

Basic Buddhist Concepts by Numbers

ZERO

Emptiness = *Sunyata*

The circle is the main symbol in Zen. It forms part of the rakusu that is worn in the zendo, and appears in poems as the full moon. It is the symbol of our True Nature, of our wholeness and perfection. Unbroken, it has no beginning point and no end point. The circle can also stand for zero, for emptiness.

When Bodhidharma was asked by Emperor Wu what is the highest teaching of Buddhism, he replied, “Vast emptiness and nothing holy.”

Cosmologists attempting to describe the birth of the universe some 14 billion years ago came up with the statement: “The universe is an event emerging out of emptiness.”

When asked:

“Where do you come from?”

“Where were you born?”

Just answer,

“From original emptiness.” —Zen saying

“From the Theravada point of view, the concept of emptiness is quite prosaic. It lacks the intrinsic mystical quality imputed to it in some of the Northern Buddhist scriptures. However, it becomes more meaningful in terms of liberation as it is almost always used in the context of “empty of self and the property of a self.” If that absence is being apprehended then the heart is certainly inclining to awakening.” —Ajahn Pasanno/Amaro

“The Fundamental Treatise of the Perfection of Wisdom says, ‘Those who become fixed on emptiness are said to be incurable.’ Why incurable? Because while a belief in the real existence of phenomena is dissipated by meditation on emptiness, if you get attached to emptiness itself, making it an object of your belief, you fall into nihilism. The same text therefore goes on, ‘Consequently the wise abide neither in being not in nonbeing’. . . . In Buddhism, emptiness isn’t just the true nature of phenomena, it’s also the potential that allows the propagation of an infinite variety of phenomena.”

— Matthieu Richard

Emptiness is not negative but dynamic, like a womb that gives birth to everything in this world (all the *dharmas*).

“Emptiness is an infinite storehouse, with flowers, the moon, and tall towers.”

— Zen capping phrase

“Since all is empty all is possible.” —Nagarjuna

The experience of emptiness is the experience of liberation. This is in stark contrast to Western concepts of emptiness, which can be negative.

“I knew that emptiness, from a Buddhist perspective, was an understanding of one’s true nature, an intuition of the absence of inherent identity in people or in things. It was the core psychological truth of Buddhism. Emptiness, from a Western perspective, seemed to me to be a tortured feeling of distress, an absence of vitality, a sense of being not quite real enough, of disconnection.” —Mark Epstein

The experience of emptiness dissolves the impenetrable barrier between “self” and “other”, that separation which causes us so much pain.

“Emptiness is vast and astonishing, the Buddhist approach insists; it does not have to be toxic. When we grasp the emptiness of our false selves, we are touching a little bit of truth. If we can relax into that truth, we can discover ourselves in a new way.”

—Mark Epstein

ONE

Oneness = *Samadhi*

Samadhi is a Sanskrit word that means deep absorption or meditation. When someone enters a state of samadhi while doing zazen, they forget themselves; they stop thinking about themselves as separate from everything else, and they obtain a great feeling of “oneness.”

Out of zero, nothingness, comes one. One is unity. To be one means not to be divided or separated from everything else and everyone else.

“Above the heavens, below the heavens, I am the only one.”

—Prince Gotama after taking seven steps at his birth

Heaven and earth and I have the same root.

The myriad things and I have the same essence.

—Master Seng-chao

“Just as the ocean has but one taste, the taste of salt, even so the discipline of Dharma has but one flavour, the flavour of release.”

—Shakyamuni Buddha

“What in one atom is manifest is also manifest in all atoms.”

—*Avatamsaka Sutra*

“In the myriad forms, a single body is revealed.”

—Changqing Huileng (Chokei)

“The entire universe is one bright pearl”

— Hsuan-sha (Gensha)

Mumonkan Case 3: Whenever Chu-chih (Gutei) was asked a question, he simply raised one finger. On day a visitor asked Chu-chih’s attendant what his master preached. The

boy raised a finger. Hearing this Chu-chih cut off the boy's finger with a knife. As he ran from the room, screaming in pain, Chu-chih called to him. When he turned his head, Chu-chih raised a finger. The boy was suddenly awakened.

Poetically expressed:

“The oneness of colours when the green snake climbs the bamboo,
The infinite feeling when a yellow butterfly flies over the hedge.”

— Zen capping phrase

Example of oneness:

Maezumi Roshi was sitting outside the Los Angeles Zen Centre one afternoon with some of his students. A young man, a neighbour who was chronically depressed, also sat down beside Maezumi Roshi and said, “It must be great to be an enlightened Zen teacher?” Maezumi replied, “Actually, it rather depressing.” There was no sense or irony in his words. At that moment he was depressed, in complete oneness with the young man.

Pernicious oneness = making a statement like “All religions are basically the same”. This type of oneness turns everything into a dull, tasteless soup.

TWO

- Two basic things that the Buddha taught:

“I teach suffering, and the end of suffering.” The first and the third of the Four Noble Truths. Suffering points to knowledge (wisdom), and the end of suffering to liberation.

Pali version: Assaji [a monk] recited a short stanza to Sariputta that summed up the main points of the Buddha's teaching – a stanza that in centuries and millennia to follow was to become famous wherever the Buddha's teaching spread:

*Of those things that arise from causes,
The Tathāgata has told the origin,
And also what their cessation is:
This is the doctrine of the Great Recluse.*

Sariputta had an awakening on hearing this verse.

Three stages of suffering: bodily, mental, and universal

“On the third stage suffering is no more concerned with the petty cares of our own person and our momentary life, it becomes more and more universal and essential. We are taking part in the suffering of others . . .” — Lama Govinda

“And what, monks, is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering? It is the complete fading-away and extinction of this craving, its forsaking and abandonment, liberation from it, detachment from it.” — *Mahasatipatthana Sutta*

“The Third Noble truth . . . is called the Noble Truth of the Cessation of *dukkha*, which is *Nibbāna* . . . To eliminate *dukkha* completely one has to eliminate the main root of

dukkha, which is ‘thirst’ (*tanhā*). Therefore Nirvana is known also by the term *Tan-hākkhāya* ‘Extinction of Thirst.’” — Walpola Rahula

- Two main factors that cause suffering (the second of the Four Noble Truths):
 - (a) attraction, desire, thirst (*tanhā*), pleasure
 - (b) aversion (*patigha*), dislike, repulsion, pain

“*Dukkha* arises from “thirst” (craving, *tanhā*) which produces re-existence and re-becoming, and which is bound up with passionate greed, and which finds fresh delight now here and now there, namely, (1) thirst for sense-pleasures (*kāma-tanhā*), (2) thirst for existence and becoming (*bhava-tanhā*) and (3) thirst for non-existence (self-annihilation, *vibhava-tanhā*.” —Walpola Rahula

Passionate thirst is of three kinds: the desire of the passions for sense pleasures; the “passion for existence” or the desire for life which aims at staying alive at all costs, even if that means continuing in some form after death; the “passion for non-existence,” which desires annihilation or the cessation of one’s life. This latter is the impulse to suicide, to settle one’s account with life once and for all and take leave of existence altogether.” —Akizuki Ryomin, *New Mahayana*

- Two extremes to be avoided:
 - (a) indulgence in sense pleasures, in a life of luxury (Prince Siddhartha’s early years)
 - (b) self-mortification and austerities (his six years of ascetic practices before his enlightenment). Nigantha Nātaputta (the Jain leader known as Mahavira) is an example of the latter. His way to truth was through pain and austerities.

- Two principle beliefs the Buddha refuted:

“According to the Buddha’s teaching, it is wrong to hold the opinion “I have no self” (which is the annihilationist theory) as to hold the opinion “I have a self” (which is the eternalist theory), because both are fetters, both arising out of the false idea “I AM.” The correct position with regard to the question of *Anattā* is not to take hold of any opinions or views, but to try to see things objectively as they are without mental projections, to see that what we call “I,” or “being,” is only a combination of physical and mental aggregates, which are working together interdependently in a flux of momentary change within the law of cause and effect, and that there is nothing permanent, everlasting, unchanging, and eternal in the whole of existence.” — Walpola Rahula

“If we think that this mind is an eternal thing, we will fall into *Jo-ken*, which is ‘the view of the eternal.’ ‘All things are changing’ is the first truth of Buddhism . . . On the contrary, if we think that all things are empty or that there is no existence at all, then we must fall into *Dan-kin*, ‘the view of nothingness.’ ‘All things are dependent on cause and effect’ is the second truth of Buddhism. The opinion that the soul is immortal is *Jo-ken*; nihilism is *Dan-ken*. Buddha showed us the Middle Way.” —Seikan Hasegawa

- Because of This there is that That
The simplest formulation of Dependent Coarising: “This being, that becomes; from the arising of this, that arises; this not being, that becomes not; from the ceasing of this, that ceases.” The Buddha used the image of two bundles of reeds to illustrate this teaching:

“Friend, let us say that we have two bundles of reeds. When these two bundles of reeds lean on each other, they can stand up. In the same way, when there is this there is that. However, if one of these two bundles of reeds is taken away, the other bundle will fall to the ground. In the same way, if that is not, then this is not.”

- Two main Theravāda disciples of the Buddha:

Next to the Enlightened One himself, it is the arahants (Sk: arhats) Sariputta and Mahamoggallana who stand highest in the veneration of Buddhists in the Theravāda lands. There were considered to be the “two great jewels” of the Sangha.

Sariputta is the disciple distinguished by excellence of wisdom. His special task in the Dispensation is the systematization of the doctrine and the detailed analysis of its content. By means of his deep insight into the ultimate truth and his sharp discernment of the sphere of differentiated phenomena he is responsible for drawing out the subtle implications of the Dhamma and for explicating its meaning with a wealth of detail that the Buddha, as head of the Dispensation, cannot personally attend to himself.

Mahamoggallana is the master of psychic powers. Once Sariputta said to his friend that, compared with Moggallana in regard to supernormal powers, he was like a small splinter of rock set against the mighty Himalayas. Moggallana, however, replied that, compared with Sariputta in regard to the power of wisdom, he was like a tiny grain of salt set against a big salt barrel.

“Cultivate the friendship of Sariputta and Moggallana, bhikkhus; associate with Sariputta and Moggallana. They are wise and helpful to their companions in the holy life. Sariputta is like a mother; Moggallana is like a nurse. Sariputta trains others for the fruit of stream-entry, Moggallana for the supreme goal. Sariputta, bhikkhus, is able to announce, teach, describe, establish, reveal, expound, and exhibit the Four Noble Truths.”
— *Saccavibhanga Sutra*

- Two main Mahāyāna disciples of the Buddha:

Mahakassapa, the father of the Sangha, and Ananda, the guardian of the Dhamma.

Mahakassapa was “the disciple who was the Buddha’s counterpart” . . . also a model of a disciplined and austere life devoted to meditation. So it is hardly surprising that he assumed the presidency of the First Council of the Sangha, which had been summoned on his urgent advice. Evidently it was for the same reason that, much later in China and Japan, this redoubtable elder came to be regarded as the first ancestor of Zen Buddhism.

Ananda was the cousin of the Buddha and he accompanied the Buddha for twenty years as his personal attendant. He was a great advocate for the cause of women and persuaded the Buddha to admit nuns and lay women into the Sangha. He was declared the disciple who was foremost in five categories:

1. of those who had “heard much” i.e., who had learned much of the Buddha’s discourses
2. of those who had a good memory
3. of those who had mastery over the sequential structure of the teaching
4. of those who were steadfast in study
5. of the Buddha’s attendants

Every sutra begins with “Thus have I heard” and this is Ananda speaking, perfectly recalling what the Buddha taught.

“When the date set for the council came closer, the Venerable Anuruddha suggested that Ananda should only be admitted if he could overcome the last hindrances and attain arahantship. Anuruddha knew the power of such an incentive, and it had the intended effect. When Ananda heard this stern stipulation, he decided to apply every bit of strength he had to realize Nibbana. He practiced meditation throughout the night. In the early hours of the morning, as he was preparing to lie down after a full night of striving, just when he had raised his legs off the ground but had not yet laid his head on the pillow, his mind was released from all defilements. That day the council was to begin, and in the hope that he would succeed a place had been reserved for him. Soon after all the other monks were seated Ananda arrived through the air by psychic power and sat down in the seat. When Anuruddha and Kassapa saw this, they knew he had reached his goal and expressed their joy. Then they declared the council open.”

– *Great Disciples of the Buddha* by Nyanaponika Thera

“Is there, Master Ananda, any single bhikkhu who was chosen by Master Gotama thus: ‘He will be your refuge when I am gone,’ and whom you now have recourse to?”

“There is no single bhikkhu, brahmin, who was appointed by the Blessed One who knows and sees, accomplished and fully enlightened . . . We are not without a refuge, brahmin. We have a refuge; we have the Dhamma as our refuge.” . . . “It is not the worthy ones who deal with us; it is the Dhamma that deals with us.” — *Gopakamogallana Sutta*

- The Two Truths

Two levels of truth in Buddhist teaching: a "relative" or commonsense truth and an "ultimate" or absolute, spiritual truth.

“The Buddha's teaching of the Dharma is based on two truths: a truth of worldly convention and an ultimate truth. Those who do not understand the distinction drawn between these two truths do not understand the Buddha's profound truth. Without a foundation in the conventional truth the significance of the ultimate cannot be taught. Without understanding the significance of the ultimate, liberation is not achieved.”

—Nagarjuna

The Harmony of Relative and Absolute

“The absolute and the relative work together like two arrows meeting in midair.”

(1) Absolute: There is no self, no enduring entity that is separate from everything else.

(2) Relative: Even if we see through this provisional self, we still have an ego to work with . It may not be centre stage so much, but it's still there.

(1) Absolute: Everything is one, all of one piece; nothing is separate from anything else. Everyone has this intrinsically enlightened Buddha Nature, whether they realize it or not.

(2) Relative: Each one of us is unique; this Buddha Nature express itself in an infinite number of different ways. Seeing into the intrinsic unity of all beings, we can appreciate our differences.

THREE

- The Three Treasures:

Also known as the Three Jewels and the Three Refuges. All Buddhists acknowledge and take refuge in the Three Treasures.

Buddha is Shakyamuni Buddha, the historic Buddha. It is also enlightenment, our enlightened True Nature.

Dharma is the Buddha's teaching, the teaching of impermanence, suffering and not-self. It is the truth or the law. Dharma translates as "law", the law of the universe, the way things are and the way they behave.

Sangha is the community of people who are practicing the Dharma, who are walking the Buddha Way. In the Buddha's time it was the community of monks and nuns. Today communities like the Auckland Zen Centre form a Sangha. Sangha is a group of people who have come together to support each other in their spiritual practice.

Buddha is "the pure nature of mind – emptiness, clarity and unlimited potential – that has been with us forever, although masked by veils obscuring its qualities."

—Kalu Rimpoche

"When we say, 'I take refuge in the Buddha,' we should also understand that 'The Buddha takes refuge in me,' because without the second part the first part is not complete. The Buddha needs us for awakening, understanding, and love to be real things and not just concepts. They must be real things that have real effects on life." —Thich Nhat Hanh

The Buddha's last words: "Ananda, what does the order of monks expect of me? I have taught the Dhamma, Ananda, making no "inner" and "outer": the Tathāgata has no "teacher's fist" in respect of doctrines . . . Therefore, Ananda, you should live as islands unto yourselves, being your own refuge, with no one else as your refuge, with the Dhamma as an island, with the Dhamma as your refuge, with no other refuge."

A stone falls to the ground; this is dharma, manifested in the law of gravity. "When the rain comes, the ground becomes wet." (a Zen saying); this is also dharma, the way things are. Or, "In broad daylight, under a blue sky" where everything is revealed, just as it is. Dharma with a small "d" stands for things, phenomena. And things can also teach us: "Grasses and trees, fences and walls demonstrate and exalt the Dharma for the sake of living beings, both ordinary and sage; and in turn, living beings, both ordinary and sage, express and unfold the Dharma for the sake of grasses and trees, fences and walls." —Dogen

Buddha is characterized as enlightenment, Dharma as wisdom and Sangha as harmony. Sangha is the harmony of Buddha and Dharma. Sangha is also the kinship of all things, animate and inanimate, every entity of the universe. Once Robert and Anne Aitken were showing Soen Nakagawa Roshi around the Ojai Valley in California. Viewing a grassy hillside that had many boulders jutting from its surface, he cried out, "How many members are here!"

- Three Characteristics of Existence (Seals):

“All conditioned things are impermanent . . . All conditioned things are suffering . . . all conditioned things are without self . . .” —*Dhammapada*

All Buddhists concur with these three truths. Early Mahāyāna added a fourth, emptiness. The addition is not really an innovation since no-self (*anattā*) really means the emptiness of self.

Impermanence (*anicca*)

“Have I not taught you already, Ananda, that it is the nature of all things near and dear to us that we must suffer separation from them and be severed from them? Of that which is born, comes into being, put together, and so is subject to dissolution, how should it be said that it should not depart? That, indeed, is not possible.”—Buddha at the time of Sariputta’s death

The Buddha, on another occasion, told Ananda that he cannot find any object of attachment that does not produce suffering because of its inherent impermanence. In the Pali canon, the final words of the Buddha were: “Now, monks, I declare this to you: It is the nature of all conditioned things to vanish. Strive for the goal with diligence.”

Thus shall ye think of all this fleeting world:

A star at dawn, a bubble in a stream;

a flash of lightning in a summer cloud,

a flickering lamp, a phantom, and a dream. —Diamond Sutra

“It is not impermanence that makes us suffer. What makes us suffer is wanting things to be permanent when they are not.” —Thich Nhat Hanh

Suffering (*dukkha*)

“Suffering is the means the Buddha used to liberate himself, and it is also the means by which we can become free . . . Our suffering is holy if we embrace it and look deeply into it. If we don’t, it isn’t holy at all.” —Thich Nhat Hanh

“In our science, because our goal is to discover the means to put an end to suffering, we start by examining the mind in order to see what leads it to a state of profound satisfaction and what destroys its serenity. We have perceived that feelings such as malice, jealousy, lust, and envy never produce long-lasting happiness. They come from egocentric compulsions, and make us desire anything that seems pleasant to us, and reject anything that seems unpleasant. They push us into an illusory quest for happiness, which causes only suffering. If we realize our mistakes, then we see that we must transform the negative impulses that cloud our judgement. Our working hypothesis is thus as follows: Suffering comes from afflictive thoughts, or mental toxins, which themselves come from our attachment to our egos. Such attachment is the basis for self-centredness, in which one regards our well-being as being intrinsically more important than the well-being of others. By unmasking this deluded attachment, we can free ourselves little by little from the cause of suffering.” —Matthieu Richard

“Those who have suffered much are like those who know many languages; they have learned to understand and be understood by all.” —Anne Sophie Swetchine (19th C. Russian writer)

Not-self (*anattā*)

Since the individual “self” entity is not ultimately real, it cannot be annihilated in Nibbāna, but the illusion of such a self is destroyed.

“The Buddha teaches that a living being is not a self but a mere conglomeration of factors, material and mental events, linked together in a process that is inherently *dukkha*, and that Nibbāna, the cessation of suffering, is not the annihilation of a being but the termination of that same unsatisfactory process.” —Bhikkhu Bodhi

“Impermanence and non-self are in essence the same. They both mean the absence of a separate, fixed self. It is called impermanence when looked at from the angle of time, and not-self when looked at from the angle of space.” —Thich Nhat Hanh

“If we understand the convention of self and the reality of not-self, then problems are finished. Its not really that problems are finished, but that there is no need for solutions. There are no problems because there is no one to solve the problems. If we clearly see this, then our lives become free of struggle and contention.” —Ajahn Chah

- Three Poisons:

Also called “the roots of unwholesomeness”: greed, anger, and ignorance.

At the center of the Wheel of Life are the cock (greed), the snake (anger), and the pig (ignorance). They are the three misrepresentations of reality.

*All evil actions committed by me since time immemorial,
Stemming from greed, anger, and delusion,
Arising from body, speech, and mind,
I now repent having committed.* —Repentance gatha

Ignorance or folly or delusion is sometimes referred specifically to ignorance of cause and effect, by which one falls into vicious circles without a clue of how to escape.

“Ignorance must not be perceived as a passive state of mere non-awareness; rather, it is a deluded state of mind, a fundamental misapprehension of the nature of reality. This is clearly stated by various Indian masters, such as Dharmakirti and Vasubandhu. Vasubandhu tells us in his *Abhidharmakosa* (Treasury of Knowledge) that ignorance is not simply the absence of knowledge, but rather it is the antithesis of knowledge; it is misknowledge, a force actively opposing knowledge, as hostility opposes friendliness and falsehood opposes truth.” —Dalai Lama

“*Vidya* means seeing, understanding, or light. *Avidya* (ignorance) means the lack of light, the lack of understanding, or blindness . . . The Buddha taught that when ignorance ends, there is clear understanding. He didn’t say that when ignorance ends, there is nothing. What does clear understanding condition? Clarity, the absence of ignorance, gives rise to the desire to act with love and compassion. —Thich Nhat Hanh

“In Tibetan medicine human psychology is spoken of in terms of the three humours – wind, bile and phlegm . . . Wind, bile and phlegm disturbances come, respectively, from the ‘three poisons’, or primary mental afflictions, namely attachment, anger and igno-

rance . . . Generally speaking, the illnesses of the body are related to imbalances in the three humours, which have their source if the three primary mental afflictions.”
—Kalu Rimpoche

“The extinction of greed, the extinction of anger, the extinction of delusion – this is indeed called *Nibbāna*. And for the disciple thus freed, in whose heart dwells peace, there is nothing to be added to what has been done and naught more remains for him to do.”
—U Thittila

- Three Taints:
 - (1) Sensual desire
 - (2) Becoming
 - (3) Ignorance

The *āsavas* or taints are a classification of defilements considered in their role of sustaining the samsaric round. The commentaries derive the word from a root *su* meaning “to flow”. They are also called “leaks”.

“Whatever is conditioned and volitionally produced is impermanent, subject to cessation.’ When he knows and sees thus, his mind is liberated from the taint of sensual desire, from the taint of being, and from the taint of ignorance. When it is liberated there comes the knowledge: ‘It is liberated.’ He understands: ‘Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being.’” —*Culasunnata Sutta*

“Suffering is what is created, what leaks, and what has no bliss. The Tathagata is not what is created or what leaks; he is full and peaceful” —*Mahaparinirvana Sutra*

Sensual desire:

“As I abided thus, diligent, ardent, and resolute, a thought of sensual desire arose in me. I understood thus: ‘This thought of sensual desire has arisen in me. This leads to my own affliction, to others’ affliction, and to the affliction of both; it obstructs wisdom, causes difficulties, and leads away from Nibbana.’ When I considered: ‘This leads to my own affliction,’ it subsided in me; when I considered: ‘This leads to others’ affliction,’ it subsided in me; when I considered: ‘This leads to the affliction of both,’ it subsided in me; when I considered: ‘This obstructs wisdom, causes difficulties, and leads away from Nibbana,’ it subsided in me. Whenever a thought of sensual desire arose in me, I abandoned it, removed it, did away with it . . . Whatever a bhikkhu frequently thinks and ponders upon, that will become the inclination of his mind.”
—*Dvedhavitakka Sutra*

- Three Bodies of the Buddha (Mahāyāna teaching):

“The Yogācāra school introduced the doctrine of the three bodies of the Buddha. The first is the apparition-body (*nirmānakāya*), which corresponds to the apparition or form body (*rupakāya*) of Siddhartha Gautama. The third is the Dharma-body, the unconstructed, infinite, and perfectly pure reality. The second is the recompense or enjoyment-body (*sambhogakāya*). It is the glorified body that the Buddha attains as a reward for his Bodhisattva practices, and it is the transfigured body which the great bodhisattvas apprehend when they see the Buddha.”— *The Buddhist Religion*

“Dharmakāya: the pure and clear, empty body. Infinite emptiness, empty infinity that is charged with possibilities. Law body of essential nature. Phenomena appear and quickly disappear. Nothing remains. With a perception of this reality, or with an understanding that such a perception is possible, I sense beginningless, endless peace.”

“Sambhogakāya: the body of blissful harmony. Karma and affinity. The mutual interdependence of everything and everybody. Bliss body of mutual interdependence with people, animals, plants, mountains, meadows, water, air, the planet Earth, the other planets, the sun, moon, and stars. Nothing is my own and everything makes me up . . . I am my own setting – interacting with all my past setting – nothing more.”

“Nirmānakāya: the body of uniqueness and variety. Uniqueness of Shakyamuni and each being. "Phenomena". Precious nature of each individual thing, being, particle. Transformation body. With a perception of this reality, I sense my particular potential and yours – and the precious nature of each being.” —Aitken Roshi

Dharmakāya

Only one of the three considered to be ultimately real and thus incomprehensible through concepts. Pure, transcendental awareness, devoid of characteristics. Vairochana Buddha is an embodiment of the Dharmakāya. It is natural, pristine awareness. In the Tibetan tradition it is the absolute nature, uncovered at the moment of death in the Great Luminosity. The dimension of “empty”, unconditioned truth into which the illusion of ignorance, and any kind of concept, has never entered.

Sambhogakāya (Body of Beatitude, Enjoyment Body)

The body of the Buddha that is beheld by other deeply enlightened beings; bodhisattvas at the final stage of cultivation before becoming buddhas. The reward body of the Buddha, appearing only in the higher buddha realms. The Sambhogakāya is sometimes characterized as “enlivening” because it excites and inspires beings to achieve Buddhahood. Amida Buddha is the embodiment of the Sambhogakāya. The Sambhogakāya is form endowed with the greatest possible adornments, beauty, perfections. It is an utterly perfect and absolutely sublime body – the body of a deva or an enlightened being that appears in visions and dreams. The Sambhogakāya arises from the Dharmakāya and manifests the clear radiance of the Dharmakāya.

“Everytime we touch something beautiful, in harmony and peace, we touch the Sambhogakāya. When we feel happy and peaceful, our happiness and peace radiate around us, and others can enjoy it as well.” —Thich Nhat Hanh

Nirmānakāya (Emanation Body)

Shakyamuni Buddha and all the great teachers are embodiments of the Nirmānakāya.

“Although Buddha is a historical figure, the historicity of Buddha Shakyamuni would be seen as a skillful display of Buddha’s compassionate action manifesting from the perfected, timeless state of the *dharmakāya*, or Truth Body. Buddha Shakyamuni as a historical figure is known as the *nirmānakāya*, which means Emanation Body: an emanation that is assumed in order to suit the mental disposition and needs of a particular time, place, and context. That emanation comes from a preceding emanation, the *sambhogakāya*, or perfect resourceful state, which has arisen from the timeless expanse of the *dharmakāya*.” —Dalai Lama

- Three Worlds
 - (1) Realm of desire (*kāmadhatu*)
 - (2) Realm of form (*rupadhatu*)
 - (3) Realm of non-form/formlessness (*arupadhatu*)

“The triple world (*trailokya*) is the ancient Indian cosmology consisting of three planes or realms arranged vertically, like a three-story building. The lower realm is the realm of desire (*kāma*), containing humans, the hells, animals, and several of the lower celestial realms. The second realm, the realm of form (*rupa*) is inhabited by celestial beings. The third and highest realm is that of formlessness (*ārūpya*) and is inhabited by celestial beings without form. All these are still included within the conditioned world of birth and death, so to "leave the triple world" means that one becomes enlightened and, therefore, liberated from rebirth and suffering.” —Francis H. Cook

The grossest tier is the sense-desire realm (*kāmadhatu*), which consists of eleven planes: the hells, the animal kingdom, the sphere of ghosts, the human realm, the sphere of titans, and the six sensuous heavens; of these, only the human realm and the animal kingdom are normally accessible to our natural sense faculties. Above the sense-desire realm is the *fine-material realm*, or the realm of subtle form (*rupadhatu*), an ascending series of some sixteen exalted planes which are the counterparts of the *jhānas*, the meditative absorptions; here the grosser aspects of matter have faded away and the beings enjoy far greater bliss, peace, and power than is ordinarily accessible in the terrestrial realm. Finally, at the pinnacle of the Buddhist cosmos is the *immaterial realm* (*arupadhatu*), four planes of extremely attenuated nature corresponding to the four immaterial meditative absorptions; here matter has disappeared completely and the inhabitants are of a purely mental constitution. Energy is present and manifested simply as mind.

Regarding the formless realm, the future Buddha attained to the Sphere of No-Thingness under his first teacher, Alara Kalama, and to the Sphere of Neither-Perception-Nor-Non-Perception under his second teacher Uddaka Ramaputta. He thus reached the highest state attainable without breaking through to the supreme Enlightenment. The Three World still pertain to unenlightened, conditioned existence.

- Triple Altar:

On the traditional Theravāda triple altar the Buddha is invariably attended by his two chief disciples, Sariputta and Mahamoggallana. Of the two, the right hand disciple, the one regarded as closest to the Blessed One, is the disciple distinguished by excellence of wisdom.

On the traditional Mahāyāna triple altar, the Buddha is flanked by Manjusri (the embodiment of wisdom) seated on a lion and Samantabhadra (the bodhisattva of enlightened action) seated on an elephant.

- Three Baskets:

During the First Council, after the Buddha’s death, the teachings were divided into two categories: the *Sutta Pitaka*, a collection of five sutras called the *Nikāyas*, and the *Vinaya Pitaka*, the “precepts basket,” the rules of discipline for monks and nuns. Later a third was added, the *Abhidharma Pitaka*, which contained *sastras* or commentaries on the sutras. These commentaries expanded the philosophical and metaphysical dimen-

sions of Buddhism. *Pitaka* refers to the baskets in which the palm-leaf manuscripts were stored.

- Three Vehicles:

- (1) Shrāvaka means “voice-hearer” or “listener” and refers to a follower or disciple of the Buddha. These disciples are divided into four grades (stream-enters, once-returners, non-returners, and arahants).
- (2) Pratyekabuddha means “enlightened for one” and refers to an individual illuminate, a self-enlightened one, who attains liberation without a teacher. Pratyekabuddhas are not capable of teaching the Dharma to others, and arise only at a time when no Dispensation of the Buddha exists in the world.
- (3) Bodhisattvas

FOUR

- Four Signs Prince Siddhartha saw:

A sick person, an old person, a corpse, and a wandering monk. The face of the monk radiated great serenity, and this pointed him in a new direction: like the wandering holy man with his alms bowl and simple garments, he would have to leave his place of birth and go forth into a homeless life.

- Four Castes in India:

In the Buddha's age the caste system was only beginning to take shape in northeast India and had not yet spawned the countless subdivisions and rigid regulations that were to manacle Indian society through the centuries. Society was divided into four broad social classes: the *brahmins*, who performed the priestly functions; the *khattiyas*, the nobles, warriors, and administrators; the *vessas*, the merchants and agriculturalists, and the *suddas*, the menials and serfs.

- Four Places worthy of veneration:

“There are four places in the world worthy of veneration, which would inspire a faithful follower – the birthplace of the Buddha (Lumbini), the place of Enlightenment (Buddha Gaya), the place where he taught the Dhamma for the first time (Sarnath), and the place of his Parinibbana (Kusinara). Anyone who passes away with confident heart while on pilgrimage to these shrines will attain a heavenly rebirth.” – Buddha to Ananda

Lumbini gardens, near Kapilavastu, in the Kingdom of Magadha (now part of Nepal)

Buddha or Bodh Gaya, near the town of Gaya

Sarnath, at the Deer Park, near the ancient city of Benares (modern day Varanasi)

Kusinara or Kushinagar, at the Sal Grove of the Mallas

- Four Theravada stages of awakening (of the *shravaka* or voice-hearer):

“The first stage of awakening is called *stream-entry* (*sotāpatti*), because it is with this attainment that the disciple can properly be said to have entered the stream of the Dhamma . . . Stream-entry is won with the first arising of the vision of the Dhamma and is marked by the eradication of the coarsest three fetters: personality view, the view of a substantial self within the empirical person; doubt in the Buddha and his Teaching; and wrong grasp of rules and vows, the belief that mere external observances (including religious rituals and penitential forms of asceticism) can lead to salvation. With the cutting off of these three fetters the stream-enterer is freed from the prospect of rebirth in . . . hell, the animal kingdom, and the sphere of hungry ghosts. Such a one is certain to attain final liberation in at most seven more lifetimes passed either in the human world or in the heavens.

The next major stage of awakening is that of the *once-returner* (*sakadāgāmi*), who will be reborn only one more time in the human realm or in the sense-sphere heavens and there reach the ultimate goal. The path of once-returning does not eradicate any fetters beyond those already eliminated by the path of stream-entry. It does, however, attenuate the three root defilements – greed, hatred, and delusion – so that they arise only sporadically and then only in a mild degree.

The third path, that of the *non-returner* (*anāgāmi*), cuts off two deep roots of emotional turbulence within the psyche: the defilements of sensual lust and ill will, the fourth and fifth fetters, which are removed in all their manifold guises, even the subtlest. Because these two fetters are the principal ties that keep living beings bound to the sense-desire realm, the non-returner, as the name implies, never returns to this realm. Rather, such a one is spontaneously reborn in one of the exalted form-realm heavens called the Pure Abodes (*suddhavasa*), accessible only to non-reurners, and there attains final Nibbana without ever coming back to this world.

The fourth and final stage of noble discipleship is that of arahantship (*arahatta*), which is attained by the elimination of the five subtle fetters that remain unabandoned even in the non-returner: desire for existence in the form realm and the formless realm, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance. As ignorance is the most deeply grounded of all the defilements, when the path of arahantship arises fully fathoming the Four Noble Truths, ignorance collapses, bringing all the other residual defilements along with it. The mind then enters upon “the taintless liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, attained by the destruction of the taints” – the state that the Buddha calls the unsurpassed consummation of the holy life.” – from *Great Disciples of the Buddha*

- Four Foundations of Mindfulness (Right Mindfulness):

- (1) Bodily activity
- (2) Feelings
- (3) States of mind
- (4) Mental contents

“What are the four foundations of mindfulness? Here, monks, a monk abides contemplating body as body, ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world; he abides contemplating feelings as feelings . . .; he abides contemplating mind as mind . . .; he abides contemplating mind-objects [dhammas] as mind-objects, ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world.” – *Mahasatipatthana Sutta*

Mind-objects are dhammas, all phenomena, perceptions and mental formations (the third and fourth skandhas).

- Four Postures:

“A monk, when walking, knows that he is walking, when standing, knows that he is standing, when sitting, knows that he is sitting, when lying down, knows that he is lying down. In whatever way his body is disposed, he knows that is how it is.” – *Mahasatipatthana Sutta*

- Four Modes of Birth:

- (1) birth from the womb
- (2) birth from an egg
- (3) birth from moisture
- (4) spontaneous birth

“What is egg-born generation? There are these beings born by breaking out of the shell of an egg.

What is womb-born generation? There are these beings born by breaking out of the caul.

What is moisture-born generation? There are these beings born in rotten fish, in a rotten corpse, in rotten dough, in a cesspit, or in a sewer.

What is spontaneous generation? There are gods and denizens of hell and certain human beings and some beings in the lower world.” – *Mahasihanada Sutta*

- Four Elements:

“The earth element may be either internal or external. What is the internal earth element? Whatever internally, belonging to oneself, is solid, solidified, and clung-to: that is, head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, large intestine, small intestine, contents of the stomach, feces, or whatever else internally, belonging to oneself, is solid, solidified, and clung to: this is called the internal earth element. Now both the internal earth element and the external earth element are simply earth element. And that should be seen as it actually is with proper wisdom thus: “This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.” When one see it thus . . . one becomes disenchanted with the earth element and makes the mind dispassionate toward the earth element. [solidity]

The water element may be either internal or external. What is the internal water element? Whatever internally, belonging to oneself, is water, watery, and clung to; that is bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, spittle, snot, oil-of-the-joints, urine, or whatever else internally, belonging to oneself, is water, watery, and clung-to . . . [as with the earth element] [cohesion]

The fire element may be either internal or external. What is the internal fire element? Whatever internally, belonging to oneself, is fire, fiery, and clung to; that is, that by which one is warmed, ages, and is consumed, and that by which what is eaten, drunk, consumed, and tasted gets completely digested, or whatever else internally, belonging to oneself, is fire, fiery, and clung-to . . . [heat]”

The air element may be either internal or external. What is the internal air element? Whatever internally, belonging to oneself, is air, airy, and clung to: that is up-going winds, down-going winds, winds in the belly, winds in the bowels, winds that course through the limbs, in-breath and out-breath, or whatever else internally, belonging to oneself, is air, airy, and clung-to . . . [distension] – *Mahahatthipadopama Sutta*

When the Four Elements separate (death):

Dissolution begins with the reabsorption of the earth element into the water element: disappearance of physical strength, phlegm and saliva flow out. Body becomes sluggish; dying person feels heavy, as though buried under a mountain.

Reabsorption of the water element into the fire element: drying out of the nose and mouth, eventual loss of sphincter control, incontinence. Mental agitation, unpleasant thoughts. The dying person feels as though he or she is being carried away by a torrent.

Dissolution of the fire element into the air element. Chilling of the mouth and nostrils, shortened breathing, decrease in body heat. Loss of mental clarity. Visions of blazing lights, as if the universe were on fire. The breathing becomes more labored until its final cessation. – adapted from *Luminous Mind*, Kalu Rinpoche

- Four Noble Truths:

(1) Life is suffering (*dukkha*)

(2) There is an arising or origin of suffering, which is craving (*tanhā*)

- (3) There is an end of suffering (*dukkha-nirodha*, the cessation of suffering)
 - (4) The way (*Magga*) leading to the end of suffering – the Noble Eightfold Path
- The cessation of suffering is linked with the cessation of the taints.

“Friends, just as the footprint of any living being that walks can be placed within an elephant’s footprint, and so the elephant’s footprint is declared the chief of them because of its great size; so too, all wholesome states can be included in the Four Noble Truths.”
– *Mahahatthipadopama Sutta*

End of suffering: “One who wants to tread the path of liberation must be conscious of the imperfections of his present state of existence and must have the earnest desire to overcome it, as well as a notion concerning the causes of his imperfection and the means how to remove them. Thus the fourth truth sums up the results of the three foregoing truths, before it points out the practical steps towards the realization of the aim in question.” – Lama Govinda

Ajahn Mun’s reformulation of the Four Noble Truths

The mind that goes out in order to satisfy its moods is the Cause of Suffering (11);

The result that comes from the mind going out in order to satisfy its moods is Suffering (1);

The mind seeing the mind clearly is the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (1V);

The result of the mind seeing the mind clearly is the Cessation of Suffering (111).

- Four averse states

(1) Being with those you do not want to be with.

(2) Not being with those you want to be with.

(3) Doing what you do not wish to do.

(4) Not doing what you wish to do.

“We suffer when we are separated from people or things with which we wish to remain in contact, and when we have to deal with people or things we wish to avoid. When we cannot get what we want, we suffer; and when we cannot get rid of the things we do not want, we suffer.” – Sheng-yen

- Four Bodhisattvic Vows (Mahāyāna teaching):

(1) All beings without number I vow to liberate

(2) Endless blind passions I vow to uproot

(3) Dharma gates beyond measure I vow to penetrate

(4) The Great Way of Buddha I vow to attain

“The origin of the Four Bodhisattvic Vows can be traced to the earliest records of the Buddha’s teaching. From the Theravāda point of view, the Four Noble Truths by themselves are sufficient. But if our primary intent in practicing is to benefit other sentient beings, then we need the Four Bodhisattvic vows. Mahāyāna Sutra: ‘Those people who do not know of suffering, help them to know of suffering. Those people who have not departed from suffering, help them to depart from suffering. Those people who do not

practice the path yet, help them to practice the path. Those people who have not attained nirvana, help them to attain nirvana.” – Sheng-yen

Path. “The Blessed One was the arouser of the unarisen path, the producer of the unproduced path, the declarer of the undeclared path; he was the knower of the path, the finder of the path, the one skilled in the path. But his disciples now abide following that path and become possessed of it afterwards.” – *Gopakamoggallana Sutta*

- Four Types of Wisdom

(1) The “great, perfect mirror wisdom,” or *adarsa-jnana*, because it resembles a great mirror that reflects the true nature of all things.

(2) The “wisdom of equality,” or *samata-jnana*, attained when the seventh sense is mastered. One who has attained this second wisdom can perceive the underlying identity of all dharmas and of himself and of others, and can thence overcome his feelings of separation.

(3) The “wisdom of wondrous perception,” or *pratyaveksana-jnana*, attained after a thorough investigation of the sixth sense. At this point one can perceive all dharma forms in their true state and teach the law of Buddhism free of error and doubt.

(4) The “wisdom of metamorphosis,” or *krtyanusthana-jnana*, attained only by mastering the first five senses. One who has this wisdom can work various metamorphoses and manifestations to help other sentient beings.

- Four Divine Abodes (*Brahma Vihāras*):

(1) Loving kindness (*mettā*)

(2) Compassion (*karunā*)

(3) Sympathetic joy (*muditā*)

(4) Equanimity (*upekkhā*)

In the *Tevijja Sutta*, the Buddha teaches the young Brahmin Vasettha the way to the union with Brahma. “With his heart filled with loving kindness, he dwells suffusing one quarter, the second, the third, the fourth. Thus he dwells suffusing the whole world, upwards, downwards, across, everywhere, always with a heart filled with loving-kindness, abundant, unbounded, without hate or ill-will. Then with his heart filled with compassion . . . with sympathetic (appreciative) joy . . . with equanimity he dwells suffusing one quarter, the second, the third, the fourth. Thus he dwells suffusing the whole world, upwards, downwards, across, everywhere, always with a heart filled with loving-kindness, abundant, unbounded, without hate or ill-will.”

Loving-kindness (*mettā*) is the wish for the welfare and happiness of others; compassion (*karunā*), the empathy with them in their suffering; appreciative joy (*muditā*), rejoicing in their virtues and successes; and equanimity (*upekkhā*), the attitude of detached impartiality towards beings (not apathy or indifference).

“Practicing *Mettā* extinguishes anger in the hearts of living beings. Practicing *Karunā* extinguishes all sorrows and anxieties in the hearts of living beings. Practicing *Muditā* extinguishes sadness and joylessness in the hearts of living beings. Practicing *Upekkhā* extinguishes hatred, aversion, and attachment in the hearts of living beings.” – Nargarjuna

“May all beings have happiness and the cause of happiness.
May all beings remain free from suffering and the cause of suffering.
May all beings remain unseparated from the sacred joy that is totally free from sorrow.
May all beings come to rest in the boundless and all-inclusive equanimity that is beyond attachment and aversion.” – *mettā* meditation

“*Upekkhā* means much more than mere equanimity in the conventional sense. It stands for a perfectly balanced state of mind and emotions, and balance between faith and intelligence, between energy and concentration, between wisdom and compassion. It is non-preferential, without inclination towards excess in any direction.” – Aung San

Upeksha (Sanskrit): “*Upe* means ‘over,’ and *ksh* means ‘to look.’ You climb the mountain to be able to look over the whole situation, not bound by one side or the other.
– Thich Nhat Hanh

“Love, compassion, joy, and equanimity are the very nature of an enlightened person. They are the four aspects of true love within ourselves and within everything.
– Thich Nhat Hanh

“my religion is kindness” – Dalai Lama

The Near Enemies:

- | | | |
|---------------------|---|--------------|
| (1) Loving Kindness | – | Attachment |
| (2) Compassion | – | Pity |
| (3) Sympathetic Joy | – | Comparison |
| (4) Equanimity | – | Indifference |

• Four Erroneous Views:

“The first view, which is conditioned by the craving for existence, maintains that those who have reached the highest goal continue on after death in some metaphysical dimension, either as distinct individuals or as absorbed into some transpersonal spiritual essence. This answer is the one given by most religions, including several later interpretations of Buddhism.

The second answer – that a Tathāgata does not exist after death – reflects the craving for nonexistence, for annihilation. The theorist regards the Perfect One as a truly existent self whose fate at death is complete annihilation. From this perspective deliverance is nothing more than the absolute dissolution of a real self.

The third answer seeks a compromise: everything impermanent in a Tathāgata would be annihilated at death, but the permanent essence, his soul, would remain. The fourth answer tries to escape the predicament by formulating a “neither-nor” solution – a skeptical approach that still implicitly accepts the validity of the Tathāgata as a real self.

All four formulas have been rejected by the Buddha as wrong views. They all presuppose that there is an “I” distinct from the world – an “I” which is either raised to eternal life or annihilated in the abyss of nothingness – while in reality “I” and “world” are mere abstractions posited on the basis of the five aggregates that constitute the process of experience . . . What we call “I” and what we call “world” are in reality a constantly changing process, always in flux. This process throws up the illusions of “I” and

“world,” which then become objects of speculation regarding their past origin and future destiny.” – From *The Great Disciples of the Buddha*

- Four Jhānas (Right Concentration):

“And when he knows that these five hindrances have left him, gladness arises in him, from gladness comes delight, from the delight in his mind his body is tranquilized, with a tranquil body he feels joy, and with joy his mind is concentrated. Being thus detached from sense-desires, detached from unwholesome states, he enters and remains in the first jhāna, which is with thinking and pondering, born of detachment, filled with delight and joy.”

“Again, a monk, with the subsiding of thinking and pondering, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, enters and remains in the second jhāna, which is without thinking and pondering, born of concentration, filled with delight and joy. And with this delight and joy born of concentration he so suffuses his body that no spot remains untouched.”

“Again, a monk with the fading away of delight remains imperturbable, mindful and clearly aware, and experiences in himself that joy of which the Noble Ones say: “Happy is he who dwells with equanimity and mindfulness,” and he enters and remains in the third jhāna. And with this joy devoid of delight he so suffuses his body that no spot remains untouched.”

“Again, a monk, having given up pleasure and pain, and with the disappearance of former gladness and sadness, enters and remains in the fourth jhāna which is beyond pleasure and pain, purified by equanimity and mindfulness. And he sits suffusing his body with that mental purity and clarification so that no part of his body is untouched by it.” – *Samannaphala Sutta*

The second jhāna is called “the noble silence” because within this absorption all discursive thought is silenced.

The four jhānas constitute the higher mind and provide “a pleasant abiding here and now.”

- Four Immaterial Attainments (Formless Jhānas):

“Here, a monk, by passing entirely beyond bodily sensations, by the disappearance of all sense of resistance and by non-attraction to the perception of diversity, seeing that space is infinite, reaches and remains in the Sphere of Infinite Space. And by passing entirely beyond the Sphere of Infinite Space, seeing that consciousness is infinite, he reaches and remains in the Sphere of Infinite Consciousness. And by passing entirely beyond the Sphere of Infinite Consciousness, seeing that there is no thing, he reaches and remains in the Sphere of Nothingness. And by passing entirely beyond the Sphere of Nothingness, he reaches and remains in the Sphere of Neither-Perception-Nor-Non-Perception.” – *Sangiti Sutta*

“With the complete surmounting of perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of sensory impact, with non-attention to perceptions of diversity, aware that ‘space is infinite,’ Sariputta entered upon and abided in the base of infinite space.” – *Anupada Sutta*

FIVE AND MORE

- Five Hindrances (to meditation):
 - (1) Sensuality, lustful desires
 - (2) Ill-will, hatred or anger
 - (3) Sloth-and-torpor
 - (4) Worry-and-flurry, restlessness and anxiety
 - (5) Skeptical doubts

Sensual desire arises through attending unwisely to a sensually attractive object and is abandoned by meditating on a foul object; ill will arises through attending unwisely to a repugnant object and is abandoned by developing loving-kindness; sloth and torpor arise by submitting to boredom and laziness and are abandoned by arousing energy; restlessness and remorse arise through unwisely reflecting on disturbing thoughts and are abandoned by wisely reflecting on tranquillity; doubt arises through unwisely reflecting on dubious matters and is abandoned by study, investigation, and inquiry.

“A monk abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects in respect to the five hindrances. How does he do so? Here, monks, if sensual desire is present in himself, a monk knows that it is present. If sensual desire is absent in himself, a monk knows that it is absent. And he knows how unarisen sensual desire comes to arise, and he knows how the abandonment of arisen sensual desire comes about, and he knows how the non-arising of the abandoned sensual desire in the future will come about . . . If will-will is present in himself, a monk knows that it is present . . . If sloth-and-torpor is present in himself, a monk knows that it is present . . . If worry-and-flurry is present in himself, a monk knows it is present . . . If doubt is present in himself, a monk knows that it is present . . .” – *Mahasatipatthana Sutta*

“Abandoning sloth-and-torpor . . . perceiving light, mindful and clearly aware, his mind is purified of sloth-and-torpor.” (Cultivation of the perception of light is given as a standard way of overcoming the hindrance of sloth-and-torpor.) – *Samannaphala Sutta*

- Five Hellish Deeds (plunging one into the lowest hell):
 - (1) Patricide
 - (2) Matricide
 - (3) Murder of an arhat
 - (4) Injury of a Buddha
 - (5) Bringing about a schism in the Sangha

- Five Skandhas or Aggregates:

Skandhas, in Buddhist thought, consist of forms, feelings, perceptions, mental formations (ideas, wishes, dreams) and consciousness. The constant interplay and interconnection among the *skandhas* has the effect of giving a false sense of personal identity and continuity – whereas in truth there is no definite “I” existing by itself, independent of the ever-shifting relation among psychic and physical forces.

The aggregate of material form (*rūpa*) includes the physical body with its sense faculties as well as external material objects. The aggregate of feeling (*vedanā*) is the affective element in experience, either pleasant, painful, or neutral. Perception (*sannā*), the third

aggregate, is the factor responsible for noting the qualities of things and also accounts for recognition and memory. The formations aggregate (*sankhara*) is an umbrella term that includes all volitional, emotive, and intellectual aspects of mental life. And consciousness (*vinnāna*), the fifth aggregate, is the basic awareness of an object indispensable to all cognition. – *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*

The whole realm of matter, both internal and external, is included in the Aggregate of matter. Also the four Great Elements, namely, solidity, fluidity, heat and motion.

Aggregate of Sensations. In this group are included all our sensations, pleasant, or unpleasant or neutral.

Aggregate of Perception. Like sensations, perceptions are produced through the contact of our six sense faculties with the external world. It is the perceptions that recognize objects whether physical or mental.

Aggregate of Mental Formations. What is generally known as *karma* comes under this group. The Buddha's own definition of *karma*: "O bhikkhus, it is volition (*cetanā*) that I call karma. Having willed, one acts through body, speech and mind." Sensations and perceptions are not volitional actions. They do not produce karmic effects. It is only volitional actions – such as attention, will, determination, confidence, concentration, wisdom, energy, desire, repugnance or hate, ignorance, conceit, idea of self etc. – that can produce karmic effects.

Aggregate of consciousness. Visual consciousness has the eye as its base and a visible form as its object. And so on for the other five faculties. Visual consciousness only means seeing, not recognizing. When the eye comes in contact with a color, for instance blue, visual consciousness arises which simply is awareness of the presence of a color; but it does not recognize that it is blue. It is perception, the third Aggregate that recognizes the color. – from Walpola Rahula's *What the Buddha Taught*

"In our present human condition there are five *skandhas*: the physical existence plus the four purely mental states of sensation, perception, mental formations, and full discursive consciousness which is able to decide – this is a sound, this is a form – and to arrive at value judgments – this is good, this is bad, and so on. The word *skandha* literally means "a heap" or "pile," and one understanding of the term is that as long as we have physical existence, we not only have these five aggregates, but also a heap of trouble." – Kalu Rinpoche, *The Dharma*

Second Skandha (feeling). "Pleasant feeling is impermanent, conditioned, dependently-arisen, bound to decay, to vanish, to fade away, to cease – and so too are painful feeling and neutral feeling. So, anyone who, on experiencing a pleasant feeling, thinks: 'This is my self,' must, at the cessation of that pleasant feeling, think: 'My self has gone!' and the same with painful and neutral feelings. Thus whoever thinks: 'Feeling is my self' is contemplating something in this present life that is impermanent, a mixture of happiness and unhappiness, subject to arising and passing away. Therefore it is not fitting to maintain: 'Feeling is my self.'" – *Mahanidana Sutta*

Fourth Skandha. *Sankhara-skandha* or mental formations. Fifty in number, they embrace various factors including what we term the emotions (i.e. karmic reactions, wholesome or otherwise). The most important one is volition (*cetanā*), the basis of karma.

The root idea suggested by the word *sankhara* is “making together.” The Pali commentators explain that the word allows for both an active and a passive sense. Thus the *sankharas* are either factors (or forces) that function together in producing an effect, or they are things that are produced by a combination of co-operating factors. Thus also called “formations.” . . . As the fourth of the five aggregates the *sankharas* comprise all the mental factors not included in the other three mental aggregates.

“A *samskara* (*sankhara*) involves not just one action and its karmic return, but a mental inclination to act a certain way. The reason the Buddha cautions us against repeating wrong actions – and recommends repeating good actions – is that such habits cut a track in consciousness upon which future actions in similar circumstances are likely to run . . . *Samskara* is a habit of thinking which karmically locks us into patterns of behavior over which we have less and less control with every succeeding repetition.” – Eknath Easwaran

Fifth Skandha. The Buddha declared in unequivocal terms that consciousness depends on matter, sensation, perception and mental formations, and that it cannot exist independently of them.

- Six Paramitas or Perfections, (Mahāyāna teaching, the path of the Bodhisattva):
 - (1) Dāna Paramita: Giving, spirit of generosity. Death is the final act of Dana in this life.
 - (2) Sila Paramita: Morality, code of the Vinaya. Literally “cool and peaceful”.
 - (3) Kshanti Paramita: Forebearance, patience, endurance of hardship, acceptance of truth. Chinese ideogram is formed with a sword over the heart.
 - (4) Virya Paramita: Zeal, vitality, related to the English word virile. Traditionally virya had three aspects: character formation, spiritual training, and altruism (encouraging others).
 - (5) Dhyāna Paramita: Focused meditation, absorption, concentration, the realm of samadhi.
 - (6) Prajnā Paramita: Wisdom, illumination arising in the human mind. If Dāna is the entry to the Dharma, Prajnā is its realization.

Four Additional Paramitas

- (7) Upāya Paramita: Compassionate means, "suited to the place or situation," "compassionately appropriate." Called “garden equipment” in Zen Buddhist texts.
- (8) Pranidhana Paramita: Aspiration, resolve, "arising of Bodhicitta," "formulation of the desire for Enlightenment," and with this the making of vows.
- (9) Bala Paramita: Spiritual power, "spiritual or moral power or force."
- (10) Jnāna Paramita: Knowledge, used together with Prajnā in Chinese "wisdom\knowledge." A kind of summing up of all the Perfections, and indeed of the many Upāya, the countless ways of cultivating perfection. – Aitken Roshi, *The Practice of Perfection*

The Paramitas (“that which has reached the other shore”) derive from the three-part teaching of Classical Buddhism: Sila (precepts, morality), Jhāna (meditation, absorption), and Pāna (wisdom). They were established in the first few centuries of the Mahāyāna, and describe the six qualities or virtues perfected by a Bodhisattva.

Four kinds of giving:

- (1) Giving material things: food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, things to the poor.

- (2) Giving protection: a refuge to those who are frightened, medicine to the sick.
- (3) Giving love: comforting the unhappy, selflessly serving others with compassion.
- (4) Giving Dharma: giving teaching and instructions to those who desire them.

- Six Realms:
 - (1) Hell
 - (2) Hungry Ghosts, *pretas*
 - (3) Animals
 - (4) Fighting Spirits, *asuras*
 - (5) Humans
 - (6) Heavenly Beings, *devas*

The Hell Realm is terrifying and horrific, marked by violence and aggression. The *Avici Hell* is the deepest and the hottest of the hells, being a prison of incandescent iron, where suffering is 1,000 times more intense than those encountered in all the other hells. This hell is the destination of Devadatta, false teachers, and anyone who commits the Five Hellish Deeds. For a vivid description of Hell see the *Balapandita Sutta*, ‘Fools and Wise Men,’ in *The Middle Length Discourses*. The tortures undergone in this realm are not punishments that have been inflicted upon its inhabitants by an omnipotent creator, but the inevitable results of their own deeds. The hells can be seen as a form of *upāya*, reminding an individual that he or she will eventually experience the effects of his or her own actions.

The Hungry Ghost Realm is inhabited by restless spirits, tormented by greed and unfulfilled passions. Their insatiable hunger is the cause of their pain. They have needle-like throats, bloated bellies, and spindly, dried up limbs. Pretas can only be nourished by faith, that is, by offerings made in the course of religious observances, which are then consigned to them.

The Animal Realm is the realm of fear and blind, instinctual behavior. Animals obey a limited set of fixed responses, lacking the faculty of articulate speech and reflective thought, which could liberate them from the darkness of their subconscious drives. Their realm is symbolized by the pig (ignorance).

The Fighting Spirits Realm is that of the Asuras or “anti-gods,” so known because of their intense jealousy towards the Gods of the Thirty-Three (Devas at the top of Mt. Sumeru who got the Asuras drunk and cast them out of heaven). The Asuras are power-hungry, ambitious, angry, and warlike. They are associated with storms, earthquakes and meteors.

The Human Realm is the realm of purposeful activity and higher aspirations, in which freedom of decision plays an essential role, the ability to use the intellect and to discriminate.

“The human state is central in relation to pleasure and pain. While tormented spirits experience pain without pleasure, the devas experience pleasure without pain. Man experiences both. Consequently he is neither so intoxicated with the one, nor so stupefied by the other, as to be incapable of directing his attention from the conditioned to the Unconditioned . . . The human state is central in relation to karma . . . man both reaps what he has sowed in past lives and sows what he must reap in future lives. All other

forms of sentient existence are states of passive experience; they reap but do not sow.”
– Sangharakshita, *The Three Jewels*

The Deva Realm is a utopian existence where everything happens easily, naturally, automatically. Nothing is irritating or undesirable. Devas are gifted with great beauty, longevity and freedom from pain, but because of their one-sided dedication to pleasure “They forget the true nature of life, the limitation of their existence, the suffering of other beings . . . They do not know that they live only in a state of temporary harmony, which comes to an end as soon as the causes, which led them to this happy state, are exhausted.” – Lama Govinda

- Seven factors of Enlightenment:

- (1) Mindfulness (*sati*)
- (2) Investigation and research into doctrine (*dhamma-vicaya*).
- (3) Energy (*viriyā*), to work with determination till the end.
- (4) Joy (*pīti*), antidote to pessimistic, gloomy states of mind.
- (5) Relaxation (*passaddhi*) of both body and mind. One should not be physically or mentally stiff.
- (6) Concentration (*samādhi*)
- (7) Equanimity (*upekkhā*); ability to face life’s vicissitudes with a tranquil mind.

- Eightfold Path (the way out of suffering):

- (1) Right view, understanding (recognizing the problem)
- (2) Right intention, thought (resolving to change)
- (3) Right speech
- (4) Right action, conduct
- (5) Right livelihood, living
- (6) Right effort
- (7) Right mindfulness, recollection
- (8) Right concentration, absorption

“The eight factors can be incorporated into three "aggregates" of training. Right speech, right action, and right livelihood make up the aggregate of virtue of moral discipline (*sīla*); right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration make up the aggregate of concentration (*samadhi*); and right view and right intention make up the aggregate of understanding or wisdom (*paññā*).” – *Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*

“And what, monks, is Right View? It is the knowledge of suffering . . . [Four Noble Truths]

“And What, monks, is Right Thought? The thought of renunciation, the thought of non-ill-will, the thought of harmlessness (non-cruelty).”

“And what, monks, is Right Speech? Refraining from lying, refraining from slander, refraining from harsh speech, refraining from frivolous speech.”

“And what, monks, is Right Action? Refraining from taking life, refraining from taking what is not given, refraining from sexual misconduct.”

“And what, monks, is Right Livelihood? Here the Ariyan disciple, having given up wrong livelihood, keeps himself by right livelihood.”

“And what, monks, is Right Effort? Here a monk rouses his will, makes an effort, stirs up energy, exerts his mind and strives to prevent the arising of unarisen unwholesome mental states . . . [Four Great Efforts]

“And what, monks, is Right Mindfulness? Here a monk abides contemplating body as body . . . [Four Foundations of Mindfulness]

“And what, monks, is Right Concentration? Here a monk detaches from sense-desire, detached from unwholesome states, enters and remains in the first jhana . . . [Four Lower Jhana] – *Mahasatipatthana Sutta*

Right View.

The Pali word for “right” is *samma* (Sanskrit, *samyak*). It means “upright”, not bent or crooked. Shariputra described Right View as the ability to distinguish wholesome roots from unwholesome roots. It has been described as Prajna Paramita, the mother of all Buddhas.

“And how does right view come first? In one of right view, right intention comes into being; in one of right intention, right speech comes into being; in one of right speech, right action comes into being; in one of right action, right livelihood comes into being; in one of right livelihood, right effort comes into being; in one of right effort, right mindfulness comes into being; in one of right mindfulness, right concentration comes into being.” – *Mahacattarisaka Sutta*

Right Thought.

Right Thinking is the bridge between Right View and Right Action.

“The development of right thought in the Buddha’s Path means a gradual uncovering and resolution of unrecognized interior drives, until at last a practitioner is able to observe that although he may *seem* to be thinking and acting with clarity and logic there is, in fact, an emotional block (perhaps more than one controlling the direction of his so-called “reasoning” and preventing it from moving beyond a fixed familiar point).” - Walpola Rahula

Right Speech.

“Five points to be borne in mind by a monk wishing to rebuke another: (a) I will speak at the proper time, not the wrong time, (b) I will state the truth, not what is false, (c) I will speak gently, not roughly, (d) I will speak for his good, not for his harm, (e) I will speak with love in my heart, not with enmity.” – *Sangiti Sutta*

Right Livelihood.

Five kinds of wrong livelihood for lay people: dealing in arms, beings, meat, intoxicants, and poisons.

Right Effort.

“Proper effort is not the effort to make something particular happen. It is the effort to be aware and awake in each moment, the effort to overcome laziness and defilement, the effort to make each activity of our day meditation.” – Jack Kornfield

Four Great Efforts:

(1) The effort to cut off unwholesome states that have already arisen.

- (2) The effort to prevent the arising of unwholesome states that have not yet arisen.
- (3) The effort to preserve the wholesome states that have already arisen.
- (4) The effort to encourage wholesome states that have not yet arisen.

“Here a monk rouses his will, makes an effort, stirs up energy, exerts his mind and strives to prevent the arising of unarisen evil unwholesome mental states. He rouses his will . . . and strives to overcome evil unwholesome mental states that have arisen. He rouses his will . . . and strives to produce unarisen wholesome mental states. He rouses his will . . . and strives to maintain wholesome mental states that have arisen, not to let them fade away, to bring them to greater growth, to the full perfection of development.”
– *Sangiti Sutta*

Right Mindfulness.

The Buddha taught four things to be mindful of: our body, our feelings, our mind, and the objects of our mind.

Right Concentration

Right Concentration becomes the basis of right views, right aspiration, and the other steps of the Noble Eightfold Path, which is now experienced on a higher level, and this spiral-like progression is continued until complete liberation is attained.

The Chinese character for concentration means, literally, “maintaining evenness.”

• Eight Consciousnesses (Buddhist Psychology, Mahāyāna teaching):

- (1) The consciousness of sight (eye-consciousness)
- (2) The consciousness of hearing (ear-consciousness)
- (3) The consciousness of smell (smell-consciousness)
- (4) The consciousness of taste (taste-consciousness)
- (5) The consciousness of touch (body-consciousness)
- (6) The mental consciousness (mind-consciousness)
- (7) The manas consciousness (spiritual or “defiled-mind” consciousness)
- (8) The ālaya-vijñāna (store consciousness or universal consciousness)

The first six kinds of consciousness are an amplification of the fifth skandha.

“In the *Lankavatara Sutra* the sixth consciousness is defined as intellectual consciousness, which sorts out and judges the results of the five kinds of sense-consciousness. The eighth consciousness, on the other hand, is compared to the ocean, on the surface of which currents, waves and whirlpools are formed, while its depth remains motionless, unperturbed, pure and clear . . . Mediating between the universal and the individual-intellectual consciousness is the seventh consciousness (*manas*), which takes part in both sides. It represents the stabilizing element of the mind.” – Lama Govinda

Cognition, judgement, and decision making are directly related to the sense organ of the brain and they comprise what can be called the “sixth consciousness in the narrow sense.” The seventh consciousness relates not so much to the physical organ of the brain as to the mind itself, to self-centeredness . . . The “sixth consciousness in the narrow sense” disappears at death. Only the latter two continue.” – Sheng-yen

The conception of ego-hood in the unenlightened individual comes from the *manas* consciousness, while its intuitive function can direct that same limited ego toward the universal and the transcendent. Our sense of oneness arises there, as does *Bodhicitta*. It conveys all the sense data gathered by the six senses to the store consciousness. Roshi Kapleau likens the manas to flypaper; it has nothing on it (is nothing in itself), but is ready to have the “I thought” stick to it.

“*Manas* is that element of our consciousness which holds the balance between the individual qualities on the one side and the spiritual qualities on the other. It is that which either binds us to the world of the senses or which liberates us from them.” – Lama Govinda

The store-consciousness is inactive, but the other seven consciousnesses are active. The store-consciousness is unconscious, while the other seven are conscious – that is, aware of objects. It is simply a series of seeds, each momentary, each giving rise to its successor. It contains not only defiled seeds, but also pure dharmas . . . As the person progresses toward enlightenment, the defilements are gradually eliminated and displaced by untainted dharmas until finally there occurs a revolution of the personality-base.

- Eight Worldly Conditions, Winds (*loka-dhamma*):
gain and loss
fame and shame
praise and blame
happiness and misery

Forces that can blow us off course. Need for conscious restraint, for checking our motivations. Fleeting impulses which can cause suffering if acted upon.

- Ten Fetters (factors that bind individuals to samsaric existence):
 - (1) Belief in personality
 - (2) Skepticism (Five Hindrances)
 - (3) Attachment to rules and rituals
 - (4) Sensuous craving (Five Hindrances, Three Taints)
 - (5) Ill will (Five Hindrances)
 - (6) Craving for material existence, for being (Three Taints)
 - (7) Craving for non-material existence, for non-being
 - (8) Conceit
 - (9) Restlessness (Five Hindrances)
 - (10) Ignorance (Three Taints)

Blake’s “mind-forged manacles.” Even the dharma must be laid aside once its purpose is served – parable of the raft.

- Ten Stages of the Bodhisattva’s Enlightenment (Mahāyāna teaching, *Avatamsaka Sutra*):
 - (1) Stage of Great Joy (initial determination, generosity, *dāna* paramita)
 - (2) Stage of Spotless Purity (universal compassion, no transgression of the precepts)
 - (3) State of Illumination (practice, doing good, mastering all *samādhis*)
 - (4) Stage of Intense Wisdom (burning away all passions, attachments)

- (5) Stage of Invincible Strength (skillful means, going beyond all dualities)
- (6) Stage of Direct Presence (correct state of mind, face to face with reality)
- (7) Stage of Far-reaching (non-regression/backsliding, always absorbed in Dharma)
- (8) Stage of Immovable Steadfastness (vast, effortless freedom, never abandoning sentient beings)
- (9) Stage of Meritorious Wisdom (“prince of teachings,” attainment of deep liberation)
- (10) Stage of the Assembling Clouds of the Dharma (“coronation,” complete accomplishment)

- Ten Questions which the Buddha refused to answer:

1-2. Is the world eternal or not?

3-4. Is the world infinite or not?

5-6. Is the soul the same as the body or not?

7-10. Does the Tathagata (a) exist, (b) not exist, (c) both exist and not exist, (d) neither exist nor not exist, after death? [Four Erroneous Views]

- Twelve links (*nidānas*) of Dependent Origination (the investigation into the cause of suffering):

- (1) In dependence upon ignorance (illusion of self) karmic and mental tendencies arise
 - (2) In dependence upon these karmic energies (formations) consciousness arises
 - (3) In dependence upon (dualistic) consciousness, the psycho-physical organism arises
 - (4) In dependence upon the psycho-physical organism (body/mind), the sixfold sense-activity arises
 - (5) In dependence upon the sixfold sense activity, contact (impressions) arises
 - (6) In dependence upon contact (of the senses with their objects), feelings arise
 - (7) In dependence upon feeling, craving (*tanhā*) arises
 - (8) In dependence upon craving, clinging arises
 - (9) In dependence upon clinging, the subconscious process of becoming arises
 - (10) In dependence upon the process of becoming, rebirth arises
 - (11) In dependence upon rebirth;
 - (12) old age (decay) and death arising, accompanied by sorrow and grief
- *The Psychological Attitude of Early Buddhist Philosophy*, Lama Govinda

Depicted on Tibetan ‘Wheel of Life’ manadala:

- (1) Ignorance: A blind man = inability to see the truth, mistaking the unreal for the real
- (2) Karmic formations: A potter = creating with raw materials
- (3) Conditioned consciousness: A monkey = restless swinging from object to object, karmic urges
- (4) Identification, mind and body: Five men in a boat = our form transporting our karmic inheritance
- (5) Six Senses: House with six windows = the sense faculties (windows) in our form (house)
- (6) Contact: Lovers embracing = sense impressions, created by sense organs and sense data
- (7) Feelings, sensations: Man with eye pierced by an arrow = contact produces feelings that blind us
- (8) Craving, desire: Man drinking = insatiable thirst (*tanhā*) caused by agreeable sensations

- (9) Grasping, attachment: Monkey clinging unhappily to a fruit tree = unable to let go, to break free
- (10) Becoming: Pregnant woman = bonds of life strengthened by attachment
- (11) Birth: Woman giving birth (always seen as the beginning of death)
- (12) Old age and death: An old man (walks towards death burdened by his attachments)

Not a linear progression but cyclic, having no beginning or end. Dependent Origination or Dependent Co-arising is the teaching of emptiness. The Buddha realized that “all phenomena arise depending on conditions,” and starting with death he traced back each of the factors in the chain. The Therādvā tradition stresses the importance of moral responsibility in regards to Dependent Origination. The Mahāyāna tradition focuses on the dynamics of the interrelationships, how everything arises with everything else. Nirvana is by definition changeless, while Dependent Co-arising is the process of change or samsara.

The Bodhisatta Vipassi thought: “With what being present does aging-and-death occur? What conditions aging-and-death?” And then, monks, as a result of the wisdom born of profound concentration the realization dawned on him: “Birth being present, aging and death occurs, birth conditions aging-and-death.” Then he thought, “What conditions birth?” And the realization dawned on him: “Becoming conditions birth” . . . “What conditions becoming? . . . “Clinging conditions becoming” . . . “Craving conditions clinging” . . . “Feeling conditions craving” etc – *Mahapadana Sutta*

The Buddha said that one who sees Dependent Origination sees the Dhamma, and one who sees the Dhamma sees Dependent Origination.

“This dependent origination is profound and appears profound. It is through not understanding, not penetrating this doctrine that this generation has become like a tangled ball of string, covered as with a blight, tangled like coarse grass, unable to pass beyond states of woe, the ill destiny, ruin and the round of birth-and-death.” – *Mahanidana Sutta*

“When this exists, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises. When this does not exist, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases.” – *Culasakuludayi Sutta*

Karmic Formations. Form-creating activities. “*Samskara* here is volitional action, synonymous with *cetanā* (will) and *karma* (effect-creating deed) in contradistinction to *samskara-skandha*, the group of mental formations, which, as a result of those volitional acts, become a cause of new activity and constitute the actively directing principle or character of a new consciousness . . . Just as a potter forms vessels out of formless clay, so we create through deeds, words and thoughts, out of the still unformed material of our life and our sense-impressions, the vessel of our future consciousness, namely that which gives it form and direction.” – Lama Govinda, *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism*

“The chain of dependent origination is broken at the link between feeling and craving. Feeling arises necessarily because the body acquired through past craving is subject to the maturation of past karma. However, if one does not delight in feeling, craving will

not have the opportunity to arise and set off reactions of like and dislike that provide further fuel for the round, and thus the round will come to an end.” – Bhikkhu Bodhi

Clinging. There are four kinds of clinging: clinging to sensual pleasures, clinging to views, clinging to rules and observances, and clinging to a doctrine of self. With the arising of craving there is the arising of clinging. With the cessation of craving there is the cessation of clinging. The way leading to the cessation of clinging is just this Noble Eightfold Path.

“Whenever you see a form, let there be just seeing. Whenever you hear a sound, let there be just hearing. Whenever you smell an odor, let there be just smelling. Whenever you taste a flavor, let there be just tasting. Whenever you experience a physical sensation, let there be just sensing. And when a thought arises, let it be just a natural phenomena arising in the mind. When it is like this, there will be no self. There will be no moving about here and there, and no stopping anywhere. That is the end of suffering.” – Buddha

“Old age occasions two effects: it produces changes in faculties and provides the cause for meeting in death. Death also occasions two effects: it destroys the compounded and causes continuation through lack of perfect knowledge.” – *Avatamsaka Sutra*

- Eighteen Dhātu (Mahāyāna teaching):

<i>Organ</i>	<i>Field</i>	<i>Consciousness</i>
1. Eye	Form and Color	Seeing
2. Ear	Sound	Hearing
3. Nose	Scent	Smelling
4. Tongue	Flavor	Tasting
5. Body	The Tangible	Feeling
6. Mind	Thought	Thinking

“These are the eighteen *dhātu*. Comprising as they do both the subjective and objective realms in their totality, they embrace all of existence. Consequently, to say that they are all empty is tantamount to saying the everything is empty.” – *Transmitting the Light*, Translated by Francis H. Cook

“Dependent on the eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as condition there is feeling. What one feels, that one perceives. What one perceives, that one thinks about. What one thinks about, that one mentally proliferates. With what one has mentally proliferated as the source, perceptions and notions tinged by mental proliferation beset a person with respect to past, future, and present forms cognizable through the eye.” – *Madhupindika Sutta*

“The same pattern is repeated for each of the other sense bases. The elder Mahakaccana then connects the entire exposition with the principle of conditionality, showing how each term in the series arises in dependence on the preceding term and ceases with the cessation of its predecessor. Instead of correctly comprehending the objects of perception, the deluded mind spins out a complex mental commentary that embellishes things with the erroneous notions of ‘mine,’ ‘I,’ and ‘my self.’” – Bhikkhu Bodhi