

Buddhism: Extinguishing the Flame of Desire

I. Gautama Siddhārtha (in Sanskrit)

- A. Various dates of historical Buddha's (Sakyamuni's) birth and death
 1. Southern Buddhists follow Ceylonese tradition (d. 544 B.C.)
 2. Japanese Buddhists accept a Northern tradition (d. 568 B.C.)
 3. Jōdo, Shin and Nishin sects adopted legend (d. 949 B.C.)
 4. Hakuji Ui, Buddhist scholar in Japan compared legends (466–386 B.C.)
 5. Western scholarly consensus of the moment (566–486 B.C. or 563–483 B.C.)

- B. Three Paradoxical Influences (both positive and negative)
 1. Brahmanic literature (*Upanishads*)
 - a. accepted: concept of *samsāra* (cycle of rebirths)
 - b. rejected: concept of *ātman* (self)
 - idea that only Brahmins could escape *samsāra*
 - authority of Brahmanic literature
 - animal sacrifice
 2. Yoga (Yogic texts: *Mahābharata*)
 - a. accepted: introspection and meditation techniques
 - b. rejected: self-mortification and extreme contorted postures
 - meditative planes as goal
 3. Asceticism (e.g., Jainism of Mahāvira)
 - a. accepted: *ahimsa* = non-violence (harmlessness)
 - idea of non-attachment
 - b. rejected: extreme self-denial (asceticism)

- C. Objective: *Nirvana* = “emptiness” or “blowing out the flame”

- D. Middle Path — rejecting the extremes of luxury and denial

II. Types of Buddhism

- A. Theravāda, or Hinayana (“Lesser Vehicle”) — Southern Buddhism (Sri Lanka, S.E. Asia)
 1. extraordinary but not supernatural

- B. Mahāyāna (“Greater Vehicle”) — Northern Buddhism (China, Japan)
 1. Mantras
 2. Charms, Spells, Incantations
 3. Zen

- C. Vajrayāna (“Diamond Vehicle”) — Tibet
 1. Sacraments and rituals

10. Stories of the Buddha's previous lives, called Jataka Tales. Story of an elephant, monkey and partridge.

11. The Nirvana simile: Tadpoles trying to get a better grasp of dry land from a frog.

Word List:

bhikkhu = monk, disciple

bodhisattva = Buddha in the making who turns back to help others

Buddha = Enlightened One

Dhamma (Dharma) = Teaching of the Buddha, which leads to liberation

Dhyāna (Jhāna) = Meditation, usually in eight stages of ascending purity of consciousness

Sangha = order of monks and nuns

Stūpa = mound for containing relics, central feature of temples and pagodas

4 Noble Truths

The truth of suffering

The origins of suffering

The cessation of suffering

The Eightfold Path

–The Right Views

–The Right Aspiration

–The Right Speech

–The Right Conduct

–The Right Livelihood

–The Right Endeavor

–The Right Mindfulness

–The Right Meditation