

### **Activity 7. What it is Important to Know: A Buddhist Perspective**

**Source:** <http://www.thenagain.info/Classes/Sources/Buddhist.html#First>, accessed June 6, 2010

**Instructions:** This is an edited version of a conversation between the Buddhist monk Malunkyaputta and his spiritual advisor, The Blessed One, about what is important to know. Read the passages and answer questions. 1 – 4.

#### **Questions**

1. What does Malunkyaputta want to know from The Blessed One?
2. What does Malunkyaputta promise in exchange for this knowledge?
3. How does The Blessed One's respond?
4. In your opinion, what is the "message" of this conversation?

**Malunkyaputta:** "If the Blessed One will explain to me, either that the world is eternal, or that the world is not eternal . . . or that the worthy person neither exists nor does not exist after death, in that case I will lead the religious life under the Blessed One."

**The Blessed One:** "Pray Malunkyaputta, did I ever say to you, 'Come, Malunkyaputta, lead the religious life under me, and I will explain to you either that the world is eternal, or that the world is not eternal . . . or that the worthy person neither exists nor does not exist after death.

**Malunkyaputta:** "No, indeed, Reverend Sir."

**The Blessed One:** "That being the case, vain man, whom are you so angrily denouncing? The religious life does not depend on the dogma that the world is eternal; nor does the religious life depend on the dogma that the world is not eternal. Whether the dogma obtain that the world is eternal, or that the world is not eternal, there still remain birth, old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief, and despair.

