Buddhism
6th Century
India
Similar to Jainism
  - Rejected the authority of the Vedas and caste system
  - Salvation is an individual effort
Different from Jainism
  - Teaches the middle way; worldliness and extreme asceticism
Missionaries sent into Asian countries – made it popular in China, Japan, Korea and Southeast Asia.
Begins to decline by resurgent Hinduism and Muslim conquest of India.
The Life of Siddhartha Gautama

- Founder of Buddhism
- Member of the Gautama clan.
- Exact dates of lifespan not known.
- Son of a Kshatriya raja, Suddhodana, and his mother, Maya.
  - Mother foretold of birth in dream
  - Predictions made about his power
    - What two things were possibilities?
  - Mom died, aunt married dad.
  - Father wanted him not to become a monk but a king.
    - What did he do?
Married at 19, had 1 son.
Approximately at age 30 he started to see the four sights.
  - What are they?
Snuck out of palace, changed his appearance.
Studied with a guru to learn of the different philosophies of life.
  - Didn’t work
Next tried sever asceticism with five monks for six years.
  - Became a champion ascetic.
    - What did he do?
Fainted in a river.
  - What did this do?
  - What did his friends think?
Meditated on a straw mat under a fig tree, bodhi tree, until he became enlightened.
  - He was tempted by Mara (Hindu counterpart of the Devil)
    - Siddhartha ignored him
The Life of Gautama Cont'd

Saw endless cycle of birth and death
Bound to this cycle because of tanha (desire, thirst, and craving)
He sought enlightenment through knowledge and asceticism; didn't get it until he ceased to desire it.
On the seventh day, at age 35, he opened his eyes and was enlightened
Called Buddha (enlightened one)
Traveled to Banaras, a holy city where his five friends were.
He delivered what?
Sermon told of Tathagata (the "Perfect One") reaching enlightenment by understanding the Middle Path (Way), avoiding the two extremes of luxury and self-mortification.
This sermon outlined the Four Noble Truths: the plight of humans

1. **Life is suffering.** (dukkha) The very nature of human existence is inherently painful. Because of the cyclical nature of death and rebirth, death does not bring an end to suffering.

2. **Suffering has a cause.** (Samudaya) Craving and attachment. Suffering is the result of our selfish craving and clinging. This in turn reflects our ignorance of reality.

3. **Craving and attachment can be overcome.** (Niradha) When one completely transcends selfish craving, one enters the state of *Nirvana*, and suffering ceases.

4. **The path toward the cessation of craving and attachment is an Eightfold Path...** (Magga)
   - Understanding
   - Purpose
   - Speech
   - Conduct
   - Livelihood
   - Effort
   - Alertness
   - Concentrations
**Nirvana**

- Means “extinguished” or “put out like a candle”.
- The goal of basic Buddhist practice is not the achievement of a state of bliss in some heaven but the extinguishing of tanha (desires).
- Once one has achieved Nirvana, you are called an arhat (saint).
Nirvana Cont.d’

- Nirvana is not...
  - just an intellectual goal like concentration but an experience that is indefinable
  - a state of sheer extinction, but the state in which a man when freed from all desires and craving feels a liberation or release from the cycle of rebirth and hence from dukkha (suffering).
All Things are Anicca

- **Definition**
  - Impermanence
  - Everything in life is transitory, passing in constant change.
  - Nothing is permanent. The world around and within us is in endless process of change and decay, of coming and going like the turning of a wheel.
  - All existence is dukkha and no man can escape suffering; but also all existence is anicca and everything is subject to change.
  - Dukkha and anicca challenge the religious views of most people during Buddha’s lifetime, men still discuss the validity of these two universal facts.
Sangha

- The five accepted his teachings at Deer Park and formed the first Sangha (Buddhist monastic order).
- Taught that anyone, male or female can become enlightened.
- Was hesitant of having women join, but allowed them to form an order of nuns.
  - Stepmother and former wife were the first women to join.
- Monks, serious joiners of Buddha, shaved their heads wore course yellow robes, possessed only a begging bowl.
Lay Buddhists support the Sangha with food, clothing and other necessities.

Lay Buddhists had 5 rules of moral conduct to follow:
1. Abstain from killing
2. Stealing
3. Lying
4. Engaging in improper sexual conduct
5. Partaking of intoxicants
Ten Commandments

Monks followed page 130’s rules of conduct
- Do not kill
- Do not steal
- Do not be unchaste
- Do not lie
- Do not use intoxicants
- Eat moderately but not after noon
- Do not look at dancing, singing, or drama
- Do not use perfumes, scents, cosmetics or ornaments
- Do not use comfortable beds
- Do not accept gold or silver
• Buddha dies at the age of eighty after eating spoiled pork curry.
Buddhists still pilgrim to India to visit Kapilavastu (birthplace), Gaya (fig tree) Varansasi (first sermon)
The Teachings of Buddha

- Did not intend to make a new religion

- Differences between Hinduism and Buddhism
  1. Brahmin animal sacrifice
  2. Rejected the Vedas
  3. Soul does not exist
     □ People live in a state of anatman (non-soulness)
The Teachings of Buddha Cont.d’

Anatman

- What is called a soul is a combination of five mental or physical aggregates (skandhas)
  1. Physical characteristics
  2. Perception
  3. Feelings
  4. Subconscious predispositions
  5. Awareness (or consciousness).
- These five are bound to cycle of birth, death, and rebirth.
Person who follows the 8-fold path will break the bonds that tie one to life and will achieve release from the cycle
- Release equals Nirvana

Buddhist practices goals to achieve extinguishing tanha

One who achieved Nirvana is called an arhat or saint
The Development of Buddhism

- Denies relevance of gods and necessity of worship or sacrifice
- Release from life depends on the works of the individual
- After Buddha's death, debate began on the meanings of the teaching
  - Schism develops
  - Council called to try and bring unity
- 16 factions developed
390 B.C.E. second council called

- Two major “wings” developed
  - Hinayana (the exclusive way)
    - Smaller
    - More orthodox
    - Most dominate school is Theravada (the tradition of the elders)
  - Mahayana (the expansive way)
    - Large
    - More
Asoka

- When Asoka converted, Buddhism greatest growth occurred
- Sent missionaries
- Son, Mahinda went to Sri Lanka
- Third council called but many major and minor sects still existed
Theravada Buddhism

- More conservative
- Believes it is closest to original teachings
- Located: Sri Lanka, Southeast Asian nations: Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos
- Enlightenment achieved by themselves
- Monk ideal figure: when reaches goal, he comes as a saint, then dies and reaches Nirvana; is released from “the cycle”.
- Need not be monk for life.
Theravada Buddhism Cont.d’

- If not a monk, lead life as layperson, supports needs of monks
- Believe there have been many Buddha’s and will be more.
- Temples are complex set of buildings called a *wat*.
The *bot*, or *vihara*, is the important part in the building.

It is a hall used for teaching, preaching and mediation.

Has statue of Buddha.

Within the wat are the stupas, or pagodas, living areas of the monks.
Pagoda
Some pagodas claim to hold relics of Buddha.

People visit not to worship but to pay respect to the ideas of Buddhahood and Nirvanas.
Two types of Theravada Meditation

- **Sammatta** is intense concentration.
  - Purpose to attain spiritual state that opens the path to enlightenment.

- **Vipassana** is insight meditation
  - Purpose sudden, intuitive realization of Buddhist truths, like Siddhartha under the bodhi tree.
Mahayana Buddhism

- While Buddhism was being spread, changes occurred in the religion (5 differences)
  - 1. One reason is said to be that Buddha actually taught secretly to a few individuals who understood his different teachings.
  - 2. Buddha was more than a man.
    - He was really a compassionate, eternal, and almost divine being who came to earth in the form of a man because he loved humankind and wished to be of assistance
  - 3. Gautama was not the only Buddha: See page #136, 17.
  - This meant that
    - Mahayanists could study their lives and build temples for them.
    - Clergy could be trained in worshiping them; rituals, sacrifices, and hymns could be established for them.
  - 4. Missionary did not have to ask people to give up their gods.
    - They could be incarnations of Buddha.
    - This is like Hindus saying Siddhartha was really an avatar of Vishnu.
  - 5. Bodhisattvas (future Buddha’s) developed (a class of people who aided others with struggles).
    - They postponed Nirvana until all living beings could attain it. Some are in heaven while others are incarnated in other humans
The Spread of Mahayana Buddhism

Map showing the spread of Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism across Asia.
The Spread of Mahayana Buddhism

- Came into China quickly after India – became one of the three religions…what are the other two?
- Spread to Korea, Japan, Indonesia. Started dying out in India because they incorporated it into Hinduism.
Mahayanist Sects

- Buddhism is seen as a family of religions:
  - Pure Land Sect (Ching-t’u, Jodo)
  - Intuitive Sects (Ch’an, Zen)
  - Rationalist Sect (T’ien-t’ai, Tendai)
  - Sociopolitical Sect (Nichiren)
  - Tibetan Buddhism
Tibetan Buddhism

Also referred to Tantric Buddhism
Tibetan Buddhism Cont. d

- Magic is a means of coping with the problems of life
- Heavy reliance on manuals (mantras) that teach magical words and spells
- These help one deal with the unknown and guides one for a positive rebirth and eventual enlightenment
Believe that there are two elements within each deity: male and female.

To overcome desires, people must overindulge excessively (pg 143)

A monk named Atisa reformed this belief.

Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara is the patron of the Tibetan people.

Prayer wheel is unique to Tibetan Buddhists.

Om mani padme hum is a Tibetan Buddhism mantra believed to invoke the attention and blessings of Chenrezig, the embodiment of compassion. It is believed the teachings of the Buddha are contained in the mantra Om Mani Padme Hum. This design has a yellow and orange circle in the center with a backing of enlightened rays. In the circle is larger Om Mani Padme Hum text. In the background there is a Devanagari Aum symbol!
The Dalai Lama Story - The Making of A World Leader

- When the Dalai Lama was just fifteen China invaded Tibet and full political power was foisted on him. Despite a meeting with Mao and numerous efforts towards a peaceful agreement with the invaders, in 1959 the Dalai Lama was forced to flee his country.

- Pursued by Chinese troops he and his family undertook a tortuous trek to safety through the mountains, only to hear when he arrived in India the news of tens of thousands Tibetans slaughtered, and 6,000 desecrated monasteries.
Tibetan Buddhism Cont'd

- Superior one
- Two orders:
  - Western scholars are the Yellow Hat school
    - Leader of the Yellow Hat group is the Dalai lama, ruler of Tibet
  - Eastern is the Red Hat School
- 1950 China invaded Tibet
  - Tibetans attempted to overthrow, didn’t work. had to escape to India.
Buddhist monks gather each year at Nechung Monastery to celebrate Losar—the Tibetan New Year. The distinctive yellow hat designates members of the Gelug school, to which the Dalai Lama belongs.
The world's largest Buddha statue dwarfs a visitor to Leshan, China. The 231-foot-tall (83-meter-tall) Buddha was carved from a riverside cliff in the 8th century to safeguard boaters on the treacherous waters below.
Buddhist Festivals and Holy Days

- Division of Buddhism has created many holy days, not celebrated by all Buddhists. The major ones followed by most Buddhists are...
- **New Year**
  - Held in April, 3 days, carnival-like atmosphere.
- **Buddha’s Birthday**
  - April 8th in China and Japan, last full moon in May in SE Asia. Buddhist children dress up as the little Buddha.
- **Festival of Souls (Ullambana)**
  - July/August. Purgatory opened, gifts of food left, rituals performed for souls of the dead.
- **Robe Offering**
  - November, Theravada, 1st Buddhist missionaries

The Elephant festival is celebrated within the Thai Buddhist beliefs on the third Saturday of November. The festival pays tribute to one of the most loved animal of the Buddhist Kingdom, elephant. The Buddha cited a wild elephant, which when captured is tied to a harness to domesticate it. This, he used to, explain that, a new Buddhist needs to get along well with the older monks so as to absorb the message of Buddhism well. Similarly, the older monks also need to interact with the younger generation and learn new things from them.
Buddhism Today

- 20th century revival
  - Missionaries wanted to understand Buddhism
  - Asian nationalism after WWII
  - China suppressed
  - Migration to America