

## The 4 secrets (Part 2 of 4)

The Buddha is the one awakened  
For a Dhamma future to be possible  
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To most of us, a Teacher is a “secret” person, full of wisdom, compassion, power, even enlightenment. We often think that he may even be an Arhat. We should never talk like this because only a real arhat knows another arhat. We are not arhats, so we cannot know another one. It’s bad karma with such a wrong view. At best, we can say that we deeply admire that Teacher.

We must be honest to ourself that even when a lot of people admire or support a Teacher it does not make him wise, good or enlightened. We are the ones who have made him “powerful.” This is called “attributing charisma” or “giving face.” Often, we are wrong; the crowd is often wrong. The point is never to worship Teachers—they are sooner or later wrong.

### Refuges

Our **only teacher** is the Buddha. He is the 1<sup>st</sup> of the 3 refuges that we take as practising Buddhists. This means that we see him as an inspiring exemplar of wisdom and compassion. When we take the Buddha as refuge, it means that he is our one and only Dhamma “father” who will give us a new life in Dhamma. Just as we have and need only one father who gives birth to us, we have and need only 1 Buddha, the one awakened, who discovered the wheel of truth.

There is no other Buddha in this universe. It’s like someone has discovered that most diseases are caused by germs. We now know how to deal with germs and control diseases. The Buddha discovered that suffering comes from craving. When we **think** we lack something (whether in our mind, or a thing we want badly), and we look for it outside of ourself, we will go through a lot of trouble and suffering.

### The Buddha as teacher

The Buddha worked very hard as a seeker and meditator to find out how to end such sufferings in our body and our mind. Ending bodily pains is not difficult: it’s best done with modern medicine. Mental illness of the psychological kind can be prevented with proper meditation and even healed with Dhamma-spirited love and joy.

The Buddha knows the secret about the greatest of diseases: spiritual disease. Simply, this is not knowing about ourself. We are ignorant of **what** we really are. The Buddha tells us the story of how he saw a really old man and was shocked. It means we all must **decay**. Then, he saw a sick man: we all will be **sick** somehow if not in body, surely in the mind. We are in some way, consciously or unconsciously, sick in mind. Then, he saw a corpse: we will **die** one day. With Dhamma, we have all these days to learn to live happily.

Finally, the Buddha tells us how he saw a **renunciant**, one who is free from the world, who lives a simple and joyful life. This is like when we are completely free of greed, hate and delusion: we feel really happy and free. We all have this kind of rare moment; the Buddha is always happy and free. It is possible for to be just like him.

### **The Buddha as healer**

Notice that all these wonderful teachings are taught by the Buddha, one awakened. There is only **one** such being. Even then, it is not the Buddha as a “being” that is important to us. The fact that the Buddha is **awakened**: this is most important to us. He is proof that we can awaken from our sleep of ignorance and dreams of suffering.

In other words, the Buddha, too, respects the Dhamma, which is his **awakening** as well as the **path** of awakening. It's like being **a doctor**: we just need one good doctor to heal us. The doctor is good because he knows how to heal. In other words, we do not see the doctor as a **status** or **title** which we worship. The doctor is one whose **state** of mind is one who knows how to heal others, and does so when needed.

Worshipping the doctor will not heal us; worshipping the Buddha will not awaken us. We have to listen to the doctor's advice; take the medicine; live a healthy life. Recommend others to this doctor and his methods.

### **Why a Buddha dies**

The Buddha's most secret teaching is about **impermanence**. It remains a secret to many because they are attracted to strange, “powerful” teachings, and stranger, powerless teachers, instead of taking the medicine and living a healthy life. They go around worshipping Doctors but never follow their instructions. They only go around claiming they know this famous Doctor, that famous Doctor!

Since everything is impermanent, they rise and fall, become other. We are born, grow, decay, die. The Buddha, too, arises, awakens, teaches, dies. The Buddha dies for the simple reason that only a human can be Buddha; and humans die, it just means that impermanence is a universal law. No exceptions: even the Buddha dies; hence, his teaching is universally and always true.

### **Nirvana**

In our normal language, we say that the Buddha “dies.” As a rule, when we **die**, we are reborn. In other words, death is only an end of **this** life. After death, we are reborn depending on how we have lived. As long as we are born, there is ignorance; from ignorance there is craving; from craving there is suffering. In this sense, the Buddha is no more reborn.

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[an occasional re-look at the Buddha's Example and Teachings]

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