *om mani padme hum* means “taking refuge in the *mani* pearl atop the lotus.” Tibetan Buddhists pray to Padmapani Bodhisattva to attain future rebirth in the Western Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss and so recite the mantra.

According to another explanation from the texts of Tibetan Esoteric Buddhism, the merit of reciting the syllable *om* brings an end to rebirth in the heavenly realm. Likewise, reciting the syllable *ma* will bring an end to rebirth in the *asura* realm. Reciting the

syllable *ni* will bring an end to further rebirth in the human realm, reciting the syllable *pad* will bring an end to rebirth in the animal realm, reciting the syllable *me* will bring an end to rebirth in the realm of hungry ghosts, and reciting the syllable *hum* will bring an end to rebirth in the hell realm.

Such a *mantra* is the source of wisdom, liberation, aide, and happiness. Just by reciting this *mantra*, one can avert disaster, extend one's life, dispel negativity, and assure rebirth in the highest level of the Western Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss. Reciting the *mantra* will also ensure that whatever else one seeks will be fulfilled as wished.

In addition, the *Mahayana Dignified Treasure King Sutra* states: "This six-syllable *dharani* of great brightness is the wondrous intrinsic mind of the Great Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva. Those who come to know this wondrous intrinsic mind will then know liberation." It also states: "If one can obtain a wish-fulfilling *mani* pearl such as this [*mantra*], then one's ancestors as far back as seven generations will attain liberation." This shows how great the virtue of reciting this esoteric *mantra* can be.

The Esoteric School of Buddhism emphasizes that it is the recitation of the *mantra* itself that matters, for there is no need to understand its meaning. Regardless of which *mantra* is being recited, one should remain firm in one's faith and not harbor any doubts.

When reciting, it is important to combine the "three esoteric elements," which are 1) the physical esoteric element in the form of hand gestures or *mudras*, 2) the verbal esoteric element in the form of reciting the *mantra*, and 3) the mental esoteric element in the form of visualizing the mantra's seed-syllable. Coordinating these three elements means that as one verbally recites the *mantra* at the same time as one performs the *mudras* and mentally visualizes the

seed-syllable of the Buddha or bodhisattva, one activates the three karmas of body, speech, and mind. Practicing *mantra* recitation by coordinating the three esoteric elements will make one's merit even greater.

Omniscience (of the Buddha)

佛智如海

Since ordinary people lack great wisdom, we cannot comprehend the omniscience and omnipotence of the Buddha. Consider the following story:

Once, when the Buddha was traveling about teaching the Dharma, he came across two merchants. The merchants asked the Buddha, “*Sramana*, we have lost our camel. Have you seen it?”

The Buddha asked, “Was that camel blind in the left eye and lame in the left foot; and were its front teeth broken?”

The merchants were delighted, “Yes! That’s our camel alright.”

The Buddha then said to them, “No, I have not seen it.” The merchants became suspicious, and asked the Buddha, “Your knowledge of the camel’s appearance is so detailed, how is it possible that you haven’t seen it? You probably stole it!”

The merchants then took the Buddha to court. After hearing the merchants’ story, the judge posed a question to the Buddha: “How did you know that the camel’s left eye was blind?”

The Buddha answered, “I knew because I saw how only the grass on the right side of the road showed signs of having been eaten by a camel. This led me to believe that the camel’s left eye was blind.”

The judge then asked the Buddha, “How did you know that the camel’s left foot was lame?”

The Buddha responded, “I saw the camel’s footprints on the road. The impression of the right foot was deep, the left foot’s was shallow. This led me to believe that the camel’s left foot was lame.”

The judge continued his inquiry by asking the Buddha, “Then, how did you know that the front teeth of that camel were broken?”

The Buddha responded once more to the judge, “I saw that of the clumps of grass the camel had chewed, little patches were left in the center. This led me to believe the front middle teeth of the camel were surely broken.”

After the Buddha offered his explanation, the two merchants were left speechless. The Buddha then went on to say, “Oh, there is no need to worry, merchants. Your camel was not stolen by anyone. I know this because I saw that there were no human footprints beside those of the camel.”

Having heard all of the testimony, the judge said to the merchants, “I see no way that this *sramana* stole your camel. You should not form such suspicions of others based on your shallow knowledge. The Buddha’s wisdom is as vast as the ocean, such that ordinary people like us cannot possibly conceive of it.”

After practicing over hundreds of millions of *kalpas*, the great Buddha truly knows and sees all.

One Mind Opens Two Doors

一心二門

See also: Intrinsic nature; mind.

The sutras say, “The Buddha is a sentient being who has awakened. Sentient beings are Buddhas who have yet to awaken.” In regards to

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the mind, the sutras also say, “The mind, the Buddha, and sentient beings are not different.” As indicated in both of these quotations, sentient beings and the Buddha are each endowed with the same nature of mind. It is only because of ignorance’s power to delude us that the phenomena of arising, abiding, change, and extinction as well as the distinctions between ignorance and awakening and defilement and purity exist.

The *Awakening of Faith in Mahayana Treatise* explains this characteristic of the mind by dividing all phenomena experienced by the mind of sentient beings as having been experienced by two different aspects of the mind: The door of suchness (心真如門) and the door of arising and ceasing (心生滅門). This distinction is often referred to as “one mind opens two doors” (一心二門).

The Door of Suchness (心真如門)

The “door of suchness” refers to all things being just as they are. It is the fundamental essence of the mind and cannot be characterized by relative distinctions like arising, abiding, change, extinction, ignorance, awakening, defilement, or purity. The door of suchness has as its essence absolute equality, and this essence neither arises nor ceases, and does not increase nor decrease, but is always present.

The Door of Arising and Ceasing (心生滅門)

The “door of arising and ceasing” refers to the dynamic aspects of the mind, which arise and cease according to conditions. It is from this aspect of the mind that the phenomena of arising, abiding, change, and extinction and the distinctions between ignorance, awakening, defilement, and purity arise.

The essence of the mind is the primary cause which leads to the arising of all phenomena, but ordinary, deluded people do not perceive the essence of equality which underlies them. When delusion is removed, the essence of the absolute appears on its own. The door of suchness and the door of arising and ceasing should be understood as neither the same nor different. They are different in the sense that the door of suchness has as its essence absolute equality, while the door of arising and ceasing encompasses all phenomena with their relative distinctions, and as such, they are considered to not be the same. However, at their essence, there is no phenomena that arises or ceases outside of the fundamental essence of all things, and in this sense, the door of suchness and the door of arising and ceasing are the same, so the two are said to not be different.

Another way to explain this relationship is by the metaphor of water and waves. Water is passive, while waves are active, and in this sense, the two are not the same. However, without water, there can be no waves, so the two are not different. We must come to realize that “not the same” and “not different” are two doors of one mind.

This should lead us to conclude that the essence of the universe with its myriad phenomena are the singular mind and that both sentient beings and Buddhas are endowed with this mind. The mind is different only in terms of awakening and non-awakening, and that is how it can be differentiated into these two different aspects. The awakened mind is the door of suchness, while the unawakened mind is the door of arising and ceasing.

Fundamentally, the essence of the mind does not arise or cease and does not increase or decrease; it has no distinctive characteristics whatsoever. The dynamic aspect of the mind does arise and

cease as well as increase and decrease and as such possesses relative distinctions. These are two sides of the same coin, and are often referred to as “the one mind opens two doors.”

The Chan *gongan* “Huike’s settled mind” also features this concept. When Huike, who would become the second patriarch, encountered Bodhidharma for the first time, he told him, “My mind is not yet settled. Please, patriarch, settle my mind for me.”

Bodhidharma replied, “Bring forth the mind. I will settle it for you!”

Huike said, “I cannot find the mind.”

Bodhidharma replied, “I have already settled the mind for you.”

In this *gongan*, the mind before it was settled is the door of arising and ceasing, and the mind after it is settled is the door of suchness. All one needs to do is bring one’s consciousness to tranquility and eliminate delusion; then, one will attain awakening by seeing intrinsic nature.

One Thought Contains the Three Thousandfold World System

一念三千

Three dots that look like stars,
A stroke like a crescent moon;
One becomes cloaked in skin and hair because
of it,
One also attains Buddhahood due to it.

This riddle is describing the Chinese character *xin* (心), “mind.” Throughout the day, there is no telling how many times our mind

wanders among the ten dharma realms, so all the phenomena of “three thousandfold world system,” the Buddhist term for the universe, exists within a single thought.

The term “three thousandfold world system” refers to all wholesome and unwholesome phenomena in their essence and outward characteristics on the mundane and supramundane levels. According to Tiantai thought, the minds of both sages and ordinary people all contain the ten dharma realms, and each of the ten dharma realms contains the ten dharma realms, and each of the ten dharma realms possesses the ten qualities, existing in the three continuums. When these divisions are taken together ($10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 3$), they constitute the “three thousandfold world system.”

To fully understand the significance of the phrase “one thought contains the three thousandfold world system,” each of these divisions must be examined. The ten dharma realms and the ten qualities each have their own entries, so what will be focused on here is the three continuums and the doctrine of “the mutual containment of the ten dharma realms.”

Mutual Containment of the Ten Dharma Realms (十界互具)

The Tiantai doctrine of “mutual containment” means that each of the ten dharma realms contain one another, such that each of the ten dharma realms contain the ten dharma realms. This means that what seemed like the hell realm yesterday can become the human realm of today, and what seems like the animal realm now can become the Buddha realm tomorrow. This endless cycle of transformation proceeds upward to the highest realm and downwards to the lowest one. To ascend up through the ten dharma realms is to come closer to awakening, and to sink down through them is to draw closer to ignorance.

The hell realm contains the other nine realms, just as the Buddha realm contains the other nine realms as well. For example, when one's mind is filled with greed, anger, or ignorance, this is the mind of the three lower realms. When the mind is inclined towards the ten wholesome actions, this is the heavenly realm, and a mind imbued with compassion is the bodhisattva realm. All of our thoughts can be found to correspond to either the six realms of ordinary existence or the four noble realms of existence, and in this way, we can see the doctrine of "mutual containment" at work.

Three Continuums (三世間)

In this instance, "continuum" refers to a combination of space and time: space stretching in the ten directions, and time across the past, present, and future. Within this span, we can consider three different "continuums":

1. The continuum of sentience, which refers to all sentient beings.
2. The continuum of matter, which is where all sentient beings dwell, and encompasses all mountains, rivers, land, and all other material things.
3. The continuum of the five aggregates, which is all form, feelings, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness.

There is a saying in Buddhism: "The Buddha gave all teachings in order to quell the afflictions of the mind. Without all minds, of what use would the teachings be?" Buddhist practice emphasizes cultivating the mind. For this reason, each thought with its three thousandfold world system can serve as the basis of our practice.

Ordination

三壇大戒

See also: Retreat; robe and bowl.

The triple platform ordination ceremony is an ordination ritual unique to China and includes being given three sets of precepts:

1. The *sramanera* precepts of novice monastics.
2. The *bhikṣu* or *bhikṣuṇī* precepts of fully ordained monastics.
3. The bodhisattva precepts for monastics.

According to the tradition maintained by Chinese Buddhism, all those who shave their heads and put on robes to join the monastic order must receive ordination through the triple platform ordination ceremony in order to be officially recognized as legitimate members of the monastic community.

The Buddhist historical texts are able to give us a sense of how the various systems of precepts were maintained within the Chinese tradition. The earliest transmission of the precepts in China occurred in 250 CE, using *Heart of the Mahasamghika Vinaya*, a vinaya text translated by Dharmakala at White Horse Monastery. Indian monastics were invited to officiate at the ceremony and confer the precepts, making this the first transmission of the precepts in China according to the vinaya. The first Chinese person to receive full monastic ordination was Zhu Shixing (203-282 CE), who became the first Chinese monk.

The beginning of the ordination of Chinese nuns occurred a number of years later in 357 CE when Dharmakala held an ordination ceremony upon the Si River, in which four nuns from the

Zhulin Monastery participated, including the nun Jingjian (ca. 313-357 CE). The ceremony was based upon the *Mahasamghika Liturgy for Bhiksuni* and the body of monastic precepts that Dharmagata had worked on in Luoyang.

The earliest joint ordination of monks and nuns in China was held in 434 CE at the Nanlin Monastery by the monk Samghavarman (5th cent. CE) and the nun Tiesaluo (ca. 433 CE). More than three hundred monks and nuns, including the nuns Huiguo (5th-6th cent. CE) and Jingyin (5th-6th cent. CE), were ordained together.

The bodhisattva precepts began to spread throughout China when they were translated by Kumarajiva in the fourth century. The bodhisattva precepts were propagated far and wide, bolstered by their adoption by Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty (r. 502-549 CE), Emperor Wen of the Chen dynasty (r. 560-566 CE), and Emperor Wen of the Sui dynasty (r. 581-604 CE), who all called themselves disciples of the bodhisattva precepts.

Chinese ordination ceremonies feature a system in which ten monastics, three presiding masters, and seven witnesses officiate over the ordination of new monastics. This practice was first instituted in 765 CE when Emperor Daizong (r. 762-779 CE) of the Tang dynasty requested Da Xingshan Monastery in Changan to establish a universal ordination platform and subsequently ordered all the monastics in the capital to name their preceptors to serve as their ordination officiates. Additionally, in 856 CE, intending to maintain the moral integrity of the monastic order through the certification process, Emperor Xuanzong (r. 846-859 CE) of the Tang dynasty began ordering that monks and nuns receive official ordination certificates. The triple platform ordination ceremony itself began in 1010 CE. The Vinaya Master Yunkan (d. 1061 CE) created a Mahayana ordination platform at Cixiao Temple in Kaifeng so

that those monastics who had only previously received the *bhikṣu* or *bhikṣuṇī* ordination would be able to ascend the platform once again and receive the bodhisattva precepts for monastics. This innovation of adding the bodhisattva precepts was better aligned with the spirit of the Mahayana teachings, and the practice evolved into the triple ordination ceremony observed by later generations.

By the beginning of the Republic of China, the most famous ordination platform was at Mount Baohua, as celebrated in this comic verse:

If you want to get ordained at Baohua,
 Be ready to work: bring your carrying pole and
 rope.
 You make donations for fine vegetarian meals,
 Yet you eat pungent salted vegetables.
 You pay the lamp oil money,
 Yet you bow and scrape in the dark.
 Yes, whoever gets ordained at Baohua
 Is truly a righteous monastic.

This goes to show that newly ordained monastics must undergo a complete and full ordination and receive strict training at the hands of the precept master before they are able to extend their limitless wisdom.

Ouyi

蒲益

See: Masters of the Ming dynasty, four.

P

Panthaka

探手羅漢

See: Arhats, eighteen.

Parables of the Lotus Sutra

法華七喻

The *Lotus Sutra* employs a number of easy-to-understand parables to illustrate its profound truths. This is one of the most important characteristics of the *Lotus Sutra* and explains why it has been singled out as one of the sutras with the greatest literary value. One could say that parables are employed throughout all twenty-eight chapters of the *Lotus Sutra*, but there are seven which are most well-known:

1. *The Parable of the Burning House* (火宅喻)

The parable of the burning house, featured in the Parables chapter, is also known as the “parable of the three carts.” The parable describes a house consumed by fire with young children playing

inside, not knowing that they need to escape danger. Their father employs skillful means and tells his children that outside there are goat drawn carts, deer drawn carts, and ox drawn carts they have long hoped to ride. Having enticed the children out of the house in this way, they then all ride a cart yoked with a white ox and escape from the burning house. In this parable, the burning house represents the three realms, which are filled with the five impurities and the eight kinds of suffering. The children represent sentient beings, who have cravings for the three realms and who are so enamored with the pleasures of life that they do not realize the dangers they face. The father represents the Buddha, while the goat drawn cart represents the *sravaka* vehicle, the deer drawn cart represents the *pratyekabuddha* vehicle, the ox drawn cart represents the bodhisattva vehicle, and the cart yoked with the white ox represents the one Buddha vehicle.

2. The Parable of the Poor Son (窮子喻)

The parable of the poor son appears in the Belief and Understanding chapter. The parable concerns the son of a rich man who wandered off at a young age and grew up in poverty. Unaware of his own background, the poor son eventually arrives at the door of his father after the many twists and turns of his wandering life. Upon seeing the imposing richness of his father's great manor, the poor son becomes fearful and tries to leave as soon as possible. The father recognizes his son immediately and employs various skillful means to make the boy his heir, and enable him to learn who he is. This story shows how the Buddha employs various skillful means to help those who consider themselves to be *sravakas* to transform and realize themselves as bodhisattvas.

3. *The Parable of the Medicinal Herbs* (藥草喻)

P The parable of the medicinal herbs appears in the chapter of the same name and describes several herbs that vary in name and appearance. Although all the different herbs receive the same amount of rainfall, the tall plants and short plants each grow according to their nature, and depending on their different roots, stalks, branches, and leaves, they all end up looking quite different. The parable is a metaphor for the various spiritual capacities of sentient beings. The Buddha teaches and imparts wisdom to sentient beings in all their many forms according to their capacity, mending their delusions and enabling them to attain awakening.

4. *The Parable of the Manifested City* (化城喻)

The parable of the manifested city appears in the chapter of the same name, and describes a group of travelers who are journeying towards a great treasure, representing awakening, some five hundred *yojana* away. But as they approach midway through their journey, they wish to stop due to exhaustion. Their leader then creates a projection of an imaginary city some three hundred *yojana* in size, representing skillful means, to entice the travelers to reach the treasure. This parable shows how the Buddha guides sentient beings to the one Buddha vehicle by employing the teaching of the three vehicles as a skillful means.

5. *The Parable of the Pearl in the Clothing* (衣珠喻)

The parable of the pearl in the clothing appears in the “Five Hundred Disciples Receive Their Prophecy” chapter. The parable describes a man who, while visiting a close friend, became drunk and passed out. The friend then had to leave on a long journey

to deal with some official matter, so he sewed a priceless pearl within the lining of his guest's clothing. As the man was asleep in his drunken stupor, he was unaware of any of this and went on to experience all manner of suffering while seeking out food and clothing. It was not until the close friend told him about the gift of the pearl that the man's life improved and he became free from want. The parable demonstrates how sentient beings have always possessed Buddha nature, yet in their confusion are unaware of it. As a result, they wander through the cycle of birth and death and endure the full measure of suffering, yet a single thought can lead them to liberation.

6. *The Parable of the Pearl in the Topknot* (髻珠喻)

The parable of the pearl in the topknot appears in the Peaceful Practicing chapter and describes a wheel-turning monarch who removes the pearl from his topknot and presents it to his best ministers. This shows how, in teaching the *Lotus Sutra*, the Buddha exposes what are skillful means and reveals what is absolute, proving to those who practice as *sravakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* that they will attain Buddhahood.

7. *The Parable of the Good Doctor* (醫子喻)

The parable of the good doctor appears in the Lifespan of the Tathagata chapter. The parable features a group of children who unknowingly drink poison, and though their father tries to cure them with medicine, the children have lost all reason and are unwilling to take it. The father then leaves on a long journey and sends back false news that he has died. Shocked, the children are restored to their senses, take the medicine, and are cured. The parable demonstrates how the Buddha proclaims the *Lotus Sutra* for

Path, Noble Eightfold

the sake of sentient beings confused by wrong ideas. The Buddha also enables sentient beings to feel a deep sense of admiration and longing so that they will advance towards *nirvana*.

Paramartha

真諦

See: Translators, four great Chinese.

Parents

父母

See: Field of merit; gratitude, four kinds of; violations, five great.

Path, Noble Eightfold

八正道

See also: Mindfulness, four bases of; merit and wisdom; right effort; *samadhi*.

Qian Lou was a Daoist scholar who lived a life of poverty, simplicity, and virtue. After he passed away, many statesmen came to pay their respects, but his burial shroud was not long enough to cover his body. One suggested that the shroud be laid out crooked so that it could cover the entire body, but Qian Lou's wife said, "I would rather it be right (正) and have there be not enough than for it to be crooked and have more than enough."

To be successful and achieve something in our journey through life, we need to go down the right path. If we go down the wrong path, our life could be over without a second thought. Those who wish to become Buddhas practice the "Noble Eightfold Path;" those who move against this way will find it impossible to achieve their goal. The eight parts of the path are as follows:

1. *Right View* (正見)

A person's ideas go a long way in determining if they succeed or fail in life. The Buddhist "right view" means having the right kinds of ideas, and right understanding. Right view is formed through having faith in the Dharma, and having the right view of cause and effect, positive and negative karmic results, impermanence, suffering, emptiness, and the enduring quality of the Buddhist teachings. Only when armed with right knowledge and right view can we see the life and the universe as they are and avoid having mistaken or biased ideas and conduct.

2. *Right Thought* (正思)

Right thought is having thinking based on true principles. In the Buddhist sutras, the mind is commonly compared to a field: good thoughts are like grain seedlings, and delusional thoughts are like weeds. Just as the grain will not grow unless the weeds are removed, Buddhahood cannot be attained unless delusion is removed. Therefore, those studying Buddhism should take good care of their thoughts and make sure they are aligned with the Dharma. The mind should be flexible, compassionate, pure, and without anger, such that our thoughts do not become tied up in arguments or disputes with others.

3. *Right Speech* (正語)

Speaking good words is the best form of practice for creating karmic connections with others. Conversely, by speaking in a sarcastic and vindictive tone or resorting to dishonest, harsh, divisive, or idle speech, language becomes a weapon to harm others. Students of Buddhism should speak constructive words that benefit others, words that are true and compassionate such that they awaken faith in others, and words that praise and gladden others.

4. *Right Action* (正業)

Right action refers to creating positive karma with the body, which means turning away from unwholesome conduct like killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct. This also means having good life habits, such as getting the appropriate amount of sleep, food, drink, exercise, rest, and work.

5. *Right Livelihood* (正命)

Right livelihood means engaging in proper work to obtain the necessities of life. For example, this means not opening a gambling parlor, a bar, a slaughterhouse, a fishing tackle store, a gun shop for hunting, or traffic in human beings or drugs, and so on. Right livelihood also means having a respectable moral life, harmonious social relations, and a pure emotional life.

6. *Right Effort* (正勤)

Right effort is the exertion of diligence, such that one remains focused on advancement and does not lose ground. Right effort also means striving to do good and refraining from doing bad. In the *Great Perfection of Wisdom Treatise*, this goal is broken down into four components: developing wholesome qualities that have not yet arisen, strengthening wholesome qualities that have already arisen, preventing unwholesome qualities that have yet to arise, and renouncing unwholesome qualities that have already arisen.

7. *Right Mindfulness* (正念)

Right mindfulness refers both to having pure ideas that accord with the Dharma, as well as the practice of the “four bases of mindfulness.” Just before the Buddha’s final *nirvana*, he taught the gathered disciples to abide in the following four contemplations:

contemplating the impurity of the body, contemplating the suffering of feeling, contemplating the impermanence of the mind, and contemplating the non-selfhood of phenomena. It is through these four bases of mindfulness that one can come to understand the reality of suffering, emptiness, and impermanence in order to realize *nirvana*, which is permanent, blissful, pure, and has an inherent self.

8. Right Meditative Concentration (正定)

Right meditative concentration is the focusing of one's mind and body to foster a moral character. "Meditation" should not be constrained by the formalities of sitting meditation, for any form of meditation that can ease the body and mind, enhance concentration, end confusion, and manifest Buddha nature can be called "right meditative concentration."

The Noble Eightfold Path includes elements of faith and morality. It is both the direct path to Buddhahood, as well as the standard for how we should behave in this very life. Therefore, everyone can practice the Noble Eightfold Path and cultivate the Dharma.

Patience

忍辱

See: Merit and wisdom; perfections, six.

Perception

想

See: Aggregates, five.

Perfections, Six

六度

See also: Giving; merit and wisdom.

The six perfections are six methods of practice that bring liberation to oneself and others. They are giving, morality, patience, diligence, meditative concentration, and wisdom.

There are some who believe that it is difficult for ordinary people to engage in bodhisattva practices like the six perfections because they see them as only benefiting others, but not benefiting those who practice them. This makes it hard to actually put the six perfections into practice. In actuality, while the six perfections are beneficial to others, they are even more beneficial to those who practice them.

1. *Giving* (布施)

Is giving about giving to others or giving to yourself? Sometimes, the thought of giving to others and gaining nothing for oneself makes people unwilling to give. However, giving is actually like planting a seed of good karma that can be harvested later. Giving may look like only giving to others, but it is actually giving to oneself.

2. *Morality* (持戒)

Is morality about being constrained or being free? Sometimes, people think following moral precepts is a constraint and thus are unwilling to do so. Following Buddhism's moral precepts is more like following the law; without following the law, how can you be free? People in prison are under constraints because they have not behaved morally or followed the law. If one does not violate the

law, then you are protected. Morality may look like a constraint, but in actuality, it is freedom.

3. *Patience* (忍辱)

Does patience put us at a loss or an advantage? Sometimes, people think that having patience with others means taking a loss, but having a moment's patience can allow the storm to clear, and taking a step back can open infinite possibilities. Adversity provides a recipe for enhancing our practice. While patience may at times seem like a loss, in actuality, we gain an incredible advantage.

4. *Diligence* (精進)

Is diligence drudgery or delight? Sometimes, it seems that working with diligence is painful, whether it is at one's job or part of one's spiritual practice. But what is done today is finished today, allowing one to advance. What may seem like drudgery is actually unsurpassed delight in the Dharma.

5. *Meditative concentration* (禪定)

Is meditative concentration dull or energetic? "Meditation" generally makes people think of the dull image of sitting with one's eyes closed in deep contemplation. In actuality, hauling firewood and carrying water are meditation as well. Walking, standing, sitting, and lying down can all be meditation. The wind through the swaying trees and a boat sailing upon flowing water both evoke the energetic sense of meditation.

6. *Wisdom* (智慧)

Is wisdom found within oneself or outside? "Wisdom" can make us think of people who are richly informed or possess extraordinary

Poisons, Three

P skill. In reality, there is no phenomenon which exists outside the mind; everything outside of the mind is illusory and unreal. After awakening, one will know everything. Only the wisdom that comes from within is truly beneficial.

Perseverance

精進

See: Merit and wisdom; spiritual wealth, seven kinds of.

Philosophy

世智辯聰

See: Difficulties, eight.

Pindolabharadvaja

伏虎羅漢

See: Arhats, eighteen.

Poisons, Three

三毒

See also: Ignorance.

The three poisons are three unwholesome elements that are entrenched in our minds that cause us harm again and again. The three poisons of greed, anger, and ignorance are what keep us from feeling happy and carefree and make nothing but trouble for us.

1. *The Poison of Greed* (貪毒)

The poison of greed arises from liking something. This defiles the mind, and we create attachments and see all things as “mine” or “myself.” For example, the mind becomes filled with “my” relatives,

“my” wealth, “my” reputation, “my” possessions, and so forth. With greed in the mind, one becomes enamored with the past, infatuated with the present, and hopeful for the future. Because of greed for food, we kill living things. Because of greed for pleasure, we pursue women and song. Because of greed for comfort, we become lazy and listless. The harm caused by the poison of greed is great indeed.

Greed leads to infatuation, defilement, desire, and clinging. Attachment, avarice, sycophancy, and arrogance all follow in its wake. There is a saying that “When one no longer has desires, one naturally has heightened morality.” It is because of greed that our refined moral character can sink into immorality.

2. *The Poison of Anger* (瞋毒)

The poison of anger arises from disliking something: one is dissatisfied with the present state of the world and one’s personal relationships. When the poison of anger is concealed, one speaks sweetly but carries a dagger in one’s breast. When the poison of anger is externalized, one glares with a ferocious expression. An angry person will verbally and physically abuse others, rail against heaven and earth, and curse the gods.

Anger towards family leads to leaving home and running away. Anger towards friends leads to hurting or even killing them. Anger towards everyday things leads to destroying them. Anger towards one’s circumstances leads to blaming others. The harm caused by anger is great indeed. Anger leads to hatred, hostility, irritation, and corruption. Pride, slander, envy, and aggression all follow in its wake. There is a saying that “the fires of anger burn away all the roots of goodness,” for anger is capable of destroying the good and decent nature of the mind.

3. *The Poison of Ignorance* (愚痴)

The poison of ignorance arises from wrong view. “Wrong views” encompass all views in which one is ignorant of true reality and attached to falsehood. Examples of wrong views include an improper understanding of cause and effect and the way things are.

Ignorance leads us to mistake falsehood for truth and makes our thoughts jumbled and confused. Ignorance makes us say what we should not, think what we should not, and do what we should not. An ignorant person does not know good and bad, cause and effect, karma and its effect, and the nature of the world. The harm caused by ignorance is great indeed.

Ignorance leads to prejudice, doubt, wrongheadedness, and fabrication. Disbelief, confusion, and mental dullness follow in its wake. There is a saying that, “Delusion and ignorance produce all suffering,” for ignorance shrouds our radiant intrinsic nature in darkness.

Practice, Four Stages of

信解行證

See also: Nirvana.

The Buddhist sutras contain the following parable: a traveler on a long journey is suffering from hunger and thirst. Finally, after much difficulty, the traveler manages to find a lake. But upon arriving, the traveler only gazes upon the lake and does not drink, for he considers that the lake is too big and that there is no way he will be able to drink all of it. Instead, he doesn't drink any of it.

This parable is satirizing those Buddhists who believe that their own spiritual foundation is too shallow, so when facing the vastness of the Buddhist path, they do not feel up to completing

the task and instead make no progress at all. In actuality, each of Buddhism's eighty-four thousand methods of practice can bring one to liberation. Even though the Dharma is vast and extensive, once the beginning student of Buddhism has a taste of its profound insights, he or she can practice the Dharma by following the sequence of "faith, understanding, practice, and realization." As long as one follows this ordered sequence, progress will be made.

1. *Faith* (信)

Faith is the basic motivational force in all matters. Only faith can produce the strength to advance forward with courage. Faith is the source we draw upon to achieve our goals and concentrate our energy. Only faith in each other can bring unity and success to a group; only faith in each other can bring harmony and joy to a family; and only faith in each other can bring depth to a friendship. Only faith in oneself can lead to success and accomplishment. In addition, learning Buddhism in particular requires faith, for it is only with faith that one can obtain the benefits of the Dharma. There is a Buddhist saying that, "The great Dharma ocean can only be entered through faith." Therefore, the first step to learn Buddhism is to take refuge in the Triple Gem. This expresses the conviction of one's faith.

2. *Understanding* (解)

Buddhism is a religion of both wisdom and faith, and it has no place for blind faith. Therefore, the second step in learning Buddhism is to understand the sutras. That is, one must understand what the Buddha taught, why we should have faith, and how faith is beneficial to us. In order to understand the teachings, one must read the sutras and listen to Dharma talks. One must also have the correct

P attitude when receiving the teachings and receive them as a field is seeded or a cup filled with water to avoid the three kinds of error: inattentiveness, arrogance, and wrong views. One should maintain an attitude of devotion, sincerity, respect, humility, gentleness, and purity. In this way the field of the mind can readily receive the seeds of enlightenment.

3. *Practice* (行)

There is a Buddhist saying that, “Ten feet of talk is not as good as one foot of practice.” Buddhists must practice; only talking about Buddhism will bring no benefit, just as the talk of food does not fill one’s stomach. Practice entails correcting one’s conduct according to the teachings of the Buddha. For example, the greed, anger, and ignorance of the past is transformed into giving, loving-kindness, and wisdom. That is why it is said in Buddhism that “the diligent cultivation of morality, meditation, and wisdom will extinguish greed, anger, and delusion.” Important practices include observing the five precepts and the ten wholesome actions, performing the many practices associated with the six perfections, and developing other aspects of the Dharma such as compassion, generosity, discernment, gratitude, determination, contentment, and freedom in one’s everyday life. In this way, one can attain the benefits of the Dharma. This is why, when learning Buddhism, equal emphasis should be placed on both understanding and practice.

4. *Realization* (證)

The liberation of *nirvana* is the ultimate goal of Buddhist practice, and it is also the state in which one realizes enlightenment. *Nirvana* is not something that is attained only after death. If we can remain unaffected when dealing with sorrow and suffering, if

we can remain free according to conditions and undisturbed by gain or loss, if we can abide with trouble without feeling troubled, and abide with suffering without feeling suffering, and if we can discover the true nature of the cycle of birth and death and act freely, then we have realized, right here and now, the enlightened state of liberation. Therefore, to realize the state of enlightenment means: to be unaffected by sorrow and suffering, to be undisturbed by success or failure, to be untroubled by hindrances and constraints, and to be untouched by birth, old age, sickness, and death.

This realization is the ultimate goal of Buddhist practice. To reach this goal, one must believe in, understand, and practice the Dharma. However, faith, understanding, practice, and realization should not be understood as a linear sequence but rather as a cycle. First comes correct faith, which generates a pure mind that strives to attain wisdom and understanding. This is followed next by practice, which serves to realize and confirm the truth. Finally, this further enhances one's faith as one delves deeper and deeper into understanding and practice. Such repeated cycles will slowly advance one along the Buddhist path, and one eventually realizes enlightenment.

Whether this should be considered “sudden enlightenment” or “gradual enlightenment,” the realization of enlightenment is the state of liberation that is attained over the course of “minor enlightenments” in everyday life. Therefore, students of Buddhism need not entrust the realization of enlightenment to some future time. It is more important to experience some small enlightenment every day, and most especially, whether or not one can remain committed and never backslide. There is a Buddhist saying that “It is easy to develop a mind of goodness, but much harder to remain

committed.” Buddhists can persevere with courage by remembering their initial motivation to the path, for it is only in this way that they can defeat the armies of affliction and realize the liberation of enlightenment.

Prajna

般若空性

See also: Mountain gate; omniscience of the Buddha; perfections, six; wisdom, four kinds of; wisdom, three kinds of.

Among all Buddhist sutras, the *Flower Adornment Sutra* is known as the “king of sutras,” in part because of its importance but also because of its great length: one translation is 60 fascicles long, while another is 80 fascicles. The *Great Nirvana Sutra* is even larger and is made up of 600 fascicles. The *Heart Sutra*, though it is only 260 Chinese characters, captures the essence of the *Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra*. The *Heart Sutra* describes the *prajna* of the “inherent emptiness of dependent origination.” It teaches how we can use *prajna* to contemplate the emptiness of all phenomena, so we can come to know our true selves.

Prajna, transliterated in Chinese as *bore* (般若), means “wisdom.” However, *prajna* implies something much more extensive and transcendent than our normal concept of wisdom. Worldly wisdom can be either good or bad, correct or mistaken, but *prajna* is pure goodness and beauty, for it is truly undefiled. That is why the word *prajna* is so often transliterated as *bore* (般若), rather than being given the full translated as *zhihui* (智慧).

There is nothing in this world that remains constant and unchanging and exists independent of other things. But sentient beings do not understand this on a deep level. Only the development

of *prajna* can penetrate the impermanence and non-self nature of all phenomena. *Prajna* is what allows us to see all phenomena as nothing more than a temporary combination of causes and conditions. *Prajna* is what can know the inherent emptiness of dependent origination, from which we can learn the truth of life and follow the Buddhist path to its completion. That is why the sutras say, “*prajna* is the mother of all Buddhas of the past, present, and future.”

Prajna is traditionally separated into three types:

1. *Prajna* of true reality (實相般若)
2. *Prajna* of contemplation (觀照般若)
3. *Prajna* of skillful means (方便般若)

The *prajna* of skillful means refers to logically judging the characteristics and distinctions of phenomena. The *prajna* of contemplation means to see into the true reality of such phenomena. The power of the latter two kinds of *prajna* is projected from the *prajna* of true reality. In this sense, the *prajna* of true reality is the intrinsic nature of *prajna*, which all beings inherently possess.

The term *prajna* (transliterated as *bore*) has become popular in Chinese, but even though many use the term, few understand what it means. *Prajna* is a heightened state of awareness; and there are many different levels of *prajna*, from the *prajna* of an ordinary person to the *prajna* of a Buddha. For ordinary people, *prajna* is holding right view. For *sravakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*, *prajna* is understanding dependent origination. For bodhisattvas, *prajna* is the wisdom of emptiness. Only the *prajna* of the Buddha is true, complete *prajna*. In this sense, while an ordinary person can develop some *prajna*-wisdom by having the correct knowledge and

view, only by attaining awakening and becoming a Buddha can one be truly said to have developed *prajna*.

Prajna is our intrinsic nature; it is the same as the Buddha nature which we all possess. *Prajna* is like the light that shines forth from our intrinsic nature and helps us to attain awakening and free ourselves from the cycle of birth and death. The quality that leads us from this shore of the cycle of birth and death to the other shore of *nirvana* is the perfection of *prajna* (*prajnaparamita*). This is the goal of Buddhist practice.

Of the Buddha's forty-nine year teaching career, he spent twenty-two of those years giving teachings on *prajna*. Such teachings are collected in the six hundred fascicles of the *Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra* and can guide sentient beings to be free of the cycle of birth and death by realizing true reality.

Prajna is not something that can be explained in words. Anything that could be explained in words would simply be worldly knowledge, and not truly *prajna*. But one way to approach an understanding of *prajna* is to see it as a mirror. A perfect mirror truly reflects whatever is before it: whether a person is fat or thin, beautiful or ugly, the mirror reflects someone just as they are. In the same way, the mirror of *prajna* reflects the true nature of reality, just as it is. The problem is that the mirror of our *prajna* has been covered by the dust of our afflictions. When we engage in spiritual practice, such as chanting sutras, paying homage to the Buddha, or listening to the Dharma, we progressively wipe clean the mirror of the mind. Once the mind is clear, *prajna* will manifest within.

Even if we are slandered, cursed, or criticized for no reason, *prajna*-wisdom will allow us to look upon these instances as helpful learning experiences to avert future troubles; even others'

renegeing on our loans to them can be treated as the repayment of a karmic debt. *Prajna*-wisdom can change our lives. There is a Chinese couplet that reads:

That same old moon before the window
Is now transformed by the plum blossoms.

Pratyekabuddha

緣覺

See: Dharma realms, ten; Mahayana and Hinayana.

Precepts

戒

See: Ordination; precepts, five; precepts, eight; spiritual wealth, seven kinds of; training, threefold.

Precepts, Eight

八關齋戒

See also: Precepts, five.

The *Nirvana Sutra* says, “The lay life at home is narrow and constrained like a prison, and gives rise to all affliction. The monastic life away from home is as vast as space, and strengthens all wholesome teachings.” The merit of joining the monastic order is extraordinary, but not all people are equipped with the causes and conditions to do so. For this reason, the Buddha implemented as a skillful means the practice of the “eight precepts” to give laypeople an opportunity to experience monastic life. Those who undertake the eight precepts gain a positive experience of renunciation and can plant the seed for undertaking the monastic life in the future.

P In Chinese, the eight precepts are called *baguan zhaijie* (八關齋戒), “eight sealed fasting precepts.” *Ba* (八), “eight,” simply refers to the number of precepts, while *guan* (關), “seal,” refers to the act of “sealing away” eight kinds of wrongdoing to ensure that the body, speech, and mind are without fault. *Zhai* (齋), “fast,” means to fast from doing anything non-virtuous so that one only engages in virtuous conduct. *Jie* (戒), “precept,” are those rules which guard against wrongdoing. The eight precepts are as follows:

1. *Refrain from killing* (不殺生)

This precept means to not violate the life of others. “Killing” includes both grave acts of killing such as taking human life, and lesser acts such as killing mice, cockroaches, ants, and the like. Wasting time or material resources is also a form of killing. However, it is important to remember that Buddhism is a religion based upon human beings, and as such, the precept to refrain from killing primarily refers to the killing of human beings.

2. *Refrain from stealing* (不偷盜)

This precept means to not violate the property of others. Stealing can be defined simply as taking anything which was not given. According to the monastic rules, taking anything that is valued at more than five coins (based upon the currency of the kingdom of Magadha during the Buddha’s time) is a violation of the precept. Taking minor articles in public places like paper, envelopes, and pens or borrowing things without returning them are considered lesser offenses.

3. *Refrain from sexual conduct* (不淫)

In the five precepts, the third precept is to refrain from sexual misconduct, which refers to any carnal act between a man and a

woman outside of marriage. However, within the eight precepts, the third precept is not to refrain from sexual *misconduct* but from sexual conduct of any kind. This is why those who are participating in an eight precept retreat are called “celibate *upasakas* and *upasikas*.”

4. Refrain from lying (不妄語)

This precept not only includes not speaking words that are false but also includes not speaking words that are divisive, harsh, or idle. Even knowing something but failing to speak up is considered lying. However, among these the worst offense is to lie about one’s spiritual attainment. Additionally, criticizing others, particularly members of the monastic order, is a serious violation of the precepts.

5. Refrain from consuming intoxicants (不飲酒)

This precept means to refrain from any drug that causes one to lose rationality and damage one’s moral character. In addition to alcohol, this includes marijuana, narcotics, barbiturates, and hallucinogens.

6. Refrain from wearing personal adornments

(不著華鬘香油塗身)

This precept means to wear clothing that is very simple. Not wearing clothing that is dazzling or beautiful and not applying perfume or makeup is conducive to concentrating the mind and establishing mindfulness. By turning away from greed and attachment in this way, one will progress along the path of purity.

7. Refrain from partaking in music and dancing (不歌舞觀聽)

This precept means to not enter places of sensual entertainment, to protect our physical, verbal, and mental karma from causing

P trouble. The scent of perfume can bewitch the mind, and the pleasures of song and dance can sap the will. Such things are not suitable for spiritual practice.

8. *Refrain from sleeping in fine beds* (不坐臥高廣大牀)

This precept means to refrain from a rich material life. “Not sleeping in fine beds” is one example of striving for material simplicity and not craving after material enjoyment. By practicing this and persevering, one will become aligned with the noble path.

Another additional stipulation of the eight precepts is to not eat out of the prescribed hours for monastics, which means not eating after noontime.

The eight precepts are typically observed for a day and a night. Although the time is short, if one practices well, it can bring infinite, limitless merit. Since undertaking the eight precepts often requires leaving one’s home to stay at a temple, it is also sometimes called *jinzhu lüyi* (近住律儀), “living in observance.”

Precepts, Five

五戒

The five precepts are fundamental to being human and are the basis for attaining Buddhahood. What are the five precepts?

1. *Refrain from killing* (不殺)

This means to do no harm to sentient beings and not to violate the lives of others.

2. *Refrain from stealing* (不盜)

This means not to take things that are not yours and not to steal from others.

3. *Refrain from sexual misconduct* (不邪淫)

This means not to upset family harmony and not to break the moral standards of ethical relationships.

4. *Refrain from lying* (不妄語)

This means not to falsify or distort the truth when speaking and not to say things that hurt others.

5. *Refrain from consuming intoxicants* (不飲酒)

This means not to crave stimulating foods and not to consume alcohol or tobacco that impairs judgment.

All the criminals in jail have, by in large, broken one of the five precepts. Those who have committed such acts as murder, assault, battery, and poisoning have broken the precept against killing. Those who have committed such acts as robbery, stealing, extortion, fraud, and bribery have broken the precept against stealing. Those who have done such things as breaking up families, upsetting social morality, breaking up marriages, polygamy, and rape have broken the precept against sexual misconduct. Those who have committed such acts as fraud, instigating criminal activity, libel, defamation of character, and spreading rumors to confound the public have broken the precept against lying. Those who traffic in opium, inject morphine, illegally manufacture alcohol and tobacco products, and other such illicit substances have broken the precept against intoxicants.

Those who are new to Buddhism often approach the precepts with a sense of fear. They think that upholding the precepts means that they can't do this or they can't do that and that their lives will become constrained. But the precepts are there simply to prevent us from doing wrong. Not only are they not restrictive, but they carry with them a sense of freedom. This freedom comes from not interfering with or disturbing others. To uphold the precepts, we must regulate the body and mind so that we do not violate the lives of others.

Buddhism's five precepts are similar to the five cardinal virtues of Confucianism: "benevolence" comes from not killing, "righteousness" comes from not stealing, "propriety" comes from not committing sexual misconduct, "honesty" comes from not lying, and "wisdom" comes from not consuming intoxicants. Observing the precepts can put an end to our faults and increase our blessings and will help us to become better people and advance upon the spiritual path.

Pure Land

淨土

See: Maitreya Bodhisattva; namo amitofu; noble ones of the West, three; om mani padme hum; schools of Chinese Buddhism, eight; supports, three.

Pure Land School

淨土宗

See: Schools of Chinese Buddhism, eight; supports, three.

Purna

富樓那

See: Disciples, ten great.

Purva-vidaha

東勝身洲

See: Continents, four great.

P

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Q

Qualities, Ten

十如是

The Skillful Means chapter in the *Lotus Sutra* states: “The Dharma which the Buddha has awakened to is the preeminent and unprecedented Dharma that is difficult to understand. Only another Buddha can fathom the true reality of all phenomena, given that all phenomena are endowed with such a form, such a nature, such an entity, such ability, such activity, such a cause, such conditions, such direct effects, such indirect effects, and is as such complete from beginning to end.”

As stated in the above passage, those who wish to understand the true nature of phenomena should master the ten qualities of form, nature, entity, ability, activity, cause, condition, direct effect, indirect effect, and completion from beginning to end. In Chinese, these ten are known as the “ten qualities of suchness” (十如是). All phenomena are endowed with these ten qualities. They are:

1. *Form* (相)

“Form” refers to the outward, visible appearance of an object. For example, every human being has his or her own form, and animals all have their forms as well. All wholesome and unwholesome conduct as it manifests externally also has a given form.

2. *Nature* (性)

“Nature” refers to a thing’s internal, fundamental principle which is not outwardly visible. All phenomena differ from one another in terms of their nature. For example, wood has the nature of combustibility, metal has the nature of hardness, water has the nature of wetness, wind has the nature of circulation, and so on.

3. *Entity* (體)

This quality refers to the substance of sentient beings. All phenomena in the universe have mind as their entity, and it is from this entity that everything arises from and exists upon.

4. *Ability* (力)

“Ability” refers to how a given thing’s powers can be applied to carry out some function. For example, sand, gravel, and cement have the ability to be used to make walls.

5. *Activity* (作)

“Activity” refers to the generation of the karma of body, speech, and mind.

6. *Cause* (因)

“Cause” refers to karmic causes generated by body, speech, and mind that will result in karmic effects.

7. *Condition* (緣)

“Condition” refers to those minor causes that support the major causes during the operation of causation. For example, for the growth of a flower, the seed is the cause, while the soil, nutrients, fertilizer, air, human effort, and so on would all be considered conditions. A flower can bloom and generate more seeds only when these supporting conditions are in place.

8. *Direct Effect* (果)

This quality refers to karmic effects based on past habitual tendencies such as which of the six realms of existence one is reborn into.

9. *Indirect Effect* (報)

This quality refers to karmic effects that result in pleasure or pain incurred in future lifetimes.

10. *Complete from Beginning to End* (本末究竟等)

This quality encompasses the previous nine from the quality of form to the quality of indirect effect and shows that each is produced through a combination of causes and conditions. As this entire process is composed of causes and conditions, each quality is empty. Since all phenomena are completely empty from beginning to end, this allows for the universal equality of all phenomena.

The significance of the ten qualities of suchness is to show the connection between each of the qualities: if a given phenomena’s form is unwholesome, then its indirect effects will also be unwholesome; whereas if the form is wholesome, the indirect effect will also be wholesome. In this way, the ten qualities are

consistent and can be applied to the ten dharma realms. Not only can these ten qualities account for the Buddha with his perfected merit and wisdom, but they can account for the suffering of those beings in hell. Each of the ten dharma realms features these ten qualities, resulting in one hundred such combinations. Additionally, since each of the ten dharma realms is contained within the ten dharma realms, this results in one thousand such combinations. This structure provides the basis for the important Tiantai doctrine of the “hundred dharma realms with their one thousand qualities.”

Questions of the Buddha, Four

四問

Similarly to how the sun’s light is most beautiful when setting in the west, before a Buddha enters final *nirvana*, he radiates a light that is even more rare than usual.

On the 15th day of the second lunar month in his eightieth year, the Buddha’s compassionate countenance manifested an unimaginable radiance; one that was ever more perfect, pure, and magnificent than usual. The gathered disciples wept silently as the Buddha was about to enter final *nirvana*. Wishing to preserve the true Dharma into the future, the disciples agreed that the Venerable Ananda would ask the Buddha four questions.

Ananda respectfully knelt beside the Buddha and asked, “Lord Buddha, during your time on earth, all of us relied upon you as our teacher. After your final *nirvana*, who should we rely on as our teacher?”

The Buddha replied compassionately, “After my final *nirvana*,

you should all rely upon the monastic precepts as your teacher.”

Ananda then asked his second question, “Lord Buddha, during your time on earth, all of us relied upon you for our abiding. After your final *nirvana*, where should we abide?”

“Ananda, after my final *nirvana*, you all should abide in the four bases of mindfulness. The four bases of mindfulness are: contemplate the impurities of the body, contemplate the suffering of feeling, contemplate the impermanence of the mind, and contemplate the non-selfhood of phenomena.”

Ananda asked his next question, “Lord Buddha, during your time on earth, you were the one who pacified vicious individuals. After your final *nirvana*, how should we deal with vicious people?”

“Ananda, the best was to pacify vicious people is to not associate with them. Just disregard them; that is all.”

Feeling extreme gratitude for the Buddha’s compassion, Ananda asked his last question, “Lord Buddha, during your time on earth, it has been easy for all of us to believe the teachings that you spoke. After your final *nirvana*, how can we ensure that people will have faith in your teachings?”

“When recounting my teachings, remember to state, ‘thus have I heard,’ to show that you, Ananda, heard what I said.”

The great, exalted Buddha then quietly entered final *nirvana*, but the Buddha’s Dharmakaya will remain in this world forever.

R

Rahula

羅睺羅

See also: Arhats, eighteen; disciples, ten great.

Realization

證

See also: Nirvana; practice, four stages of.

Realms of Existence, Six

六道輪迴

See also: Dharma realms, ten; heaven; hell; human realm.

Where do we come from when we are born? Where do we go after we die? These are some of the great mysteries of life, and only the Buddha can solve these mysteries.

Some people believe that one becomes a ghost upon death, while others believe that after one dies, there is nothing. Both of these are mistaken views, for after death, one does not necessarily become a ghost, nor is there nothing at all. Whether one

R is a man or a woman, enjoys high or low status, or is a human or non-human being, all are trapped in the cycle of birth and death. There are some beings who will dwell for some time in heaven, while others will live for some time in the hells. Some may be reborn as humans, and others are reborn as animals. No matter who you are, as long as you are part of the cycle of birth and death, you are within what are called the “six realms of existence.” These six realms are the heavenly realm, the human realm, the *asura* realm, the animal realm, the hungry ghost realm, and the hell realm.

1. Heavenly Realm (天道)

Those being reborn in this realm have the greatest merit of the six. The physical bodies of heavenly beings are also extremely large, with the shortest being nine hundred feet high and the tallest being some 256,000 kilometers in height. They also live extraordinarily long lives, with the shortest being equivalent to 900 years and the longest being 80,000 *kalpas*. Heavenly beings enjoy extraordinary pleasure, with some enjoying sensory pleasures and others the joys of meditation. There is no chaos or disorder, nor is there sorrow or pain. Heavenly beings have high levels of meditative concentration, but when their lives come to an end, their meditative concentration is exhausted. The heavenly realm is the most magnificent among the six realms of existence.

2. Human Realm (人道)

In the human realm, some people are happy, and some people suffer. Some people are wholesome, and some are unwholesome. The human realm has both pleasure and pain, for it is an intermediary place where life has its ups and downs. However, the human realm

is also the best place among the six realms of existence for cultivation. This is why the Buddha arose in the human realm and attained awakening in the human realm. For this reason, the human realm is the most praiseworthy.

3. *Asura Realm* (阿修羅道)

The *asura* realm is for those sentient beings who love war. *Asuras* are beings who have similar blessings to heavenly beings but lack their virtue. One can certainly find beings with such a warlike disposition among the other five realms.

4. *Animal Realm* (畜生道)

There is the greatest variety of beings within the animal realm. Some fly in the sky, some walk on the land, some live in the water, and some bury themselves beneath the earth. Another way to classify animals is by how many legs they have: some animals are legless like earthworms, some have two legs like fowl, some have four legs like beasts of burden, and some have many legs like insects. The lives of animals are usually short, and their intelligence is typically meager. They brutally kill one another as they gobble each other up; the big fish eat the little fish and the large insects eat the smaller ones. There are some animals that are even raised by human beings for slaughter, such as cattle and horses, and some are driven around by the whip and the lash. Such is truly a fate worth pitying.

5. *Hungry Ghost Realm* (餓鬼道)

There are three different kinds of beings that live in the hungry ghost realm: hungry ghosts without wealth, hungry ghosts with some wealth, and hungry ghosts with much wealth. In terms of

their physical qualities, there are ghosts with flaming mouths, those with needle-like mouths, those with odorous mouths, those with needle-like hair, those with odorous hair, those with goiters, those that subsist on what is discarded, those that subsist on what is lost, and those that are powerful. Hungry ghosts suffer from hunger and thirst, and as such, they are deserving of our pity.

6. *Hell Realm* (地獄道)

The hell realm is the most painful of the six realms of existence. Some of the beings who are reborn here suffer from the intense burning infernos of the eight hot hells, while others suffer from the freezing cold of the eight cold hells. Some experience the suffering of the isolated hells, while others go through the miseries of the adjacent hells.

Within the six realms of existence, we reside in the human realm and are able to see those beings in the animal realm. We cannot see beings in the heavenly realm, *asura* realm, hell realm, or hungry ghost realm. *Asuras* also reside in the heavenly realm, and hungry ghosts also reside in the hell realm—so one might ask, where is heaven and where is hell?

One way to answer that question is to say that heaven is in heaven and hell is in hell. That is certainly one way to put it. However, we can also see that heaven and hell exist in the human realm. Just look at how many people in the world are enjoying heaven-like happiness. And when one sees fresh fish and meat at the market, is this not the same as the suffering of hell? In a very real way, the six realms of existence exist within our own minds.

Rebirth in the Pure Land, Nine Grades of 九品往生

Pure Land can be practiced at many different levels. Whether you are a great sage well-versed in the Tripitaka or just an ordinary person, as long as you concentrate on reciting Amitabha Buddha's name with pure devotion, then you will be welcomed by Amitabha Buddha and his noble assembly and be reborn in the Pure Land. However, due to difference in the level of cultivation, there are different levels of rebirth in the Pure Land. According to the *Contemplation Sutra*, there are nine levels of rebirth in the Pure Land known as the “nine grades of rebirth”:

1. *The Top of the Highest Grade* (上品上生)

To be reborn here requires generating true sincerity, a profound mind, and the dedicatory vow (the “three states of mind”). One must also observe all the precepts and rules, read and recite Mahayana sutras, and practice the six objects of mindfulness. If one can do so with perseverance and courage, then upon death, one will be greeted by Amitabha Buddha, Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, and Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva, an infinite number of manifested Buddhas, thousands of *bhiksus*, and boundless heavenly beings bearing a *vajra* throne to welcome one to the Pure Land.

2. *The Middle of the Highest Grade* (上品中生)

One who is reborn at this grade has developed the three states of mind described above but does not read and recite the Mahayana sutras. However, one does understand the supreme truth and has deep faith in cause and effect. Upon death, one will be greeted by Amitabha Buddha, Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, Mahasthamaprapta

Bodhisattva, one thousand manifested Buddhas, and a boundless retinue bearing a golden throne, reaching out in welcome.

3. *The Bottom of the Highest Grade* (上品下生)

One reborn at this grade is able to develop the three states of mind but does not read and recite Mahayana sutras, nor understand their meaning, and only believes in cause and effect. Upon death, one will be greeted by Amitabha Buddha, Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva, and five hundred manifested Buddhas and bodhisattvas bearing golden lotus flowers to welcome one to the Pure Land.

4. *The Top of the Intermediary Grade* (中品上生)

One reborn at this grade observes the five precepts and the eight precepts. In addition to practicing all precepts, he does not commit the five great violations and is free from all unwholesomeness. Upon death, one is surrounded by Amitabha Buddha and his retinue of *bhiksus*, who will project a golden light. Upon seeing such light, one will feel great happiness and will see oneself sitting on a lotus flower throne.

5. *The Middle of the Intermediary Grade* (中品中生)

One reborn at this grade has upheld the eight precepts for one day and one night, the *sramanera* precepts for one day and one night, or the full *bhiksu* precepts for one day and one night, and has maintained proper comportment. Upon death, one will see the golden light projected by Amitabha Buddha and his retinue as they come in welcome, bearing lotus flowers of the seven treasures.

6. *The Bottom of the Intermediary Grade* (中品下生)

One reborn at this grade has given loving care to their parents and practiced benevolence and righteousness. As death approaches, they encounter good Dharma friends who will teach them about the joys of Amitabha Buddha's Pure Land and the forty-eight vows of Dharmakara Bodhisattva. With perfect faith and joy, they will obtain rebirth in the Pure Land.

7. *The Top of the Lowest Grade* (下品下生)

One reborn of this grade is a sentient beings who commits all manner of negative karma, slanders the *vaipulya* sutras, and engages in wrongdoing with no sense of remorse. As death approaches, if such people encounter good Dharma friends who read them the Mahayana sutras, it shall drive away the negative karma of a thousand *kalpas*. If they teach them how to join their palms and chant "Namo Amitofo," it will drive away the negative karma equal to five billion lifetimes in the cycle of birth and death. Upon death, Amitabha Buddha will send manifestations of Buddhas, Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, and Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva to greet them.

8. *The Middle of the Lowest Grade* (下品中生)

One reborn of this grade violates the five precepts, eight precepts, and the *bhiksu* precepts. Such people steal the property of the temple and speak of the Dharma with impure intentions. All of this is done with no remorse; rather, they adorn themselves with wrongdoing. As death approaches, such people will surely face the fires of hell, but if they meet good Dharma friends who praise the ten powers of Amitabha Buddha's moral influence, they can be freed of their serious wrongdoing that would lead to eight billion *kalpas*

in the cycle of birth and death. Thereafter, the first of hell will be transformed into a cool breeze that carries a cascade of heavenly flowers with the manifestations of Buddhas and bodhisattvas upon these flowers to greet them.

9. *The Bottom of the Lowest Grade* (下品下生)

One reborn of this grade commits the five great violations and the ten unwholesome actions and involves themselves in all manner of unvirtuous behavior. As death approaches, if such people meet with good Dharma friends, they can receive various forms of comfort. Through the teaching of the wondrous Dharma, they can learn how to recite Amitabha Buddha's name. By taking these lessons to heart and reciting the name continuously to fulfill the ten recitations of "Namo Amitofo," each recitation will remove the wrongdoing of eight billion *kalpas* in the cycle of birth and death. Thereafter, they will see golden lotus flowers like the sun discs that now appear before them, welcoming them to the Pure Land.

The lowest grade mentioned above shows that even people who have done wrong during their lifetime can still obtain rebirth in the Western Pure Land, as long as they receive guidance from good Dharma friends as death approaches so that they can perform ten recitations of Amitabha Buddha's name. However, those who try to rely upon this method and do not cultivate positive karma in their everyday lives will face all manner of danger. People can die in a million different ways, and there is no way to guarantee that one will have the clarity of right mindfulness. The presence of good Dharma friends is even harder to come by. Therefore, engaging in Pure Land cultivation is the most reliable form of practice,

which can only be perfected by accumulating merit on a daily basis and making the vow with profound faith.

Refuge

南無

See also: Gem, triple.

When chanting the name of a Buddha, the expression *namo* often precedes the name of the Buddha. For example, someone may chant “Namo Amitofo.” Some non-Buddhists misinterpret this, thinking that they hear the Buddhists chanting “No more Amitofo” or some other similar misconception. Some even mistakenly think that *namo* is the name of a Buddha. Each of these mistakes stems from a lack of understanding.

There is a Buddhist saying that, “If one is confused, go to a temple. One ‘Namo Fo,’ and you will attain the Buddha way.” *Namo* is a Sanskrit word meaning “to show respect” or “to take refuge.” Thus “Namo Amitofo” means “to respectfully take refuge in Amitabha Buddha.” Taking refuge is the first step to officially becoming a Buddhist and involves undergoing a particular ceremony.

To take “refuge” means to return, to take what has been stained, and to return it to its original purity. Before coming to Buddhism, one may deal with worldly things with a worldly attitude, but after coming to Buddhism, one deals with the matters of truth, goodness, and beauty with an attitude of truth, goodness, and beauty. The purpose of taking refuge is to direct the human mind towards the good in this way.

Taking refuge means believing in the Triple Gem of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha with all one’s body and mind. The

R unsurpassed morality and wisdom of the Buddha and the Sangha serve as our model for how to be human, while the principles revealed by the Dharma represent our standards for how to live. We rely upon the Triple Gem just as a child relies upon its mother, how the people rely upon the ruler, how the weak rely upon the strong, how the lame rely upon the staff, and how those drowning in water rely upon a boat. When our body and mind find that refuge, our life will have its support and our spirit can be uplifted.

Taking refuge is a lifelong process and is not something that only occurs during a certain period of time. Taking refuge also involves taking refuge in all three components of the Triple Gem: the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. There are some people who have incorrect views about taking refuge and thus take refuge incompletely. Some people only take refuge in one thing, such that they only venerate the Buddha, only listen to teachings, or only show respect to monastic teachers. Some people only take refuge in the first two gems, for they venerate the Buddha and chant the sutras, but they do not honor the sangha. There are still others who venerate the Buddha and listen to the Dharma, but they only honor their own teacher rather than the monastic order as a whole.

The Buddha is like a skilled physician who can cure the various different illnesses of sentient beings. The Dharma is like miraculous medicine that can reveal the correct path and show us how to free ourselves from suffering and attain happiness. The sangha is like a nurse, who can guide us to correct faith. Only the triple refuge can assure that we will be happy and peaceful in body and mind. When we take refuge, none of these elements can be missing.

After taking refuge in the Triple Gem as described above, one then takes refuge in the Triple Gem of one's intrinsic nature. They are as follows:

1. The Buddha Gem of Intrinsic Nature: Maintaining awakened awareness with every thought so that confusion does not arise.
2. The Dharma Gem of Intrinsic Nature: Holding onto correct principles in every thought so that wrong views do not arise.
3. The Sangha Gem of Intrinsic Nature: Purifying the mind with every thought so that desire for things or states does not arise.

After recognizing the Triple Gem, one's beliefs become steadfast so that one will not practice blindly nor stray from the path.

Reliances, Four

四依止

See also: Prajna; wisdom, four kinds of; wisdom, three kinds of.

Life is like a great ocean. On this shore, there is pain and suffering, while on the other shore, there is joy and happiness. To cross over to the other shore, one must rely on the Dharma's boat of compassion to make the trip of liberation. All those who learn Buddhism wish to be free from pain and suffering, though we come to Buddhism with different sets of causes and conditions. Though our circumstances are not the same, there should be unanimity regarding the attitude with which one learns Buddhism. There is a Buddhist teaching regarding how one should approach learning the Dharma called the "four reliances." They are:

1. *Rely on the Dharma, not on individual teachers*
(依法不依人)

“Dharma” refers to what is true, and when learning Buddhism, one should rely upon and act according to the truth. We cannot rely upon individual teachers because each differs in their thinking and understanding. People suffer from birth, old age, sickness, and death, and thus, their comings and goings are impermanent. The Dharma, on the other hand, has remained unchanged from the past to the present and is forever renewing itself throughout time. When learning the path we must rely upon the Dharma rather than any individual. Do not be one of those people who likes to socialize with their friends by going to various temples, for such people are enveloped in a web of social ties and in the end cannot choose any real faith. The Buddha shows that we should rely on the Dharma through pursuing faith, understanding, practice, and realization. We must not lose faith because of the good or bad qualities of individual teachers, nor should we follow only a certain temple or monastic group, while ignoring the whole Dharma.

2. *Rely on wisdom, not on knowledge* (依智不依識)

In this context, “wisdom” refers to pure *prajna*-wisdom, while “knowledge” refers to the learning that arises from distinctions made by the six sense consciousnesses. Because of the illusory nature of worldly phenomena, all that is recognized and distinguished by the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind changes from moment to moment. Therefore, it is ultimately not very thorough to use knowledge based upon our consciousnesses’ ability to make distinctions about phenomena among the vast multiplicity of form and shape.

On the other hand, *prajna*-wisdom is undefiled and functions like a perfect mirror, able to reflect all worldly phenomena just as they are. Like a shining bright light, *prajna*-wisdom allows us to see our own original nature. Therefore, not only should we be sure to “rely on wisdom, not on knowledge,” but also endeavor to transform our consciousness into wisdom. In this way, we will not be confused by the illusions of the world.

3. *Rely on the meaning, not on the words* (依義不依語)

Language and writing are convenient means for us to obtain knowledge and ascertain the truth. Such things are like labels; they are tools we use to explain principles, but they are not the essence of the truth itself. In our daily lives, language and writing can serve as a bridge for people to communicate with one another, but they also make it very possible for misunderstandings to arise due to misinterpretation, loss of context, or differences in language or expression. If this is true even for mundane things, it is certainly true when applied to something sublime and profound like the Dharma.

That is why the Chan School says of itself that it is “not based upon the written word.” Huineng (638-713 ce), the Sixth Patriarch of the Chan School, even said, “The wondrous teachings of the Buddhas are not within words.” Such sublime truths and practices cannot be communicated solely through relying on written words. Therefore, in learning Buddhism, we should understand the Dharma in terms of its meaning, rather than becoming involved in conjecture, disputation, or attachment over the language. Otherwise, language becomes an obstacle, and we will drift farther and farther away from the path.

4. *Rely on the ultimate truth, not on relative truth* (依了義不依不了義)

R There is a distinction within the Dharma between relative truth and ultimate truth. Relative truths are known as “skillful means,” while ultimate truth is absolute. The Buddha used skillful means in order to adapt his teaching to the spiritual capacity of his audience, but it is important that we do not treat these skillful means as ultimate truth. Ultimate truth is that which corresponds to the Buddha mind. Therefore, when learning Buddhism, we should rely on the ultimate truth of the Buddha mind, rather than the relative truth of skillful means.

These four reliances are principles that Buddhists should know and put into practice. The *Diamond Sutra* says, “My teachings should be understood to be like a raft. If even the Dharma must be let go of [upon reaching the other shore], what about what is not the Dharma?” The Buddha gave various teachings to help sentient beings find their Buddha nature, just as a pointing finger can help us to see the moon in the night sky. In practicing Buddhism, we remember to see the moon that the finger is pointing at, rather than becoming attached to the finger that points the way. If we were to become attached to the finger, it would block our vision, such that we would no longer be able to see the moon.

Retreat

結夏安居

See also: Precepts, eight.

Within orthodox Buddhist monastic traditions, there are rules set in place to encourage isolation, restrict movement, and create a

quiet atmosphere so that members of the monastic order can focus on their practice. Such rules are adapted from the monastic retreat system instituted by the Buddha.

During the time of the Buddha, the rainy season in India lasted for three months. The Buddha set aside that period from the sixteenth day of the fourth lunar month to the fifteenth day of the seventh lunar month as a retreat period. During this three month period, members of the monastic order were not permitted to travel and would instead stay in one place to practice diligently. In Chinese, the first day of the retreat period is called *jiexia* (結夏), and the concluding day is called *xiexia* (解夏). This retreat period is also called *zuoxia*, (坐夏) “summer meditation.”

Retreat periods were most commonly held during the summer, but a similar period of retreat is sometimes held from the sixteenth day of the tenth lunar month through the fifteenth day of the first lunar month, known as the “winter retreat.” There is no set location where such retreats must take place: a small room, the foot of a tree, a cave, or a remote hermitage will do. However, according to the *Five-Part Vinaya*, one should not observe the retreat period in a place lacking emergency help, due to the possibility of attacks from wild animals like poisonous snakes, tigers, and other such dangerous animals.

The monastic retreat is a period of restricted movement, and those monastics who are on retreat are strictly forbidden from leaving the monastery. The reasoning is that during the rainy season, most plants, trees, and insects are undergoing the reproductive process, and travel beyond the monastery may lead to harming these living beings by mistakenly stepping on them and thereby bring ridicule to the monastic order. At the same time, the retreat period is a time for practice, so travel is forbidden.

If a monastic needs to leave in the middle of a retreat, he or she must ask for leave and obtain permission before doing so. Among Buddhist monasteries, those of the Vinaya School give special attention to the retreat period.

R At the end of the retreat, the community performs four rituals: repentance, dispersing the sacred boundaries (*sima*), renewing the sacred boundaries, and the bestowing of robe cloth. The repentance ritual is conducted after the monastic retreat has been completed; participants reflect upon their conduct during the retreat. If anyone has broken the rules, they confess their faults to the community, as each repents to the other. The day this ritual is performed is known as *zizi* (自恣), “day of repentance.” As all the members of the monastic community have newly purified bodies and minds, many have attained awakening during the period following the day of repentance. This made the Buddha joyful, and as such, the day is also known as *fo huanxi ri* (佛歡喜日), “day of the Buddha’s joy.”

At the time following the summer retreat, the Buddha also directed Maudgalyayana to prepare all manner of food and drink to be offered to the monastic community so that the merit of this act could help Maudgalyayana ease his mother’s suffering in the realm of hungry ghosts where she had been reborn. This was the origin of the Ullambana Dharma service.

The system of monastic retreat has been observed in China since the Latter Qin dynasty (384-417 CE). Though the system was adopted, not every aspect of it has been practiced as it was in India due to the differences in physical locale and social custom. For example, one reason for the prohibition against unnecessary travel during the retreat period is to protect the mind from distraction. The monastic retreat in China has thus become a more solitary

affair, in which one practices on one's own to attain awakening and cultivates to ever greater depths to quiet the self. Today, most Buddhist colleges operate year-round as if it were a retreat period.

Right Dharma, Age of 正法

See: Ages of the Dharma, three.

Right Effort 四正勤

See also: Path, noble eightfold.

To have a positive spirit and strive for improvement is what is meant by “right effort” in Buddhism. There are four kinds of right effort, and these are called the “four right efforts.”

1. Prevent Unwholesome States (未生的惡法，使它不生)

We should prevent thoughts from arising that would violate the precepts, much less any action that may violate them. We must apply effort to removing our afflictions, purifying our desire, abandoning wrong views, and ridding ourselves of attachment.

“Unwholesome states” refers to unwholesome thoughts, unwholesome words, and unwholesome deeds. We should apply effort to prevent unwholesome thoughts of greed, anger, and ignorance from arising; unwholesome words like lies, harsh words, divisive words, and idle chatter from being spoken; and unwholesome actions like killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct from being committed. This is the first right effort: preventing unwholesome states that have not yet arisen from arising.

2. *End Unwholesome States* (已生的惡法，使它斷除)

People are not perfect sages, and there is no one among us who is without fault. We are all ordinary people, and who among us can forget their feelings? The distractions of our feelings, thoughts, and perceptions and the provocations of greed, anger, and ignorance cause us to do all kinds of wrong and create negative karma every day, such that our unwholesomeness grows more and more. This is like an elephant stuck in the mud: the more it thrashes, the deeper it sinks.

At times like these, we must keep a cool head and apply our effort to remove such unwholesome states by the root. If we are diligent, we can cut away all unwholesome thoughts, unwholesome words, and unwholesome deeds with the sword of wisdom. This is the second right effort: ending unwholesome states that have already arisen.

3. *Develop Wholesome States* (未生的善法，令它生起)

Even the best of fields will not yield a harvest if not planted, and even the wisest sage is unfit if he is lacking in virtue. We should apply our effort to develop faith and commitment which has yet to be developed, and generate compassion that has yet to be generated.

What are wholesome states? Not killing, but having benevolence. Not committing sexual misconduct, but acting with propriety. Not stealing, but being righteous. Not lying, but being honest. Not consuming intoxicants, but having wisdom. Giving what brings joy to others and offering assistance to those in need. When we plant the seeds of goodness in the world's field of merit, though there is no expectation of gain, there will naturally be a fruitful harvest. This is the third right effort: developing wholesome states that have not yet arisen.

4. *Strengthen Wholesome States* (已生的善法，令它增長)

We should apply effort to strengthen the sprouts of faith and commitment, expand our feelings of compassion, and purify our practice and virtue. By not expecting anything in return, one will not regret any act of generosity. By not expecting any praise, one can endure any slander or attack. By not expecting to be free from illness, one will develop constitution that comes from enduring the hardship of illness. By acting in this way, our wholesome qualities will grow stronger. This is the fourth right effort: strengthening wholesome states that have already arisen.

There is a saying, “Even if some gold washed in with the tide, one will still need to rise early to get it.” We should not allow ourselves to do the wrong thing because the consequences will only be minor, for even drops of water can cut through a stone in time. Nor should we fail to do the right thing when the reward is very small, for even a tall oak grows from a tiny acorn. One must be diligent to achieve victory over unwholesomeness, for only then can what is wholesome flourish. There is no shorter path to attaining Buddhahood than the path of right effort.

Robe and Bowl

三衣一鉢

The earliest members of the Buddhist monastic order were represented by their “three robes and one bowl.” No matter where they wandered, they always kept their three robes and bowl with them. Each of the three robes has a different name and purpose, and they include the *sanghati*, the *uttarasanga*, and the *anatarvasaka*. Collectively, the three robes are known as the *kasaya*, which is

Sanskrit for “mute color,” “off color,” or “dyed color.” The uses for the three robes are as follows:

1. *Sanghati* (僧伽梨)

Also called the “monastic robe,” “great robe,” “doubled robe,” “mottled robe,” “outer robe,” and “robe for going to palaces and villages.” The *sanghati* is worn when leaving the monastery or during solemn ceremonies. Examples of such events include visiting the royal palace, entering a village, gathering alms, ascending the dais to teach the Dharma, or debating non-Buddhists. The *sanghati* is made by sewing together between nine to twenty-five strips of cloth and is thus also known as the “robe of nine strips.”

2. *Uttarasanga* (鬱多羅僧)

Also known as the “upper robe,” “robe of seven strips,” “intermediate robe,” and “assembly robe,” the *uttarasanga* is worn when attending lectures and during chanting ceremonies, as well as fortnightly recitations of the monastic precepts. It is stitched together from seven pieces of cloth.

3. *Anatarvasaka* (安陀會)

Also known as the “inner robe,” “robe of five strips,” and “nighttime robe,” the *anatarvasaka* is worn all day and when going to sleep. It is made by stitching together five strips of cloth.

After Buddhism was introduced to China, due to factors relating to customs and climate, monastics began to wear the three robes only during Dharma services and other related Buddhist activities. The Chinese monastics opted for the more utilitarian Chinese-style long gown for everyday wear.

Each of the three robes is made by first cutting cloth into patches and then later stitching them together. This custom originated during the time of the Buddha when the Buddha remarked to Ananda upon passing some rice paddy fields that the Buddhas of the past wore robes that resembled the patchwork pattern of the rice paddies. Thus, the monastics' robes were made to feature the pattern, as well.

The three robes are made by sewing the cloth patches into squares of four patches each to resemble rice fields, and are also called “field of merit” robes because they offer the faithful the opportunity to plant merit. The patchwork design on the three robes provides additional advantages: 1) it designates the robes as religious garments that are not to be used for other purposes, 2) it prevents monastics from coveting the robes, and 3) it prevents the robes from being stolen by others.

According to the *Treasury of Meanings Sutra*, the monastic robes grant ten benefits to those who wear them:

1. You will be guided toward *bodhi*.
2. You will only reside in the heavenly or human realms.
3. Your parents will pay homage to you.
4. *Nagas* will sacrifice themselves for you.
5. *Nagas* will wrap themselves in it to protect themselves from danger.
6. Kings will honor you and give rise to faith.
7. Sentient beings will worship you.
8. *Raksas* will venerate you.
9. Heavenly beings and *nagas* will protect you.
10. You will be able to attain Buddhahood.

R In his *Preface to the Brahma Net Sutra's Bodhisattva Precepts Ritual*, Chan Master Yongming Yanshou (904-975 CE) tells of how Utpalavarna Bhikkuni, before she was ordained, once draped some monastic robes over her shoulders in jest, and owing to these causes and conditions, she was able to happen upon where the Buddha was dwelling. There, she joined the monastic order and became an arhat. This gives some indication of how venerable the monastic robes are.

The bowl is the eating implement of the monastic order, and it is carried while gathering alms. In the same way that monastics are known for being worthy of the support of heavenly and human beings, the bowl, too, represents a “field of merit.” The bowl is also called the “proper vessel,” for it is proper in three ways: 1) it is the proper color, in that a bowl must be a dark color that does not give rise to attachment, 2) it is the proper material, in that it is constructed from a coarse material that does give rise to desire, and 3) it holds the proper amount, in that one may eat the right amount of food such that one can be content and not covetous.

The three robes and bowl symbolize the purity and moral character of the monastic community. Emperor Shunzhi of the Qing dynasty (r. 1664-1661 CE) composed a verse praising monastic life as follows:

Food for all the monasteries in the world is piled
as high as a mountain,
Whenever you go with your alms bowl there is
food to eat.
Gold and jade are not dear,
Only the monastic's robe is hard to wear.

S

Saha World

五濁惡世

See also: Human realm.

The sutras say, “Only excessive desire leads to birth in this Saha world; only a firm vow can lead to birth in the Pure Land.” *Saha* in Sanskrit, or *suopo* (娑婆) in Chinese, refers to our world; the world in which Sakyamuni Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, teaches the Dharma. *Saha* means “endurance,” for although this world is tormented by suffering, human beings have the power to endure it. According to the *Amitabha Sutra*, the Saha world degenerates in five ways:

1. *Kalpa Degeneration* (劫濁)

At one time, human beings could live for 84,000 years. But as the human mind became increasingly brutish and morality declined, every hundred years or so, the average human life span became shorter and shorter. As this *kalpa* continues, the average human life span will eventually reduce to thirty years, and the world will

be beset by a calamity of famine. When the average human life span is twenty years, there will be a calamity of pestilence, and when it has reduced to ten years, there will be a calamity of war which will bring harm to all sentient beings.

2. *View Degeneration* (見濁)

The Age of Right Dharma and the Age of Semblance Dharma have already passed. The world has degenerated into the Age of Declining Dharma, in which sentient beings increasingly hold wrong views, such that they do not know how to follow the wholesome path.

3. *Affliction Degeneration* (煩惱濁)

As sentient beings pursue the five desires and the six sense objects, they continue to build the afflictions of greed, anger, ignorance, pride, and doubt, which trouble the body and mind.

4. *Sentient Being Degeneration* (眾生濁)

As the understanding of sentient beings has degenerated, their minds have become dominated by affliction such that they no longer honor their parents, do not cultivate virtue, do not cut off non-virtue, and do not fear the effects of negative karma. Because of this, their positive karmic effects decrease and their negative karmic effects increase.

5. *Life-span Degeneration* (命濁)

As mentioned above, due to their increasingly negative karma, the average life span of sentient beings has degenerated from 84,000 years in the ancient past to today, when it is rare for one to live to be 100.

As recorded in the *Vimalakirti Sutra*, at one time Sariputra asked the Buddha, “All the other Buddha lands are of such incomparable purity. Why is the realm that you teach in so foul and polluted?”

The Buddha then pressed his toe into the earth, and in a moment, the four great continents manifested before their eyes, but now, there were beautiful golden rivers, burgeoning trees, blooming flowers, and soft grass. The Buddha said, “This is my land. The unbearably polluted and base realm that you see is a manifestation of the karma of sentient beings.”

The Buddha manifested that Saha world to bring liberation to sentient beings, while sentient beings are reborn here due to the pull of their karma. Due to the differences in the karma of each individual, their share of suffering or happiness, fortune or misfortune will also vary. Each being’s appearance, intelligence, life span, and talents are also unique, depending on their built up positive and negative karma.

During the Buddha’s time, King Bimbisara of Magadha was usurped by his wicked son Ajatasatru. The prince imprisoned and tortured his father. King Bimbisara was deeply affected by the blight of the Saha world, and at the apex of his pain and hopelessness, he prayed to the Buddha with great devotion. In response, the Buddha taught the Pure Land method to the king and queen and opened up a new window of hope for the sentient beings of this Saha world.

The Buddha said that the sentient beings of the Saha world have a great propensity for listening and that all learning proceeds from listening and memorizing. Buddhists must enter *samadhi* by hearing, thinking, and practice. That is why there is a Buddhist saying: “the more one hears, the more it becomes ingrained.”

The Saha world is full of suffering, but this does not mean there is no happiness whatsoever. Suffering is just more plentiful than happiness. To live means one will bear the suffering of birth, old age, sickness, death, separation from loved ones, being near loathsome people, not getting what one wants, and the five aggregates. One must also bear hunger, thirst, cold, heat, slander, condemnation, false accusation, injustice, humiliation, frustration, and even natural and man-made disasters.

S In this human journey so full of hardship, if one can be at peace with the realization that living means bearing all sorts of pain and suffering, then one has the “patience for life.” The next step is to live according to the Dharma so that one can be amidst suffering but be able to transform it through wisdom, and this is called the “patience for phenomena.” Ultimately, if one is able to apply dependent origination and know that all phenomena lack an independent nature, that they are empty, such that one transcends patience itself, this is called the “patience for the non-arising of phenomena.” When one has the supreme, perfect wisdom of this level of patience, one can transform this Saha world here and now into the Pure Land.

Samadhi

三摩地

See also: Heaven; path, noble eightfold; perfections, six; stopping and seeing meditation.

Buddhism is a religion of wisdom, and wisdom comes from listening to the teachings, thinking about their meaning, and practicing according to the principles. Similarly, there is a saying in Buddhism that “one enters *samadhi* by means of listening, thinking, and practicing.”

Samadhi, transliterated in Chinese as *sanmodi* (三摩地) or *sanmei* (三昧), is a Sanskrit word meaning “holding oneself in equanimity” or “right meditative concentration.” “Equanimity” refers to the peace and harmony one attains beyond the ups and downs of one’s mind, and “holding” refers to concentrating the mind in one state. This condition of keeping the mind focused in a single state without distraction is also called “one-pointedness of the mind.”

There are two types of meditative concentration: meditative concentration that is innate and meditative concentration obtained through cultivation. Innate meditative concentration refers to the meditative concentration obtained by heavenly beings born into the form and formless realms due to their wholesome karma accumulated during previous lives. For those born in our realm (also called the “desire realm”), meditative concentration must be obtained through diligent practice.

Cultivating meditative concentration generally involves concentrating the mind on one point, free from distraction, while maintaining a peaceful state of mind. This is *samadhi*.

In addition to the type of *samadhi* practice described in the Tiantai teaching of stopping and seeing meditation, there is an additional categorization of *samadhi* called the “four types of *samadhi*.” They are as follows:

1. *Constant Sitting Samadhi* (常坐三昧)

A typical session consists of ninety days of devoting oneself entirely to sitting meditation and reciting a Buddha’s name. As one’s thoughts become concentrated in one place, one can contemplate the absolute nature of the Dharma. By practicing towards *samadhi* in this way, one will realize the non-duality of ignorance and awakening, and the oneness of the sagely and the ordinary. Since

one only undertakes the single practice of constant sitting, this form of practice is also sometimes called “single-practice *samadhi*.”

2. *Constant Walking Samadhi* (常行三昧)

Like constant sitting *samadhi*, this is typically practiced over the course of a ninety day session. During a ninety day session, one cannot sit nor lie down. One is only allowed to stand or move around. During the twenty-four hours of each day, one walks around a room without stopping; there are no breaks. This kind of *samadhi* is also called the “presence *samadhi*” because it is based on the *Presence Samadhi Sutra*. According to this sutra, practicing this form of *samadhi* can allow the practitioner to see all Buddhas of the ten directions appearing before the practitioner.

3. *Half Walking, Half Sitting Samadhi* (半行半坐三昧)

This is also known as the “universal *samadhi*,” or the “*Lotus Sutra Samadhi*.” This type of practice is not associated for any specific unit of time, but sessions may last between seven to twenty-one days or more. This form of practice is also associated with groups of ten or more people practicing together. This type of practice includes the following phases:

- Purifying the temple.
- Purifying the body.
- Making offerings of the body, speech, and mind.
- Invoking the Buddhas.
- Worshipping the Buddhas.
- Repenting the faults of the six sense organs.
- Circumambulating the shrine.
- Chanting the sutras.

- Performing sitting meditation.
- Realization of reality.

4. *Non-Walking and Non-Sitting Samadhi* (非行非坐三昧)

This category includes all varieties of *samadhi* outside of the three kinds described above. This kind of *samadhi* is not limited to any particular body position, be that walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, and can be sustained by any method. At all times and during any activity without restriction, one can contemplate and realize *samadhi* in each thought. Of the four, this *samadhi* is the most important.

A sutra states, “Concentrating the mind in one place is a meritorious achievement, while a moment of distraction is affliction.” Meditative concentration is an inquiry into the mind that turns away from the profane desires produced when the mind is seduced by external objects. By calming the mind and quieting thoughts, one can end desire. The *Dharmapada* states, “If I do not think of you, then you will not arise.” By eliminating craving and overcoming confusion, one is able to achieve a calm and peaceful mental state.

Meditative concentration naturally produces wisdom. Buddhist meditation methods and non-Buddhist meditation methods are not different, yet the practices of non-Buddhist schools emphasize obtaining supernatural powers, while Buddhist meditation focuses on the cultivation of wisdom. This is one way that Buddhism is different from other religions.

This shows that attaining meditative concentration in and of itself is not the goal; it is the attainment of wisdom through concentration that is the goal of Buddhist meditation. If one wishes to

Schools of Chinese Buddhism, Eight

attain meditative concentration, one must first eliminate concern for success or failure and not be worried by gain or loss. In this way, the mind will not be swayed by external circumstances and will naturally become focused.

Samantabhadra

普賢

See: Mountains, four great.

Sangha

僧

See: Assembly, sevenfold; gem, triple; harmony, six points of reverent.

Sariputra

舍利弗

See: Disciples, ten great.

Schools of Chinese Buddhism, Eight

八大宗派

Chan is poor, the Esoteric rich, Pure Land is a skillful means.

Faxiang is patient, Three Treatise speaks of emptiness,

Huayan has its lineage, Vinaya cultivates conduct.

Tiantai organizes the doctrine and its meaning.

This verse explains the unique characteristics of eight schools of Chinese Mahayana Buddhism. Among these eight, some emphasize

doctrine, such as the Tiantai, Huayan, Faxiang, and Three Treatise schools, and some emphasize practice, such as the Chan, Pure Land, Vinaya, and Esoteric schools.

1. *Tiantai School* (天台宗)

The school was named after its founder, Zhiyi (538-597 CE), who lived on Mount Tiantai. The school derives many of its teachings from the *Lotus Sutra* and is thus also known as the *Lotus Sutra School*.

Zhiyi divided all of the Buddha's teachings into five periods, culminating in the teachings on the *Lotus Sutra*. Zhiyi specified four methods of instruction: the sudden method, the gradual method, the secret method, and the indeterminate method. Zhiyi also defined four objects of instruction: the canonical teachings, the common teachings, the particular teachings, and the complete teachings. Using these schemes, he classified the many sutras of the Tripitaka according to the differing spiritual capacities of their intended audiences. He then analyzed and compared each and every method of practice and stage of realization. As a result, the doctrines within the Tiantai School are very rigorous and systematic.

Formalized doctrines of the Tiantai School include "one thought containing the three thousandfold world system," "one thought, three contemplations," and the "doctrine of the integration of the three truths." The main methods of practice include the "three kinds of stopping and seeing," the "four kinds of *samadhi*," and the "five repentances." Even though its doctrine is complex and its teachings profound, the school has managed to survive into modern times because there were those in every generation who carried on its tradition.

2. *Huayan School* (華嚴宗)

This school is named after the Chinese title of the *Flower Adornment Sutra*, which is its principle text. It is also sometimes called the “Xianshou School” because the vision of the school was primarily established by National Master Fazang Xianshou (643-712 CE).

The *Flower Adornment Sutra* is honored as the “king of sutras,” for it is the greatest and most profound among the Buddha’s teachings. The *Flower Adornment Sutra* originated in India. After being transmitted to China, it became fully integrated into Chinese Buddhism, which developed the doctrine of “dependent origination of the dharma realm.” Many great teachers also developed methods to encode the school’s philosophical principles into real practices. This allowed the philosophy of the *Flower Adornment Sutra* to reach its apex in Chinese Buddhism.

The Huayan School primarily extols the concept of the absolute “dharma realm,” from which such doctrines as the “four dharma realms,” the “ten gates of profundity,” and the “interpenetration of the six characteristics” were developed. The Huayan School’s main methods of practice include making the four universal vows, cultivating the ten vows of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, and sitting meditation.

3. *Faxiang School* (法相宗)

This school specializes in delineating the nature and characteristics of all phenomena, which is why it is called the *Faxiang* (法相), “phenomenal characteristic,” School. The Faxiang School is also closely aligned with “consciousness-only” thought. It is also known as the Cien School because the school’s main architect, Kuiji (632-683 CE), lived at Cien Monastery.

The school values a number of texts, but most especially the *Esoteric Meaning Sutra*, the *Lankavatara Sutra*, the *Stages of Yogacara Practice Treatise*, and the *Compendium of Mahayana Treatise*. The main doctrines of the school include “all phenomena are consciousness-only,” the “five categories and one hundred dharmas,” the “eight kinds of consciousness and four wisdoms,” and the “five natures.” As the Faxiang School uses an elaborate terminology to articulate many complex layers of doctrine, those who wish to learn its teachings require a great deal of patience.

4. *Three Treatise School* (三論宗)

This school is so named because it is principally focused on three texts: the *Middle Way Treatise*, the *Hundred Verses Treatise*, and the *Twelve Aspects Treatise*. These three texts focus on prajna-wisdom and the inherent emptiness of dependent origination, and as such, the school is sometimes called the “*Prajna*-wisdom School” or the “Emptiness School.” It is also sometimes known as the Jiexiang School because it became strongest under Jiexiang Jizang (549-623 CE).

The chief aim of the Three Treatise School is subdue wrong views and promote right views, for it believes that the principle of the inherent emptiness of dependent origination can remove all delusion and attachment. The Three Treatise School also holds that sentient beings are fundamentally Buddhas and originally awakened; thus, there is no question about whether one can or cannot become a Buddha, and this distinction is only a label. While doctrines like “inherent emptiness” and “name only” are quite profound, the number of great sages who study under the Three Treatise School are dwindling, and the school seems to be in decline.

5. *Chan School* (禪宗)

This school is named after the Chinese word *chan* (禪), “meditation,” because meditation is its main form of practice. It is also known as the “Buddha Mind School” because it is based upon the wordless transmission of the Buddha mind seal.

The Chan School was brought to China by the Patriarch Bodhidharma. After introducing the principles in China, the lineage continued to be transmitted through a series of patriarches: Huie (487-593 CE), Sengcan (d. 606 CE), Daoxin (580-651 CE), Hongren (602-675 CE), and Huineng. After the Sixth Patriarch Huineng, the Chan School blossomed like a flower into “five houses” and flourished throughout China, becoming one of the most important schools in Chinese Buddhism. Almost all the Buddhist sects in Taiwan today are connected to the heritage of the Chan School, showing what a profound influence the Chan School exerts upon modern Buddhism.

The Chan School emphasizes a separate transmission beyond the teachings that is not based upon the written word, and as a consequence, the school is not based upon any particular text. The Chan School has venerated various texts throughout its history with no consistent pattern. For example, before the time of Hongren, the *Lankavatara Sutra* was widely studied, while Huineng himself relied upon the *Diamond Sutra*. After the time of Huineng, it was the *Platform Sutra* that was used most often.

The goal of practice in the Chan School is to directly see one’s nature by illuminating the mind so that one can see intrinsic nature in its simple and undefiled state.

6. *Pure Land School* (淨土宗)

The Pure Land School is a collection of the various practices to seek rebirth in one of the many pure, magnificent Buddha Lands. Since

the teachings on Amitabha Buddha's Western Pure Land became very well-known, this Pure Land became synonymous with the school. Beings are reborn in Amitabha Buddha's Pure Land in lotus flowers, and thus, this school is also sometimes known as the "Lotus School." It is also sometimes called the "Mount Lu School" because of its founder Huiyuan (334-416 CE) who lived on Mount Lu.

The fundamental texts of the Pure Land School are represented by three scriptures and one treatise: the *Infinite Life Sutra*, the *Contemplation Sutra*, the *Amitabha Sutra*, and the *Treatise on Rebirth*. In accordance with the original vow of Amitabha Buddha, this school believes that as long as one has faith in Amitabha Buddha's Pure Land, vows to be reborn there, and recites Amitabha Buddha's name with single-minded effort, one will be reborn in the Pure Land.

Since the practice is convenient and easy to do, many Pure Land organizations have arisen, such as Amitabha Buddha recitation organizations, lotus societies, and lay groups that focus on the practice.

7. *Vinaya School* (律宗)

This school is named after the *vinaya*, the collection of Buddhist monastic precepts. It is also called the "Mount Nan School" because Daoxuan (596-667 CE), the founder and compiler of the *Four-Part Vinaya* taught at Mount Zhongnan.

The Vinaya School venerates the "four vinayas and five treatises": the *Four-Part Vinaya*, the *Five-Part Vinaya*, the *Ten Recitations Vinaya*, the *Great Compilation of Monastic Rules*, the *Root Treatise on the Vinaya*, the *Root Treatise of Sarvastivada Vinaya*, the *Treatise on the Samantapasadika Vinaya*, the *Treatise on the Sarvastivada*, and the *Treatise which Clarifies*.

The school is chiefly concerned with the clarification of the *vinaya* or monastic rules, which are divided into “precepts of proper conduct” and “precepts of wholesome deeds.” Precepts of proper conduct are intended to prevent the mind and body from committing all manner of negative action, while the precepts of wholesome deeds are intended to encourage all positive physical, verbal, and mental actions.

Master Daoxuan was the culmination of the *Four-Part Vinaya* in China, and the masters Yunkan and Yuanzhao (1048-1116 CE) revived this tradition during the Song period. The Vinaya School was transmitted to Japan by Master Jianzhen (687-763 CE). During the late Ming dynasty, the Master Jinling Guxin (1541-1615 CE) reestablished the school, while his disciple and grand-disciple, the masters Sanmei (1580-1645 CE) and Jianyue (1601-1679 CE) respectively, continued his work, establishing an ordination platform at Mount Baohua. Even today, all the Chinese Monasteries still observe the ordination practice of Mount Baohua.

8. Esoteric School (密宗)

The Esoteric School is based upon Vairocana Buddha’s self-realized state of esoteric mystery depicted in the *Mahavairocana Sutra* and the *Susiddhikara Sutra*. It is also known as the Mantra School, since the recitation of sacred formula called “mantras” is one of the school’s main practices.

The Esoteric School is generally considered to be extraordinarily mysterious, for it is contrasted with the non-esoteric traditions. In reality, except for some mantras and sacred formulas that are not accorded any explanation, everything in the Esoteric School can be transmitted to others. It is just that the ceremonial

practices of the Esoteric School are extraordinarily complex, for every performance of its spiritual practices requires a considerable amount of time; and one must also provide rich offerings to the guru. Those wishing to become genuine students of the Esoteric School must be quite well-off financially and have a considerable amount of free time on their hands.

Additionally, for a person to become a formal Buddhist follower in the non-esoteric traditions, one must take refuge in the Triple Gem, what is known as the “three refuges.” In the Esoteric School, one must take a fourth refuge; besides taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, one must also take refuge in the guru.

Each of the eight schools described above has its own unique characteristics, but they also share something in common: they all rose to prominence between the Sui dynasty and the Tang dynasty (581-907 CE). These schools benefitted from and added to the prosperity of that time in Chinese history.

Semblance Dharma, Age of

像法

See: Ages of the Dharma, three.

Sense Objects

六塵

See also: Consciousness, eight kinds of; dependent origination.

A common metaphor used in Buddhist writing is to describe our Buddha nature as a “bright pearl covered in dust.” This describes how our Buddha nature is obscured by the five desires and six

sense objects, or *liuchen* (六塵), “six dusts.” The term “six sense objects” refers to those objects which are cognizable by the six sense organs: the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. When the six sense organs contact the six sense objects, they give rise to the six kinds of consciousness.

1. *Sight* (色塵)

Sight is everything the eyes can see, including colors like blue, yellow, red, and white, as well as features like clouds, smoke, dust, and mist, qualities such as shadow, light, brightness, and darkness, and physical features like long, short, square, round, high, low, straight, and curved.

2. *Sound* (聲塵)

Sound is everything the ears hear. This encompasses pleasant sounds like chanting, music, song, and applause, unpleasant sounds like sounds of crying, swearing, cursing, arguing, and other irritating noises, as well as natural sounds like the sound of wind, rain, and thunder.

3. *Smell* (香塵)

Smell is everything the nose can smell. This includes nice smells like the scent of sandalwood, bad smells like onions and leeks, moderate smells, and pungent odors.

4. *Taste* (味塵)

Taste is everything that the tongue can taste. This includes all the flavors of food and drink such as sourness, sweetness, bitterness, spiciness, saltiness, pungency, pleasantness, and plainness.

5. *Touch* (觸塵)

Touch is everything that the body feels. This includes sensations such as firmness, dampness, softness, hardness, slipperiness, roughness, lightness, heaviness, coldness, and warmth.

6. *Dharmas* (法塵)

“Dharmas,” or mental sensory data, are everything the mind thinks, which can include all the things in the universe.

We have afflictions because our six sense organs are constantly seeking out the six sense objects and the five desires. The five sense organs want to eat the best, use the best, hear the best, and see the best; and our minds do not wish us to be unfavorably compared to others. Selfishness, attachment, and ignorance arise as a result. The six sense objects are just like dust that can pollute our true intrinsic nature, which is why they are also called the “six dusts.” The six sense objects can generate the afflictions of greed, anger, and ignorance.

The six sense objects can also lead us to create greed, anger, and ignorance. These cause us to ruin our good minds and can steal away our good deeds. For this reason, the six sense objects are also called the “six delusions,” the “six ruinous things,” and the “six thieves.”

Though the six sense objects can pollute the mind, they must first be apprehended by the six sense organs to arise. That is why the Buddha once warned his disciples, “Hide the six sense organs like a turtle withdrawing into its shell, and enclose the mind within a defensive wall.” We should lock up the doors to our six sense organs just like a turtle hides its head and legs within its shell so that there is no fear of being attacked by sea otters.

Cultivation does not mean the complete and total eradication of external conditions, but rather, it should begin with not being

Shrine, Main

distracted by the external world. This means not pursuing power and status or craving life's enjoyments, nor enjoying a life of wine, women, and song. In this way, the six sense organs do not grasp at the six sense objects, and evil has no way to gain access. The *Platform Sutra* says, "Purify the inherent mind and allow the six consciousnesses to exit through the six sense organs onto the six sense objects without attachment or integration. Come and go freely, and circulate without obstruction; this is *prajna samadhi*, liberating and carefree."

Normally, our life is lived amid the troubles caused by the five desires. It is rare for one to stand apart from the ebb and flow of ordinary life, but it is even more precious if one can engage in ordinary life and remain unhindered by it. To leave the world behind and retreat to the mountains and forests to practice is hardly the ultimate path. Only living along the busy streets and remaining unperturbed by the outside world is the Mahayana path. There is a Chinese saying that captures this idea well: "The true hermit retreats to the city."

Sex

色

See: Desires, five.

Shrine, Main

大雄寶殿

See also: Structures and buildings.

The main hall within a Buddhist monastery or temple in which Buddha images are venerated is called the "treasure hall of the great hero." No monastery or temple, regardless of size, is without

one, for it is the place set aside for monastics to perform morning and evening services and for lay people to venerate the Buddha and chant sutras. It is also where Dharma services for both monastics and lay people are held.

Daxiong (大雄), “Great hero” is one of the epithets of respect for the Buddha. He is called the “great hero” because his great wisdom allows him to subdue all harmful obstructions. In most temples, the treasure hall of the great hero contains an image of Sakyamuni Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, as the main object of veneration. Some halls include the “three treasured Buddhas,” where Sakyamuni Buddha is joined by Amitabha Buddha and the Medicine Buddha. An image of Sakyamuni Buddha is also sometimes flanked by his attendant Ananda and the disciple Mahakasyapa, who symbolizes the dual emphasis upon understanding and practice. Other halls feature the Huayan trinity with Mahavairocana Buddha, Manjusri Bodhisattva, and Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, or the trinity of the Western Pure Land with Amitabha Buddha, Avaolkitesvara Bodhisattva, and Mahasthamaprapta Bodhisattva. The main shrine may also venerate the eighteen arhats, the twelve *yaksas*, the eight vajra deities, or other Buddhist figures.

Buddha images are made through a variety of methods, including wood carving, copper casting, clay molding, painting on paper, and jade carving. Buddha images are also made with unconventional materials like cement and fiberglass. In the minds of Buddhist followers, however, the significance and value of these images is the same, for they are symbols of faith rather than idols to be worshipped.

The various positions the Buddha is depicted in indicate the different roles of the Buddha. Images of a standing Buddha are

meant to evoke the Buddha as teacher, while images of a sitting Buddha show the Buddha in meditation, and images of a reclining Buddha are indicative of his completion of merit and wisdom.

Buddha images are usually placed in a shrine in one of two positions: wall-niche or island-dais. The island-dais placement includes a connecting corridor behind the image that permits circumambulation of the Buddha image. How the circumambulation is performed depends upon the layout of the hall. In the case of wide, horizontal spaces, the left and right sides of the assembly will often circumambulate in separate lines traveling in opposite directions. In more narrow, long spaces, the left and right sides of the hall will often join into a single line to circumambulate the image.

The roof of the treasure hall of the great hero in a Chinese temple will either feature an upward curling roof-line, typical of northern Chinese temples, or a flat roof-line, more common in southern China. Main halls are predominately constructed from timber, in imitation of ancient building styles, or from cement. Timber is less fire-resistant and is thus less safe, while cement halls appear too modern. Today, some main halls use steel-frame construction. This has the advantage of being able to offer a wide open interior without the need for supporting columns, making the hall available for many additional possible uses.

The most common design for the interior walls of the treasure hall of the great hero in a Chinese temple is to lay out row upon row of small Buddha images. Another design is to adorn the walls with colorful paintings of stories from the Buddhist sutras. Some older Buddhist monasteries make use of floor-to-ceiling windows along the entirety of their wall space.

In some main halls, it is asked that one's shoes be removed before entering, while in others there is no such requirement.

Generally, this is determined based upon the materials used for the flooring. Commonly used materials include carpet, marble, vinyl flooring, and red brick, with each having advantages and disadvantages. Carpet easily attracts dirt and grime, while marble flooring, though easier to clean, can be quite cold and hard. Wood flooring can more easily become bug-infested and grows loose over time as the wood contracts when cold and expands when hot. Wood is also particularly sensitive to moisture, which can darken it over time.

The treasure hall of the great hero also contains various offerings to the Buddha. Besides the ten kinds of offerings mentioned in the sutras (incense, flowers, lamps, perfume, fruit, tea, food, treasure, pearls, and clothing), offerings include bells, drums, and banners that are hung to the left and right of the main altar. Generally speaking, it is not considered proper to clutter up the main Buddha hall, particularly the offering table in front of the Buddha image, for emphasis should be placed on keeping things orderly and clean. An appropriately sparse setup could include a pair of lamps placed before the Buddha, three sticks of incense, two vases of fresh flowers, four plates of fruit offerings, and an offering of three cups of tea. It is not even necessary to offer fresh flowers every day, for leaving out the offering of flowers both reduces a temple's expenses while creating less waste. Rather than allowing the incense burner to become filled with incense sticks, keeping three sticks of incense burning at any given time allows the wafting smoke to highlight the quiet solemnity and peaceful tranquility of the great hall. Even the Buddha image itself should not be too large, so that as one gazes up at it from a distance, the Buddha image appears to sparkle amid the dappled haze. In this way, visitors become even more impressed with the august greatness of the Buddha and will come to feel admiration and devotion.

Skillful Means

The treasure hall of the great hero should be moderately well-lit, quiet, orderly, and clean. There should be no laughing or playing in the hall, no loud noises, and no lounging about or eating. In short, the treasure hall of the great hero should be maintained in a state of dignified respect and peaceful tranquility so that anyone entering the hall can feel a sense of sincere devotion and be moved to express their admiration. There is a verse that describes this feeling of admiration well:

In heaven above and earth below there is no
one like the Buddha;
Nor can a comparison be made to anyone in
the worlds of the ten directions.
I have seen all that this world has to offer;
But there is absolutely no one like the
Buddha.

Sickness

疾病

See: Field of merit; offerings, four; parables of the *Lotus Sutra*.

Siksamana

式叉摩那

See: Assembly, sevenfold.

Skillful Means

方便

See: Mountain gate; teaching, four modes of; parables of the *Lotus Sutra*.

Sleep

睡

See: Desires, five.

Small Things Not to Be Taken Lightly, Four

四小不可輕

A hundred years after the Buddha's final *nirvana*, King Asoka (3rd cent. bce) unified India and became the most powerful patron of Buddhism. On one occasion, King Asoka had pledged to make offerings to the monastic community, when a young novice monk approached him. King Asoka was unsure as to whether or not he should bow before the young novice. Later, this young novice manifested his supernatural powers to awaken the king. From then on, King Asoka would always treat all members of the monastic community with respect without any thought of pride, regardless of their age or level of intelligence.

While in the world, the Buddha often exhorted his disciples by pointing out that younger students were not to be taken lightly; and on one occasion even, the Buddha personally instructed King Prasenajit on the principle of “four small things not to be taken lightly.” As explained by the Buddha, there are four things in the world that appear to be quite small but are not to be taken lightly:

1. *Small Little Sparks* (小小火苗)

A little spark can start a great fire. Seemingly small and insignificant sparks can develop into an uncontrollable disaster once they get going and thus should not be taken lightly.

2. *Small Young Water Nagas* (幼小之龍)

Small *nagas* will grow up to become great *nagas* that can stir up wind blown waves and overturn rivers and oceans. Therefore, they are not to be taken lightly.

3. *Small Young Princes* (年少王子)

Princes will grow up to be kings who will command the world, for they alone can either confer benefits upon their people, or lose their country with a single word as a ruinous legacy upon the land. Therefore, they are not to be taken lightly.

4. *Small Young Novices* (年幼沙彌)

Novice monastics may be few in years, but all they need is to cultivate the path with devotion, and they will certainly be transformed over time to become model teachers for heavenly and human beings and bring liberation to all sentient beings. This is a power in the world that must not be ignored to any degree whatsoever.

The *Dharmapada* says, “Do not fail to do what is only a little wholesome, do not do what is only a little unwholesome. Though drops of water are small, they will gradually fill a large container.” Things that are small have limitless potential. Throughout our lives, there are many people, activities, and things that do not attract our attention because they are small and insignificant, but end up playing a large role in our futures. For example, small though a seed may be, it can grow into a large tree that can provide shelter to people. A small, insignificant good thought might lead to some great undertaking that will benefit the country and its people. A small, insignificant crack may cause a dam to break, resulting in a major disaster; and even a small, insignificant act of generosity can

save someone in a dire emergency. A simple, little smile can give someone limitless confidence; and the small, insignificant good deed we do every day can create wholesome karmic connections for a positive future.

In particular, though novice monks may be young, they are the future. Lay Buddhists may look up to those eminent monks and sages of high character and prestige with great respect, but they must not treat lightly those small, young novices who have just begun the Buddhist path. That is why Venerable Master Hsing Yun teaches that, “In looking after the old, we must look after the young all the more.”

Spiritual Wealth, Seven Kinds of

七聖財

See also: Giving; practice, four stages of; *prajna*; precepts, five; *samadhi*.

We all like the wealth of gold and silver, but Buddhism considers this kind of wealth to be easily destroyed by the five causes of loss: floods, fires, thieves, corrupt officials, and wayward children. Thus, there is a Buddhist saying that “You can’t take anything with you except your karma.” No matter how much wealth of this world you have, you cannot take anything with you once your life comes to an end. Therefore, it is only the wealth of the Dharma that is worth pursuing, for it is what assists us in progressing along the Buddhist path.

The *Dharmapada* describes seven kinds of Dharma wealth:

1. Faith (信仰)

The *Flower Adornment Sutra* says, “Faith is the mother of merit and the source of awakening which nourishes the roots of all virtue.”

Faith is the basis of all good works. If we can generate faith in the Dharma, we will naturally be able to do what is right according to the Dharma and align ourselves with the proper goal and realize its benefits. That is why the sutras liken faith to a hand, a staff, a root, a boat, one's power, and one's wealth.

2. *Listening and Learning* (聽聞)

Learning Buddhism requires listening to the true Dharma before one can come into accord with the Buddhist path. This is what is meant by the saying, "one enters *samadhi* by means of listening, thinking, and practicing." To learn Buddhism, it is necessary that one be well-informed. One should listen to the Dharma like a field ready to be planted or an empty cup ready to be filled to avoid inattentiveness, preconceptions, and delusion. Only by listening to the Dharma with an attitude of devotion, sincerity, respect, humility, pliancy, purity, and gratitude will one then be able to receive any benefit.

3. *Perseverance* (精進)

One should endeavor to do whatever is proper and beneficial for oneself. This is perseverance. A sutra states: "If lay practitioners are lazy, they will lose out on ordinary benefits; if monastics are slothful, they will lose the Dharma Gem." Laziness and sloth are major defects in human life, so one should constantly apply perseverance to correct them.

4. *Morality* (持戒)

Buddhist morality is most commonly codified as adherence to the precepts. The precepts are a set of standards and rules that serve as guidelines to regulate one's conduct. Like a set of train tracks, they lead the mind and body down the correct moral path and advance

us towards the liberation of *nirvana*. The fundamental spirit of the precepts is to not violate the rights of others, for as long as we do not violate the rights of others and be of benefit to them, we are keeping the precepts. Doing what is wholesome and refraining from what is unwholesome constitutes the basic spirit of Buddhism.

5. *Conscience* (慚愧)

A conscience will spare one from committing all manner of bad deeds, for one will feel shame from doing what is unwholesome. The *Teachings Bequeathed by the Buddha Sutra* says, “Being clothed with a sense of shame is an unsurpassable adornment.” One’s morality and character can only be improved by developing a sense of shame for what one does not know, has not yet done, had not done enough, or what one has not purified.

6. *Giving* (布施)

Giving is sharing what one has with others. For example, the giving of food, drink, clothing, medicine, and money to those who are poor, sick, or indigent, is known as “giving wealth.” Sharing of one’s skills, talents, and experience with others so that they might understand and gain wisdom, is known as “giving Dharma.” Additionally, not adding to the pain, suffering, and fears of others and helping them turn away all worry and panic is “giving fearlessness.”

7. *Meditative Wisdom* (定慧)

Meditative wisdom means to focus the mind so that it does not scatter and thereby attain insight into all phenomena. Meditative concentration is the essence of wisdom, and the development of wisdom is a function of establishing meditative concentration. The two are like a lamp and its light, or a body of water and its waves:

Stopping and Seeing Meditation

the two complement one another, neither being identical nor entirely different. By maintaining a lucid and pure mind, one will generate wisdom from meditative concentration, and maintain meditative concentration within wisdom. Only through meditative wisdom can one attain liberation from the cycle of birth and death. Studying Buddhism involves cultivating both wisdom and virtue, as well as practicing meditative concentration and wisdom.

Having faith in the Dharma is itself a form of wealth. Worldly wealth is limited, finite, and defiled, and in the end, it will one day disappear. Only noble wealth cannot be destroyed.

Sramanera

沙彌

See: Assembly, sevenfold.

Sramanerika

沙彌尼

See: Assembly, sevenfold.

Sravaka

聲聞

See: Dharma realms, ten; Mahayana and Hinayana.

Stopping and Seeing Meditation

止觀雙修

See also: Samadhi.

The Essential Points of Practicing Stopping [Delusion] and Seeing [Truth] in Sitting Meditation states: “There are many ways of attaining

nirvana, but the most important of these is none other than the dual practice of stopping and seeing.” *Zhi* (止), “stopping,” and *guan* (觀), “seeing” are two methods for cultivating meditative concentration and wisdom and are the most important methods of practice in the Tiantai School. The Tiantai teachings cannot possibly be understood without including a discussion of stopping and seeing meditation.

“Stopping” refers to putting to rest all thoughts and remaining in a state of non-thought. In this way, one can remove deluded thinking to allow for the wisdom that arises from meditative concentration. Once the confusion of deluded thinking has been eliminated, “seeing” is applied to contemplate all phenomena and attain the wisdom of knowing the fundamental essence of all phenomena.

In other words, “stopping” means to stop the mind from generating illusory thoughts, such that unwholesome states cannot arise. This is the development of meditative concentration. “Seeing” means to see mental objects such that one diligently investigates the nature of all phenomena. This is the development of wisdom. These are the ways that practitioners develop meditative concentration and wisdom, and the two depend upon one another. That is why *Essential Points of Practicing Stopping [Delusion] and Seeing [Truth] in Sitting Meditation* states: “The dual practice of meditative concentration and wisdom are like the two wheels of a cart or the two wings of a bird. If either one of these is practiced to the exclusion of the other, then one will fall into error.”

The practice of meditative concentration must be in accord with wisdom, and they both can be developed through the dual practice of stopping and seeing. When stopping and seeing are practiced together, meditative concentration and wisdom are cultivated equally. This practice can produce extraordinary results and begins with a three-part method:

1. *Gradual Stopping and Seeing* (漸次止觀)

“Gradual” in this instance means being guided through different stages of meditative concentration, from the simple to the profound. In general, there are five such stages:

1. Taking refuge and upholding the five precepts.
2. Learning meditative concentration.
3. Entering the undefiled path.
4. Attaining liberation from the cycle of birth and death.
5. Cultivating the compassion of the bodhisattva.

During this process, one must not neglect to practice seeing meditation so that one may eliminate the attachments to both emptiness and mundane existence, and to realize the path of non-action in absolute reality.

2. *Indeterminate Stopping and Seeing* (不定止觀)

This level is called “indeterminate” because there is no longer any stated sequence of stages. Some may advance suddenly, some may advance gradually, and some may even go backwards. Sometimes, one may practice according to provisional truth, and at other times practice according to ultimate truth. This approach combines the simple with the profound, unites all phenomena with their principles, and is established to meet the spiritual needs and capacities of sentient beings. That being said, mindfulness of breathing is still the most important method of practice.

3. *Complete Stopping and Seeing* (圓頓止觀)

One begins by taking true reality as the object of stopping and seeing meditation, but after one has understood and practiced,

one will reach the state of non-duality. It differs from the previous modes of practice and includes the following stages:

1. Generating a great aspiration.
2. Cultivating great practice.
3. Producing great results.
4. Transcending the sutras.
5. Returning to emptiness.

Of these stages the second stage, “cultivating great practice,” refers to the cultivation of *samadhi*, namely the four kinds of *samadhi*, which is another major doctrinal category within the Tiantai tradition.

The text *Explanation on the Stages of the Perfection of Meditative Concentration* states those who wish to practice stopping and seeing meditation must pay close attention to the following four matters:

1. Prepare the five external conditions: observe the precepts, have adequate food and clothing, dwell in a quiet place, clear away worldly obligations, and be close to a teacher.
2. Turn away from the five desires of wealth, sex, fame, food, and sleep.
3. Abandon the five hindrances of desire, anger, sleepiness, agitation, and doubt.
4. Be balanced in four aspects: balanced in meals, balanced in sleep, balanced in breathing, and balanced in mind.

The dual practice of stopping and seeing meditation is a practice to develop meditative concentration and wisdom; this does not

mean they can only be practiced by sitting in a meditation hall. Even in the midst of a normal, busy life, one can set aside five minutes every day to quiet the mind and relax. It is even possible to set aside a whole day or even half of a day each month to be alone and retire from the clamor of everyday existence, to calm the mind and still one's thoughts, and find peace and quiet. This can allow one to become re-energized. In this way, there is nothing of greater benefit than the ability to practice stopping and seeing meditation.

Structures and Buildings

寺院庵堂

See also: Shrine, main.

There are many names for various religious buildings and structures in Chinese. The terms *miao* (廟), *gong* (宮), *guan* (觀), *dian* (殿), and *tan* (壇) are typically associated with Daoist buildings, while the following terms are used to describe Buddhist buildings and structures:

Chinese	Pinyin	Translation
寺	<i>si</i>	Hall
院	<i>yuan</i>	Court
庵	<i>an</i>	Hermitage
堂	<i>tang</i>	Shrine
道場	<i>daochang</i>	Dharma center
精舍	<i>jingshe</i>	Archaic term for monastery
講堂	<i>jiangtang</i>	Lecture hall
伽藍	<i>qielan</i>	Monastic park
蘭若	<i>lanre</i>	Rural temple
叢林	<i>conglin</i>	Monastery

蓮社	<i>lianshe</i>	Lotus society
佛剎	<i>focha</i>	Buddhist pillar
學舍	<i>xueshe</i>	Buddhist learning center
念佛會	<i>nianfohui</i>	Buddha's name recitation center
佈教所	<i>bujiaosuo</i>	Buddhist teaching center
居士林等	<i>jushilin deng</i>	Lay Buddhist Association

Most names for Buddhist sites are encompassed by the Chinese characters *si* (寺), *yuan* (院), *an* (庵), and *tang* (堂). However, there are people who refer to Buddhist temples as *simiao* (寺廟), though the character *miao* is more associated with Daoist temples. This demonstrates how Chinese folk beliefs often make no distinction between Buddhism and Daoism and are quite deeply rooted.

In ancient times, the character *si* originally referred to a government office, such as the *honglu si* (鴻臚寺), and the *taichang si* (太常寺). When the first two Buddhist monks to come to China, Kasyapa-matanga and Dharmaraksa, first arrived, they were temporarily housed in the office of the minister of heralds. Later, a site outside the capital was selected to construct the first Buddhist monastery, called *baima si* (白馬寺), “white horse monastery,” and the two monks settled there. This site became the first Buddhist monastery in the history of Chinese Buddhism.

The character *yuan* means an enclosing wall, and it came to refer to any building with a surrounding wall or corridor, such as those used for imperial residences. Emperor Taizong of the Tang dynasty (r. 626-649 CE) ordered that a place be constructed to house Xuanzang's sutra translation work within Dacien Monastery, and the structure was named *yijing yuan* (譯經院), “Sutra Translation Court.” From then on, *yuan* has been used to refer to many different Buddhist buildings, including sutra translation courts,

ordination platform courts (戒壇院), and sutra teaching courts (講經院). Typically, Buddhist buildings referred to as *yuan* have a greater emphasis on education.

The character *an* has been incorporated into the terms *caoan* (草庵), *pengan* (蓬庵), *anshi* (庵室), *maoan* (茅庵), and *chanan* (禪庵), which all refer to various small, simple dwellings where monastics and hermits live far away from villages. Later generations used this character as well as the compound *ansi* (庵寺) to refer to Buddhist nunneries. However, the term *ansi* originally referred to structures that housed either male or female monastics, not only to nuns' housing.

Tang, which is also incorporated in the compound *diantang* (殿堂), refers to places where Buddha images are housed and venerated or buildings which serve as locations for practice and the learning of sutras. *Tang*, along with *tasi* (塔寺), “stupas,” are one type of structure that make up the main monastery complex. These structures are named depending on which Buddha or bodhisattva image is installed within, such as the Samantabhadra Hall (普賢殿) and the Ksitigarbha Hall (地藏殿). Other examples of these structures include founders' halls (開山堂), which house images of founding patriarchs, and reliquary halls (舍利殿), which intern cremated remains. Other structures are simply named for the functions that they perform, such as dining halls (齋堂), reception halls (客堂), and tea halls (茶堂).

As Buddhism has continued to reach out into society venues for spreading the Dharma have expanded, with places as small as an open square in a village to large college auditoriums and even national theaters becoming places where one can hear the Dharma. However, the Buddhist monastery will forever remain the center of faith and a source of strength. A monastery is a gathering place

for good Dharma friends on the path together, a place to refuel on the road of life, and a vacation retreat for cultivating one's spirit. It is a place of purity where we can wash away our affliction, bring ourselves close to the jewel of the Dharma, and learn about compassion, wisdom, vows, and practice. As Buddhist practitioners, we should spend more time at Buddhist monasteries and take care of Dharma centers.

Subhuti

須菩提

See: Disciples, ten great.

Subinda

托塔羅漢

See: Arhats, eighteen.

Suffering, Eight Kinds of

八苦

See also: Aggregates, five.

Laozi said that “The greatest trouble for human beings is having a body.” It is only because we have a human body that we create karma in delusion and thereby experience all the afflictions of suffering that prey upon the mind and body. That is why Buddhism teaches that suffering is one of the realities of life.

The Buddhist sutras mention many different groupings of suffering: two kinds of suffering, three kinds of suffering, eight kinds of suffering, one hundred and eight kinds of suffering, and even up to innumerable and limitless sufferings. One of the most common categorizations is the eight kinds of suffering:

1. *Birth* (生苦)

For the fetus in a mother's womb being surrounded by amniotic fluid, with its head down and feet up, is not unlike being in a prison. The process of childbirth itself endangers both the child and the mother, and after birth, the child is subject to the cold, biting wind upon its body, unable to express its suffering in words. This is the suffering of birth.

2. *Old Age* (老苦)

One goes from childhood to the prime of life and then into decline. One's vim and vigor drain away and one becomes anxious all the time. As fullness departs and decline sets in, one's physical strength weakens. One's life grows shorter with each passing day until one becomes decrepit and worn down. This is the suffering of old age.

3. *Sickness* (病苦)

When the four great elements become imbalanced, one becomes infected with disease. It becomes difficult to drink and digest food, one can become bed-ridden, gasping for breath and moaning in pain. This is the suffering of sickness.

4. *Death* (死苦)

As death approaches, one's spirit leaves the body like a tortoise being pulled from its shell, for such is the unbearable suffering and pain of death.

5. *Separation from Loved Ones* (愛別離苦)

There are times when one becomes separated from those so loved and dear such that it is impossible to be together any longer. This is the suffering of separation from loved ones.

6. *Closeness to Loathsome People* (怨憎會苦)

There are other times when it becomes impossible to escape the company of those one hates and despises. This is the suffering of being close to loathsome people.

7. *Not Getting What One Wants* (求不得苦)

Such effort is placed into getting desirable and enjoyable things, yet one cannot have it all. This is the suffering of not getting what we want.

8. *The Five Aggregates* (五陰熾盛苦)

Sentient beings produce pain and suffering because, due to their delusion, they create karma. The body and mind are made up of the five aggregates of form, feelings, perception, mental formations, and consciousness, and the actions of the five aggregates produce karmic effects that oppress the mind and the body again and again in endless succession, like the spreading of a raging fire. This is the suffering of the five aggregates, and it includes the previous seven forms of suffering.

Suffering is a fact of life, but the Buddhist analysis of suffering is not a goal in and of itself; it is to help us recognize the source of suffering so that we can realize the goal of abandoning suffering and obtaining happiness. For those who wish to eliminate pain and suffering, faith in the Triple Gem of Buddhism is a way out: the Buddha is like a good physician who excels in treating the sickness of sentient beings; the Dharma is like good medicine that can eliminate our suffering, and the Sangha, the monastic community, is like a nurse who is constantly attentive in relieving our afflictions. In the vast ocean of the Dharma, sentient beings are able

Supernatural Powers, Six

to obtain comfort, faith, wisdom, joy, and freedom. In this way, the Dharma is a light for humanity, and a shining star capable of liberating the world.

Sumeru, Mount

須彌山

See: Continents, four great; world system.

Supernatural Powers, Six

六神通

“Supernatural power” refers to phenomena such as mind reading, heavenly vision, teleportation, the ability to manifest in whatever form one wishes, the ability to live or to die as one wishes, and live free and unencumbered.

What may be a coincidence is sometimes called a miracle, and when something unpredictable happens, it is sometimes called a mystery. A good plan might be called a “supernatural” scheme, and a good doctor may be called a “supernatural” healer. Some people may pray to the “supernatural” in the form of gods and deities, or chase after “supernatural” power by reciting magic spells. Many seek control of the supernatural through different means. Buddhism, too, speaks of different kinds of supernatural power, with the most common categorization being a list of six kinds of supernatural power:

1. Heavenly Vision (天眼通)

Heavenly vision means that one can see what is obstructed and unobstructed. One is able to see what is near and what is far. One can see that which is illuminated but also see in

darkness. One can see things that are large, as well as extremely minute. One can see the surface of things as well as the interior. One is capable of seeing the present physical form of sentient beings and whether they will attain future rebirth in heaven or hell. With heavenly vision, there is nothing that one cannot see.

2. *Heavenly Hearing* (天耳通)

With heavenly hearing, one is able to hear voices that are near as well as far. One can understand all human languages, as well as the languages of animals. With heavenly hearing, there is nothing that one cannot hear.

3. *Mind Reading* (他心通)

Mind reading is the ability to know one's own mind and the minds of others. One can know the mind of the past and the mind of the future. One can discern the thoughts of an ordinary person and a sage, as well as distinguish deluded thoughts from true thoughts. Mind reading is the power to know all the thoughts of sentient beings.

4. *Teleportation* (神足通)

With the power of teleportation, one can penetrate mountains, enter oceans, ascend to the heavens, or dive into the earth. One can transform oneself into many, and return many manifestations into one. One can grow to an incredible size or shrink down so small that one cannot be seen. One can appear or disappear at will and can also go wherever one pleases. The power of teleportation means that nothing can hinder or obstruct one.

5. *Knowledge of Past Lives* (宿命通)

With the knowledge of past lives, one knows the location and manner of one's past, present, and future rebirths. One can know the karmic causes that lead to previous lives, as well as the karma that was created during those lives. By knowing the karma of previous lives, one can understand the location of present and future rebirths. The knowledge of past lives means that one knows all about the past and all about the future.

6. *Destruction of All Affliction* (漏盡通)

Have you subdued the bandits of affliction? Have you eliminated habitual tendencies? Have you cured the illnesses of affliction? Have you removed the obstacles of affliction? With the power of destroying all affliction, one has eliminated all afflictions with outflow and all afflictions without outflow. The power to destroy all afflictions means that one can put an end to affliction and attain liberation.

The supernatural powers described above are indeed incredible, but attaining them is not the goal of true Buddhists. Developing a mind of equality and compassion is the Way; the Buddha did not encourage his followers to develop supernatural powers. The Venerable Maudgalyayana, known as the foremost disciple in supernatural powers, was still ranked below the Venerable Sariputra, who was considered the foremost in wisdom. Additionally, the Venerable Pindola once demonstrated his supernatural powers to the laity and was severely reprimanded by the Buddha and not permitted to enter *nirvana*. Supernatural powers cannot overcome karma, nor can they purify our afflictions. Only by eliminating negative karma and purifying the mind is one in constant pursuit of the Way. This is the approach of Humanistic Buddhism.

Supports, Three

三資糧

See also: Namo amitofu; schools of Chinese Buddhism, eight.

To go on a long journey, one must prepare appropriate traveling expenses and provisions before proceeding. The journey into Buddhism is the same, for if one wishes to attain Buddhahood, one must ensure that there is sufficient support in order to reach the goal.

What supports Buddhism? The Pure Land School teaches the “three supports” of faith, vows, and practice in order to attain rebirth in the Pure Land of the West.

1. Faith (信)

Faith allows the mind to purify itself. It is important to note that the faith discussed here is informed faith, not blind faith. Only faith based in wisdom can purify the mind and wash away defilements so that we can manifest our Buddhahood. On the other hand, blind faith and superstitious beliefs create nothing but trouble and impede wisdom. Blind faith makes us more confused each day and obstructs the path to liberation.

Faith can also be true faith and wrong faith. True faith is true in its details and its principles. True faith is not some empty legend but can be used as a model for the people of the world. A true faith comes with some sort of religious teaching and can be traced to a historical figure. The historical founder should be morally upright, and the teachings should be able to relieve the suffering of those who follow them. The founder of Buddhism, for example, Sakyamuni Buddha, was the prince of the ancient Indian kingdom of Kapilavastu. Moral purity, as possessed by the Buddha, has

unimaginable power to liberate sentient beings and is therefore worthy of faith.

Religion begins and ends with faith and is also the first step to attaining Buddhahood. The *Flower Adornment Sutra* says that “Faith is the mother of merit and the source of awakening. It nourishes the roots of all virtue.” The sutras also say “The great ocean of the Dharma can only be entered through faith.”

Faith is the source of both self-power and other-power. Those wishing to be reborn in the Pure Land of the West must have faith that such a place exists and believe in the wondrous virtue of reciting Amitabha’s name. Only through faith can one establish a goal and only then will one be able to be reborn there.

2. Vows (願)

Vows are based in faith, for only after one’s faith has become strong can one generate a vow to attain awakening. Only by reciting the name of Amitabha Buddha with the vow to become a Buddha and liberate sentient beings can one respond to Amitabha Buddha’s forty-eight great vows. Even better is to make a vow to focus all of one’s merit and wisdom to be reborn in the Pure Land of the West and dedicate one’s merit so that all sentient beings can be reborn in the Pure Land.

3. Practice (行)

Faith, vows, and practice are like the three legs of a tripod, for the structure to stand none can be lacking. When faith has allowed one to generate a vow, one can then engage in practice, namely, doing good deeds and reciting Amitabha Buddha’s name. When one can recite the name with single-minded concentration, all that is left is to await the ripening of causes and conditions to find rebirth in the Pure Land.

Not only does seeking rebirth in the Pure Land of the West require faith, vows, and practice, but cultivation of other forms of Buddhism requires the same sort of commitments. In the same way, one must hold incorruptible faith in the Triple Gem. A practitioner generates the same four universal vows to liberate limitless sentient beings, eradicate endless afflictions, learn infinite teachings, and attain supreme Buddhahood. Furthermore, there are many Buddhist practices including undertaking the five precepts and ten wholesome actions, applying the six perfections, engaging in the threefold training, cultivating the four immeasurable minds, and so forth. Only with these three will the goal be reached, which is why faith, vows, and practice are called the “three great supports” for attaining Buddhahood.

Sutra

契經

See: Gem, triple; sutras, twelve divisions of; translators, four great Chinese; Tripitaka.

Sutras, Twelve Divisions of

十二部經

See also: Gem, triple; teachings, four modes of; Tripitaka.

The Buddha’s teachings are great, profound, and extremely subtle. The Buddhist sutras are made up of numerous texts and many volumes, amounting to more than nine thousand fascicles. Together, these texts are known as the “twelve divisions of the sutras.” There are some who do not understand and think that this means that the Buddhist teachings are made up of only twelve texts. However, the twelve divisions are actually twelve different genres of narrative

form and content that are present throughout the sutras. They are as follows, with Sanskrit names given first:

1. *Sutra* (*discourses* 長行)

Technically, a “sutra” is a prose narrative, and directly records the teachings of the Buddha without any restrictions as to sentence length. The *Amitabha Sutra* and *Heart Sutra* are examples of this category.

2. *Geya* (*repeated verses* 重頌)

Geya writings repeat in verse form the contents of a prose text immediately preceding it. An example of this would be the verses in the Universal Gate Chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*.

3. *Gatha* (*verses* 孤起)

Gatha writings record the teachings of the Buddha entirely in verse form. The *Dharmapada* and *Buddhacarita* are examples of gatha.

4. *Avadana* (*parables* 譬喻)

Avadana are allegorical stories or parables to explain the meaning of the Dharma. Examples include the *One Hundred Parables Sutra*, as well as the Parables Chapter in the *Lotus Sutra*, among others.

5. *Nidana* (*expositions of causes* 因緣)

Nidana writings describe the causes and conditions under which the Buddha gives his teaching and instruction. The introductory chapters in the various sutras are examples of this.

6. *Udana* (*unprompted teachings* 無問自說)

Udana writings are teachings given by Buddha that are not prompted by any question. The *Amitabha Sutra* is an example of this.

7. *Jataka* (*stories of the Buddha's previous lives* 本生)

Jataka writings record what the Buddha said about the causes and conditions of his own past lives. Examples of this are the *Jataka Sutra*, the *Six Perfections Sutra*, and the *Miscellaneous Treasures Sutra*.

8. *Itivrttaka* (*stories of the disciples' previous lives* 本事)

Itivrttaka writings record what the Buddha said about the causes and conditions of his disciples' past lives. One such example is the Medicine King Bodhisattva Chapter in the *Lotus Sutra*.

9. *Abdhutadharma* (*miracles* 未曾有)

Abdhutadharma writings record the unique and fantastic attributes of the Buddha. One such text is the *Causes and Conditions of Miracles Sutra*.

10. *Vaipulya* (*profound teachings* 方廣)

Vaipulya writings proclaim the universal and profound meaning of the teachings, like the *Flower Adornment Sutra*.

11. *Upadesa* (*debates* 論議)

Upadesa writings contain discussion and debate. This refers to texts which are largely in question-and-answer format, like the *Vimalakirti Sutra*.

12. *Vyakarana* (prophecies 授記)

Vyakarana writings contain the Buddha's predictions of when various disciples or bodhisattvas will attain awakening. One such text is the Five Hundred Receive Predictions Chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*.

The twelve divisions of the sutras described above are also called *shier fenjiao* (十二分教), "twelve divisions of the teaching," and *shier shengjiao* (十二聖教), "twelfefold noble teaching." The twelve divisions are actually twelve teaching methods used by the Buddha and show the expediency of his teaching methodology as well as his wisdom in tailoring his message to suit the needs of his audience. The twelve divisions of the sutras are also a useful methodology for modern educators.

Swastika

卍字

All world religions have their various symbols, signs, and ritual objects to represent their core ideas. The most commonly seen symbols used to represent Buddhism include: the swastika (卍) sign, the Dharma wheel, the lotus flower, the *stupa*, the halo of light, Buddhist beads, the bodhi tree, the *mandala*, and the Buddhist flag. Among these symbols, Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike are often curious about Buddhism's association with the swastika and what it really means.

The swastika is one of the Buddha's "eighty noble characteristics," a set of physical features which manifest on the Buddha as a result of previous wholesome karma. The swastika in particular appears on such places as the breast of Buddhas and tenth-stage

bodhisattvas. The sign symbolizes the coming together of good fortune and all virtues. It has been used in India since ancient times as a symbol for good fortune, purity, and perfection. Later, both the swastika and the Dharma wheel became symbols to represent Buddhism, and both are commonly seen on Buddhist structures, ritual objects, and even on such Buddhist souvenirs as necklaces, pins, and stickers.

In Mandarin Chinese, the swastika symbol (卐) is treated as a Chinese character and pronounced as *wan* (萬), but this pronunciation is not present in any early texts or records. It was not until 638 CE that Empress Wu Zetian set the pronunciation as *wan*. *Wan* means “the coming together of good fortune and virtue,” signifying fortune, sacred purity, and the perfection of merit.

However, since the Nazis in Germany used the swastika as their party emblem, people have come to associate the sign as a symbol of struggle. Actually, the Nazi swastika is drawn on a slant, and thus differs from the Buddhist swastika (卐), but in order to avoid creating any impediment to the development of Buddhism, Buddhist circles in Germany still try to avoid using the swastika as much as possible. Actually, the Nazi usage of the swastika as their symbol, though resembling the Buddhist sign, was really an attempt to employ a false image of peace as a cover for their acts of war!

The swastika was originally just a symbol and not considered a Chinese character. But after its use for generations, it is not considered different from any other character. This reflects the customary practice of using the symbol but also shows some of the misunderstandings that arise when Sanskrit texts are translated into Chinese.

Additionally, there are two variants of the swastika symbol used throughout Buddhist writings: the right-facing swastika (卐) and the left-facing swastika (卍). There are various conceptions of which variant is the “correct” variant, mostly derived from which more completely depicts the clockwise circumambulation of stupas and the clockwise turning of the Dharma wheel. Each variant has its staunch advocates who believe that only their method for drawing the sign is consistent with the clockwise motion. Even during the 1960s, many senior monks within Buddhist circles in Taiwan still held opposing views over which swastika variant was correct. However, in June of 1963, Venerable Master Hsing Yun led a pilgrimage to the sacred Buddhist sites of India where they discovered an ancient circular stupa at the Deer Park, around which were rows filled with right-facing swastikas (卐). The stupa was built during the time of King Asoka around 300 BCE, to commemorate the spot where the Buddha in the past had entered deep meditation. From this, Venerable Master Hsing Yun became even more convinced that the view he had previously advocated was correct. How the swastika depicts the direction it is turning cannot be determined from our point of view but only by how the swastika itself is constructed. Thus, the right-facing swastika (卐) best represents the sacred clockwise direction.

Since the beginning, the symbols representing Buddhism have taken many forms, like the swastika, the Dharma wheel, the lotus flower, the stupa, the halo of light, Buddhist beads, the bodhi tree, the mandala, and the Buddhist flag; it is hard to establish one as definitively representative. Therefore, although Buddhism is a religion that believes in freedom and democracy, in the future it would seem best for all Buddhists to come together and select a

single symbol from among these, so that there could be a single Buddhist symbol with a degree of authority.

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S

T

Teachers

教師

See also: Field of merit; reliance, four kinds of.

Teaching, Four Modes of

四悉檀

See also: Mountain gate; parables of the *Lotus Sutra*; sutras, twelve divisions of.

There is a saying that, “The Buddha teaches the Dharma with one voice, and sentient beings each understand according to their level.” This is because the Buddha excels at adapting his teachings to his audience by applying the four teaching modes.

In Chinese, the four are called *xitan* (悉檀), which is a transliteration of the Sanskrit *siddhanta*, “accomplishment.” They describe the four methods that the Buddha used to liberate sentient beings. Since these methods are employed according to the spiritual capacity of sentient beings, they are able to accomplish the task of liberating all sentient beings; that is why they are called “accomplishments.”

1. *Worldly Method* (世界悉檀)

This method utilizes explanations of causes and conditions using mundane phenomena. It uses mundane thinking, language, and concepts to explain the truth of dependent origination. For example, sentient beings are a combination of the five aggregates and are therefore empty. But non-Buddhists generally see the “self” as real and concrete. The Buddha thus teaches in accordance with everyday phenomena so that most people will understand, be pleased with the teaching, and gain some wisdom. For this reason, the method is also known as the “method that pleases.”

2. *Individual Method* (各各為人悉檀)

This is the method used by the Buddha to teach various supra-mundane practices in accordance with the spiritual capacity and ability of each individual sentient being, so that in doing so, they would be able to generate wholesome roots. The Buddha would do this by observing each individual beings superior and inferior faculties, seeing the depth of their wholesome roots, and providing them the appropriate teaching. In this way, the Buddha established their faith and fostered their wholesome roots. Therefore, it is also known as the “method for generating wholesomeness.”

3. *Specific Method* (對治悉檀)

This method provides certain Dharma teachings to correspond to sentient beings’ specific afflictions, such as greed, anger, and ignorance. For example, for those beings with much greed, the Buddha would teach them the contemplation of impurity. For those beings with much anger, he would teach the contemplation of compassion. For beings with distracted minds, he would teach the

contemplation of counting the breath. For beings who are ignorant, he would teach the contemplation of causes and conditions. For sentient beings with many obstacles, he would teach contemplation through reciting Amitabha Buddha's name. This "specific" method is a means to eliminate the afflictions and negative karma of sentient beings. For this reason, it is known as the "method for eliminating negativity."

4. *Ultimate Method* (第一義悉檀)

With this method, the Buddha employs skillful means to teach the principles of the Middle Way as the one reality, according to the ultimate truth as understood by the Buddha, so that sentient beings can eliminate delusion and attain awakening. To overcome all discursive language, the Buddha teaches the ultimate truth directly to show the principles behind the true reality of all phenomena. This allows sentient beings to accord with the teachings and is as such known as the "method through principles."

These four modes of teaching are what underpin the Tripitaka, the twelve divisions of the sutras, and their associated 84,000 practices. Only the Buddha can master all of these methods and use them to respond to the spiritual capacity of sentient beings with unimpeded freedom. Because the Buddha is able to apply the four modes of teaching to so effectively, and since he can perfectly modify the teachings based on the audience's capacity, the Buddha is the greatest of all educators. It is for this reason that the Buddha's teachings act as a light for the world that shall never be extinguished.

Temporary Monastic Lodging

掛單

See also: Wandering mendicant.

In order to travel in search of teachers and to learn the way, the Chan masters of the past would live temporarily in various different temples and monasteries.

The term used to describe requesting temporary residence in Chinese is *guan* (掛單), “hang up the name,” referring to a small card with a monastic’s ordination name that is hung above his room in a monastery. This process is also sometimes called *guaxi* (掛錫), “hang up the staff,” or *guabo* (掛鉢), “hang up the bowl,” referring to hanging up one’s walking staff and travel bag, with the three robes and bowl on a peg within the monastic dormitory.

According to the Chan temple rules, any traveling monastic who is fully ordained and is equipped with monastic robes, an alms bowl, and an ordination certificate, can go to any monastery and register for temporary lodging at the “hall of clouds and water,” named after the image of a monastic wandering as freely as clouds that float through the sky.

The traditional process for requesting such temporary lodgings included a certain set of procedures: One must first wait in the reception hall where the steward makes the initial inquiry and passes on the information obtained to the receptionist. Once the receptionist arrives, the visitor quickly says, “I bow to the receptionist,” and if the receptionist says “Only a half bow,” then the visitor should follow the instructions and make a half bow.

At this time, the receptionist will ask, “What is your Dharma name and in which temple do you reside?” The guest answers the question in the form of, “My name is ... and my temple is”

The receptionist will then ask, “Where have you come from and what do you intend to do?” If the guest is traveling and only intends to stay for one or two nights, the guest then answers, “My presence will just be a temporary bother to the temple.” Upon hearing this, the receptionist generally makes no further inquiries and calls for someone to lead the guest to his lodgings. If the guest wishes to stay for a while and study he says, “I would like to learn from the temple,” at which point the receptionist will ask a few more questions, such as: “How old are you and where have you studied in the past?” In this way, the receptionist gains a better understanding of the situation so that arrangements can be made to give the guest access to the meditation hall, the Amitabha chanting hall, the Buddhist seminary, and to assign the guest work duty. The guest should answer the questions in a comfortable and unhurried manner, speaking neither too fast nor too slow, and be sure to answer properly and correctly.

After the interview, the guest’s ordination certificate and belongings will be inspected and then arrangements for the guest’s lodging will be made. By this time, the receptionist has already sent someone to inform the head of the dormitory. Upon meeting the head of the dorm, the guest will bow to him, and he will say to the guest, “See the receptionist off.” The receptionist will then say to the guest, “There is no need to do so. Stay and chat with the head of the dorm.” The head of the dorm will then ask another guest who has been living there for some time: “Lead this new visitor to our hall and show him his lodgings.” It is only at this point that the guest can take his belongings and settle in to his temporary lodgings.

After a monastic takes up temporary monastic lodging, he must observe the rules. If he wishes to ask for instruction from a

senior teacher, an appointment must be made in advance. He must also observe the following five rules:

1. One must be polite and circumspect.
2. One must know the seating order; that is, one must appreciate how juniors and seniors interact and know where one is situated in the order of seniority.
3. One must refrain from idle conversation; that is, one must not talk about trivialities unrelated to study and practice.
4. One must listen carefully, and master what one has learned by committing it to memory.
5. One must be able to receive the teachings and then truly practice them.

After a monastic has registered, he is led to his lodging. After he settles in and is accepted into the community, it is said that he has *andan* (安單), “settled his name,” and eventually *jindan* (進單), “joined his name,” to the monastery. To visit other monastics is called to *kandan* (看單), “see their name,” and to be allowed to remain at the monastery is to *liudan* (留單), “remain in name.” If a visiting monastic breaks the rules he is said to *qiandan* (遷單), “remove his name,” and if he departs without requesting leave, he is said to *liudan* (溜單), “slip one’s name away.”

In the past, the “travel bag” carried by monastics when registering for temporary lodging contained only the following eighteen items: a willow branch, washing powder, three robes, a water bottle, an alms bowl, a sitting mat, a walking staff, an incense burner, an incense box, a water strainer, a hand towel, a knife, fire making gear, tweezers, a rope bed, a copy of the sutras and the vinaya, a Buddha statue, and a bodhisattva statue. A monastic

carried nothing more than these eighteen items such that there is a saying in Chinese that “a monastic’s bag weighs two and a half pounds.” This clearly shows the simplicity of the monastic life, for they are not driven by or burdened with things. This is why they can wander the world like drifting clouds and flowing water, making their home anywhere. Hence, in Chinese, it is said of monastics that, “Having left home, they are as clouds and water.”

Today, not only can members of the monastic order register for temporary lodging at most Buddhist temples and monasteries, but there are quite a few temples who accept lay Buddhists to stay for several days at a time. In doing so, lay Buddhists can remove themselves from the hustle and bustle of mundane life and partake of the serene harmony of the monastery or temple. They can cleanse their mind of the grime of mundane concerns before setting sail once more with renewed spirits. A Buddhist monastery is a place to refuel.

Whoever goes to a monastery or temple today, whether they are monastics or lay Buddhists, they will find the process of registering for temporary monastic lodgings to be simple, easy, and conducted in a gracious and courteous manner. This is a far cry from the past, when monastics wishing to register for temporary lodging had to undergo interrogations and examination at layer upon layer of check points, and in some case were even subject to humiliation and abuse before they could fulfill their wish. In order to seek the teachings and learn the Dharma, the etiquette surrounding registration for temporary lodging required respectfulness, piety, perseverance, and patience. Only those able to grind away all attachment to the self and material things would be successful, clearly showing how difficult it is to seek the Dharma.

Three Treatise School

三論宗

See also: Schools of Chinese Buddhism, eight.

Thus Have I Heard

如是我聞

When the Buddha was about to enter final *nirvana*, the Venerable Ananda, on behalf of all there assembled, asked the Buddha four questions. Among these, the following question was posed: “Lord Buddha, during your time on earth, it has been easy for all of us to believe the teachings that you spoke. After your final *nirvana*, how can we ensure that people will have faith in your teachings?”

The Buddha replied, “When recounting my teachings, remember to state, ‘thus have I heard,’ to show that you, Ananda, heard what I said.” This is the origin of the phrase “Thus have I heard,” which can be found at the beginning of the Buddhist sutras today.

The phrase “Thus have I heard” has three functions:

1. *To Remove the Three Doubts* (斷三種疑惑)

The Venerable Ananda was the Buddha’s attendant; he possessed the thirty-two marks of excellence and resembled the Buddha in appearance. During the council to compile the Buddhist canon held after the Buddha’s final *nirvana*, it was the general consensus of those assembled to have Ananda lead reciting the verbal teachings of the Buddha. When Ananda ascended the dais to speak the Dharma, a series of misunderstandings broke out among the assembly. Some people thought that the Buddha had not really entered final *nirvana* but had returned once more to give teachings. Some thought Ananda was a Buddha from some other world

system who had come to give teachings. And there were still others who thought that Ananda himself had become a Buddha. In order to remove these three doubts, the phrase “Thus have I heard” shows that the “I,” Ananda, has heard the teachings that were given by the Buddha. Every word and every sentence spoken by Ananda in this context are indeed the teachings proclaimed by the Buddha. It is not the case that Ananda himself has become a Buddha, nor has a Buddha from some other place come to give teachings.

2. *To Quell Disputes* (息諍)

T There is a saying that, “The Buddha teaches the Dharma with one voice, and sentient beings each understand according to their level.” Sentient beings vary in spiritual capacity, and they each differ in terms of how they understand and comprehend the Buddha’s teachings. In order to avoid any future disagreements regarding the Buddhist sutras, the phrase “Thus have I heard” stands for the verbal teachings of the Buddha. In this way, disputes regarding personal opinions can be avoided.

3. *To Distinguish Buddhism* (異邪)

How can we differentiate between Buddhist sutras and non-Buddhist texts? The phrase “Thus have I heard” clearly indicates that this is a Buddhist sutra, and differentiates it from the texts of all other religions. This allows Buddhists to know which teachings to follow.

“Thus have I heard” explains how Buddhists should read the sutras and listen to the true Dharma. But, it is important to remember that, in Buddhism, a greater emphasis is placed on actual practice. This is why sutras end with the phrase, “Believed it,

received it, and practiced it.” This shows that understanding and practice are equally important. Understanding and practice are like the two wings of a bird or the two wheels of a cart, for neither can be lacking.

Tiantai School

天台宗

See: Schools of Chinese Buddhism, eight.

Training, Threefold

三學

See also: Mountain gate; ordination; *prajna*; precepts, five; precepts, eight; *samadhi*; wisdom, four kinds of; wisdom, three kinds of.

To cultivate the Buddhist path, we must eliminate the three poisons of greed, anger, and ignorance. To do this, we can cultivate the “three trainings” of morality, meditative concentration, and wisdom.

1. *Training on Morality* (戒學)

This is also known as *sila* and *vinaya*, which refer to the Buddhist precepts. The precepts show the norms and standards for cultivating our bodies and minds; following them can prevent all negative karma and generate all positive karma. In life, we should not only adhere to the rules and keep from transgressions, but we should engage in good works to purify the body and mind, allowing for meditative concentration.

There are three kinds of precepts. The first kind is called “precepts for proper conduct,” which include the five precepts, ten

precepts, and monastic precepts that prevent wrongdoing and negative karma. The second kind are “precepts for wholesome deeds,” which means applying the precepts in one’s own life to perform wholesome deeds. The third kind are “precepts for benefiting sentient beings,” which means having compassion for all beings as one’s precepts and providing benefit to them. These three kinds of precepts can be seen in the famous Buddhist verse “Do nothing that is unwholesome, do all that is wholesome, purify the mind. This is the teaching of all Buddhas.”

2. *Training on Meditative Concentration* (定學)

T Meditation means to bring cessation to one’s karmic conditions and purify the mind. Meditation is also the process of concentrating the mind and cultivating awareness and is a method to settle the mind. During meditation practice, we watch the six sense organs to turn away delusional thought and eliminate affliction. By fixing the mind in one-pointed concentration, the mind and body become calm and settled, and wisdom will arise.

There are three levels of meditative concentration: mundane meditation, supramundane meditation, and highest supramundane meditation. Mundane meditation is practiced by ordinary people and non-Buddhists; it uses the method of mindfulness of breathing to achieve extraordinary spiritual attainments. Supramundane meditation is practiced by *sravakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* and uses the method of observing form to achieve the highest Hinayana attainments. The highest supramundane meditation is practiced by Mahayana bodhisattvas and uses the method of observing the mind to achieve supreme awakening.

3. *Training on Wisdom* (慧學)

This refers to *prajna*-wisdom. This is the ultimate truth, the wisdom that is capable of perceiving reality and eliminating confusion. When developing this wisdom, we must cultivate meditative concentration and eliminate ignorance and delusion so that we can remove our afflictions and directly awaken to the truth. This is the attainment of Buddhahood and brings freedom to the body and mind.

There are also three levels of wisdom: mundane wisdom, supramundane wisdom, and the highest supramundane wisdom. Mundane wisdom is the wisdom of ordinary people and outsiders; it does not bring freedom nor does it remove delusion or karma. Supramundane wisdom is the wisdom of *śravakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*, also known as “wisdom of all phenomena,” though it is not the highest wisdom. The highest supramundane wisdom is the wisdom of Buddhas and bodhisattvas, also known as “complete wisdom of all phenomena,” and is an unsurpassable form of wisdom.

The threefold training of morality, meditative concentration, and wisdom is also known as the “three undefiled trainings.” They are the factors that sentient beings practice to attain Buddhahood. They are to be cultivated in order: By relying on morality, one achieves meditative concentration, by relying on meditative concentration one develops wisdom, and by relying on wisdom one attains Buddhahood.

Translators, Four Great Chinese

四大譯師

See also: Untranslatable terms, five kinds of.

After Buddhism came to China, the task of translating the sutras stirred a wave of enthusiasm for research into Buddhist study and

thought. This facilitated the successive establishment of the various schools and sects and gave rise to new perspectives that allowed for the fervent development of Chinese Buddhism.

The four sutra translators who were the most prolific and influential in the history of Chinese Buddhism are: Kumarajiva, Xuanzang, Paramartha, and Yijing. The Esoteric School additionally venerates the translator Amoghavajra, who they recognize as the Sixth Patriarch of their school.

1. *Kumarajiva* (鳩摩羅什)

T Kumarajiva (344-413 CE) came from the kingdom of Qiuci (now Shule in Xinjiang Province). Kumarajiva's father, Kumarayana, was the son of the prime minister in an Indian kingdom, but he left for Qiuci because he did not want to succeed his father as prime minister. Kumarayana married the king's sister, and they had a son, Kumarajiva. When Kumarajiva was seven, his mother went on a hunger strike, demanding that her husband allow her to join the monastic order. The father assented, and thereupon, mother and son lived a life together as wandering monastics.

Kumarajiva had been bright from an early age. As he followed his mother in her pursuit of the Way, he later studied abroad in India, learning from all the famous scholars as his reputation spread far and wide across the five regions of India. Fu Jian (r. 357-85 CE) of the Former Qin dynasty heard of his virtue and sent his general Lü Guang (337-399 CE) to receive Kumarajiva with numerous soldiers. But it was not until 401 CE that Kumarajiva arrived in Chang'an. The ruler Yao Xing (r. 393-416 CE) honored him as National Master and installed him in the Xiaoyao Garden, where he began his work translating the sutras along with such individuals as Sengzhao (384-414 CE) and Sengyan (4th-5th cent. CE), becoming quite famous for

a time. Kumarajiva translated more than three hundred fascicles of Buddhist texts, and among these, the *Lotus Sutra*, the *Vimalakirti Sutra*, the *Diamond Sutra*, and the *Amitabha Sutra* are still widely chanted and memorized by people today.

Beyond this, Kumarajiva translated in succession the *Middle Way Treatise*, the *Hundred Verses Treatise*, and the *Great Perfection of Wisdom Treatise*, among others. Their texts systematically introduced the theories of Nagarjuna's (150-250 CE) Madhyamaka and had a tremendous impact upon the development of Chinese Buddhism. Kumarajiva has many disciples, with some of his prominent disciples later founding the Three Treatise School and the Establishing the Truth School.

Since he first joined the monastic order under Bandhudatta, Kumarajiva studied the Hinayana, yet later on, he also studied the Mahayana teachings. When Bandhudatta learned about this, he actually honored Kumarajiva as his teacher, thereby leaving to posterity this celebrated story of how the Mahayana Buddhist and the Hinayana Buddhist served as one another's teacher.

2. Xuanzang (玄奘)

Xuanzang (600-664 CE) was born in Chenliu in Henan Province in the year 600 CE. He joined the monastic order as a youth and studied widely from such sutras and treatises as the *Nirvana Sutra*, the *Great Compendium of the Abhidharma Treatise*, the *Compendium of Mahayana Treatise*, the *Establishing the Truth Treatise*, and the *Treasury of Abhidharma Treatise*. Because the various teachers at the time were inconsistent in their understanding of the Buddhist scriptures with many wide and differing opinions, Xuanzang decided to journey to India and bring back the original texts of the Consciousness-Only philosophy.

In 629 CE, Xuanzang crossed more than several hundred miles of desert all by himself with the determination to seek the Dharma. It was said that he “preferred to take one more step towards death in the West rather than take one step back towards life in the East.”

After experiencing hardships, difficulties, and surviving several brushes with death, Xuanzang finally arrived at Nalanda Monastery in India, where he came to know Silabhadra (ca. 6th cent. CE), the leading authority on Consciousness-Only philosophy. Xuanzang studied such texts as the *Stages of Yogacara Practice Treatise*, the *Acclamation of the Noble Teachings Treatise*, and the *Great Compendium of the Abhidharma Treatise*, and gained a deep understanding and connection with the profound meaning of the Consciousness-Only doctrines.

In the nineteenth year of the Zhenguan reign (645 CE), Xuanzang returned to Chang’an, bringing with him more than six hundred texts from the Hinayana and Mahayana canons. The most important of these were the precious texts of the Consciousness-Only School, such as the *Thirty Verses on Consciousness-Only Treatise*, the *Twenty Verses on Consciousness-Only Treatise*, the *Compendium of Mahayana Treatise*, the *Demonstration of Consciousness-Only Treatise*, and the *Stages of Yogacara Practice Treatise*. Xuanzang’s reputation spread throughout the land.

Upon his return to Chang’an, Xuanzang spent the next twenty years training his disciples and carrying on his sutra translation work. In total, Xuanzang translated over a thousand fascicles of texts, over a quarter of all the Buddhist texts translated into Chinese. He laid the foundation for the rise of the Consciousness-Only School of Chinese Buddhism and was treated by Emperor Gaozong as a national treasure.

3. *Paramartha* (真諦)

Paramartha (499-569 CE) came from Udyana in northwestern India. He was well-versed in the Tripitaka and the five vinaya texts, and had gained an understanding of the profound principles of the Mahayana through extensive study and research. In 546 CE, *Paramartha* arrived at China's southern coast with many Buddhist sutras, and gained the deep respect of Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty (r. 502-549 CE).

Despite having to wander from place to place during the Hou Jing rebellion (549 CE), *Paramartha* continued his translation work, producing nearly three hundred fascicles of Buddhist texts. His major translations include such Consciousness-Only texts as the *Treatise on the Transformation of Consciousness* and the *Treatise on Consciousness-Only in the Mahayana*, as well as the *Golden Light Sutra*, the *Compendium of Mahayana Treatise*, the *Explanation on the Compendium of the Mahayana*, and the *Awakening of Faith in Mahayana Treatise*. Additionally, he produced an incredible corpus of commentaries and notes with which he endeavored to make his meaning perfectly clear. With the breadth of his understanding and the excellence of his methodology, he is rightly known as a leading figure in the history of Chinese Buddhism.

4. *Yijing* (義淨)

Yijing (635-713 CE) came from Fanyang in Hebei Province. At the age of twelve and owing to his admiration of Xuanzang, *Yijing* decided to join the monastic order to follow Xuanzang's example of going to India to seek the Dharma.

After he requested and received full ordination at the age of twenty, *Yijing* was concerned over how incomplete the vinaya canon for *bhiksus* had remained, which further strengthened his

T determination to go to India and explore vinaya studies. Having prepared himself and raised funds for seventeen years, Yijing invited a group of a dozen like-minded companions, including Chuyi, Hongwei, Xuanda, and Shanxing, to accompany him on the journey. However, when this impressive group arrived in Guangzhou, concerns over the dangers of the ocean voyage arose in everyone's mind, and one after the other, the members of the group decided to proceed no further. Only Yijing remained faithful to his original intent and courageously went on by himself. Along the way, Yijing fell ill and was also once robbed by bandits, but none of this caused him to waver in his mission to seek the Dharma. Finally, he arrived at the great Buddhist university, Nalanda Monastery, where he studied for ten years. Later, he also studied abroad in Sumatra for seven years. In his travels, Yijing visited more than thirty countries.

When he returned to China, he brought with him about four hundred sutras and works of Abhidharma in Sanskrit and subsequently devoted his energies to translating them. Over the next twelve years, Yijing translated more than two hundred fascicles of sutras and treatises, with the majority of his work coming from the vinaya canon. The various texts on the monastic rules and precepts from the Sarvastivadin Vinaya preserved today are mostly his work.

5. *Amoghavajra* (不空)

Amoghavajra (705-774 CE) came from Sri Lanka and possessed an innate intelligence. During his early years, he accompanied his uncle on journeys to the countries of Southeast Asia and later joined the monastic order. In his early years, he studied with Vajrabodhi (671-741 CE) and received a complete education

in the “five parts” and “three secrets.” He also honored his teacher’s dying wish and returned once more to India to seek the Dharma.

Upon his return to China, Amoghavajra bestowed an empowerment upon Emperor Xuanzong (r. 712-756 CE) and came to reside in Jingying Monastery. Since his prayers for rain were miraculously effective, he was given the imperial title “Wisdom Treasure” and given a purple robe. He was revered by the emperors Xuanzong, Suzong (r. 756-762 CE) and Daizong (r. 762-779 CE) during their reigns. Amoghavajra translated more than one hundred and twenty fascicles of Buddhist texts and became the Sixth Patriarch in the Esoteric School.

Each of these five great translators discussed above had to leave their hometowns and overcome difficulty and hardship, only achieving success after much hard work and diligent practice. They left behind a rich treasury of sutras. Therefore, when Buddhists read the sutras today, one should feel gratitude and keep in mind a sense of utmost sincerity and devout respect for the great achievements of these exalted figures.

Tripitaka

三藏

See also: Sutras, twelve divisions of; translators, four great Chinese.

After the Buddha’s final *nirvana*, his disciples wished to preserve the Buddha’s teachings. Over a number of Buddhist councils the teachings were compiled, edited, and eventually divided into three divisions: the collection of discourses, the collection of monastic

rules, and the collection of treatises. This became known as the *tripitaka* in Sanskrit, or *sancang* (三藏) in Chinese, meaning “three collections,” encompassing the threefold division of the sacred texts of Indian Buddhism.

1. *Collection of Discourses* (經藏)

In Sanskrit, this collection is called *sutra*, meaning “concordant scriptures.” The basic meaning here is that the teachings of the sutras are mutually in accord with one another, just as all the flowers on a stringed garland are interconnected.

The sutras contain all that accords with the principles of the Buddhas above, and all the teachings of the Buddha that accord with the spiritual capacity of sentient beings below. There is a verse that describes the various types of teachings the Buddha delivered across his forty-nine year teaching career:

Flower Adornment the first three weeks.

Agama, twelve years; *vaipulya*, eight years.

Twenty-two years teaching *Wisdom*,

Lotus and *Nirvana* totaled eight years.

Among these, the *vaipulya* scriptures include various Mahayana scriptures beyond those listed above, such as the *Vimalakirti Sutra*, the *Lion’s Roar of Queen Srimala Sutra*, and the *Golden Light Sutra*.

2. *Collection of Monastic Rules* (律藏)

In Sanskrit, this collection is called *vinaya*, which means “discipline and restraint.” This is the body of monastic rules the Buddha instituted to discipline the minds of his disciples and correct their bad habits. In Chinese, the *vinaya* is also called *mie* (滅), “extinguish,”

for the Buddhist precepts can extinguish the faults and wrongdoings of physical, verbal, and mental karma.

There are three types of vinaya texts: expansive vinaya, precept texts, and vinaya commentaries. Expansive vinaya, like the *Ten Recitations Vinaya*, the *Four-Part Vinaya*, the *Great Compilation of Monastic Rules*, and the *Five-Part Vinaya*, explain the origins of how the Buddha formulated the monastic precepts and their finer details. Precept texts, like the *Bhiksu and Bhiksuni Precepts*, only contain a list of monastic rules, and are for the purpose of recitation. Vinaya commentaries, like the *Treatise on the Sarvastivada Vinaya* and others, comment upon the monastic rules.

3. Collection of Treatises (論藏)

In Sanskrit, this collection is called *abhidharma*, which means “analysis of the Dharma,” and showcases the wisdom to be gained from explicating the Dharma. The *abhidharma* is a collection of texts by disciples of the Buddha to discuss, explain, and organize the doctrines of the sutras. Some such texts that many people are familiar with include the *Middle Way Treatise*, the *Treatise of the Twelve Aspects*, the *Great Perfection of Wisdom Treatise*, the *Treatise in a Hundred Verses*, the *Treatise on the Stages of Yogacara Practice*, the *Awakening of Faith in Mahayana Treatise*, and the *Treatise on the Ten Stages Sutra*.

The texts of the Tripitaka constitute the teachings and doctrines of the Buddha, and Buddhists rely upon them to guide their cultivation. Monastics who are well-versed in the collection of discourses are called “sutra masters.” Those who are well-versed in the collection of monastic rules are called “vinaya masters.” And those well-versed in the collection of treatises are called “*abhidharma*”

masters” or “treatise masters.” Monastics well-versed in all three collections are called “tripitaka masters.” Monastics like Xuanzang (600-664 CE), Kumarajiva (344-413 CE), Paramartha (499-569 CE), Yijing (635-713 CE), Faxian (b. 340 CE), and even Zhu Shixing, among others, were well-versed in the sutra, vinaya, and abhidharma texts of the tripitaka, and known as “tripitaka masters.”

Consider the Triple Gem: It was because of the Dharma that the Buddha was able to attain awakening, and the Sangha is able to teach us because it maintains the true Dharma. Thus, among the Triple Gem, the Dharma is the most revered.

The *Diamond Sutra* states, “Wherever this sutra can be found, there also is the Buddha; and it should be honored as if it were one of his disciples.” This shows how we should revere the Dharma.

Truths, Four Noble

四聖諦

See also: *Nirvana*; path, noble eightfold; suffering, eight kinds of.

The Four Noble Truths were realized by the Buddha in his awakening, and constitute a general outline of the Dharma. What are the Four Noble Truths?

1. The truth of suffering (苦諦)
2. The truth of the cause of suffering (集諦)
3. The truth of the cessation of suffering (滅諦)
4. The truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering (道諦)

The first noble truth, “suffering,” describes human life in this world. The body experiences the pain and suffering of old age,

sickness, and death while the mind experiences the pain and suffering of greed, anger, and ignorance. The natural world undergoes the pain and suffering of floods and fires. Our relationships are strained by the pain and suffering of being near loathsome people and being separated from loved ones. Society experiences pain and suffering in the form of broken dreams and hardship. Suffering is a fundamental characteristic of life.

The second noble truth identifies the causes of this suffering: ignorance and delusion, as well as karma from past lives. This includes physical karma of killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct; verbal karma of lying and argument; and mental karma of greed, anger, and wrong views. The suffering of life is simply the effect of all of these causes.

The third noble truth, the cessation of these causes, describes the state of the Buddha. This is the cessation of the accumulation of karma; a wonderful state where one can be liberated from the impermanence of the cycle of birth and death—the tranquility of *nirvana*. In the state of *nirvana*, differences are replaced by equality, and turmoil is replaced by tranquility. Attachment no longer arises, and a brilliant and infinite light shines throughout the world system.

The fourth noble truth is the path or process that can lead to cessation. Without cultivating the path, how can one expect to be like a Buddha? Without practice, one's faith and vows cannot be fulfilled. The path is made up of eight factors: right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right meditative concentration. Following this path leads to liberation.

The Four Noble Truths operate on both a mundane and supramundane level. The Venerable Aniruddha, one of the ten great

Truths, Four Noble

disciples of the Buddha, once said, “The sun could grow cold and the moon could grow hot, but the Four Noble Truths spoken by the Buddha will never change.”

T

Fo Guang Shan
International Translation Center

U

Untranslatable Terms, Five Kinds of 五種不翻

See also: Translators, four great Chinese.

Buddhism began in India and flourished in China. Buddhism's growth in China was assisted by the translation of Buddhist sutras into Chinese, for only then was it possible for Buddhism to flourish in China and bear fruit to dazzle the world with its splendor.

The task of translating the Buddhist sutras into Chinese began during the Eastern Han period (25-220 CE) and reached its height during the Six Dynasties (420-581 CE), Sui (581-618 CE), and Tang (618-907 CE) periods. Translations of the Buddhist sutras not only formed the basis for spreading the Dharma, but have also provided scholars with source material for researching the histories of India, Central Asia, and the countries of the South China Sea. The translations expanded the vocabulary of Chinese literature, enriching the breadth of the culture.

The three highest principles to consider when translating are fidelity, elegance, and readability. A translation must be faithful

to the original, as well as elegant in literary diction and comprehensible in meaning. According to biographies of eminent monks, over the centuries, there have been more than one hundred monastic translators who have left their name to posterity, but among these, Kumarajiva, Xuanzang, Yijing, and Paramartha have been singled out as the four greatest translators in the history of Chinese Buddhism.

Kumarajiva took readability as his guiding principle for scriptural translation, believing it was more important to rely on the meaning rather than textual structure. The fluency of his translations, and the polish of his verse have always entranced his readers. On the other hand, Xuanzang emphasized fidelity to the original text and further advocated a system known as the “five categories of terms not translated.” Later scholars have treated Xuanzang’s work as a watershed and have come to refer to the sutras translated before Xuanzang as the “old translations,” and those that came after Xuanzang as the “new translations.”

The “five categories of terms not translated” refers to five situations in which a word or passage from a source text is not given a semantic translation but rather is transliterated in order to preserve the original pronunciation. The five categories of terms not translated are as follows:

1. *Terms with Multiple Meanings* (多含不翻)

Terms with multiple meanings are transliterated rather than translated. For example, the term *arhat* has the three meanings of “slayer of the enemy,” “not reborn,” and “worthy of respect,” and is thus transliterated in Chinese as *luohan* (羅漢). The term *bhagavat* has the six meanings of “carefree,” “flourishing,” “dignified,” “renowned reputation,” “auspicious,” and “revered,” and is thus transliterated in

Chinese as *bojiefan* (薄伽梵). It would not be possible to translate these terms and choose only one of their meanings.

2. *Terms with Esoteric Meanings* (祕密不翻)

Terms with esoteric meanings, like the *dharani* and *mantras* found in the sutras, are sounds which resonate with all the Buddhas. Being so profound and inconceivable, they are not given a word for word translation of their meaning.

3. *Terms of Reverence* (尊貴不翻)

Terms that are subject to great reverence or respect are not translated. For example, *prajna* could be translated as *zhihui* (智慧), “wisdom,” but “wisdom” can also mean a worldly cleverness and sophistication that stems from the defiled consciousness of discrimination. Wisdom can be virtuous or non-virtuous, beneficial or harmful. *Prajna* on the other hand is perfectly true, perfectly virtuous, and perfectly beautiful, and constitutes the unafflicted and undefiled nature of suchness. There is no word that is more honored or respected than *prajna*, hence it is not translated as “wisdom.”

4. *Terms Traditionally Transliterated* (順古不翻)

For example, *anuttarasamyak-sambodhi* means “supreme, perfect awakening;” however since the Eastern Han (25-220 CE), generations of translators have always transliterated the term, and so in order to be consistent with time-honored practice, such terms are not translated.

5. *Terms without Local Equivalent* (此方無不翻)

Terms with no local equivalent in China are transliterated. For example, the fruit of the *amala* tree is native to India, though no

Uttara-kuru

such fruit exists in China. Thus, when the fruit is mentioned, it is transliterated as *anmoluo* (菴摩羅).

Observing these “five categories of terms not translated” has become standard practice in the sutra translations of later generations.

Upali

優婆離

See: Disciples, ten great.

Upasaka

優婆塞

See: Assembly, sevenfold.

Upasika

優婆夷

See: Assembly, sevenfold.

Uttara-kuru

北俱盧洲

See: Continents, four great; difficulties, eight.

V

Vajraputra

笑獅羅漢

See: Arhats, eighteen.

Vanavasin

芭蕉羅漢

See: Arhats, eighteen.

Vehicles, Five

五乘佛法

See also: Dharma realms, ten; heaven.

The Sanskrit word *yana*, “vehicle,” can refer to any means of conveyance such as a road, a boat, or a cart. In his career of teaching the Dharma to liberate sentient beings, the Buddha divided the Dharma into five methods of practice called “vehicles” based upon the spiritual capacity of his followers. Following these five methods of practice

can convey sentient beings from the cycle of birth and death on this shore to the *nirvana* of the other shore. The five vehicles are the human vehicle, the heavenly vehicle, the *śravaka* vehicle, the *pratyekabuddha* vehicle, and the bodhisattva vehicle.

1. *The Human Vehicle* (人乘)

The human vehicle emphasizes taking the three refuges and upholding the five precepts so that one can avoid the three lower realms of rebirth and instead be born as a human being. To undertake the three refuges means to take refuge in and rely upon the Triple Gem, with the Buddha as your guide, the Dharma as your truth, and the Sangha as your spiritual friends.

By relying upon the merit of the Triple Gem to empower and protect us, we can transcend the limitless suffering of cyclic existence, be free from fear, and liberate ourselves from all sorrow. There is a sutra that says, “By taking refuge in the Buddha, one will not fall into the hells; by taking refuge in the Dharma, one will not be reborn as a hungry ghost; and by taking refuge in the Sangha, one will not be reborn as an animal.”

The five precepts are: to refrain from killing, which is not to violate the lives of others; to refrain from stealing, which is not to violate the property of others; to refrain from sexual misconduct, which is not to violate the honor or body of others; to refrain from lying, which is not to violate the reputation or trust of others; and to refrain from consuming intoxicants, which is not to consume any substance that would impair one’s health or judgment and lead to harm.

2. *The Heavenly Vehicle* (天乘)

The heavenly vehicle involved practicing the ten wholesome actions and the eight *dhyana* meditation states, which can propel

sentient beings into the heavenly realms. The ten wholesome actions are an extension and expansion of the five precepts, and correspond to the three types of karma: physical, verbal, and mental. Refraining from killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct constitutes physical karma. Refraining from dishonest speech, harsh speech, divisive speech, and idle speech constitutes verbal karma. Refraining from greed, anger, and wrong views constitutes mental karma.

Training in meditative concentration must be practiced as well. There are eight levels of meditative concentration which correspond to the four form heavens and the four formless heavens.

3. *The Sravaka Vehicle* (聲聞乘)

The *sravaka* vehicle is founded in the teaching of the Four Noble Truths and can transport sentient beings beyond the three realms to become arhats and attain *nirvana* without remainder. The Four Noble Truths are: the truth of suffering, which explains how the world is characterized by suffering; the truth of the cause of suffering, which shows how greed, anger, and ignorance lead to the cycle of birth and death; the truth of the cessation of suffering, which describes the pure state of *nirvana* that is the absence of all suffering; and the truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering, which includes teachings such as the threefold training, the Noble Eightfold Path, and the thirty-seven aspects of awakening.

These four truths describe the true reality of human life and the universe, which only sages are able to profoundly realize with certainty. The *Teachings Bequeathed by the Buddha Sutra* says, “The Buddha’s explanation of the truth of suffering means that suffering is true and real, for it cannot be turned into happiness; the cause of suffering is the real cause, for there is no other. If

suffering is to cease, it must be that its cause ceases, for when its cause ceases, so does its effect. The path that leads to the cessation of suffering is the true and real path, for there is no other.”

4. *The Pratyekabuddha Vehicle* (緣覺乘)

The *pratyekabuddha* vehicle has the twelve links of dependent origination as its basis, which can transport sentient beings beyond the three realms into *nirvana* without remainder by becoming *pratyekabuddhas*. Dependent origination is the process by which all mundane phenomena arise. It is the simple formula that “When there is this, then there is that. When this arises, then that arises. When there is no this, then there is no that. When this ceases, then that ceases.” The teaching of dependent origination describes an interdependent relationship of cause and effect that ties together the existence of all phenomena. All sentient beings are subject to dependent origination as they travel through the cycle of birth and death.

Pratyekabuddhas attain awakening by contemplating the twelve links of dependent origination. The twelve links are: mental formations depend upon ignorance, consciousness depends upon mental formations, name and form depend upon consciousness, the six sense organs depend upon name and form, contact depends upon the six sense organs, feeling depends upon contact, craving depends upon feeling, clinging depends upon craving, becoming depends upon clinging, birth depends upon becoming, and aging and death depends upon birth.

5. *The Bodhisattva Vehicle* (菩薩乘)

The bodhisattva vehicle is founded upon compassion, wisdom, and the six perfections, such that it can transport sentient beings beyond the three realms to the other shore of great *nirvana* of

unsurpassed awakening. The six perfections, called *paramita* in Sanskrit, means that which allows us to cross over and reach the other shore. The six perfections are giving, morality, patience, diligence, meditative concentration, and wisdom.

The human and heavenly vehicles are focused on improving the mind by accumulating merit in this world so that we can find fulfillment and happiness in this life and the next. This is the aspect of the Dharma that is held in common with the whole world. For example, Confucianism is similar to the human vehicle of Buddhism, and Christianity and Islam are more similar to the heavenly vehicle. The *sravaka* vehicle and *pratyekabuddha* vehicle emphasize renunciation and liberation, where the bliss of *nirvana* is considered the ultimate goal. This is similar to the Daoist concept of *wuwei* (無為), “non-action,” that renounces the world with pure freedom. The bodhisattva vehicle is founded upon developing *bodhicitta*, the mind that aspires to awakening, and wishes to benefit others and liberate the world. The ultimate practice of the bodhisattva vehicle is the bliss of wisdom and compassion, while the more practical goals are represented by the six perfections and other such practices.

Vimalakirti

維摩

See: Non-duality.

Vinaya

毗奈耶

See: Gem, triple; schools of Chinese Buddhism, eight; Tripitaka; translators, four great Chinese.

Vinaya School

律宗

See: Schools of Chinese Buddhism, eight.

Violations, Five Great

五逆

The kindness of fathers, the filial piety of sons, and respect between brothers are all excellent virtues of traditional Chinese relationships. But as times have changed, obedience towards one's parents is no longer common. Instead, it is now commonplace for unruly sons and daughters to be violent towards their parents because they cannot accept their parents' supervision or their refusal of some demand. Some even go so far as to kill their mother and father. This clearly shows how our behavior has changed and our morals have declined.

This kind of extreme impropriety is a great violation against the norms of society. In the Buddhist world, there are five heinous crimes which are known as the "five great violations," such that those who commit these violations are surely bound to be reborn in hell. The five great violations are: killing one's father, killing one's mother, killing an arhat, shedding the blood of a Buddha, and creating a schism in the monastic community.

The kindness with which parents themselves raise their children is as high as the mountains and as deep as the ocean. Even if children exerted all their energy in serving and caring for their parents, they still would not be able to repay even one ten-thousandth of their parents' kindness. Thus, we can see what a great violation it would be to kill them, for the karma of such an extremely serious crime would mean falling into Avici Hell after death.

Arhat is a Sanskrit word meaning “worthy of offerings,” for an arhat is a noble person who has realized the fruit of sagehood and is worthy of offerings from human and heavenly beings. As such wise and noble beings are deserving of our reverence and respect, it would be a great violation to kill one, for such a crime would be a heinous act against heaven and unpardonable.

The Buddha is an awakened being, and it is only the Buddha’s appearance on earth that can bring light to the world. The Buddha is like the sun and the moon which shines upon all things without distinction. Causing the Buddha to bleed is a great violation and a grave act of negative karma far more serious than even killing one’s father, mother, or an arhat.

Members of the sangha, or monastic community, are the messengers who carry on the true Dharma. They are able to shoulder this great responsibility because of the sangha’s harmonious, dispute-free environment. If one were to sow discord through gossip and destroy the harmony of the monastic community, such that it cannot carry on the true Dharma, causing it to decline, it is an extremely serious crime. Among the five great violations, this one is the most grave.

At present, there are some Buddhists who have unintentionally created schisms within the monastic community. There are some people who visit a number of temples, spreading gossip to each of them, leading to conflict and misunderstandings between temples. There are some people who criticize members of the monastic community, thus ruining their image. There are even those who congratulate themselves for taking in monastics who have left their temples, thinking that they are furthering Buddhism by looking after these homeless monastics and that they are doing some good deed to protect the Dharma. But such actions damage temple regulations

and keep the monastic community from being what it should be. Not only is taking in such monastics not meritorious, it is actually a grave error. The principle is not unlike children who run away from home: the proper thing to do in such a situation would be to help the child return home, rather than providing them shelter; this hurts the other family. Such behavior does not even conform to basic human morality and even less so to the Buddhist path.

Virtues of the Buddha, Three

三德

See also: Prajna; wisdom, four kinds of; gratitude; means of embracing, four; truths, four noble; *nirvana*.

The three virtues of the Buddha are some of the more celebrated meritorious qualities of the Buddha and his Dharma:

1. *Wisdom* (智德)

The Buddha has attained wisdom, and the Dharma he teaches can overcome all ignorance. In regards to time, the Buddha knows the past, present, and future. In regards to space, the Buddha can perceive all places in the world. In regards to sentient beings, the Buddha knows all their various shapes and forms. The Buddha is the embodiment of truth, has personally attained *prajna*-wisdom, and is radiant and bright. To the Buddha, there is no darkness, no ignorance, and no unknown, for the Buddha is the one who has achieved the wisdom of supreme awareness.

2. *Kindness* (恩德)

The Buddha is the great compassionate one, and the Dharma he teaches can liberate all sentient beings. All beings within the

six realms of existence, from heaven to hell, are subject to the Buddha's liberation. All beings, whether born from the womb, from an egg, from moisture, or from transformation, are subject to the Buddha's compassion. All beings of the highest heavens and formless realms are subject to the Buddha's guidance. The Buddha is the great teacher and liberator of the three realms, who extends his compassion across an ocean of suffering. No matter who you are, you can be liberated by the Buddha, end your suffering, and be happy. The Buddha is our compassionate benefactor.

3. *Eliminating Afflictions* (斷德)

The Buddha is the great liberator, and the Dharma he teaches can eliminate all affliction. The Buddha has taken all the various practices to their completion; his work is done. The Buddha has removed all obstacles and no longer has any habitual tendencies or afflictions. The Buddha has already attained the Dharmakaya of absolute reality, and perfected his merit and virtue. The Buddha is the liberator of the universe who knows the fundamental essence of reality. No matter who you are, the Buddha can eliminate obstacles, remove afflictions, and free you from suffering. The Buddha is courageous and fears nothing.

The Buddha's virtue of wisdom is *prajna*-wisdom, his virtue of kindness is compassion, and his virtue of eliminating affliction is liberation. The three virtues of the Buddha are comparable to the three Confucian virtues of wisdom, benevolence, and courage, though they in no way reach the limitless depths of the Buddha's virtues.

As for the three virtues of the Buddha, the virtue of wisdom belongs to rationality, the virtue of kindness belongs to the

Vows, Four Universal

emotions, and the virtue of eliminating affliction belongs to the will. The Buddha awakened rationality, purified the emotions, and transformed the will. The Buddha became who he is by fulfilling the highest moral perfection in human life.

Visakha

毘舍佉

See: Offerings, four.

Vows, Four Universal

四弘誓願

When cultivating the Mahayana bodhisattva path, we must first generate the four universal vows:

1. *Sentient beings are limitless, I vow to liberate them.*

(眾生無邊誓願度)

Within the six realms of existence, beings are born in four ways. Some are born from eggs, like chicken, geese, and other fowl. Some are born from the womb, like cattle, horses, and human beings. Some are born in moisture, like mosquitoes, gnats, and other insects. Some simply become manifest, like deities, immortals, and other supernatural beings. All these innumerable and limitless beings are drowning in the ocean of suffering, where they endure the suffering and pain of birth, old age, sickness, and death, hoping to be set free by someone powerful. It is said of being a bodhisattva: “It is only for the sake of freeing sentient beings from suffering, and not for the sake of seeking one’s own peace and joy.” The vow to liberate all sentient beings is the Mahayana spirit of benefiting others.

2. *Afflictions are endless, I vow to eradicate them.*

(煩惱無盡誓願斷)

Since the beginning, sentient beings have been beset by ignorance and have forgotten their intrinsic nature and have gotten lost in delusion. Acts of killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct, along with greed, anger, ignorance, sadness, jealousy, and wrong views produce negative karma which results in suffering. Because of this, beings continue to be reborn in the cycle of birth and death without pause. There is a saying that one must, “Forge resolve even in the face of death, so that the Dharmakaya may live.” The vow to end all afflictions is the wisdom of realization that can end all unwholesome qualities.

3. *Teachings are infinite, I vow to learn them.*

(法門無量誓願學)

After the Buddha attained awakening, he taught the Dharma for forty-nine years in over three hundred assemblies. His teachings including both the Mahayana and Hinayana, the essence and characteristics, and both emptiness and existence. In China, eight schools of Buddhism developed: Chan, Pure Land, Vinaya, Esoteric, Tiantai, Huayan, Faxiang, and Three Treatise. Regardless of which of these teachings is followed, their purpose is the same: elucidate the truth of the universe and human life, and reveal, proclaim, realize, and attain the wisdom of the Buddha. A profound understanding of the sutras leads to developing wisdom as vast as the ocean. To liberate sentient beings, a bodhisattva must first liberate himself. The vow to learn the infinite teachings of Buddhism supplies us with the power to benefit both ourselves and others.

4. *Buddhahood is supreme, I vow to attain it.*

(佛道無上誓願成)

Sakyamuni Buddha practiced over many lifetimes for three great *kalpas* to perfect his virtue and wisdom and one hundred small *kalpas* to perfect the thirty-two marks of excellence and eighty notable characteristics. In his final rebirth, the Buddha attained awakening under the bodhi tree while staring at the bright stars of the night; he realized the five eyes and six supernatural powers, and came to understand the past, present, and future. We should learn how the Buddha brought an end to the cycle of birth and death, attained the Dharmakaya, and came to abide always within the liberated state of *nirvana*. There is a saying that, “In heaven and earth, there is nothing like the Buddha. Throughout the worlds of the ten directions, nothing can compare to him.” The vow to attain Buddhahood means to awaken oneself, awaken others, and complete the mission of awakening.

Vulture Peak and Jeta Grove

靈山祇園

It was at one particular assembly on Vulture Peak that the Buddha held forth a flower and Mahakasyapa smiled, leaving this famous anecdote to the ages and marking the beginning of the Chan School's lineage.

The “Vulture Peak” mentioned in the story refers to a particular peak on Spirit Mountain outside Rajagrha, the capital city of the Magadha Kingdom of ancient India. Throughout his life, the Buddha held countless Dharma assemblies there: the wide-ranging teachings included such sutras as the *Lotus Sutra*, the *Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra*, the *Infinite Life Sutra*, and the *Lotus*

Samadhi Sutra, among others. In particular, when the Buddha was teaching the *Lotus Sutra*, a host of a million human and heavenly beings participated in the gathering, and this event became known and celebrated as the “magnificent assembly on Vulture Peak.”

While the Buddha was staying at Vulture Peak, Magadha’s King Bimbisara undertook an extensive construction project that spanned valleys and skirted cliffs, as stones were set in a stairway that led all the way to the top of the mountain. In addition to the dais upon which the Buddha once gave teachings, there are also many other ancient Buddhist sites on the mountain, including the spot where Devadatta threw rocks at the Buddha, the cave where the Buddha and such disciples as Sariputra entered deep meditation, and the place where Ananda was tormented by Mara. In addition, below Vulture Peak is where King Bimbisara was imprisoned by his son, Prince Ajatasatru. It was on this occasion that the Buddha proclaimed the Pure Land of the West, and thus it was from Bimbisara’s prison that Pure Land thought spread throughout the Saha world. Today Buddhists place Vulture Peak on their list of must-see sacred sites.

Jetavana Monastery, also known as “Jeta Grove” or “Jeta Garden,” was donated by the elder Sudatta of Sravasti, in the kingdom of Kausala. The elder Sudatta took joy in good works and charitable acts, and he happily assisted the weak and supported orphans on a regular basis; thus, he was called *anathapindaka*, “benefactor of the poor and orphaned.” It was his sincere faith in the Buddha that inspired Prince Jeta to donate his garden and later to supply funds to construct a monastery. In order to commemorate these two for jointly accomplishing this meritorious task, the site was named the “Jetavana Anathapindaka Grove,” also known as the “Jeta Forest Monastery.”

In addition to Jetavana Monastery, another early monastery was the Bamboo Grove Monastery. Both are celebrated as two of the earliest and greatest Buddhist monasteries. It was due to the establishment of these two great monasteries that the Buddhist monastic order was thus able to develop a position of greater strength. These two monasteries represent an enduring contribution to the later development of Buddhism. However, Jetavana Monastery, unlike Bamboo Grove Monastery, contained magnificent buildings and complete facilities that were impressive and beautiful. The Buddha stayed at this monastery over countless rainy seasons and gave the teachings recorded in many sutras. For example, the famous *Amitabha Sutra* was proclaimed at Jetavana Monastery.

Although Buddhism began in India, today, its influence has greatly diminished. Not only do its various sacred sites appear forlorn and neglected, but it is unlikely that we will ever see a reoccurrence of a grand assembly of a million human and heavenly beings as when the Buddha proclaimed the *Flower Adornment Sutra* on Vulture Peak so long ago. Master Taixu's (1889-1947) description is quite apropos:

The bodhi tree has flourished and declined many
times;
And Vulture Peak is silent, awaiting some later
revival;
But now one need not agonize over being late,
For spreading the Dharma has always been the
monastic order's calling.

When recalling the past and reflecting upon the bounty bestowed by the Buddha, Buddhist followers know that they are

duty-bound to see to the revitalization of Buddhism and ensure its long prosperity, in hopes that the great assembly on Vulture Peak will occur again and the light of Jetavana Monastery will shine forth once more. This, indeed, is our great mission.

Fo Guang Shan
International Translation Center

V

W

Wandering Mendicant

行腳雲遊

See also: Temporary monastic lodging.

A single alms bowl holds food from a thousand
families,
A solitary monk wanders over ten thousand
miles;
All for the liberation of birth and death,
As he begs and teaches year after year.

The poem above describes the untrammled spirit of the Chan master who remains devoted to the spiritual path while living contentedly in poverty. Since ancient times, monastics have wandered with their three robes, alms bowl, bamboo staff, and straw sandals, bringing liberation wherever they go. They do not wander to enjoy the scenery, for they are instead seeking something of great importance: the spiritual path. This search for the Way is how they conduct themselves: they wander the ten directions, teaching as they

go. They have no set abode, but they drift free and contented like wandering clouds or flowing water. Thus, they are called *yunshui seng* (雲水僧), “cloud and water monks,” *youfang seng* (遊方僧), “wandering monks,” and *xingjiao seng* (行腳僧), “mendicant monks.”

Those Chan masters who are wandering mendicants possess their own unique, free-spirited style. They come and go unhindered, for they are unencumbered and unattached. They do not long for their hometowns, nor do they become enamored with a beautiful vista should they come upon one. They look upon the vast universe and all its phenomena like birds passing through the sky, leaving no trace.

One such example is the famous Chan Master Mazu Daoyi (709-788 CE). On one occasion, he returned to his hometown for a visit, where he met an old woman washing clothes on the riverbank who recognized and called out to him, “Little boy!”

In practicing the Way, one better not return
home,
Returning home, one does not achieve the Way.
Just now that old lady on the riverbank,
Called me by my old name.

Chan Master Mazu Daoyi lived in Jiangxi Province. Students would come in droves from great distances to travel to Jiangxi to learn Chan from him. At the same time, another prominent Chan master named Shitou Xiqian lived in Hunan Province. All monks of that era would travel to either learn from Mazu Daoyi in Jiangxi or Shitou Xiqian in Hunan, and thus, Chan practitioners became known as *zoujianghu* (走江湖), “travelers to Jiang and Hu.” While

this term was originally an abbreviation of the provinces of these two great masters, *zoujianghu* later came to describe traveling theater troops. However, the term originally referred to Chan practitioners who wandered about visiting teachers.

Wandering in search of teachers is the finest form of practice for monastics to benefit both themselves and others. Visiting teachers improves the body and mind, and traveling allows monastics to spread the Dharma to benefit sentient beings. As they wander, they gather alms and teach Buddhism wherever they go. In receiving the generous support from the devoted laity, they serve as fields of merit for sentient beings, who are rewarded with teachings on the Dharma. In this way, wandering not only advances the monastic's own spiritual work, but allows them to advance the cause of teaching the Dharma to benefit others. This explains the Buddhist saying that monastics, "Request the truth from the Buddhas above to nourish wisdom, and request food from sentient beings below to sustain the body."

The *Diamond Sutra* opens with the following passage:

Thus have I heard. At one time, the Buddha was in the city of Sravasti at the Jeta Grove Monastery with a gathering of monks numbering 1,250. At mealtime, the World-honored One put on his robe, picked up his bowl, and went into the city of Sravasti to beg for food. After he had gone from house to house, he returned to the grove. When he had finished eating, he put away his robe and bowl, washed his feet, straightened his mat, and sat down.

This clearly shows that the beginnings of Buddhist monastic life involved gathering alms, and wandering with an alms bowl in hand is a Buddhist tradition.

In the past, the Buddha wandered from south to north with alms bowl in hand, teaching the Dharma as he went. It was only in this way that the Dharma was spread throughout the five regions of India. While times have changed and monastics no longer depend upon alms, Fo Guang Shan has created several programs to preserve the mendicant tradition with the goal of preserving tradition while advancing towards modernity. The hope is that teaching the Dharma with alms bowl in hand will purify the minds of people and spread the light of Buddhism to all corners of the world. These efforts strive to bring strength and prosperity to the nation, light to humanity, renewal to Buddhism, and true faith to Buddhists. In this way, the legacy of the Buddha's teachings will be glorified.

Water

水

See: Elements, four great.

Wealth

財

See: Desires, five.

Wind

風

See: Elements, four great; winds, eight.

Winds, Eight

八風吹不動

The lay Buddhist Su Shi of the Song dynasty once composed a poem and instructed his attendant to sail across the Yangtze River from Guazhou on its northern bank to Jinshan Monastery on its southern bank. The attendant was to present the poem to Chan Master Foyin and hear his remarks. The poem read:

Bowing, heaven within heaven,
A light that illuminates the boundless universe,
The eight winds cannot move me,
Sitting mindfully upon the purple golden lotus.

Chan Master Foyin read the poem and wrote down one word in response: “fart.” He then gave his reply to the servant to take back. Su Shi read the Chan master’s reply and became extremely angry. He immediately made the journey across the river to up-braid Chan Master Foyin. The Chan master said to him, “I read your poem and could tell your practice has reached a high level, but if you say that ‘the eight winds cannot move me,’ how did a little fart blow you across the river?”

Su Shi was speechless. He then knew he was not even close to the Chan master’s level of cultivation.

What are these “eight winds”?

1. Praise (稱)

Praise refers to all the various kind words are spread about on one’s behalf. Praise occurs at any time or place that such expressions bring support and joy.



2. *Ridicule* (譏)

Ridicule encompasses taunts and jeers, disgust and revulsion, and all manner of blame for things that may never have even happened. Such careless criticisms make one angry and worried.

3. *Defamation* (毀)

Defamation includes baseless gossip and malicious smears that damage one's trustworthiness. Defamation makes one appear worthless, and causes disappointment and embarrassment.

4. *Honor* (譽)

Honor means praising one's achievements and contributions. One may be proclaimed a bodhisattva on earth or a great sage who has returned to the world once more. Such words are pleasing and build one's popularity.

5. *Gain* (利)

Gain can be money, property, all manner of benefits, and even gifts.

6. *Loss* (衰)

Loss includes those things which are misplaced or ruined. Such things as a successful business which is suddenly bankrupt or the sudden disappearance of wealth. Loss leads to poverty and decline.

7. *Sorrow* (苦)

Sorrow is when the body is harmed or the mind is vexed. Negative causes and conditions make life hard, while negative surroundings torment the body and mind. Sorrow brings hardship and oppression.

8. Joy (樂)

Joy is attaining one's heart's desire and easily finding peace and joy. Joy can be material enjoyment or emotional satisfaction; whatever makes one joyful and happy.

The eight states discussed above are like winds blowing from eight different directions that can disturb and shake up the body and mind. When things go well, we may be joyful and happy, but when things go badly, we become miserable and sad. This is because we are not able to withstand these eight "winds."

All eight winds are destructive. One's character can be harmed by praise and honor, just as one's accomplishments can be undone by ridicule and defamation. Gain and pleasure can take away one's dignity, just as loss and sorrow can bring one down. The eight winds are truly terrible. But if one can remain unshaken and unagitated by these eight states, then one can be free and stand tall without fear or shame.

Wisdom

智慧

See: Merit and wisdom; mountain gate; omniscience of the Buddha; perfections, six; *prajna*; reliance, four kinds of; training, threefold; virtues of the Buddha, three; wisdom, four kinds of; wisdom, three kinds of.

Wisdom, Four Kinds of

轉識成智

See also: Consciousness, eight kinds of; *prajna*.

All phenomena in the universe exist just as they are until our consciousness begins to discriminate. Then all the mountains, rivers,

and land appear different because of the changing projections of our different forms of consciousness. The Consciousness-Only School of Buddhism has a saying that, “the three realms are mind-only and all phenomena are consciousness-only.” In this instance, “consciousness” means the mind that discriminates, which is defiled and impure. This is the mind that is the root cause of the cycle of birth and death within the six realms of existence, but this same mind can be the medium that moves us from the mundane to the supramundane.

In order to change the defiled world projected by our consciousness into a world of purity, we must change the discriminating consciousness that we have as ordinary beings into the wisdom of the Buddha. This process, which is the central practice of the Consciousness-Only School, is called “transforming consciousness into wisdom” and describes transforming our different levels of consciousness into four kinds of supramundane wisdom:

1. *Wisdom of Perfect Conduct* (成所作智)

In Consciousness-Only thought, the first five kinds of consciousness correspond to the five sense organs of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body. These five consciousnesses arise from the discrimination generated by the five sense organs in response to craving for sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touch. Craving for sense objects creates delusion and karma, and obscures our true mind like dust covering a mirror. These five kinds of craving are like five bandits who occupy our body as if it were a village and plunder the wealth of our merit.

To transform our sensory consciousness into the “wisdom of perfect conduct,” one must transform the destructive elements of consciousness into wisdom that can work to fulfill worldly tasks.

With the wisdom of perfect conduct, one's words and deeds are constructive, undefiled, and of benefit to others.

2. *Wisdom of Profound Insight* (妙觀察智)

Among the eight kinds of consciousness described by the Consciousness-Only School, it is the sixth consciousness, the mind consciousness, that has the strongest power of discrimination. When an object is judged by the mind consciousness its degree of worth, beauty, and correctness will immediately be determined.

Since the mind consciousness performs this function of discrimination upon all phenomena, it is also sometimes called the “discriminating consciousness.” The mind consciousness works in conjunction with the five sensory consciousnesses described above to generate thoughts regarding what is good or bad. Typically the mind consciousness is superficial, simplistic, narrowly focused, and conceptual in nature. By transforming the mind consciousness into the wisdom of profound insight, one can ponder deeply and perceive directly the principle of things without being confused by their outer appearance.

3. *Wisdom of Universal Equality* (平等性智)

The seventh, or *manas* consciousness, is grounded upon the notion of an independent self. It grasps at the elements that are stored in the *alaya* consciousness as constituting an enduring or unchanging self. As a consequence comes the afflictions of self, including views of the self, self-pride, self-ignorance, self-desire, and attachment to the self. Deluded attachments are formed that separate phenomena that are “me” and “mine” from the rest. This discrimination leads to comparisons, score-keeping, inequality, and categorizing things as

good or bad, wholesome and unwholesome, and mine and yours, such that the body and mind cannot find peace.

By transforming the *manas* consciousness into the wisdom of universal equality, one eliminates the notion of an independent self and the discrimination of phenomena. One can then contemplate how all phenomena, regardless of whether they are wholesome or unwholesome, good or bad, friend or foe, or yours and mine, are all equal just as they are. Simply put, this is the process of transforming the “small self” that is self-centered and self-absorbed into a “larger self” that is all-inclusive.

4. Perfect Mirrorlike Wisdom (大圓鏡智)

The eighth or *alaya* consciousness is the source of life. It functions as a storehouse, and stores up all of our positive and negative karmic seeds. These seeds do not disappear with the death of the body but are passed on to a new living entity in the next life. In this sense, the *alaya* consciousness is the basic essence of the cycle of birth and death. It is not unlike a “soul,” but in Buddhism, it is more properly thought of as karmic consciousness.

By transforming the *alaya* consciousness from something defiled into perfect mirrorlike wisdom, we have truly “transformed consciousness into wisdom.” Perfect mirrorlike wisdom allows the pure seeds of the *alaya* consciousness to manifest as the wondrous state of Buddhahood and, just like a mirror can reflect all things, it can genuinely reflect back the true reality of all phenomena.

Transforming consciousness into wisdom is the final goal for students of the Consciousness-Only School. However, for many, the doctrine of the Consciousness-Only School seems overly

specialized, complex, and arcane. Those lacking sufficient patience will find its study a daunting task.

Even so, one need not study Consciousness-Only doctrine in order to transform consciousness into wisdom. Being able to recognize dependent origination in the face of people and things one dislikes, and suffering injustice, false accusation, and abuse without becoming resentful or angry, and being able to maintain a calm and peaceful attitude also transforms consciousness into wisdom. Even in the face of adversity, if one is able to weather suffering and hardship without thinking about it, one can be successful and develop an open, generous outlook on life. It is this optimistic and positive attitude that allows one to elevate the value of life.

Wisdom, Three Kinds of 三慧

See also: Prajna.

W Buddhism is a religion that emphasizes wisdom. Only with wisdom are we able to distinguish good from bad, and right from wrong. Wisdom is what allows us to eliminate afflictions and attain Buddhahood. Without wisdom, one cannot attain ultimate liberation, no matter how blessed one may be. Therefore, in addition to cultivating merit, one must develop wisdom.

“Wisdom” as described in the Buddhist teachings is different from ordinary wisdom. Ordinary wisdom is simply knowledge and cleverness, which at times can be used for unwholesome purposes. Buddhist wisdom is called *prajna*-wisdom. *Prajna*-wisdom is the ability to comprehend the truth of all phenomena; it is the light of the Dharma that indicates the correct path. To attain this kind of wisdom, one must be diligent in learning and practicing the

Buddhist teachings and progress through their stages from simple to profound. There are three methods for developing Buddhist wisdom:

1. *Wisdom from Hearing* (聞慧)

This is learning about Buddhism from the twelve divisions of the sutras or from good Dharma friends. One is introduced to awakening through what is read or heard, whether that is hearing the teachings or reading the sutras. This generates a profound faith in and understanding of the Dharma, thus generating undefiled, noble wisdom.

2. *Wisdom from Thinking* (思慧)

With the wisdom from hearing as a foundation, the next step is to deeply contemplate the meaning of the Dharma and to investigate the nature of all phenomena along with the causes and conditions so that one has an even more direct and immediate experience of realization. This is the undefiled wisdom that comes from the process of contemplating the hows and whys of what has been heard and read.

3. *Wisdom from Practice* (修慧)

With the realizations from the wisdom from hearing and thinking, one proceeds to develop meditative concentration to see the true reality of all phenomena and the truth of dependent origination. This wisdom comes from the meditative practice known as “stopping the illusory mind and seeing the truth.”

In Buddhism there is the saying, *duowen xunxi* (多聞薰習), “to permeate through hearing much.” This means that, to learn

World System, Three Thousandfold

Buddhism, one must always listen to the teachings and read the sutras, contemplate their meaning, and most importantly, practice according to their principles. By developing the wisdom from hearing, thinking, and practice, one can perceive one's intrinsic nature, the Buddha nature which we all inherently have.

World System, Three Thousandfold

三千大千世界

See Also: Continents, Four Great

The *Diamond Sutra* says that if someone were to make an offering of the seven treasures so great that it could fill the three thousandfold world system, they would generate less merit than one who has faith in the *Diamond Sutra*'s four-line verse and explained its meaning to others. In this instance, the term "three thousandfold world system" refers to the entire universe.

According to Buddhist cosmology, there are many, many worlds. A group of one thousand such worlds is called a "small world system." One thousand small world systems equals a "medium world system." One thousand medium world systems is called a "large world system." A "three thousandfold world system" is a combination of these three types of world systems; the term does not literally refer to 3,000 large world systems. One "three thousandfold world system" is the area in which a Buddha teaches the Dharma and as such is also referred to as one "Buddha land."

Every minor world in a three thousandfold world system is made up of a Mount Sumeru at its center which is surrounded by nine mountains, eight oceans, four continents, sun, moon, and stars. When taken together, they are similar in scale to a "solar

system.” At the lowest level of each world is a layer of air, called the wind wheel; above the wind wheel is a layer of water known as the water wheel; and above the water wheel is a layer of metal known as the metal wheel; and above the metal wheel is the great earth itself made up of mountains, oceans, the four continents, and so forth.

Within each world are the six realms of existence, including the hell realm, the hungry ghost realm, the animal realm, the *asura* realm, the human realm, and the heavenly realm. The first five realms make up what is known as the “desire realm,” while the heavenly realm can be differentiated between the “form realm” and the “formless realm.” We can see that the Saha world in which we live is but a small part of the universe which contains countless three thousandfold world systems. The sutras say that “the worlds of the ten directions are as numerous as sands along the Ganges River,” and that “the worlds of the ten directions are as numerous as particles of dust.” Considering the vast expanse of the universe, our existence is infinitesimally small in comparison.

In short, Buddhism refers to a large expanse of space as a “Buddha land,” or simply as “the vastness of space,” while the smallest unit of space is often referred to as a “particle of dust.” These units of space are distinguished by different names, but each of them can be a three thousandfold world system. In Buddhism, the “three thousandfold world system” is a general reference to the universe, which can be so large that nothing exists outside of it, or so small that nothing exists within it. In Buddhism, the universe is seen as infinite and limitless, without border or boundary.

The *Amitabha Sutra* says that the distance between our world and the Western Pure Land is ten trillion Buddha lands. Since one Buddha land is the equivalent of one three thousandfold world

system, that means that there are ten trillion three thousandfold world systems separating this Saha world from the Western Pure Land. This is an immensely large astronomical number, upon which we would seemingly look with regret. But the sutra also says that we can be reborn in the Western Pure Land with a single thought. Even the *Flower Adornment Sutra* says, “A single particle of dust can manifest a three thousandfold world system, and a three thousandfold world system can be completely contained within a single particle of dust.”

For an awakened person, each flower is a world and each leaf is a Buddha. One can see a three thousandfold world system within a rock or a single grain of sand. In the same way, a three thousandfold world system can be contained within one’s heart. Buddhism’s perspective on the perfect integration of the dharma realm that transcends time and space without obstruction is contained within the phrase, “from one, many; and from many, one.”

The former chair of the Buddhist Association of China, the layman Zhao Puchu (1907-2000), once said of Master Hsing Yun, “He is as noble as a teacher of heavenly and human beings, and is enriched by containing the three thousandfold world system.”

Each of us can expand and broaden the mind to encompass the vastness of the universe, with its worlds as numerous as grains of sand. Not everyone will be as noble as a teacher of human and heavenly beings, but each of us can be enriched by containing within us the three thousandfold world system.

X

Xuanzang

玄奘

See: Translators, four great Chinese.

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Y

Yanqi School

楊岐派

See: Chan schools

Yijing

義淨

See: Translators, four great Chinese.

Yunmen School

雲門宗

See: Chan schools.

Z

Zibo, Master

紫柏大師

See: Masters of the Ming dynasty, four.

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List of Articles by Chinese Title

一心二門	225
One Mind Opens Two Doors	
一心不亂	186
Mind	
一念三千	228
One Thought Contains the Three Thousandfold World System	
三十二相	168
Marks of Excellence, Thirty-Two	
三十三天	116
Heaven of the Thirty-Three Gods	
三千大千世界	390
World System, Three Thousandfold	
三大阿僧祇劫	145
Kalpa	
三世因果	148
Karma of the Three Time Periods	
三衣一鉢	283
Robe and Bowl	
三法印	75
Dharma Seals, Three	
三界二十八天	112
Heaven	

三毒	244
Poisons, Three	
三時佛法	4
Ages of the Dharma, Three	
三時業	88
Effects of Karma of the Three Time Periods	
三途	157
Lower Realms, Three	
三業	150
Karma, Three Types of	
三資糧	327
Supports, Three	
三德	370
Virtues of the Buddha, Three	
三壇大戒	231
Ordination	
三摩地	290
Samadhi	
三慧	388
Wisdom, Three Kinds of	
三輪體空	103
Giving	
三學	345
Training, Threefold	
三藏	353
Tripitaka	
三轉法輪	77
Dharma Wheel, Three Turnings	
三寶	101
Gem, Triple	

四小不可輕	309
Small Things Not to Be Taken Lightly, Four	
四大名山	195
Mountains, Four Great	
四大皆空	90
Elements, Four Great	
四大部洲	52
Continents, Four Great	
四大譯師	347
Translators, Four Great Chinese	
四正勤	281
Right Effort	
四弘誓願	372
Vows, Four Universal	
四依止	275
Reliances, Four	
四事供養	219
Offerings, Four	
四念處	190
Mindfulness, Four Bases of	
四威儀	43
Comportment, Four Kinds of	
四問	263
Questions of the Buddha, Four	
四恩總報	106
Gratitude, Four Kinds of	
四悉檀	336
Teaching, Four Modes of	
四無量心	135
Immeasurable Minds, Four	

四聖諦	356
Truths, Four Noble	
四攝	181
Means of Embracing, Four	
五戒	256
Precepts, Five	
五逆	368
Violations, Five Great	
五衰相現	56
Decay, Five Signs of	
五家七派	38
Chan Schools	
五乘佛法	363
Vehicles, Five	
五欲	65
Desires, Five	
五停心觀	49
Contemplations, Five	
五無間罪	26
Avici Hell	
五種不翻	359
Untranslatable Terms, Five Kinds of	
五濁惡世	287
Saha World	
五蘊	7
Aggregates, Five	
六神通	324
Supernatural Powers, Six	

六字洪名	205
Namo Amitofo	
六字真言	222
Om Mani Padme Hum	
六成就	1
Accomplishments, Six	
六和合僧	110
Harmony, Six Points of Reverent	
六度	242
Perfections, Six	
六師外道	212
Non-Buddhist Schools, Six	
六道輪迴	265
Realms of Existence, Six	
六塵	301
Sense Objects	
七眾弟子	18
Assembly, Sevenfold	
七聖財	311
Spiritual Wealth, Seven Kinds of	
八大宗派	294
Schools of Chinese Buddhism, Eight	
八正道	238
Path, Noble Eightfold	
八苦	321
Suffering, Eight Kinds of	
八相成道	35
Buddha's Progress, Eight Stages of	

八風吹不動	382
Winds, Eight	
八種福田	95
Field of Merit	
八關齋戒	253
Precepts, Eight	
八識	46
Consciousness, Eight Kinds of	
八難	81
Difficulties, Eight	
九品往生	269
Rebirth in the Pure Land, Nine Grades of	
十大弟子	84
Disciples of the Buddha, Ten Great	
十地	31
Bodhisattva Path, Ten Grounds of	
十如是	260
Qualities, Ten	
十法界	71
Dharma Realms, Ten	
十二因緣	62
Dependent Origination	
十二部經	329
Sutras, Twelve Divisions of	
十二頭陀行	15
Ascetic Practices	
十八地獄	119
Hell	

十八羅漢	11
Arhats, Eighteen	
人勝諸天	127
Human Realm	
山門	193
Mountain Gate	
大乘小乘	162
Mahayana and Hinayana	
大雄寶殿	304
Shrine, Main	
不二法門	215
Non-Duality	
卍字	332
Swastika	
友有四品	98
Friends, Four Kinds of	
止觀雙修	314
Stopping and Seeing Meditation	
左右脅士	21
Attendants	
出坡	154
Labor, Communal	
西方三聖	209
Noble Ones of the West, Three	
回向	59
Dedication	
如是我聞	343
Thus Have I Heard	

行腳雲遊	378
Wandering Mendicant	
寺院庵堂	318
Structures and Buildings	
佛陀十號	201
Names of the Buddha, Ten	
明心見性	140
Intrinsic Nature	
明末四大師	170
Masters of the Ming Dynasty, Four	
法華七喻	234
Parables of the Lotus Sutra	
佛智如海	224
Omniscience (of the Buddha)	
阿鞞拔致	23
Avaivartika	
食存五觀	179
Meal Contemplations, Five	
南無	273
Refuge	
信解行證	246
Practice, Four Stages of	
般若空性	250
Prajna	
涅槃	207
Nirvana	
部派佛教	124
History of Buddhism	
掛單	339
Temporary Monastic Lodging	

無明煩惱	133
Ignorance	
善知識	68
Dharma Friends	
結夏安居	278
Retreat	
無常苦空	138
Impermanence	
福慧雙修	183
Merit and Wisdom	
龍華三會	165
Maitreya Bodhisattva	
闍提成佛	130
Icchantikas Can Attain Buddhahood	
轉識成智	384
Wisdom, Four Kinds of	
靈山祇園	374
Vulture Peak and Jeta Grove	

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