

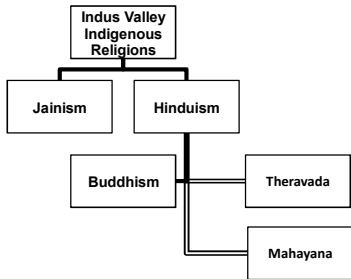
**God in Other Cultures:
Buddhism**

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Hinduism: Origins



Beginnings: Siddhartha Gautama

Enter Buddhism

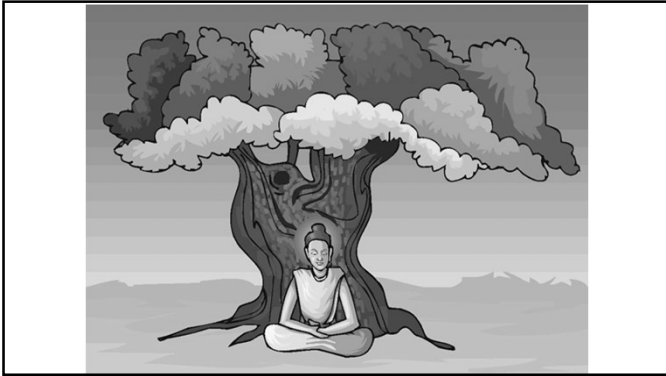
- Born about 560 BC
- Born in northeast India, to parents of noble birth (highest caste of Indian society)
- Given name was Siddhartha Guatama) – Siddhartha means “wish fulfilling”
- Though married, with a son, and destined to succeed his father, he was nevertheless unhappy
- Renounced his life and left by night, seeking salvation

Siddhartha’s search

- Became an ascetic – cut off his hair, put on rough garments and began his search
- Tried yoga, philosophy, and paths of devotion but none explained or gave peace to the visions he had seen
 - Old man, dead man, sick man and a monk
- Tried Jainism but it almost killed him

Siddhartha’s search

- Begged some food and regained his strength but lost the regard of his fellow Jainists
- At 35, went and sat under a “bo” tree or bodha tree, determined to figure out the problem of mortal misery





Success!

- **Through four states he passed**
 - Detachment from sensory objects
 - From discursive to intuitive thinking
 - From vitality to blissful peace
 - Beyond the opposites of pleasure and pain
- **Dharma – cosmic truth or the ultimate order of things**

Success!

- **Attained pure awareness**
- **Became aware that the key was**
 - **A twelve link chain of causation**
 - **Breaking the first link breaks the whole chain**

Disciples

- Went first to those he had been close to as a Jainist; they became his first followers and members of the sangha
- Hindu caste designations ceased to apply among his converts
- Gained 60 "arhats" or perfected disciples whom the Buddha charged to travel everywhere to spread his teachings
- After repeated pleadings, the Buddha established a sangha for women
- His cousin Devadatta tried unsuccessfully to succeed, then overtake, then murder the Buddha

Death of the Buddha

- Taught for 45 years
- Died at 80 from illness
- Despite his instructions to avoid the transience of "conditioned things," his followers divided his things in 8 groups

Two Buddhist “ways”

- Theravadin Buddhism
- Mahayana Buddhism

These differ in where the emphasis is placed in the life of the Buddha

Theravada Buddhism

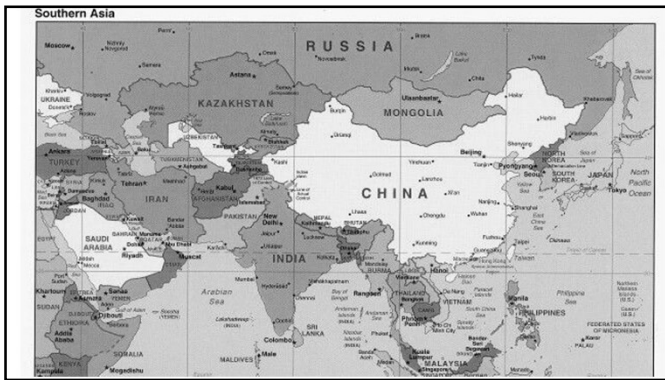
- “orthodox” or conservative
- Narrow path of the middle way
- Focus on the life of the Buddha as the monk and thus that is to be emulated and followed
- Salvation is through self-effort rather than the help of heavenly beings

Mahayana Buddhism

- “large vehicle”
- Variety of ways to reach nirvana
- Bodhisattas available to assist others on their way to nirvana
- The Buddha became more than a mere man; in fact, he was an ‘incarnation’ of the eternal Buddha
- Everyone is potentially a “buddha”

Buddhism moves into Asia

- The movement into China, Japan and Tibet gave Buddhism further expansion of thought



The chain of causation

- Ignorance
- Dispositions
- Consciousness
- Name and form
- Six sense fields
- Contact
- Feeling
- Craving
- Appropriation
- Becoming
- Birth
- Aging and dying

4 Noble Truths

- Dukka
 - All life is suffering and misery, pain and anxiety
- Tanha
 - Suffering and misery are caused by craving/desire
- Misery is abolished by getting rid of craving
- Abolishing tanha can be done by following the Eight-Fold Noble Path or the Middle Way

Eight-Fold Noble Path

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|--------------------|
| • Right understanding | } | higher wisdom |
| • Right – mindedness | | |
| • Right speech | } | ethical principles |
| • Right action | | |
| • Right livelihood | | |
| • Right effort | } | mental disciplines |
| • Right meditation | | |
| • Right emancipation | | |

Buddhism Worldview

- Humans
 - People have no souls (*anatta*)
 - One must live with the results of the cravings of the past (*karma*)
 - However, choice can change the future

Buddhism Worldview

- The Problem
 - suffering and ignorance: said one way – “all life is suffering caused by the ignorance of cravings.”
 - To stop suffering, one must stop the ignorance of where suffering comes from and stop the cravings.

Buddhism Worldview

- Solution for the problem
 - Knowledge
 - Knowledge through meditation
 - T's believe that a person must find his/her own salvation with Buddha as the model
 - M's believe there are savior beings who can be called on for help (bodhisattvas)

Buddhism Worldview

- Solution (continued)
 - “nirvana”
 - End of the spiritual path all Buddhists seek
 - Burning out of the cravings that bring suffering from lifetime to lifetime
 - Enlightenment that brings compassion and harmony with the whole universe
 - Above is somewhat westernized version

Nirvana

- Goal of perfection, NOT abyss of annihilation
- Fires of desire burn out for want of fuel
- Experience of absorption into the transcendent
- Extinction of individuality

Nirvana

- **Buddha discouraged speculation about what it was like**
- **Taught what it was**
 - End of the cycle of rebirth and suffering
 - End of ignorant cravings which produce misery
 - Not absorption (nothingness) but awareness without separation and without desire

Become an island to yourself...

by “contemplating the body as body, earnestly, clearly aware, mindful and having put away all hankering and fretting for the world, and likewise with regard to feelings, mind and mind-objects.”

Moral code

- Do not kill
- Do not steal
- Refrain from wrong sexual behavior

Moral code

- Do not lie
- Avoid use of intoxicants
- Meditation – key to success in the above
 - One-pointed concentration
 - Insight into the true nature of reality
 - Extension of this reality into daily living

Moral Code

-- monks in the sangha

- Eating moderately and not after noon
- Avoiding "spectacles"
- Do not use flowers, perfume or jewelry
- Use simple beds
- Accept no gold or silver

The end of suffering is letting go
of the need for and notion of a
permanent self

**The processes of living do not
cause suffering; the cause of
suffering is unwarranted
attachment to the processes**

Why are people often drawn to Buddhism?

- People are often seeking
 - inner peace, harmony
 - to be a part of something “bigger”
 - Order in their daily lives
- Personal effort and responsibility are appealing
