



• Buddhism...

- The “middle way of wisdom and compassion”
- A 2500 year old tradition that began in India and spread and diversified throughout the Far East
- A philosophy, religion, and spiritual practice followed by more than 300 million people
- Based on the teachings of the Buddha

• How does Buddhism differ from Hinduism?



- Buddhism rejects...
 - Authority of the ancient Vedic texts
 - The Vedic caste system
 - The Vedic and Hindu deities
 - The efficacy of Vedic worship and ritual
 - The concept of Brahman

• Who was the Buddha?



- Born Siddhartha Gautama ~ of noble caste in India, 563 B.C.E.
- Raised in great luxury to be a “king”
- Empathy for the suffering of others; at age 29 rejected the life of luxury to seek enlightenment and the solution to suffering
- Followed a strict ascetic lifestyle for six years
- Rejected this extreme, sat in and achieved *Nirvana* ~ an awakening to the truth about life, becoming a Buddha, the “Awakened One” at the age of 35
- Spent the remaining 45 years of his life teaching others how to achieve the peace of mind he had achieved

• What did the Buddha teach?



- The Four Noble Truths:
- To live is to suffer (dukkha)
- The cause of suffering is self-centered desire & attachments
- The solution is to eliminate desire and attachment, thus achieving *Nirvana* (“extinction”)
- The way to *Nirvana* is through the “Eight-Fold Path”



• What is the Eight-Fold Path?

Wisdom:

- right view
- Right intention

Moral discipline:

- Right speech
- Right action
- Right livelihood

Mental discipline:

- Right effort
- Right mindfulness
- Right meditation



What is “right view?”

Dukkha: Life is suffering

Anatman: no soul (no individual existent entity)

Anicca: impermanence of all things (everything changes constantly)

Sunyata: emptiness (nothing possesses essential, enduring identity)

• What are some Buddhist texts?

- *Tripitaka* (the *Pali Canon*) – the “Three Baskets”:
 - *Vinaya* (“discipline”) – rules for monastic life
 - *Sutta* (“discourse”) – sermons of the Buddha
 - *Abhidhamma* (metaphysical “teachings”)
- *Dhammapada* – collected sayings of the Buddha
- Other texts used by specific schools



JATAKA TALES-THERAVEDA

• The “Three Jewels” of Buddhism



Buddha ~ the teacher



Dharma ~ the “way”
or “truth”



Sangha ~ the community

• Schools of Buddhism - Theravada

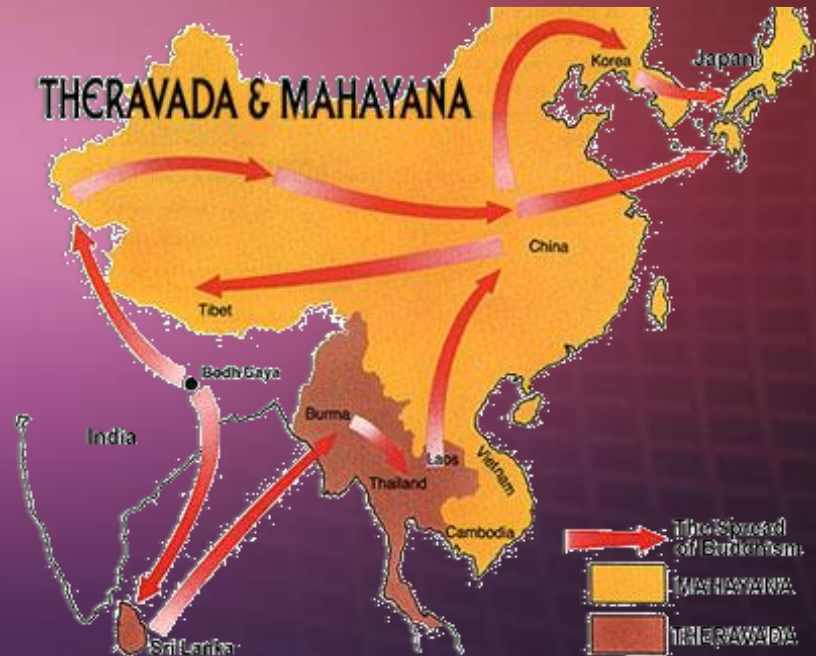


- The “Way of the Elders” (a.k.a.: the “small vehicle”)
- Oldest school of Buddhism
- Found in southern Asia (Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, etc.)
- Monasticism is the ideal life for achieving *Nirvana*
- A “do-it-yourself” approach to enlightenment
- Focus on wisdom and meditation
- Goal is to become a *Buddha*
- Fairly unified in belief & practice (some cultural differences)



• The Spread of Buddhism

- Within two centuries after the Buddha died, Buddhism began to spread north and east into Asia
- By 13th century Buddhism had disappeared from India



• Schools of Buddhism - Mahayana

- The “Great Vehicle”
- Developed first century C.E.
- Found in Northern Asia (China, Japan, etc.)
- Lay Buddhism - Buddhism “for the masses”
- Devotional - seek guidance from *Bodhisattvas* (“wise beings”) & heavenly *Buddhas*
- Focus on compassion
- Goal is to become a *bodhisattva* and assist others toward enlightenment (the “*Bodhisattva* ideal”)
- Diverse schools and sects including:
 - Pure Land, Intuitive, Rationalist, Sociopolitical, Tibetan



• Schools of Buddhism - Tibetan



- *Vajrayana/Tantra* - the “Diamond Vehicle”
- Developed 7th century C.E.
- A mix of Theravada & Mahayana:
 - Rituals (*Tantra*):
 - *Mantras* (chanting)
 - *Mandalas & Thankas* (symbolic images)
 - *Mudras* (hand gestures)
 - *Bodhisattvas*, including living *Lamas* (Dalai Lama)
 - Meditation, monasticism, wisdom & compassion
- *Bardo Thodol*-Tibetan Book of the Dead



• Schools of Buddhism - Zen



- The “intuitive” school: meditation
- Lay and monastic
- Seeks sudden enlightenment (*satori*) through meditation, arriving at emptiness (*sunyata*) and the “Buddha Nature”
- Use of meditation masters
- *Koans* (paradoxical riddles to confound reason)
- Beauty, arts & aesthetics – gardens, archery, the tea ceremony, calligraphy, etc.



• Buddhism in the West



- Over the past two centuries, especially since the later half of the 20th century, Buddhism has made inroads into the Western world through...
- Immigration of Asian peoples who have brought their diverse forms of Buddhism to the West
- Western followers who tend to adopt meditation practices and the philosophy rather than more devotional forms of Buddhism
 - Many such western followers remain within their own faith traditions, finding Buddhism to be a complement to rather than in conflict with other religions
- The two groups remain independent of one another



• Web Resources:

- [Buddhanet.net](http://www.buddhanet.net): Buddhist information and education network. Includes online resource for [Buddhist Studies](#) and other Buddhism resources: <http://www.buddhanet.net/>

- [Dharma the Cat](http://www.dharmathecat.com/): a multi award winning, lighthearted but informed look at Buddhism. Includes original comic strip expressing Buddhist teachings, an interfaith forum discussing Buddhist ideas from the perspective of other religions, and many other contributions from a wide variety of folks: <http://www.dharmathecat.com/>

- Learn more about Tibetan Buddhism at [Osel Shen Phen Ling Tibetan Buddhist Center](http://www.fpmt-osel.org/): <http://www.fpmt-osel.org/>

