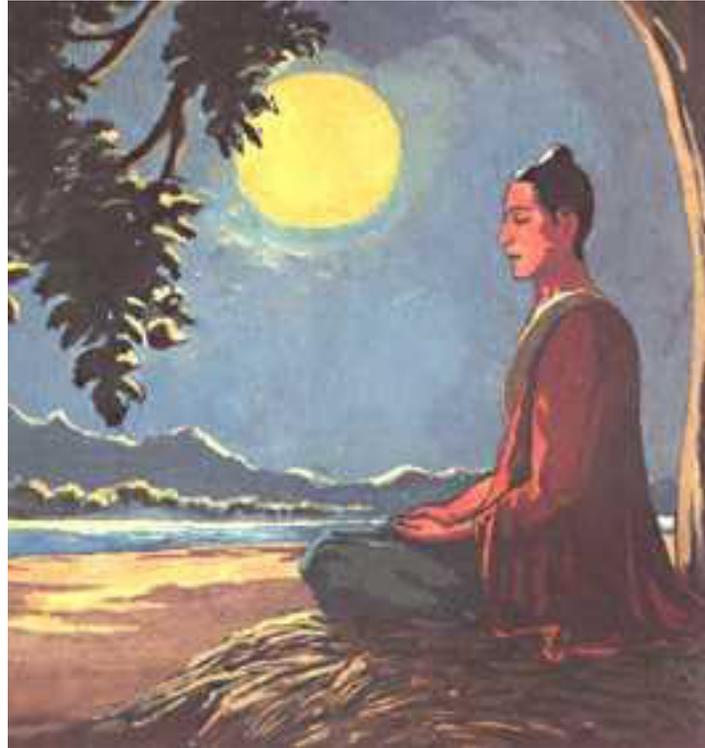


SIDDHARTHA GAUTAMA BUDDHA



A WEEK: It is necessary not to be Christian to appreciate the beauty and significance of the life of Christ. I know that some will have hard thoughts of me, when they hear their Christ named beside my Buddha, yet I am sure that I am willing they should love their Christ more than my Buddha, for the love is the main thing, and I like him too. "God is the letter Ku, as well as Khu." Why need Christians be still intolerant and superstitious?



GAUTAMA BUDDHA

GAUTAMA BUDDHA

THE INSTANT



When a monk was asked the question, what is the original Buddha-mind, he replied, "Wall, fence, tiles, stones...." "Wall, fence, tiles, stones" symbolize "everyday mind." This mind is not concerned with the past or future worlds - it is continually working now, in the present, and concerns itself only with **this precise moment**. "Everyday mind" is its own accomplishment, self-contained and self-fulfilling. Ancient times are cut off and past, present, and future exist together in each moment.... "Everyday mind" opens its gates for each moment of existence - life and death, coming and going enter freely. Do not think of heaven and earth as this world or the next; know that they co-exist eternally in each passing moment. Generally, people never think about the nature of heaven and earth unless something unexpected occurs. For me, a sudden and unexpected sneeze is like an echo that symbolizes the instantaneous coexistence of life and death, heaven and earth in each moment. The entire content and meaning of heaven and earth and its relationship to the mind reduces itself to one eternal moment. If we fail to understand this we will never grasp the significance of a sneeze or any seemingly minor occurrence.



GAUTAMA BUDDHA

GAUTAMA BUDDHA

566 BCE



Siddhartha [Gautama Buddha](#) was born, according to one account, at Lumbini in the foothills of the Himalayas, in Gaya, which is now in the state of Bihar in [India](#). According to another account he was born in Kapilavastu, in the Sakya republic of the Kosala kingdom of what is now India. His father was the leader Suddhodana and his mother Maya Devi, of the Kshatriya caste of the Shakya tribal group. His birth name was Siddhartha and it is because he was born into the Gautama (in Sanskrit) or Gotama (in Pali) clan he is often called, in Sanskrit, Gautama, or in Pali, Gotama. This prince would grow up in luxury in Sakka, Nepal and be married at age 16 to Yasodhara.



558 BCE

From about this point until 491 BCE, Bimbisara, King of Magadha (an Indian kingdom) would be expanding the kingdom, as a precursor to later expansion of the Maurya Empire. Bimbisara was a friend of Jina (Founder of Jainism in [India](#)) and a protector of Siddhartha [Gautama Buddha](#). This king's support helped Buddhism become a popular movement.

- 559 Cyrus the first king of Persia.
- 538 The kingdom of Babylon finished; that city being taken by Cyrus, who in 536, issues an edict for the return of the Jews.
- 534 The first tragedy was acted at Athens, on a waggon, by Thespis.
- 526 Learning is greatly encouraged at Athens, and a public library first founded.
- 515 The second Temple at Jerusalem is finished under Darius.
- 509 Tarquin the seventh and last king of the Romans is expelled, and Rome is governed by two consuls, and other republican magistrates, till the battle of Pharsalia, being a space of 461 years.
- 504 Sardis taken and burnt by the Athenians, which gave occasion to the Persian invasion of Greece.
- 486 Æschylus, the Greek poet, first gains the prize of tragedy.
- 481 Xerxes the Great, king of Persia, begins his expedition against Greece.
- 458 Ezra is sent from Babylon to Jerusalem, with the captive Jews, and the vessels of gold and silver, &c. being seventy weeks of years, or 490 years before the crucifixion of our Saviour.
- 454 The Romans send to Athens for Solon's laws.
- 451 The Decemvirs created at Rome, and the laws of the twelve tables compiled and ratified.
- 430 The history of the Old Testament finishes about this time. Malachi the last of the prophets.
- 400 Socrates the founder of moral philosophy among the Greeks, believes the immortality of the soul, and a state of rewards and punishments, for which, and other sublime doctrines, he is put to death by the Athenians, who soon after repent, and erect to his memory a statue of brass.
- 331 Alexander the Great, king of Macedon, conquers Darius king of Persia, and other nations of Asia. 323, Dies at Babylon, and his empire is divided by his generals into four kingdoms.
- 285 Dionysius of Alexandria, began his astronomical æra, on Monday, June 26, being the first who found the exact solar year to consist of 365 days, 5 hours, and 49 minutes.
- 284 Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, employs seventy-two interpreters to translate the Old Testament into the Greek language, which is called the Septuagint.

GAUTAMA BUDDHA

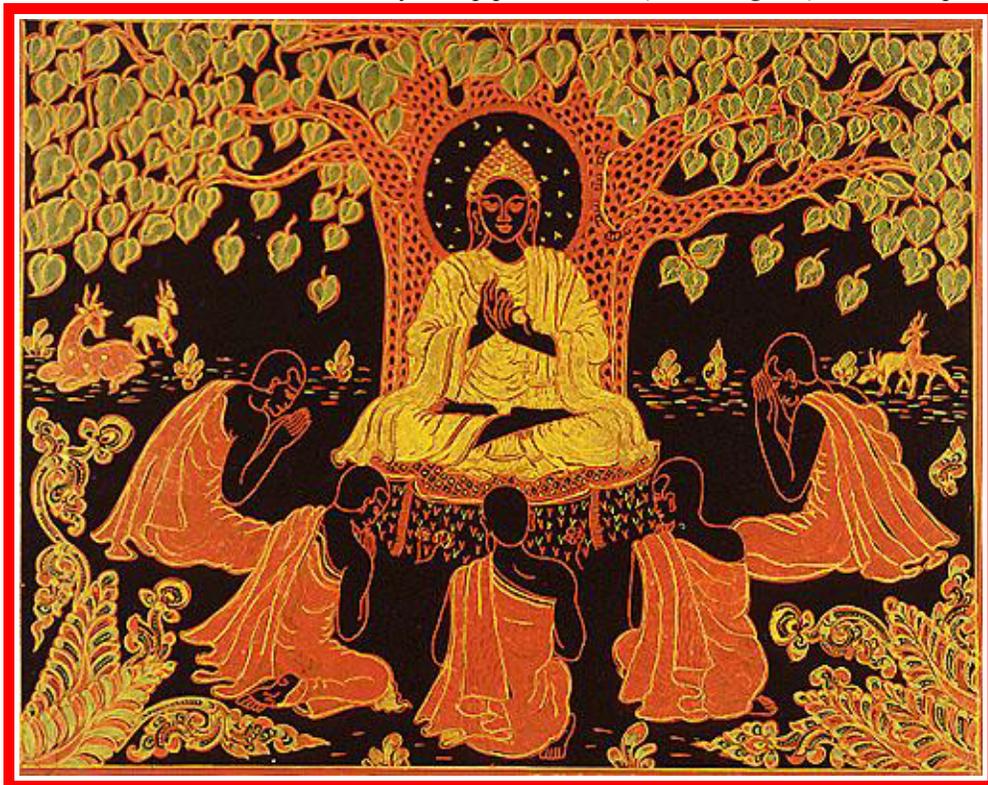
GAUTAMA BUDDHA

537 BCE

Life at the palace not being difficult enough to be interesting, at the age of 29 Siddhartha [Gautama Buddha](#) became a wandering ascetic, traveling south to the Magadha kingdom of [India](#) in search of someone from whom he could learn the nature of human existence.

521 BCE

The ascetic Siddhartha, who would be known as [Gautama Buddha](#), began his decade-long journey to the holy city of Benares on the River Ganges in [India](#) (now Varanasi, in southeast Uttar Pradesh) where he would deliver his first sermon underneath a banyan or pipal or bo tree (*Ficus religiosa*) in the deer park of Sarnath.

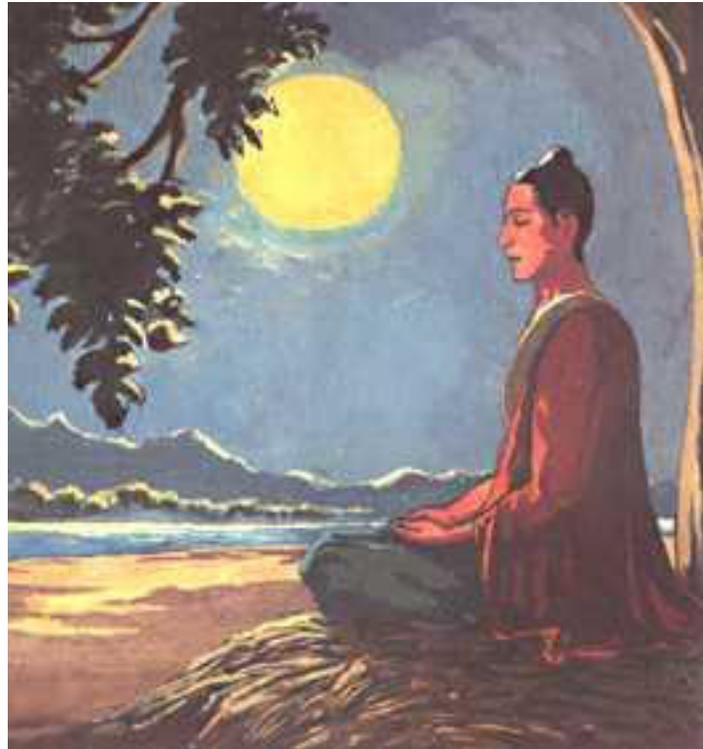


In the illustration above, what he is sitting on is a pile of kusa grass. For the uses of kusa grass, such as for dry sitting, refer to the LAWS OF MENU. Even a sage needs to keep his butt dry and warm.

GAUTAMA BUDDHA

GAUTAMA BUDDHA

Here is another, slightly more realistic, presentation of the kusa-grass pad:



The title “Buddha” that is applied to him is never a proper name but literally means “awakened one” or “enlightened one.” The Pali Tipitaka is presently presumed to be the earliest still-extant record of his discourses.



GAUTAMA BUDDHA

GAUTAMA BUDDHA

At about this point the person we refer to as [Lao-tze](#), to whom we attribute the 81 epigrams of the [Tao Tê CHING](#) (well, it was in fact written by somebody), has been traditionally reputed to have died in [China](#) (well, in fact he died sometime somewhere).

TAOISM

At some point during his 30s [Confucius](#) would begin to accept as his pupils various *chün-tzu* (male children of noble family); that is, he would transform himself into what we would today refer to as a schoolmaster.



500 BCE

There is a record that Siddhartha [Gautama Buddha](#) survived by eating [cannabis](#). Presumably this was the seed of the hemp plant, which is of significant nutritional value (it is nowadays a principal ingredient of the sort of birdseed one buys in a supermarket in a big sack).

Plant	Name	Place
Artichoke	<i>Cynara scolymus</i>	Western Mediterranean
Cabbage	<i>Brassica oleracea</i>	Europe
Lettuce	<i>Lactuca sativa</i>	Mediterranean/Asia Minor
Carrot	<i>Daucus carota</i>	Afghanistan

PLANTS

OTHERS

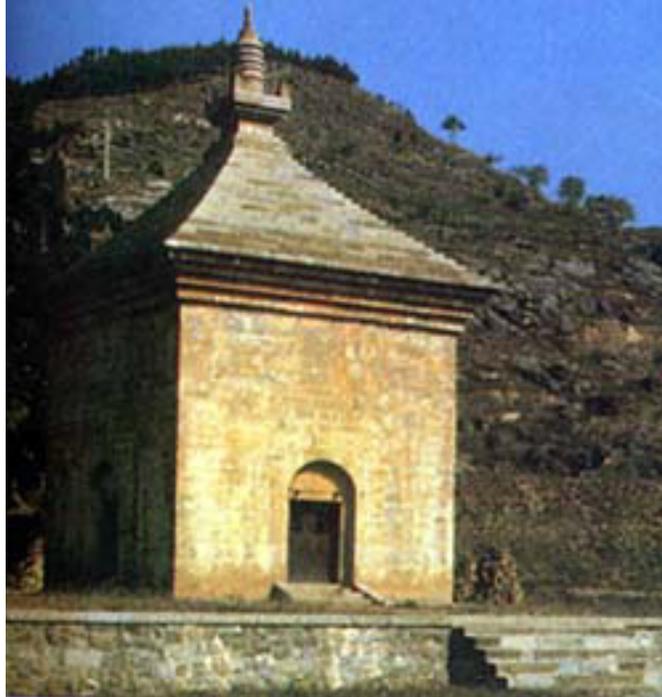
486 BCE

[Siddhartha Gautama Buddha](#), early in his 80s, ate some spoiled food in Kushinagara in the Malla republic of the Magadha kingdom of [India](#) and died.

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611 CE

A four-gate pagoda was erected on the grounds of a monastery in Shandong province. Facing in each of the four cardinal directions was a massive imperturbable seated statue of the [Akshobhya Buddha](#).



(In 1997  the Buddha facing east, the best preserved of the four, would be assaulted twice by a gang who would swaddle the head in blankets and attempt to cut it free with a diamond saw. On their 2nd attempt they would succeed in knocking the head from the torso with a sledgehammer. When the [Chinese](#) police would catch up with these people, several local government officials would become suddenly unemployed, and their ringleader would be sent to prison for life, which in China, which has a plenty of people, actually does mean for-life-and-be-grateful-we-didn't-just-shoot-you-in-the-back-of-your-neck-and-harvest-your-warm-kidneys. However, the imperturbable 159-pound head would be nowhere to be found, presumably having been spirited out of the country via [Hong Kong](#). In 2002  the head would turn up, as a gift to a Buddhist master on the island of Taiwan, and he would cause it to be returned to the Shandong monastery, where it would be reconnected with its torso by means of an iron rod down the neck.)

 July 1, Friday: [Robert Spence Hardy](#) was born at Preston in Horsforth, Yorkshire, to John Hardy and Ann Spence Hardy (who had gotten married in York on August 18, 1802). He would become a Wesleyan Methodist reverend, would produce three children with Mary Anne Turton (1809-1846), and would make three-count-'em-three journeys as a missionary to [Buddhist](#) (which is to say, pagan, heathen, idolatrous, materialistic, atheistic, etc.) [Ceylon](#).



GAUTAMA BUDDHA

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1839

Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Baroda died. This maharaja had been a fan of combative sports, supportive of a court wrestler named Sadika Gilgoo or “Man Mountain.”

[James Robert Ballantyne](#)'s A GRAMMAR OF THE MAHRATTA LANGUAGE (Edinburgh), PRINCIPLES OF PERSIAN CALIGRAPHY, ILLUSTRATED BY LITHOGRAPHIC PLATES OF THE NASKH-TA'LIK CHARACTER (London and Edinburgh), and ELEMENTS OF HINDI AND BRAJ BHĀKHĀ GRAMMAR: COMPILED FOR THE USE OF THE EAST-INDIA COLLEGE AT HAILEYBURY (London and Edinburgh: Sold by J. Madden and Co., 8, Leadenhall Street, London; C. Smith, 87, Princes Street, Edinburgh; and at the Military Academy, Lothian Road).

In the previous year the British government had disassociated the East India Company from obligations into which it had entered, to maintain the temples of [India](#). Forget your promises, that's an order! In this year the Reverend [Robert Spence Hardy](#)'s pamphlet THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND IDOLATRY IN [CEYLON](#) would cry out again for an end to the “unnatural, sinful, and pernicious connexion between the British Government of [Ceylon](#) and idolatry.” Just as the sole purpose for the existence of the Roman Empire way back then obviously had been to facilitate the initial flourishing of Christianity in the known world, he argued, the sole purpose of the British Empire in the present era obviously must be to consolidate and hegemonize this entire globe under the sway of Christianity. The issue was that when the British had taken possession of [Ceylon](#) in 1815 their emissaries had done so with the explicit pledge, made to the Buddhist *sangha* and the Kandyan chiefs, that they would be responsible for maintenance of the Tooth Relic in Kandy — the ceremonies attendant upon this annual act of idolatry were at the present time costing the crown the unholy sum of £15.19.9½ per year! (Although such an expense might seem to be small potatoes in the eyes of some, it amounts to a jab in the eye of God — God will not be mocked!) It was “the bounden duty of the government of the country, from its possession of Truth, to discountenance the system [of [Buddhism](#)] by every legitimate means.” Buddhism must be confronted in a struggle that can end only “in the discomfiture of those who have risen against the Lord and his Christ.”

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GAUTAMA BUDDHA

[Opium](#) was [India](#)'s largest export.



The first war between the British and the [Chinese](#) over the [opium](#) trade began.

A very popular medical book that had first appeared in 1830, Dr. John C. Gunn's DOMESTIC MEDICINE OR POOR MAN'S FRIEND, IN THE HOUSE OF AFFLICTION, PAIN AND SICKNESS, reached its 9th edition despite being all of a thousand pages. A feature of this medical treatise was a sizeable section titled "Of the Passions" which attempted to deliver advice on mental health, religion, and love. The "passions" analyzed were those of:

- fear
- anger
- love
- jealousy
- joy
- grief
- intemperance

Thankfully, the remedies which the popular Dr. Gunn commended to his self-medicants for their "passions" were not drugs such as [opiates](#) but amounted instead to:

- religion
- education
- self-discipline

1840

The Reverend [Theodore Parker](#)'s "Cudworth's INTELLECTUAL SYSTEM" appeared in [The Christian Examiner](#). ([Waldo Emerson](#) had the Thomas Birch edition of 1820 in his library.)

CUDWORTH'S SYSTEM, I
 CUDWORTH'S SYSTEM, II
 CUDWORTH'S SYSTEM, III

At the end of the journal entries for this year, [Emerson](#) listed his readings in Oriental materials during the period: "[Buddha](#); Vedas; [Sir William Jones](#); [Zoroaster](#); Koran; [Ockley](#), History of the Saracens."



CHALDEAN ORACLES



1843

April: In this month and the following one, two articles on Buddhist thought by Professor Eugène Burnouf were appearing in La Revue Indépendante, a prominent French journal which was presumably being stocked by Miss Elizabeth Palmer Peabody at her bookstore in downtown Boston. This month’s article was entitled Fragments des Prédications de Buddha. Professor Burnouf was the 1st to translate the LOTUS SUTRA from Sanskrit into a European language and eventually Henry Thoreau would possess a personal copy of the 1852 edition of his LE LOTUS DE LA BONNE LOI, TRADUIT DU SANSKRIT, ACCOMPAGNÉ D’UN COMMENTAIRE ET DE VINGT ET UN MÉMOIRES RELATIFS AU BUDDHISME, PAR M. E. BURNOUF (Paris: Imprimerie nationale). An English translation of this French translation of Chapter V of the Sanskrit of THE LOTUS SUTRA would appear in THE DIAL for January 1844, and presumably either Thoreau or Peabody, busy as beavers, prepared that translation — which would amount to the very 1st presentation of any part of this essential Buddhist scripture in the English language!

THOREAU AND CHINA

Thoreau edited this issue (Volume III, Number 4) of THE DIAL.

THE DIAL, APRIL 1843

The issue carried 21 quotes in its “Ethnical Scriptures: Sayings of Confucius” section, but these are not the ones which Thoreau would (probably later in this same year) retranslate from the French of M.J. Pauthier’s CONFUCIUS ET MENCIVS. Thoreau was still relying upon English editions, at least three of which he had at this point perused, and the translation he was relying upon at this point was one made in 1809 by the Reverend Joshua J. Marshman.¹

JOSHUA J. MARSHMAN

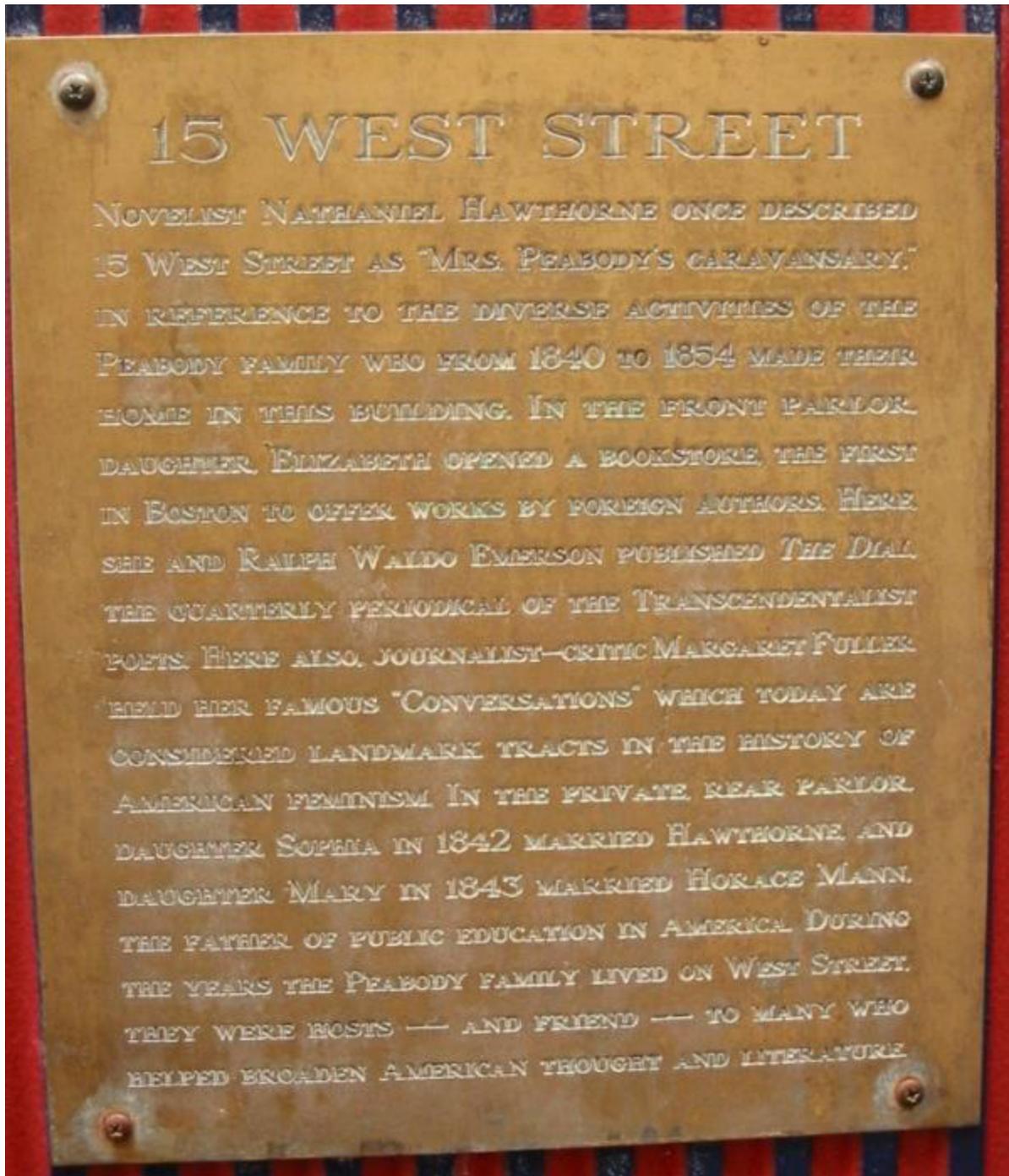
Heaven speaks, but what language does it use to preach to men, that there is a sovereign principle from which all things depend; a sovereign principle which makes them act and move? Its motion is its language; it reduces the seasons to their time; it agitates nature, it makes it produce. This silence is eloquent. (ANALECTS or LUN-YÜ, one of THE FOUR BOOKS), Book XVII, Chapter 19)



MENCIVS

LIGHT FROM CHINA

1. We know he read the English translation by Father Couplet, a Jesuit in China from 1658 to 1680, which had been in 1687 the very first notice of the writings of Confucius for an European audience, in an 1835 edition, plus two by a Baptist missionary in India in 1809, the Reverend Joshua J. Marshman, and one done in 1828 by David Collie, a member of the London Missionary Society who was at one time the principal of the Protestant Anglo-Chinese College at Malacca.





Ethnical Scriptures.

Sayings Of Confucius.

1. Chee says, if in the morning I hear about the right way, and in the evening die, I can be happy.
2. A man's life is properly connected with virtue. The life of the evil man is preserved by mere good fortune.
3. Coarse rice for food, water to drink, and the bended arm for a pillow – happiness may be enjoyed even in these. Without virtue, riches and honor seem to me like a passing cloud.
4. A wise and good man was Hooi. A piece of bamboo was his dish, a cocoa-nut his cup, his dwelling a miserable shed. Men could not sustain the sight of his wretchedness; but Hooi did not change the serenity of his mind. A wise and good man was Hooi.
5. Chee-koong said, Were they discontented? The sage replies, They sought and obtained complete virtue;—how then could they be discontented?
6. Chee says, Yaou is the man who, in torn clothes or common apparel, sits with those dressed in furred robes without feeling shame.
7. To worship at a temple not your own is mere flattery.
8. Chee says, grieve not that men know not you; grieve that you are ignorant of men.
9. How can a man remain concealed! How can a man remain concealed! Have no friend unlike yourself.
10. Chee-Yaou enquired respecting filial piety. Chee says, the filial piety of the present day is esteemed merely ability to nourish a parent. This care is extended to a dog or a horse. Every domestic animal can obtain food. Beside veneration, what is the difference?
11. Chee entered the great temple, frequently enquiring about things. One said, who says that the son of the Chou man understands propriety? In the great temple he is constantly asking questions. Chee heard and replied- "This is propriety."
12. Choy-ee slept in the afternoon. Chee says, rotten wood is unfit for carving: a dirty wall cannot receive a beautiful color. To Ee what advice can I give?
13. A man's transgression partakes of the nature of his company. Having knowledge, to apply it; not having knowledge, to confess your ignorance; this is real knowledge.
14. Chee says, to sit in silence and recall past ideas, to study and feel no anxiety, to instruct men without weariness; —have I this ability within me?
15. In forming a mountain, were I to stop when one basket of earth is lacking, I actually stop; and in the same manner were I to add to the level ground though but one basket of earth daily, I really go forward.



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GAUTAMA BUDDHA

16. A soldier of the kingdom of Ci lost his buckler; and having sought after it a long time in vain; he comforted himself with this reflection; "A soldier has lost his buckler, but a soldier of our camp will find it; he will use it."

17. The wise man never hastens, neither in his studies nor his words; he is sometimes, as it were, mute; but when it concerns him to act and practice virtue, he, as I may say, precipitates all.

18. The truly wise man speaks little; he is little eloquent. I see not that eloquence can be of very great use to him.

19. Silence is absolutely necessary to the wise man. Great speeches, elaborate discourses, pieces of eloquence, ought to be a language unknown to him; his actions ought to be his language. As for me, I would never speak more. Heaven speaks, but what language does it use to preach to men, that there is a sovereign principle from which all things depend; a sovereign principle which makes them to act and move? Its motion is its language; it reduces the seasons to their time; it agitates nature; it makes it produce. This silence is eloquent.²

2. This last of the Marshman translations which Thoreau inserted into THE DIAL is now considered to have been a Taoist inclusion in the Confucian ANALECTS, so we cannot ever allege that Thoreau had **no contact whatever** with Taoism.



Dark Ages.

WE should read history as little critically as we consider the landscape, and be more interested by the atmospheric tints, and various lights and shades which the intervening spaces create, than by its groundwork and composition. It is the morning now turned evening and seen in, the west, – the same sun, but a new light and atmosphere. Its beauty is like the sunset; not a fresco painting on a wall, flat and bounded, but atmospheric and roving or free. In reality history fluctuates as the face of the landscape from morning to evening. What is of moment is its hue and color. Time hides no treasures; we want not its *then* but its *now*. We do not complain that the mountains in the horizon are blue and indistinct; they are the more like the heavens.

Of what moment are facts that can be lost, – which need to be commemorated? The monument of death will outlast the memory of the dead. The pyramids do not tell the tale that was confided to them; the living fact commemorates itself. Why look in the dark for light? Strictly speaking, the historical societies have not recovered one fact from oblivion, but are themselves instead of the fact that is lost. The researcher is more memorable than the researched. The crowd stood admiring the mist, and the dim outlines of the trees seen through it, when one of their number advanced to explore the phenomenon, and with fresh admiration, all eyes were turned on his dimly retreating figure. It is astonishing with how little cooperation of the societies, the past is remembered. Its story has indeed had a different muse than has been assigned it. There is a good instance of the manner in which all history began, in Alwakidi's Arabian Chronicle. "I was informed by Ahmed Almatin Aljorhami, who had it from Rephaa Ebn Kais Alamiri, who had it from Saiph Ebn Fabalah Alchatquarmi, who had it from Thabet Ebn Alkamah, who said he was present at the action." These fathers of history were not anxious to preserve, but to learn the fact; and hence it was not forgotten. Critical acumen is exerted in vain to uncover the past; the *past* cannot be *presented*; we cannot know what we are not. But one veil hangs over past, present, and future, and it is the province of the historian to find out not what was, but what is. Where a battle has been fought, you will find nothing but the bones of men and beasts; where a battle is being fought there are hearts beating. We will sit on a mound and muse, and not try to make these skeletons stand on their legs attain. Does nature remember, think you, that they were men, or not rather that they are bones ?

Ancient history has an air of antiquity; it should be more modern. It is written as if the spectator should be thinking of the backside of the picture on the wall, or as if the author expected the dead would be his readers, and wished to detail to them their own experience. Men seem anxious to accomplish an orderly retreat through the centuries, earnestly rebuilding the works behind, as they are battered down by the encroachments of time; but while they loiter, they and their works both fall a prey to the arch enemy. It has neither the venerableness of antiquity, nor the freshness of the modern. It does as if it



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would go to the beginning of things, which natural history might with reason assume to do; but consider the Universal History, and then tell us— when did burdock and plantain sprout first ? It has been so written for the most part, that the times it describes are with remarkable propriety called *dark ages*. They are dark, as one has observed, because we are so in the dark about them. The sun rarely shines in history, what with the dust and confusion; and when we meet with any cheering fact which implies the presence of this luminary, we excerpt and modernize it. As when we read in the history of the Saxons, that Edwin of Northumbria "caused stakes to be fixed in the highways where he had seen a clear spring," and "brazen dishes were chained to them, to refresh the weary sojourner, whose fatigues Edwin had himself experienced." This is worth all Arthur's twelve battles.

But it is fit the past should be dark; though the darkness is not so much a quality of the past, as of tradition. It is not a distance of time but a distance of relation, which makes thus dusky its memorials. What is near to the heart of this generation is fair and bright still. Greece lies outspread fair and sunshiny in floods of light, for there is the sun and day-light in her literature and art, Homer does not allow us to forget that the sun shone — nor Phidias, nor the Parthenon. Yet no era has been wholly dark, nor will we too hastily submit to the historian, and congratulate ourselves on a blaze of light. If we could pierce the obscurity of those remote years we should find it light enough; only there is not our day. — Some creatures are made to see in the dark. — There has always been the same amount of light in the world. The new and missing stars, the comets and eclipses do not affect the general illumination, for only our glasses appreciate them. The eyes of the oldest fossil remains, they tell us, indicate that the same laws of light prevailed then as now. Always the laws of light are the same, but the modes and degrees of seeing vary. The gods are partial to no era, but steadily shines their light in the heavens, while the eye of the beholder is turned to stone. There was but the eye and the sun from the first. The ages have not added a new ray to the one, nor altered a fibre of the other.

T.



THE CULT OF NOTHINGNESS

Here is a review describing how Buddhism was being mis-appreciated, in the West during Thoreau's lifetime. It is important to understand that Thoreau had **no share whatever** in any of the various mis-appreciations of Buddhism which are here described.

Roger-Pol Droit. THE CULT OF NOTHINGNESS: THE PHILOSOPHERS AND THE BUDDHA. Translated by David Streight and Pamela Vohnson. Chapel Hill NC: U of North Carolina P, 2003

Reviewed for H_Buddhism by David R. Loy, Bunkyo University

Published by H_Buddhism in December 2003

In May this year media headlines announced the discovery that Buddhists are happier. Smaller print summarized the results of new research into the effects of meditation on brain activity, behavior, and even immune responses to flu vaccine. Richard Davidson, director of the Laboratory for Affective Neuroscience at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, and a participant in Dharamsala meetings with the Dalai Lama, used new scanning techniques to examine the brain activity of experienced meditators. MRI scanners and EEGs showed dramatic changes in brain function, including high activity in brain centers associated with positive emotions. Similar results were also achieved with new meditators. Although still provisional, these findings led the philosopher Owen Flanagan to comment in New Scientist magazine:

The most reasonable hypothesis is that there's something about conscientious Buddhist practice that results in the kind of happiness we all seek.³

Such scientific results show a rather different perception of Buddhism than the understanding that horrified Westerners throughout most of the nineteenth century. Buddhism today is usually seen as a kind of pragmatic therapy that cures or reduces suffering, but from approximately 1820 to 1890 -the period of focus for Droit's book- Europe was haunted by the nightmare of an alternative religion that denied existence and recommended annihilation. THE CULT OF NOTHINGNESS: THE PHILOSOPHERS AND THE BUDDHA summarizes and analyzes the history of this (mis)understanding. He concludes that it had less to do with the rudimentary state of Buddhist studies during that period than with Europe's fears about its own incipient nihilism, which would later ripen into the horrors of the twentieth century. "Thinking they were talking about the Buddha, Westerners were talking about themselves" (p. 21).

At the end of the eighteenth century, new translations of Indian texts were exciting European intellectuals, giving rise to hopes for another Renaissance greater than the one that had resulted from the late-medieval rediscovery of Greek texts. But it never happened. About 1820, when scholarly research first clarified

3. The research results are summarized in [Dharma Life](#) 21 (Autumn 2003): pp. 8-9.



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the distinction from Brahmanism, "Buddhism" became constructed as a religion that, amazingly, worshiped nothingness, and European commentators reacted in horror.

In their descriptions of nirvana, earlier scholars such as Francis Buchanan and Henry Thomas Colebrooke had been careful to deny that it was equivalent to annihilation. Their influence, however, was overwhelmed by the philosophical impact of Hegel and later the unsurpassed authority of Eugene Burnouf at the Collège de France. Hegel established the strong link with Nichts that would endure throughout most of the century. Instead of benefiting from the best scholarship then available, he relied on earlier sources such as de Guignes and the Abbots Banier and Grosier, evidently because their views of Buddhism fit better into his equation of pure Being with pure Nothingness. In Hegel's system this equation signified the advent of interiority, a "lack of determination" that was not really atheistic or nihilistic in the modern sense – more like the negative theology of Rhineland mystics such as Meister Eckhart. Later, Burnouf's *INTRODUCTION A L'HISTOIRE DU BUDDHISME INDIEN* (1844) was immensely influential because it provided the first rigorous study of the Buddha's teachings, thus taking Buddhist studies to a new level of sophistication, but one which firmly established the nihilistic specter: despite making cautious qualifications due to the West's still-limited knowledge, Burnouf did not hesitate to identify nirvana with total annihilation.

Burnouf's scholarly objectivity was soon supplemented by apologetic and missionary ardor. Catholic preachers such as Ozanam declared that, behind his serene mask, the Buddha was Satan himself in a new incarnation. The Buddha's cult of nothingness aroused in Felix Neve's soul the need to liberate Buddhist peoples from their errors, weakness, and immobility. Victor Cousins, who played a major role in establishing philosophical education in mid-century France, and who proclaimed that Sanskrit texts were worthy of Western philosophical attention, nevertheless followed Burnouf in reacting against the Buddhist system: it was not only an anti-religion but a counterworld, a threat to order. His follower Barthelemy Saint-Hilaire took a further step and denied that such a "deplorable and absurd" faith could be philosophically relevant, even asking whether such a strange phenomenon meant that human nature in India "is still the same nature we feel within ourselves," since Buddhism's "gloomy meaning" led only to "moral suicide" (pp. 122-23). Ernest Renan called Buddha "the atheistic Christ of India" and attacked his revolting "Gospel of Nihilism" (p. 120).

Schopenhauer discovered in Buddhism many of his favorite themes –renunciation, compassion, negation of the will to live– but relatively late, so, according to Droit, Buddhism had no significant influence on his system. However, his annexation of Buddhist principles brought the Buddhist challenge back to Europe, from missionary conversion to counteracting home-grown nihilism. Ever the philosopher, however, Schopenhauer was careful to say that nirvana could only be nothingness "for us," since the standpoint of our own existence does not allow us to say anything more about it. Would that other commentators had



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been so sensible!

The nihilistic understanding of Buddhism had a significant impact on Arthur de Gobineau's *Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races* (1853), which would become enormously influential for the Nazis and other twentieth-century racists. For Gobineau, humanity was rushing to perdition and nothingness due to degeneration caused by intermingling of the races. He viewed Buddhism as the effort of an inferior people to overthrow the racially superior Aryan Brahmins. The failure of this attempt – the fact that Buddhism was largely eliminated from India – was somewhat inconsistent with his own historical pessimism, which accepted the inevitability of decline; but it may have encouraged the Nazis to attempt their own program of extermination for the sake of racial purity.

Nietzsche, too, accepted the view of Buddhism as aspiring to nothingness, although for him it was the similarity with Christianity, not the difference, that was the problem. Despite the undoubted value of Buddhism as a moderate and hygienic way of living that denied transcendence and viewed the world from more rigorous psychological and physiological perspectives, in the end the choice is between Buddhism, Schopenhauer, India, weakness, and peaceful inactivity, or strength, conflict, Europe, pain, and tragedy. Buddhism's spread in Europe was unfortunate, Nietzsche believed, since "Nostalgia for nothingness is the negation of tragic wisdom, its opposite" (p. 148).

About 1864 the annihilationist view of Buddhism began to decline. Carl F. Koppen's *THE RELIGION OF THE BUDDHA* (2 vols., 1857–59), very influential in the 1860s and 70s, emphasized the Buddha's ethical revolution, which affirmed a human deliverance and proclaimed human equality. Although literary fascination with the worship of nothingness continued, by the early 1890s emphasis was on Buddhism as a path of knowledge and wisdom, a "neo-Buddhist" view attacked by a still-active Burnouf. In place of Christian apologetics, there was a growing tendency to think of different religions as converging, as Vivekananda argued at the 1893 World Parliament of Religions in Chicago (although elsewhere he imagined Buddhism as responsible for various spiritual degenerations). As Droit summarizes: "The cult of nothingness was ending.... The time of wars was soon to come. Another cult of nothingness was beginning" (p. 160).

He argues persuasively that the issue at stake was always Europe's own identity. With "Buddhism" Europe constructed a mirror in which it dared not recognize itself. (Here perhaps Droit could have strengthened his case with some more reflections on Darwin, the death of God, and Europe's own hopes for/fears of a religion of Reason without transcendence.)

When the question of the Buddha's atheism arose, it was the atheism of the Europeans that was really in question. No one really believed, and almost no one ever said, that the beliefs of the Buddhists on the other side of the world were going to come and wreak havoc among the souls of the West. It was not a conversion, a corrosion, a "contamination" of any kind that was threatening, coming from outside. It was in Europe itself that the enemy, and the danger, were to be found. (p. 163)

This was not only a threat to the foundations of one's personal



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belief-system, but a challenge that threatened to undermine social order. "The nothingness of order corresponded to the nothingness of being. Once again, this nothingness was not the equivalent of a pure and simple absence. It was supposed to undo and disorganize. It was dangerous because it shattered, it leveled, it instigated anarchy" (p. 165).

Tragically, the decline of this nihilistic view of Buddhism was accompanied by the unprecedented triumph of a more active nihilism in the following century, with well over a hundred million war-dead, two-thirds of them civilian non-combatants. Today, to say it again, Buddhism for us has become a pragmatic and non-metaphysical kind of therapy that reduces suffering. But how confident should we be about this view, given how well it reflects the postmodern West's own pragmatic, anti-metaphysical, therapeutic self-understanding? If we cannot leap over our own shadow, must we resign ourselves to "misinterpretations" of Buddhism that always reflect our own prejudices? Or is "Buddhism" better understood as the still-continuing history of its interpretations? Interpretations that must reflect our prejudices because they reflect our own needs. *THE CULT OF NOTHINGNESS: THE PHILOSOPHERS AND THE BUDDHA* concludes with a 65-page chronological bibliography of Western works on Buddhism, most of it derived from a more extensive (15,073 titles!) bibliography compiled by Shinsho Hanayama and published by the Hokuseido Press in 1961. Droit claims that his own bibliography is almost complete for 1638-1860, omitting only more specialized works on archaeology, philology, etc. for 1860-1890. The translation is clear and fluent, although I have not compared it with the French original. And, although not a specialist in this field, I do not doubt that this work is indispensable to anyone studying the history of the Western reception of Buddhism.

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May: Several members of the [Unitarian](#) Society formed what they termed the Unitarian Missionary Society.

In the previous month and this one, two articles on [Buddhist](#) thought by [Professor Eugène Burnouf](#) had been appearing in *La Revue Indépendante*, a prominent French journal which may have been available to Thoreau at the New York Society Library. The previous month's article had been entitled *Fragments des Prédications de Buddha* and this month's article was entitled *Considérations sur l'Origine du Bouddhisme*. [Professor Burnouf](#) was the 1st to translate the LOTUS SUTRA from Sanskrit into a European language and eventually [Henry Thoreau](#) would possess a personal copy of the 1852 edition of his *LE LOTUS DE LA BONNE LOI, TRADUIT DU SANSKRIT, ACCOMPAGNÉ D'UN COMMENTAIRE ET DE VINGT ET UN MÉMOIRES RELATIFS AU BUDDHISME, PAR M. E. BURNOUF* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale). An English translation of this French translation of Chapter V of the Sanskrit of THE LOTUS SUTRA would appear in [THE DIAL](#) for January 1844, and presumably either Thoreau or Miss [Elizabeth Palmer Peabody](#), busy as beavers, prepared that translation — which would amount to the very 1st presentation of any part of this essential Buddhist scripture in the English language!



1844

January: [Henry Thoreau](#)'s translations from the odes of [Pindar](#) and his "[Homer](#). [Ossian](#). [Chaucer](#)." appeared in this current issue of [THE DIAL](#).

READ PINDAR'S ODES
THE DIAL, JANUARY 1844

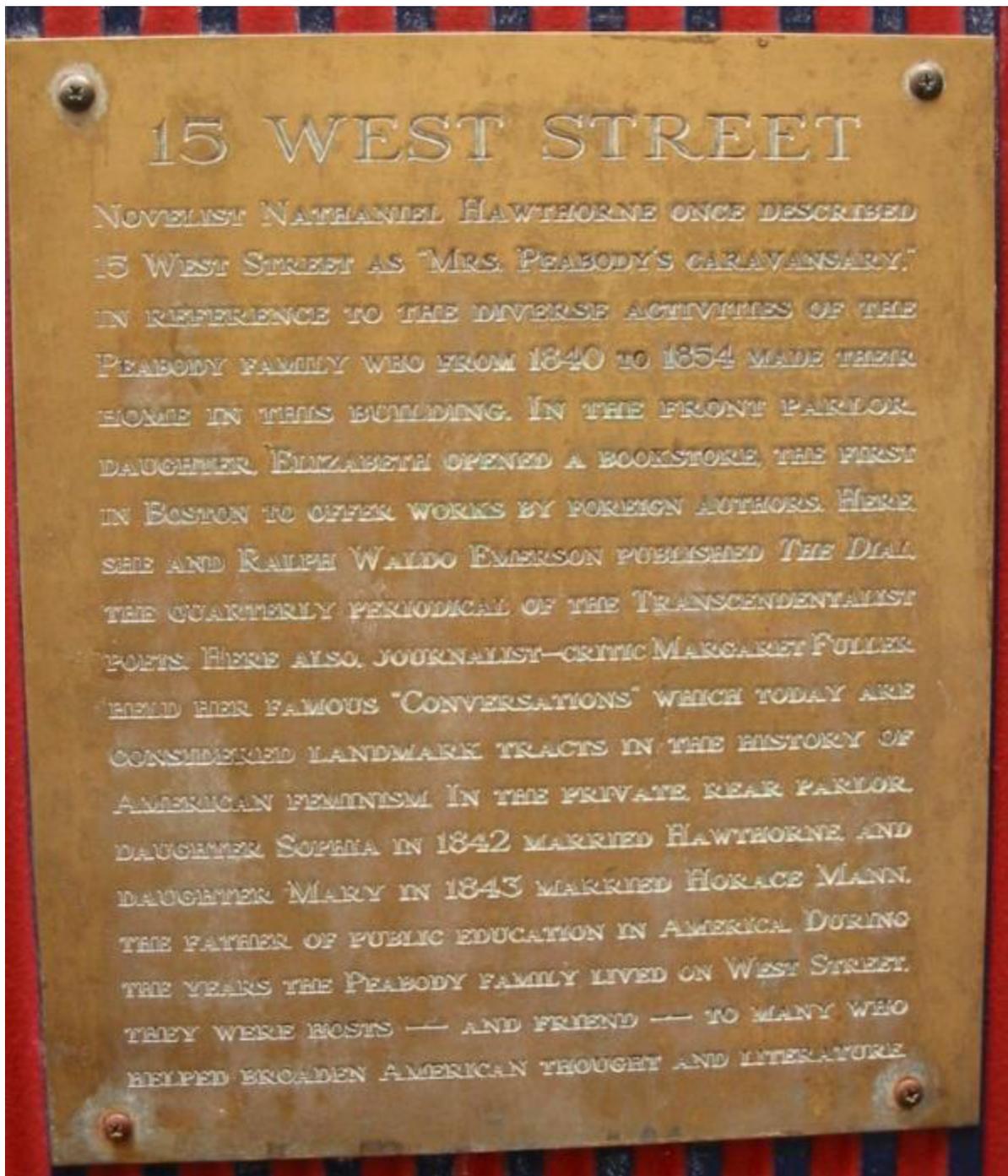
So, who then was the translator from French into English of the piece "The Preaching of [Buddha](#)" that also appeared? This amounts to the first English version of Chapter V of what we now know as THE LOTUS SUTRA. The piece was based upon two articles by [Professor Eugène Burnouf](#) that had appeared in French in the magazine *La Revue Indépendante* for April/May 1843 ([Professor Burnouf](#) having been the first to translate the LOTUS SUTRA from Sanskrit into a European language). In 1885, George Willis Cooke would finger Miss [Elizabeth Palmer Peabody](#), who not only knew French but also presumably carried the French magazine in question at her bookstore, as the English translator for this part of Thoreau's ethnical scriptures series, but there seems to be no document trail. (According to Sattelmeyer's THOREAU'S READING, item 1202 on page 264, Thoreau eventually would possess Burnouf's *LE LOTUS DE LA BONNE LOI...*, but since this book was not published until 1852 it does not bear upon the issue here.)



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1850

The Reverend [Robert Spence Hardy](#)'s EASTERN MONACHISM: AN ACCOUNT OF THE ORIGIN, LAWS, DISCIPLINE, SACRED WRITINGS, MYSTERIOUS RITES, RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES, AND PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, OF THE ORDER OF MENDICANTS FOUNDED BY [GÓTAMA BUDHA](#), (COMPILED FROM SINGHALESE MSS. AND OTHER ORIGINAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION), WITH COMPARATIVE NOTICES OF THE USAGES AND INSTITUTIONS OF THE WESTERN ASCETICS, AND A REVIEW OF THE MONASTIC SYSTEM. BY R. SPENCE HARDY, MEMBER OF THE [CEYLON](#) BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY (London: Partridge and Oakey, Paternoster Row; and 70, Edgware Road; Hanbury and Co., Agents).

EASTERN MONACHISM

[James Robert Ballantyne](#)'s FIRST LESSONS IN SANSKRIT GRAMMAR, TOGETHER WITH AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HITOPADÉSA; 2d edition, 1862.

1853

[Monier Williams](#) translated [Kalidasa](#)'s [SAKOONTALA, OR THE LOST RING](#).⁴

INDIA



The initial academic account of [Theravada Buddhism](#), written with hostility to discount it as not a major religion but a mere error of materialism and agnosticism, the Reverend [Robert Spence Hardy](#)'s A MANUAL OF [BUDHISM](#), IN ITS MODERN DEVELOPMENT; TRANSLATED FROM SINGHALESE MSS. BY R. SPENCE HARDY, AUTHOR OF "EASTERN MONACHISM," "DÉWA-DHARMA-DARPANAYA," ETC. (London: Partridge and Oakey, 34, Paternoster Row; and 70, Edgware Road. Sold by J. Mason, Paternoster Row and City Road).

Copies of this would be found in the personal libraries of [Bronson Alcott](#) and of [Henry Thoreau](#) (although it would seem clear that these would be two of the last persons in the world to be tainted by its invidious missionary-position propaganda).

A MANUAL OF BUDHISM

A WEEK: It is necessary not to be Christian to appreciate the beauty and significance of the life of Christ. I know that some will have hard thoughts of me, when they hear their Christ named beside my Buddha, yet I am sure that I am willing they should love their Christ more than my Buddha, for the love is the main thing, and I like him too. "God is the letter Ku, as well as Khu." Why need Christians be still intolerant and superstitious?

4. [Thoreau](#) had already been studying this play in 1850, in the 1789 [Sir William Jones](#) translation available from the [Harvard Library](#).



1862

The Reverend [Robert Spence Hardy](#) sailed for [Ceylon](#) a 3d time, as a Wesleyan missionary.

[James Robert Ballantyne](#)'s FIRST LESSONS IN SANSKRIT GRAMMAR, TOGETHER WITH AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HITOPADÉSA, 2d edition.

At the end of the journal entries for this year, [Waldo Emerson](#) listed his recent readings in Oriental materials: "Iamblichus; Sakootala, or The Lost Ring, (by [Kalidasa](#)); Hafiz." "Nala and Damayanti; 'Books bequeathed to me by [H.D. Thoreau](#)'; Abd el Kader."

Here is a more elaborate record of the books out of [Thoreau](#)'s personal library that [Emerson](#) mentions (above) as having been bequeathed to him:

- THE LAWS OF MENU, OR THE *VISHNU PURĀNA*: A SYSTEM OF HINDU MYTHOLOGY AND TRADITION, translated by [Horace Hayman Wilson](#)
- SELECT SPECIMENS OF THE THEATRE OF THE *HINDOOS*, translated by [Horace Hayman Wilson](#)
- *RIG-VEDA SANHITA*; First *ASHTAKA*; Second *ASHTAKA*; translated by [Horace Hayman Wilson](#)
- Īśvara Kṛṣṇa's THE *SĀṆKHYA KĀRIKĀ*; OR, MEMORIAL VERSES ON THE *SĀṆKHYA* PHILOSOPHY, translated by [Henry Thomas Colebrooke](#)

THE SANKHYA KARIKA

and the *BHĀSHYA* OR COMMENTARY OF *GAURAPĀDA*, translated by [Horace Hayman Wilson](#)

COMMENTARY OF GAURAPADA

- *LE LOTUS DE LA BONNE LOI, TRADUIT DU SANSKRIT, ACCOMPAGNÉ D'UN COMMENTAIRE ET DE VINGT ET UN MÉMOIRES RELATIFS AU BUDDHISME, PAR M. E. BURNOUF* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1852)

LE LOTUS DE LA BONNE LOI

- *LA BHĀGAVATA PURĀNA, OU HISTOIRE POÉTIQUE DE KRICHNA*, translated by [Eugène Burnouf](#) and published in three volumes at Paris between 1840 and 1844

LA BHĀGAVATA PURĀNA, I

LA BHĀGAVATA PURĀNA, II

LA BHĀGAVATA PURĀNA, III

- INSTITUTES OF MENU, translated by [Sir William Jones](#)
- TWO TREATISES ON THE HINDU LAW OF INHERITANCE [Comprising the Translation of the *Dáyabhāga* of *Īmūtavāhana* and that of the section of the *Mitāksharāj* by *Vijñāneśvara* on Inheritance]. TRANSLATED BY [H.T. COLEBROOKE](#), ESQUIRE

HINDU INHERITANCE

- Volume XV of the *BIBLIOTHECA INDICA*, translated by E. Roer; Upanishad



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- [Henry Thomas Colebrooke](#). MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS (two volumes). London, 1837

COLEBROOK'S ESSAYS, I

COLEBROOK'S ESSAYS, I

- *NALA AND DAMAYANTI*, translated by the Reverend Professor [Henry Hart Milman](#)

NALA AND DAMAYANTI

- [James Robert Ballantyne](#)'s translation of THE APHORISMS OF THE *MĪMĀNSĀ* PHILOSOPHY BY [JAIMINI](#). WITH EXTRACTS FROM THE COMMENTARIES. IN *SANSKRIT* AND ENGLISH. PRINTED FOR THE USE OF THE BENARES COLLEGE, BY ORDER OF GOVT., N.W.P. (Allahabad: Printed at the Presbyterian Mission Press. Rev. Jos. Warren, *Supt.* 1851)

APHORISMS OF MĪMĀNSĀ

- Gautama, called Aksapāda. THE APHORISMS OF THE *NYĀNA* PHILOSOPHY, BY [GAUTAMA](#), WITH ILLUSTRATIVE EXTRACTS FROM THE COMMENTARY BY [VIŚWANĀTHA](#). IN *SANSKRIT* AND ENGLISH. PRINTED, FOR THE USE OF THE BENARES COLLEGE, BY ORDER OF GOVT. N.W.P. (ALLAHABAD: Printed at the Presbyterian Mission Press. Rev. Jos. Warren, *Superintendent.* 1850)

APHORISMS IN SANSKRIT

- [James Robert Ballantyne](#)'s A LECTURE ON THE *VEDĀNTA*, EMBRACING THE TEXT OF THE *VEDĀNTA-SĀRA* (Allahabad: Presbyterian Mission Press, 1851, an 84-page pamphlet)
- [James Robert Ballantyne](#)'s translation of Viśwanātha Panchānana Bhatta's THE *BHĀSHĀ-PARICHCHHEDA*

1866

The Reverend [Robert Spence Hardy](#)'s THE LEGENDS AND THEORIES OF THE [BUDDHISTS](#), COMPARED WITH HISTORY AND SCIENCE: WITH INTRODUCTORY NOTICES OF THE LIFE AND SYSTEM OF GOTAMA BUDDHA (Williams and Norgate, 14, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London; and 20, South Frederick Street, Edinburgh).

LEGENDS AND THEORIES

1874

November 16: Posthumous publication of the Reverend [Robert Spence Hardy](#)'s CHRISTIANITY AND [BUDDHISM](#) COMPARED (Colombo: Wesleyan Mission Press).

CHRIST VS. BUDDHA

Synopsis of this volume: The Reverend R. Spence Hardy was right all along.



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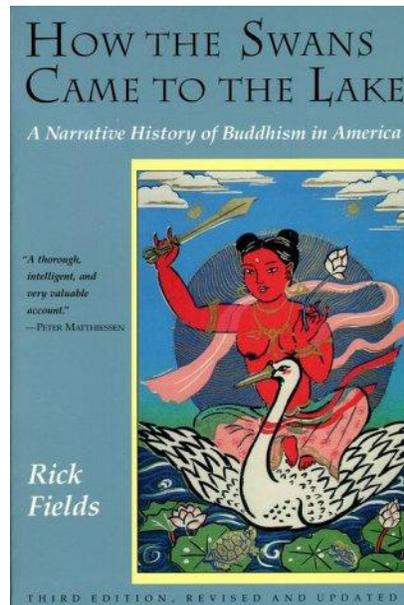
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1879

Edwin Arnold, M.A. (1832-1904). THE LIGHT OF ASIA: OR, THE GREAT RENUNCIATION (*MAHABHINISKRAMANA*). BEING THE LIFE AND TEACHING OF GAUTAMA, PRINCE OF [INDIA](#) AND FOUNDER OF [BUDDHISM](#) / (AS TOLD IN VERSE BY AN INDIAN BUDDHIST). London: Trübner (a copy of this would be found, upon Bronson Alcott's death, in his library, inscribed by Wm. Henry Channing to Alcott, Harris, and Sanborn).

1981

Frederick Douglas "Rick" Fields's HOW THE SWANS CAME TO THE LAKE: A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF BUDDHISM IN AMERICA (Shambhala Publications, 1981, 1991) alleged without evidence that it was [Thoreau](#) who had provided the English translation of Eugène Burnouf's French version of the LOTUS SUTRA for [THE DIAL](#) of January 1844.



(Of course, actually we have not established that to be the case, regardless of what Rick Fields supposes, because it may well have been that this English translation had been prepared not by Thoreau but by Miss [Elizabeth Palmer Peabody](#).)

One might say that Thoreau was pre-Buddhist in much the same way that the [Chinese](#) Taoists were. He forecast an American Buddhism by the nature of his contemplation, in the same way that a certain quality of transparent predawn forecasts a clear morning. He lost himself in nature as the Chinese painters did, by becoming one with nature. He was certainly not the only one of his generation to live a contemplative life, but he was, it seems, one of the few to live it in a Buddhist way. That is to say, he was perhaps the first American to explore the nontheistic mode of contemplation which is the distinguishing



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mark of Buddhism. Emerson had abstracted God into the Universe, the Over-soul, or infused Him through Nature with a capital "N." Thoreau was after the bare facts, the hard rock-bottom of existence. His journals were filled with details, precise observations and data. Emerson had an idea of what was real, Melville had ransacked the visible world for the symbols behind it, but Thoreau had no theories. He was content to wait and see what was there. There were many gods in Thoreau, as in all the pagans, but precious little God. Deity was not a problem one way or the other for Thoreau; it was more of a function than an absolute principle or existence. "I know that some will have hard thoughts of me, when they hear their Christ named beside my Buddha," he wrote in *A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS*, "yet I am sure that I am willing they should love their Christ more than my Buddha, for the love is the main thing."

[- http://www.ralphmag.org/thoreau-swansJ.html](http://www.ralphmag.org/thoreau-swansJ.html)

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1996

Tom Hayden, who used to be married to Jane Fonda, displayed his Green credentials in a book entitled THE LOST GOSPEL OF THE EARTH: A CALL FOR RENEWING NATURE, SPIRIT AND POLITICS (foreword by Joan Halifax; introduction by Thomas Berry; afterword by Daniel Swartz. San Francisco CA: Sierra Club Books). On page 174, without bothering with substantiation, he asserted that Henry David Thoreau had in fact been the first translator of the LOTUS SUTRA into the English language. –So now, along with having to deal with the people who perennially come forward with a Thoreau who was the putative inventor of raisin bread, we have to deal with people who will come forward with a Thoreau who was the first translator of the LOTUS SUTRA.⁵



(Since Hayden quite omits to mention that a translation already existed from the Sanskrit into the French language, which Thoreau could read, the incautious general reader might also here be allowed to suppose that Thoreau had been able to translate this material out of the original Sanskrit language, with which however Thoreau had been entirely unfamiliar.)

5. Hayden also asserts, on page 198, that John Muir “knew every word” of Thoreau’s nature writings. — Evidently the “lost gospel of the earth” amounts to the conceit that whatever a Green may have some reason to desire to believe, happens also to be God’s own truth. Ah, hippies!



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1997

John James Clarke, on page 86 of his *ORIENTAL ENLIGHTENMENT: THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN ASIAN AND WESTERN THOUGHT*, denigrated [Thoreau](#) as having an approach to the East that was, in contrast to the approach made by [Emerson](#):

- less choosy
- altogether less intellectual
- much shorter lasting



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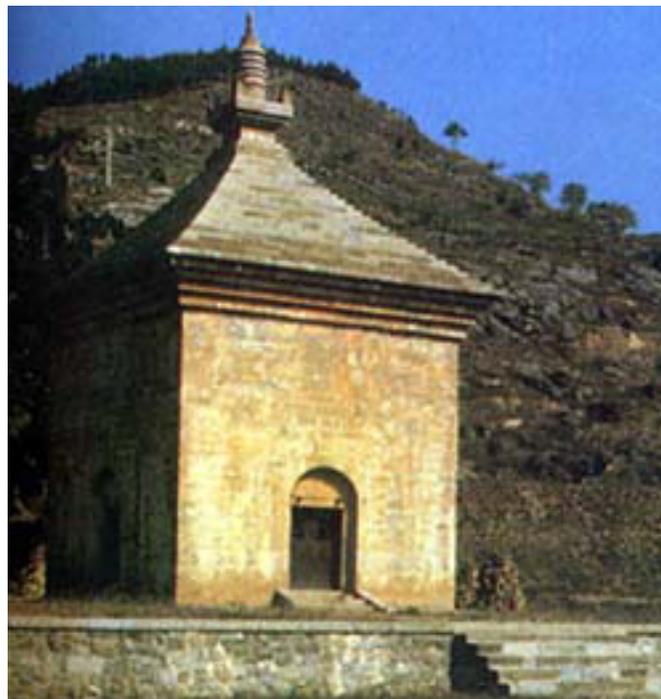
GAUTAMA BUDDHA



Clark displays a colossal “blind spot” in regard to [China](#) as part of the Orient, or in regard to Thoreau as a separate person, in that he make no mention whatever of any influence by Confucius or by the Chinese [THE FOUR BOOKS](#) on Thoreau. He has apparently been unable to see over the tops of the Himalayas with Thoreau, to notice that on the other side of this mountain chain there are also a certain number of enlightened Orientals.

Hu Yamin’s “Thoreau’s [WALDEN](#) and the Confucian Classical Four Books” appeared in the Journal of PLA Institute of Foreign Languages (this “PLA” is the People’s Liberation Army of China).

At the four-gate pagoda on the grounds of a monastery in Shandong province, facing in the four cardinal directions, were four massive imperturbable seated statues of the [Akshobhya Buddha](#), that had been created in the year 611 CE.



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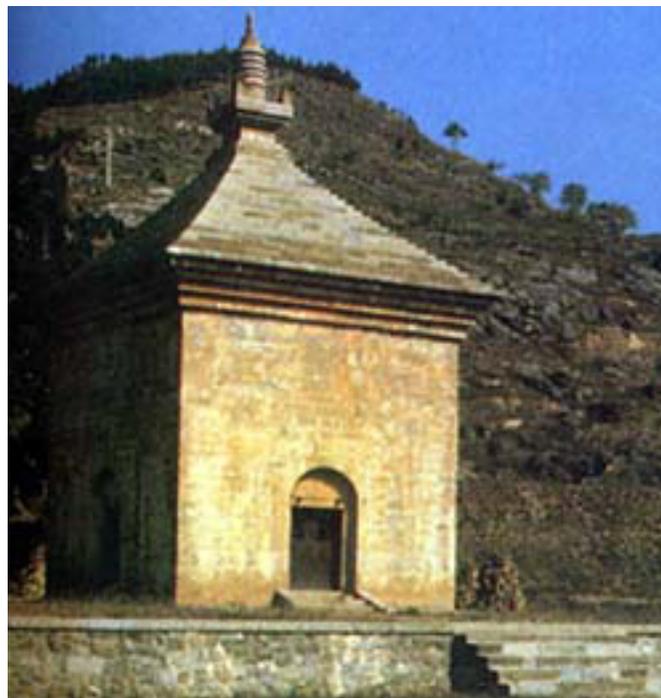
In this year the Buddha facing east, which was the best preserved of the four, was assaulted twice by a gang who swaddled the head in blankets and attempted to cut it free with a diamond saw. On their 2nd attempt they succeeded in knocking the head from the torso with a sledgehammer. When the [Chinese](#) police caught with these people, several local government officials became suddenly unemployed, and their ringleader was sent to prison for life, which in China, which has a plenty of people, actually does mean for-life-and-be-grateful-we-didn't-just-shoot-you-in-the-back-of-your-neck-and-harvest-your-warm-kidneys. However, the imperturbable 159-pound head was nowhere to be found, presumably having been spirited out of the country via [Hong Kong](#). (In 2002  the head would turn up, as a gift to a Buddhist master on the island of Taiwan, and he would cause it to be returned to the Shandong monastery, where it would be reconnected with its torso by means of an iron rod down the neck.)

2002

February: Former FEMA deputy director John Brinkerhoff authored a paper for the Anser Institute for Homeland Security in which he defended the Pentagon's desire to deploy troops on American streets.

A Counterintelligence Field Activity Agency was created by the Pentagon (in 2005, the White House would be pushing for broader powers for CIFA, such as authority to engage in domestic surveillance, and Senator Ron Wyden, a member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, would be protesting that "We are deputizing the military to spy on law-abiding Americans in America. This is a huge leap without even a [congressional] hearing").

At the four-gate pagoda on the grounds of a monastery in Shandong province, facing in the four cardinal directions, had been four massive imperturbable seated statues of the [Akshobhya Buddha](#), created during the year 611 CE.





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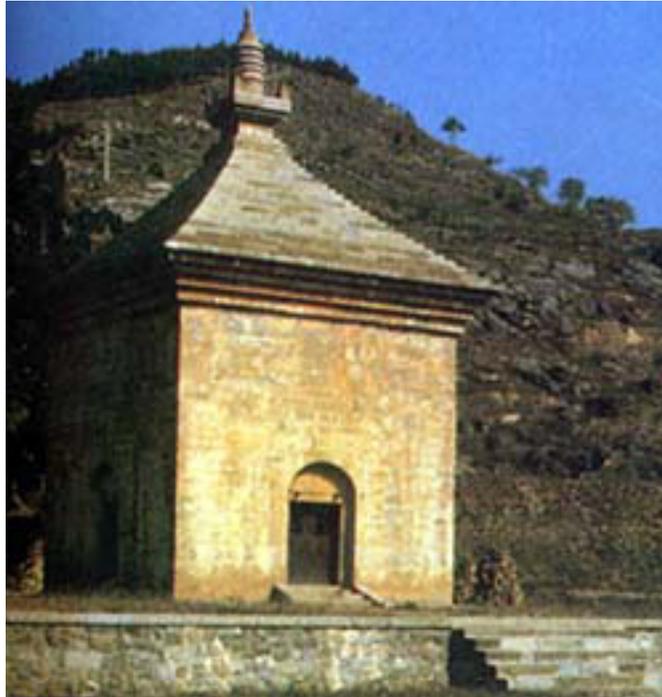
GAUTAMA BUDDHA

In 1997  the Buddha facing east, the best preserved of the four, had been twice assaulted by a gang who swaddled the head in blankets and attempted to cut it free with a diamond saw. On their 2nd attempt they had succeeded in knocking the head from the torso with a sledgehammer, but by the time the [Chinese](#) police caught with these people, the imperturbable 159-pound head was nowhere to be found, presumably having been spirited out of the country via [Hong Kong](#). Several local government officials had become suddenly unemployed and their ringleader had been packed off to prison for life, which in China, which has a plenty of people, actually does mean for-life-and-be-grateful-we-didn't-just-shoot-you-in-the-back-of-your-neck-and-harvest-your-warm-kidneys. At this point the head turned up when it was presented as a gift to a 73-year-old Buddhist master named Sheng-yen, the leader of the Dharma Drum Mountain Buddhist Association on the island of Taiwan. (The master would ask Lin Bao Yao of the Taipei National University of Arts to check out the provenance of this gift, and then would cause it to be returned to the four-gate pagoda at Shandong monastery, where it would be reconnected with its torso by means of an iron rod down the neck.)

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December 17, Tuesday: At the four-gate pagoda on the grounds of a monastery in Shandong province, facing in the four cardinal directions, had been four massive imperturbable seated statues of the [Akshobhya Buddha](#), created during the year 611 CE.



In 1997 the Buddha facing east, the best preserved of the four, had been twice assaulted by a gang who swaddled the head in blankets and attempted to cut it free with a diamond saw. On their 2nd attempt they had succeeded in knocking the head from the torso with a sledgehammer, but by the time the [Chinese](#) police caught with these people, the imperturbable 159-pound head was nowhere to be found, presumably having been spirited out of the country via [Hong Kong](#). Several local government officials had become suddenly unemployed and their ringleader had been packed off to prison for life, which in China, which has a plenty of people, actually does mean for-life-and-be-grateful-we-didn't-just-shoot-you-in-the-back-of-your-neck-and-harvest-your-warm-kidneys. Earlier this year the head had turned up when it had been presented as a gift to a 73-year-old Buddhist master named Sheng-yen, the leader of the Dharma Drum Mountain Buddhist Association on the island of Taiwan. The master, suspicious, asked Lin Bao Yao of the Taipei National University of Arts to check out the provenance of this gift, and caused it to be returned to the four-gate pagoda at Shandong monastery. On this day, with appropriate ceremony, the imperturbable head was reconnected with its torso by means of an iron rod down the neck.



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TODAY

Pope Benedict XVI (Joseph Aloisius Ratzinger).

In the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, funding has been arranged to erect the world's biggest statue of the Buddha in the town of Kushinagar where, 25 centuries ago, Siddhartha [Gautama Buddha](#) died. The statue will be bronze, and three times as tall as the 151-foot Statue of Liberty. Meanwhile, in Texas, financing is being sought to build an even taller statue — to the “Spirit of Houston.”

[COLOSSUS OF RHODES](#)
[STATUE OF LIBERTY](#)



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“It’s all now you see. Yesterday won’t be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago.”

– Remark by character “Garin Stevens”
in William Faulkner’s INTRUDER IN THE DUST



Prepared: September 1, 2013

ARRGH AUTOMATED RESearch REPORT

GENERATION HOTLINE



This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, upon someone's request we have pulled it out of the hat of a pirate that has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (depicted above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of data modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture. This is data mining. To respond to such a request for information, we merely push a button.



GAUTAMA BUDDHA

GAUTAMA BUDDHA

Commonly, the first output of the program has obvious deficiencies and so we need to go back into the data modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and do a recompile of the chronology – but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process which you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.
Place your requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>.
Arrgh.