

recognition of one's own complete inability to act ethically that enables the compassion of Amida to transform one into an ethical actor. According to Shinran's thought, the devotee neither inspires nor invokes Amida's compassion; rather, Amida is the sole agent in bringing about the ethical formation of his devotees. Without Amida, Shinran estimated, he was completely without options for leading an ethical life.

This emphasis on the power of a buddha to shape the ethical life of beings is not exclusive to Pure Land traditions. While not articulated with the same direct emphasis as with Shinran, there is, in the Theravādin traditions, for example, the conception that the presence of a buddha—through physical proximity in his lifetime or through his relics after his *parinibbāna*—can change people's destinies. Hagiographical accounts of the buddha's teaching career are filled with stories of the multitudes of people who quickly attained arahatship upon receiving the Dharma from the Buddha.

In addition to these generalized patterns, narratives also depict personalized encounters with the Buddha Gautama. The evocative story of Pattācāra, recorded in the Pali *Therīgīthā*, describes how the Buddha's intercession changes the ethical destiny of a woman whose grief at the loss of her entire family renders her insane, wandering naked as an outcast from society. The Buddha becomes literally her last refuge; he is the only one who clearly perceives her naked ravings as an exposure of suffering. The encounter brings sanity, a new family in the *saṅgha*, and ultimately, enlightenment. Attaining enlightenment is not the ultimate goal for Buddhist ethical life; rather, it is to continue to aid others, both through acts of heroic intervention and, like Pattācāra, by serving as an inspiring role model for others.

SEE ALSO Buddha; Buddhism, articles on Buddhism in Japan and Buddhism in Tibet; Buddhism, Schools of, article on Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhism; Celestial Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

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KAREN DERRIS (2005)

BUDDHISM

This entry consists of the following articles:

AN OVERVIEW
BUDDHISM IN INDIA
BUDDHISM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
BUDDHISM IN CENTRAL ASIA
BUDDHISM IN MONGOLIA
BUDDHISM IN TIBET
BUDDHISM IN CHINA
BUDDHISM IN KOREA
BUDDHISM IN JAPAN
BUDDHISM IN THE WEST

BUDDHISM: AN OVERVIEW

[*This article attempts to identify certain of the elements and structures that have constituted the Buddhist tradition as it has evolved over the past twenty-five hundred years. It traces a complex of social and ideological formations that have allowed it to develop from a small religious community to a "universal" religion associated with empire, to an important component in the several cultures of Buddhist Asia, to a tradition faced with the problems raised by modernity and contact with the West.*]

The concept of Buddhism was created about three centuries ago to identify what we now know to be a pan-Asian religious tradition that dates back some twenty-five hundred years. Although the concept, rather recent and European in origin, has gradually, if sometimes begrudgingly, received global acceptance, there is still no consensus about its definition. We can, however, identify two complementary meanings that have consistently informed its use. First, it groups together the thoughts, practices, institutions, and values that over the centuries have—to use a phrase coined by the French Buddhologist Louis de La Vallée Poussin—"condensed around the name of the Buddha." The implicit conclusion of this usage is that Buddhism is, in short, whatever Buddhist men and women have said, done, and held dear. Second, the concept suggests some unifying character or order in the overwhelming diversity encompassed by the first usage. The beginning of this ordering process has often been to consider Buddhism as an example of larger categories, and thus Buddhism has been variously labeled a religion, a philosophy, a civilization, or a culture. It must be admitted, however, that no single ordering principle has been found that takes full account of the data included within the first meaning. This admission stands as a rebuke of the limitations of our current understanding, and as a continuing challenge to go further in our descriptions and explanations.

When the first meaning of Buddhism, which emphasizes its encompassment of accumulated traditions, is placed in the foreground, the resulting conception is indeed com-

prehensive. The further scholarship proceeds, the more comprehensive this conception becomes, because Buddhists have done in the name of the Buddha almost everything that other humans have done. Buddhists have, of course, been concerned with living religiously, some with the aim of salvation, and they have created traditions of belief and practice that help to realize these aspirations. But they have been concerned with much more as well. Buddhists have built cities sanctified by monuments dedicated to the Buddha and they have cultivated their crops using blessings that invoke his name. They have written self-consciously Buddhist poems and plays as well as highly technical works of grammar and logic that begin with invocations to the Buddha. They have commended nonviolence, but they have also gone to war with the name of Buddha on their lips. They have valued celibacy, but have also written erotic manuals and rejoiced in family life, all in the name of Buddha. Buddhists have created subtle philosophical concepts, such as the absence of self (*anātman*), which are contravened by other ideas and values they have held. Like other human beings, Buddhists have been inconsistent and even contradictory, and they have been both noble and base in what they have said and done.

Although most scholars have at some level accepted this first conception of Buddhism as a diverse cumulative tradition, few have been content to allow this encompassing notion to prevail. They have sought to discover what ideals and values have inspired Buddhists, or to formulate generalizations that will help us to see the behavior of individuals as distinctively Buddhist. Some scholars have singled out a pattern, an idea, or a cluster of ideas that they felt was important enough to provide continuity through Buddhist history, or at least sufficient to suggest a coherence to the variety. Important candidates for this “key” to Buddhism are the purported teaching of the founder of Buddhism, Gautama, which provides an essence that has unfolded over the centuries; the monastic organization (*saṃgha*), whose historical continuity provides a center of Buddhist practice and a social basis for the persistence of Buddhist thought and values; the closely related ideas of nonself and emptiness (*anātman*, *śūnyatā*), realized through insight, which are said to mold Buddhist behavior; and the goal of *nirvāṇa* as the purpose of life. While such patterns and notions are very important for Buddhist sociology and soteriology, they also omit a great deal. Moreover, we can see that the element that is singled out as important is often distinctive to Buddhism only in comparison with other religions or philosophies and cannot serve as a core that informs the entire corpus of Buddhist beliefs, rituals, and values.

Scholars have also sought to identify the characteristic order of Buddhism by dividing the cumulative tradition into more manageable parts, whether by chronology, by school, or by country. Some scholars, following the Buddhist historians Bu ston (1290–1364) and Tāranātha (1574–1608), have divided Buddhism into three periods, mainly along philosophical lines. A first phase, represented by the early

Theravāda (Way of the Elders) and Sarvāstivāda (All Things Are Real) schools, emphasized the no-soul idea and the reality of the constituents (*dharma*s) of the world. A middle phase, represented by the Mādhyamika (Middle Way) school, introduced the idea of the ultimate emptiness (*śūnyatā*) of all phenomena. A third period, represented by the Vijñānavāda (Consciousness Only) school, was philosophically idealistic in character. The limitations of this philosophical division are severe in that it only touches certain aspects of Buddhism and acknowledges no significant development after the fifth century CE.

Other scholars have elaborated a schema based on polemical divisions within the Buddhist community. They have focused attention on three great Buddhist “vehicles” (*yāna*) that are characterized by different understandings of the process and goal of salvation. The Hīnayāna, or Lesser Vehicle, elaborated a gradual process of individual salvation, and in that context distinguished among the attainment of an *arhat*, the attainment of a *pratyekabuddha* (one who achieves enlightenment on his own but does not become a teacher), and the attainment of a fully enlightened Buddha who teaches others the way to salvation. The Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda schools mentioned above are two of the major schools that are included under the Hīnayāna rubric. The term *Hīnayāna* was in its origins a pejorative name coined by the adherents of a new movement, self-designated as the Mahāyāna, or Great Vehicle, which generated new texts and teachings that were rejected by the Hīnayānists.

Like the adherents of the Hīnayāna, the Mahāyānists elaborated a gradual path of salvation lasting over many lifetimes, but their emphasis was different in two very important and related respects. They held that an individual’s soteriological process could be aided and abetted by what some Mahāyāna schools came to designate as “other-power,” and they recognized, ultimately, only one soteriological goal—the attainment of fully realized Buddhahood. The Vajrayāna (Diamond Vehicle), which is also known as Mantrayāna (Sacred Sounds Vehicle), Esoteric Buddhism, or Tantric Buddhism, accepted the basic approach and goal of the Mahāyāna, but felt that individual realization could be accomplished more quickly, in some cases even in this present life. The Vajrayānists described the practices that lead to this attainment in texts called *tantras* that were not accepted by either the Hīnayāna or the Mahāyāna schools. Although this Hīnayāna/Mahāyāna/Vajrayāna schema is probably the most common one used by scholars to divide Buddhism into more manageable segments, it too has serious drawbacks. It underestimates the significance of developments after the first millennium of the common era and it tends to overemphasize certain traits therein as extreme differences, beyond what is warranted by history.

Finally, scholars have recognized that Buddhism has always been deeply shaped by its surrounding culture. The Buddhist tradition has been more accretive in its doctrine and practice than the other great missionary religions, Chris-

tianity and Islam. It has shown an enduring tendency to adapt to local forms; as a result we can speak of a transformation of Buddhism in various cultures. The extent of this transformation can be seen in the difficulty that the first Western observers had in recognizing that the religion they observed in Japan was historically related to the religion found in Sri Lanka. This cultural division of Buddhism into Tibetan Buddhism, Chinese Buddhism, and so forth has been most successfully applied to the more recent phases of Buddhist history, especially to contemporary developments. Its dangers are, of course, quite obvious: above all, it conceals the Buddhist tradition's capacity to transcend the boundaries of culture, politics, and nationality.

The general trends of scholarship on Buddhism in this century have been within such accepted divisions of the cumulative tradition, with the result that our sense of Buddhism's historical continuity has been greatly obscured. Theodore Stcherbatsky, a Soviet Buddhologist, is in this regard a representative example. He adopted Bu ston's tripartite "philosophical" division of Buddhist history and, in his *Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa* (Leningrad, 1927), commented on the transition between the first phase and the second phase as follows: "the history of religions has scarcely witnessed such a break between new and old within the pale of what nevertheless continued to claim common descent from the same religious founder" (p. 36). Similar statements pointing to radical discontinuity have been made from the perspective of the soteriological and cultural forms of Buddhism as well.

The investigation of each segment of the Buddhist cumulative tradition is now generally done in isolation from other segments. This strategy has had remarkable success in our discovery of the imprint of Buddhist thought and practice in areas far beyond the monasteries, beyond the level of elite groups. In small domains scholars have begun to see patterns in the full extent of phenomena grouped under the name of Buddhism. At the same time, contemporary scholarship often risks missing the forest for the trees. Our advances in particular areas of research may be at the price of the scholar's unique vision of Buddhism as a pan-Asian tradition.

As is often the case in the study of religion, however, the scale of investigation is decisive. This article will discuss Buddhism on a general level and will highlight continuities rather than disjunctions within the tradition. These continuities cannot be found in any static essence or core threading its way through all of Buddhist history. They will be traced here by following certain elements that have been preserved in a changing series of structures, expanded to meet new needs, and brought into relation with new elements that are continuously being introduced. We will, in other words, identify various elements and successive structures that have constituted Buddhism as it developed from a small community of mendicants and householders in northeastern India into a great "universal" religion associated with empire, civilization, and culture in various parts of Asia, and ultimately with "modernity" and the West as well.

BUDDHISM AS SECTARIAN RELIGION. Buddhism began around the fifth or fourth century BCE as a small community that developed at a certain distance, both self-perceived and real, from other contemporary religious communities, as well as from the society, civilization, and culture with which it co-existed. Thus, we have chosen to characterize the Buddhism of this period as "sectarian."

It is quite probable that Buddhism remained basically a sectarian religion until the time of King Aśoka (third century BCE). Whether this was a period of approximately two hundred years, as some scholars, dating the death of the Buddha around 486 BCE, maintain, or of approximately one hundred years (accepting a death date around a century later) as others contend, it was by all accounts a crucial period in which many elements and patterns were established that have remained fundamental to subsequent phases of Buddhist thought and life. Despite the importance of this early phase of Buddhist history our knowledge about it remains sketchy and uncertain. Three topics can suggest what we do know: the source of authority that the new Buddhist community recognized, the pattern of development in its teaching and ecclesiastical structures, and the attitude it took toward matters of political and social order. In discussing these three topics we shall identify some of the main scholarly opinions concerning them.

One primary factor that both accounts for and expresses Buddhism's emergence as a new sectarian religion rather than simply a new Hindu movement is the community's recognition of the ascetic Gautama as the Buddha ("enlightened one") and of the words that he had reportedly uttered as a new and ultimate source of sacred authority. The recognition of the Buddha's authority was based on an acceptance of the actuality and relative uniqueness of his person and career, and of his enlightenment experience in particular. It was based on the conviction that through his enlightenment he had gained insight into the *dharma* (the Truth). This included the aspect of truth that he had formulated more "philosophically" as, for example, in the teaching concerning the dependent co-origination (*pratītya-samutpāda*) of the various elements that constitute reality, and also the aspect of truth he had formulated more soteriologically, as summarized, for example, in the classic delineation of the Four Noble Truths (that reality is permeated with suffering, that desire is the cause of suffering, that the cessation of suffering is a possibility, and that there is a path that leads to a cessation of suffering). Finally, the Buddha's authority was based on the confidence that the teachings and actions that had flowed from his enlightenment had been accurately transmitted by those who had heard and seen them.

From certain stories preserved in the tradition it seems that there were some challenges to the Buddha's authority. For example, there are numerous reports that even during his own lifetime a more ascetically inclined cousin named Devadatta tried to take over leadership of the new movement. Such challenges were successfully met by the Buddha and by

those who carried on the tradition. As a result, later controversies concerned not so much the authority of his teachings and actions as their content and correct interpretation.

There is less scholarly agreement concerning the more specific content of the early Buddhist teaching and about the closely related question of the structure of the early Buddhist community. Three conflicting interpretations have been set forth, each defended on the basis of detailed text-critical research. Some scholars have maintained that early Buddhism was a movement of philosophically oriented renouncers practicing a discipline of salvation that subsequently degenerated into a popular religion. A second group has contended that Buddhism was originally a popular religious movement that took form around the Buddha and his religiously inspiring message, a movement that was subsequently co-opted by a monastic elite that transformed it into a rather lifeless clerical scholasticism. A third group has argued that as far back as there is evidence, early Buddhist teaching combined philosophical and popular elements, and that during the earliest period that we can penetrate, the Buddhist community included both a significant monastic and a significant lay component. This argument, which is most convincing, has included the suggestion that the philosophical/popular and monastic/lay dichotomies should actually be seen as complements rather than oppositions, even though the understandings of the relative importance of these elements and their interrelationships have varied from the beginning of the Buddhist movement.

By the time of the Second Buddhist Council, held in the city of Vaiśālī probably in the fourth century BCE, the Buddhist community already encompassed two competing assemblies whose members espoused positions that correspond to the modern scholarly group of those who associate the “original” or “true” Buddhism with an elite monastic tradition, and those who associate it with a more democratic and populist tradition. A split occurred at or shortly after the Second Council: those who adhered to the former position came to be known in Sanskrit as *Sthaviravādins* (Pali, *Theravādins*; the proponents of the Way of the Elders), while those who adhered to the latter position came to be known as the *Mahāsāṃghikas* (Members of the Great Assembly).

The third area of discussion about early Buddhism has focused on its sectarian character. While it is not disputed that during the pre-Aśoka period the Buddhist community was a specifically religious community only tangentially involved with issues of political order and social organization, it is less clear whether this distance was a matter of principle or simply an accident of history. Some scholars have argued that early Buddhists were so preoccupied with individual salvation, and the early monastic order so oriented toward “otherworldly” attainments, that early Buddhism’s sectarian character was intrinsic, rather than simply circumstantial. While individualistic and otherworldly strands played an important role in some segments of the early Buddhist community, there are balancing factors that must also be taken into

account. Early Buddhists were concerned to gain royal patronage and were often successful in their efforts; they appropriated royal symbolism in their depiction of the Buddha and his career; they maintained their own explicitly anti-Brahmanic conception of kingship and social order, in the *Aggañña Sutta*, for example; and they encouraged a respect for authority and moral decorum conducive to civil order and tranquillity. Thus, within the sectarian Buddhism of the early period, there were a number of elements that prepared the way for the “civilizational Buddhism” that began to emerge during the reign of King Aśoka.

BUDDHISM AS CIVILIZATIONAL RELIGION. Buddhism has never lost the imprint of the sectarian pattern that characterized its earliest history, largely because the sectarian pattern has been reasserted at various points in Buddhist history. But Buddhism did not remain a purely sectarian religion. With the reign of King Aśoka, Buddhism entered a new phase of its history in which it became what we have chosen to call a “civilizational religion,” that is, a religion that was associated with a sophisticated high culture and that transcended the boundaries of local regions and politics. By the beginning of the common era Buddhism’s civilizational character was well established in various areas of India and beyond. By the middle centuries of the first millennium CE, Buddhism as a civilizational religion had reached a high level of development across Asia. However, the signs of the transition to a new stage had already begun to appear by the sixth and seventh centuries CE.

History and legend of the Aśokan impact. Aśoka (r. circa 270–232 BCE) was the third ruler in a line of Mauryan emperors who established the first pan-Indian empire through military conquest. In one of the many inscriptions that provide the best evidence regarding his attitudes and actual policies, Aśoka renounced further violent conquest and made a commitment to the practice and propagation of *dharma*. In other inscriptions Aśoka informs his subjects concerning the basic moral principles that form his vision of the *dharma*; he mentions related meditational practices that he commends to his subjects as well as festivals of *dharma* that he sponsored. He also tells of sending special representatives to ensure that the *dharma* was appropriately practiced and taught by the various religious communities within his realm.

It would seem from Aśoka’s inscriptions that the *dharma* that he officially affirmed and propagated was not identical to the Buddhist *dharma*, although it was associated with it, especially insofar as Buddhist teaching impinged on the behavior of the laity. However, the inscriptions give clear evidence that if Aśoka was not personally a Buddhist when he made his first commitment to the *dharma*, he became so soon thereafter. His edicts indicate that he sponsored Buddhist missions to various areas not only within his own empire, but in the Greek-ruled areas of the northwest and in Sri Lanka to the south. They indicate that he maintained a special interest in the well-being and unity of the Buddhist

saṃgha, that he was concerned to emphasize the importance of Buddhist texts that dealt with lay morality, and that he undertook a royal pilgrimage to the sites associated with the great events in the Buddha's life.

Aśoka's actual policies and actions represent only one aspect of his impact in facilitating the transition of Buddhism from a sectarian religion to a civilizational religion. The other aspect is evidenced in the legends of Aśoka that appeared within the Buddhist community in the period following his death. These legends vary in character from one Buddhist tradition to another. For example, the Theravādins present an idealized portrait of Aśoka and depict him as a strong supporter of their own traditions. Another widely disseminated Aśokan text, the *Aśokāvadāna*, composed in Northwest India probably in a Sarvāstivāda context, depicts an equally imposing but more ambivalent figure, sometimes cruel in behavior and ugly in appearance. But all of the various Aśokan legends present in dramatic form an ideal of Buddhist kingship correlated with an imperial Buddhism that is truly civilizational in character.

During the Aśokan and immediately post-Aśokan era there are at least three specific developments that sustained the transformation of Buddhism into a civilizational religion. The first, a realignment in the structure of the religious community, involved an innovation in the relationship and balance between the monastic order and its lay supporters. Prior to the time of Aśoka the monastic order was, from an organizational point of view, the focus of Buddhist community life; the laity, however important its role may have been, lacked any kind of independent institutional structure. As a result of the Aśokan experience, including both historical events and the idealized example he set as lay participant *par excellence* in the affairs of the *saṃgha*, the Buddhist state came to provide (sometimes as a hoped-for possibility, at other times as a socioreligious reality) an independent institution that could serve as a lay counterpoint and counterbalance to the order of monks. In addition, this realignment in the structure of the Buddhist community fostered the emergence of an important crosscutting distinction between monks and laypersons who were participants in the imperial-civilizational elite on the one hand, and ordinary monks and laypersons on the other.

The transformation of Buddhism into a civilizational religion also involved doctrinal and scholastic factors. During the Aśokan and post-Aśokan periods, factions within the monastic community began to formulate aspects of the teachings more precisely, and to develop those teachings into philosophies that attempted to explain all of reality in a coherent and logically defensible manner. As a result, the literature in which the community preserved its memory of the sermons of the Buddha (the *sūtras*) and of his instructions to the monastic order (*Vinaya*) came to be supplemented by new scholastic texts known as *Abhidharma* ("higher Dharma"). Given the philosophical ambiguities of the received traditions, it was inevitable that contradictory doctrines

would be put forward and that different religio-philosophical systems would be generated. This led to controversies within the community, and these controversies led to the proliferation of Buddhist schools and subschools, probably in conjunction with other more mundane disputes that we do not have sufficient data to reconstruct. Some sources list a total of eighteen schools without any consistency in names. The institutional and ideological boundaries between groups and subgroups were probably very fluid.

Developments in the areas of symbolism, architecture, and ritual were also significant components in the transformation of Buddhism into a civilizational religion. Some changes were related to the support Buddhism received from its royal and elite supporters. For example, royal and elite patronage seems to have been crucial to the emergence of large monastic establishments throughout India. Such support was also a central factor in the proliferation of stupas (Skt., *stūpas*), memorial monuments replete with cosmological and associated royal symbolism that represented the Buddha and were, in most cases, believed to contain a portion of his relics. These stūpas were an appropriate setting for the development of Buddhist art in which the Buddha was represented in aniconic forms such as a footprint, a Bodhi ("enlightenment") Tree, a royal throne, the wheel of the *dharma*, and the like. Merit making and related rituals proliferated and assumed new forms around these stupas. Pilgrimages to the sacred sites associated with the great events of the Buddha's life became more popular. The veneration and contemplation of stupas and other symbolic representations of the Buddha became increasingly widespread. Moreover, the notion of merit making itself was expanded so that it came to include not only merit making for oneself but the transfer of merit to deceased relatives and others was well.

Imperial Buddhism reasserted and transcended. Despite the importance of Aśoka to the history of Buddhism, the imperial order that he established persisted only a short time after his death. Within fifty years of his death (i. e., by the year 186 BCE), the Buddhist-oriented Mauryan dynasty collapsed and was replaced by the Śuṅga dynasty, more supportive of Brahmanic Hindu traditions. The Buddhist texts claim that the Śuṅgas undertook a persecution of Buddhism, although the force of any such persecution is rendered dubious by the fact that Buddhism and Buddhist institutions continued to flourish and develop within the territory ruled by the Śuṅgas. Moreover, Buddhism emerged as a dominant religion in areas outside northeastern India where the Śuṅgas were unable to maintain the authority and prestige that their Mauryan predecessors had enjoyed.

During the three centuries from the second century BCE through the first century CE Buddhism became a powerful religious force in virtually all of India, from the southern tip of the peninsula to the Indo-Greek areas in the northwest, and in Sri Lanka and Central Asia as well. New polities seeking to secure their control over culturally plural areas emulated Aśoka's example and adopted Buddhism as an imperial

religion. This happened in Sri Lanka, probably when Duṭṭhagāmaṇī brought about the unification of the island kingdom in the mid-second century BCE. It happened in central India when the rising Śātavāhana dynasty became a supporter of the Buddhist cause. It happened to some extent in northwestern India when certain Greek and invading Central Asian kings converted to Buddhism. And it happened more fully in northwestern India during and after the reign of King Kaniṣka (first to second century CE), who ruled over a vast Kushan empire that extended from northern India deep into Central Asia. By this time Buddhism had also begun to penetrate into trading centers in northern China and to spread along land and sea routes across Southeast Asia to South China as well.

A major aspect of the transformation of Buddhism into a fully civilizational religion was the differentiation that occurred between Buddhism as a civilizational religion and Buddhism as an imperial religion. During late Mauryan times the civilizational and imperial dimensions had not been clearly differentiated. However, by the beginning of the common era Buddhism had become a civilizational religion that transcended the various expressions of imperial Buddhism in particular geographical areas. As a direct correlate of this development, an important distinction was generated within the elite of the Buddhist community. By this period this elite had come to include both a truly civilizational component that maintained close international contacts and traveled freely from one Buddhist empire to another and beyond, as well as overlapping but distinguishable imperial components that operated within the framework of each particular empire.

At this time Buddhist texts and teachings were being extended in a variety of ways. In some schools, such as the Theravāda and the Sarvāstivāda, canons of authoritative texts were established, but even after this had occurred new elements continued to be incorporated into the tradition through commentaries. In the case of the Sarvāstivādins, a huge collection of commentaries known as the *Mahāvibhāṣā* was compiled at a Buddhist council held by King Kaniṣka. In other schools the Pīṭakas themselves were still being enriched by the incorporation of a variety of new additions and embellishments. There also began to appear, on the fringes of the established schools, a new kind of sūtra that signaled the rise of a new Buddhist orientation that came to be known as the Mahāyāna. The earliest of these were the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras*, which put forward the doctrine of *śūnyatā* (the ultimate “emptiness” of all phenomena) and proclaimed the path of the *bodhisattva* (future Buddha) as the path that all Buddhists should follow. Before the end of the second century CE the great Buddhist philosopher Nāgārjuna had given the perspective of these sūtras a systematic expression and thereby established a basis for the first of the major Mahāyāna schools, known as Mādhyamika.

This extension of Buddhist traditions of texts and teachings was accompanied by two other developments that also

contributed to their civilizational efficacy. During this period the older Buddhist schools (hereafter collectively called the Hīnayāna) that had previously limited themselves to the oral transmission of tradition, and the newly emerging Mahāyāna fraternities as well, began to commit their versions of the Buddha’s teaching to writing. Some Buddhist groups began to translate and write their most authoritative texts in Sanskrit, which had become the preeminent civilizational language in India.

The rapid development of Buddhism led to major changes in Buddhist ways of representing the Buddha and relating to him ritually. Some Hīnayāna schools produced autonomous biographies of the Buddha. The most famous of the biographies is the *Buddhacarita* (Acts of the Buddha), by Aśvaghōṣa, written in refined Sanskrit in a classic literary form (*kāvya*). The Hīnayāna schools provided the context for the production of anthropomorphic images of the Buddha, which became a major focal point for sophisticated artistic expression on the one hand, and for veneration and devotion on the other. These schools also made a place within the Buddhist system for a new and very important figure who became a focus for new forms of devotional practice and, in later phases of Buddhist history, new forms of religio-political symbolism and activity as well. This new figure was the future Buddha Maitreya (“the friendly one”), who was believed to be residing in the Tusita Heaven awaiting the appropriate time to descend to earth. By the beginning of the common era other buddhological trends were beginning to surface that were exclusively Mahāyāna in character. For example, sūtras were beginning to appear that focused attention on a celestial Buddha named Amitābha (“infinite light”) and portrayed practices of visualization that could lead to rebirth in the western paradise over which he presided.

Closely associated developments were taking place at the level of cosmology and its application to religious practice. In the Hīnayāna context the most important development was probably the rich portrayal of a set of six cosmological *gatis*, or “destinies” (of gods, humans, animals, *asuras* or titans, hungry ghosts, and beings who are consigned to hell), which depicted, in vivid fashion, the workings of *karman* (moral action and its effects). These texts, which were probably used as the basis for sermons, strongly encouraged Buddhist morality and Buddhist merit-making activities. Other Hīnayāna works of the period suggested the presence of a vast expanse of worlds that coexist with our own. In the new Mahāyāna context this notion of a plurality of worlds was moved into the foreground, the existence of Buddhas in at least some of these other worlds was recognized, and the significance of these Buddhas for life in our own world was both affirmed and described. Finally, there are indications that during this period both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna Buddhists increasingly employed exorcistic rituals that depended on the magical power of various kinds of chants and spells (*paritta* in Pali, *dhāraṇī* in Sanskrit).

Buddhism as Pan-Asian Civilization. From the second to the ninth century, Buddhism enjoyed a period of im-

mense creativity and influence. Prior to the beginning of the sixth century, Buddhist fortunes were generally on the rise. Buddhism flourished in Sri Lanka, India, and Central Asia. Through already familiar processes involving its introduction along trade routes, its assimilation to indigenous beliefs and practices, and its adoption as an imperial religion, Buddhism became firmly entrenched in both northern and southern China and in many parts of Southeast Asia. After about 500 CE, these well-established dynamics of expansion continued to operate. Buddhism became the preeminent religion in a newly unified Chinese empire, it continued its spread in parts of Southeast Asia, and it was established in important new areas, first in Japan and then in Tibet. However, during this latter period its successes were coupled with setbacks, and by the middle of the ninth century the era of Buddhism as a pan-Asian civilization was rapidly drawing to a close.

The geographical expansion of Buddhism was both a cause and an effect of its civilizational character. But Buddhism's role as a pan-Asian civilization involved much more than a pan-Asian presence. Buddhist monasteries, often state supported and located near capitals of the various Buddhist kingdoms, functioned in ways analogous to modern universities. There was a constant circulation of Buddhist monks, texts, and artistic forms across increasingly vast geographical areas. Indian and Central Asian missionaries traveled to China and with the help of Chinese Buddhists translated whole libraries of books into Chinese, which became a third major Buddhist sacred language alongside Pali and Sanskrit. In the fifth century Buddhist nuns carried their ordination lineage from Sri Lanka to China. Between 400 and 700 a stream of Chinese pilgrims traveled to India via Central Asia and Southeast Asia in order to visit sacred sites and monasteries and to collect additional scriptures and commentaries. Some of these, such as Faxian, Xuanzang, and Yijing, wrote travel accounts that provide information concerning Buddhist civilization in its fullest development. In the sixth century Buddhism was formally introduced into Japan; in the following century Buddhists from Central Asia, India, and China made their way into Tibet. Beginning in the eighth and ninth centuries monks from Japan visited China in order to receive Buddhist training and acquire Buddhist texts. These are only a few illustrations of the kind of travel and interaction that characterized this period.

While Buddhism was reaching its apogee as a civilizational religion, the teachings of the Hīnayāna tradition were further extended and refined. New commentaries were produced in both Sanskrit and in Pali. During the fifth century these commentaries were supplemented by the appearance of two very important manuals, Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*, composed in the Sarvāstivāda-Sautrāntika context in Northwest India, and Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga* (Path of Purification), written in the Theravādin context in Sri Lanka. Moreover, many Hīnayāna themes remained basic to the other Buddhist traditions with which it coexisted. Most Buddhists continued to recognize the Bud-

dha Gautama as an important figure, and to focus attention on the single-world cosmology that posited the existence of three realms—the realm beyond form associated with the most exalted gods and the highest meditational states, the realm of form associated with slightly less exalted gods and meditational states, and the realm of desire constituted by the six *gatis* previously mentioned. This latter realm was especially prominent as the context presumed by pan-Buddhist teachings concerning karmic retribution and the value of giving, particularly to the members of the monastic community.

Within the Mahāyāna tradition this period of Buddhist efflorescence as a civilizational religion was characterized by a high level of creativity and by a variety of efforts toward systematization. In the earlier centuries the Mahāyānists produced a rich and extensive collection of new sūtras, including the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (Lotus of the true law), the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, and the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*. With the passage of time, voluminous commentaries were written on many of these sūtras in India, Central Asia, and China. These sūtras and commentaries developed new teachings concerning the emptiness of the phenomenal world, the storehouse consciousness (*ālaya-vijñāna*), and the “embryo of the Tathāgata” (*tathāgata-garbha*). These teachings were given scholastic forms in various Mahāyāna groups such as the Mādhyamika and Yogācāra schools, which originated in India, and the Tiantai and Huayan schools, which originated in China. In addition, these sūtras and commentaries recognized a vast pantheon of Buddhas and *bodhisattvas* (future Buddhas) and acknowledged the existence of a plurality, even an infinity, of worlds. Some went on to affirm the reality of an eternal, cosmic Buddha whom they took to be the ultimate source of these innumerable Buddhas, *bodhisattvas*, and worlds (and of all else as well). Some of these texts highlighted various kinds of soteriological help that particular Buddhas and *bodhisattvas* could provide to those who sought their aid. In addition to Maitreya and Amitābha, mentioned above, other Buddhas and *bodhisattvas* who became particularly important include Bhaiṣajyaguru (the Buddha of healing), Avalokiteśvara (the *bodhisattva* exemplar of compassion), Mañjuśrī (the *bodhisattva* patron of the wise), and Kṣitigarbha (the *bodhisattva* who specialized in assisting those who suffer in hell).

By the second half of the first millennium CE a new strand of Buddhist tradition, the Vajrayāna, or Esoteric Vehicle, began to come into the foreground in India. This new vehicle accepted the basic orientation of the Mahāyāna, but supplemented Mahāyāna insights with new and dramatic forms of practice, many of them esoteric in character. The appearance of this new Buddhist vehicle was closely associated with the composition of new texts, including new sūtras (e.g., the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*), and the new ritual manuals known as *tantras*. By the eighth and ninth centuries this new vehicle had spread through virtually the entire Buddhist world and was preserved especially in Japan and in Tibet. But before the process of systematization of the Vajrayāna

could proceed very far the infrastructure that constituted Buddhist civilization began to break down, thus at least partially accounting for the very different form that this tradition took in Tibet and in Japan, where it became known as Shingon.

During the period of its hegemony as a pan-Asian civilization, Buddhism retained a considerable degree of unity across both the regional and text-oriented boundaries that delimited particular Buddhist traditions. In each cultural area and in each of the three *yānas* there were ascetics and contemplatives who practiced Buddhist meditation; there were ecclesiastics and moralists whose primary concern was Buddhist discipline; there were monks and laypersons who were involved in Buddhist devotion; and there were those who took a special interest in Buddhist magic and exorcism. These diverse groups and individuals shared—and many realized that they shared—beliefs, attitudes, and practices with like-minded Buddhists in distant areas and other *yānas*.

Moreover, during the period of its ascendancy as a civilizational religion, Buddhism provided a successful standard of cultural unification such that other religious traditions, including the Hindu in India, the Manichaean in Central Asia, the Daoist in China, the Shinto in Japan, and the Bon in Tibet, responded to it with their own innovations shaped by Buddhist ideas and values. During this period, in other words, Buddhism set the standards, religious, philosophical, artistic, and so on, to which a whole range of other Asian traditions were forced to respond. Buddhism also served as a civilizational religion by encompassing other elements—logic, medicine, grammar, and technology, to name but a few—that made it attractive to individuals and groups, including many rulers and members of various Asian aristocracies who had little or no interest in the spiritual aspect of religion.

BUDDHISM AS CULTURAL RELIGION. For more than a thousand years, from the time of King Aśoka to about the ninth century, Buddhism exhibited a civilizational form that began as pan-Indian and ultimately became pan-Asian in character. Like the sectarian pattern that preceded it, this civilizational pattern left an indelible mark on all subsequent Buddhist developments. Buddhism never completely lost either its concern for inclusiveness or its distinctively international flavor. But beginning in about the fifth century the civilizational structure suffered increasingly severe disruptions, and a new pattern began to emerge. All across Asia, Buddhism was gradually transformed, through a variety of historical processes, into what we have chosen to call “cultural religion.”

The period of transition. Buddhist civilization, which characteristically strove for both comprehensiveness and systematic order, was dependent on the security and material prosperity of a relatively small number of great monasteries and monastic universities that maintained contact with one another and shared common interests and values. This institutional base was, in fact, quite fragile, as was demonstrated when historical events threatened the well-being of these

monasteries and their residents. New developments arose within the Buddhist community as a result of these vicissitudes, developments that eventually transformed Buddhism into a series of discrete cultural traditions.

Some indication of these developments can be seen quite early, even as Buddhist civilization was at the peak of its brilliance. Events in Central Asia during the fifth and sixth centuries were not favorable to the Buddhist kingdoms along the Silk Route that connected Northwest India and northern China. These kingdoms were invaded and in some cases conquered by different nomadic peoples such as the Huns, who also invaded India and the Roman empire. The Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang, who visited Sogdiana in 630, saw only ruins of Buddhist temples and former Buddhist monasteries that had been given over to the Zoroastrians.

The instability in the crucial linking area between India and China during the fifth and sixth centuries seems to have been sufficient to weaken Buddhism’s civilizational structure. For the first time we see the emergence of new Buddhist schools in China that are distinctively Chinese. The appearance of synthetic Chinese schools like Tiantai and Huayan suggests a continuation of the civilizational orientation. These schools sought to reconcile the divergent views found in Buddhist literature through an extended elaboration of different levels of teaching. This is, of course, characteristic of Buddhism as a civilizational religion, but the manner of reconciliation reflects a style of harmonization that is distinctively Chinese.

The increasing importance of Tantra in late Indian Buddhism and the success of the Pure Land (Jingtu) and Chan (Zen) schools in China during the Sui and Tang period (598–907) are further indications that the Buddhist tradition was becoming more local in self-definition. Chinese Buddhism had a new independent spirit in contrast to the earlier India-centered Buddhism. Moreover, the new movements that emerged at that time seem to be the result of a long development that took place apart from the major cosmopolitan centers. Far more than in the past, expressions of Buddhism were being made at all levels of particular societies, and there was a new concern for the interrelation of those levels within each society.

During the last centuries of the first millennium CE, Buddhist civilization developed a new, somewhat independent center in China that reached its peak during the Sui and Tang dynasties. Thus, when Buddhist texts and images were introduced into Japan during the sixth century they were presented and appropriated as part and parcel of Chinese culture. The new religion gained support from the prince regent, Shōtoku Taishi, who wanted to model his rule after that of the Buddhist-oriented Sui dynasty. Chinese Buddhist schools such as Huayan (Jpn., Kegon) also prospered in the Nara period in Japan (710–784) as Chinese cultural influence continued to flourish.

The two centers of Buddhist civilization, China and India, also competed with each other, as can be seen in a situ-

ation that developed in Tibet. Buddhism had been brought to Tibet by King Sroñ bstan sgam po (d. 650), who established the first stable state in the area. Buddhist texts were translated into Tibetan from both Sanskrit and Chinese. A later king, Khri sroñ lde btsan (755–797), officially adopted Buddhism as the state religion and determined to resolve the tension between Indian and Chinese influence. He sponsored the famous Council of Lhasa, in which a Chinese party representing a Chan “sudden enlightenment” point of view debated an Indian group that advocated a more gradualist understanding of the Buddhist path. Both sides claimed victory, but the Indian tradition gained predominance and eventually translations were permitted only from Sanskrit.

During the ninth and tenth centuries the two Buddhist civilizational centers in India and China were themselves subject to attack, both internally and externally. The combination of Hindu resurgence and Muslim invasions led to the effective disappearance of the Buddhist community in India by the thirteenth century. Repeated invasions by Uighurs and Turkic peoples, as well as official persecutions and the revival of the Confucian tradition, resulted in a decisive weakening of institutional Buddhism in China.

The processes of acculturation that had first become evident in the sixth century in India and China repeated themselves beginning in the tenth century in Japan, Korea, Tibet, Sri Lanka, and Southeast Asia. In each of these areas distinct cultural forms of Buddhism evolved. There was a reorganization of the Buddhist community with an increased emphasis on the bonds between elite and ordinary Buddhists in each particular area. There was a renewed interest in efficacious forms of Buddhist practice and the Buddhist schools that preserved and encouraged such practice. Within each area there was a development of Buddhist symbols and rituals that became representative of distinct Buddhist cultures, particularly at the popular level.

In Central Asia the Buddhist community had no success in surviving the Muslim expansion. Buddhism had some limited success in India during the last centuries of the first millennium. It benefited from extensive royal and popular support in northeastern India under the Pāla dynasty from the eighth to the twelfth century, but Hindu philosophy and theistic (*bhakti*) movements were aggressive critics of Buddhism. Hardly any distinct Buddhist presence continued in India after the last of the great monasteries were destroyed by the Muslims. In China there was more success, although the Confucian and Daoist traditions were powerful rivals. As a result of persecutions in the ninth century, Buddhism lost its distinctively civilizational role, but it continued as a major component of Chinese religion, becoming increasingly synthesized with other native traditions. In Sri Lanka, Southeast Asia (except for Indonesia and the Malay Peninsula, where Buddhism suffered the same fate that it suffered in India), Japan, Korea, and Tibet (from whence it eventually spread to Mongolia), areas where Buddhism did not have to compete with strongly organized indigenous traditions, it was

successful in establishing itself as the dominant religious tradition. The religious creativity of these areas, once the periphery of the Buddhist world, resulted in a Buddhist “axial age” that dramatically transformed the tradition as a whole.

Monastic order, royal order, and popular Buddhism.

The transformation of Buddhism from a civilizational religion to a cultural religion depended on a fundamental realignment in the structure of the Buddhist community. As a civilizational religion, Buddhist community life had come to include a largely monastic elite that traveled extensively, was multilingual, and operated at the civilizational level; an imperial elite made up of monks and laypersons associated more closely with royal courts and related aristocracies; and a less exalted company of ordinary monks and laypersons living not only in urban areas but in the countryside as well. In Buddhism’s zenith as a civilizational religion the central organizing relationship was that between the largely monastic civilizational elite and the imperial elites, consisting of kings, queens, and other high-placed members of the laity on the one hand, and the monks whom they supported on the other. The ordinary members of the laity and the less exalted monks played a role, of course, but in most areas at most periods of time they seem to have been somewhat distanced from the mainstream of Buddhist community life. With the transformation of Buddhism into a cultural religion, however, this situation was drastically altered.

One aspect of this transformation was major changes that took place at three different levels: monastic, imperial, and popular. The demise of the monastic network through which the civilizational aspect of Buddhism had been supported and maintained was decisive. To be sure, there were elements of the monastic community that never lost their international vision, and travel and exchanges between specific cultural areas was never totally absent, particularly between China and Japan, China and Tibet, and Sri Lanka and mainland Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, it would be difficult to speak of a pan-Asian Buddhist elite after the ninth or tenth century.

The pattern at the imperial level was altered by the loss of monastic power and influence coupled with increased state control in monastic affairs. During the period that Buddhism was an effective civilizational religion its great monasteries functioned practically as “states within the state.” Monasteries commanded extensive resources of land and labor and were often actively involved in commercial enterprises. This public splendor made the monasteries inviting targets, especially after their usefulness as civilizational centers had declined. If the monasteries were not simply destroyed, as they were in India and Central Asia, they were often deprived of their resources, as occurred at one time or another in virtually every Buddhist area. With the decline of monastic influence at the imperial level, the control of the state over monastic affairs inevitably increased. In China and Japan, and to a lesser extent in Korea and Vietnam, state control became thoroughly bureaucratized. In Sri Lanka and the

Theravāda areas of Southeast Asia, state control was implemented more indirectly and with considerably less efficiency by royal “purifications” of the *sangha*. Specific local conditions in Tibet led to a unique situation in which monastic and royal functions became so tightly interlocked that they were often completely fused.

The demise of the international Buddhist elite and the weakening of the large and powerful establishments were counterbalanced by a strengthening of Buddhist life at the grass-roots level. Smaller, local institutions that for a long time had coexisted with the great monasteries took on new importance as focal points in Buddhist community life. For example, smaller so-called merit cloisters (*kung-te yüan*) supported by wealthy laymen were significant components in the development and life of Chinese Buddhism. In Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia the emergence of cultural Buddhism was closely associated with monks who were called *gāmaṇīsins* (village dwellers) and who strengthened Buddhist influence among the people in the major cities and in the more distant provinces as well. In contrast to civilizational Buddhism, in which the crucial structural alignment was that between the civilizational elite and the monks and laity at the imperial level, the crucial structural alignment in cultural Buddhism was between the monks and laity of the imperial or state elites, who were located primarily in the capital cities, and the ordinary people who inhabited local monasteries and villages.

The preeminence of practice. The era of comprehensive Buddhist philosophizing and the formulation of original systems of thought came to an end, for the most part, with the demise of Buddhism as a civilizational religion. There continued to be philosophical innovations, and some of the great systems that were already formulated were adjusted to meet new circumstances. However, the real creativity of Buddhism as a cultural religion came to the fore in schools and movements that emphasized efficacious modes of Buddhist practice.

A major component in the development of various Buddhist cultures is the ascendancy of schools or movements that combined a strong emphasis on the importance of discipline (particularly although not exclusively the monastic discipline) with an accompanying emphasis on meditation. In China and Japan, Chan and Zen, with their emphasis on firm discipline and meditative practices such as “just sitting” and the contemplation of *kung-an* (Jpn., *kōan*; enigmatic verses), are representative of this kind of Buddhist tradition. These were the schools that became more prominent as Mahāyāna Buddhism emerged as a cultural religion in East Asia, and they continued to exert influence on the various East Asian political and aesthetic elites from that time forward. The Āraṇīkas, or “forest-dwelling monks,” represented an analogous orientation and played a similar role in Sri Lanka and subsequently in Southeast Asia. The Āraṇīkas appeared on the Sri Lankan scene in the ninth and tenth centuries as a group of monks who had chosen to withdraw from

the wealthy monasteries of the capital, to adopt a strictly disciplined mode of life, and to devote themselves to study and/or meditation. In the twelfth century the Āraṇīkas led a major reform in Sri Lanka and in subsequent centuries they extended their reform movement throughout the Theravāda world, which included not only Sri Lanka but also Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos. The Āraṇīkas in the Theravāda world, like the Chan and Zen practitioners in East Asia, were closely affiliated with the elite segments of the various societies in which they were active. A similar kind of emphasis was placed on discipline, study, and meditation in Tibet, where the Vajrayāna tradition was established by Atīśa, the monk who in the eleventh century inaugurated the “second introduction” of Buddhism into the country. In the fifteenth century another infusion of discipline-oriented reform was provided by reformers who established the Dge lugs pa, the so-called Yellow Hats, which became the preeminent Tibetan (and Mongolian) school subsequently headed by the well-known line of Dalai Lamas.

Each expression of Buddhism as a cultural religion generated, as a kind of counterpoint to its more elitist, discipline-oriented schools and movements, other schools and movements that focused on more populist forms of devotional or Esoteric (Tantric) practice. In the East Asian Mahāyāna areas the most important development was the increasing prominence of the Pure Land schools in the early centuries of the second millennium CE. The Chinese Pure Land schools remained in close symbiosis with the practitioners of Chan and retained a relatively traditional mode of monastic practice. Their Japanese counterparts, however, became more differentiated and considerably more innovative. During the Kamakura period (1185–1333) a number of new, distinctively Japanese Pure Land and related schools were founded by charismatic leaders such as Hōnen, Shinran, and Nichiren; these schools took on a distinctively Japanese cast. For Nichiren, the Pure Land was Japan itself.

Although less important than Pure Land and related kinds of devotion, Esoteric or Tantric modes of religion also were a significant part of cultural Buddhism in East Asia. In China the Esoteric elements were closely related to influences from the Vajrayāna tradition in Tibet as well as interactions with forms of indigenous Daoism. In Japan more sophisticated Esoteric elements persisted in the Tendai (Chin., Tiantai) and Shingon schools, while more rustic and indigenous elements were prominent in groups that were integrated into these schools, for example, the Shūgendō community that was made up of mountain ascetics known as *yamabushi*.

In Sri Lanka in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (the period of Hōnen, Shinran, and Nichiren in Japan) devotional religion also seems to have been influential in the Buddhist community, generating new genres of Buddhist literature that were written primarily in Sinhala rather than Pali. Although no specifically devotional “schools” were formed, a whole new devotional component was incorporated into the Theravāda tradition and subsequently diffused to the

Theravāda cultures in Southeast Asia. Similarly, there were, as far as we know, no “schools” that were specifically Esoteric or Tantric in character. However, there is some evidence that indicates that Esoteric elements played a very significant role in each of the premodern Theravāda cultures. This kind of influence seems to have been particularly strong in northern Burma, northern Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia.

In Tibet and Mongolia, as one would expect given their Vajrayāna ethos, the primary counterpoints to the more discipline-oriented traditions were the schools, such as the Rnying ma pa and Bka’ brgyud pa, that emphasized the performance of Esoteric and Tantric rituals in order to achieve worldly benefits and to proceed along a “fast path” to salvation. However, just as in the other Buddhist cultures devotion was supplemented by recourse to Esoteric and Tantric techniques, so in Tibet and Mongolia Esoteric and Tantric techniques were supplemented by the practice of devotion.

Another important component of Buddhism as a cultural religion was the mitigation, in some circles at least, of traditional distinctions between monks and laity. This trend was least evident in the more discipline-oriented contexts, but even here there was some movement in this direction. For example, in the Chan and Zen monasteries, monks, rather than being prohibited from engaging in productive work as the Vinaya had stipulated, were actually required to work. In the Pure Land schools in Japan, and in some of the Esoteric schools in Japan and Tibet, it became permissible and common for clergy to marry and have families. Also, certain kinds of monastic/lay and purely lay associations played important roles in China and Japan. These included both straightforward religious associations devoted to the various Buddhist causes, and, particularly in China, a number of secret societies and messianically oriented groups. Even in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia tendencies toward the laicization of the monastic order can from time to time be observed, but in these strongly Theravāda areas the process was always thwarted by royal intervention before the innovations could take root.

The pervasiveness of ritual. Alongside the particular schools and movements that characterized Buddhism as a cultural religion there were also modes of Buddhist practice that, although influenced by those schools and movements, were more pervasively involved in Buddhist cultures as such. Pilgrimage was in the forefront of these practices.

Virtually every instance of Buddhism as a cultural religion had its own particular patterns of Buddhist pilgrimage. In many cases these pilgrimage patterns were a major factor in maintaining the specificity of particular, often overlapping, religious and cultural complexes. In some contexts these pilgrimage patterns delimited Buddhist cultural complexes that supported and were supported by particular political kingdoms. An example of this situation was the Sinhala pattern, in which there were sixteen major sites systematically distributed throughout all of Sri Lanka. In other situations, for example in Southeastern Asia, these patterns often delim-

ited Buddhist cultural complexes that cut across political divisions.

Many of the sites that were the goals of major Buddhist pilgrimages were mountain peaks or other places that had been sacred from before the introduction of Buddhism and continued to have sacred associations in other traditions that coexisted with Buddhism. Through pilgrimage practices at these sites Buddhism assimilated various deities and practices associated with local religious traditions. At the same time, of course, the Buddhist presence imbued those deities and practices with Buddhist connotations. In Japan, Buddhas and *bodhisattvas* became virtually identified in many situations with indigenous *kami* (divine spirits). In China great *bodhisattvas* such as Kṣitigarbha, Mañjuśrī, and Avalokiteśvara became denizens of sacred mountains that were popular pilgrimage sites, and in those pilgrimage contexts underwent a thoroughgoing process of sinicization. Stūpas, footprints, and other Buddhist objects of pilgrimage in Southeast Asia became, for many who venerated them, representations in which the Buddha was closely associated with indigenous spirits (e.g., *nats* in Burma, *phī* in Thailand, etc.) who served as the local guardians or protectors of Buddhist institutions.

Wherever Buddhism developed as a cultural religion it penetrated not only the sacred topography of the area but also the cycle of calendric rites. In China, for example, the annual cycle of Buddhist ritual activities included festivals honoring various Buddhas and *bodhisattvas*, festivals dedicated to significant figures from Chinese Buddhist history, a great vegetarian feast, and a very important “All Soul’s” festival in which the Chinese virtue of filial piety was expressed through offerings intended to aid one’s ancestors. While these rituals themselves involved much that was distinctively Chinese, they were interspersed with other festivals, both Confucian and Daoist, and were supplemented by other, lesser rituals associated with daily life that involved an even greater integration with non-Buddhist elements. In Sri Lanka the Buddhist ritual calendar included festivals honoring events of the Buddha’s life; a festival that celebrated the coming of Mahinda, Aśoka’s missionary son, to establish Buddhism in Sri Lanka; a festival in the capital honoring the Buddha relic that served as the palladium of the kingdom; and the monastic-centered *kathin* (Pali, *kaṭhina*; giving of robes) ceremony that marked the end of the rainy season. These Buddhist rituals were interspersed with non-Buddhist celebrations that were, in this case, largely Hindu. These large-scale rituals were supplemented by more episodic and specialized rites that involved an even wider variety of indigenous elements such as offerings to local spirits. In the Tibetan cultural area the Buddhist calendar encompassed great festivals sponsored by monasteries in which the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet was celebrated as the Buddhist defeat of indigenous demons, as well as festivals honoring Buddhist deities (e.g., Tārā) and Tibetan Buddhist heroes (e.g., Padmasambhava). The Tibetan Buddhist calendar also included

other large- and small-scale rituals in which Buddhist and indigenous shamanistic elements were combined.

Buddhism in its various cultural expressions also became associated with life cycle rites, especially those of the male initiation into adulthood and those associated with death. The Buddhist involvement in male initiation rites was limited primarily to Southeast Asia. In many Buddhist countries children and young men were educated in the monasteries, but only in Southeast Asia did temporary initiation into the order, either as a novice (as in Burma) or at a later age as a full-fledged monk (as in central Thailand), become a culturally accepted necessity for the attainment of male adulthood. Buddhist involvement in funerary rituals was, on the other hand, a phenomenon that appeared again and again all across Asia. For example, in the Theravāda countries where Buddhism has been the dominant cultural religion elaborate cremations patterned after the ceremony reportedly performed for the Buddha himself have become the rule for members of the royal and monastic elites. Simpler ceremonies, based on the same basic model, were the norm for those of lesser accomplishment or status. Even in cultures where Buddhism coexisted with other major religions on a more or less equal basis, Buddhists have been the preferred officiants in the funerary context. The prime example is China, where Buddhists developed elaborate masses for the dead that were widely used throughout the whole of society. Originally introduced into China by the now defunct Zhenyan (Vajrayāna) school, these masses for the dead were adapted to their new Chinese environment and became an integral component of Chinese Buddhist culture.

All across Asia Buddhism expressed itself as a cultural religion through different kinds of ritual at different levels of society. It was through these ritual forms, more than in any other way, that it became an integral component in the life of different Asian peoples, molding cultures in accordance with its values and being itself molded in the process. Once Buddhism became established as a cultural religion, it was these rituals that enabled it to maintain its position and influence, and to do so century after century on into the modern era.

BUDDHISM IN THE MODERN WORLD. The beginnings of European mercantilism and imperialism in the sixteenth century initiated a chain of events that continue to stimulate and to threaten the Buddhist community in its parts and as a whole. Traditional social and economic patterns on which the various Buddhist cultures depended were disrupted and eventually displaced by new patterns. These new patterns inextricably linked individual Buddhist societies to a global community and especially to the West. As a result, all of the profound transformations that have occurred in European civilization in the last three centuries, the advent of rationalism, scientific materialism, nationalism, relativism, technology, democracy, and communism, have challenged Buddhists in Asia just as they have challenged religious men and women in Europe and the Americas.

The modern encounter of cultures and civilizations has not been monolithic. Three stages can be identified in Buddhist Asia. The first was the arrival of missionaries with traders in various parts of Asia. These missionaries came to convert and instruct, and they brought printing presses and schools as well as Bibles and catechisms. There was a missionary onslaught on Asian religious traditions, including Buddhism, in Sri Lanka, Southeast Asia, China, and Japan. This onslaught was sometimes physically violent, as in the Portuguese destruction of Buddhist temples and relics in Sri Lanka, but for the most part it was an ideological assault. A second stage was more strictly colonial, as some European powers gained control over many different areas of the Buddhist world. Some Buddhist countries, such as Sri Lanka, Burma, and the Indochinese states, were fully colonized while others, such as Thailand, China, and Japan, were subjected to strong colonial influences. In virtually every situation (Tibet was a notable exception), the symbiotic relationship between the political order and the monastic order was disrupted, with adverse effects for Buddhist institutions.

The twentieth-century acceptance of Western political and economic ideologies, whether democratic capitalism or communism, represents a third stage. Buddhists in China, Mongolia, Tibet, and parts of Korea and Southeast Asia now live in communist societies, and the future of Buddhist communities in these areas looks bleak. Capitalism has been dominant in Japan, South Korea, Sri Lanka, and parts of Southeast Asia (Thailand being the prime example), and greater possibilities for the Buddhist tradition are presumed to exist in these areas. But capitalism, as well as communism, has undercut the claim that Buddhist thought and values are of central significance for contemporary life. Buddhist monuments and institutions are in many cases treated as museum pieces, while Buddhist beliefs are often banished to the sphere of individual opinion. In many situations Buddhism is deplored as backward and superstitious, and is for that reason criticized or ignored. As Edward Conze noted in his *A Short History of Buddhism* (London, 1980), "One may well doubt whether capitalism has been any more kind to Buddhism than communism" (p. 129).

Despite the difficulties that Buddhists have faced, they have responded creatively to the turmoil of recent history. They have engaged in many efforts to adapt to their changing environment, just as they have done repeatedly in the past. Thus far, however, they have drawn on their traditional heritage for suitable models, and their varied responses can thus be grouped as cultural, civilizational, and sectarian.

Cultural responses. The initial responses to European civilization were cultural in character, and often reactionary. Some Buddhist kingdoms, after an initial exposure to elements of European civilization, attempted to isolate themselves as a way of preserving their cultural identity. This was done in Japan, Korea, and Tibet, and was attempted in China. In other cases, Buddhist revivals were inspired by the missionary challenges. In Sri Lanka and China, Buddhist in-

Intellectuals responded to the efforts of Christian missionaries to criticize Buddhism with their own spirited apologetics. These intellectuals readily adopted the methods and instruments of the Christian missionary, the printing press and the school, as well as his militancy, to promote the Buddhist cause. Some processes that began in the period of Buddhist culture, especially the mitigation of distinctions between monks and laity, were also stimulated by these innovations. Modern technology, such as improved modes of transportation, also made it easier for more people to engage in traditional practices like pilgrimage.

The Buddhist revivals often were inspired by cultural loyalty. To choose Buddhism as one's religious identity in the face of the Christian challenge also meant that one was choosing to be Sinhala, Thai, or Chinese. It was an emphatic denial that things Chinese, for example, were inferior, even if this was suggested by the power and prestige of Christianity and European civilization.

The association between Buddhism and cultural loyalty has been strongest in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. Buddhists, both laity and monks, were actively involved in the local independence movements. In these contexts Buddhism has been given a sharply defined nationalistic character by drawing on both the heritage of indigenous Buddhist culture and the example of Aśoka's imperial religion. Buddhism has been used as an instrument for national integration in post-colonial politics and elements of Buddhism have been appropriated by emerging civic religions in Sri Lanka, Burma, and Thailand.

The colonial disestablishment of Buddhism in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia, and its analogues in Qing-dynasty China and Meiji Japan, altered again the lay-monk relationship and encouraged the emergence of an active lay leadership. Monasteries, deprived of government maintenance and generally without sufficient resources of their own, found it necessary to cultivate the support of local patrons. A larger number of people from various economic and social levels thus became actively involved in religious affairs focusing on the monasteries. This, of course, often led to controversy, with further segmentation of the monastic communities resulting. It also created an environment in which laity and monks could come together in new kinds of associations, much as had happened in the development of Buddhist cultures. Some of the strikingly successful "new religions" of Japan and Korea, such as Reiyūkai (Association of the Friends of the Spirit) and Won Buddhism, are products of this environment.

The disestablishment of Buddhism also encouraged the development of an active lay leadership among the new urban elites who were most influenced by European civilization. These elites introduced "reformed" interpretations of elements of the Buddhist tradition in order to bring those elements into harmony with the expectations of European civilization. Modern reformers' interpretations of the Buddha's biography have emphasized his humanity and his ratio-

nal approach to the problem of human suffering. Some modernists have sought to relate Buddhist thought to Western philosophical perspectives and also to scientific patterns. Many Buddhist reformers have stressed the relevance of Buddhist teachings to social and ethical issues.

Civilizational responses. The encounter between European civilization and Buddhist cultures encouraged a new awareness among Buddhists of their common heritage. New contacts among Buddhists began on a significant scale, and, as a result, there was also a renewed sense of Buddhism as a civilizational religion.

This sense that Buddhism could again be a civilizational standard that could encompass the conflicting ideologies present in modern Asia and the world had great appeal to the new urban elites. In many countries Buddhist apologists maintained that Buddhism could be the basis for a truly democratic or socialist society and, as a nontheistic religion, could be the basis for world peace and unity. Sōka Gakkai (Value Creation Society), a Japanese "new religion" stemming from the Nichiren tradition, for example, presents an understanding of Buddhism as the "Third Civilization," which can overcome the opposition of idealism and materialism in thought and, when applied to the economy, can bring about a synthesis of capitalism and socialism.

New missionary efforts to Asian countries such as India, Indonesia, and Nepal, where Buddhist influence had waned, and to the West have been encouraged by this view of Buddhism as "the supreme civilization" and the antidote to the spiritual malaise generated by European civilization.

Sectarian developments. New sectarian developments in the modern period have resulted from the expansion of Buddhism, through missionary work, and from Buddhist losses that have occurred through the encounter with European civilization. These developments are evidence that the idea of a new Buddhist civilization remains, as yet, more an aspiration than a reality.

Sectarian developments resulting from expansion can be seen in the establishment of Buddhism in the West, which has been accomplished at a certain distance from the mainstream communities, whether among immigrant groups or among intellectuals and spiritual seekers disaffected by Western cultures and religious traditions. Another sectarian development resulting from expansion is the neo-Buddhist movement among *harijans*, or scheduled castes, in India, led by B. R. Ambedkar.

A resurgence of sectarian patterns, resulting from Buddhist losses, can be seen in totalitarian communist areas. These developments tend to be pragmatic and defensive in character. Buddhists have attempted to isolate their community from the mainstream of communist society and thus avoid criticism and attack, but these efforts have rarely been successful. Sectarian isolation, however, has often been enforced by new communist governments as a way of weakening and discrediting Buddhist influence. Through a combi-

nation of criticism of Buddhist teaching by communist ideology and the radical disestablishment of Buddhist monasteries, communist governments have been able to divest Buddhist leaders and institutions of their cultural power and influence very quickly. This has occurred in the Soviet Union, Mongolia, North Korea, Vietnam, and with special ferocity in Cambodia (Kampuchea) and Tibet.

The Tibetan experience provides a tragic example of a new sectarian development in Buddhism. Buddhist institutions and leaders have been subject to a brutal attack as part of the effort to incorporate Tibet into the People's Republic of China. This has often taken the form of sinicization, with Buddhism being attacked because of its central place in traditional Tibetan culture. Following the Chinese invasion of 1959, thousands of Tibetans, including the Dalai Lama, fled the country. They have established refugee communities in North America, Europe, and India, where they are trying to preserve the heritage of Tibetan Buddhist culture.

Finally, the growth of millenarian movements among Buddhists in the modern period, especially in Burma, Thailand, and Vietnam, may be described as sectarian developments resulting from Buddhist losses. Like so much else of Buddhism in the modern period, Buddhist millenarian movements were transitory responses to crises of power and interpretation within the Buddhist community.

CONCLUSION. Buddhism as a whole has not yet developed a distinctive character in the modern period. On the contrary, there is a great deal of continuity between the historical development of Buddhism and the current responses and innovations. Thus the sectarian, civilizational, and cultural patterns continue to exert a predominant influence in the evolution of Buddhist tradition.

At the same time, we can see that Buddhism, like other world religions, participates in a modern religious situation that is, in many respects, radically new. Buddhism has thus come to share certain modern elements with other contemporary religions. We can see such elements in the search for new modes of religious symbolism, as is found in the writings of the Thai monk Buddhadasa and the Japanese Kyoto school of Buddhist philosophy. We can also see these common elements in the preoccupation with the human world and this-worldly soteriology that is emerging in many Buddhist contexts. A modern Sinhala Buddhist, D. Wijewardena, expressed this attitude in a polemical tract, *The Revolt in the Temple* (Colombo, 1953), by saying that Buddhists must pursue "not a will-o'-the-wisp Nirvana secluded in the cells of their monasteries, but a Nirvana attained here and now by a life of self-forgetful activity . . . [so that] they would live in closer touch with humanity, would better understand and sympathize with human difficulties" (p. 586).

This diversity, representing both tradition and present situation, reminds those of us who would study and understand Buddhism and Buddhists that, in the end, the decisive meaning of our concept of Buddhism must be that of cumulative

tradition. Our concept must remain open-ended to allow for future transformations of the Buddhist tradition for as long as men and women associate their lives with the name of Buddha.

SEE ALSO Ālaya-vijñāna; Ambedkar, B. R.; Amitābha; Arhat; Aśoka; Atīśa; Avalokiteśvara; Bhaiṣajyaguru; Bodhisattva Path; Buddha; Buddhaghosa; Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, article on Celestial Buddhas and Bodhisattvas; Buddhism, Schools of, article on Mahāyāna Philosophical Schools of Buddhism; Buddhist Books and Texts; Buddhist Ethics; Buddhist Meditation; Buddhist Philosophy; Buddhist Religious Year; Cakravartin; Chan; Chinese Religion, overview article; Confucianism; Cosmology, article on Buddhist Cosmology; Councils, article on Buddhist Councils; Dalai Lama; Dge lugs pa; Dharma, article on Buddhist Dharma and Dharmas; Duṭṭhagāmaṇī; Eightfold Path; Faxian; Folk Religion, article on Folk Buddhism; Four Noble Truths; Hönen; Huayan; Iconography, article on Buddhist Iconography; Indian Religions, overview article; Islam, article on Islam in Central Asia; Japanese Religions, overview article; Jintu; Jōdo Shinshū; Jōdoshū; Kamalaśīla; Karman, article on Buddhist Concepts; Kingship, article on Kingship in East Asia; Korean Religion; Kṣitigarbha; Language, article on Buddhist Views of Language; Mādhyamika; Mahāsāṃghika; Mahāsiddhas; Maitreya; Mañjuśrī; Merit, article on Buddhist Concepts; Millenarianism, article on Chinese Millenarian Movements; Missions, article on Buddhist Missions; Monasticism, article on Buddhist Monasticism; Mongol Religions; Mountains; Nāgārjuna; Nats; New Religious Movements, article on New Religious Movements in Japan; Nichiren; Nichirenshū; Nirvāṇa; Padmasambhava; Pilgrimage, article on Buddhist Pilgrimage in South and Southeast Asia; Pratītya-samutpāda; Priesthood, article on Buddhist Priesthood; Pūjā, article on Buddhist Pūjā; Pure and Impure Lands; Reiyūkai Kyōdan; Saṃgha, overview article and articles on Saṃgha and Society; Sarvāstivāda; Sautrāntika; Shingonshū; Shinran; Shōtoku Taishi; Shūgendō; Sōka Gakkai; Soteriology; Soul, article on Buddhist Concepts; Southeast Asian Religions, article on Mainland Cultures; Stupa Worship; Śūnyam and Śūnyatā; Tārā; Tathāgata; Tathāgata-garbha; Temple, articles on Buddhist Temple Compounds; Tendaishū; Theravāda; Tiantai; Tibetan Religions, overview article; Turkic Religions; Vasubandhu; Vinaya; Worship and Devotional Life, articles on Buddhist Devotional Life; Xuanzang; Yijing; Yogācāra; Zen; Zhenyan.

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FRANK E. REYNOLDS (1987)
CHARLES HALLISEY (1987)

BUDDHISM: BUDDHISM IN INDIA

A contemporary visitor to the South Asian subcontinent would find Buddhism flourishing only outside the mainland,

on the island of Sri Lanka. This visitor would meet small pockets of Buddhists in Bengal and in the Himalayan regions, especially in Ladakh and Nepal, and as the dominant group in Bhutan and Sikkim. Most of the latter Buddhists belong to the Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna forms of Buddhism and represent denominations and orders of Tibetan and Nepalese origin. Buddhists may also be found in the subcontinent among Tibetan refugees (mostly in Himachal Pradesh and Bangalore), among the Ambedkar Buddhists of Maharashtra, and among pilgrims and missionaries flocking to the sacred sites of India. The diversity of manifestations is not new, but the specific forms are not representative of what Indian Buddhism was in the past.

ORIGINS. Approximately twenty-five hundred years ago the founder of the Buddhist religion was born into the Śākya tribe in a small aristocratic republic in the Himalayan foothills, in what is today the kingdom of Nepal. In his youth he descended to the Ganges River valley in search of spiritual realization. After several years of study at the feet of spiritual masters he underwent a profound religious experience that changed his life; he became a teacher himself, and lived for the rest of his adult life as a mendicant peripatetic. His worldview and personal preoccupations were shaped in the cultural milieu of India of the sixth century BCE; the religious communities that trace their origin to him developed their most distinctive doctrines and practices in Indian soil.

Sources and setting. Unfortunately, we do not possess reliable sources for most of the history of Buddhism in its homeland; in particular, we have precious little to rely on for its early history. Textual sources are late, dating at the very least five hundred years after the death of the Buddha. The archaeological evidence, abundant as it is, is limited in the information it can give us. A few facts are nevertheless well established. The roots of Indian Buddhism are to be found in the “shramanic” movement of the sixth century BCE, which owes the name to its model of religious perfection, the *śramaṇa*, or wandering ascetic. The *śramaṇas* set religious goals that stood outside, and in direct opposition to, the religious and social order of the *brāhmaṇas* (brahmins), who represented the Indo-Aryan establishment. Most of the values that would become characteristic of Indian, and therefore Hindu, religion in general were shaped by the interaction of these two groups, especially by a process of assimilation that transformed the Brahmanic order into Hindu culture.

The appearance of two major shramanic religions, Buddhism and Jainism, marked the end of the Vedic-Brahmanic period and the beginning of an era of cross-fertilization between diverse strata of Indian culture. This new age, sometimes called the Indic period, was characterized by the dominant role of “heterodox” or non-Hindu religious systems, the flourishing of their ascetic and monastic orders, and the use of the vernaculars in preference to Sanskrit.

We can surmise that this new age was a time of social upheaval and political instability. The use of iron had changed radically the character of warfare and the nature of

farming. The jungle was cleared, farmland could support a court bureaucracy, and palaces and city walls could be built. A surplus economy was created that made possible large state societies, with concentrated populations and resources, and consequently with heightened political ambition.

The Buddha must have been touched directly by these changes: shortly before his death the republic of the Śākyas was sacked by the powerful kingdom of Kośala, which in turn would shortly thereafter fall under the power of Magadha. At the time of the Buddha sixteen independent states existed in north-central India, a century later only one empire would rule in the region, and in another hundred years this empire, Magadha, would control all of northern India and most of the South. The unity of the empire was won at a price: political and social systems based on family or tribal order crumbled; the old gods lost their power.

As the old order crumbled, the brahmins claimed special privileges that other groups were not always willing to concede. Those who would not accept their leadership sought spiritual and moral guidance among the *śramaṇas*. Although recent research has shown that the interaction between these two groups was more complex than we had previously imagined, it is still accepted that the shramanic movement represented some of the groups displaced by the economic and political changes of the day, and by the expansion of Brahmanic power. The *śramaṇas*, therefore, were rebels of sorts. They challenged the values of lay life in general, but especially the caste system as it existed at the time. Thus, what appeared as a lifestyle designed to lead to religious realization may have been at the same time the expression of social protest, or at least of social malaise.

The shramanic movement was fragmented: among the shramanic groups, Buddhism’s main rival was Jainism, representing an ancient teaching whose origin dated to at least one or two generations before the Buddha. A community of mendicants reformed by Vardhamāna Mahāvīra (d. around 468 BCE) shortly before the beginning of Buddha’s career, Jainism represented the extremes of world denial and asceticism that Buddhism sought to moderate with its doctrine of the Middle Way. Buddhists also criticized in Jainism what they saw as a mechanistic conception of moral responsibility and liberation. Another school criticized by early Buddhists was that of Makkhali Gosāla, founder of the Ājīvikas, who also taught an extreme form of asceticism that was based, strangely, on a fatalistic doctrine.

We have to understand the shramanic movements as independent systems and not as simple derivations or reforms of Brahmanic doctrine and practice. One can find, nevertheless, certain elements common to all the movements of the age: the *śramaṇas*, called “wanderers” (*parivrājakas*), like the forest dwellers of Brahmanism, retired from society. Some sought an enstatic experience; some believed that particular forms of conduct led to purity and liberation from suffering; others sought power through knowledge (ritual or magical)

or insight (contemplative or gnostic); but most systems contained elements of all of these tendencies.

Among the religious values formed during the earlier part of the Indic age, that is, during the shramanic period, we must include, above all, the concept of the cycle and bondage of rebirth (*saṃsāra*) and the belief in the possibility of liberation (*mokṣa*) from the cycle through ascetic discipline, world renunciation, and a moral or ritual code that gave a prominent place to abstaining from doing harm to living beings (*ahiṃsā*). This ideal, like the quest for altered states of consciousness, was not always separable from ancient notions of ritual purity and spiritual power. But among the shramanic movements it sometimes took the form of a moral virtue. Then it appeared as opposition to organized violence—political, as embodied in war, and religious, as expressed in animal sacrifice.

The primary evil force was no longer envisioned as a spiritual personality, but as an impersonal moral law of cause and effect (*karman*) whereby human actions created a state of bondage and suffering. In their quest for a state of rest from the activities of *karman*, whether the goal was defined as ecstasy or knowledge, the new religious specialists practiced a variety of techniques of self-cultivation usually known as *yogas*. The sustained practice of this discipline was known as a “path” (*mārga*), and the goal was a state of peace and freedom from passion and suffering called *nirvāṇa*.

As a shramanic religion, Buddhism displayed similar traits but gave to each of these its unique imprint. The conception of rebirth and its evils were not questioned, but suffering was universalized: all human conditions lead to suffering, suffering has a cause, and that cause is craving, or “thirst” (*trṣṇā*). To achieve liberation from the cycle of rebirth one must follow the spiritual discipline prescribed by the Buddha, summarized in the Eightfold Path. The follower of Buddhism was expected to renounce the lay life and become a wandering ascetic, an ideal epitomized by the spiritual career of the founder.

Most shramanic groups made provisions for their lay supporters, essentially members of the community who by circumstance or choice could not follow the wanderer’s path. Buddhist laymen could begin moving in the right direction—with the hope of being able to renounce the world in a future birth—by “taking refuge” (*śaraṇa-gamana*), that is, by making a confession of faith in the Buddha, his teachings, and his monastic order, and by adopting five fundamental moral precepts (*pañcaśīla*): not to deprive a living thing of life, not to take what is not given to you, not to engage in illicit sexual conduct, not to lie, and not to take intoxicating drinks.

The Three Jewels. Perhaps all we can say with certainty about the roots of Buddhist doctrine and doctrinal continuity in Buddhism is that the figure of the Buddha and his experience dominate most of Buddhist teachings. If we wish to understand Buddhism as a doctrinal system, we can look

at its oral and written ideology—including its scriptures—as the effort of diverse Buddhist communities to explore and define the general issues raised by the Buddha’s career. These include questions such as the following: Does the Buddha “exist” after liberation? Is the experience of awakening ineffable? Which of the two experiences, awakening or liberation, is the fundamental one?

On the other hand, if we wish to understand Buddhism as a religion rather than as a system of doctrines, its focus or fulcrum must be found in the religious communities and their objects of veneration. The early community was represented primarily by the gathering of mendicants or monks called the *saṃgha*, held together by ascetic or monastic codes (*prātimokṣa*) attributed to the Buddha himself, and by the objects of worship represented by (1) the founder himself as the “Awakened One” (*buddha*); (2) his exemplary and holy life, his teachings and his experience (*dharma*); and (3) the community (*saṃgha*) itself, sustained by the memory of his personality and teaching. These objects of veneration are known as the “Three Treasures” (*triratna*), and the believer’s trust in these ideals is expressed, doctrinally and ritually, in the “Three Refuges” (to rely on the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha). To this day, this formula serves at once as an indication of the meaning of monastic ordination and a lay confession of faith.

Buddha. No Western scholar today would claim to know the exact details of the founder’s biography, or for that matter the exact content of his teachings. The above is merely an educated guess based on formulations from a time removed by several centuries from their origins. Scholars agree, nevertheless, on the historicity of the founder. That is to say, though they may doubt the accuracy of the information transmitted in traditional “biographies” (beginning with his personal name, Siddhārtha Gautama) or in legends about the Buddha’s sermons, Western scholars accept the existence of an influential religious figure, called Śākyamuni (“the sage of the Śākya tribe”) by his disciples, who at some point in the sixth century BCE founded in the Ganges River valley the community of wandering mendicants that would eventually grow into the world religion we now call Buddhism.

Scholars generally tend to accept the years 563 to 483 BCE as the least problematic, if not the most plausible, dating for the life of Gautama Buddha. (Other dating systems exist, however, that place his life as much as a century later.) Assuming, moreover, that the legend is reliable in some of its details, we can say that the history of the religion begins when Śākyamuni was thirty-five (therefore, in about 528), with his first sermon at Sārnāth (northeast of the city of Vārāṇasī).

Before and after his enlightenment, Śākyamuni followed the typical career of a wanderer. At twenty-nine he abandoned the household and sought a spiritual guide. An early legend claims that Śākyamuni actually studied under two teachers of the age, Ālāra Kālāma and Udraka Rāmaputra. From such teachers the young ascetic learned

techniques of meditation that he later rejected, but the imprints of which remain in Buddhist theories of meditation. Dissatisfied with what he had learned, he tried the life of the hermit. Finally, after six years of struggle, he “awakened” under a pipal tree (*Ficus religiosa*) near the border town of Uruvilvā (Bodhi Gayā).

His first sermon was followed by forty-five years of wandering through the Ganges River valley, spreading his teachings. Although tradition preserves many narratives of isolated episodes of this half century of teaching, no one has been able to piece together a convincing account of this period. For the tradition this was also a time for the performance of great miracles, and historical accuracy was never an important consideration.

At the age of eighty (c. 483), Siddhārtha Gautama, the Buddha Śākyamuni, died near the city of Kuśināgara. To his immediate disciples perhaps this fading away of the Master confirmed his teachings on impermanence, but the Buddha’s death would soon come to be regarded as a symbol of his perfect peace and renunciation: with death he had reached his *parinirvāṇa*, that point in his career after which he would be reborn no more. His ashes, encased in a reliquary buried in a cairn, came to stand for the highest achievement of an awakened being, confirming his status as the one who had attained to truth, the Tathāgata—an epithet that would come to denote ultimate truth itself.

Dharma. The first preaching, known as the “First Turning of the Wheel of Dharma” (or, in the West, the “Sermon at Banaras” or the “Deer Park Sermon”), symbolizes the appearance in history of the Buddhist teaching, whereas Śākyamuni’s enlightenment experience, or “Great Awakening” (*mahābodhi*), which occurred in the same year, represents the human experience around which the religion would develop its practices and ideals. This was the experience whereby Śākyamuni became an “Awakened One” (*buddha*). His disciples came to believe that all aspects of Buddhist doctrine and practice flow from this experience of awakening (*bodhi*) and from the resultant state of freedom from passion, suffering, and rebirth called *nirvāṇa*. The teachings found in the Buddha’s sermons can be interpreted as definitions of these two experiences, the spiritual practices that lead to or flow from them, and the institutions that arose inspired by the experience and the human beings who laid claim to it.

However, it is difficult, if not impossible, to surmise which, if any, among the many doctrines attributed by tradition to the founder are veritably his. Different Buddhists, even when they can agree on the words, will interpret the message differently. Although most would find the nucleus of Śākyamuni’s teachings in the “First Sermon,” especially in the doctrine of the Four Noble Truths allegedly preached therein, a host of other doctrinal statements compete for the central position throughout the history of Buddhism in India and beyond. Moreover, a number of texts that can claim great antiquity are not only silent about the Four Noble Truths but actually do not seem to presuppose them in any

way. The same can be said about other doctrines that would become central to the development of Buddhist doctrinal speculation, for instance, the principle of conditioned arising (*pratītya-samutpāda*) and the analysis of the human personality into its constituent parts (*skandhas*, etc.).

It is difficult to determine to what extent early Buddhism had an accompanying metaphysics. Some of the earliest strata of Buddhist literature suggest that the early community may have emphasized the joys of renunciation and the peace of abstention from conflict—political, social, and religious—more than a philosophical doctrine of liberation. Such are the ascetic ideals of one of the earliest texts of the tradition, the *Aṭṭhakavagga* (*Suttanipāṭa*). The mendicant abstains from participating in the religious and metaphysical debates of brahmins, *śramaṇas*, and sages. He is detached from all views, for

Purity is not [attained] by views, or learning, by knowledge, or by moral rules, and rites. Nor is it [attained] by the absence of views, learning, knowledge, rules, or rites. Abandoning all these, not grasping at them, he is at peace; not relying, he would not hanker for becoming. (*Suttanipāṭa* 839)

There is in this text a rejection of doctrine, rule, and rite that is a critique of the exaggerated claims of those who believed they could become pure and free through ritual, knowledge, or religious status. The lonely ascetic seeks not to become one thing or the other and avoids doctrinal disputes.

If such statements represent some of the earliest moments in the development of the doctrine, then the next stage must have brought a growing awareness of the need for ritual and creed if the community was to survive. This awareness would have been followed in a short time by the formation of a metaphysic, a theory of liberation, and a conscious system of meditation. In the next strata of early Buddhist literature these themes are only surpassed in importance by discussions of ascetic morality. The ascetic ideals of the early community were then expanded and defined by doctrine—as confession of faith, as ideology, and as a plan for religious and moral practice. The earliest formulations of this type are perhaps those of the Eightfold Path, with its triple division into wisdom, moral practice, and mental concentration. The theoretical or metaphysical underpinnings are contained in the Four Noble Truths and in the Three Marks (impermanence, sorrow, and no-self), both traditionally regarded as the subject matter of the Buddha’s first sermons.

Samgha. With the first sermon the Buddha began a ministry that would last forty-five years. During this period he established a religious order—perhaps only a mendicant order in its beginnings—and trained a number of distinguished disciples who would carry on the teaching after the founder’s death. Tradition preserves the names of many of his disciples and immediate heirs to his teaching: Kauṇḍinya, the first convert to be admitted into the Buddha’s religious order (*saṃgha*); Yasa, the first householder to receive full lay initiation with the Three Refuges; Śāriputra, the master of

wisdom; Maudgalyāyana, the great thaumaturge; Upāli, the expert in the monastic code; Ānanda, the Buddha's cousin and beloved disciple; Mahāprajāpati, the first woman admitted into the monastic order; and Mahākāśyapa, who undertook to preserve the Buddha's teaching and organized the First Council. The Buddha's disciples represented a wide spectrum of social classes. Yasa was the son of a wealthy guild master; Upāli, a humble barber; Śāriputra, a brahman; Ānanda, a member of the nobility (*kṣatriya*). Among the early followers we find not only world renouncers but believers from a variety of walks of life; King Bimbisara, the wealthy banker Anāthapiṇḍika, the respectable housewife Viśākhā, and the courtesan Amrapālī, for instance.

Although the Buddhist monastic community was an integral part of Indian society, serving as an instrument of legitimation and cohesion, it also served on occasions as a critic of society. Especially in its early development, and in particular during the period of the wandering mendicants, the *saṃgha* was a nonconformist subgroup. The variety of social classes represented by the roster of early disciples in part reflects the fluid state of Indian society at the time; but it also reflects the Buddha's open opposition to the caste system as it existed then. Although the challenge was religious and political as well as social, the Buddha's critique of Brahmanism made his order of mendicants an alternative community, where those who did not fit in the new social order could find a sense of belonging, acceptance, and achievement. Buddhist reforms and institutions would waver in their function as rebels and supporters of social order until Buddhism ultimately became absorbed into Hinduism during the centuries following the first millennium of the common era.

We can surmise that the earliest community did not have a fixed abode. During the dry season the Buddhist *śramaṇas* would sleep in the open and wander from village to village "begging" for their sustenance—hence their title *bhikṣu*, "mendicant" (fem., *bhikṣuṇī*). They were persons who had set forth (*pravrajyā*) from the household to lead the life of the wanderer (*parivrajaka*). Only during the rainy season would they gather in certain spots in the forest or in special groves provided by lay supporters. There they would build temporary huts that would be dismantled at the end of the rainy season, when they would set out again in their constant wandering to spread the Buddha's Dharma.

The main ideals of the mendicant life of the "wanderers" is expressed in a passage that is presented as the creed or code (the *Prātimokṣa*) recited by the followers of the "former Buddha" Vipaśyin when they interrupted the wandering to meet and renew their common ideals:

Enduring patience is the highest austerity, *nirvāṇa* is the highest condition—say the Buddhas. For he who injures another is not a true renouncer, He who causes harm to others is not a true ascetic. Not to do any evil, to practice the good, to purify one's own mind: This is the teaching of the Buddhas. Not to speak against others, not to harm others, and restraint according to the

rule (*prātimokṣa*), Moderation in eating, secluded dwelling, and the practice of mental cultivation (*adhicitta*): This is the teaching of the Buddhas. (*Mahāpadāna Suttanta*)

These verses outline important aspects of the early teaching: the centrality of *ahimsā*, the two aspects of morality—abstention and cultivation—and the practice of meditation, all in the context of a community of ascetics for whom a life of solitude, poverty, and moderation was more important than the development of subtle metaphysics.

Probably—and the earliest scriptures suggest this—the first aspect of Buddhist teachings to be systematized was the rule, first as a confession of faith for dispersed communities of mendicants, soon as a monastic rule for sedentary ascetics. Also at an early stage, the community sought to systematize its traditions of meditation, some of which must have been pre-Buddhist (the Buddha himself having learned some of these from his teachers). Thus, Buddhist techniques of meditation represent a continuation of earlier processes of yoga, though we cannot be certain as to the exact connection, or the exact content of the early practices.

The first of these developments brought the community closer together by establishing a common ritual, the recitation of the rule (*prātimokṣa*) at a meeting held on the full and new moon and the quarter moons (*uposatha*). The second development confirmed an important but divisive trait of the early community: the primary source of authority remained with the individual monk and his experience in solitude. Thus, competing systems of meditation and doctrine probably developed more rapidly than differences in the code.

THE CENOBIIUM. As India moved into an age of imperial unity under the Maurya (322–185) and Śuṅga dynasties (185–73), the Buddhist community reached its point of greatest unity. Although the *saṃgha* split into schools or sects perhaps as early as the fourth century BCE, differences among Buddhists were relatively minor. Transformed into a monastic brotherhood, Buddhism served a society that shared common values and customs. Unity, however, was shortlived, and Buddhism, like India, would have to adapt rapidly to new circumstances as the first invasions from Central Asia would put an end to the Śuṅga dynasty in 175. Until then, however, during the approximately three hundred years from the death of the founder to the beginning of the age of foreign invasions, Buddhist monks and laymen began the process of systematization that defined the common ground of Indian Buddhism in practice, scripture, and doctrine.

The primary element of continuity became the *Prātimokṣa*, the rules for the maintenance of the community and the liturgical recitation thereof; differences in this regard would be more serious than differences of doctrine. Thus the Second Council, which is supposed to have caused the most serious split in the history of the community, is said to have been called to resolve differences in the interpretation and formulation of minor details in the monastic regulations. In order to justify and clarify the rules that held the community

together a detailed commentary of the *Prātimokṣa* rules had to be developed. The commentary, attributed to the Buddha himself, eventually grew into the *Vinaya*, an extensive section of the canon.

But the full development of the monastic code presupposes a sedentary *saṃgha*. We can surmise that not long after the Buddha's death the retreat for the rainy season began to extend into the dry season, perhaps at the invitation of the lay community, perhaps owing to dwindling popular support for the mendicant wanderers. Soon the temporary huts were replaced by more or less permanent structures built of wood, and the community of wanderers became a cenobium. The stone and gravel foundation of one of the earliest monasteries remains in the vicinity of Rājagṛha (Bihar). These are the ruins of the famous "Jivaka's Mango Grove" (Jivakāmravaṇa) Monastery, built on a plot of land donated to the order at the time of the Buddha. In its early history it may have been used only during the rainy season, but it already shows the basic structure of the earliest monasteries: living quarters for the monks and a large assembly hall (perhaps for the celebration of the *Uposatha*).

As the community settled down, rules and rituals for regulating monastic life became a necessity. At least some of the items in the *Prātimokṣa* section of the *Vinaya* and some of the procedural rules discussed in the *Karmavācānā* may go back to the time of the Buddha. The rule and the procedures for governing the *saṃgha* are clearly based on republican models, like the constitution of the Licchavis of Vaiśālī, which is praised in the canonical texts. If this admiration goes back to the founder, then we can say that the Buddha ordered his community of wandering mendicants on the political model provided by the disappearing republics of North India. Such a rule would encourage order and harmony on the one hand, and peaceful disagreement and individual effort on the other. It provided for mutual care and concern in matters of morals, but lacked a provision for a central authority in political or doctrinal matters.

The common doctrinal ground. The Buddha realized the true nature of things, their "suchness" (*tathatā*), and therefore is one of those rare beings called *tathāgatas*. Yet, whether there is a *tathāgata* to preach it or not, the Dharma is always present, because it is the nature of all things (*dharmatā*). Four terms summarize this truth known by the *tathāgatas*: impermanence, sorrow, no-self, *nirvāṇa*. The first implies the second, for attachment to what must change brings sorrow. Our incapacity to control change, however, reveals the reality of no-self—nothing is "I" or "mine." The experience of no-self, on the other hand, is liberating; it releases one from craving and the causes of sorrow; it leads to peace, *nirvāṇa*.

These principles are summarized also in a doctrine recognized by all schools, that of the Four Noble Truths: sorrow, its cause, its cessation, and the path leading to cessation. Buddhist tradition, therefore, will spend much of its energy in understanding the causes of suffering and the means to

put an end to it, or, in doctrinal shorthand, "arising" and "cessation." Since cessation is in fact the obverse of arising, a proper understanding of arising, or causation, becomes central to Buddhist speculation in India. The most important doctrine for this aspect of the religion is the principle of dependent arising (*pratītya-samutpāda*): everything we regard as "the self" is conditioned or compounded; everything conditioned depends on causes and conditions; by understanding the causes of our idea of the self and of the sorrow that this idea brings to us we can become free of suffering. This doctrine is summarized in a stanza that has become one of the best known Buddhist creeds throughout Asia:

The Tathāgata has proclaimed the cause,
as well as the cessation,
of all things (*dharmā*) arising from a cause.
This is the Great *Śramaṇa*'s teaching. (*Mahāvastu* 2.62;
Pāli *Vinaya* 1.40)

Abstract theories of causation were perceived as having an ultimately soteriological meaning or function, for they clarified both the process of bondage (rebirth forced upon us as a consequence of our actions) and the process of liberation (freedom from rebirth by overcoming our ignorance and gaining control over the causes of bondage). Liberation was possible because the analysis of causation revealed that there was no reincarnating or suffering self to begin with.

Impermanence and causation were explained by primitive theories of the composition of material reality (the four elements) and mental reality (the six senses, the six types of sense objects, etc.) and, what is more important, by the theory of the constituents (*skandhas*) of human personality. These notions would become the main focus of Buddhist philosophy, and by the beginning of the common era they were being integrated into systematic treatments of the nature of ultimately real entities (*dharmā*).

Although the themes of impermanence and causation will remain at the heart of Buddhist philosophical speculation for several centuries, from the religious point of view the question of no-self plays a more important role. At first seen as an insightful formulation of the meaning of awakening and liberation, the doctrine of no-self raised several difficulties for Buddhist dogma. First, it was not at all obvious how moral (or karmic) responsibility could be possible if there was no continuous self. Second, some Buddhists wondered what was the meaning of liberation in the absence of a self.

Closely related to these issues was the question of the nature and status of the liberated being. In other words, what sort of living being is a *tathāgata*? Some Buddhists considered the *tathāgata* as a transcendent or eternal being, while others saw him as someone who by becoming extinct was nonexistent; still others began to redefine the concept of liberation and no-self in an attempt to solve these questions and in response to changes in the mythological or hagiographic sphere. These issues are an essential part of the changes in doctrine and practice that would take place during the age

of invasions, culminating in the emergence of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Worship and ritual. The most important ritual of the monastic community continued to be Upavasatha or Uposatha, a gathering of the *saṃgha* of a given locality or “parish” (*sīmā*) to recite the rules of the Prātimokṣa. These meetings were held at every change in the moon’s phase. A similar ceremony, but with greater emphasis on the public confession of individual faults, was held at the end of the rainy season. At this time too was held the *kāṭhina* ceremony, in which the monks received new robes from the lay community. Other rituals, such as the ordination ceremony, had a more limited impact on the community at large, but were nevertheless important symbols of the status of the religious specialist in society at large.

Above all other rituals, one of shramanic origin offered continued reinforcement of the ties that bound the religious order with the laity. The *bhikṣu*, as his title indicates, was expected to receive his sustenance from the charity (*dāna*) of pious laymen and laywomen. Accordingly, the monks would walk the villages every morning to collect alms. By giving the unsolicited gift the layperson was assured of the merit (*punya*) necessary to be reborn in a state of being more favorable for spiritual or material progress. According to some traditions, the monk received the benefits of helping others gain merit; but some believed the monk could not gain merit except by his own virtue.

In the early stages lay followers were identified by their adherence to the fivefold moral precept (*pañcaśīla*) and the formal adoption of the Three Refuges. These practices continued throughout the history of Indian Buddhism. It is also likely that participation of lay members in Upavasatha meetings with the *saṃgha* was also an early and persistent practice.

At first the cenobitic life of the monks probably had no room for explicit acts of devotion, and the monk’s religion was limited to a life of solitude and meditation. The early monastic ruins do not show evidence of any shrine room. It was essential to have the cells open onto a closed courtyard, to keep out the noise of the world; it was essential to have an assembly hall for teaching and the recitation of the Prātimokṣa; a promenade (*caṅkrama*) for walking meditation was also necessary. But there were no shrine rooms.

With the institutionalization of Buddhism, however, came new forms of lay and monastic practice. The monastic brotherhood gradually began to play a priestly role; in tandem with the lay community, they participated in non-monastic rituals, many of which must have been of pre-Buddhist origin. One practice that clearly was an important, nonascetic ritual, yet characteristic of Buddhism, was the worship of the relics of the Buddha and his immediate disciples. The relics were placed in a casket, which was then deposited in a cairn or tumulus (stupa, *caitya*), to which the faithful would come to present their offerings. Already by the time of Aśoka (mid-third century BCE) we find evidence of

a flourishing cult of the relics, often accompanied by the practice of pilgrimage to the sacred sites consecrated by their role in the life of Śākyamuni—especially the birth place, the site of the Great Awakening, the site of the First Sermon, and the spot where the Buddha was believed to have died. Following an ancient custom, tumuli were built on these spots—perhaps at first as reliquaries, later as commemorative monuments. Monasteries near such sites assumed the role of shrine caretakers. Eventually, most monasteries became associated with stupas.

Aśoka erected columns and stupas (as many as eighty thousand, according to one tradition) marking the localities associated with the life of the Buddha as well as other ancient sacred sites, some associated with “former Buddhas,” that is, mythical beings believed to have achieved Buddhahood thousands or millions of lives before the Buddha Śākyamuni. The latter practice and belief indicates the development of a new form of Buddhism, firmly based on the mythology of each locality, that expanded the concept of the Three Treasures to include a host of mythical beings who would share in the sanctity of Śākyamuni’s experience and virtue and who were therefore deserving of the same veneration as he had received in the past.

The cairn or tumulus eventually became sacred in itself, whether there was a relic in it or not. Chapels were built to contain the *caitya*. The earliest surviving examples of these structures are built in stone and date from the first or second century BCE, but we can surmise that they existed in wood from an earlier date. These “*caitya* halls” became the standard shrine room of the monastery: a stylized memorial tumulus built in stone or brick, housed in an apsidal hall with a processional for the ritual circumambulation of the tumulus.

Reliefs at the *caitya* hall at Bhājā in western India (late Śuṅga, c. end of the second century BCE) suggest various aspects of the cult: the main form of worship was the ritual of circumambulation (*pradakṣiṇa*), which could be carried out individually or in groups. The stupa represented the sacred or cosmic mountain, at whose center was found the *axis mundi* (now represented by the Buddha’s royal parasol); thus the rite of circumambulation expressed veneration for the Buddha and his teaching, while at the same time it served as a symbolic walking of the sun’s path around the cosmic mountain.

Stupas were often erected at ancient sacred sites, hills, trees, the confluence of streams, which in many cases were sacred by virtue of non-Buddhist belief. Thus, pre-Buddhist practice, if not belief, survived side by side, and even within, Buddhist liturgy and belief. There is ample evidence of a co-existing cult of the tree (identified with the “Tree of Awakening”), of forest spirits (*yakṣas*) and goddesses (*devatā*), and the persistence of Vedic deities, albeit in a subordinate role, beside a more austere, and presumably monastically inspired, cult of aniconic symbolizations of Buddhahood: the tree and the throne of enlightenment standing for the Great Awakening, the stupa representing the *nirvāṇa*, the wheel represent-

ing the doctrine of the Buddha. But one must not assume that the implied categories of “high tradition” and popular cult were mutually exclusive.

The councils and the beginning of scriptural tradition. The First Council, or Council of Rājagṛha, if a historical fact, must have served to establish the Buddhist *saṃgha* and its doctrine for the community of the Magadhan capital. In all probability the decisions of the Council were not accepted by all Buddhists. Further evidence of disagreement, and geographical fragmentation is found in the legend of the Second Council, one hundred years after the Buddha’s death.

Since the early community of wanderers, there had been ample room for disagreement and dissension. But certain forces contributed to maintaining unity: the secular powers, for instance, had much at stake in preserving harmony within the *saṃgha*, especially if they could maintain some kind of control over it. Thus, as the legends have it, each of the three major councils were sponsored by a king: Ajātaśatru, Kālāśoka, and Aśoka, respectively. Within the *saṃgha*, there must have been interest groups, mainly conservative, seeking to preserve the religion by avoiding change—two goals that are not always conciliable. There must have been, therefore, a strong pressure to recover the ideal unity of the early community (as we have seen, probably a fantasy), by legislation. These efforts took two forms: in the first place, there was the drive to establish a common monastic code, in the second place, there was the drive to fix a canon of scriptures. Both tendencies probably became stronger toward the beginning of the common era, when a number of political factors recreated a sense of urgency and a yearning for harmony and peace similar to the one that had given rise to the religion.

The most important result of the new quest for harmony was the compilation and redaction of scriptures. Transmitted and edited through the oral tradition, the words of the Buddha and his immediate disciples had suffered many transformations before they came to be compiled, to say nothing of their state when they were eventually written down. We have no way of determining which, if any, of the words contained in the Buddhist scriptures are the words of the founder: in fact we have no hard evidence for the language used by the Buddha in his ministry. Scholars have suggested an early form of Māgadhī, since this was probably the lingua franca of the kingdom of Magadha, but this is at best an educated guess. If it is correct, then none of the words of the Buddha have come to us in the original language.

Although the Theravādin tradition claims that the language of its canon, Pali, is the language spoken by the Buddha, Western scholars disagree. Evidently, the Pali canon, like other Buddhist scriptures, is the creation, or at least the compilation and composition, of another age and a different linguistic milieu. As they are preserved today, the Buddhist scriptures must be a collective creation, the fruit of the effort of several generations of memorizers, redactors, and compilers. Some of the earliest Buddhist scriptures may have been

translations from logia or sayings of the Buddha that were transmitted for some time in his own language. But even if this is the case, the extant versions represent at the very least redactions and reworkings, if not creations, of a later age.

Since the *saṃgha* was from the beginning a decentralized church, one can presume that the word of the Buddha took many forms. Adding to this the problem of geographical isolation and linguistic diversity, one would expect that the oral transmission would have produced a variegated textual tradition. Perhaps it is this expectation of total chaos that makes it all the more surprising that there is agreement on so many points in the scriptures preserved to this day. This is especially true of the scriptures of the Theravāda school (preserved in Pali), and fragments of the canon of the Sarvāstivāda school (in the original Sanskrit or in Chinese translation). Some scholars have been led to believe, therefore, that these two traditions represent the earliest stratum of the transmission, preserving a complex of pericopes and logia that must go back to a stage when the community was not divided: that is, before the split of the Second Council. Most scholars tend to accept this view; a significant minority, however, sees the uniformity of the texts as reflecting a late, not an early stage, in the redaction of the canon.

The early canon, transmitted orally, must have had only two major sections, Dharma and Vinaya. The first of these contained the discourses of the Buddha and his immediate disciples. The Vinaya contained the monastic rules. Most Western scholars agree that a third section, Abhidharma, found in all of the surviving canons, could not have been included in early definitions of canonicity, though eventually most schools would incorporate it in their canon with varying degrees of authority.

Each early school possessed its own set of scriptural “collections” (called metaphorically “baskets,” *piṭaka*). Although eventually the preferred organization seems to have been a tripartite collection of “Three Baskets,” the *Tripiṭaka*, divided into monastic rules, sermons, and scholastic treatises (Vinaya, *sūtra*, Abhidharma), some schools adopted different orderings. Among the collections that are now lost there were fourfold and fivefold subdivisions of the scriptures. Of the main surviving scriptural collections, only one is strictly speaking a *Tripiṭaka*, the Pali corpus of the Theravādins. (The much later Chinese and Tibetan collections have much more complex subdivisions and can be called *Tripiṭakas* only metaphorically.)

THE AGE OF FOREIGN INVASIONS. The decline and fall of the Maurya dynasty (324–187) brought an end to an age of assured support for Buddhist monastic institutions. Political circumstances unfavorable to Buddhism began with persecution under Puṣyamitra Śuṅga (r. about 187–151). The Śuṅga dynasty would see the construction of some of the most important Buddhist sites of India: Bhārhut, Sāncī, and Amarāvati. But it also foreshadowed the beginning of Hindu dominance. The rising cult of Viṣṇu seemed better equipped to assimilate the religion of the people and win the support

of the ruling classes. Although Buddhism served better as a universal religion that could unite Indians and foreign invaders, the latter did not always choose to become Buddhists. A series of non-Indian rulers—Greek, Parthian, Scythian (Saka), Kushan—would hesitate in their religious allegiances.

Among the Greek kings, the Buddhist tradition claims Menander (Milinda, c. 150 BCE) as one of its converts. The Scythian tribe of the Sakas, who invaded Bactriana around 130 BCE, roughly contemporaneous with the Yüeh-chih conquest of the Tokharians, would become stable supporters of Buddhism in the subcontinent. Their rivals in South India, the Tamil dynasty of the Śātavāhana (220 BCE–236 CE), sponsored in Andhra the construction of major centers of worship at Amarāvātī and Nāgārjunikoṇḍa. The Yüeh-chih (Kushans) also supported Buddhism, though perhaps less consistently. The most famous of their rulers, Kaṇiṣka, is represented by the literature as a pious patron of Buddhism (his dates are uncertain; proposed accession in 78 or 125 CE). During the Kushan period (c. 50–320 CE) the great schools of Gandhāra and Mathurā revolutionized Indian, especially Buddhist, art. Both the northern styles of Gandhāra and Mathurā and the southern school of Andhra combined iconic and aniconic symbolization of the Buddha: the first Buddha images appeared around the third century of the common era, apparently independently and simultaneously in all three schools.

The appearance of schools and denominations. Any understanding of the history of composition of the canons, or of their significance in the history of the religion, is dependent on our knowledge of the geographic distribution, history, and doctrine of the various sects. Unfortunately, our knowledge in this regard is also very limited.

Developments in doctrine and in scholastic speculation. As the original community of wandering mendicants settled in monasteries, a new type of religion arose, concerned with the preservation of a tradition and the justification of its institutions. Although the “forest dweller” continued as an ideal and a practice—some were still dedicated primarily to a life of solitude and meditation—the dominant figure became that of the monk-scholar. This new type of religious specialist pursued the study of the early tradition and moved its doctrinal systems in new directions. On the one hand, the old doctrines were classified, defined, and expanded. On the other hand, there was a growing awareness of the gap that separated the new developments from the transmitted creeds and codes. A set of basic or “original” teachings had to be defined, and the practice of exegesis had to be formalized. In fact, the fluidity and uncertainty of the earlier scriptural tradition may be one of the causes for the development of Buddhist scholasticism. By the time the canons were closed the degree of diversity and conflict among the schools was such, and the tradition was overall so fluid, that it was difficult to establish orthodoxy even when there was agreement on the basic content of the canons. In response to these prob-

lems Buddhists soon developed complicated scholastic studies.

At least some of the techniques and problems of this early scholasticism must go back to the early redactions of the sūtra section of the canon, if not to a precanonical stage. The genre of the *mātrkā*, or doctrinal “matrices,” is not an uncommon form of sūtra literature. It is suggested in the redaction of certain sections of the Pali and Sarvāstivādin canons, is found in early Chinese translations (e.g., the *Dharmaśarīraka Sūtra* and the *Daśottara Sūtra*), and continues in Mahāyāna *Sūtra* literature. It is a literary form that probably represents not only an exegetic device but an early technique of doctrinal redaction—a hermeneutic that also served as the basis for the redaction of earlier strata of the oral transmission.

The early sects. Given the geographical and linguistic diversity of India and the lack of a central authority in the Buddhist community one can safely speculate that Buddhist sects arose early in the history of the religion. Tradition speaks of a first, but major, schism occurring at (or shortly after) the Second Council in Vaiśālī, one hundred years after the death of the founder. Whether the details are true or not, it is suggestive that this first split was between the Sthaviras and the Mahāsāṃghikas, the prototypes of the two major divisions of Buddhism: “Hīnayāna” and Mahāyāna.

After this schism new subdivisions arose, reaching by the beginning of the common era a total of approximately thirty different denominations or schools and subschools. Tradition refers to this state of sectarian division as the period of the “Eighteen Schools,” since some of the early sources count eighteen groups. It is not clear when these arose. *Faut de mieux*, most Western scholars go along with classical Indian sources, albeit with a mild skepticism, and try to sort out a consistent narrative from contradictory sources. Thus, we can only say that if we are to believe the Pali tradition, the Eighteen Schools must have been in existence already in the third century BCE, when a legendary Moggaliputtatissa compiled the *Kathāvatthu*. But such an early dating raises many problems.

In the same vein, we tend to accept the account of the Second Council that sees it as the beginning of a major split. In this version the main points of contention were monastic issues—the exact content and interpretation of the code. But doctrinal, ritual, and scholastic issues must have played a major role in the formation of separate schools. Many of the main points of controversy, for instance, centered on the question of the nature of the state of liberation and the status of the liberated person. Is the liberated human (*arhat*) free from all moral and karmic taint? Is the state of liberation (*nirvāṇa*) a condition of being or nonbeing? Can there be at the same time more than one fully awakened person (*samyaksambuddha*) in one world system? Are persons already on their way to full awakening, the *bodhisattvas* or future Buddhas, deserving of worship? Do they have the ability to descend to the hells to help other sentient beings?

Among these doctrinal disputes one emerges as emblematic of the most important fissure in the Buddhist community. This was the polemic surrounding the exalted state of the *arhat* (Pali, *arabanti*). Most of the Buddhist schools believed that only a few human beings could aspire to become fully awakened beings (*samyaksambuddha*), others had to content themselves with the hope of becoming free from the burden of past *karman* and attaining liberation in *nirvāṇa*, without the extraordinary wisdom and virtue of Buddhahood. But the attainment of liberation was in itself a great achievement, and a person who was assured of an end to rebirth at the end of the present life was considered the most saintly, deserving of the highest respect, a “worthy” (*arhat*). Some of the schools even attributed to the *arhat* omniscience and total freedom from moral taint. Objections were raised against those who believed in the faultless wisdom of the *arhat*, including obvious limitations in their knowledge of everyday, worldly affairs. Some of these objections were formalized in the “Five Points” of Mahādeva, after its purported proponent. These criticisms can be interpreted either as a challenge to the belief in the superhuman perfection of the *arhat* or as a plea for the acceptance of their humanity. Traditionally, Western scholars have opted for the first of these interpretations.

The controversies among the Eighteen Schools identified each group doctrinally, but it seems unlikely that in the early stages these differences lead to major rifts in the community, with the exception of the schism between the two trunk schools of the Sthavira and the Mahāsāṃghika; and even then, there is evidence that monks of both schools often lived together in a single monastic community. Among the doctrinal differences, however, we can find the seeds of future dissension, especially in the controversies relating to ritual. The Mahīśāsakas, for instance, claimed that there is more merit in worshipping and making offerings to the *saṃgha* than in worshipping a stupa, as the latter merely contains the remains of a member of the *saṃgha* who is no more. The Dharmaguptakas replied that there is more merit in worshipping a stupa, because the Buddha’s path and his present state (in *nirvāṇa*) are far superior to that of any living monk. Here we have a fundamental difference with both social and religious consequences, for the choice is between two types of communal hierarchies as well as between two types of spiritual orders.

Developments in the scriptural tradition. Apart from the Theravāda recension of the Pali canon and some fragments of the Sarvāstivādin Sanskrit canon nothing survives of what must have been a vast and diverse body of literature. For most of the collections we only have the memory preserved in inscriptions referring to *piṭakas* and *nikāyas* and an occasional reference in the extant literature.

According to the Pali tradition of Sri Lanka, the three parts of the Tripiṭaka were compiled in the language of the Buddha at the First Council. The Second Council introduced minor revisions in the *Vinaya*, and the Third Council

added Moggaliputtatissa’s *Kathāvatthu*. A few years later the canon resulting from this council, and a number of extracanonical commentaries, were transmitted to Sri Lanka by Mahinda. The texts were transmitted orally (*mukhapāṭhena*) for the next two centuries, but after difficult years of civil war and famine, King Vaṭṭagāmaṇī of Sri Lanka ordered the texts written down. This task was carried out between 35 and 32 BCE. In this way, it is said, the canon was preserved in the original language. Although the commentaries were by that time extant only in Sinhala, they continued to be transmitted in written form until they were retranslated into Pali in the fifth century CE.

Modern scholarship, however, questions the accuracy of several points in this account. Pali appears to be a literary language originating in Avantī, western India; it seems unlikely that it could be the vernacular of a man who had lived in eastern India all his life or, for that matter, the lingua franca of the early Magadhan kingdom. The Pali texts as they are preserved today show clear signs of the work of editors and redactors. Although much in them still has the ring of oral transmission, it is a formalized or ritualized oral tradition, far from the spontaneous preaching of a living teacher. Different strata of language, history, and doctrine can be recognized easily in these texts. There is abundant evidence that already at the stage of oral transmission the tradition was fragmented, different schools of “reciters” (*bhāṇaka*) preserving not only different corpuses (the eventual main categories of the canons) but also different recensions of the same corpus of literature. Finally, we have no way of knowing if the canon written down at the time of Vaṭṭagāmaṇī was the Tripiṭaka as we know it today. There is evidence to the contrary, for we are told that the great South Indian scholar Buddhaghosa revised the canon in the fifth century when he also edited the commentaries preserved in Sinhala and translated them into Pali, which suggests that Pali literature in general had gone through a period of deterioration before his time.

Most scholars, however, accept the tradition that would have the Pali canon belong to a date earlier than the fifth century; even the commentaries must represent an earlier stratum. However late may be its final recension, the Pali canon preserves much from earlier stages in the development of the religion.

Of the Sanskrit canon of the Sarvāstivāda school we only possess a few isolated texts and fragments in the original, mostly from Central Asia. However, extensive sections survive in Chinese translation. This canon is supposed to have been written down at a “Fourth Council” held in Jālandhara, Kashmir, about 100 CE, close to the time when the same school systematized its Abhidharma in a voluminous commentary called the *Mahāvibhāṣa*. If this legend is true, two details are of historical interest. We must note first the proximity in time of this compilation to the date of the writing down of the Pali canon. This would set the parameters for the closing of the “Hīnayāna” canons between the first century BCE and the first century CE. Second, the close connec-

tion between the closing of a canon and the final formulation of a scholastic system confirms the similar socio-religious function of both activities: the establishing of orthodoxy.

Developments in practice. The cult at this stage was still dominated by the practice of pilgrimage and by the cult of the *caitya*, as described above. However, we can imagine an intensification of the devotional aspect of ritual and a greater degree of systematization as folk belief and “high tradition” continued to interact. Sectarian differences probably began to affect the nature of the liturgies, as a body of liturgical texts became part of the common or the specific property of different groups of Buddhists. Among the earliest liturgical texts were the hymns in praise of the Buddha, especially the ones singing the many epithets of the Awakened One. Their use probably goes back to the earliest stages in the history of monastic ritual and may be closely connected with the practice of *buddhānusmṛti*, or meditation on the attributes of the Buddha.

Pilgrimage sites and stupas. Many Buddhist practices and institutions remain apparently stable in the subcontinent until the beginnings of the common era. The monuments of Bhārhut and Sāñcī, for example, where we find the earliest examples of aniconic symbolism, represent a conservative Buddhism. Other signs of conservatism, however, confirm a continuous nonliterary cult. The oldest section at Sāñcī, the east gateway, dating from perhaps 90 to 80 BCE, preserves, next to the illustrated Jātakas, the woman and tree motifs, *yakṣas* and *yakṣīs* (with the implied popular cult of male and female fertility deities), and the aniconic representations of the wheel, the footprint, the throne, and the tree. The most advanced or innovative trait is the increasing iconographic importance of the previous lives of the Buddha, represented in the reliefs of Jātakas. These indicate a developed legend of the Buddha’s past lives, a feature of the period that suggests the importance of past lives in the cult and in the future development of Mahāyāna. The most important cultic development of the pre-Mahāyāna period, however, was the shift from the commemorative ritual associated with the stūpa and the aniconic symbol to the ritual of worship and devotion associated with the Buddha image. After the beginning of the Christian era major developments in practice reflect outside influence as well as new internal developments. This is the time when the sects were beginning to commit to writing their sacred literature, but it is also the time of foreign invasions. These may have played a major role in the development of the Buddha image. Modern scholarship has debated the place of origin of this important cultic element and the causal factors that brought it about. Some, following Foucher, proposed a northwestern origin, and saw the Buddhas and *bodhisattvas* created under the influence of Greco-Roman art in Gandhāra (Kushan period) as the first images. Others, following Coomaraswamy, believed the first images were created in Andhra, as part of the natural development of a South Indian cult of the *yakṣas*, and in the north central region of Mathurā. Be that as it may,

the Buddha image dominates Buddhist iconography after the second century CE; stupas and Jātaka representations remain but play a secondary role. There seems to be, especially in Mathurā art, an association between the Buddha image and solar symbolism, which suggests Central Asian or Iranian influences on Buddhism and may be closely related to the development of the new doctrinal conceptions, such as those that regarded the Buddha as “universal monarch” (*cakravartin*) and lord of the universe, and Buddhas and *bodhisattvas* as radiant beings. The abundance of *bodhisattva* images in Gandhāra, moreover, suggests the beginning of a gradual shift towards a conception of the ideal being as layman, or at least a shift in the way the *bodhisattva* was conceived (from merely an instance of a Buddha’s past to the central paradigm of Buddhahood). As a balance to the growing importance of the past lives of the Buddha, the process of redacting the scriptures also brought about the necessity of formulating a biography of the Buddha. The first “biographies” appear at the beginning of the common era, perhaps as late as the second century CE. Partial biographies appear in the literature of the Sarvāstivādins (*Lalitavistara*) and Lokottaravādins (*Mahāvastu*). The first complete biography is a cultured poem in the *kāvya* style, the *Buddhacarita* of Aśvaghōṣa. This is also a time when noncanonical literature flourished. Poets wrote Buddhist dramas and poetical recastings of canonical parables and legends. Aśvaghōṣa, for instance, wrote a drama on the life of Śāriputra, and a poem narrating the conversion of Nanda (*Saundarānanda*). Developments in the literary tradition perhaps should be seen as reflecting other strata of the living tradition. Thus, the vitality of the Jātaka tradition is seen in its appearance as a literary genre in the Jātakamālā of Āryaśūra (fl. c. 150 CE). This classical poet is sometimes identified with Mātṛceṭa, who in his works (e.g., *Śatapañcaśatka*) gives us a highly cultured reflection of the hymns of praise (*stotras*) that must have been a regular part of the Buddhist cult of the day. In these hymns we already see the apotheosis of the Buddha figure, side by side with the newly redefined *bodhisattva* ideal.

Mystics and intellectuals. The development of devotional Buddhism did not obscure the ascetic and contemplative dimensions of the religion. The system of meditation contained in the Nikāyas probably achieved its final form during this period. Diverse techniques for the development of ecstasy and insight were conflated first in the canonical *Sūtra* literature, then in the Abhidharmic texts. Side by side with the development of popular and monastic cults a new elite of religious specialists appeared, seeking to follow the Buddha’s path through systematic study into the scriptures. They belonged to the tradition of the *mātṛkās* and composed treatises purporting to treat the “higher” Dharma (*abhidharma*)—or, what is perhaps the more correct etymology, treatises “on the Dharma.” Although the analysis of meditational categories was an important aspect of these traditions, the scholar-monks were not always dedicated meditators. In fact, many of them must have made scholarship the prime objective of their religious life, leaving the practice of meditation

to the forest monks. For the scholars, the goal was to account for the whole of Buddhism, in particular, the plethora of ancient doctrines and practices found in the canon. Above all, they sought to define and explain the ultimately real components of reality, the *dharma*s, into which one could analyze or explode the false conception of the self. This critique was not without soteriological implications. The goal was conceived at times as ineffable, beyond the ken of human conception. Thus canonical literature describes the liberated person, the *arhat*, as follows:

When bright sparks fly
as the smith beats red-hot iron,
and fade away,
one cannot tell where they have gone.

In the same way, there is no way of knowing
the final destination of those who are truly free,
who have crossed beyond the flood, bondage, and desire,
obtaining unshakable bliss. (*Udāna*, p. 93)

But side by side with the tradition of ineffability, there was a need to define at the very least the process of liberation. For the gradual realization of selflessness was understood as personal growth. Accordingly, a set of standard definitions of liberation was accompanied by accepted descriptions of the stages on the path to liberation, or of degrees of spiritual achievement. The canonical collections already list, for instance, four types of saints (*āryapudgala*): the one who will be reborn no more (*arhat*); the one who will not come back to this world, the “non-returner” (*anāgamin*); the one who will return only once more (*sakṛdāgamin*); and the one who has entered the path to sainthood, the “stream-enterer” (*srotāpanna*). Canonical notions of levels or hierarchies in the path to liberation became the focus of much scholastic speculation—in fact, the presence of these categories in the canons may be a sign of scholastic influence on the redaction of the scriptures. The construction of complex systems of soteriology, conceived as maps or detailed descriptions of the path, that integrated the description and analysis of ethical and contemplative practices with philosophical argumentation, characterized the Abhidharmic schools. This activity contributed to the definition of the doctrinal parameters of the sects; but it also set the tone for much of future Buddhist dogmatics. The concerns of the Abhidharmists, ranging from the analysis of ecstasy and the contemplative stages to the rational critique of philosophical views of reality, had a number of significant doctrinal consequences: (1) scholars began devising “maps of the path,” or theoretical blueprints of the stages from the condition of a common human being (*prthag-jana*) to the exalted state of a fully awakened being (*samyaksambuddha*); (2) Buddhist scholars engaged other Indian intellectuals in the discussion of broad philosophical issues; (3) various orthodox apologetics were developed, with the consequent freezing of a technical terminology common to most Buddhists; (4) the rigidity of their systems set the stage for a reaction that would lead to the creation of new forms of Buddhism.

THE SECTS AND THE APPEARANCE OF MAHĀYĀNA. Most of the developments mentioned above overlap with the growth of a new spirit that changed the religion and eventually created a distinct form of Buddhist belief and practice. The new movement referred to itself as the “Great Vehicle” (*Mahāyāna*) to distinguish itself from other styles of Buddhism that the followers of the movement considered forms of a “Lesser Vehicle” (*Hīnayāna*).

The early schools outside India. If we accept the general custom of using the reign of Aśoka as the landmark for the beginning of the missionary spread of Buddhism, we may say that Buddhism reached the frontiers of India by the middle of the second century BCE. By the beginning of the common era it had spread beyond. In the early centuries of the era *Mahāyāna* and *Hīnayāna* spread in every direction; eventually certain areas would become predominantly *Mahāyāna*, others, predominantly *Hīnayāna*.

Mahāyāna came to dominate in East and Central Asia—with the exception of Turkistan, where *Sarvāstivādin* monasteries flourished until the Muslim invasion and conversion of the region. *Hīnayāna* was slower to spread, and in some foreign lands had to displace *Mahāyāna*. It lives on in a school that refers to itself as the *Theravāda*, a Sinhala derivative of the *Sthavira* school. It spread throughout Southeast Asia where it continues to this day.

The Great Vehicle. The encounter of Buddhism with extra-Indian ethnic groups and the increasing influence of the laity gradually transformed the monastic child of *śramaṇic* Buddhism into a universal religion. This occurred in two ways. On the one hand, monasticism adapted to the changing circumstances, strengthened its ties to the laity and secular authorities, established a satisfactory mode of coexistence with nonliterary, regional forms of worship. Both *Mahāyāna* and *Hīnayāna* schools participated in this aspect of the process of adaptation. But Buddhism also redefined its goals and renovated its symbols to create a new synthesis that in some ways may be considered a new religion. The new style, the *Mahāyāna*, claimed to be a path for the many, the vehicle for the salvation of all sentient beings (hence its name, “The Great Vehicle”). Its distinctive features are: a tilt toward world affirmation, a laicized conception of the human ideal, a new ritual of devotion, and new definitions of the metaphysical and contemplative ideals.

The origins of Mahāyāna. The followers of *Mahāyāna* claim the highest antiquity for its teachings. Their own myths of origin, however, belie this claim. *Mahāyāna* recognizes the fact that its teachings were not known in the early days of Buddhism by asserting that Śākyamuni revealed the *Mahāyāna* only to select *bodhisattvas* or heavenly beings who kept the texts hidden for centuries. One legend recounts that the philosopher Nāgārjuna had to descend to the underworld to obtain the *Mahāyāna* texts known as the “Perfection of Wisdom” (*Prajñāpāramitā*).

Western scholars are divided on the question of the dates and location of the origins of *Mahāyāna*. Some favor

an early (beginning of the common era) origin among Mahāsāṃghika communities in the southeastern region of Andhra. Others propose a northwestern origin, among the Sarvāstivādins, close to the second and third centuries CE. It may be, however, that Mahāyāna arose by a gradual and complex process involving more than one region of India. It is clear that Mahāyāna was partly a reform movement, partly the natural development of pre-Mahāyāna Buddhism; still in another sense, it was the result of new social forces shaping the Indian subcontinent.

The theory of a southern origin assumes that the Mahāsāṃghika monastic centers of Andhra continued to develop some of the more radical ideals of the school, until some of these communities saw themselves as a movement completely distinct from other, so-called Hīnayāna schools. This theory also recognizes external influences: the Iranian invaders as well as the non-Aryan substratum of southern India, the first affecting the mythology of the celestial *bodhisattvas*, the second incorporating non-Aryan concepts of the role of women into the mainstream of Buddhist religious ideals.

For the sake of clarity one could distinguish two types of causes in the development of Mahāyāna: social or external, and doctrinal or internal. Among the first one must include the Central Asian and Iranian influences mentioned above, the growing importance of the role of women and the laity, especially as this affected the development of the cultus, and the impact of the pilgrimage cycles. The foreign element is supposed to have introduced elements of light symbolism and solar cults, as well as a less ascetic bent.

Doctrinal factors were primarily the development of the myth of the former lives of Śākyamuni and the cult of former Buddhas, both of which contributed to a critique of the *arhat* ideal. The mythology of the Buddha's former lives as a *bodhisattva* led to the exaltation of the *bodhisattva* ideal over that of the *arhat*. The vows of the *bodhisattva* began to take the central role, especially as they were seen as an integral part of a developing liturgy at the center of which the dedication of merit was transformed as part of the exalted *bodhisattva* ideal.

It seems likely, furthermore, that visionaries and inspired believers had continued to compose sūtras. Some of these, through a gradual process we can no longer retrace, began to move away from the general direction of the older scholastic traditions and canonical redactors. Thus it happened that approximately at the time when the older schools were closing their canons, the Mahāyāna was composing a set of texts that would place it in a position of disagreement with, if not frank opposition to, the older schools. At the same time, the High Tradition began to accept Mahāyāna and therefore argue for its superiority; thus, a Mahāyāna *śāstra* tradition began to develop almost at the same time as the great Sarvāstivādin synthesis was completed.

In the West, the gap between Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna is sometimes exaggerated. It is customary to envision

Mahāyāna as a revolutionary movement through which the aspirations of a restless laity managed to overcome an oppressive, conservative monastic establishment. Recent research suggests that the opposition between the laity and the religious specialists was not as sharp as had hitherto been proposed. Furthermore, it has become apparent that the monastic establishment continued to be a powerful force in Indian Mahāyāna. It seems more likely that Mahāyāna arose gradually and in different forms in various points of the subcontinent. A single name and a more or less unified ideology may have arisen after certain common aspirations were recognized. Be that as it may, it seems evident that the immediate causes for the arising of this new form of Buddhism were the appearance of new cultic forms and widespread dissatisfaction with the scholastic tradition.

Merit, bodhisattvas, and the Pure Land. Inscriptional evidence shows that the doctrine of merit transference had an important role in the cultus even before the appearance of Mahāyāna. Although all Buddhists believe that virtuous thoughts and actions generate merit, which leads to a good rebirth, it appears that early Buddhists believed that individuals could generate merit only for themselves, and that merit could only lead to a better rebirth, not to liberation from the cycle of rebirth. By the beginning of the common era, however, some Buddhists had adopted a different conception of merit. They believed that merit could be shared or transferred, and that it was a factor in the attainment of liberation—so much so that they were offering their own merit for the salvation of their dead relatives.

Dedication of merit appears as one of the pivotal doctrines of the new Buddhism. Evidently, it served a social function: it made participation in Buddhist ritual a social encounter rather than a private experience. It also contributed to the development of a Buddhist high liturgy, an important factor in the survival of Buddhism and its assimilation of foreign elements, both in and outside India.

This practice and belief interacted with the cult of former Buddhas and the mythology of the former lives to create a Buddhist system of beliefs in which the primary goal was to imitate the virtue of Śākyamuni's former lives, when he was a *bodhisattva* dedicated to the liberation of others rather than himself. To achieve this goal the believer sought to imitate Śākyamuni not as he appeared in his last life or after his enlightenment, when he sought and attained *nirvāṇa*, but by adopting a vow similar to Śākyamuni's former vow to seek awakening (*bodhi*) for the sake of all sentient beings. On the one hand, this shift put the emphasis on insight into the world, rather than escape from it. On the other hand, it also created a new form of ideal being and object of worship, the *bodhisattva*.

Contemporary developments in Hindu devotionalism (*bhakti*) probably played an important role in the development of Buddhist liturgies of worship (*pūjā*), but it would be a mistake to assume that the beginnings of Mahāyāna faith and ritual can be explained adequately by attributing

them merely to external theistic influences. For instance, the growth of a faith in rebirth in “purified Buddha fields,” realms of the cosmos in which the merit and power of Buddhas and *bodhisattvas* create an environment where birth without suffering is possible, can be seen as primarily a Buddhist development. The new faith, generalized in India through the concept of the “Land of Bliss” (the “Pure Land” of East Asian Buddhism), hinged on faith in the vows of former *bodhisattvas* who chose to transfer or dedicate their merit to the purification of a special “field” or “realm.” The influence of Iranian religious conceptions seems likely, however, and one may have to seek some of the roots of this belief among Central Asian converts.

Formation of a new scriptural tradition. With the new cult and the new ideology came a new body of scriptures. Mahāyāna sūtras began to be composed probably around the beginning of the Christian era, and continued to be composed and redacted until at least the fifth or sixth century CE. Unlike the canons of the earlier schools, the Mahāyāna scriptures do not seem to have been collected into formal, closed canons in the land of their origin—even the collections edited in China and Tibet were never closed canons.

In its inception Mahāyāna literature is indistinguishable from the literature of some of the earlier schools. The *Prajñāpāramitā* text attributed to the Pūrvaśailas is probably an earlier version of one of the Mahāyāna texts of the same title; the *Ratnakūṭa* probably began as part of a Mahāsāṃghika canon; and the now lost *Dhāraṇī Pīṭaka* of the Dharmaguptaka school probably contained prototypes of the *dhāraṇī-sūtras* of the Mahāyāna tradition. The Mahāyānist monks never gave up the pre-Mahāyāna Vinaya. Many followed the Dharmaguptaka version, some the Mahāsāṃghika. Even the Vinaya of a school that fell squarely into the Hīnayāna camp, the Sarvāstivāda, was used as the basis for Mahāyāna monastic rule.

Still, the focus of much Mahāyāna rhetoric, especially in the earlier strata of the literature, is the critique of non-Mahāyāna forms of Buddhism, especially the ideal of the *arhat*. This is one of the leading themes of a work now believed to represent an early stage in the development of Mahāyāna, the *Raṣṭrapālāparipṛcchā*, a text of the *Ratnakūṭa* class. In this text, the monastic life is still exalted above all other forms of spiritual life, but the *bodhisattva* vows are presented for the first time as superior to the mere monastic vows.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to establish with any degree of certainty the early history of Mahāyāna literature. It seems, however, that the earliest extant Mahāyāna sūtra is the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā*, or its verse rendering, the *Ratnagaṇasamcayagāthā*. Both reflect a polemic within Buddhism, centering on a critique of the “low aspirations” of those Buddhists who chose not to take the vows of the *bodhisattvas*. The *Ratnagaṇa* defines the virtues of the *bodhisattva*, emphasizing the transcendental insight or “perfect wisdom” (*prajñāpāramitā*) that frees him from all forms of attachment

and preconceived notions—including notions of purity and world renunciation. An important aspect or complement of this wisdom is skill in means (*upāyakaūśalya*)—defined here as the capacity to adapt thought, speech, and action to circumstances and to the ultimate purpose of Buddhist practice, freedom from attachment. This virtue allows the *bodhisattva* to remain in the world while being perfectly free from the world.

The *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* treats these same concepts, but also expands the concept of merit in at least two directions: (1) dedication of merit to awakening means here seeing through the illusion of merit as well as applying merit to the path of liberation; and (2) dedication of merit is an act of devotion to insight (wisdom, *prajñā*). As the goal and ground of all perfections (Pāramitā), Perfection of Wisdom is personified as the Mother of All Buddhas. She gives birth to the mind of awakening, but she is present in concrete form in the Sacred Book itself. Thus, the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra* is at the same time the medium expressing a sophisticated doctrine of salvation by insight and skill in means, the rationalization of a ritual system, and the object of worship.

Another early Mahāyāna text, the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* (Lotus Sutra), also attacks the *arhat* ideal. This sūtra is considered the paradigmatic text on the developed Buddhology of the Mahāyāna: the Buddha is presented as a supernatural being, eternal, unchanging; at the same time he is Buddha by virtue of the fact that he has become free from all conceptions of being and nonbeing. The Buddha never attained awakening or *nirvāṇa*—because he is Buddhahood, and has been in awakening and *nirvāṇa* since eternity, but also because there is no Buddhahood or *nirvāṇa* to be attained.

The widespread, but clearly not exclusively popular, belief in the Land of Bliss (Sukhāvātī) finds expression in two texts of the latter part of the early period (c. first to second century CE). The two *Sukhāvātī* sūtras express a faith in the saving grace of the *bodhisattva* Dharmākara, who under a former Buddha made the vow to purify his own Buddha field. The vows of this *bodhisattva* guarantee rebirth in his Land of Bliss to all those who think on him with faith. Rebirth in his land, furthermore, guarantees eventual enlightenment and liberation. The Indian history of these two texts, however, remains for the most part obscure.

The attitude of early Mahāyāna sūtras to laity and to women is relatively inconsistent. Thus, the *Ugradatta-paripṛcchā* and the *Upāsakaśīla*, while pretending to preach a lay morality, use monastic models for the householder’s life. But compared to the earlier tradition, the Mahāyāna represents a significant move in the direction of a religion that is less ascetic and monastic in tone and intent. Some Mahāyāna sūtras of the early period place laypersons in a central role. The main character in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, for instance, is a young lay pilgrim who visits a number of *bodhisattvas* in search of the teaching. Among his teachers we find laymen and laywomen, as well as female night spirits and celestial *bodhisattvas*. The *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* is more down-to-

earth in its exaltation of the lay ideal. Although not without its miraculous events, it represents the demythologizing tendencies of Mahāyāna, which are often carried out to the extreme of affirming that the metaphoric meaning of one doctrine is exactly its opposite.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MAHĀYĀNA. Although Buddhism flourished during the classical age of the Guptas, the cultural splendor in which it grew was also the harbinger of Hindu dominance. Sanskrit returned as the lingua franca of the subcontinent, and Hindu devotionalism began to displace the ideals of the Indic period. Mahāyāna must have been a divided movement even in its inception. Some of the divisions found in the Hīnayāna or pre-Mahāyāna schools from which Mahāyāna originated must have carried through into Mahāyāna itself. Unfortunately, we know much less of the early sectarian divisions in the movement than we know of the Eighteen Schools. It is clear, for instance, that the conception of the *bodhisattva* found among the Mahāsāṃghikas is different from that of the Sarvāstivādins. It appears also that the *Prajñāptivādins* conceived of the unconditioned dharmas in a manner different from other early schools. However, though we may speculate that some of these differences influenced the development of Mahāyāna, we have no solid evidence.

As pre-Mahāyāna Buddhism had developed a scholastic system to bolster its ideological position, Mahāyāna developed special forms of scholarly investigation. A new synthesis, in many ways far removed from the visionary faith underlying the religious aspects of Mahāyāna, grew in the established monasteries partly as a critique of earlier scholastic formulations, partly due to the need to explain and justify the new faith. Through this intellectual function the monastery reasserted its institutional position. Both monk and layman participated in giving birth to Mahāyāna and maintaining its social and liturgical life, but the intellectual leadership remained monastic and conservative. Therefore, Mahāyāna reform brought with it an element of continuity—monastic institutions and codes—that could be at the same time a cause for fossilization and stagnation. The monasteries would eventually grow to the point where they became a burden on society, at the same time that, as institutions of conservatism, they failed to adapt to a changing society.

Still, from the beginning of the Gupta dynasty to the earlier part of the Pāla dynasty the monasteries were centers of intellectual creativity. They continued to be supported under the Guptas, especially Kumāra Gupta I (414–455), who endowed a major monastery in a site in Bihar originally consecrated to Śāriputra. This monastic establishment, called Nālandā after the name of a local genie, probably had been active as a center of learning for several decades before Kumāra Gupta decided to give it special recognition. It would become the leading institution of higher learning in the Buddhist world for almost a thousand years. Together with the university of Valabhī in western India, Nālandā represents the scholastic side of Mahāyāna, which coexisted with

a nonintellectual (not necessarily “popular”) dimension, the outlines of which appear through archaeological remains, certain aspects of the sūtra literature, and the accounts of Chinese pilgrims.

Some texts suggest a conflict between forest and city dwellers that may in fact reflect the expected tension between the ascetic and the intellectual, or the meditator and the religious politician. But, lest this simple schema obliterate important aspects of Buddhist religious life, one must note that there is plentiful evidence of intense and constant interaction between the philosopher, the meditator, and the devotee—often all three functions coinciding in one person. Furthermore, the writings of great philosophical minds like Asaṅga, Śāntideva, and Āryadeva suggest an active involvement of the monk-*bodhisattva* in the social life of the community. The nonintellectual dimensions of the religion, therefore, must be seen as one aspect of a dialectic that resolved itself in synthesis as much as rivalry, tension, or dissonance.

Mahāyāna faith and devotion, moreover, was in itself a complex phenomenon, incorporating a liturgy of the High Tradition (e.g., the *Hymn to the Three Bodies of the Buddha*, attributed to Aśvaghoṣa) with elements of the nonliterary and non-Buddhist religion (e.g., pilgrimage cycles and the cult of local spirits, respectively), as well as generalized beliefs such as the dedication of merit and the hope of rebirth in a purified Buddha Land.

Developments in doctrine. In explaining the appearance of Mahāyāna, two extremes should be avoided carefully. On the one hand, one can exaggerate the points of continuity that link Mahāyāna with pre-Mahāyāna Buddhism; on the other, one can make a distinction so sharp that Mahāyāna appears as a radical break with the past, rather than a gradual process of growth. The truth lies somewhere between these two extremes: although Mahāyāna can be understood as a logical expansion of earlier Buddhist doctrine and practice, it is difficult to see how the phenomenon could be explained without assuming major changes in the social fabric of the Indian communities that provided the base for the religion. These changes, furthermore, are suggested by historical evidence.

The key innovations in doctrine can be divided into those that are primarily critiques of early scholastic constructs and those that reflect new developments in practice. In both types, of course, one should not ignore the influence of visionary or contemplative experience; but this aspect of the religion, unfortunately, cannot always be documented adequately. The most important doctrine of practical consequence was the *bodhisattva* doctrine; the most important theoretical development was the doctrine of emptiness (*śūnyatā*). The first can be understood also as the result of a certain vision of the concrete manifestation of the sacred; the second, as the expression of a new type of mystical or contemplative experience.

The bodhisattva. In pre-Mahāyāna Buddhism the term *bodhisattva* referred primarily to the figure of a Buddha from

the time of his adoption of the vow to attain enlightenment to the point at which he attained Buddhahood. Even when used as an abstract designation of an ideal of perfection, the value of the ideal was determined by the goal: liberation from suffering. In the teachings of some of the Hīnayāna schools, however, the *bodhisattva* became an ideal with intrinsic value: to be a *bodhisattva* meant to adopt the vow (*praṇidhāna*) of seeking perfect awakening *for the sake of living beings*, that is, to follow the example set by the altruistic dedication of the Buddha in his former lives, when he was a *bodhisattva*, and not to aspire merely to individual liberation, as the *arhats* were supposed to have done. The Mahāyāna made this critique its own, and the *bodhisattva* ideal its central religious goal.

This doctrinal stance accompanied a shift in mythology that has been outlined above: the belief in multiple *bodhisattvas* and the development of a complex legend of the former lives of the Buddha. There was likewise a change in ritual centered around the cult of the *bodhisattva*, especially of mythical *bodhisattvas* who were believed to be engaged in the pursuit of awakening primarily, if not exclusively, for the sake of assisting beings in need or distress. Closely allied with this was the increasing popularity of the recitation of *bodhisattva* vows.

Whereas the *bodhisattva* of early Buddhism stood for a human being on his way to become a liberated being, the *bodhisattva* that appears in the Mahāyāna reflects the culmination of a process of change that began when some of the Hīnayāna schools extended the apotheosis of the Buddha Śākyamuni to the *bodhisattva*—that is, when they idealized both the Buddha and the spiritual career outlined by the myth of his previous lives. Mahāyāna then extended the same religious revaluation to numerous mythical beings believed to be far advanced in the path of awakening. Accordingly, in its mythology Mahāyāna has more than one object of veneration. Especially in contrast to the more conservative Hīnayāna schools (the Sarvāstivāda and the Theravāda, for instance), Mahāyāna is the Buddhism of multiple Buddhas and *bodhisattvas*, residing in multiple realms, where they assist numberless beings on their way to awakening.

Accordingly, the early ideal of the *bodhisattva* as future Buddha is not discarded; rather it is redefined and expanded. As a theory of liberation, the characteristic position of Mahāyāna can be summarized by saying that it emphasizes *bodhi* and relegates *nirvāṇa* to a secondary position. Strictly speaking, this may represent an early split within the community rather than a shift in doctrine. One could speculate that it goes back to conflicting notions of means to liberation found among the shramanic religions: the conflict between ecstasy and insight as means of liberation. But this analysis must be qualified by noting that the revaluation of *bodhi* must be seen in the context of the *bodhisattva* vow. The unique aspiration of the *bodhisattva* defines awakening as “awakening for the sake of all sentient beings.” This is a concept that cannot be understood properly in the context of disputes regarding the relative importance of insight.

Furthermore, one should note that the displacement of *nirvāṇa* is usually effected through its redefinition, not by means of a rejection of the basic concept of “freedom from all attachment.” Although the formalized texts of the vows often speak of the *bodhisattva* “postponing” his entrance into *nirvāṇa* until all living beings are saved, and the Buddha is asked in prayer to remain in the world without entering *nirvāṇa*, the central doctrine implies that a *bodhisattva* would not even consider a *nirvāṇa* of the type sought by the *arhat*. The *bodhisattva* is defined more by his aspiration for a different type of *nirvāṇa* than by a rejection or postponement of *nirvāṇa* as such. The gist of this new doctrine of *nirvāṇa* can be summarized in a definition of liberation as a state of peace in which the liberated person is neither attached to peace nor attached to the turmoil of the cycle of rebirth. It is variously named and defined: either by an identity of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* or by proposing a *nirvāṇa* in which one can find no support (*apratiṣṭhitanirvāṇa*).

As noted above, in the early conception a *bodhisattva* is a real human being. This aspect of the doctrine is not lost in Mahāyāna, but preserved in the belief that the aspiration to perfect awakening (the *bodhicitta*) and the *bodhisattva* vow should be adopted by all believers. By taking up the vow—by conversion or by ritual repetition—the Mahāyāna Buddhist, monk or layperson, actualizes the *bodhicitta* and progresses toward the goal of becoming a *bodhisattva*. Also uniquely Mahāyāna is the belief that these human aspirants to awakening are not alone—they are accompanied and protected by “celestial *bodhisattvas*,” powerful beings far advanced in the path, so perfect that they are free from both rebirth and liberation, and can now choose freely if, when, and where they are to be reborn. They engage freely in the process of rebirth only to save living beings.

What transforms the human and ethical ideal into a religious ideal, and into the object of religious awe, is the scale in which the *bodhisattva* path is conceived. From the first aspiration to awakening (*bodhicitta*) and the affirmation of the vow to the attainment of final enlightenment and liberation, countless lives intervene. The *bodhisattva* has to traverse ten stages (*bhūmi*), beginning with the intense practice of the virtue of generosity (primarily a lay virtue), passing through morality in the second stage, patience in the third, then fortitude, meditation, insight, skill in means, vows, powers, and the highest knowledge of a Buddha. The stages, therefore, correspond with the ten perfections (*pāramitā*). Although all perfections are practiced in every stage, they are mastered in the order in which they are listed in the scheme of the stages, suggesting at one end of the spectrum a simple and accessible practice for the majority of believers, the human *bodhisattva*, and at the other end a stage clearly unattainable in the realm of normal human circumstances, reserved for semidivine Buddhas and *bodhisattvas*, the object of worship. Although some exceptional human beings may qualify for the status of advanced *bodhisattvas*, most of these ideal beings are the mythic objects of religious fervor and imagination.

Among the mythic or celestial *bodhisattvas* the figure of Maitreya—destined to be the next Buddha of this world system after Śākyamuni—clearly represents the earliest stage of the myth. His cult is especially important in East Asian Buddhism. Other celestial *bodhisattvas* include Mañjuśrī, the *bodhisattva* of wisdom, the patron of scripture, obviously less important in the general cultus but an important *bodhisattva* in monastic devotion. The most important liturgical role is reserved for Avalokiteśvara, the *bodhisattva* of compassion, whose central role in worship is attested by archaeology.

Emptiness. The doctrine of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) represents a refinement of the ancient doctrine of no-self. In some ways it is merely an extension of the earlier doctrine: the denial of the substantial reality of the self and what belongs to the self, as a means to effect a breaking of the bonds of attachment. The notion of emptiness, however, expresses a critique of our common notions of reality that is much more radical than the critique implicit in the doctrine of no-self. The Mahāyāna critique is in fact unacceptable to other Buddhists, for it is in a manner of speaking a critique of Buddhism. Emptiness of all things implies the groundlessness of all ideas and conceptions, including, ultimately, Buddhist doctrines themselves.

The doctrine of emptiness was developed by the philosophical schools, but clearly inspired by the tradition of the Mahāyāna sūtras. Thus we read: “Even *nirvāṇa* is like a magical creation, like a dream, how much more any other object or idea (*dharma*). . . ? Even a Perfect Buddha is like a magical creation, like a dream. . . .” (*Aṣṭasāhasrikā*, p. 40). The practical correlate of the doctrine of emptiness is the concept of “skill in means” (*upāya*): Buddhist teachings are not absolute statements about reality, they are means to a higher goal beyond all views. In their cultural context these two doctrines probably served as a way of making Buddhist doctrine malleable to diverse populations. By placing the truth of Buddhism beyond the specific content of its religious practices, these two doctrines justified adaptation to changing circumstances and the adoption of new religious customs.

But emptiness, like the *bodhisattva* vows, also reflects the Mahāyāna understanding of the ultimate experience of Buddhism—understood both as a dialectic and a meditative process. This experience can be described as an awareness that nothing is self-existent. Dialectically, this means that there is no way that the mind can consistently think of any thing as having an existence of its own. All concepts of substance and existence vanish when they are examined closely and rationally. As a religious experience the term *emptiness* refers to a direct perception of this absence of self-existence, a perception that is only possible through mental cultivation, and which is a liberating experience. Liberation, in fact, has been redefined in a way reminiscent of early texts such as the *Suttanipāta*. Liberation is now the freedom resulting from the negation of all assumptions about reality, even Buddhist assumptions.

The cessation of grasping and reifying,

calming the plural mind—this is bliss.

The Buddha never taught any thing/doctrine [*dharma*] to anyone anywhere. (*Madhyamakakārikā* 25.24)

Finally, emptiness is also an affirmation of the immanence of the sacred. Applied to the turmoil of the sphere of rebirth (*saṃsāra*), it points to the relative value and reality of the world and at the same time transforms it into the sacred, the experience of awakening. Applied to the sphere of liberation (*nirvāṇa*), emptiness is a critique of the conception of liberation as a religious goal outside the world of impermanence and suffering.

Other views of the Absolute. Mahāyāna developed early notions of the supernatural and the sacred that guaranteed an exalted status to the symbols of its mystical and ethical ideals. Its notion of extraordinary beings populating supernal Buddha fields and coming to the aid of suffering sentient beings necessitated a metaphysic and cosmology that could offer concrete images of a transcendent sacred. Accordingly, the abstract, apophatic concept of emptiness was often qualified by, or even rejected in favor of, positive statements and concrete images.

Pre-Mahāyāna traditions had emphasized impermanence and no-self: to imagine that there is permanence in the impermanent is the most noxious error. Mahāyāna introduced the notion of emptiness, urging us to give up the notion of permanence, but to give up the notion of impermanence as well. Within the Mahāyāna camp others proposed that there was something permanent within the impermanent. Texts like the [*Mahāyāna*] *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* asserted that the Buddha himself had taught a doctrine of permanence: the seed of Buddhahood, innate enlightenment, is permanent, blissful, pure—indeed, it is the true self, present in the impermanent mind and body of sentient beings.

The *tathāgata* as object of worship was associated with “suchness” (*tathatā*), his saving actions were seen as taking effect in a world formed in the image of the dharma and its ultimate truth (*dharmadhātu*), and his form as repository of all goodness and virtue represented his highest form.

A doctrine common to all Mahāyānists sought to establish a link between the absolute and common human beings. The Tathāgata was conceived of as having several aspects to his person: the human Buddha or “Body of Magical Apparition” (*nirmāṇakāya*), that is, the historical persons of Buddhas; the transcendent sacred, the Buddha of the paradises and Buddha fields, who is also the form that is the object of worship (*saṃbhogakāya*); and the Buddha as Suchness, as nonduality, the *tathāgata* as embodiment of the *dharmadhātu*, called the “Dharma Body” (*dharmakāya*).

Developments in practice. The practice of meditation was for the Mahāyānist part of a ritual process beginning with the first feelings of compassion for other sentient beings, formulating the vow, including the expression of a strong desire to save all sentient beings and share one’s merit with them, followed by the cultivation of the analysis of all

existents, reaching a pinnacle in the experience of emptiness but culminating in the dedication of these efforts to the salvation of others.

Worship and ritual. The uniquely Mahāyāna aspect of the ritual is the threefold service (*triskandhaka*). Various defined, this bare outline of the essential Mahāyāna ritual is explained by the seventh-century poet Śāntideva as consisting of a confession of sins, formal rejoicing at the merit of others, and a request to all Buddhas that they remain in the world for the sake of suffering sentient beings. A pious Buddhist was expected to perform this threefold ritual three times in the day and three times in the night.

A text known as the *Triskandhaka*, forming part of the *Upāliparipṛcchā*, proves the central role of confession and dedication of merit. The act of confession is clearly a continuation of the ancient Prātimokṣa ritual. Other elements of continuity include a link with early nonliterary tradition (now integrated into scripture) in the role of the dedication of merit, and a link with the general Buddhist tradition of the Three Refuges.

More complicated liturgies were in use. Several versions remain in the extant literature. Although many of them are said to be “the sevenfold service” (*saptavidhānuttarapūjā*), the number seven is to be taken as an abstract number. The most important elements of the longer liturgies are the salutation to the Buddhas and *bodhisattvas*, the act of worship, the act of contrition, delight in the merit of others, and the dedication of merit. Xuanzang, the seventh-century Chinese pilgrim to India, describes, albeit cursorily, some of the liturgies in use in the Indian monasteries of his time.

Most common forms of ritual, however, must have been less formalized and less monkish. The common rite is best represented by the litany of Avalokiteśvara, preserved in the literature and the monuments. In its literary form it is a solemn statement of the *bodhisattva*’s capacity to save from peril those who call on his name. But in actual practice, one can surmise, the cult of Avalokiteśvara included then, as it does today in East Asia, prayers of petition and apotropaic invocations.

The basic liturgical order of the literary tradition was embellished with elements from general Indian religious custom, especially from the styles of worship called *pūjā*. These included practices such as bathing the sacred image, carrying it in procession, offering cloth, perfume, and music to the icon, and so forth.

Ritual practices were also expanded in the monastic tradition. For instance, another text also going by the title *Triskandhaka* (but preserved only in Tibetan translation) shows an intimate connection between ritual and meditation, as it integrates—like many monastic manuals of meditation—the typical daily ritual cycle with a meditation session.

Meditation. The practice of meditation was as important in the Mahāyāna tradition as it had been before. The maps of the path and the meditation manuals of Mahāyāna

Buddhists give us accounts, if somewhat idealized ones, of the process of meditation. Although no systematic history of Mahāyāna meditation has been attempted yet, it is obvious that there are important synchronic and diachronic differences among Mahāyāna Buddhists in India. Considering, nevertheless, only those elements that are common to the various systems, one must note first an element of continuity with the past in the use of a terminology very similar to that of the Mahīśāsakas and the Sarvāstivāda, and in the acceptance, with little change, of traditional lists of objects and states of contemplation.

The interpretation of the process, however, and the definition of the higher stages of contemplation differed radically from that of the Hīnayāna schools. The principal shift is in the definition of the goal as a state in which the object of contemplation (*ālambana*) is no longer present to the mind (*nirālambana*). All the mental images (or “marks,” *nimitta*, *saṃjñā*) that form the basis for conceptual thought and attachment must be abandoned through a process of mental calm and analysis, until the contemplative reaches a state of peaceful concentration free of mental marks (*ānimitta*), free of conceptualizations (*nirvikalpa-samādhi*).

These changes in contemplative theory are closely connected to the abandonment of the *dharma* theory and the doctrine of no-self as the theoretical focus of speculative mysticism. One may say that the leading theme of Mahāyāna contemplative life is the meditation on emptiness. But one must add that the scholastic traditions are very careful to define the goal as constituted by both emptiness and compassion (*karuṇā*). The higher state of freedom from conceptions (the “supramundane knowledge”) must be followed by return to the world to fulfill the vows of the *bodhisattva*—the highest contemplative stage is, at least in theory, a preparation for the practice of compassion.

The new ethics. The *bodhisattva* ideal also implied new ethical notions. Two themes prevail in Mahāyāna ethical speculation: the altruistic vow and life in the world. Both themes reflect changes in the social context of Buddhism: a greater concern, if not a stronger role for, lay life and its needs and aspirations and a cultural context requiring universal social values. The altruistic ideal is embodied in the *bodhisattva* vows and in the creation of a new set of ethical rules, commonly known as the “Bodhisattva Vinaya.” A number of Mahāyāna texts are said to represent this new “Vinaya.” Among these, the *Bodhisattvaprātimokṣa* was especially important in India. It prescribes a liturgy for the ritual adoption of the *bodhisattva* vows, which is clearly based on the earlier rites of ordination (*upasampadā*). Although the Mahāyāna Vinaya Sūtras never replaced in India the earlier monastic codes, they preserved and transmitted important, and at times obligatory, rites of monastic and lay initiation, and were considered essential supplements to traditional monastic Vinaya.

THE HIGH TRADITION AND THE UNIVERSITIES. The most important element in the institutionalization of Mahāyāna

was perhaps the establishment of Buddhist universities. In these centers of learning the elaboration of Buddhist doctrine became the most important goal of Buddhist monastic life. First at Nālandā and Valabhī, then, as the Pāla dynasty took control of East Central India (c. 650), at the universities of Vikramaśīla and Odantapurī, Mahāyāna scholars trained disciples from different parts of the Buddhist world and elaborated subtle systems of textual interpretation and philosophical speculation.

The Mahāyāna synthesis. Although eventually they would not be able to compete with more resilient forms of Buddhism and Hinduism, the Mahāyāna scholars played a leading role in the creation of a Mahāyāna synthesis that would satisfy both the intelligentsia and the common believers for at least five hundred years. Devotion, ritual, ethics, metaphysics, and logic formed part of this monument to Indian philosophical acumen. Even as the ruthless Mihirakula, the Ephthalite ("White") Hun, was invading India from the northwest (c. 500–528) and the Chalukya dynasty was contributing to a Hindu renaissance in the southwest (c. 550–753), India allowed for the development of great minds—such distinguished philosophical figures as Dignāga and Sthiramati, who investigated subtle philosophical issues. Persecution by Mihirakula (c. 550) was followed by the reign of one of the great patrons of Buddhism, Harṣa Vardhana (c. 605–647). Once more Buddhism was managing to survive on the seesaw of Indian politics.

Schools. The scholastic tradition of Mahāyāna can be divided into three schools: Mādhyamika (Madhyamaka), Yogācāra, and the school of Sāramati. The first two dominated the intellectual life of Mahāyāna in India. The third had a short-lived but important influence on Tibet, and indirectly may be considered an important element in the development of East Asian Buddhism.

Mādhyamika. The founder of this school can also be regarded as the father of Mahāyāna scholasticism and philosophy. Nāgārjuna (fl. c. 150 CE) came from South India, possibly from the Amarāvātī region. Said to have been the advisor to one of the Śātavāhana monarchs, he became the first major philosopher of Mahāyāna and a figure whose ideas influenced all its schools. The central theme of his philosophy is emptiness (*śūnyatā*) understood as a corollary of the pre-Mahāyāna theory of dependent origination. Emptiness is the Middle Way between affirmations of being and nonbeing. The extremes of existence and nonexistence are avoided by recognizing certain causal relations (e.g., the path and liberation) without predicating a self-existence or immutable essence (*svabhāva*) to either cause or effect. To defend his views without establishing a metaphysical thesis, Nāgārjuna argues by reducing to the absurd all the alternative philosophical doctrines recognized in his day. For his own "system," Nāgārjuna claims to have no thesis to affirm beyond his rejection of the affirmations and negations of all metaphysical systems. Therefore, Nāgārjuna's system is "the school of the Middle" (*madhyamaka*) both as an ontology

(neither being nor nonbeing) and as a logic (neither affirmation nor negation). In religious terms, Nāgārjuna's Middle Way is summarized in his famous statement that *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are the same.

Three to four centuries after Nāgārjuna the Mādhyamika school split into two main branches, called Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika. The first of these, represented by Buddhapālita (c. 500) and Candrakīrti (c. 550–600), claimed that in order to be faithful to the teachings of Nāgārjuna, philosophers had to confine themselves to the critique of opposing views by *reductio ad absurdum*. The Svātantrikas, on the other hand, claimed that the Mādhyamika philosopher had to formulate his own thesis; in particular, he needed his own epistemology. The main exponent of this view was Buddhapālita's great critic Bhāvaviveka (c. 500–550). The debate continued for some time but was eclipsed by other philosophical issues; for the Mādhyamika school eventually assimilated elements of other Mahāyāna traditions, especially those of the logicians and the Yogācārins.

Mādhyamika scholars also contributed to the development of religious literature. Several hymns (*stava*) are attributed to Nāgārjuna. His disciple Āryadeva discusses the *bodhisattva*'s career in his *Bodhisattva-yogācāra-catuhśataka*, although the work deals mostly with philosophical issues. Two anthological works, one attributed to Nāgārjuna, the *Sūtrasamuccaya*, and the other to the seventh-century Śāntideva, the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, became guides to the ritual and ethical practices of Mahāyāna. Śāntideva also wrote a "guide" to the *bodhisattva*'s career, the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, a work that gives us a sampling of the ritual and contemplative practices of Mādhyamika monks, as well as a classical survey of the philosophical issues that engaged their attention.

Yogācāra. Approximately two centuries after Nāgārjuna, during the transition period from Kushan to Gupta power, a new school of Mahāyāna philosophy arose in the northwest. The founders of this school, the brothers Asaṅga (c. 310–390) and Vasubandhu (c. 320–400), had begun as scholars in the Hīnayāna schools. Asaṅga, the elder brother, was trained in the Mahīśāsaka school. Many important features of the Abhidharma theories of this school remained in Asaṅga's Mahāyāna system. Vasubandhu, who converted to Mahāyāna after his brother had become an established scholar of the school, began as a Sautrāntika with an extraordinary command of Sarvāstivādin theories. Therefore, when he did become a Mahāyānist he too brought with him a Hīnayāna scholastic grid on which to organize and rationalize Mahāyāna teachings.

The school founded by the two brothers is known as the Yogācāra, perhaps following the title of Asaṅga's major work, the *Yogācārabhūmi* (sometimes attributed to Maitreya), but clearly expressing the centrality of the practice of self-cultivation, especially through meditation. In explaining the experiences arising during the practice of yoga, the school proposes the two doctrines that characterize it: (1) the experi-

ence of enstasy leads to the conviction that there is nothing but mind (*cittamātratā*), or the world is nothing but a perceptual construct (*vijñaptimātratā*); (2) the analysis of mind carried out during meditation reveals different levels of perception or awareness, and, in the depths of consciousness, the basis for rebirth and karmic determination, a storehouse consciousness (*ālaya-vijñāna*) containing the seeds of former actions. Varying emphasis on these two principles characterize different modes of the doctrine. The doctrine of mind-only dominates Vasubandhu's *Viṃśatikā* and *Triṃśikā*; the analysis of the *ālaya-vijñāna* is more central to Asaṅga's doctrine. Since both aspects of the doctrine can be understood as theories of consciousness (*vijñāna*), the school is sometimes called Vijñānavāda.

One of the first important divisions within the Yogācāra camp reflected geographical as well as doctrinal differences. The school of Valabhī, following Sthiramati (c. 500–560), opposed the Yogācārins of Nālandā, led by Dharmapāla (c. 530–561). The point at issue, whether the pure mind is the same as the storehouse consciousness, illustrates the subtleties of Indian philosophical polemics but also reflects the influence of another school, the school of Sāramati, as well as the soteriological concerns underlying the psychological theories of Yogācāra. The debate on this point would continue in the Mādhyamika school, involving issues of the theory of perception as well as problems in the theory of the liberated mind.

Tathāgata-garbha theory. Another influential school followed the tendency—already expressed in some Mahāyāna sūtras—toward a positive definition or description of ultimate reality. The emphasis in this school was on the ontological basis for the experience and virtues of Buddhahood. This basis was found in the underlying or innate Buddhahood of all beings. The school is known under two names; one describes its fundamental doctrine, the theory of *tathāgata-garbha* (the presence of the Tathāgata in all beings), the other refers to its purported systematizer, Sāramati (c. 350–450). The school's emphasis on a positive foundation of being associates it closely with the thought of Maitreyānatha, the teacher of Asaṅga, to whom is often attributed one of the fundamental texts of the school, the *Ratnagotravibhāga*. It may be that Maitreya's thought gave rise to two lines of interpretation—*tathāgata-garbha* and *cittamātratā*.

Sāramati wrote a commentary on the *Ratnagotravibhāga* in which he explains the process whereby innate Buddhahood becomes manifest Buddhahood. The work is critical of the theory of emptiness and describes the positive attributes of Buddhahood. The *bodhisattva*'s involvement in the world is seen not so much as the abandonment of the bliss of liberation as it is the manifestation of the Absolute (*dharmadhātu*) in the sphere of sentient beings, a concept that can be traced to Mahāsāṃghika doctrines. The *dharmadhātu* is a positive, metaphysical absolute, not only eternal, but pure, the locus of ethical, soteric, and epistemo-

logical value. This absolute is also the basis for the *gotra*, or spiritual lineage, which is a metaphor for the relative potential for enlightenment in living beings.

The logicians. An important development in Buddhist scholarship came about as a result of the concern of scholastics with the rules of debate and their engagement in philosophical controversies with Hindu logicians of the Nyāya school. Nāgārjuna and Vasubandhu wrote short treatises on logic, but a creative and uniquely Buddhist logic and epistemology did not arise until the time of Dignāga (c. 480–540), a scholar who claimed allegiance to Yogācāra but adopted a number of Sautrāntika doctrines. The crowning achievement of Buddhist logic was the work of Dharmakīrti (c. 600–650), whose *Pramāṇavārttika* and its *Vṛtti* revised critically the whole field. Although his work seems on the surface not relevant for the history of religion, it is emblematic of the direction of much of the intellectual effort of Mahāyāna scholars after the fifth century.

Yogācāra-Mādhyamika philosophers. As India moved away from the security of the Gupta period, Mahāyāna Buddhist philosophy gradually moved in the direction of eclecticism. By the time the university at Vikramaśīla was founded in the eighth century the dominant philosophy at Nālandā was a combination of Mādhyamika and Yogācāra, with the latter as the qualifying term and Mādhyamika as the core of the philosophy. This movement had roots in the earlier Svātantrika Mādhyamika and like its predecessor favored the formulation of ontological and epistemological theses in defense of Nāgārjuna's fundamental doctrine of emptiness. The most distinguished exponent of this school was Śāntirakṣita (c. 680–740); but some of his theories were challenged from within the movement by his contemporary Jñānagarbha (c. 700–760). The greatest contribution to religious thought, however, came from their successors. Kamalaśīla (c. 740–790), a disciple of Śāntirakṣita who continued the latter's mission in Tibet, wrote a number of brilliant works on diverse aspects of philosophy. He traveled to Tibet, where he wrote three treatises on meditation and the *bodhisattva* path, each called *Bhāvanākrama*, which must be counted among the jewels of Indian religious thought.

New scriptures. The philosophers found their main source of inspiration in the Mahāyāna sūtras, most of which did not advocate clearly defined philosophical theories. Some sūtras, however, do express positions that can be associated with the doctrines of particular schools. Although scholars agree that these compositions are later than texts without a clear doctrinal affiliation, the connection between the sūtras and the schools they represent is not always clear.

For instance, some of the characteristic elements of the school of Sāramati are clearly pre-Mahāyānic, and can also be found in a number of sūtras from the *Avataṃsaka* and *Ratnakūṭa* collections. However, Sāramati appealed to a select number of Mahāyāna sūtras that clustered around the basic themes of the school. Perhaps the most famous is the *Srīmālādevīsīmhanāda*, but equally important are the

[*Mahāyāna*] *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, the *Anūnatvāpūṇṇatvanirdeśa*, and the *Dhāraṇīrāja*.

A number of Mahāyāna sūtras of late composition were closely associated with the Yogācāra school. Although they were known already at the time of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu, in their present form they reflect a polemic that presupposes some form of proto-Yogācāra theory. Among these the *Laṅkāvatāra* and the *Samādhinirmocana* are the most important from a philosophical point of view. The first contains an early form of the theory of levels of *vijñāna*.

Decline of Mahāyāna. It is difficult to assess the nature and causes of the decay of Mahāyāna in India. Although it is possible to argue that the early success of Mahāyāna led to a tendency to look inward, that philosophers spent their time debating subtle metaphysical, logical, or even grammatical points, the truth is that even during the period of technical scholasticism, constructive religious thought was not dormant. But it may be that as Mahāyāna became more established and conventional, the natural need for religious revival found expression in other vehicles. Most likely Mahāyāna thinkers participated in the search for new forms of expression, appealing once more to visionary, revolutionary and charismatic leaders. But the new life gradually would adopt an identity of its own, first as Tantric Buddhism, eventually as Hinduism. For, in adopting Tantric practices and symbols, Mahāyāna Buddhists appealed to a symbolic and ritual world that fit naturally with a religious substratum that was about to become the province of Hinduism.

The gradual shift from Mahāyāna to Tantra seems to have gained momentum precisely at the time when Mahāyāna philosophy was beginning to lose its creative energy. We know of Tantric practices at Nālandā in the seventh century. These practices were criticized by the Nālandā scholar Dharmakīrti but apparently were accepted by most distinguished scholars of the same institution during the following century. As Tantra gained respectability, the Pāla monarchs established new centers of learning, rivaling Nālandā. We may say that the death of its great patron, King Harṣa, in 657 signals the decline of Mahāyāna, whereas the construction of the University of Vikramaśīla under Dharmapāla about the year 800 marks the beginning of the Tantric period.

TANTRIC INNOVATIONS. As with Mahāyāna, we must assume that Tantra reflects social as well as religious changes. Because of the uncertainties of the date of its origin, however, few scholars have ventured any explanation for the arising of Tantra. Some advocate an early origin for Tantra, suggesting that the literature existed as an esoteric practice for many centuries before it ever came to the surface. If this were the case, then Tantra must have existed as some kind of underground movement long before the sixth century. But this theory must still explain the sudden appearance of Tantrism as a mainstream religion.

In its beginnings, Buddhist Tantra may have been a minority religion, essentially a private cult incorporating ele-

ments from the substratum frowned upon by the Buddhist establishment. It echoed ancient practices such as the critical rites of the *Atharvaveda* tradition, and the initiatory ceremonies, Aryan and non-Aryan, known to us from other Brahmanic sources. Starting as a marginal phenomenon, it eventually gained momentum, assuming the same role Mahāyāna had assumed earlier; a force of innovation and a vehicle for the expression of dissatisfaction with organized religion. The followers of Tantra became the new critics of the establishment. Some asserted the superiority of techniques of ritual and meditation that would lead to a direct, spontaneous realization of Buddhahood in this life. As wandering saints called *siddhas* ("possessed of *siddhi*," i. e., realization or magical power), they assumed the demeanor of madmen, and abandoned the rules of the monastic code. Others saw Tantra as the culmination of Mahāyāna and chose to integrate it with earlier teachings, following established monastic practices even as they adopted beliefs that challenged the traditional assumptions of Buddhist monasticism.

The documented history of Tantra, naturally, reveals more about the second group. It is now impossible to establish with all certainty how the substratum affected Buddhist Tantra—whether, for instance, the metaphoric use of sexual practices preceded their explicit use, or vice versa. But it seems clear that the new wandering ascetics and their ideology submitted to the religious establishment even as they changed it. Tantra followed the pattern of cooperation with established religious institutions set by Mahāyāna in its relationship to the early scholastic establishment. Tantric monks would take the *bodhisattva* vows and receive monastic ordination under the pre-Mahāyāna code. Practitioners of Tantra would live in the same monastery with non-Tantric Mahāyāna monks. Thus Tantric Buddhism became integrated into the Buddhist high tradition even as the *siddhas* continued to challenge the values of Buddhist monasticism.

Although it seems likely that Tantric Buddhism existed as a minority, esoteric practice among Mahāyāna Buddhists before it made its appearance on the center stage of Indian religion, it is now impossible to know for how long and in what form it existed before the seventh century. The latter date alone is certain because the transmission of Tantra to China is marked by the arrival in the Chinese capitals of Tantric masters like Śubhakarasiṃha (arrives in Ch'ang-an 716) and Vajrabodhi (arrives in Lo-yang 720), and we can safely assume that the exportation of Tantra beyond the Indian border could not have been possible without a flourishing activity in India. Evidence for an earlier origin is found in the occasional reference, critical or laudatory, to *mantras* and *dhāraṇīs* in the literature of the seventh century (Dharmakīrti, Śāntideva) and the presence of proto-Tantric elements in Mahāyāna sūtras that must date from at least the fourth century (*Gaṇḍavyūha*, *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka*).

Tantra in general makes use of ritual, symbolic, and doctrinal elements of earlier form of Buddhism. Especially

the apotropaic and mystical formulas called *mantras* and *dhāraṇīs* gain a central role in Tantrayāna. The *Mahāmāyūrī*, a proto-Tantric text of the third or fourth century, collects apotropaic formulas associated with local deities in different parts of India. Some of these formulas seem to go back to parittas similar to those in the Pali canonical text *Āṭāṇāṭiya Suttanta* (*Dīgha Nikāya* no. 32). Although one should not identify the relatively early, and pan-Buddhist, genre of the *dhāraṇī* and *paritta* with the Tantrayāna, the increased use of these formulas in most existing forms of Buddhism, and the appearance of *dhāraṇī-sūtras* in late Mahāyāna literature perhaps marks a shift towards greater emphasis on the magical dimension of Buddhist faith. The Mahāyāna sūtras also foreshadow Tantra with their doctrine of the identity of the awakened and the afflicted minds (*Dharmasaṅgīti*, *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*), and innate Buddhahood (*Tathāgata-garbha sūtras*).

Varieties of Tantra. Whatever may have been its pre-history, as esoteric or exoteric practice, the new movement—sometimes called the third *yāna*, Tantrayāna—was as complex and fragmented as earlier forms of Buddhism. A somewhat artificial, but useful classification distinguishes three main types of Tantra: Vajrayāna, Sahajayāna, and *Kālacakra* Tantra. The first established the symbolic terminology and the liturgy that would characterize all forms of the tradition. Many of these iconographic and ritual forms are described in the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* (finished in its extant form c. 750), the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, and the *Vajrasekhara* (or *Tattvasaṃgraha*) *Sūtra*, which some would, following East Asian traditions, classify under a different, more primitive branch of Tantra called “Mantrayāna.” The Sahajayāna was dominated by long-haired, wandering *siddhas*, who openly challenged and ridiculed the Buddhist establishment. They referred to the object of their religious experience as “the whore,” both as a reference to the sexual symbolism of ritual Tantra and as a challenge to monastic conceptions of spiritual purity, but also as a metaphor for the universal accessibility of enlightenment. The *Kālacakra* tradition is the farthest removed from earlier Buddhist traditions, and shows a stronger influence from the substratum. It incorporates concepts of messianism and astrology not attested elsewhere in Buddhist literature.

Unfortunately, the history of all three of these movements is clouded in legend. Tibetan tradition considers the Mantrayāna a third “turning of the wheel [of the dharma]” (with Mahāyāna as the second), taking place in Dhānyakaṭaka (Andhra) sixteen years after the enlightenment. But this is patently absurd. As a working hypothesis, we can propose that there was an early stage of Mantrayāna beginning in the fourth century. The term *Vajrayāna* could be used then to describe the early documented manifestations of Tantric practice, especially in the high tradition of the Ganges River valley after the seventh century.

Sahajayāna is supposed to have originated with the Kashmirian yogin Lūi-pa (c. 750–800). The earliest docu-

mented Sahajayānists are from Bengal, but probably from the beginning of the ninth century. Regarding the *Kālacakra*, Western scholarship would not accept traditional views of its ancient origins in the mythic land of Shambhala. It must be dated not earlier than the tenth century, probably to the beginning of the reign of King Mahīpāla (c. 974–1026). Its roots have been sought in the North as well as in the South.

The Vajrayāna. The Vajrayāna derives its name from the centrality of the concept of *vajra* in its symbolism. The word *vajra* means both “diamond” and “cudgel.” It is therefore a metaphor for hardness and destructiveness. Spiritually, it represents the eternal, innate state of Buddhahood possessed by all beings, as well as the cutting edge of wisdom. The personification of this condition and power is Vajrasattva, a deity and an abstract principle, which is defined as follows:

By *vajra* is meant emptiness;
sattva means pure cognition.

The identity of these two is known
as the essence of Vajrasattva. (*Advaya vajra Saṃgraha*,
p. 24)

Behind this definition is clearly the metaphysics of Yogācāra-Mādhyamika thought. Vajrasattva stands for the nondual experience that transcends both emptiness and pure mind. In religious terms this principle represents a homology between the human person and the essence of *vajra*: in the human body, in this life, relative and absolute meet.

The innate quality of the nondual is also represented by the concept of the “thought of awakening” (*bodhicitta*). But innate awakening in Vajrayāna becomes the goal: enlightenment is present in its totality and perfection in this human body; the thought of awakening is awakening:

The Thought of Awakening is known to be
Without beginning or end, quiescent,
Free from being and nonbeing, powerful,
Undivided in emptiness and compassion. (*Guhyasamāja*
18.37)

This identity is established symbolically and ritually by a series of homologies. For instance, the six elements of the human body are identified with different aspects of the body of *Mahāvairocana*, the five constituents of the human personality (*skandhas*) are identified with the five forms of Buddha knowledge.

But the most characteristic aspect of Tantric Buddhism generally is the extension of these homologies to sexual symbolism. The “thought of awakening” is identified with semen, dormant wisdom with a woman waiting to be inseminated. Therefore, wisdom (*prajñā*) is conceived as a female deity. She is a mother (*jananī*), as in the Prajñāpāramitā literature; she is the female yogi (*yoginī*); but she is also a low-caste whore (*ḍombī caṇḍālī*). Skillful means (*upāya*) are visualized as her male consort. The perfect union of these two (*prajñopāya-yuganaddha*) is the union of the nondual. Be-

hind the Buddhist interpretation, of course, one discovers the non-Aryan substratum, with its emphasis on fertility and the symbolism of the mother goddess. But one may also see this radical departure from Buddhist monkish prudery as an attempt to shock the establishment out of self-righteous complacency.

Because the sexual symbolism can be understood metaphorically, most forms of Buddhist Tantra were antinomian only in principle. Thus, Vajrayāna was not without its vows and rules. As *upāya*, the symbols of ritual had as their goal the integration of the Absolute and the relative, not the abrogation of the latter. Tantric vows included traditional monastic rules, the *bodhisattva* vows, and special Tantric rules—some of which are contained in texts such as the *Vinayasūtra* and the *Bodhicittaśīlādānakalpa*.

The practice of the higher mysteries was reserved for those who had mastered the more elementary Mahāyāna and Tantra practices. The hierarchy of practice was established in systems such as the “five steps” of the *Pañcakrama* (by the Tantric Nāgārjuna). Generally, the order of study protected the higher mysteries, establishing the dividing line between esoteric and exoteric. Another common classification of the types of Tantra distinguished external daily rituals (Kriyā Tantra), special rituals serving as preparation for meditation, (Caryā Tantra), basic meditation practices (Yoga Tantra), and the highest, or advanced meditation Tantras (Anuttarayoga Tantra). This hermeneutic of sorts served both as an apologetic and a doctrinal classification of Tantric practice by distinguishing the audience for which each type of Tantra was best suited: respectively *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, Yogācārin, and Mādhyamikas.

Elements of Tathāgata-garbha theory seem to have been combined with early totemic beliefs to establish a system of Tathāgata families or clans that also served to define the proper audience for a variety of teachings. Persons afflicted by delusion, for instance, belonged to Mahāvairocana’s clan, and should cultivate the homologies and visualizations associated with this Buddha—who, not coincidentally, represents the highest awakening. This system extends the homologies of *skandhas*, levels of knowledge, and so forth, to personality types. This can be understood as a practical psychology that forms part of the Tantric quest for the immanence of the sacred.

The Sahaja (or Sahajiyā) movement. Although traditional Sahaja master-to-disciple lineages present it as a movement of great antiquity, the languages used in extant Sahaja literature belong to an advanced stage in the development of New Indic. These works were written mostly in Apabhraṃśa (the *Dohakośa*) and early Bengali (the *Caryāgītī*). Thus, although their dates are uncertain, they cannot go as far back as suggested by tradition. Scholars generally agree on a conjectural dating of perhaps eighth to tenth century.

Works attributed to Sahaja masters are preserved not only in New Indian languages (Sahaja, c. 750–800, Kāṇha,

c. 800–850, Ti-lo-pa, c. 950–1000); a few commentaries exist in Sanskrit. The latter attest to the influence of the early wandering *siddhas* on the Buddhist establishment.

The basic doctrinal stance of the Sahaja movement is no different from that of Vajrayāna: sahaja is the innate principle of enlightenment, the *bodhicitta*, to be realized in the union of wisdom and skillful means. The main difference between the two types of Tantra is in the lifestyle of the adept. The Sahajiyā was a movement that represented a clear challenge to the Buddhist establishment: the ideal person was a homeless madman wandering about with his female consort, or a householder-sorcerer—either of which would claim to practice union with his consort as the actualization of what the high tradition practiced only in symbolic or mystical form. The Vajrayāna soon became integrated into the curriculum of the universities, controlled by the *Vinaya* and philosophical analysis. It was incorporated into the ordered program of spiritual cultivation accepted in the monasteries, which corresponded to the desired social and political stability of the academic institutions and their sponsors. The iconoclastic stunts of the Sahaja, on the other hand, sought spontaneity, and saw monastic life as an obstacle to true realization. The force of their challenge is seen in quasi-mythic form in the legend that tells of the bizarre tests to which the *siddha* Ti lo pa submitted the great scholar Nā ro pa when the latter left his post at Vikramaśīla to follow the half-naked madman Ti lo pa.

This particular Tantric tradition, therefore, best embodied the iconoclastic tendencies found in all of Tantra. It challenged the establishment in the social as well as the religious sphere, for it incorporated freely practices from the substratum and placed women and sexuality on the level of the sacred. In opposition to the bland and ascetic paradises of Mahāyāna—where there were no women or sexual intercourse—Tantrism identifies the bliss of enlightenment with the great bliss (*mahāsukha*) of sexual union.

The Kālacakra Tantra. This text has several features that separate it from other works of the Buddhist tradition: an obvious political message, suggesting an alliance to stop the Muslim advance in India, and astrological symbolism and teachings, among the others. In this work also we meet the concept of “Ādibuddha,” the primordial Buddha, whence arises everything in the universe.

The high tradition, however, sees the text as remaining within the main line of Buddhist Tantrism. Its main argument is that all phenomena, including the rituals of Tantra, are contained within the initiate’s body, and all aspects of time are also contained in this body. The concept of time (*kāla*) is introduced and discussed and its symbolism explained as a means to give the devotee control over time and therefore over the impermanent world. The *Sekoddeśaṭīkā*, a commentary on part of the *Kālacakra* attributed to Nā ro pa (Nāḍapāda, tenth century), explains that the time (*kāla*) of the *Kālacakra* is the same as the unchanging *dharmadhātu*, whereas the wheel (*cakra*) means the manifes-

tations of time. In *Kālacakra* the two, absolute and relative, *prajñā* and *upāya*, are united. In this sense, therefore, in spite of its concessions to the substratum and to the rising tide of Hinduism, the *Kālacakra* was also integrated with mainline Buddhism.

Tantric literature. The word *tantra* means “thread” or “weft” and, by extension, “text.” The sacred texts produced as the new dispensation, esoteric or exoteric, were called Tantras, and formed indeed a literary thread interwoven with the secret transmission from master to disciple. Some of the most difficult and profound Tantras were produced in the early period (before the eighth century); the *Mahāvairocana*, *Guhyasamāja*, the earlier parts of the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, and the *Hevajra*. By the time Tantra became the dominant system and, therefore, part of the establishment, a series of commentaries and authored works had appeared. Nāgārjuna’s *Pañcakrama* is among the earliest. The Tantric Candrakīrti (ninth century) wrote a commentary on the *Guhyasamāja*, and Buddhaguhya (eighth century) discussed the *Mahāvairocana*. Sanskrit commentaries eventually were written to fossilize even the spontaneous poems of the Sahaja saints.

Tantra and the high tradition. Thus, Tantra too, like its predecessors, eventually become institutionalized. What arose as an esoteric, intensely private, visionary and iconoclastic movement, became a literary tradition, ritualized, often exoteric and speculative.

We have abundant evidence of a flourishing Tantric circle at Nālandā, for instance, at least since the late seventh century. Tantric masters were by that time established members of the faculty. Especially during the Pāla dynasty, Tantric practices and speculation played a central role in Buddhist universities. This was clearly the period of institutionalization, a period when Tantra became part of the mainstream of Buddhism.

With this transformation the magical origins of Tantra were partly disguised by a high Tantric liturgy and a theory of Tantric meditation paralleling earlier, Mahāyāna theories of the path. Still, Tantric ritual and meditation retained an identity of their own. Magic formulas, gestures, and circles appeared transformed, respectively, into the mystical words of the Buddhas, the secret gestures of the Buddhas, and charts (*maṇḍalas*) of the human psyche and the path.

The mystical diagram (*maṇḍala*) illustrates the complexity of this symbolism. It is at the same time a chart of the human person as it is now, a plan for liberation, and a representation of the transfigured body, the structure of Buddhahood itself. As a magic circle it is the sphere in which spiritual forces are evoked and controlled, as religious symbol it is the sphere of religious progress, experience, and action. The primitive functions remain: the *maṇḍala* is still a circle of power, with apotropaic functions. For each divinity there is an assigned meaning, a sacred syllable, a color, and a position within the *maṇḍala*. Spiritual forces can thus be evoked

without danger. The sacred syllable is still a charm. The visualization of Buddhas is often inseparable from the evocation of demons and spirits. New beings populate the Buddhist pantheon. The Buddhas and *bodhisattvas* are accompanied by female consorts—these spiritual sexual partners can be found in explicit carnal iconographic representations.

Worship and ritual. Whereas the esoteric ritual incorporated elements of the substratum into a Buddhist doctrinal base, the exoteric liturgies of the Tantric high tradition followed ritual models from the Mahāyāna tradition as well as elements that evince Brahmanic ritual and Hindu worship. The daily ritual of the Tantric Buddhist presents a number of analogies of Brahmanic *pūjā* that cannot be accidental. But the complete liturgical cycle is still Buddhist. Many examples are preserved, for instance, in the Sanskrit text *Ādikarmapradīpa*. The ritual incorporates Tantric rites (offering to a *maṇḍala*, recitation of *mantras*) into a structure composed of elements from pre-Mahāyāna Buddhism (e.g., the Refuges), and Mahāyāna ritual (e.g., confession, vows, dedication of merit).

More complex liturgies include rites of initiation or consecration (*abhiṣeka*) and empowerment (*adhiṣṭhāna*), rites that may have roots going as far back as the *Atharvaveda*. The burnt-offering rites (*homa*) also have Vedic and Brahmanic counterparts. Elements of the substratum are also evident in the frequent invocation of *yakṣas* and *devatās*, the propitiation of spirits, and the underlying sexual and alchemical symbolism.

Meditation. The practice of Tantric visualization (*sādhana*) was even more a part of ritual than the Mahāyāna meditation session. It was always set in a purely ritual frame similar to the structure of the daily ritual summarized above. A complete *sādhana* would integrate pre-Mahāyāna and Mahāyāna liturgical and contemplative processes with Tantric visualization. The meditator would first go through a gradual process of purification (sometimes including ablutions) usually constructed on the model of the Mahāyāna “sevenfold service.” He would then visualize the mystical syllable corresponding to his chosen deity. The syllable would be transformed into a series of images that would lead finally to clear visualization of the deity. Once the deity was visualized clearly, the adept would become one with it. But this oneness was interpreted as the realization of the nondual; therefore, the deity became the adept as much as the adept was turned into a deity. Thus, the transcendent could be actualized in the adept’s life beyond meditation in the fulfillment of the *bodhisattva* vows.

Tantric doctrine. Tantric symbolism was interpreted in the context of Mahāyāna orthodoxy. It is therefore possible to explain Tantric theoretical conceptions as a natural development from Mahāyāna. The immanence of Buddhahood is explicitly connected with the Mahāyāna doctrine of the identity of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* and the teachings of those Yogācārins who believed that consciousness is inherently pure. The magical symbolism of Tantra can be traced—

again through explicit references—to the doctrine of the *bodhisattva* as magician: since the world is like a dream, like a magical apparition, one can be free of it by knowing the dream as dream—knowing and controlling the magical illusion as a magician would control it. The *bodhisattva* (and therefore the *siddha*) is able to play the magical trick of the world without deceiving himself into believing it real.

One should not forget, however, that what is distinctively Tantric is not limited to the externals of ritual and symbolism. The special symbolism transforms its Mahāyāna context because of the specifically Tantric understanding of immanence. The Buddha is present in the human body innately, but the Buddha nature is manifested only when one realizes the “three mysteries,” or “three secrets.” It is not enough to be free from the illusion of the world; one becomes free by living *in* illusion in such a way that illusion becomes the manifestation of Buddhahood. Tantra seeks to construct an alternative reality, such that a mentally constructed world reveals the fundamental illusion of the world and manifests the mysterious power of the Buddha through illusion. The human body, the realm of the senses, is to be transformed into the body of a Buddha, the senses of a Buddha.

The body, mind, and speech of the Buddha (the Three Mysteries) have specific characteristics that must be recognized and reproduced. In ritual terms this means that the adept actualizes Buddhahood when he performs prostrations and ritual gestures (*mudrās*); he speaks with the voice of the Buddha when he utters *mantras*; his mind is the mind of the Buddha when he visualizes the deity. The magical dimension is evident: the power of the Buddha lives in the formalized “demeanor of a Buddha.” But the doctrine also implies transforming the body by a mystical alchemy (rooted in substratum sexual alchemy) from which is derived the soteriological meaning of the doctrine: the ritual changes the human person into a Buddha, all his human functions become sacred. Then this person’s mind is the mind of an awakened being, it knows all things; the body assumes the appearance appropriate to save any living being; the voice is able to speak in the language of any living being needing to be saved.

THE DECLINE OF BUDDHISM IN INDIA. With Harṣa’s death Indian Buddhism could depend only on the royal patronage of the Pāla dynasty of Bihar and Bengal (c. 650–950), who soon favored the institutions they had founded—Vikramaśīla (c. 800), Odantapurī (c. 760). The last shining lights of Nālandā were the Mādhyamika masters Śāntirakṣita and Kamalaśīla, both of whom participated actively in the conversion of Tibet. Then the ancient university was eclipsed by its rival Vikramaśīla, which saw its final glory in the eleventh century.

Traditionally, the end of Indian Buddhism has been identified with the sack of the two great universities by the troops of the Turk Muḥammad Ghūrī: Nālandā in 1197 and Vikramaśīla in 1203. But, although the destruction of Nālandā put an end to its former glory, Nālandā lingered on.

When the Tibetan pilgrim Dharmasvāmin (1197–1264) visited the site of the ancient university in 1235 he found a few monks teaching in two monasteries remaining among the ruins of eighty-two others. In this way Buddhism would stay on in India for a brief time, but under circumstances well illustrated by the decay witnessed by Dharmasvāmin—even as he was there, the Turks mounted another raid to further ransack what was left of Nālandā.

For a long time scholars have debated the causes for the decline of Buddhism in India. Although there is little chance of agreement on a problem so complex—and on which we have precious little evidence—some of the reasons adduced early are no longer widely accepted. For instance, the notion that Tantric Buddhism was a “degenerate form” of Buddhism that contributed to or brought about the disappearance of Buddhism is no longer entertained by the scholarly community. The image of a defenseless, pacifist Buddhist community annihilated by invading hordes of Muslim warriors is perhaps also a simplification. Though the Turkish conquerors of India were far from benevolent, the Arabs who occupied Sindh in 711 seem to have accepted a state of peaceful coexistence with the local population. Furthermore, one must still understand why Jainism and Hinduism survived the Muslim invasion while Buddhism did not.

Buddhist relations with Hindu and Jain monarchs were not always peaceful—witness the conquest of Bihar by the Bengali Śaiva king Śaśiṅka (c. 618). Even without the intervention of intolerance, the growth of Hinduism, with its firm roots in Indian society and freedom from the costly institution of the monastery, offered a colossal challenge to Buddhism. The eventual triumph of Hinduism can be followed by a number of landmarks often associated with opposition to Buddhism: the spread of Vaiṣṇavism (in which the Buddha appears as a deceptive *avatāra* of Viṣṇu); the great Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva saints of the South, the Ālvārs and Nayānars, respectively, whose Hindu patrons were openly hostile to Buddhism and Jainism; the ministry of Śaṅkara in Mysore (788–850), a critic of Buddhism who was himself accused of being a “crypto-Buddhist”; and the triumph of Śaivism in Kashmir (c. 800).

But the causes for the disappearance of Buddhism were subtle: the assimilation of Buddhist ideas and practices into Hinduism and the inverse process of the Hinduization of Buddhism, with the advantage of Hinduism as a religion of the land and the locality. More important than these were perhaps the internal causes for the decline: dependence on monastic institutions that did not have broad popular support but relied exclusively on royal patronage; and isolation of monasteries from the life of the village community, owing to the tendency of the monasteries to look inward and to lose interest in proselytizing and serving the surrounding communities.

The disappearance of Buddhism in India may have been precipitated by the Muslim invasion, but it was caused primarily by internal factors, the most important of which

seems to have been the gradual assimilation of Buddhism into Hinduism. The Muslim invasion, especially the Turkish conquest of the Ganges Valley, was the *coup de grace*; we may consider it the dividing line between two eras, but it was not the primary cause for the disappearance of Buddhism from India.

BUDDHIST REMNANTS AND REVIVALS IN THE SUBCONTINENT. After the last days of the great monastic institutions (twelfth and thirteenth centuries) Indian Buddhism lingered on in isolated pockets in the subcontinent. During the period of Muslim and British conquest (thirteenth to nineteenth century) it was almost completely absorbed by Hinduism and Islam, and gave no sign of creative life until modern attempts at restoration (nineteenth and twentieth centuries). Therefore, a hiatus of roughly six hundred years separates the creative period of Indian Buddhism from its modern manifestations.

Buddhism of the frontier. As the Turk occupation of India advanced, the last great scholars of India escaped from Kashmir and Bihar to Tibet and Nepal. But the flight of Buddhist talent also responded to the attraction of royal patronage and popular support in other lands. The career of Atīśa (Dīpaṃkara Śrījñāna, 982–1054), who emigrated to Tibet in 1042, is emblematic of the great loss incurred by Indian Buddhism in losing its monk-scholars. He combined extensive studies in Mahāyāna philosophy and Tantra in India with a sojourn in Sumatra under the tutorship of Dharmakīrti. He had studied with Bodhibhadra (the successor of Nā ro pa when the latter left Vikramaśīla to become a wandering ascetic), and was head master (*upādhyāya*) of Vikramaśīla and Odantapurī at the time of King Bheyaṇpāla. He left for Tibet at the invitation of Byaṅ-chub-'od, apparently attracted by a large monetary offer.

The migration of the Indian scholars, and a steady stream of Tibetan students, made possible the exportation of Buddhist academic institutions and traditions to Tibet, where they were preserved until the Chinese suppression of 1959. The most learned monks were pushed out to the Himalayan and Bengali frontiers in part because the Indian communities were no longer willing to support the monasteries. Certain forms of Tantra, dependent only on household-priests, could survive, mostly in Bengal and in the Himalayan foot-hills. But some Theravādin Buddhists also survived in East Bengal—most of them taking refuge in India after the partition, some remaining in Bangladesh and Assam.

Himalayan Buddhism of direct Indian ancestry remains only in Nepal, where it can be observed even today in suspended animation, partly fused with local Hinduism, as it must have been in the Gangetic plain during the twelfth century. Nepalese Buddhists produced what may very well be considered the last major Buddhist scripture composed in the subcontinent, the *Svayambhu Purāṇa* (c. fifteenth century). This text is an open window into the last days of Indian Buddhism. It reveals the close connection between Buddhist piety and non-Buddhist sacred localities, the formation of a

Buddhist cosmogonic ontology (the Ādibuddha), and the role of Tantric ritual in the incorporation of religious elements from the substratum. Nepalese Buddhism survives under the tutelage of married Tantric priests, called *vajrācaryās*. It is therefore sometimes referred to as “Vajrācaryā Buddhism.”

Buddhism of Tibetan origin survives in the subcontinent mostly in Ladakh, Sikkim, and Bhutan, but also in Nepal. Perhaps the most significant presence in modern India, however, is that of the Tibetan refugee communities. The Tibetan diaspora includes about eighty thousand persons, among which are several thousand monks. Some have retained their monastic robes and have reconstructed in India their ancient Buddhist academic curricula, returning to the land of origin the disciplines of the classical universities. So far their impact on Indian society at large has been insignificant and their hope of returning to Tibet dwindles with the passing of time. But the preservation, on Indian soil, of the classical traditions of Nālandā and Vikramaśīla is hardly a trivial accomplishment.

Attempted revival: The Mahābodhi society. Attempts to revive Buddhism in the land of its origin began with the Theosophical Society, popularized in Sri Lanka in the early 1880s by the American Henry S. Olcott. Although the society eventually became the vehicle for broader and less defined speculative goals, it inspired new pride in Buddhists after years of colonial oppression. The Sinhala monk Anagārika Dharmapāla (1864–1933; born David Hewavitarane) set out to modernize Buddhist education. He also worked untiringly to restore the main pilgrimage sites of India, especially the temple of Bodh Gayā, which had fallen in disrepair and had been under Hindu administration for several centuries. To this end he founded in 1891 the Mahābodhi Society, still a major presence in Indian Buddhism.

Ambedkar and “Neo-Buddhism.” The most significant Buddhist mass revival of the new age was led by Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891–1956). He saw Buddhism as the gospel for India’s oppressed and read in the Buddhist scriptures ideals of equality and justice. After many years of spiritual search, he became convinced that Buddhism was the only ideology that could effect the eventual liberation of Indian outcasts. On October 14, 1956, he performed a mass “consecration” of Buddhists in Nagpur, Maharashtra. The new converts were mostly from the “scheduled caste” of the *mahārs*. Although his gospel is in some way on the fringes of Buddhist orthodoxy, Buddhist monks from other parts of Asia have ministered to the spiritual needs of his converts, and inspired Indian Buddhists refer to him as “Bodhisattva Ambedkar.”

Other aspects of modern Buddhism. The most fruitful and persistent effort in the rediscovery of Indian Buddhism has been in the West, primarily among Western scholars. The achievements of European scholars include a modern critical edition of the complete Pali canon, published by the Pali Text Society (founded in London in 1881),

and the recovery of original texts of parts of the canon of the Sarvāstivāda. The combined effort of Indian, North American and European historians, archaeologists, and art historians has placed Indian Buddhism in a historical and social context, which, though still only understood in its rough outlines, allows us to see Buddhism in its historical evolution.

Japanese scholarship has also made great strides since the beginning of the twentieth century. The publication in Japan of three different editions of the Chinese canon between 1880 and 1929 may be seen as the symbolic beginning of a century of productive critical scholarship that has placed Japan at the head of modern research into Indian Buddhism.

Another interesting phenomenon of the contemporary world is the appearance of "neo-Buddhists" in Europe and North America. Although most of these groups have adopted extra-Indian forms of Buddhism, their interest in the scriptural traditions of India has created an audience and a demand for research into India's Buddhist past. The Buddhist Society, founded in London in 1926, and the Amis du Bouddhisme, founded in Paris in 1928, both supported scholarship and encouraged the Buddhist revival in India.

In spite of the revived interest in India of the last century, the prospects of an effective Buddhist revival in the land of Śākyamuni seem remote. It is difficult to imagine a successful living Buddhism in India today or in the near future. The possibility of the religion coming back to life may depend on the reimportation of the Dharma into India from another land. It remains to be seen if Ambedkar and Anagārika Dharmapāla had good reasons for hope in a Buddhist revival, or if in fact the necessary social conditions for the existence of Indian Buddhism disappeared with the last monarchs of the Pāla dynasty.

SEE ALSO Ahimsā; Ājīvika; Ājīvā; Ālaya-vijñāna; Ambedkar; Amitābha; Amoghavajra; Arhat; Āryadeva; Asaṅga; Aśoka; Atīśa; Avalokiteśvara; Avatāra; Bengali Religions; Bhakti; Bhāvaivēka; Bodhisattva Path; Buddha; Buddhapālita; Buddhism, Schools of, overview article and articles on Mahāyāna Philosophical Schools of Buddhism; Buddhist Ethics; Buddhist Studies; Cakravartin; Candrakīrti; Councils, article on Buddhist Councils; Dharma, article on Buddhist Dharma and Dharmas; Dharmakīrti; Dharmapāla; Dignāga; Eightfold Path; Folk Religion, article on Folk Buddhism; Four Noble Truths; Goddess Worship, article on The Hindu Goddess; Gosāla; Hindu Tantric Literature; Iconography, article on Buddhist Iconography; Indian Religions; Inner Asian Religions; Islam, articles on Islam in Central Asia and Islam in South Asia; Jainism; Kamalaśīla; Karman, article on Buddhist Concepts; Karman, article on Hindu and Jain Concepts; Karuṇā; Kṛṣṇaism; Mādhyamika; Mahāsāṃghika; Mahāsiddhas; Mahāvīra; Maitreya; Maṇḍalas, article on Buddhist Maṇḍalas; Mañjuśrī; Mantra; Marathi Religions; Meditation; Missions, article on Buddhist Missions; Moggaliputtatissa; Mokṣa; Monasticism, article on Buddhist Monasti-

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LUIS O. GÓMEZ (1987)
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BUDDHISM: BUDDHISM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Conventional wisdom labels the Buddhism of Southeast Asia as Theravāda. Indeed, customarily a general distinction pertains between the “southern,” Theravāda, Buddhism of Southeast Asia, whose scriptures are written in Pali, and the “northern,” Sanskrit Mahāyāna (including Tantrayāna), Buddhism of Central and East Asia. A Thai or a Burmese most likely thinks of the Buddhism of his country as a continuation of the Theravāda tradition, which was allegedly brought to the Golden Peninsula (Suvaṇṇabhūmi) by Aśoka’s missionaries Sona and Uttara in the third century BCE. But modern scholarship has demonstrated that prior to the development of the classical Southeast Asian states, which occurred from the tenth or eleventh century to the fifteenth century CE, Buddhism in Southeast Asia—the area covered by present-day Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia (Kampuchea), and Laos—defies rigid classification. Both archaeological and chronicle evidence suggest that the religious situation in the area was fluid and informal, with Buddhism characterized more by miraculous relics and charismatic, magical monks than by organized sectarian traditions. In short, the early period of Buddhism in Southeast Asia was diverse and eclectic, infused with elements of Hindu Dharmśāstra and Brahmanic deities, Mahāyāna Buddhas such as Lokeśvara, Tantric practices, Sanskrit Sarvāstivādin texts, as well as Pali Theravāda traditions.

The classical period of Southeast Asian Buddhism, which lasted from the eleventh to the fifteenth century, began with the development of the monarchical states of Śrīvijaya in Java, Angkor in Cambodia, Pagan in Burma, Sukhōthai in Thailand, and Luang Prabang in Laos, and culminated in the establishment of a normative Pali Theravāda tradition of the Sinhala Mahāvihāra monastic line. Hence, by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the primary, although by no means exclusive, form of Buddhism in Burma, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia was a Sinhala orthodoxy that was dominated doctrinally by “the commentator” (Buddhaghosa) but enriched by various local traditions of thought and practice. By this time, what is now Malaysia and Indonesia, with the exception of Bali, had been overrun by Islam, and the popular religion there was an amalgamation of animism, Brahmanic deities, and the religion of the Prophet.

The colonial interregnum, which infused Western and Christian elements into the religious and cultural milieu of Southeast Asia, gradually challenged the dominance of the Indian Buddhist worldview and its symbiotically related institutional realms of kingship (*dhammacakka*) and monastic order (*sāsanacakka*). From the nineteenth century onward Buddhism in Southeast Asia has faced the challenges of Western science; provided cultural and ideological support for modern nationalist movements; offered idiosyncratic, sometimes messianically flavored, solutions to the stresses and strains of political, economic, and social change; and formulated doctrinal innovations challenging the Abhidhammic orthodoxy of Buddhaghosa that characterizes the Sinhala Theravāda.

The following essay will examine Buddhism in Southeast Asia in terms of its early development, the establishment of a normative Theravāda orthodoxy, and the diverse responses of this tradition to the challenges of the modern period. The future of Buddhism in Southeast Asia may not hang in the balance; nevertheless, it does appear to be problematic. Political events in Cambodia (Kampuchea) and Laos have threatened the very foundations of institutional Buddhism in those countries. Thailand’s rapid and widespread modernization and secularization have undermined many traditional aspects of the religion (*sāsana*), and internal political strife in Burma has had severe, detrimental effects on the *sangha* (Skt., *saṃgha*). Our attention to Southeast Asian Buddhism should not ignore its fragility or its potential contribution to the continuing self-definition and self-determination of these civilizations.

EARLY DEVELOPMENT. From its earliest beginnings to the establishment of the major monarchical states, Buddhism in Southeast Asia can only be characterized as diverse and eclectic. Its presence was felt as part of the Indian cultural influence that flourished throughout the area. During these early centuries Buddhism competed successfully with indigenous forms of magical animism and Brahmanism, undoubtedly becoming transformed in the process. Its propagation probably followed the same pattern that was seen in Central and East Asia, with which we are more familiar: Padmasambhava-type monks subjugating territorial guardian spirits; monks accompanying traders and bringing in objects of power and protection, such as relics and images, as well as a literary tradition in the forms of magical chants in sacred languages and also written texts. We glean something of this pattern from Buddhist chronicles in Pali and in Southeast Asian vernacular languages of a later time. When the *Sāsanavamsa* of Burma or the *Mūlasāsana* of Thailand relates the story of the Buddha’s visit to these countries to establish the religion, we interpret myth in historical terms, reading “the Buddha” to mean “unnamed Buddhist monks” who were bearers of a more advanced cultural tradition. While the chronicles, more so than the early inscriptions, paint a picture of dubious historical accuracy, they correctly associate Buddhism with a high continental way of life in contrast to the less sophisticated life of tribal peoples. Buddhism, then,

abets the development of a town or urban culture, provides symbols of translocal value, and articulates a worldview in which diverse communities can participate and find a new identity, a language in which they can communicate, and institutions in which an organized religious life can be pursued and systematically taught.

Such a general description of the early centuries of Buddhism in Southeast Asia does not preclude the establishment of identifiable Buddhist traditions in the area. These include not only strong Pali Theravāda tradition but also other Buddhist sects and schools representing Mahāyāna and Tantric traditions. Pali inscriptions found in Hmawza, the ancient Pyu capital of Śrīkṣetra in lower Burma, indicate the existence of Theravāda Buddhism by the fifth or sixth century CE. Their Andhra-Kadamba script points to connections with Kāñcīpuram, Negapatam, and Kāverīpaṭṭanam in South India. The Chinese traveler Yijing, who visited Shih-li-cha-to-lo (Śrīkṣetra, or Prome) in the seventh century, mentions the presence of not only Theravādins (Āryasthaviras) but also the Āryamahāsāṃghika, Āryamūlasarvāstivāda, and Āryasammatīya schools. We know of the Mahāsāṃghikas as among the forerunners of the Mahāyāna tradition. While their original home was in Magadha, their tradition established itself in parts of northern, western, eastern, and southern India. The Amarāvati and Nāgārjunikoṇḍa inscriptions, for instance, mention the Mahāsāṃghikas and state that their canon was written in Prakrit. The three other sects are Hīnayāna schools. The Mūlasarvāstivāda, according to one tradition, was one of the seven branches of the Sarvāstivādin tradition and was widespread in India, although it was especially strong in the north, whence it was propagated under the aegis of King Kaniṣka during the late first century CE. Its canon was written in a Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit. The Sammatīya sect, also known as the Vātsīputrīya or Vajjipattaka, came from Avanti, but inscriptions point to its presence in Sārnāth during the fourth century and in Mathurā during the fifth century. The great early seventh-century ruler Harṣavardhana is thought to have supported the Sammatīyas in the early part of his reign. Hence, the four sects whose presence in the Prome area was attested to by Yijing are all associated with important Indian Buddhist centers and with the reigns of powerful monarchs reputed to have been supporters of various Buddhist sectarian traditions.

Evidence of the diverse nature of sectarian Buddhism during the formative period of Southeast Asian history comes from Burmese and other sources in both mainland and insular Southeast Asia. The Tang dynastic chronicles (seventh to tenth century CE) state that Buddhism flourished in the P'iao (Pyu) capital of Shih-li-cha-to-lo (Śrīkṣetra) in the eighth and ninth centuries. Archaeological and sculptural evidence of the same period from Prome and Hmawza portray the Buddha in scenes from the Jātakas and from popular commentarial stories. Terracotta votive tablets depicting scenes from the life of the Buddha and of the Mahāyāna *bo-*

dhisattvas have also been found, as well as inscriptions written in Sanskrit, Pali, mixed Pali and Sanskrit, and Pyu written in South Indian alphabets. Evidence from ruined stupas in Hmawza, which date from the fifth to the eighth century, reinforce the claim to a strong but diverse Buddhist presence.

The Mon, or Talaing, lived south of the Pyu, occupying the coastal area of lower Burma, with flourishing centers at Pegu (Hamsavatī) and Thaton (Sudhammavatī). This region, known as Rāmaññadesa in Burmese and Thai chronicles, extended over much of present-day Thailand; one major Mon center was as far north as Haripuñjaya (present-day Lamphun). In Nakorn Prathom, thirty miles southwest of Bangkok, archaeological evidence points to a flourishing Mon Buddhist culture in the region known as Dvāravatī, in which forms of both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna Buddhism were present. Amarāvati-style Buddha images in the vicinity of Nakorn Prathom and Pong Tuk date from the fourth to fifth century CE, and images of both early and late Gupta are also found there. While Mon-Dvāravatī Buddhism in Thailand and lower Burma lacked the homogeneity attributed to it by later chroniclers, both archaeological and textual evidence suggest a strong Pali Theravāda presence, especially in comparison to that found in Pagan.

Pagan, near the sacred Mount Popa on the Irrawaddy Plains of upper Burma, had become the locus of power of the Mrammas, a Tibeto-Dravidian tribe who eventually dominated and consequently named the entire region. During the tenth and eleventh centuries, the Buddhism present among people of the Pagan-Irrawaddy River basin seems to have been dominated by an eclectic form of Mahāyāna Tantrism similar to that found in esoteric Śaivism or in animistic *nāga* cults. According to the Burmese chronicles, the monks of this sect, who are referred to as Ari, rejected the teachings of the Lord Buddha. They believed in the efficacy of magical *mantras* over the power of *karman* and propagated the custom of sending virgins to priests before marriage. In addition to numerous figures of Mahāyāna *bodhisattvas*, such as Avalokiteśvara and Mañjuśrī, findings include remnants of murals that depict deities embracing their consorts.

According to the *Hmannān māha yazawintawkyī* (Glass Palace Chronicle, begun 1829) of Burma, the country's political and religious history was changed by the effect of Shin Arahan, a charismatic Mon Theravāda monk from Thaton, on the Burmese ruler Aniruddha (Anawratha), who ascended to power in Pagan in 1044 CE. According to this account, Shin Arahan converted Aniruddha to a Theravāda persuasion, advising him to secure relics, *bhikkhus* (monks), and Pali texts from Manuha (Manohari), the king of Thaton. Manuha's refusal became the excuse for Aniruddha's invasion of Thaton, the eventual subjugation of the Mons in lower Burma, and the establishment of Theravāda under Kyanzittha (fl. 1084–1113) as the dominant, although by no means exclusive, Buddhist sect.

As part of the Indian cultural expansion into "greater India," Mahāyāna, Tantric, and Hīnayāna forms of Bud-

dhism were established in other parts of mainland and insular Southeast Asia from the fifth century onward. Guṇavarman is reputed to have taken the Dharmaguptaka tradition from northern India to Java in the fifth century, and by the seventh century Buddhism was apparently flourishing in the Sumatra of Śrīvijaya. An inscription from 684 CE, for instance, refers to a Buddhist monarch named Jayanāsa. I-ching, who spent several months in Java on his return to China in order to copy and translate Buddhist texts, indicates that both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna forms of Buddhism were present at that time. Indonesia was also visited by Dharmapāla of Nālandā University and by two prominent South Indian monks, Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra, both adherents of a Tantric form of Buddhism. Two inscriptions from the late eighth century refer to the construction, under the aegis of Śailendra rulers, of a Tārā temple at Kalasan and an image of Mañjuśrī at Kelunak. The Śailendras were great patrons of the North Indian Pāla form of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

The rulers of Champa, in southern Annam (Vietnam), also patronized Buddhism. According to Yijing, the dominant tradition in Champa was that of the Āryasammatīya *nikāya*, but the Sarvāstivādins were also present. Amarāvātī-style Buddha images and monastery foundations from the ninth century have been discovered in Quang Nam Province, and an inscription of the same period from An-Thai records the erection of a statue of Lokanātha and refers to such Mahāyāna deities as Amitābha and Vairocana.

Although Hinduism was initially the dominant religion in Cambodia, there is some evidence of Buddhism from the fifth century CE. Jayavarman of Fu-nan sent representatives to China in 503 CE who took as gifts a Buddha image; and an inscription by Jayavarman's son, Rudravarman, invokes the Buddha. In the eleventh century Sūryavarman was given the posthumous Buddhist title of Nirvāṇapada, and Jayavarman VII, the Khmer empire's greatest monarch and builder of Angkor Thom, patronized Buddhism of the Mahāyāna variety. A Pāli inscription from 1308, during the reign of Śrīndravarmadeva, refers to a Hīnayāna form of Buddhism, and a Chinese source from about the same time refers to Hīnayāna Buddhism as flourishing in Cambodia at that time.

The evidence cited supports the contention that throughout much of Southeast Asia Buddhism was present as part of the larger Indian cultural influence. Various sources, ranging from testimony of Chinese and indigenous chronicles, diaries of Chinese monk-travelers, as well as a large amount of archaeological and inscriptional evidence, support the contention that both Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna forms of Buddhism existed side by side, dependent on such factors as the particular regional Indian source and the predilection of a given ruler. Clearly, before the emergence of the major classical Southeast Asian states, no standard form of Buddhism existed.

It is also true that various types of Buddhism in this period competed with autochthonous forms of animism as well as Brahmanic cults. Were the early states in Burma, Cambodia, Thailand, and Indonesia—such as Fu-nan, Champa, Śrīkṣetra, Dvāravātī, and so on—Buddhist or Hindu? Or were these great traditions themselves so accommodated and transformed by the Southeast Asian cultures that they qualified the labels “Buddhist” and “Hindu” almost beyond recognition? Although rulers in these preclassical states may be characterized as Hindu or Buddhist and their brand of Buddhism defined by a given sect or school, in all probability they supported a variety of priests, monks, and religious institutions and worshiped various gods and spirits ranging from territorial guardians to Viṣṇu, Śiva, and Vairocana. In some cases we are prone to assign labels when, in reality, the diversity of the situation makes labeling a problematic enterprise at best. Such a qualification does not mean that we are unable to make certain claims about the nature of Buddhism in Southeast Asia in the formative period; however, evidence supporting the presence of particular Buddhist schools and sects should be understood within the general framework of the varied and eclectic nature of Buddhism in this era.

CLASSICAL PERIOD. While diversity and eclecticism continue to mark the character of Buddhism during the period of the foundation of the classical Southeast Asian monarchical states, homogeneity of form and institutional orthodoxy began to emerge during this period. On the one hand, Buddhism and Hinduism contributed to the development of the nature and form of Southeast Asian kingship. On the other hand, the symbiotic relationship that developed between the monarchy and the Buddhist *sangha* tended to support a loose religious orthodoxy. Historically, this orthodoxy follows the Sinhala Theravāda tradition and accompanies the ascendancy of the Burmese and the Tai in mainland Southeast Asia. Vietnam, Malaysia, and Indonesia, however, depart from this pattern: Vietnamese culture was strongly influenced by China, and Malaysia and Indonesia were affected by the advent and spread of Islam during the thirteenth century. We shall first examine Buddhism at the level of the nature and form of classical Southeast Asian kingship and then trace the emergence of Sinhala Theravāda Buddhism as the normative tradition in Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos after the thirteenth century.

Buddhism and monarchy. The relationship between Buddhism and the rise of the monarchical states in the classical period of Southeast Asian history is customarily referred to as symbiotic, that is, one of mutual benefit. Rulers supported Buddhism because it provided a cosmology in which the king was accorded the central place and a view of society in which the human community was dependent on the role of the king. Ideologically, Buddhism legitimated kingship, providing a metaphysical rationale and moral basis for its existence. The Buddhist *sangha*, in turn, supported Southeast Asian monarchs because the material well-being, success, and popularity of institutional Buddhism depended to a signifi-

cant degree on the approval, support, and largess of the ruling classes.

The Theravāda picture of the cosmos, set forth classically in the *Aggañña Suttanta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, depicts the world as devolving from a more perfect, luminous, undifferentiated state to a condition of greater opacity and differentiation. Imperfection results because differences in sex, comeliness, size of rice fields, and so on engender desire, greed, lust, and hatred, which, in turn, lead to actions that destroy the harmony and well-being of the inhabitants of the world. Recognizing the need to correct the situation, the people select a person whose comeliness, wisdom, virtue, and power enable him to bring order to this disharmonious, chaotic situation. That person, the ruler or king, is referred to in the text as *mahāsammata* because he is chosen by the people. He is *rāja* (king) because he rules by the Dhamma, and he is also *khattiya*, or lord of the fields, responsible for maintaining the economic and political order. Social order is dependent upon the righteous ruler, who creates and maintains the fourfold social structure (the traditional Indian *varṇa* hierarchy). Such a peaceful and harmonious situation also allows for the sustenance of *bhikkhus*, who seek a higher, nonmundane end, that is, *nibbāna* (Skt., *nirvāṇa*). The ruler, then, is responsible for the peace, harmony, and total well-being of the people, which includes the opportunity to pursue a religious or spiritual life.

Buddhism's contribution to the classical conception of Southeast Asian kingship is particularly noteworthy in its emphasis on Dhamma and on the role of the ruler as a moral exemplar. The king is a *cakkavattin*, one whose rule depends upon the universal Dhamma of cosmic, natural, and moral law. His authority stems from the place he assumes in the total cosmic scheme of things. But his power and, hence, his effectiveness rest on his virtue. While the king rules by strength of arms, wealth, intellect, able ministers, and the prestige of his own status, his embodiment of the Dhamma and, hence, his ability to rule depend on his maintenance of the ten *rājadharmas*: liberality, good conduct, nonattachment, straightforwardness, mildness, austerity, suppression of anger, noninjury, patience, and forbearance. The ideal king should cleanse his mind of all traces of avarice, ill will, and intellectual confusion and eschew the use of force and weapons of destruction. These moral virtues represent the highest ideals of Theravāda Buddhism, an overlapping of two "wheels" (*cakka*), or realms: the mundane (*ānācakka*, *lokiya*) and the transmundane (*sāsanacakka*, *lokuttara*), or the ideals of the political leader (*cakkavattin*) and the religious exemplar (Buddha).

This symbiotic relationship between political and religious leadership roles takes a particular mythic pattern in many of the classical Southeast Asian chronicles, such as the *Jinakālamālipakaraṇam* (The Sheaf of Garlands of the Epochs of the Conqueror), a pattern also present in the Pali chronicles of Sri Lanka (e.g., the *Mahāvamsa*). Essentially, the chroniclers hold that the Buddha sacralizes a region by vis-

iting it. He frequently converts the indigenous populations and teaches them the Dhamma. To be sure, the monastic authors had a vested interest in establishing the precedence of Buddhism in the land, but the Buddha's visits to such places as the Tagaung kingdom of Burma and Haripuñjaya in northern Thailand serve the additional purpose of grounding a later interrelationship between Buddhism and kingship. In the northern Thai chronicles, for example, when the Buddha visits the Mon-Lava state of Haripuñjaya in the Chiangmai Valley, he predicts that his bone relic will be discovered by King Ādicca (Āditarāja), one of the principal twelfth-century monarchs of this state. This tale not only points to royal support of the *sāsana*, it makes the king the symbolic actualizer of the tradition, which he celebrates by building a *cetiya* for the relic. Furthermore, the Buddha in effect engenders the monarch with the power necessary to rule, a magical potency inherent in the relic. The *cetiya* reliquary mound thus functions as a magical center, or *axis mundi*, for the kingdom. In Haripuñjaya, alliances between the northern Tai kingdom of Lānnā and other states were sealed in front of the magical center. The Emerald Buddha image has played a similar role in Lao and Tai religious history, with various princes of the kingdom swearing fealty to the reigning monarch who possessed it.

The nature of the interrelationship between Buddhism and classical monarchical rule in Southeast Asia manifests itself architecturally in the great *cetiya* or stupa (Skt., *stūpa*) monuments of Borobudur, Angkor, Pagan, and other ancient capitals. The earliest of these, Borobudur, was constructed on the Kedu Plain outside of present-day Jogjakarta on the island of Java in the mid-eighth century CE under a dynasty known as the Śailendras, or "kings of the mountain." The monument's strong Mahāyāna influence is reflected in bas-reliefs that depict stories from the *Lalitavistara*, *Divyāvadāna*, *Jātakamālā*, and *Gaṇḍavyūha*. The seventy-two perforated, hollow stupas on the top of three circular platforms cover seated images of the Buddha Vairocana. Scholars have argued that the monument, as a cosmic mountain, connects royal power with the Dharma, the basis of all reality; it may also synthesize an autochthonous cult of "kings of the mountain" with the Ādibuddha, or universal Buddha nature. In support of this connection it is speculated that Śailendra inscriptions use the Sanskrit term *gotra* to signify both "line of the ancestors" as well as "family of the Buddha," thereby identifying the Śailendra ancestral line with that of the Tathāgata.

Angkor, in Cambodia, has been even more widely studied as a source for understanding the interrelationships between Southeast Asian kingship and religion, especially regarding the *devarāja* (god-king) concept. It may be that this concept originated in Fu-nan, a Chinese term derived from the Mon-Khmer *bnam*, meaning "mountain" and possibly referring to a cult of a national guardian spirit established by the founder of the state. In the early ninth century the Khmer ruler Jayavarman II built on this background, adopt-

ing Śaivism as the state religion and thus requiring that the king be worshiped as a manifestation of Śiva. This identification was symbolized by a *liṅga* that was set upon the central altar of a pyramidal temple as an imitation of Mount Meru and the center of the realm. The *devarāja* cult took on Mahāyāna Buddhist forms under Sūryavarman I in the early eleventh century and under Jayavarman VII (1181–1218), who constructed the great Bayon Temple, in which Jayavarman and Lokeśvara appear to be identified, at Angkor Thom at the end of the twelfth century. It can be inferred that in the tradition of the *devarāja*, Suryavarman and Jayavarman became *buddharājas*, or incarnate buddhas.

Other classical Southeast Asian capitals and major royal and religious monuments exhibit the influence of both Hindu and Buddhist worldviews. The remains of over five thousand stupas can be seen at the site of ancient Pagan, an area covering sixteen square miles. It was unified by Aniruddha (1040–1077) and the commander of his forces and successor, Kyanzittha (fl. 1084–1113). The Schwezigon Pagoda, possibly begun by Aniruddha but certainly completed by Kyanzittha, enshrines three sacred Buddha relics, symbolizing the power of the *cakkavattin* as the defender of the sacred order of things (*dhamma*). Other stupas, such as the Mingalazedi, which was completed in the late thirteenth century, reflect the basic macro-micro cosmological symbolism of Borobudur; it has truncated pyramidal and terraced bases and a central stairway on each side. The Ānanda Temple, the stupa that dominated Pagan, was constructed by Kyanzittha in the late eleventh century and combines both cosmic mountain and cave symbolism: an ascetic's cave in which the Buddha meditates and a magical *axis mundi* that empowers the entire cosmos. A small kneeling image facing the large Buddha image in the temple is thought to represent Kyanzittha, corroborating inscriptional claims that he saw himself as a *bodhisatta* and *cakkavattin*.

The mythic ideal of the *cakkavattin* is embodied in the moral example of Aśoka Maurya. Similarly, the *cakkavattin* of the Suttas provides the legendary charter for the idealized kingly exemplar of the Southeast Asian Theravāda chronicles. Aśoka was the moral exemplar *par excellence*, in whose footsteps, so say the chronicles and inscriptions, the monarchs of Burma, Thailand, and Laos follow. Aśoka's conversion divides his biography into two halves—the first tells of warring, wicked Aśoka (Pali, Caṇḍāsoka) and the second of the just, righteous Aśoka (Pali, Dhammāsoka). Similarly Aniruddha kills his brother to become the ruler of Pagan but then becomes a patron of Buddhism, and Tilokarāja (1441–1487) of Chiangmai revolts against his father but then devotes much of his attention to the prosperity of the Buddhist *sangha*. Southeast Asian rulers are also reputed to have called councils, as did Aśoka, in order to purify the *sangha* and regularize the Tipiṭaka. These activities, which supported Buddhism, represented ways the monarch could uphold his reputation for righteousness in ruling the state and in his dealings with the people. In his famous 1292 inscription, Rāma

Kham-haeng (Ramkhamhaeng) of Sukhōthai says that the king adjudicates cases of inheritance with complete impartiality, does not kill or beat captured enemy soldiers, and listens to the grievances of his subjects. This paternalistic model of the dhammically righteous king is obviously indebted to the Aśoka model.

Dominance of Sinhala Theravāda Buddhism. The shift to a Sinhala Theravāda orthodoxy in what became, in the true sense, Buddhist Southeast Asia (Burma, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia) took place gradually from the late eleventh to the early thirteenth century and onward. This development reflected several factors: the decline of Buddhism in parts of Asia that had influenced the Southeast Asian mainland; the rising influence of Sri Lanka under Vijayabāhu I (1055–1110) and Parākramabāhu I; the consolidation of power by the Burmese and Tai; an increasing interrelationship among Sri Lanka, Burma, and Thailand; and the spread of popular Theravāda practice among the general population of mainland Southeast Asia. The general outline of the story of the establishment of Sinhala Theravāda Buddhism in Southeast Asia is reasonably clear, although disparities between epigraphic and chronicle sources make historical precision difficult. Consequently, scholars disagree on dates, and historical reconstructions keep on changing.

Pali Theravāda and Sanskrit Hīnayāna forms of Buddhism were present at a relatively early time. Pali inscriptions found in central Thailand and lower Burma and associated with Mon culture support this claim, as does chronicle testimony, such as the story of Aniruddha's excursion into Rāmaññadesa to secure Pali scriptures. Inscriptional evidence makes it reasonable to assume that the roots of Mon Theravāda lay in the Kāñcīpuram area along the east coast of India. Even the popular Burmese tradition that holds that Buddhaghosa, who has been associated with Kāñcī, either came from Thaton or went there after visiting Sri Lanka may contain a kernel of historical truth, namely, the spread of Kāñcī Theravāda Buddhism into the Mon area. The presence of Pali Theravāda Buddhism among the Mon, who strongly influenced both the Burmese and Tai, provides the religio-cultural backdrop to the eventual consolidation of Sri Lankan forms of Theravāda Buddhism. As we shall see, both the Burmese and the Tai assimilated elements of Mon culture: its religion, legal traditions, artistic forms, and written script. Mon Theravāda, in effect, mediated Sinhala Theravāda. On the one hand, Theravāda Buddhism from Sri Lanka provided continuity with Mon religio-cultural traditions; on the other, it enabled the Burmese and Tai to break away from a Mon religio-cultural dominance. We must now explore some of the details of this story of cultural transformation and religious consolidation.

Burma. Contact between Burma and Sri Lanka dates from the establishment of the Pagan era by Aniruddha. Because of the disruption of Sri Lanka caused by wars with the Cōlas in the mid-eleventh century, Vijayabāhu I, knowing of the strength of the Mon Theravāda traditions, sought help

from Aniruddha to restore valid ordination. Aniruddha responded by sending a group of monks and Pali scriptures to Sri Lanka. In turn, Aniruddha requested, and was sent, a replica of the Buddha's tooth relic and a copy of the Tipiṭaka with which to check the copies of the Pali scriptures acquired at Thaton. The tooth relic was enshrined in Pagan's Schwezigon Pagoda, which became Burma's national palladium. Although archaeological evidence calls into question the chronicler's claim regarding the acquisition of the entire Pali Tipiṭaka, the tale might well be interpreted to indicate the growing importance of Sinhala Buddhism, not simply because the texts were more authoritative, but because the alliance between the king and the new sectarian tradition legitimated his authority over the Mon religio-cultural tradition.

Sinhala Buddhism flourished during the reign of Narapatisithu (1173–1210), and the Mahāvihāra tradition became normative at this time. Sinhala Buddhism, in particular the Mahāvihāra tradition, gained position partly through visits of distinguished Burmese monks to Sri Lanka. Panthagu, successor to Shin Arahan as the nominal head of the Pagan Buddhist *sangha*, visited the island in 1167. The Mon monk Uttaraḥīva Mahāthera followed in his predecessor's footsteps by journeying to Sri Lanka in 1180 with a group of monks that included a Mon novice named Chapaṭa, who was to figure most prominently in establishing the precedent authority of the Mahāvihāra. Chapaṭa and four others remained in Sri Lanka for ten years and were reordained as Mahatheras in the Mahāvihāra lineage. Their return to Burma marked the permanent establishment of Sinhala Buddhism in mainland Southeast Asia and brought about a schism in the Burmese Buddhist *sangha* between the Theravāda school of Thaton and Kāñcī, characterized by Shin Arahan's orthodoxy; and the Sinhala Theravāda tradition. When Chapaṭa returned to Pagan, Narapatisithu requested that he and the other four Mahatheras reordain Burmese monks of the Shin Arahan tradition, thereby establishing the superior legitimacy of the Sinhala orthodoxy over the Mon form of Theravāda. The chronicles refer to the Shin Arahan tradition as the "early school" (*purimagaṇa*) and to Chapaṭa's Sihaḥa Sangha simply as the "late school" (*pacchāgaṇa*). Owing to disciplinary and personal reasons, the *pacchāgaṇa* was to divide into several branches each loyal to one or another of the Mahātheras who had returned from Sri Lanka. One point of dispute among the branches was whether gifts could be given to particular monks or to the *sangha* at large.

The Sihaḥa order was introduced to lower Burma at Dala, near Rangoon, by Sāriputta, who bore the title Dhammavīlāsa, meaning a scholar of great repute. This tradition is referred to as the Sihaḥapakkhabhikkhu Sangha, in contrast with the Ariyārahanta-pakkhabhikkhu Sangha, which represents the Mon Theravāda tradition. The chronicles also call this school the Kambojasanghapakka on the grounds that it was headquartered near a settlement of Kambojans (Cambodians). This title may reflect historical fact or refer to the earlier Theravāda of the Mon-Khmer areas to the

east (i.e., Dvāravatī), which found its way into lower Burma. The Sihaḥa Sangha was also introduced to Martaban by two Mon monks, Buddhavaṃsa Mahāthera and Mahāsāmi Mahāthera, who had been reordained in Sri Lanka. According to the Kalyāṇī inscriptions of Pegu, by the thirteenth century six Buddhist schools—the Mon Ariyārahanta and five Sihaḥa sects—existed in Martaban. Sectarianism in Burmese Theravāda has continued into the modern period and contrasts with the relative homogeneity of Theravāda Buddhism in Thailand.

Buddhism prospered during the reign of Narapatisithu (1173–1210). Many beautiful temples were built under his sponsorship (e.g., Sulamani, Gawdawpalin), and Pali scholarship flourished. For example, Chapaṭa (also known as Saddhammajotipāla) wrote a series of famous works dealing with Pali grammar, discipline (Vinaya), and higher philosophy (e.g., *Suttanīdessa*, *Sankhepa-vaṇṇanā*, *Abhidhammatthasangha*), and Sāriputta wrote the first collection of laws composed in Rāmaññadesa, known as the *Dhammavīlāsa* or *Dhammathāt*. The shift away from a dominant Mon influence that occurred during Narapatisithu's reign is also reflected in the architectural style and the use of Burmese in inscriptions.

Thailand. The development of Buddhism among the Tai followed roughly the same pattern as in Burma. As the Tai migrated from southwestern China into the hills east of the Irrawaddy (home of the Shans), the upper Menam Plain (the Siamese), and farther east to the Nam U (the Lao), and as they gradually moved into the lowland area dominated by the Mons and the Khmers, they came into contact with Theravāda and Mahāyāna forms of Buddhism as well as with Brahmanism. After Khubilai Khan's conquest of Nan-chao in 1254 caused ever greater numbers of Tai to push south, they began to establish domination over the Mon and Khmer and to absorb elements of these more advanced cultures. As was the case in Burma, Mon Buddhism in particular became a major influence on the Tai as they extended their sway over much of what we now know as modern Thailand. This influence is seen in the establishment of two major Tai states in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Sukhōthai and Chiangmai.

Both Sukhōthai and Chiangmai became powerful centers of Tai settlement under the leadership of the able rulers Rāma Khamhaeng (r. c. 1279–1299) and Mengrai respectively. Sukhōthai, which had been a Khmer outpost from at least the time of Jayavarman VII, became an independent Tai state in the middle of the thirteenth century. Two Tai chieftains, Phe Mu'ang and Bang Klang Hao, seized Śrī Sajalanāya and drove the Khmer governor from Sukhōthai. Bang Klang Hao was installed as ruler of Sukhōthai with the title Indrāditya. Indrāditya's third son, Rāma Khamhaeng, was to become Sukhōthai's greatest monarch and one of the exemplary Buddhist kings of Tai history. During his reign, which extended over the last two decades of the century, Rāma Khamhaeng asserted his sway over a large area extend-

ing from Hamsavatī (Pegu) to the west, Phrae to the north, Luang Prabang to the east, and Nakorn Sri Dhammaraja (Nagara Śrī Dharmarāja; Ligor or Tambraliṅga) to the south. Nakorn Sri Dhammaraja, although dominated by Śrīvijaya from the eighth to the twelfth century and later by the Khmer, was an important center of Theravāda Buddhism by the eleventh century. Prior to Rāma Khamhaeng's ascendance to power in Sukhōthai, Chandrabhānu of Nagara Śrī Dharmarāja had sent a mission to Sri Lanka, and the *Cūlavamsa* reports that Parākramabāhu II invited Dhammakitti Mahāthera, a monk from Nagara Śrī Dharmarāja, to visit Sri Lanka. Rāma Khamhaeng, who was well aware of the strength of Theravāda Buddhism at Nagara Śrī Dharmarāja, invited a Mahāthera from the forest-dwelling tradition (*araññaka*) there to reside in Sukhōthai. Rāma Khamhaeng's famous 1292 stela inscription refers to various religious sanctuaries in Sukhōthai, including the *araññaka* monastery (Wat Taphan Hin), a Khmer temple (Wat Phra Phai Luang), and a shrine to the guardian spirit of the city, Phra Khaphung. In short, while we have definitive evidence that Rāma Khamhaeng supported Theravāda Buddhism, religion in thirteenth-century Sukhōthai was varied and eclectic.

During the reigns of Rāma Khamhaeng's successors—his son Lö Tai (1298–1347), and his grandson Lü Thai (1347–1368/74?)—Sinhala Buddhism became normative. According to the *Jīnakālamālī*, a Sukhōthai monk named Sumana studied under, and received ordination from, a Sinhala Mahāthera, Udumbara Mahāsāmi, who was resident in Martaban. Sumana returned to Sukhōthai to establish the Sīhaḷa Sangha there, and, along with his colleague Anōmadassī, he proceeded to spread the Sīhaḷa order throughout much of Thailand (Ayuthayā, Pitsanulōk, Nān, Chiangmai, and Luang Prabang). King Lü Thai, in particular, was noted for his piety and his support of Buddhism. He brought Buddha relics and images and established Buddha “footprints” (*buddhapada*) in an effort to popularize Buddhist practice throughout his realm. A Buddhist scholar of note, he was particularly known as the author of the *Traibhūmikathā* (Verses on the Three Worlds), thought to be the first systematic Theravāda cosmological treatise.

About the same time that Sinhala Buddhism was coming into its own in Sukhōthai, it was also being spread to Tai states to the north and northeast, namely, Chiangmai and Luang Prabang. Chiangmai was established as the major Tai state in northern Thailand by Mengrai, who expanded his authority from Chiangsaen to encompass Chiangrai, Chiangkhong, and Fāng. He subjugated the Mon-Lava center of Haripuñjaya in 1291 before founding Chiangmai in 1296. According to both inscriptional and chronicle evidence, Sumana Mahāthera brought the Sinhala Buddhism he had learned from his preceptor in Martaban to Chiangmai in 1369 at the invitation of King Küna (1355–1385). Küna built Wat Suan Dōk to house the Buddha relic brought by Sumana, and Sinhala Buddhism gained favored status over

the Mon Theravāda traditions of Haripuñjaya. As in the case of Sukhōthai and Pagan, Sinhala Buddhism functioned not only as a means to build continuity with the Mon Theravāda tradition over which the Tai and the Burmese established their authority but also as a means to assert their unique religio-cultural traditions.

The apogee of the development of the Sīhaḷa order in Chiangmai was reached during the reigns of Tilokarāja, one of the greatest of the Tai monarchs, and Phra Mu'ang Kaew (1495–1526). Tilokarāja legitimated the overthrow of his father, Sam Fang Kaen, through the support of the Mahāvihāra order, which had been brought to Chiangmai in 1430. According to the *Mūlasāsana* of Wat Pa Daeng in Chiangmai, the center of this sect, this tradition was brought to Thailand by a group of thirty-nine monks from Chiangmai, Lopburi, and lower Burma who had visited Sri Lanka in 1423 during the reign of Parākramabāhu VI of Kotte. They returned to Ayutthayā, a Tai state that subjugated Sukhōthai under the Indrarāja in 1412, and dominated central Thailand until they were conquered by the Burmese at the end of the eighteenth century. According to the northern Tai chronicles, members of this mission spread throughout central and northern Thailand, reordaining monks into the new Sīhaḷa order. Tilokarāja made this Wat Pa Daeng-Mahāvihāra group the normative monastic tradition in Chiangmai at a general council in 1477. The Pa Daeng chronicles depict Tilokarāja as a great supporter of the *sangha* and as a righteous and exemplary monarch in the Aśokan mode. During the reign of Tilokarāja's successor, Phra Mu'ang Kaew, Pali Buddhist scholarship in Chiangmai flourished. The *Māṅga-ladīpaṇi*, a Pali commentary on the *Māṅgala Sutta*, was written at this time and is still used as the basis of higher-level Pali studies, and the most important northern Tai chronicle, the *Jīnakālamālīpakaraṇa*, also dates from this period.

Contemporaneous with the apogee of Buddhism in Chiangmai was the reign of Dhammaceti (1472–1492), who ruled Burma from Pegu, in the lower part of the country. According to the northern Tai and Burmese chronicles as well as the Kalyāṇī inscriptions, during Dhammaceti's reign there were several religious missions to Sri Lanka from Pegu and Ava, and Sīhaḷa monks, in turn, visited Burma. Burmese monks were reordained and visited sacred shrines on the island. Like Tilokarāja, Dhammaceti wanted to unify the *sangha* and used the new ordination to unite Buddhists in the Pegu kingdom. Monks from all over lower Burma, Ava, Tougoo, from the Shan kingdoms, Thailand, and Cambodia came to Pegu to be ordained during what the chronicles portray as the “golden age” of lower Burma.

Cambodia and Laos. Theravāda Buddhism was introduced to Cambodia by the Mon of the lower Menam Chaophraya River valley. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Theravāda also existed alongside Mahāyāna forms of Buddhism as well as Brahmanism. Mahāyāna Buddhism certainly received royal patronages in the eleventh century, and

Jayavarman VII, the builder of the Bayon Temple at Angkor Thom, was identified with the Buddha Lokeśvara in the divine-royal symbiosis of the Khmer *devarāja/buddharāja* cult. Yet, typical of the classical Southeast Asian monarchs, Jayavarman's patronage of Mahāyāna Buddhism was not exclusive. According to the Kalyāṇī inscriptions and *The Glass Palace Chronicle*, a Cambodian monk, possibly Jayavarman's son, was part of the Burmese mission to Sri Lanka in the twelfth century. There was certainly an influx of Mon Buddhists from the Lopburi region in the face of Tai pressure in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Testimony of Chau Ta Kuan, a member of a late-thirteenth-century mission to Angkor, indicates that Theravāda monks were present in the Khmer capital during that period. The *Jīnakālamāli* account of the Chiangmai mission to Sri Lanka in 1423 CE includes reference to eight Khmer monks who brought the Sīhala order of the Mahāvihāra to Cambodia.

The development of Buddhism in Laos was influenced by both Cambodia and Thailand. According to the Lao chronicles, Jayavarman Parmesvara (1327–1353) helped Phi Fa and Fa Ngum establish the independent kingdom of Lān Chāng, which earlier had been under the political hegemony of Sukhōthai. An inscription at Wat Keo in Luang Prabang refers to three Sinhala Mahātheras—including Mahāpasaman, Fa Ngum's teacher at Angkor—who went from Cambodia to Lān Chāng as part of a religious mission. Certainly, from the late fourteenth century onward, Buddhism in Laos and Cambodia was primarily influenced by the Tai as a consequence of their political dominance in the area. Even in the modern period, Theravāda sectarian developments in Thailand were reflected in Cambodia and Laos, and prior to the Communist revolution, monks from Cambodia and Laos studied in the Buddhist universities in Bangkok.

Summary. During the period that marks the rise of the classical Southeast Asian states, Buddhism existed in many guises. Pali Theravāda was introduced principally through the Mon of Dvāravatī and lower Burma and was considered a “higher” culture appropriated by the Burmese and the Tai. A strong Mahāyāna Buddhist presence is apparent not only in Śrīvijaya and Angkor but also in Pagan and the early Tai states. Furthermore, these forms of Buddhism competed with, and were complemented by, autochthonous animistic cults and Brahmanism. Buddhism made a decisive contribution to the conception of Southeast Asian kingship and monarchical rule through its ideal of the *dharmarāja*, who was not only represented by King Aśoka in India but by such Southeast Asian monarchs as Kyanzittha, Rāma Khamhaeng, and Tilokarāja.

Sri Lanka played the decisive role in the increasing dominance of Theravāda Buddhism in mainland Southeast Asia. Several factors contributed to this development, but I have singled out two: the rise to power of the Burmese and the Tai, who appropriated the Theravāda Buddhism of the Mon; and their subsequent adoption of Sinhala Buddhism as a way

of establishing their own distinctive cultural and religious identity. While Sīnhala influence can be traced to the eleventh century, the Sīhala order only became dominant with the rise and development of the classical states from the mid-twelfth to the end of the fifteenth century. Sinhala Buddhism contributed to the legitimation of the ruling monarchies through its worldview, interpretation of history, monastic institution, education, and language; however, just as important, it became the religion of the masses through the worship of relics and sacred images and through the development of popular syncretic cults.

Vietnam has been largely excluded from the story of the development of the classical Buddhist Southeast Asian states because of the predominance of Hinduism among the Chams during early Vietnamese history and the overwhelming cultural influence of China on the country. Until the eleventh century the Vietnamese were effectively a group within the Chinese empire, and they looked to China for cultural inspiration even after they achieved independence under the Ly dynasty (1009–1224). Mahāyāna Buddhism was certainly part of the Chinese cultural influence, and the Chan (Viet., Thien) school, allegedly first established in 580 CE by Ti-ni-da-lu'u-chi, was the major Buddhist tradition in Vietnam. The elite eventually came to prefer Confucianism, but Buddhism continued to be important among the masses.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN BUDDHISM IN THE MODERN PERIOD. The classical Southeast Asian religio-cultural synthesis, of which Theravāda Buddhism has been a major component, has given the cultures of Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam a unique sense of identity and has sustained them to the present. Faced with Western imperialistic expansion from the seventeenth century onward and the challenge of modernity, the classical religious worldview, institutional structures, and cultural ethos have been changed, modified, and reasserted in a variety of ways. We shall examine how Buddhism has adapted to this challenge, its role in the development of the modern nation-state, and what the most recent trends suggest for the future of Buddhism in the region.

The condition of Southeast Asian Buddhism in the modern period reflects, to a large degree, the forces unleashed during the colonial period, especially during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although modern religious histories of Burma, Thailand, and Indochina differ because of internal factors as well as the uniqueness of their colonial experiences—just as the Enlightenment fundamentally challenged the medieval synthesis of Christian Europe—the last century and a half has called into question the traditional Buddhist-Brahmanic-animistic synthesis of Southeast Asia and, consequently, the institutions and values associated with that worldview. The challenge to the classical worldview, and to the traditional moral community that was based on it, occurred on many fronts. Throughout the region the educational role of the *sangha* has been undermined by Western education. The status of the monk as one who was educated and as an educator and the significance of what was

traditionally taught have also suffered. In Burma, the destruction of the institution of Buddhist kingship in 1885, as well as the relatively open posture of the British toward Buddhism, left the *sangha* in disarray, without the authority and direction the king traditionally provided. Thailand's rapid urbanization over the past fifty years has dramatically changed the village or town milieu that has historically informed and supported Buddhist religious practice. The communist revolutions in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam have displaced Buddhism as the fundamental mediator of cultural values. These are but a few of the challenges that Southeast Asian Buddhism has faced in the modern and contemporary periods.

Modernization and reform. The eve of the assertion of colonial power in the Buddhist countries of Southeast Asia found them in differing states and conditions. The Burmese destruction of Ayutthayā in 1767 provided the Thai (the designation applied to Tai living in the modern nation-state) the opportunity to establish a new capital on the lower Chaophraya River at present-day Bangkok. Because of its accessibility to international commerce the new site was much better situated for the new era about to dawn; the new dynastic line was better able to cope with the increasing impact of Western influence and was also committed to building a new sense of national unity. The Burmese, on the other hand, tired of wars under Alaungpaya and his son, were beset by religious and ethnic fractionalism. They were disadvantaged by the more isolated location of their capital (Ava, Amarapura, and then Mandalay), and governed by politically less astute rulers such as King Bagyidaw, who lost the Arakan and lower Burma to the British in the Anglo-Burmese Wars. Cambodia, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, basically fell victim to either the Thai or the Vietnamese until the French protectorate was established over the country in the 1860s. The Lao kingdoms of Luang Prabang and Vientiane were subject to Thai dominance in the nineteenth century until King Norodom was forced to accept French protection in 1863. Only in the 1890s were the French able to pacify Cochinchina, Annam, and Tongkin, which, together with Cambodia, were formed into the Union Indochinoise in 1887. With the rest of Buddhist Southeast Asia disrupted by the colonial policies of France and Great Britain, Thailand's independence and able leadership under Mongkut (Rāma IV, 1851–1868) and Chulalongkorn (1868–1910) abetted religious modernization and reform, making Thailand the appropriate focus for this topic.

The classical Thai Buddhist worldview had been set forth in the *Traibhūmikathā* of King Lū Thai of Sukhōthai. In one sense this text must be seen as part of Lū Thai's program to reconstruct an administrative and political framework and to salvage the alliance structure that had collapsed under the policies of his predecessor. In laying out the traditional Buddhist stages of the deterioration of history, Lū Thai meant to affirm the meaningfulness of a karmically calculated human life within a given multitiered universe. As

a Buddhist sermon it urges its listeners to lead a moral life and by so doing to reap the appropriate heavenly rewards. Within its great-chain-of-being framework of various human, heavenly, and demonic realms, the text focuses on a central figure, the universal monarch, or *cakkavattin*, exemplified by the legendary king Dharmaśokarāja. Lū Thai's traditional picture of the world, the role of the king, the nature of karmic action, and the hope of a heavenly reward provide a rationale for Sukhōthai political, social, and religious order. That King Rāma I (1782–1809), who reestablished the fortunes of the Thai monarchy, commissioned a new recension of the *Traibhūmi* testifies to its longevity and also to its utility as a charter for order and stability during yet another time of political and social disruption.

The worldview of the *Traibhūmi* was soon to be challenged by the West, however. European and American missionaries, merchants, and travelers came to Bangkok in the 1830s and 1840s, and by 1850 Thailand, or Siam, had signed commercial treaties with several Western nations. Led by Mongkut, who was crowned king in 1851, and by Chao Phraya Thiphakorawong, his able minister of foreign affairs, the Siamese noble elite proved to be interested in and open to Western technology and culture. A pragmatic type of scientific empiricism began to develop among them, leading even the devout Mongkut to articulate a demythologized Buddhism somewhat at odds with the traditional *Traibhūmi* worldview. This critique was formally set forth in 1867 in Chao Phraya Thiphakorawong's *Kitchanukit* (A Book Explaining Various Things), which explains events not in terms of traditional cosmological and mythological sources but using astronomy, geology, and medicine. For example, he argues that rain falls not because the rainmaking deities venture forth or because a great serpent thrashes its tail but because the winds suck water out of clouds; illness, he says, is caused not by a god punishing evil deeds but by air currents. Although the explanations were inaccurate, they were naturalistic rather than mythological or religious. The *Kitchanukit* presents Buddhism as primarily a system of social ethics; heaven and hell are not places but have a moral or pedagogical utility; *kamma* (Skt., *karman*) is not an actual causal force but a genetic principle that accounts for human diversity. Mongkut's successor, his son Chulalongkorn, moved even further from the mythic cosmology of the traditional Southeast Asian Buddhist worldview, declaring the *Traibhūmi* simply an act of imagination.

Modernization of the Thai Buddhist worldview was accompanied by a reform of the Buddhist *sangha*, led initially by Mongkut and continued during the reign of Chulalongkorn. Before his coronation in 1851 Mongkut had been a monk for twenty-five years. During that time his study of the Pali scriptures and his association with Mon monks of a stricter discipline convinced him that Thai Buddhism had departed from the authentic Buddhist tradition. He advocated a more serious study of Pali and Buddhist scripture as well as the attainment of proficiency in meditation. His efforts

at religious reform resulted in an upgrading of monastic discipline in an effort to make it more orthodox. The group of monks who gathered around Mongkut at Wat Bovornives called themselves the Thammayut ("those adhering to the doctrine") and formed the nucleus of a new, stricter sect of Thai Buddhism. With its royal origins and connections, the Thammayut, or Dhammayuttika, sect has played a very influential role in the development of modern Thai Buddhism. In 1864 the Khmer royal family imported it to Cambodia, where it played a similar role. Its impact in Laos, however, was less significant.

The development of a reformist Buddhist tradition that embodied Mongkut's ideals brought about further changes in the monastic order, especially as the *sangha* became part of the policies and programs of Mongkut's son Chulalongkorn. At the same time that he implemented reforms designed to politically integrate outlying areas into the emergent nation-state of Thailand, Chulalongkorn also initiated policies aimed at the incorporation of all Buddhists within the kingdom into a single national organization. As a consequence, monastic discipline, as well as the quality of monastic education, improved throughout the country. A standard monastic curriculum, which included three levels of study in Buddhist history, doctrine, and liturgy, and nine levels of Pali study, was established throughout the country. In addition, two Buddhist academies for higher studies were established in Bangkok.

The modernization and reform of Buddhism in Thailand in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries stand out, but the Thai case must be seen as part of a general trend in all the Southeast Asian Buddhist countries. In the area of text and doctrine a new scripturalism, epitomized by the new redaction of the Tipiṭaka in conjunction with the general Buddhist council held in Burma in 1956 and 1957, has emerged. Doctrinal reinterpretation has followed three major lines: an emphasis on the ethical dimensions of the tradition at the expense of the supernatural and mythical; a rejection of magical elements of popular thought and practice as incompatible with the authentic tradition; and a rationalization of Buddhist thought in terms of Western categories, along with an apologetic interest in depicting Buddhism as scientific. Some apologists, such as U Chan Htoon of Burma, have claimed that all modern scientific concepts pre-existed in Buddhism. Others make less sweeping claims but cite specific correlations between such Buddhist doctrines as interdependent co-arising (*paṭicca samuppāda*; Skt., *pratītya-samutpāda*) and Einstein's relativity theory. Generally speaking, Buddhist apologists have attempted to prove that Buddhism is more scientific than other religions, particularly Christianity; that the empirical approach or methodology of Buddhism is consistent with modern science; and that science proves or validates particular Buddhist teachings.

Institutional modernization and reform have also taken place along the lines that we have examined in some detail in regard to Thailand. Cambodia, for example, not only

adopted the Dhammayuttika sect from Thailand but also re-organized the *sangha* along national lines. In Laos and Burma various Buddhist organizations and associations with reformist intent emerged, often under lay leadership.

Buddhism and the modern nation-state. Buddhism proved to be a crucial factor during the end of the colonial and the postcolonial periods, as Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam became modern nation-states. On the one hand, Buddhism contributed decisively to the development of the new nationhood; on the other, it resisted in various ways changes forced upon traditional Buddhist thought and practice. We shall first examine the Buddhist contributions to the national independence movements and to the maintenance of national identity and unity; second, we shall explore Buddhist resistance to pressures put on the tradition by the organization of the modern nation-state.

Historically, Buddhism played an important role in the definition of the classical Southeast Asian states. It was inevitable, therefore, that it would be a crucial factor in the redefinition of these states. In those cases, for example, in which a country was dominated by a colonial power, nationalist movements grew out of, or were identified with, a religious base or context. Take Burma as a case in point. Buddhism provided the impetus for the independence movement that arose there during the first decades of the twentieth century. The YMBAs (Young Men's Buddhist Association) of Rangoon and elsewhere in Burma quickly assumed a political role. The first issue of major consequence was the "no footwear" controversy of 1918. The YMBAs argued that Europeans, in keeping with Burmese custom, should be prohibited from wearing shoes in all pagodas; accordingly, the British government allowed the head monk of each pagoda to decide the regulations applying to footwear. During the next decade the nationalist cause was led primarily by the General Council of Burmese Associations and by such politically active monks as U Ottama, who was imprisoned for urging a boycott of government-sponsored elections, and U Wisara, who became a martyr to the independence movement when he died during a hunger strike in a British jail.

When U Nu became prime minister in January 1948, following Aung San's assassination, he put Buddhism at the heart of his political program. Although he rejected Marxism, he espoused a Buddhist socialism. In essence, he believed that a national community could be constructed only if individuals are able to overcome their own self-acquisitive interests. Sufficient material needs should be provided for everyone, class and property distinctions should be minimized, and all should strive for moral and mental perfection. The state was to meet the material needs of the people and Buddhism their spiritual needs. To this end he created a Buddhist Sasana Council in 1950 to propagate Buddhism and to supervise monks, appointed a minister of religious affairs, and ordered government departments to dismiss civil servants thirty minutes early if they wished to meditate. In 1960 U Nu committed himself and his party to making Buddhism

the state religion of Burma, an unpopular move with such minorities as the Christian Karens. This attempt was one of the reasons given for General Ne Win's coup in March 1962, which deposed U Nu as prime minister. While in many ways naive and politically unrealistic, U Nu's vision of Buddhist socialism harked back to an earlier vision of the political leader as one who ruled by *dhamma* and who would engender peace and prosperity by the power of his own virtue. But such a vision proved incompatible with the political realities of the 1960s.

Buddhism figured prominently in other Southeast Asian countries, both as a basis of protest against ruling regimes and as an important symbolic component of political leadership. In the 1960s politically active Vietnamese monks contributed to the downfall of the Diem regime, and afterward the United Buddhist Association, under the leadership of Thich Tri Quang and Thich Thien Minh, remained politically active. In Cambodia, Prince Sihanouk espoused a political philosophy based on Buddhist socialism and was the last Cambodian ruler to represent, although in an attenuated way, the tradition of classical Southeast Asian Buddhist rule.

In addition to providing the inspiration for political independence movements, contributing to a political ideology with uniquely Buddhist features, and being the motivating force challenging political power structures, Southeast Asian Buddhism has been used to promote political unity within the boundaries of the nation-state. U Nu's hope that making Buddhism the state religion would promote national unity was naive; it did not take into account the contending factions within the Buddhist *sangha* and the presence of sizable non-Buddhist minorities who feared they might be threatened by covert, if not overt, pressure from the Buddhist majority.

In Thailand the centralization of the Thai *sangha* under King Chulalongkorn and his able *sangharāja*, Vajirañāṇa, not only improved monastic discipline and education but also integrated the monastic order more fully into the nation-state. Chulalongkorn's successor, Vajiravudh (1910–1925), made loyalty to the nation synonymous with loyalty to Buddhism; in effect, he utilized Buddhism as an instrument to promote a spirit of nationalism. In particular, he glorified military virtues and identified nationalism with the support of Thai Buddhism. He founded the Wild Tigers Corps, resembling the British Territorial Army; the Tiger Cubs, a branch of the corps, was later assimilated into the Boy Scout movement. Both encouraged loyalty to nation, religion (i.e., Buddhism), and the king.

Buddhism has continued to be an important tool in the government's policy to promote national unity. In 1962 the Buddhist Sangha Act further centralized the organization of the monastic order under the power of the secular state. In the same year the government organized the Dhammadhuta program, and in 1965 the Dhammacarika program. The former supported Buddhist monks abroad and those working in sensitive border areas, especially the northeastern region

of the country, while the latter has focused on Buddhist missions among northern hill tribes.

Buddhism, however, has not only functioned as a kind of "civil religion," contributing to the definition and support of the new Southeast Asian nation-states in the postcolonial period. It has also resisted the kind of accommodation and change brought on by the new nationalism. In some cases this resistance has been generated by the desire to maintain traditional religious practices and more local autonomy; in others, it has come in the form of armed rebellion and messianic, millenarian movements. As an example of the former we cite Khrūbā Sīwichai, a northern Thai monk of the early twentieth century, and of the latter we cite the Saya San rebellion (1930–1931) in Burma.

While the vast majority of the Buddhist *sangha* in Thailand cooperated with the central government's attempts in the early twentieth century to standardize monastic organization, discipline, and education, there were a few notable exceptions. Khrūbā Sīwichai of the Chiangmai region of northern Thailand was one of them. He ran into problems with the *sangha* hierarchy because he ordained monks and novices according to northern Thai custom although he had not been recognized as a preceptor by the national order. He also singlehandedly raised vast sums of money to rebuild monasteries that had fallen into disrepair and to construct a road, using manual labor, to the famous Mahādhātu Temple on Doi Sutēp Mountain, overlooking Chiangmai. Because of his success in these enterprises, miraculous powers were attributed to him. In 1919, however, he was ordered to report to Bangkok to answer charges of clerical disobedience and sedition, but high Thai officials, fearing the repercussions that punishment of Khrūbā Sīwichai might have, intervened on his behalf. Although eventually Sīwichai submitted to the laws of the Thai national monastic order, *sangha* officials tacitly agreed to permit the northern clergy to follow some of its traditional customs.

Other, more radical Buddhist responses to the emerging nation-state developed in various parts of Southeast Asia and usually centered on a charismatic leader who was sometimes identified as an incarnation of the *bodhisattva* Maitreya. In Burma several rebellions in the early twentieth century aimed to overthrow British rule and to restore the fortunes of both Burmese kingship and Burmese Buddhism. One of these was led by Saya San, who had been a monk in the Tharrawaddy district in lower Burma but disrobed to work in a more directly political way to overthrow the British. Saya San's movement had a strongly traditional religious and royal aura, and much of his support came from political monks associated with nationalistic associations (*wunthanu athins*) that had formed in the 1920s. Saya San was "crowned" as "king" in a thoroughly traditional Burmese manner in a jungle capital on October 28, 1930. An armed group was trained and the rebellion launched toward the end of December. As the conflict spread throughout lower Burma and into the Shan States, the British army was called in to help the police forces

repress the rebellion. Only after eight months of fighting did the warfare end.

Recent trends. The chapter on Southeast Asian Buddhism's future within the context of the modern nation-state has yet to be closed. The disestablishment of the *sangha* in Cambodia and Laos has shaken, but by no means rooted out, the tradition, even though Pol Pot's genocidal regime attempted such wholesale destruction in the aftermath of American withdrawal from the war in Indochina. Laos and Cambodia, however, have experienced a breakdown of the traditional religio-cultural synthesis. This is taking place more slowly in Thailand and even in Burma, which has been much more isolated from Western influences since the early 1960s. The political and economic contexts of Southeast Asian Buddhism, in short, have obviously affected the state of Buddhism in Southeast Asia. The trends that have emerged seem paradoxical, if not contradictory. We shall examine three sets or pairs: increasingly active lay leadership and the veneration of monks to whom supernatural powers are ascribed; a revival of meditation practice and an emphasis on active political and social involvement; rampant magical, syncretic ritual practice and insistence on the purity of the authentic teaching.

The modern period has seen increased lay leadership at various levels of religious life. The YMBAs of Burma and the Buddhist "Sunday schools" that have arisen in Thailand have obviously been influenced by Western Christian models. Lay associations have developed for various purposes. For example, prior to the revolution Cambodia had the Buddhist Association of the Republic of Cambodia (1952), the Association of Friends of the Buddhist Lycée (1949), the Association of Friends of Religious Welfare Aid Centers, the Association of Religious Students of the Republic of Cambodia (1970), the Association of the Buddhist Youth of Cambodia (1971), and so on. Buddhist laity have also been actively involved in the worldwide Buddhist movement. Most notable of the laity groups are the World Fellowship of Buddhists, which has headquarters in Bangkok, and the World Council of Churches, which holds interreligious dialogue consultations.

The increasingly significant role of the laity in a religious tradition noted for the centrality of the monk reflects many developments in modern Southeast Asian countries, not the least of which is the spread of secular, Western education among the elites. Coupled with this phenomenon, however, we find a polar opposition—a persistent cult of the holy man to whom supernatural powers are attributed. In some instances the holy monk becomes a charismatic leader of a messianic cult (e.g., the Mahagandare Weikzado Apwegyoke in Burma), while in others the form of veneration is more informal and generalized (e.g., Phra Acharn Mun in Thailand). In many cases the holy monk makes few, if any, miraculous or supernatural claims, but these will be ascribed to him by his followers. Hagiographic literature, describing cosmic portents of the monk's birth, extraordinary events during his childhood, and other characteristics of this genre, will

often emerge. While the monk as miracle worker is not a new phenomenon in Theravāda Buddhism, it has persisted to the present time and, some observers claim, has been on the upswing in the contemporary period.

Meditation has always been the *sine qua non* of Buddhist practice, but traditionally it was the preserve of the forest-dwelling (*araññavāsi*) or meditating (*vipassana dhura*) monk. In the modern period, meditation has been more widely practiced as part of the routines of ordinary Buddhist temples and, more particularly, in meditation centers that either include or are specifically for lay practice. The lay meditation movement was especially strong in Burma under the leadership of such meditation masters as U Ba Khin and Ledi Sayadaw (1856–1923). Westerners have been particularly attracted to some of Southeast Asia's renowned meditation teachers, such as Acharn Cha of Wat Pa Pong in Ubon Ratchathani. Some meditating monks have also gained reputations not only for their method of meditation or for holiness but for the attainment of extraordinary powers as well.

While meditation has become a lay as well as monastic practice in contemporary Southeast Asian Buddhism, this development has not precluded a movement to formulate a strong, activist social ethic. The Vietnamese Zen monk Thich Nhat Hahn attempted to work out a Buddhist solution to the military conflict in his country during the 1960s, and there has been a widespread interest in formulating a Buddhist theory of economic development that is critical of Western capitalism but not necessarily indebted to Marxism. Buddhists have also acted to solve particular social problems, such as drug addiction, and have spoken out strongly against the proliferation of nuclear arms. Southeast Asian Buddhists have also joined with members of other religious groups, both within their own countries as well as in international organizations, to work for such causes as world peace and basic civil rights for all peoples. Buddhist interpreters, such as the Thai monk Bhikkhu Buddhādāsa, have referred to Buddhism as a practical system of personal and social morality.

Buddhādāsa has also been strongly critical of conventional Thai Buddhist religious practice, which has stressed merit-making rituals. These are aimed at obtaining personal benefit and propitiating various supernatural powers for protection or good luck. In his writings and at his center in Chaiya, southern Thailand, he emphasizes the importance of overcoming greed and attachment. *Nibbāna*, for Buddhādāsa, is the state that is achieved when egoism is overcome. This is the goal of all Buddhists, not just monks. Indeed, he argues, this is the purpose of all religions. Buddhādāsa's critique reflects the magical nature of popular Buddhist ritual practice not only in Thailand but, more generally, in Southeast Asian Buddhism, the goal of which is to improve one's life materially through the mechanism of gaining merit or improving one's karmic status. Buddhādāsa's proposal that such teachings as *nibbāna* and *anatta* (not-self), which represent the essence of the Buddha's teachings, must

be part of every Buddhist's religious practice exemplifies an interest on the part of many contemporary Buddhist thinkers to restore the kernel of the authentic tradition, which has often been hidden beneath layers of cultural accretions. Thus, while the popular religious ethos is syncretic and emphasizes the attainment of worldly goals, various apologists in Burma and Thailand are attempting to make the core of the tradition a part of the understanding and practice of the Buddhist populace at large. Some critical observers have referred to this trend as a "protestantizing" of Southeast Asian Buddhism.

The contemporary ethos of Buddhism in Southeast Asia reflects an ancient heritage but also points in new directions. It is difficult to predict how the *sangha* will fare under the Marxist regimes in Laos and Cambodia or, for that matter, in the urban and increasingly materialistic environment of Bangkok and Chiangmai. Can the Theravāda monk maintain his place in society when his education cannot compare with that of the elite? Can Buddhism effectively address problems of overpopulation, prostitution, malnourishment, and economic exploitation? To what extent can the tradition change with the times and retain its identity? These and other questions face a religion that has not only been fundamental in the identity of the Burmese, Thai, Laotians, Cambodians, and Vietnamese but has also contributed much to world culture.

SEE ALSO Amoghavajra; Aśoka; Buddhism, Schools of, article on Tantric Ritual Schools of Buddhism; Burmese Religion; Cakravartin; Dharmapala; Khmer Religion; Kingship, article on Kingship in East Asia; Lao Religion; Mongkut; Pilgrimage, article on Buddhist Pilgrimage in South and Southeast Asia; Saṃgha, articles on Saṃgha and Society; Southeast Asian Religions, article on Mainland Cultures; Thai Religion; Theravāda; Vajrabodhi; Vietnamese Religion; Worship and Devotional Life, article on Buddhist Devotional Life in Southeast Asia.

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DONALD K. SWEARER (1987)
Revised Bibliography

BUDDHISM: BUDDHISM IN CENTRAL ASIA

Central Asia is not a clearly defined term. In a narrower sense, it refers to the region previously known as Eastern or Chinese Turkestan, as the Tarim Basin, or as Sinkiang (Xinjiang), lying between the towns of Kashgar in the west and Dunhuang in the east. In a wider sense, it also refers to the former Soviet republics, now independent states, of Middle Asia, generally known as Western Turkestan, and to the whole Tibetan plateau in the south. Here it is meant to include Eastern Turkestan, i.e., the present Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region in the People's Republic of China, and those parts of the Middle Asian republics where traces of Buddhism have been found.

During the period of its maximum spread, Buddhism became a major religious and cultural factor not only in India and in East and Southeast Asia, but also in Afghanistan and in large parts of Central Asia. In the northwest, it reached Merv in present-day Turkmenia, Termez at the southern border of Uzbekistan, and Qurğān-tübä in southern Tadzhikistan. Although written sources and excavations attest to its presence even farther north, for instance in Samarkand, in Quvā near Fergana, and in Aq Bešim near Frunse, in these areas it did not gain the popularity it did south of the Amu Darya (Oxus). Following old trade routes, monks and merchants brought Buddhism from the northwest of the Indian subcontinent into Central Asia and farther east to China. In all those regions, it was the vigorous spread of Islam that finally replaced the various other religious movements, to the extent that Buddhism disappeared from western Central Asia before the turn of the millennium and was continually driven back in the east. From about the fifteenth century, followers of Buddhism were no longer found, and therefore a description of its history is now based on archaeological remains and on such historical sources as, for instance, the travel accounts of the Chinese Indian pilgrims Faxian (fifth century), Xuanzang (seventh century), Huizhao (eighth century), and others. These written sources are few, and it is mainly such impressive monuments as the two stone statues of the standing Buddha in Bāmiyān, formerly 174 and 115 feet (53 and 35 meters) high (but in 2001 destroyed by the Taliban), or large cave monasteries like Dunhuang with its overwhelming wealth of fascinating wall paintings, which bear witness to the former splendor and importance of Buddhism, as no traces of it are preserved in the present-day cultures of the area.

Although an ever-growing number of publications, mainly on the Buddhist art and literature of the region, continues to appear, the history of Buddhism in Central Asia re-

mains fragmentary. One of the basic difficulties is that Central Asia never formed a political unity during the first millennium CE. A multitude of ethnic groups faced frequent changes of the ruling powers, and powerful neighbors like the Sassanids in the west, the Tibetans in the south, or the Chinese in the east continually sought to establish political and economical influence, often by force and military campaigns. Nomadic tribes from the northern steppes often invaded the area, sometimes causing considerable destruction, as in the case of the White Huns (Hephthalites) on their way through Afghanistan to India, but sometimes becoming sedentary and adopting the local cultures, as in the case of the Uighurs. Powerful empires like those of the Kushans, Tang-dynasty China, or imperial Tibet never succeeded in bringing the whole of Central Asia under their sway. Buddhism offered one of the few uniting elements of the area. However, Buddhism itself did not appear as a uniform phenomenon, but was spread in various forms and school traditions and thereby contributed to the diversity of the whole picture. The situation of the various cultures, especially in the oasis towns along the Silk Road, must have been very complex and is probably best characterized by the modern term “multicultural.” Members of very different ethnic groups and cultures—Chinese, Indians, Sakas, Sogdians, Tibetans, Tocharians, Uighurs, to name only the most important ones—lived together and followed various different religious traditions, including Buddhism, Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism, Nestorian Christianity, while the ethnic borders were never identical with linguistic, religious, or political borders.

BEGINNINGS. Buddhism reached Central Asia from the northwest of the Indian subcontinent. Its spread into Afghanistan must have begun not later than the third century BCE when the Indian dynasty of the Mauryas, and especially their most important ruler Aśoka (c. 268–233 BCE), succeeded in uniting major parts of India and advancing the northwestern border of their empire up to Kabul and Kandahār in Afghanistan. This extension is well documented by the famous stone inscriptions placed by Aśoka in various parts of the empire. Such inscriptions are preserved in northwest Pakistan (in Shābāzgarhī and Mānsehrā) and in Afghanistan (in Kandahār, in Lampāka, and at the river Laghmān). The inscriptions suggest that Aśoka supported the various religious movements in his empire, but especially Buddhism, to which he appears to have been personally inclined. Since in Buddhist scripture he is depicted as one of the foremost supporters of the faith, it may be concluded that the development of Buddhism, from an ascetic movement mainly situated in northeast India to a universal religion, accelerated during his reign and that the political stability achieved by the Mauryas favored its spread, especially along the trade routes.

Apart from these inscriptions, very few traces of the presence and spread of Buddhism during that period remain. Well-known is the Dharmarājika stupa in the old town of Taxila, a large excavation in Pakistan; the stupa is dated to the time of the Mauryas. This situation changed around the

beginning of the common era, when another great empire arose in the northwest and guaranteed an enduring period of peace and stability. In the first century CE, the dynasty of the Kushans united the northwest and established an empire that included Afghanistan and reached from Bactria into northern India and Eastern Turkestan. Trade routes became safe and allowed long-distance trade that facilitated the exchange and spread of both material and non-material cultural goods. Like Aśoka before him, Kanishka the Great (first half of the second century CE), the most important ruler of the Kushan dynasty, is described as a devoted supporter of Buddhism in Buddhist sources. No external indications are preserved that could confirm the Buddhist picture of Kanishka, as the inscriptions do for Aśoka, but he appears to have built stupas and a monastery near Kāpiśī (Begram). Although the Kushan rulers also supported other religions, the tradition connected with Kanishka suggests that Buddhism flourished under the Kushans. Within the varied pantheon depicted on his coins, there is also the figure of a standing Buddha. As far as datable archaeological remains are preserved, only very few monasteries seem to go back to this period, which hints at the possibility that institutionalized Buddhism was less widespread than is often supposed.

ART. As an extremely important innovation, the representation of the Buddha in human form was created during the reign of the Kushan dynasty. Previously, the Buddha had been represented in art only aniconically, for instance by a wheel to symbolize the first teaching. It is still a matter of debate whether the first Buddha figure was created in Mathurā in northern India or in Gandhara, a region in northern Pakistan, but many scholars now believe that the step from aniconic to iconic representation was taken in Gandhara. By fusing Greco-Roman forms with Indian contents, artists in Gandhara created a distinctive style that influenced Indian art and became the model for Buddhist art in Central and East Asia. It is well known that Apollo served as a model for the Buddha, as did Herakles for Vajrapāṇi, a non-human attendant of the Buddha, or Tyche/Fortuna for the goddess Hārītī. Greeks had been living in Bactria and Gandhara since the Indian campaign of Alexander the Great in the fourth century, and the influence of Hellenistic, and then Roman, culture continued until the first centuries CE.

Gandharan art attests to the importance of the cult of *bodhisattvas*, probably Siddhārtha (the Buddha before his enlightenment) and definitely Maitreya (the future Buddha), but despite an overwhelming richness of surviving sculptures, there are very few that can be indisputably connected with Mahāyāna Buddhism and its specific Buddhas and *bodhisattvas*.

THE KUSHANS. The Kushans adopted Bactrian, a Middle Iranian language, for their coins and for inscriptions, but they also used Gandhari, a Middle Indian language written in Kharoṣṭhī script, for administrative purposes. Kushan influence extended well into Central Asia and administrative documents written in Gandhari and dating from the period

between 200 and 320 have been found in the kingdom of Shan-shan (Kroraina), which stretched from the Niya River, a short distance east of Khotan as far as Lob Nor. At the same time, Gandhari was the language used by the Dharmaguptakas, a school of mainstream Buddhism. Translations of scriptures of this school into Chinese are known from the beginning of the fifth century, but until recently only one text was known in its Indian original, the famous manuscript of the *Dharmapada*, found more than a hundred years ago in Khotan and probably to be dated to the second or third century CE. Since the 1990s, however, a steadily growing number of Dharmaguptaka texts has been found in Afghanistan. They attest to the importance of this school in the Kushan Empire, and they support the thesis that the Dharmaguptakas were among the first to bring Buddhism to the south and east of Central Asia.

Another school of mainstream Buddhism apparently flourishing in the Kushan Empire was that of the Sarvāstivādins. Originally, they also must have used a Middle Indian language, but they adopted Sanskrit for their commentaries and their poetical literature and then gradually Sanskritized their canonical literature. They spread mainly along the northern route of the Silk Road, and the cave monasteries in the oases of Kučā, Karašahr and Turfan became strongholds of the Sarvāstivāda. It is difficult, if not impossible, to date this process. An Shigao, the first known translator of Buddhist texts into Chinese active around 140 CE, apparently used Sarvāstivāda versions, but he came from Parthia in the west of Central Asia. A large amount of manuscript fragments has been found in the monasteries along the northern route, and the oldest of them date to the second century CE, but these are palm-leaf manuscripts imported from India. The oldest Sanskrit manuscripts actually written in Central Asia probably date to the fifth century; they are written on paper, a material introduced from China, but not used in India and Afghanistan at that time.

FORMS OF BUDDHISM. The spread and distribution of various forms of Buddhism in Central Asia has to be reconstructed from the manuscript finds and the reports of the Chinese pilgrims to India. The evidence suggests a clear divide between Buddhism on the northern and southern branches of the Silk Road. Between Kashgar at the western end of the Tarim Basin and Anxi at its eastern end the Silk Road divided into two routes, which followed the mountain ranges from oasis to oasis and skirted the terrible Takla Makan desert. The northern route followed the Tianshan and connected the oases of Tumšūq, Kučā, Karašahr, Turfan, and Hami, while the southern route led along the Kunlun to Khotan and then on to Niya, Mirān, and Dunhuang. Most of the monks in the monasteries on the northern route followed mainstream Buddhism in the form of the Sarvāstivāda school. The overwhelming majority of Sanskrit manuscripts found there belongs to the canonical and postcanonical literature of the Sarvāstivādins. The work represented by the largest number of manuscripts is the *Udānavarga*, a very popular collection of verses allegedly spoken by the Buddha. Next

comes the *Prātimokṣasūtra*, the confession formulary of the Buddhist monks. The number and order of its rules are school-specific, and the frequency of this text serves as one of the main arguments for determining the school affiliation of the monasteries along the northern route. Fragments of the corresponding text for the Buddhist nuns point to the possible existence of nunneries, but the fragments are very few and none of the spots where they were found have been proven to be convents for nuns. Besides works from the Sarvāstivāda *Vinaya* (the collection of rules of the Buddhist order), a few from that of the Mūlasarvāstivādins have also been found, and altogether three texts from the canon of the Dharmaguptakas. Interestingly enough, the latter are no longer written in Gandhari, but in Sanskrit, apparently under the influence of the Sarvāstivādins. A certain number of fragments of *Mahāyānasūtras* has come to light, but they belong to no more than thirty manuscripts, most of which have been found in the oases of Šorčuq and Toyoq farther east.

Khotan, on the contrary, must have been an a leading center of Mahāyāna Buddhism, since nearly all of the Sanskrit texts found there belong to sūtras of the “Great Vehicle.” The precise date of Buddhism’s initial establishment in Khotan is unknown. According to Chinese sources, there was a Buddhist community in Khotan by the second century CE. Zhu Shixing, who studied Prajñāpāramitā literature in the Chinese city of Luoyang in the third century, went west in search of the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, which he found in Khotan. Mokṣala, who translated this work into Chinese in 291, was a Khotanese, and another Khotanese, Gītamitra, took a copy of the same text with him to the Chinese capital Chang’an in 296. Thus, Khotan was already a well-established center of Mahāyāna studies in the third century. None of the manuscripts found in Khotan, however, belongs to this early period. Most of them date from the seventh to the tenth centuries, and they contain either Sanskrit texts or translations from Sanskrit into Khotanese, an Iranian language. Common are manuscripts of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtras*, the *Suvarṇabhāṣottamasūtra*, the *Samghāṭasūtra*, and the ubiquitous *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra*, which, amazingly, was never translated into Khotanese. One of the most famous manuscripts from Central Asia is the so-called Kashgar manuscript of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra*. Originally, it comprised 459 leaves, 447 of which are preserved in full or in fragments and are now distributed over the collections in St. Petersburg, London, Berlin, Dalian (China), and New Haven, a not-at-all uncharacteristic example of the fate of many manuscript finds, especially those from Khotan and from Dunhuang.

LANGUAGES. Indian languages, and from the fifth century onwards, only Sanskrit, remained the “church language” (Nattier, 1990) in Central Asia, and the percentage of Indian texts among the literature is absolutely remarkable. In the western part, in Bactria, Sogdiana, and Afghanistan, no translations into any of the vernaculars have been found so far. Two Buddhist texts in Bactrian, which came to light among the finds from Afghanistan in the 1990s, are possibly

not translated, but may have been originally composed in Bactrian. The Sogdians played a very important role in the transmission of Buddhism to the east, since from the third century onwards they took over the long-distance trade and built up a network of trade posts from Samarkand far into China. But when they finally started to translate Buddhist scriptures into their own language, they did so not from Sanskrit originals, but from Chinese. In Eastern Turkestan, however, the situation was different: Sanskrit texts are found side by side with translations into the vernaculars, and they remained in use until the end of Buddhism in the area. Texts in Tocharian, the easternmost Indo-European language, which have been found mostly in Kučā, Karašahr, and Turfan, belong to the literature of the Sarvāstivādins and suggest that it was mainly the Tocharians who continued to use the original Sanskrit texts of that school. Many bilinguals and Sanskrit manuscripts with Tocharian glosses confirm this supposition. To a certain extent, this also holds true for the literature of the Uighurs. After the fall of their empire in the Orkhon Basin further northeast, parts of this Turkish tribe had settled from 840 onwards in the oases of Kučā, Karašahr, and Turfan, but also in Hami and in the Gansu corridor. In Xočo in the oasis of Turfan, a Uighur kingdom was established, which existed from approximately 850 to 1250. The Uighurs also used Sanskrit, but from the eighth or ninth century onwards they translated a growing number of texts, mostly of Mahāyāna affiliation, from Chinese into Uighur.

INDIGENOUS DEVELOPMENTS. Very different from the development in China, and later in Tibet, it appears that none of the Central Asian forms of Buddhism succeeded in establishing an important indigenous literary tradition based on the received canonical literature. There are very few independent works in the vernaculars; a famous example is a work in Khotanese, provisionally called the “Book of Zambasta” after the person who commissioned it, a voluminous verse-summary of Buddhism, which probably dates from the seventh century. Remarkably enough, its author complains that “The Khotanese do not value the [Buddhist] Law at all in Khotanese. They understand it badly in Indian. In Khotanese it does not seem to them to be the Law. For the Chinese the Law is in Chinese. . . . To the Khotanese that seems to be the law whose meaning they do not understand at all” (Emmerick, 1968, p. 343ff.). This clinging to Sanskrit as the authoritative medium of religious literature may have been one of the reasons for the comparatively small number of indigenous works in the vernaculars.

One of the most important works from the northern route is the *Maitreyasamitiṇātaka*, the “dramatical description of the meeting with [the future Buddha] Maitreya” in twenty-seven chapters. Although the text pretends to be of Indian origin, it was probably composed in Karašahr in Tocharian and then translated into Uighur under the title *Maitrisimit*. It attests to the important position of the cult of Maitreya in Central Asian Buddhism. This cult was practiced equally by followers of mainstream and of Mahāyāna Buddhism, and significantly a whole chapter of the “Book

of Zambasta” is devoted to Maitreya. As in the case of Amitābha, the most popular meditation Buddha in Central Asia, an Iranian origin or at least influence has been much discussed. Although both figures display certain elements that are also found with Iranian gods, these elements can just as easily be explained with reference to the Indian background.

One of the most important sites in the region is the monastery Qianfo-dong (“caves of the thousand Buddhas”) near Dunhuang. The Indo-Scythian Dharmarakṣa, one of the great translators of Buddhist texts into Chinese, was born there around 230 CE, and one of his Chinese disciples founded a large monastery there. The caves are famous for their excellently preserved wall paintings, but one of them contained another surprise for the European scholars who came there in the first decade of the twentieth century. The local attendant led them to a previously walled-off chamber, which concealed a sensational collection of manuscripts. They had been hidden probably before 1035 when Dunhuang was conquered by the Tanguts, since no Tangut texts are found there. The chamber contained forty to fifty thousand manuscripts, most of them Chinese and Tibetan, the latter dating to the eighth and ninth centuries when the Tibetan empire occupied most of Eastern Turkestan. Besides the Chinese and Tibetan manuscripts, the library included texts in Uighur, Sanskrit, Tocharian, Khotanese, and Sogdian (in the last two cases most of what survives in these languages was found at Dunhuang).

Although the Tibetan texts from Dunhuang are of singular importance for the early history of Tibet, the Tibetan occupation made little mark on Central Asian Buddhism. Only the Uighurs translated Buddhist texts from Tibetan into their own language, but when they started to do so it was after the turn of the millennium and at a time when Tibet had long lost all political influence in Central Asia. This was very different with Chinese Buddhism. During the first centuries CE, it was mainly monks from Central Asia who brought the new religion to China and who became instrumental in acquainting the Chinese with Buddhism by translating the texts. Without such outstanding figures like the famous Kumārajīva, Buddhism would probably never have made a lasting impact on Chinese culture. As a son of an Indian father and a local princess, Kumārajīva was born in Kučā and brought to Chang’an at the beginning of the fifth century. With him, a new translation technique was developed, which finally succeeded in presenting Buddhism in a literary form acceptable to Chinese taste. From the time of the Tang dynasty, however, the relationship was partly reversed. Buddhist literature was no longer imported from Central Asia; instead, Chinese translations of what were originally Indian texts were now translated into Khotanese, Sogdian, and Uighur.

In the western part of Central Asia, Buddhism had practically disappeared by the end of the first millennium. Around 950, it came to an end in Khotan when the rulers

decided to embrace Islam. Only on the northern route of the Silk Road did Buddhism survive for a few more centuries, although it must already have been in decline at that time. Around the end of the fifteenth century, at the latest, it finally disappeared from the Turfan oasis when the ruler of Xočo withdrew his support of the local monks.

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JENS-UWE HARTMANN (2005)

BUDDHISM: BUDDHISM IN MONGOLIA

Buddhism in Chinese, Central Asian, Kāśmiri, and Tibetan forms influenced Mongolia's ancient and medieval nomadic empires in varying degrees. From 1580 to 1920 Tibetan-style Buddhism dominated Mongolia and touched every aspect of life. Communist antireligious campaigns destroyed this hegemony, but after 1985 liberalization led to a renewed religious revival. The Mongolian plateau can be divided into Mongolia proper (Outer Mongolia, now the independent State of Mongolia) to the north, and Inner Mongolia (now an autonomous region in China) along the borders of China proper. From the fourth century on, the Mongolic-speaking Xianbi in Inner Mongolia and north China patronized Chinese Buddhism. The Kitans, another branch of the Xianbi, whose Mongolic language has been partly deciphered, became avid patrons and practitioners of Chinese Buddhism under their Liao dynasty (907–1125). Many rulers of the Türk empires, which dominated Mongolia proper from 552 to 745, also patronized Buddhist monks from the Central Asian oasis states and from China.

By the twelfth century, Mongolia and Inner Mongolia were occupied by a variety of Turkic and Mongolic-speaking tribes, and Buddhist influence had virtually disappeared. The unification of the plateau by Chinggis Khan (Genghis, r. 1206–1227) and his conquests brought the Mongols again in touch with Buddhism among the Uighurs of the Central Asian oases (in today's eastern Xinjiang) and in northern China. In 1219 Chinggis Khan granted tax exemption to all Buddhist clerics. Buddhism, alongside Christianity, Daoism, and Islam, became one of the four favored religions of the Mongol empire. Until 1253, the khans chiefly patronized Chinese *dhyāna* (Zen) monks.

With the conquest of the Xi (western) Xia or Tangut dynasty in northwestern China completed in 1227, the Mongols learned of its long-standing ties with Tibetan Buddhist clerics. In 1240 the Mongols first reconnoitered Tibet to find a Tibetan cleric. In 1247, the first Tibetan Buddhist lama came to the court of a Mongol prince. Mongol expansion also brought contact with Kāśmiri monks.

In 1251 a new branch of Chinggis Khan's family seized power. Möngke Khan (r. 1251–1259) began actively patronizing Tibetan and Kāśmiri Buddhist leaders of several different lineages. Möngke's brother Qubilai Khan (r. 1260–1294) made 'Phags pa Lama, of the Tibetan Sa skya pa monastic order, the chief cleric of the empire. From then on, the imperial family of the Mongols in China, as well as many aristocratic Mongol clans, regularly received tutoring and Tantric initiations from Sa skya pa and other Tibetan Buddhist hierarchs.

The Mongols adopted the Uighur script under Chinggis Khan. In the late thirteenth and early to mid-fourteenth centuries, the Mongols in China sponsored many Buddhist translations. Although the translations were generally made from Tibetan texts, the translators were strongly influenced by Uighur Buddhist terminology. The translations of Chos-

gi-Odsir (fl. 1307–1321) were particularly famous. A Nepalese artist, Aniga (1244–1278), invited to Qubilai's court, began a school of Nepalese-influenced Inner Asian Buddhist artwork. Surviving monuments of the era include the White Pagoda in central Beijing. Mongol princes also patronized other religions and 'Phags pa Lama and succeeding court chaplains participated in the Mongol ancestral cults maintained at court. Buddhist clergy served as astrologers and diviners.

After 1260, the Mongol dominions in the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Kazakhstan, and in Central Asia broke away from the power of the great khans in East Asia. The local Mongol rulers continued to patronize Buddhist monks, called *baqshi*, who were sometimes Tibetan, Kāśmīri, or Chinese, but mostly Uighur. This patronage in the Mongols' western domains ceased after successive waves of Islamization from 1295 to 1335.

Although the Mongol great khans were expelled from China in 1368, they continued to rule on the Mongolian plateau in the name of the Chinggisid dynasty. Buddhist monks were appointed as court chaplains at least through 1455, but after that the influence of Buddhism declined. Particularly after the reign of Dayan Khan (1480?–1517?), the ancestral cult of Chinggis Khan became the focus of court religious life.

From the 1550s on, Mongols expanded into Kökenuur (Qinghai) in northeastern Tibet where they again came in contact with Tibetan Buddhist clerics. At the same time, Altan Khan (1508–1582), in Höhhot of modern Inner Mongolia, gave refuge to millenarian Buddhists fleeing persecution in China. After making peace with China in 1571, however, Altan Khan extradited the millenarian leaders and instead turned to Tibetan lamas. The Second Conversion that made Mongolia a pervasively Buddhist country began in 1578 when Altan Khan and the Chinggisid nobility of southwestern Inner Mongolia met the Third Dalai Lama of the new Dge lugs pa, or Yellow Hat, order of Tibetan Buddhist monks.

In Tibet itself, the passionately convinced Dge lugs pa adherents fought fierce opposition in order to purge Buddhism of noncanonical tantras and practices. The embattled Dge lugs pa saw the Mongol conversion as a chance to create a purely Yellow Hat society. Mongol rulers converted to Dge lugs pa Buddhism, destroyed shamanist ancestral figures, and severely punished shamanist sacrifices. As Dge lugs pa missionaries expanded to eastern Inner Mongolia and Mongolia proper during the seventeenth century, they also struggled tenaciously against adherents of older Buddhist orders, particularly the Sa skya pa. The missionary endeavor of the Dge lugs pas paid off in 1642 when Güüshi Khan, ruler of the western Oirat Mongols (from today's northern Xinjiang) invaded Tibet, destroyed the enemies of the Yellow Hats, and enthroned the Fifth Dalai Lama as Central Tibet's secular and religious ruler. By 1700, non-Yellow Hat Buddhism had essentially disappeared from Mongolia. Shamanism was

more tenacious, but by 1800 it survived in institutionalized form only on the eastern and northern fringes of the Mongolian plateau. From 1800 on, another wave of Dge lugs pa missionary activity converted many Buriat Mongols in southern Siberia.

During the Second Conversion, noblemen dedicated their children to monastic life. Monastic institutions rapidly took shape all over Mongolia. In 1639 the son of a Chinggisid nobleman became the first of the line of Jibzundamba Khutugtus, the most holy Mongolian Buddhist incarnate lama lineage. This First Jibzundamba Khutugtu, named Zanabazar (1635–1723), also became a major political leader who led the Mongols of Mongolia proper into submission to the Manchu Qing dynasty (1636–1912). He was also one of the great sculptors of the Buddhist artistic tradition. Translation of the Buddhist scriptures culminated in the complete translation of the Tibetan Buddhist canon, first of the Bka' 'gyur (the canonical sutras and tantras), in 1628 to 1629 and then of the Bstan 'gyur (the canonical Indian commentaries) in 1749.

By the 1830s virtually every aspect of Tibetan monastic culture had been transplanted to Mongolia. With only a few exceptions, Mongolian Buddhist services were carried on in Tibetan language. In the 1918 census of Mongolia proper, about 45 percent of the Mongolian male population had received some monastic education and hence were considered lamas. Only about a third of these, however, actually lived in monasteries as celibate lamas. The rest left the monasteries in their late teens and became married householders, performing all normal lay duties. Nuns (*chibagantsa*) were almost always widows or unmarried older women who took vows; no organized nunneries are known. Incarnate lamas and major monasteries also had lay subjects, called *shabi* (disciples). Mongolia's present capital, Ulaanbaatar, developed around the monastery of the Jibzundamba Khutugtu. Other major monasteries include Erdeni Zuu in central Mongolia and Badgar Juu in Inner Mongolia.

Mongolian Buddhist literature was first nurtured by translated Indian and Tibetan works. Many Mongolian scholars wrote in Tibetan on Buddhist philosophy, tantra, astrology, medicine, and grammar. In the eighteenth century, the Third Mergen Gegeen Lubsang Dambi Jalsan (1717–1766) designed a Mongolian-language liturgy that incorporated local Mongolian deities and spirits. He also began the tradition of writing didactic poetry and devotional songs in Mongolian; many of his songs are still sung today. This tradition reached its height with the wild poet and incarnate lama Danzin Rabjai (1803–1856).

Lay Mongolian religious life revolved around a number of cults such as that of the *oboo* (cairns), the "White Old Man" (*tsagan ebügen*), and the rituals of the household fire, particularly that of the Lunar New Year. Many scholars have seen these as "survivals of shamanism," yet they were completely integrated into Mongolian Buddhist practice. In fact, the *oboo* cult actually seems to have been introduced into

Mongolia from Tibet in the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries. Poems and sermons addressed to the laity castigated social evils such as hunting, blood sacrifices, alcohol, smoking, and youthful romance, while advocating filial piety, frugality, and obedience to authorities in religion and state.

After the Manchu Qing dynasty changed its policy to sinicizing the Mongols in 1901, the Eighth Jibzundamba Khutugtu (1870–1924) declared Mongolia proper independent in 1911. Under his theocratic rule from 1911 to 1919, clerical privileges in Mongolia expanded to unprecedented levels. Several monuments of Buddhist architecture were built, including the temple housing the 80-foot high statue of Avalokiteśvara and the Green Palace.

In southeastern Inner Mongolia, the Chinese-influenced writer Injannashi (1837–1892) had sharply criticized Buddhist lamas for their ignorant and arrogant rejection of the world. This criticism, reflecting a long-standing Confucian critique of Buddhism, developed in the early twentieth century into an anticlerical ethos that pervaded the new schools movement in eastern Inner Mongolia. By contrast, many Buriat Mongols of southern Siberia clung strongly to Buddhism in resisting Tsarist Russia's policies of Russification and Christianization. After 1917, the lama Agwang Dorzhiev (1853–1938) and the secular intellectual Tsyben Zhamtsarano (1881–1942) strongly advocated the compatibility of Buddhism with modern science and socialism.

In independent Mongolia, a Soviet-supported leftist regime was installed in 1921. When the Eighth Jibzundamba Khutugtu died in 1924, Mongolia was declared a People's Republic. In 1929, mass anti-Buddhist campaigns began among the Buriat Mongols of southern Siberia and in Mongolia proper. Popular support for the monasteries remained strong and religiously based insurrections in Mongolia in 1932 forced a temporary reversal. Between 1936 and 1939, however, pressure from Moscow resulted in the complete destruction of institutional Buddhism in Mongolia and Siberia. In Mongolia, perhaps 50,000 lamas were arrested or shot.

After 1944 one monastery was reopened in Mongolia proper and two in Buriatia. Education of children in religious tenets was prohibited. Lamas were prohibited from performing any religious functions outside the monasteries. All lamas were expected to marry. In 1947 the Chinese Communists came to power in Inner Mongolia. After a period of limited religious tolerance, anti-Buddhist persecution began there in 1958, which resulted in the destruction of all Buddhist institutions after 1966.

In 1979 liberalization in China allowed Inner Mongolian monasteries to open again. By the 1990s, Buddhist monasteries again enjoyed a qualified toleration, although the Communist party still controlled education and public discourse. After 1989, the collapse of the Soviet bloc brought full religious freedom to Mongolia proper for the first time. Old Buddhist monasteries are being rebuilt, often with funds from India, Japan, and the Mongolian government. Child-

monks are being trained in new religious schools. At the same time, Buddhism faces new competition from evangelical Christian missionaries. Among the Buriat Mongols, Christian missions are much more limited, but Western-based advocates of non-Dge lugs pa, non-traditional forms of Buddhism have brought new divisions.

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CHRISTOPHER P. ATWOOD (2005)

BUDDHISM: BUDDHISM IN TIBET

Religion pervades many aspects of Tibetan life and culture, and the dominant, institutional religious system of Tibet is Buddhism (*sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa*). The Tibetan Bon religion, in its organized, clerical dimension, is a form of Bud-

dhism whose first human teacher, Ston pa Gshen rab (Tönpa Shenrab), is always referred to by the Bon po as a buddha (*sangs rgyas*) who lived long before Śākyamuni. Bon, like the other forms of Buddhism in Tibet, embraces a wide-ranging sphere of cultural and religious activity, whose elaborate traditions of ritual, art, and learning derive from both indigenous sources and the ancient religious matrices of India, Iran, and China.

Besides the originally “foreign” traditions of Buddhism and Bon, Tibetan religions embrace a broad range of beliefs, practices, and specialist practitioners that appear to be of autochthonous origin. These may be found in both Bon po and Buddhist settings as well as in some contexts in which sectarian affiliation is left unclear. At issue are the elements of Tibetan religious life that constitute what R. A. Stein has called the “nameless religion,” in preference to the misleading designation of “popular religion.” What is at stake here is not a distinction between the beliefs of the general populace and those of the religious or social elite. In actual practice, the nameless religion, centering on the cults of local divinities and spirits, the harmony or conflict between humans, and the invisible forces with which they must interact, is the concern of persons belonging to all strata of Tibetan society, and it is in fact almost named Buddhism or Bon, depending upon the contexts in which it occurs. For the purposes of the present survey, however, the point of focus must be restricted to Tibetan Buddhism as represented in the historical and doctrinal traditions of the major Buddhist orders apart from Bon, with some attention too to the role of Buddhism in Tibetan society overall.

TIBETAN BUDDHIST BEGINNINGS. It is not clear when, exactly, Tibetans made their first contact with the Buddhist religion. Indigenous tradition holds that in the time of the legendary king of the Yar lung principality, Lha Tho tho ri (Lha Thotori, c. fourth century CE), Buddhist scriptures and images miraculously fell onto the palace or else that these objects were carried there by a central Asian Buddhist monk. Though these tales must be considered as legends, it is not implausible that some knowledge of Buddhism may have found its way to Tibet during this late period of its prehistory for the Tibetan plateau was by then surrounded on all sides by lands in which Buddhism was well established as a religious and cultural system: Nepal and India to the south, China to the east, the Silk Road states to the north, and the Iranian world to the west.

History proper begins in Tibet with the emperor Srong btsan sgam po (Songtsen Gampo, c. 617–649), who politically unified the peoples occupying the Tibetan plateau and whose armies then penetrated deep into the surrounding territories. The Tibetan system of writing was also developed at this time. The emperor’s marriage to the Chinese princess of Wencheng (d. 678) was accompanied by the installation in his capital, Lhasa, of a precious image of Śākyamuni Buddha brought from China as part of her dowry and said to have been originally manufactured in India as an exact like-

ness of the Buddha himself. The statue, known as the *Jowo* (Lord), remains Tibet’s holiest object of pilgrimage. Later accounts relate that the monarch also married a Nepalese Buddhist princess, Bhṛkuṭī, and that, inspired by the devotion of his two foreign queens, Srong btsan sgam po and the inner circle of his court embraced the Indian religion. Indeed, the emperor was regarded in later times as a Tibetan emanation of the regal *bodhisattva* of compassionate love, Avalokiteśvara.

Though Srong btsan sgam po may have extended some degree of official tolerance to Buddhism, at least in order to accommodate his Chinese bride and her court, it is unlikely that the alien faith made much progress in Tibet before another half century or more had passed. In the time of the ruler Khri ’Dus srong (Trhi Düsöng, d. 704), a temple was founded in the region of Gling, in far eastern Tibet, perhaps in connection with military campaigns in the southeastern part of the Tibetan Empire, aimed at subjugating the Buddhist kingdom of Nanzhao (in modern Yunnan). Nevertheless, it was only during the reign of Khri ’Dus srong’s noted successor Khri Lde gtsug btsan (Trhi Detsuksen, 704–755) that there is clear evidence of Buddhist advances in central Tibet. Once again, it was a Chinese princess who played an instrumental role in supporting the faith.

The princess of Jincheng arrived in Tibet in 710, two years before her then six-year-old husband-to-be was granted his regal title. She is said to have been much saddened by the absence of Buddhist funerary rites for the deceased nobility and so introduced the Chinese Buddhist custom of conducting rites for the dead during a period of seven weeks of mourning. This practice later gave rise to the belief, famed in such works as the so-called *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, that forty-nine days intervene between death and rebirth. The princess also invited to central Tibet Khotanese monks, who formed the first community of the *saṃgha* in that land. However, following the death of the princess in 739, probably due to an outbreak of the plague, there was a sharp anti-Buddhist reaction, and the foreign monks were expelled.

The last years of Khri Lde gtsug btsan’s reign were marked by grave factional conflict among the nobility, resulting finally in the monarch’s assassination. When his thirteen-year-old son was placed on the throne in 755, the factions dominating the court were implacably hostile to Buddhism. The young emperor, Khri Srong lde’u btsan (Trhi Songdetsen, 742–c. 797), nevertheless became imperial Tibet’s greatest ruler as well as an unparalleled Buddhist benefactor. In the monarch’s own surviving edicts, it was written that during the early years of his reign Tibet faced severe epidemics, afflicting both humans and livestock. When no other viable solution appeared, he rescinded the ban on the practice of Buddhist rites and matters rapidly turned for the better. As a result, he himself adopted the Buddhist religion and undertook to study its teachings in depth. His conversion took place in 762, when he was just twenty years of age.

It is sometimes thought that the adoption of Buddhism by the Tibetan court pacified the formerly warlike Tibetan people and thus contributed to the decline and fall of the empire. Research, however, makes clear that Tibet continued aggressive policies of imperial expansion long after Buddhism became a key aspect of Tibetan imperial ideology. Buddhism, in this context, provided the empire with the symbolic means to represent itself throughout its domains and to its neighbors as embodying a universal spiritual and political order.

Khri Srong lde'u btsan went on to construct Tibet's first Buddhist monastery, Bsam yas (Samye, c. 779), and invited the learned Indian monk Śāntarakṣita to ordain the first officially recognized Tibetan Buddhist monks. Henceforth, the Tibetan Buddhist monastic community adhered to the Vinaya of the Indian Mūlasarvāstivāda order as the basis for its monastic code. The court also sponsored the translation of Buddhist canonical scriptures, and the hundreds of texts translated into Tibetan by the imperial translation committees may be counted among the greatest achievements of the art of translation in world history. The Tibetan translation canon, later organized into the complementary collections of the *Kanjur* (*bka' gyur*, "translated scriptures") and *Tanjur* (*bstan gyur*, "translated commentaries"), preserves numerous Indian and Chinese texts now unavailable elsewhere.

The foundation of Bsam yas is said also to have involved the intercession of Padmasambhava, a renowned Tantric adept from Oḍḍiyāna in northern India, whose services were required to quell the hostile spirits and divinities of Tibet and to win their allegiance to Buddhism. Together, the king Khri Srong lde'u btsan, the monk Śāntarakṣita, and the adept Padmasambhava are popularly revered as the trinity of the Tibetan conversion and represent three of the major constituents of the Tibetan Buddhist world: patron, monk, and Tantric adept.

During the 780s, Khri Srong lde'u btsan's armies conquered Dunhuang, a major center of Chinese Buddhism. The Chinese Chan master Moheyan was invited to central Tibet and became involved in a debate or discussion at Bsam yas with Śāntarakṣita's disciple, the Indian philosopher Kamalaśīla. Their debate may well have led to a draw, but later tradition reviles Moheyan as representing an irrational doctrine of mystical intuition and regards Kamalaśīla's emphasis upon the gradual cultivation of the virtues of a *bodhisattva* as the enduring paradigm to be emulated by Tibetan Buddhists. The Tibetan occupation of Dunhuang in any event broadened Tibet's relations with Chinese Buddhism. The preservation there of numerous Tibetan manuscripts, which first became known in Europe through the work of the British explorer Marc Aurel Stein in 1907, provides the richest source of Tibetan documentation for the religious life of the late first millennium.

DECLINE AND RENAISSANCE. Under Khri Srong lde'u btsan's successors, Khri Lde srong btsan (r. 804–815) and Khri Ral pa can (Trhi Relpacen, r. 815–838), Buddhist monasteries

and schools continued to flourish with royal support. In the reign of U'i dum btsan (Üdumtsen, popularly known as Glang Dar ma [Lang Darma], "Ox Dharma," 838–842), state sponsorship of the monasteries was reduced or withdrawn, perhaps for fiscal reasons. Later tradition, however, recounts that there was a persecution of Buddhism culminating in Glang Dar ma's assassination in 842 by the Buddhist monk Lha lung Dpal gyi rdo rje (Lhalung Pelgi Dorje). The collapse of the Tibetan Empire soon followed, and Tibet remained without central authority for a full four hundred years. Though much of Buddhist activity was curtailed, some traditions of study and practice nevertheless survived, and the Tantric traditions appear actually to have flourished following the empire's fall. Monastic Buddhism, however, virtually disappeared in central Tibet for more than a century and was preserved among Tibetans solely in what had been the empire's far eastern districts, in the modern Chinese provinces of Qinghai and Gansu. It was here, at some time during the mid-tenth century, that a young Bon po converted and received Buddhist ordination. Known to posterity as Bla chen Dgongs pa rab gsal (Lachen Gongpa Rapsel), the "great lama whose spirit was clear," he later ordained a group of seekers from central and western Tibet, thus sparking the late-tenth-century monastic revival movement that came to be called the "later promulgation of the teaching" (*bstan pa phyi dar*).

Tibet had now entered a new period of economic and political development and change. Throughout much of the Tibetan world, local lords struggled for supremacy, and religious authority was no less contested than temporal power. Seekers and adventurers looked for authoritative sources of Buddhist teaching in India and Nepal, traveling there in search of *gurus*, scriptures, and esoteric lore. These developments were particularly prominent in western Tibet, where the great translator Rin chen bzang po (Rinchen Zangpo, 958–1055) was patronized by the devout monarch of the Guge Kingdom, Ye shes 'od (Yeshe-ö), who was concerned to purify Tibetan Buddhism from what he regarded as the corrupt forms of Tantrism that had emerged during the post-imperial period. At the royal monastery of Tho ling, one of a number of religious establishments newly founded in Guge's domains, a translation academy was created, where Indian Buddhist scholars were invited to collaborate with Rin chen bzang po and his disciples. The Tibetan Buddhist translations, particularly of Tantric materials, produced from this time on became known as the "new translations" (*gsar gyur*) in contradistinction to the "former translations" (*snga gyur*), whose Tantric texts some believed to be apocryphal or corrupt. Tho ling continued to flourish long after Ye shes 'od's decease, and in 1042 his successor Byang chub 'od (Changcup-ö) invited the renowned Bengali scholar and adept Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna, known to posterity as Atīśa, to teach there. Three years later Atīśa traveled to central Tibet, where he continued to augment his Tibetan following until his death at Snye thang, not far from Lhasa, in 1054.

Atiśa appears in Tibetan accounts to have been an enthusiastic, generous, and saintly teacher, austere but at the same time humorous and good-natured, learned but more concerned with the quality of practice than with scholarship per se. His successors, above all those affiliated with the line of his lay disciple 'Brom ston Rgyal ba'i 'byung gnas (Dromtön, 1004–1064), came to be known as Bka' gdams pa (Kadampa), "adherents of the scriptures and precepts," the first such named Tibetan Buddhist order. 'Brom ston founded the seat of the order at the monastery of Rwa sgren (Reting), to the north of Lhasa, in 1057. Buddhist philosophical education came to flourish at some Bka' gdams pa centers as well. Especially notable in this regard was the monastery of Gsang phu (Sangphu), founded in 1071, where Rngog Blo ldan shes rab (Ngok Loden Sherab, 1059–1109) established a formal curriculum emphasizing debate and scholastic study, which formed the model for all later Tibetan monastic education.

The renewal of Buddhist activity was marked by intermittent tensions due to a variety of factors: competing lines of transmission, regional and clan affiliations, relations between preexisting Tibetan Buddhist traditions and newly imported Indian teachings, orientations favoring monastic scholarship versus Tantrism and yoga, and competition for patronage among them. It was in this setting that the *guru*, or lama (*bla ma*), began to emerge as a focal point of religious and political authority. Though foreigners have sometimes followed the Chinese in using the word *lama* to refer to Tibetan monks in general, it is a term that retains for Tibetans a special reference to the religious teacher who guides the spiritual life of the individual and often the practical life of the community as well.

Despite the reticence evinced by some factions toward aspects of Tantrism, particularly ritualized sex and violence, it was precisely during this same period that new efforts were made to translate and transmit Buddhist Tantric traditions. These efforts moreover reflected important changes within the Indian Buddhist Tantrism itself: roughly, a shift to systems emphasizing internal yoga over external ritual, which were often strongly eroticized in symbolism and sometimes in practice as well. Indian Tantric adepts active at this time claimed to possess particularly efficacious means for the swift attainment of spiritual powers of various kinds, including and culminating in enlightenment. Hence, the claims on the part of Tibetan masters to continue the authoritative transmission of such esoteric knowledge in Tibet came to play a special role in authenticating new sources of power, prestige, and authority.

Though the age of the new Tantric translations is generally said to have begun with Rin chen bzang po, it is one of his junior contemporaries who is regarded as the first great proponent of these innovative forms of Indian Buddhist Tantrism. 'Brog mi Śākya ye shes (Drokmi, 993–1050) was, like most who entered the *samgha* in Tibet during the late tenth century and early eleventh century, ordained within

monastic traditions stemming from the indigenous tenth-century monastic revival. But after years of study in Nepal and India, he established his own monastic center and translation academy at Myu gu lung (Nyugulung), where he collaborated with the Indian Tantric master Gayadhara. His most renowned contribution to later Tibetan Buddhism was the transmission of a system of Tantrism and yoga based upon the *Hevajratāntra* that came to be the central esoteric tradition of the Sa skya pa (Sakyapa) order, founded by the aristocratic 'Khon (Khön) household in 1073.

Among those who studied with 'Brog mi was Mar pa Chos kyi blo gros (Marpa, 1012–1096), who was sent to study translation when his parents found him otherwise impossible to control. Eventually he rebelled against his teacher's exactions, for 'Brog mi's tutelage did not come cheap, and set out to make his own way among the celebrated masters of India. Famed as the leading Tibetan successor of the renowned Indian *siddhas* Nāropa and Maitrīpa, he attracted many disciples, who, with their successors, came to be known as Bka' brgyud pa (Kagyüpa), "adherents of the oral lineage." Most famous among them was Mi la ras pa (Milarepa, 1040–1123), the great Tibetan mystical poet. The latter's disciple Sgam po pa (Gampopa, 1079–1153) sought to harmonize the esoteric teachings of Mar pa's tradition with the ethical instructions of the Bka' gdams pa, thus "mingling the two streams." The several monastic orders of the Bka' brgyud pa stem from among his disciples and played an important role in later Tibetan religious and political life.

The new infusion of Indian Buddhist teaching during this period gave rise to a large number of new Tibetan Buddhist sects and schools, focusing on both philosophical and Tantric teachings. At the same time, the reassertion of the Bon and Rnying ma pa (Nyingmapa) traditions was advanced by means of rediscovered "treasures" (*gter ma*), texts, and religious objects said to have been cached by famous teachers in ancient times and now recovered. Among the Rnying ma pa, their concealment was mostly attributed to Padmasambhava. By means of their revelation, Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer (Nyangrel Nyima Özer, 1124–1196) and the later "treasure revealers" (*gter ston*) elaborated an abundant and influential body of ritual, historical, and legendary literature. Here the memory of the Tibetan Empire of the seventh to ninth centuries is transformed to become a national religious myth in which the emperor Srong btsan sgam po figures as the worldly presence of the *bodhisattva* Avalokiteśvara and his Chinese and Nepalese brides as that of the savioress Tārā. Padmasambhava himself is now transfigured to become the "Precious Guru" (*Gu ru Rin po che*) of the Tibetan people overall. A famous later example of the *gter ma* literature is the so-called *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, the book of "liberation by hearing in the intermediate state" (*Bardo Thödrol*). This fourteenth-century revelation reflects in part the ancient Tibetan religious concern with the safe passage of the deceased.

LATER DEVELOPMENTS. In 1204 the Kashmiri scholar Śākyaśrī arrived in Tibet with a retinue of learned followers.

Their visit did much to catalyze a new enthusiasm for Indian scholarship. Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (Kunga Gyaltsen, 1182–1251), an heir to the 'Khon family of Sa skya and later famed as Sa skya Paṇḍita, was among those inspired to devote himself to the advancement in Tibet of Indian intellectual traditions. Contemporaneously, much of Eurasia experienced the devastating upheaval of the Mongol conquest, which had begun with the rise of Chinggis Khan (d. 1227). By the end of the third decade of the century, prophecies began to appear warning of an impending Mongol attack on Tibet. These proved true when in 1239 an army commanded by Dorta the Black swept into central Tibet, sacking the temple of Rwa sgrenḡ. The Mongols, however, withdrew without consolidating their rule in Tibet. In 1246 Sa skya Paṇḍita embarked on a mission to the Mongol ruler, Godan Khan, and remained among the Mongols until his death. His visit established a precedent for Mongol relations with Tibet and for the eventual adoption of Buddhism by the Mongols. Sa skya Paṇḍita's nephew 'Phags pa (Phakpa, 1235–1280) later became the Tibetan preceptor of Kublai Khan. As the preeminent Tibetan clergyman in the eastern Mongol Empire (the Chinese Yuan dynasty), he would be instrumental in the establishment of Sa skya pa preeminence in Tibet under the Mongols.

Members of non-Sa skya pa orders also maintained relations with the Mongol lords: examples are the second Karma pa hierarch, Karma Pakshi (1206–1283), and his successor, Karma pa III Rang byung Rdo rje (Rangjung Dorje) (1284–1339). The Karma pas, who headed one of the prominent Bka' brgyud pa orders, were instrumental in creating Tibet's unique form of ecclesiastical succession, in which a child is identified as the reborn emanation (*sprul sku*) and legal heir of a deceased master. During the period of the Mongol–Sa skya pa hegemony, Tibetan Buddhist scholastic philosophy also came into flower, thanks in part to Sa skya Paṇḍita's example. The many famous figures active during this period included the Bka' gdams pa scholiast Bcom ldan rig ral (Comden Raldri, early fourteenth century), the celebrated canonical editor Bu ston (Butön, 1290–1364), the promulgator of the Jo nang pa (Jonangpa) order's controversial “extrinsic emptiness” (*gzhan stong*) doctrine, Dol po pa (1292–1361), and the redactor of the Great Perfection system, Klong chen Rab 'byams pa (Longchen Rabjampa, 1308–1363).

Toward 1350, under the leadership of Ta'i Si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan (Tasi Changcup Gyaltsen, 1302–1364) of the Phag mo gru pa (Phakmotrupa) order, a Bka' brgyud pa offshoot, Tibet was freed from the Sa skya pa–Mongol regime. It was during the period of Phag mo gru pa dominance that followed that Rje Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (Je Tsongkhapa, 1357–1419) founded the Dga' ldan (Ganden) monastery to the east of Lhasa (1409), which emerged as the main seat of a new order, best known as Dge lugs pa (Gelukpa), the “adherents of virtue.” Though Tsong kha pa was greatly revered for his vast learning and rigorous standard of

practice, relations between his disciples and some representatives of the older orders grew increasingly contentious. The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries witnessed intensive doctrinal debate between the Dge lugs pa and their Sa skya pa and Bka' brgyud pa rivals.

The connection between Tibetan Buddhism and imperial China, which had been formed under China's Mongol rulers during the Yuan dynasty, did not come to an end after that dynasty fell in 1368. An example may be found in the relationship between one of the greatest Ming emperors, Yongle (r. 1403–1424), and the fifth Karma pa hierarch De bzhin gshegs pa (Dezhinshepa, 1384–1415). Though the Ming dynasty is often regarded as a period of Karma pa dominance in Sino-Tibetan affairs, the Ming emperors were by no means exclusive in their allegiance to a single Tibetan school. Tsong kha pa's disciple, Byams chen Chos rje (Jamchen Chöje, 1352–1435), for instance, who established Se ra Monastery near Lhasa in 1419, traveled to the Chinese capital and enjoyed an enthusiastic reception at the court, where he was showered with honors and gifts.

Throughout the fifteenth century, Tsong kha pa's successors continued to found important new monastic establishments, gathering the patronage and support of leading princes and powerful families. One of those who succeeded in this way was Dge 'dun grub (Gendündrup, 1391–1474), founder of the Bkra shis lhun po (Tashi Lhünpo) monastery in Gtsang (Tsang) province. This had significant political ramifications during the seventeenth century, when the rulers of Gtsang came to favor the Dge lugs pa's rivals, above all, the Karma pas. Dge 'dun grub and his successor, Dge 'dun rgya mtsho (Gendün Gyatso, 1476–1542), were, however, primarily famed for their learning and sanctity, and under their guidance Bkra shis lhun po soon became the preeminent Dge lugs pa institution in Gtsang and the base for the expansion of the order throughout western Tibet.

During the sixteenth century, important powers in central Tibet were allied with the Dge lugs pa, while the kings of Gtsang in the west supported hierarchs of the Bka' brgyud pa, Jo nang pa, and other orders. Dge 'dun rgya mtsho's successor, Bsod nams rgya mtsho (Sonam Gyatso, 1543–1588), at this time became a missionary to the Mongols, and on winning the allegiance of the chieftain Altan Khan (1578) of the Tumed tribe, he received the Mongolian title Dalai Lama (oceanic guru). Because the title was bestowed posthumously on his predecessors, he became the third in the line. The connection forged with the Mongols encouraged the renewed interest of the Mongolian leadership in Tibetan affairs, and in 1642 Gushri Khan of the Khoshot tribe conquered all of Tibet, establishing the fifth Dalai Lama (1617–1682) as ruler of the reunified realm. The kingdom of Gtsang was suppressed together with the religious traditions it had favored, above all the Jo nang pa, who were banned from all but a few Tibetan territories outside the sphere of the Dalai Lama's control. The government of the fifth Dalai Lama strongly supported the development of mass monasti-

cism in all parts of the country, and new Dge lugs pa establishments were founded everywhere. Many centers of the older orders and of the Bon religion were now required to become Dge lugs pa.

The fifth Dalai Lama forged Tibet's unique political system, based in principle upon a reciprocal relationship between the religious and secular branches of government (*chos srid gnyis ldan*), with the Dalai Lama or his regent directing the affairs of state. This system required that monastic hierarchs and officials be directly involved in most offices of the Tibetan government. The authority of the Great Fifth's regime was given concrete form in the imposing Potala Palace, a large complex of government offices, shrines, and residences. His tutor, the Panchen bla ma Blo bzang chos rgyan (Lozang Chögyen, 1567–1662), a distinguished scholar, rose to prominence at this time as well. Thereafter, the successive rebirths of the Panchen Lamas were recognized at Bkra shis lhun po, where they often wielded considerable political power. The Panchen Lamas were officially second in rank to, but sometimes actually rivaled, the Dalai Lamas themselves.

The Manchu rulers of China's Qing dynasty (1644–1911) became directly involved in Tibetan affairs in opposition to the renewed Mongol power in Tibet, and the fifth Dalai Lama visited the court soon after the new dynasty's inception. Tibet was soon a focal point of competition between Manchus and Mongols in their struggle for hegemony in central Asia. The controversial sixth Dalai Lama, Tshangs dbyangs rgya mtsho (Tshangyang Gyatso, 1683–1706), a libertine who preferred the company of women to the life of a monk, was forcibly removed from office and died under mysterious circumstances enroute to the Chinese capital. In 1717 the Mongolian Dzungar tribe invaded Tibet, bringing renewed civil war and intersectarian violence. During the 1720s, the Manchus sought to consolidate their rule over large parts of the eastern Tibetan provinces of Amdo and Kham. Leading Dge lugs pa hierarchs from Amdo, such as the Qianlong emperor's teacher Lcang skya Rol pa'i rdo rje (Jangkya Rölpe Dorje, 1717–1786), came to play an important role in the religious affairs of the Manchu Empire.

The political turmoil in central Tibet throughout much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries contributed to a remarkable shift in Tibet's cultural geography. Whereas central Tibet had been, throughout the preceding centuries, the unrivaled heart of Tibetan religious life, it became now the tendency for masters of eastern Tibetan origin to devote much of their energy to activities in or near their native districts. The eastward displacement of cultural activity had many causes and consequences. Thus, for example, the civil wars of the seventeenth century made an exile of the tenth Karma pa, Chos dbyings rdo rje (Chöying Dorje, 1605–1674), a talented painter and patron of the arts, and led him to spend much of his career in the far southeast of Tibet, in what is now Yunnan. The patronage of his order by important princes in Kham encouraged his followers to regard the east as their true base, so that in succeeding centuries the

major center of learning and culture in the Karma pa order was Dpal spungs (Pelpung) monastery, in the eastern principality of Sde dge (Derge). With the patronage of the rulers of Sde dge, eastern Tibetan Karma pa and Sa skya pa masters contributed to the foundation of Tibet's greatest publishing house, the Sde dge Printery, whose eighteenth-century edition of the Tibetan Buddhist canon is considered one of the masterworks of traditional Tibetan printing. At the same time, some of the Dge lugs pa monasteries in eastern Tibet for the first time also became important centers of learning in their own right, particularly in Amdo. The best-known examples were no doubt Sku 'bum (Kumbum), near Tsong kha pa's birthplace not far from the city of Xining (Qinghai province), and Bla brang Bkra shis 'khyil (Labrang Tashikhyil), founded by 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa (Jamyang Zhepa, 1648–1721) in southern Gansu.

Nineteenth-century Khams became home to a dynamic movement often characterized as "eclectic" or "universalist" (*Ris med*), which sought to defuse the intense sectarianism that had often plagued Tibetan Buddhism. The encyclopedic writings of 'Jam dbyangs Mkhayen brtse'i dbang po (Jamyang Khyentse, 1820–1892) and 'Jam mgon kong sprul (Jamgon Kongtrül, 1813–1899) became in some respects a new canon for the adherents of this movement. One of their disciples, Mi pham rnam rgyal (Mipham Namgyal, 1846–1912) also elaborated a new scholastic curriculum emphasizing the doctrinal standpoint of the Rnying ma pa order. Though the thirteenth Dalai Lama (1876–1933) was sympathetic to the goals of the eclectic movement, some factions within the Dge lugs pa leadership were not. Prominent among them was Pha bong kha pa Bde chen Snying po (Phabongkhapa Dechen Nyingpo, 1878–1941), whose visions of the spirit Rdo rje shugs ldan (Dorje Shukden) seem to have entailed a commitment to oppose actively the other schools of Tibetan Buddhism and the Bon religion. There has been, as a result, a continuing legacy of sectarian dispute among Tibetans to the early twenty-first century.

ESSENTIAL BELIEFS AND DOCTRINES. The several orders and schools of Tibetan Buddhism have a great many particular doctrines and precepts, which impart to them each a distinctive character. Here, however, only salient features of the common heritage of Tibetan Buddhism will be considered.

Like many Buddhist traditions, Tibetan Buddhism emphasizes the impermanence of conditioned reality and the resulting inevitability of suffering and death. Living beings who have not achieved *nirvāṇa* (*myang 'das*), that is, the enlightenment of a buddha, are subject to a perpetual, painful round of rebirth, or *samsāra* (*'khor ba*), their condition in any given lifetime, whether human, divine, or infernal, being determined by the impetus of their past meritorious and demeritorious *karma* (*las*). Tibetan Buddhism therefore stresses the necessity of gaining merit (*bsod nams*) through donations to monks and religious institutions, offering of lamps and incense, recitation of scriptures, performance of prostrations and circumambulations, "ransoming" of animals from the

butcher, and many other types of religiously valued actions. One must turn from worldly activities to religion by taking refuge in the Three Precious Jewels (*dkon mchog gsum*): the Buddha, his teaching (*chos*), and the religious community (*dge 'dun*). Often one's lama is added to this universal Buddhist trinity as a fourth refuge.

Tibetan Buddhists are encouraged not to seek *nirvāṇa* for themselves alone but to cultivate compassion (*snying rje*) for all living beings. One is to embark upon the Great Vehicle, the Mahāyāna (*theg chen*), that is, the path of a *bodhisattva* (*byang chub sems dpa'*), and to develop the virtues of charity, self-restraint, patience, diligence, meditation, and insight. This last is, above all, insight into the radically contingent nature of conditioned things, that is, their emptiness (*stong nyid*). To comprehend this difficult concept through reason is among the central concerns of Tibetan Buddhist philosophy and is a source of considerable debate.

MONASTIC INSTITUTIONS AND EDUCATION. The institutional heart of Tibetan Buddhism is the monastery. Mass monasticism was encouraged in traditional Tibetan society, particularly after the consolidation of political power by the fifth Dalai Lama. This was justified ideologically by the notion that the monk was in an especially privileged position to avoid evil and to achieve merit, so that by maximizing monasticism, the maximum merit accrued to Tibetan society as a whole and especially to those individuals and families who most contributed to the monastic system by dedicating sons to the religious life and who used their wealth to support religious activities. Nomadic groups in the east often felt this to be a particularly urgent matter, for the merit earned by supporting good monks and their monasteries was believed to counterbalance the burden of sin that one acquired through actions prohibited by the system of religious ethics, especially the slaughter of animals, that were nevertheless unavoidable in a nomadic livelihood. Although worldly life was thought to be inevitably ensnared in various evils, a family could still better itself spiritually by committing some sons to the clergy. And if those sons achieved religious distinction, this could sometimes also impact favorably upon the status of the family concerned.

The monastery fostered a concentration of cultural resources, serving as a center for education and for the cultivation of the arts (though in most cases, only a minority of the monks participated in these pursuits). Significantly too the monastery absorbed surplus labor. Whenever the rate of fertility outpaced the expansion of economic activity, monasticism provided a socially valued alternative to production. For religious girls and women, nunneries also existed, though nuns appear to have been less numerous than monks and seldom had access to resources for more than a rudimentary education.

Most monks entered the monastery as children and did so at the wish of their parents. Such children were granted the essential vows of the Buddhist novitiate and became eligible to receive full ordination as *bhikṣu* (*dge slong*) only in later

adolescence. Rudimentary alphabetization seems to have been relatively widespread among monks and nuns, though the numbers able or inclined to pursue a higher education in Buddhist philosophy, or in such disciplines as medicine, art, or astrology, were few. The majority of the monks participated when possible in prayer services sponsored by lay patrons, who offered tea, butter, grain, and cash to the assembled congregation. Monks also pursued economic or administrative activities required for their own support or for that of the monastic community. They therefore were regularly involved in commerce and in various trades. Larger monasteries had their own complex bureaucracies, in which some offices were filled according to merit and ability and others occupied by incarnates (*sprul sku*) groomed for the task since childhood.

Some monasteries housed colleges where advanced studies could be pursued by those who were motivated to do so. Aspirant monk-scholars sometimes traveled for months across the whole of the Tibetan world to enter an especially famous college. Besides the economic and ritual functions of the monastery therefore, almost the entire apparatus of Tibetan formal education was concentrated within the monasteries as well. Literacy in traditional Tibet was a preeminently religious affair, and so, not surprisingly, the clerical services of trained monks were required by the old Lhasa government and by the administrations of the eastern Tibetan principalities as well.

It has become customary to characterize the intellectual life of the Tibetan monastic colleges as a type of scholasticism. From the late eleventh century onward, the Tibetan colleges emphasized a highly rationalized approach to Buddhist doctrine, over and against one dominated exclusively by faith. The curriculum of the colleges required the careful study of Indian Buddhist philosophical writings, with the epistemological and logical works of Dharmakīrti (c. 600) supplying the major methodological organ. Other required topics included the monastic code or Vinaya (*'dul ba*), the "meta-doctrine" or Abhidharma (*chos mngon pa*), the Perfection of Wisdom or Prajñāpāramitā (*phar phyin*), and the teaching of the Middle Way (*dbu ma*), that is, the Mādhyamika dialectic of the Indian philosopher Nāgārjuna. In the Dge lugs pa colleges, those who completed this curriculum were awarded the title of *dge bshes*, "spiritual benefactor" (equivalent to the Sanskrit *kalyāṇamitra*).

Among the most contentious of topics for doctrinal debate was the relationship between the Mādhyamika teaching of emptiness and the positive conception of a "buddha nature" pervading living beings and forming the basis for their potential to achieve enlightenment. While some interpreted the latter as just a metaphorical description of emptiness, the proponents of "extrinsic emptiness," following the teaching of the Jo nang pa master Dol po pa, argued that the absolute, in its proper nature, was not intrinsically empty at all but embodied instead the plenitude of the attributes of the Buddha's enlightenment.

TANTRISM AND YOGA. Tibetan Buddhism was especially influenced by the esoteric Indian teachings of Vajrayāna, the “Vajra Vehicle” (*rdo rje theg pa*), so-called because the primary symbol of this branch of Mahāyāna Buddhism is the *vajra* (*rdo rje*), a ritual implement at once symbolizing the diamond-like clarity and unalterability of mind as emptiness and its lightning-like brilliance. Vajrayāna Buddhism has its own authoritative texts, called Tantras (*rgyud*), which are primarily manuals of ritual and esoteric lore. Among the major topics treated in the Tantras is *abhiṣeka* (*dbang*), the consecration or “empowerment” whereby a disciple is initiated into a sphere of meditation called a *maṇḍala* (*dkyil 'khor*), which is most often represented as a heavenly palace. This is the residence of the deity, who is the focal point of the initiate’s meditation and who is invoked by means of special formulas called *mantras* (*sngags*). The central deity may be male, female—in which case she is sometimes referred to as a *dākini* (*mkha' 'gro ma*), a term also used to describe women who are Tantric adepts—or a couple in union and is often surrounded by a retinue of divine attendants, arranged symmetrically throughout the *maṇḍala*. Avalokiteśvara (*spyān ras gzigs*) in particular was identified as the national patron-deity and became the focus of a much-elaborated cult. Of central importance is the recitation of Avalokiteśvara’s famous six-syllable *mantra*, *Oṃ Maṇipadme Hūṃ*, invoking the divinity as the “bearer of jewel and lotus.” The ubiquitousness of this formula in Tibetan religion—it is often uttered aloud while turning a prayer wheel containing the *mantra* written many times on a paper scroll—was noted even by medieval European visitors to Tibet.

The systems of meditation taught in the Tantras are referred to as yoga (*rnal 'byor*), or “union,” for yoga is a discipline said to unite the adept with the realization of ultimate reality. This unification of the enlightened mind and the absolute is symbolized by the depiction of deities as couples in sexual embrace. Besides those types of yoga concerned with the visualization of *maṇḍala* and deity and the recitation of the *mantra*, there are also more advanced disciplines involving visualizations and exercises in which one’s body is conceived as a network of subtle channels and energies, the skillful manipulation of which is believed to hasten the adept’s progress toward enlightenment and also to lead to the acquisition of uncanny, magical abilities: clairvoyance, miraculous flight, and the resurrection of the dead. These advanced techniques of yogas are often described in terms of six doctrines (*chos drug*):

1. Inner Heat (*gtum mo*), whereby the adept learns to master the subtle physical energies of the body;
2. Body of Apparition (*sgyu lus*), through which the illusion-like nature of experience becomes known;
3. Dream (*rmi lam*), whereby one achieves the ability to consciously explore the possibilities revealed during dreams;
4. Radiant Light (*'od gsal*), referring to the luminous dimension of the mind;

5. Transference (*'pho ba*), the means to cause one’s consciousness to leave the body abruptly at the moment of death and to seek rebirth in a pure realm;
6. Intermediate State (*bar do*), which here refers primarily to the state of consciousness in the course of migration between death and rebirth.

The first four doctrines enable one to attain enlightenment swiftly during this very lifetime, the last two to achieve it at death. Adepts who have attained the goals of this esoteric path are called *siddha* (*grub thob*), “accomplished” or “perfected,” because they have attained *siddhi* (*dnogs grub*), the mundane or supermundane powers and realizations that are especially cultivated on the path of the Vajrayāna.

The highest teachings of Tibetan Tantric Buddhism are those relating to the abstract realization of the ultimate nature of mind. For the Rnying ma pa tradition, these are represented primarily by the Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*) teaching, while for the Bka' brgyud pa and Dge lugs pa, the Great Seal (*phyag chen*) system in the tradition of Mar pa is preeminent. Although there are many special points of emphasis, particular to each of these approaches to the absolute, the words of Klong chen Rab 'byams pa summarize their common orientation:

The luminous nucleus is the absolute truth, permanent, stable, not subject to change or transformation, quiescent, undeceiving, the essence of gnosis that accords with the ground from beginning to end and is free from all the limits of intellectual elaboration. It should be known to be by nature neither stained, nor being stained, nor about to be stained by any of the principles of mind or mental events, and like unto the taintless orb of the sun.

PILGRIMAGES, FESTIVALS, AND RITUAL CYCLES. Among the many characteristic religious activities in which virtually all Tibetans at some time or other participate, pilgrimage is particularly prominent. Pilgrimage was traditionally one of the central phenomena contributing to, and perhaps even to some extent engendering, the cultural unity of Tibet. Pilgrimage, among other things, promoted trade in both goods and information. It brought persons from distant parts of the Tibetan world into direct contact with one another and thus militated to some extent against divisive regional tendencies.

Among the many famous Tibetan places of pilgrimage, most Tibetans regarded the religious shrines of Lhasa to be particularly important to visit. There, in the ancient Tibetan capital, they could behold and be blessed by contact with the Jowo Śākyamuni image residing in the central temple that was thought to have been brought from China by the princess of Wencheng. The pilgrims who flocked to Lhasa brought offerings for the temples and monks and also frequently engaged in trade to finance their journeys. Thus, besides its purely religious significance, pilgrimage also came to play an important role in the Tibetan economy.

The capital, however, was not the sole center of pilgrimage. In fact, there was a sort of national pilgrimage network

in Tibet, whose routes, extending the length and breadth of the country, joined great and small temples and shrines as well as caves, mountains, valleys, and lakes that were imbued with sacred significance. In far western Tibet, the greatest pilgrimage center was undoubtedly Mount Kailash, regarded popularly as being substantially identical with the world-mountain, the *axis mundi*. As such it was a major destination for both Hindus and Buddhists. Other important centers of pilgrimage included Tsa ri, where a great procession that convened once every twelve years was said to purge even the taint of murder, and Mchod rten Nyi ma (Chöten Nyima), to the north of Sikkim, where incest pollution could be cleansed.

Related in some respects to the pilgrimage cycles are the festivals of Tibetan Buddhism. The celebration of the Buddha's enlightenment (*sa ga zla ba*, equivalent to the Vesakh of Theravāda Buddhism) is marked by fasting and communal prayer. The Tibetan New Year requires the performance of extensive rites on behalf of the protective divinities and is the occasion for the convening of the Great Prayer Festival (*smon lam chen mo*) in Lhasa. The tenth day of each lunar month is consecrated to the *guru* and, among the Rnying ma pa in particular, is a time for communal feast rituals and sometimes also the elaborate masked dances known as *'cham*.

TIBETAN BUDDHISM IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA. When the course of events in China turned decisively in favor of the communists after World War II, some Tibetan modernists felt that the revolutionary programs of the Communist Party offered them the best opportunity for modernization and reform. An example was the celebrated monk-scholar Rdo bis Shes rab rgya mtsho (Dobi Sherab Gyatso, 1884–1968), who after allying himself with the Chinese Nationalists during the 1930s, later turned to the Communists. In 1952, two years after China assumed control of Tibet, he became the first chairman of the Chinese Buddhist Association. His attempt to find a common ground between the policies of the party and the interests of Tibetan Buddhism came to represent in some measure the norm among educated Tibetan clergy during the 1950s, when both the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama embraced the hopeful idea that Mao Zedong's revolution had room for their religion and indeed that the ethical concerns of Mahāyāna Buddhism for universal well-being would be realized by the dawning socialist order.

Soon, however, the promise of a harmonious relationship between Chinese Communism and Tibetan Buddhism came undone. As the monasteries were considered by China's leadership to be among the centers of resistance to the implementation of Communist programs and also to be giving shelter to rebels in the eastern Tibetan province of Kham, they became increasingly prone to direct attack, and in 1956 a number of eastern Tibetan monasteries were subjected to aerial bombardment. These circumstances were deeply shocking to Tibetan sensibilities and led to the flight of large numbers of eastern Tibetans to central Tibet. With

the events surrounding the Lhasa Uprising of 1959 and the subsequent flight of the Dalai Lama to India, the steadily worsening relations between the Tibetan Buddhist establishment and the Chinese government spun altogether out of control. The Dalai Lama and many religious Tibetans fled into exile in India, and many who remained behind were persecuted and imprisoned. By 1962 both the tenth Panchen Lama and Shes rab rgya mtsho, the two leading Tibetan clerics remaining in China, openly expressed their disillusionment and were subsequently dismissed from their posts. The assault on religion intensified throughout the 1960s and during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), when all but a few of the thousands of Tibetan temples and monasteries were razed, their artistic treasures and libraries destroyed or plundered. Tens of thousands of monks and nuns were forced to undergo "reeducation," and many perished under extraordinarily harsh conditions or suffered prolonged maltreatment in prison.

The conclusion of the Cultural Revolution and the consolidation of Chinese power by Deng Xiaoping in 1978 brought great changes to cultural and religious affairs. A visit to Tibet in 1980 by the party secretary Hu Yaobang clearly signaled that cultural redevelopment was now possible. In view of new policy directives, a dramatic revival of Tibetan Buddhism now ensued, which took many different forms. At its most basic level, it meant that ordinary believers could now engage publicly once more in a variety of devotional and ritual activities: performance of prostrations, circumambulations, offerings, and prayers at temples and other sacred sites; erecting prayer flags and stone walls with prayers carved upon them; copying and distributing prayer books and religious icons. The small number of temples and monasteries that had survived in more or less usable condition began to be refurbished and reopened, and efforts were made to rebuild some that had been destroyed. As the monasteries reopened, the few aged monks who remained were joined by numbers of young new recruits. The reinception of religious festivals and pilgrimages was also a development welcomed by both monks and laypersons.

The revival that began in the late twentieth century continued into the twenty-first century and even attracted non-Tibetan, Chinese converts to Tibetan Buddhism, but it has nevertheless been marked by repeated tensions with the Chinese political leadership. Most dramatically, a series of demonstrations in support of the exiled Dalai Lama, staged by monks in Lhasa beginning in 1987, led to rioting that culminated in the declaration of a state of emergency in 1989. Subsequently, the government's view of the Dalai Lama steadily hardened, and after a period during which the expression of purely religious devotion to him was tolerated, any explicit manifestation of loyalty to him became treated as fundamentally political in nature.

In 1989 the highest-ranking Buddhist hierarch who had remained in Tibet after 1959, the Panchen Lama, died suddenly, and his passing led to new disputes between Chinese

authorities and the partisans of the Dalai Lama. This received worldwide attention when, on May 14, 1995, the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government-in-exile announced the discovery of the young incarnate Panchen in Tibet. The Chinese responded harshly: the acting abbot of Tashi Lhünpo monastery, Chadrel Rinpoche, was arrested in Chengdu, Sichuan, and Gendun Choekyi Nyima, the young boy who had been recognized as the Panchen Lama by the Dalai Lama, was detained with his family. Shortly thereafter, his recognition was rejected by the Chinese government, and a lottery was held on November 29, 1995, to choose a new Panchen Lama from among several officially approved candidates.

The Dalai Lama, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate in 1989, remained of course the best-known symbol of Tibetan aspirations in the world at large and also for Tibetans themselves. During the late 1980s and the early 1990s, photographs of the Dalai Lama were so ubiquitous as to be seen plentifully in temples, homes, shops, and markets. In reaction to the Panchen Lama affair, the Communist Party launched a campaign in April 1996 to remove such images from view, particularly from public and otherwise high prestige venues, such as schools and the homes and offices of Tibetan officials. With the beginning of the new millennium, the Dalai Lama's government-in-exile and the Chinese leadership cautiously resumed efforts to settle their differences through negotiation. These seem to have made little progress so far, and Buddhism in the Tibetan autonomous region remains hampered by severe restrictions placed on religious recruitment, livelihood, and education.

SEE ALSO Bon; Buddhism, Schools of, article on Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhism; Dalai Lama; Dge lugs pa; Mahāsiddhas; Pilgrimage, article on Tibetan Pilgrimage.

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MATTHEW T. KAPSTEIN (2005)

BUDDHISM: BUDDHISM IN CHINA

First imported from India and Central Asia around the first century CE, Buddhism in China is an evolving hybrid of Chinese and foreign elements. As a social organization with significant implications for the proper ordering of the world, Buddhism has had a long, complicated relationship with the Chinese state, both the imperial dynastic system and the modern Republican and Communist states that began in the twentieth century. Buddhist conceptions of rebirth and salvation, mythologies of buddhas, *bodhisattvas*, and other figures as well as Buddhist art and temple life have attracted people from all social classes. Philosophers have wrestled with Buddhist understandings of emptiness, enlightenment, and sagehood. Buddhist rituals, formed partly in relation to Daoist traditions, are diffused throughout much of Chinese popular religion. Even during those eras when the institutional presence of Buddhism in the form of temples, monks, and nuns has been small, its influence on Chinese culture has remained strong.

A HYBRID OF CHINESE AND FOREIGN. Both in its origin and later development, Buddhism in China constituted a mixture of foreign and native elements. The first Buddhists in China were immigrants. Before entering the Chinese Empire ruled by the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), they grew up in lands to the west: parts of India ruled by the Kushan dynasty (an Indo-Scythian ethnic group, called Yuezhi in Chinese, that ruled from 128 BCE to 450 CE), and smaller Central Asian kingdoms like Parthia and Sogdiana. The texts they memorized, or in some cases carried with them, were composed in Sanskrit, forms of *prakrit*, or other Indo-Iranian languages of the Silk Road. When these travelers first arrived in Dunhuang (modern Gansu province, China), the westernmost garrison town in Chinese territory, and proceeded to the capital city of Luoyang (Henan province), they probably could not speak Chinese. Before they developed proficiency in the spoken language, they relied on translators. Thus to explain their beliefs to their Chinese hosts, foreign monks depended on local go-betweens, Chinese-born interpreters whose cultural presuppositions inevitably influenced how they articulated what their guests were trying to say. The first Buddhists in China had even less control over how their message was conveyed in written form. Most of them never mastered Classical Chinese, which differs significantly from the spoken language in both grammar and lexicon (comparable to the difference between Latin and the Romance vernacular languages). For the first several centuries, translation was usually a process conducted by a committee with numerous overseers, none of whom was capable of judging the result against the original.

The vocabulary developed by foreign monks and their local assistants advertises this mixture of cultural influences. Some foreign terms were translated by Chinese words that had a preestablished frame of meaning. *Dharma*, for instance, was rendered by the Chinese word for “law,” “principle,” or “method” (*fǎ*). Another translation strategy was to use Chinese words that mimicked the sound of the foreign

word but made no sense in Chinese. *Buddha*, for instance, was pronounced in Chinese as *Fotuo* (or abbreviated as *Fo*), which attempts to reproduce the phonetics of the original Indic word. The significance of the second method of translation is that Chinese Buddhists chose to maintain an audible trace of the non-Chinese nature of their religion.

Chinese Buddhists often celebrate that theirs is a foreign faith, meaning that its founder and earliest patriarchs lived outside of China. These facts are both undeniable and misleading. Already in the Han dynasty, Buddhist monks were criticized for worshipping a foreign god, following doctrines unattested in the Chinese classics, dressing in barbarian fashion, and destroying the foundation of the Chinese kinship system. Rather than disavowing their foreign origins, Buddhists responded by claiming that even Chinese figures like Laozi (sixth century BCE) had left China to gain enlightenment as a disciple of Śākyamuni Buddha. They explained that the meaning of the Buddha’s golden speech could be accurately conveyed in Chinese translation, that monks followed the more noble among the barbarian habits, and that the ultimate devotion to one’s parents was bringing Buddhist salvation to one’s ancestors rather than begetting offspring. The controversy over the foreign nature of Chinese Buddhism was never fully settled. *Native* and *foreign* (or the various words authors used for *Chinese* and *Indian*) were continually redefined in relation to each other; they were rhetorical claims rather than fixed identities.

The interdependence of the notions of India and China also casts doubt on the model of Sinification (making Chinese), often used to conceptualize the history of Chinese Buddhism. In general terms it might make sense to say that over a span of two thousand years, Buddhism in China was made more Chinese, or that the tradition was uprooted from Indian soil and transplanted in China. The problem is that the two parties engaged in this imagined process—“India” and “China”—were themselves undergoing constant change. One of the more interesting features of Chinese Buddhism is that it provides such a helpful lens for bringing this history of intercultural redefinition into better focus. The metaphor of transplantation is faulty because the two soils in which the plant grew were not inert media or simply defined cultures. Rather, they were city-states, kingdoms, and empires the definition of which was changing and often contested. Furthermore models of Sinification, transmission, and transplanting assume that the religion transmitted between cultures was sufficiently stable to be identified as an Indian tradition at one moment and a Chinese tradition at another point in time. Yet neither in India nor in the various oasis empires of Central Asia was Buddhism defined by a single canon or governing body. In China too Buddhism might best be considered plural rather than singular. The hybrid nature of Chinese Buddhism thus means that the model of Buddhism being made more Chinese is simplistic at best and misleading at worst.

BUDDHISM AND POLITICAL AUTHORITY. In both theory and practice, the Buddhist movement in China intersected fre-

quently with political power. Even when Buddhists defined their ultimate purpose as the achieving of *nirvāṇa* (literally, “extinction”) or enlightenment, they made strong claims about the social world in which that goal was pursued. Like Buddhists elsewhere, Chinese Buddhists considered morality to be the foundation of religious practice. Most Chinese authors appreciated that traditional Buddhist thought accepted the government and social order as givens. Chinese audiences were also receptive to some of the standard Buddhist models for political authority, especially the ideal of the *cakravartī-rāja* or “wheel-turning king,” the monarch who achieves dominion over the entire world through his support of the *dharma*. King Aśoka, who ruled the Mauryan Empire in India from circa 270 BCE to 230 BCE and sent relics and monks abroad to disseminate Buddhism, was a living symbol for some Chinese emperors. Such ideals were a powerful supplement and at times an alternative to the Confucian symbolism of imperial rule. Buddhist models of divine kingship were especially attractive to groups, such as female emperors and rulers of non-Chinese origin, who were normally left out of traditional political theory.

Despite their differences, the paradigms of imperial sovereignty offered by Buddhists, Daoists, and Confucians all stipulated that the emperor should behave as the ritual master of the cosmos. As son of heaven (*tianzi*, ancient parlance for the emperor), the divine monarch was supposed to bring harmony to the world by ordaining the proper ceremonies, including sacrifices to heaven and earth, rites to guarantee good harvests, and observances to assure victory in war. Emperors drew ecumenically from the ritual repertoires offered by shamans and by specialists in Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism. From the emperor’s perspective, as ritual techniques for rainmaking or blessing the nation, any of these traditions served as well as the others.

Buddhism also played a significant role in the private religious life of the ruler. In their personal as opposed to political lives, emperors behaved like other people: they got sick and needed curing, they were concerned with the afterlife and the fate of their ancestors, and they made donations to religious establishments. Many emperors turned to both Buddhism and Daoism, simultaneously or in succession, for this side of their religious lives. They followed the ceremony of becoming a lay Buddhist, ransomed themselves to Buddhist monasteries, practiced meditation, sought longevity, and built temples to honor their parents.

Buddhism had inescapable political implications in yet another sense by virtue of the large-scale social organization it proposed: a community of monks and nuns dependent on lay donors for support. In China the state vested in itself the right to encourage, limit, or destroy any social institution outside the family whose membership attracted significant numbers or whose organizers even hinted at rebellion. The successive dynasties placed Buddhist and Daoist monastic institutions under the control of various branches of the government. By licensing institutions and practices, the govern-

ment could simultaneously offer support, exercise power, and take advantage of the religion’s popularity. The state limited the number of monks and nuns, sold ordination certificates, established state-supported monasteries and nunneries, drafted statutes governing monastic behavior, defined the Buddhist canon, and distributed copies of the canon throughout the empire. At the other extreme, the government proscribed books, melted down statues, forcibly returned clerics to lay life, redistributed temple landholdings, banned religious organizations, and put their leaders to death.

CONTINUING TRENDS. Beginning around 400 CE the basic foundation of Buddhist belief and practice was well established and has remain recognizable as such into the twenty-first century. The fundamental characteristics of Chinese Buddhism described here apply to people from all walks of life, including those—the vast majority—who would never have identified themselves as exclusive followers of any single religious tradition. (Variations over time and the activities of monks, elite laypeople, and the state are discussed in the following sections.)

The basic worldview of premodern Buddhism proved difficult but not impossible to translate into Chinese terms. The cosmology of continual rebirth was depicted in paintings of the six paths in which sentient beings are reborn: gods in heaven, demigods or *asuras*, humans, animals, hungry ghosts, and beings in hell. Preachers explained how people are reborn in accordance with their deeds (*karma*). Many rituals aimed for rebirth in paradises overseen by buddhas or in the heavens of the gods. This proximate result was supposed to be followed by the ultimate goal: having a direct encounter with a buddha and achieving enlightenment or *nirvāṇa*. Chinese Buddhists were concerned with the question of what exactly carried over from one lifetime to the next. Answers included canonical explanations (one’s deeds, one’s consciousness, or the five “bundles” [*skandha*] of psychophysical existence) as well as ideas about the yin and yang aspects of the person drawn from ancient Chinese cosmology. The basis of Buddhist practice was morality (*śīla*), followed by the cultivation of concentrative states (*samādhi*) and the development of wisdom (*prajñā*). Specific ethical duties varied from one group to the next. Although everyone was supposed to follow the same guiding principles, there was an ascending series of disciplines. Laypeople adhered to the five precepts, which prohibited the taking of life, stealing, illicit sexual relations, lying, and consuming alcohol. Novices undertook 5 more, fully ordained monks usually observed 250 regulations (348 for nuns), and ascetic monks and hermits were even more severe. The critique of egocentric clinging, analysis of perception, discussion of the path, and philosophy of language in Chinese Buddhism brought the tradition into sustained dialogue with pre-Buddhist Chinese philosophy. Chinese Buddhist writings on emptiness, non-duality, two levels of truth, and buddha-nature are as rich and complex as those in any Buddhist culture.

Chinese Buddhism offers devotees a responsive pantheon of gods and spirits. In theory buddhas are the most majestic and powerful of all beings. Having spent many lifetimes perfecting themselves, they have become “enlightened ones” (buddhas). Each buddha exercises dominion over an entire world or buddha-country. Śākyamuni (the historical Buddha, fifth-century BCE India) lived as a prince, renounced his birthright, achieved enlightenment, and spent fifty years teaching others. Beings who resided in India during his time were particularly fortunate, since hearing a buddha preach or simply being in his presence has a transformative effect on believers, more efficacious than trying to reach enlightenment on one’s own. The next buddha who will be reincarnated in this world will be Maitreya, who now resides in Tuṣita Heaven. Amitābha (or Amitāyus) is a currently existing buddha who presides over a distant realm of bliss in the west, known as a “Pure Land” (Chinese, *jingtu*; Japanese, *jōdo*) in the Sino-Japanese tradition. Another important buddha is Mahāvairocana, a cosmic figure who functions as the ontological ground or essence for all manifestations of buddhahood. Just below buddhas are *bodhisattvas*, beings dedicated to becoming buddhas. They define themselves as *bodhisattvas* by taking a formal series of vows in the presence of a buddha. Often serving as saints to people in need, *bodhisattvas* have discrete functions or specializations. Avalokiteśvara (Chinese, Guanyin; Japanese, Kannon; Tibetan, Chenrezi), arguably the most popular *bodhisattva* in China, assures mothers of safe childbirth; Bhaiṣajyaguru (Chinese, Yaoshiwang) is especially invoked in curing rites; Kṣitigarbha (Chinese, Dizang; Japanese, Jizō) rescues beings reborn in hell. *Bodhisattvas* often reincarnate themselves in different guises to make their compassion more effective. Laypeople also modeled their own actions after those of the *bodhisattva* and committed themselves in ceremonies to lesser versions of the *bodhisattva* vows. Ranking significantly below *bodhisattvas* are gods who, in the Buddhist conceptual world, are only temporarily powerful and happy, since they will suffer demotion in their next life. Many gods reside in the heavens, like the gods living in Indra’s palace atop Mount Sumeru. Less-powerful gods populate the terrestrial world, inhabiting trees, rocks, caverns, and lakes. All such beings can be converted to serve the Buddhist cause. Biographies, hagiographies, and miracle tales—genres that blend into each other—record the exemplary lives and unusual deeds performed by all these beings treading the path to enlightenment.

Because of its implications for the fate of the ancestors, the rebirth cosmology in which Buddhism was bundled has always been a prime concern for Chinese Buddhists. Religious rituals carried out in the home and a reverence for the ancestors were hallmarks of early Chinese social life. Buddhism preached the acceptance of impermanence and valorized the example of the Buddha, who approached his own special death (*nirvāṇa* rather than another lifetime of suffering) with equanimity. Buddhists accepted the traditional Chinese value of filial piety (*xiao*) but redefined its practice. Priests argued that deathbed rituals, funerals, rites of com-

memoration, and other pious acts performed by descendants on behalf of their ancestors were more effective when carried out in a Buddhist context, with offerings made to buddhas and *bodhisattvas* and payments given to the *saṃgha*.

Buddhism had a tremendous influence on rituals aimed at increasing good fortune and reducing bad luck. At all levels of society, there were Buddhist versions of rituals, performed by monks as well as unlicensed practitioners, for curing illness, prolonging life, vanquishing spirits, and foretelling the future. Buddhist ideas and ritual structures permeated other forms of Chinese religion. The cross-fertilization between Buddhist and Daoist versions of important rituals was particularly strong.

One religious structure that set Buddhism apart from other Chinese religions was monasticism, a special community of ascetics clearly demarcated from normal social life. Monks and in lesser number nuns were supposed to leave their families, remain celibate, give up worldly conveniences, dedicate themselves full-time to spiritual cultivation, and serve as paragons of the highest Buddhist ideals. Such theories usually came into conflict with realities, political and otherwise. The *saṃgha* itself was organized into ranks and administered by officers, monks and nuns did not fully divorce themselves from their families, monasteries and temples were frequented by lay visitors, and the Buddhist Church possessed great wealth that required careful corporate management. Sometimes the Daoist Church developed a similar monastic structure.

Although one can assume that most Buddhists in China reflected on their beliefs and thought about their religious practice, the overwhelming weight of evidence about Chinese Buddhism was produced by and for a tiny but powerful minority, the literate elite. With that caveat in mind, what was the self-understanding of well-educated Chinese Buddhists as contained in traditional Buddhist canons? The core of the canon consisted of faithful translations of any words attributed to the Buddha or his Indian followers, organized into the traditional three baskets (*tripiṭaka*; Chinese, *san-zang*) of sūtra, Vinaya, and *abhidharma*. In addition it contained an astonishing variety of books written in China: apologetic literature defending Buddhism, biographies, text criticism and bibliographies, encyclopedias, commentaries, essays, miracle tales, genealogies, local histories, debates with Daoists, official documents submitted to the throne, and chronicles of the fate of Buddhist institutions under imperial governance. Buddhist authors wanted to prove that Buddhism, like other noble Chinese traditions, possessed a hal- lowed historical record and was led by models worthy of emulation, ranging from buddhas, *bodhisattvas*, and *arhats* to local patriarchs, pure monks, and sagacious emperors.

Owing to the decentralization of the welter of texts brought into their country from the West, Chinese thinkers devoted themselves to making sense of the history and diversity of Buddhism. The problem of doctrinal classification gave rise to various attempts to “divide the teachings” (*pan-*

jiao). Since all teachings were understood as the infallible word of the Buddha, each text and philosophical movement was assigned to a specific time-period and audience of Śākyamuni's preachings. Followers of the Tiantai School (named for its monastic home, Mount Tiantai, in Zhejiang) placed the *Lotus Sūtra* at the apex of Buddha's pronouncements, while proponents of Huayan ("Flower Adornment") Buddhism (named after the text, the *Avatamsaka* [Chinese, *Huayan*] *Sūtra*) believed that their text was the most subtle and profound. In keeping with Buddhist ideas of inclusivity, these interpretations of religious pluralism tended to privilege one school over another by portraying it not as the sole truth but as best adapted to its audience's needs.

Another important paradigm invoked by Chinese Buddhists to make sense of Buddhist history was that of lineage. Like the lines of descent that define Chinese kinship groups, a Buddhist lineage consists of current male members who trace their spiritual authenticity through successive generations of patriarchs. Especially but not exclusively used by the Chan (Japanese, Zen) School, the idea of patriarchal succession solved several problems. It located the sacred origin of current Buddhist leaders in the legendary heroes of the past; it linked China to India; it wrapped male authority in the guise of ineffable religious experience; it answered critics who impugned Buddhism's antiquity; and it helped solidify the identity of various Chinese schools (not really "sects" in the Protestant or modern Japanese sense) in relation to each other.

ORIGINS. Legends written long after the fact illuminate what later generations thought was important about the enculturation of Buddhism. According to some, Confucius (551–479 BCE) knew of the Buddha, and Laozi left China to study with him. Other accounts speak cryptically of a foreign magician carrying the implements of the Buddhist wanderer, a staff and begging bowl, when he visited China in 317 BCE. Some stories claim that the first Buddhist missionaries had been sent by King Aśoka. Another late source explains the chance discovery of sixty scrolls of Sanskrit texts in China by hypothesizing that they had been hidden intentionally to escape the burning of books carried out under the first Qin emperor, Shihuangdi (r. 221–210 BCE). Military records of the defeat of a Xiongnu army (a nomadic group in ancient northern China) in 120 BCE talk about the local people bowing and offering incense to a golden statue. Another legend states that in 2 BCE a man named Jinglu received oral instruction in Buddhism from a royal visitor to China sent by the Yuezhi. The most famous and one of the oldest stories about the origin of Chinese Buddhism is that Emperor Ming (r. 58–75 CE) dreamed of a golden deity and dispatched a mission to the Yuezhi; the embassy returned bearing the first Buddhist text to reach Chinese soil, perhaps accompanied by monks and statues.

It is most likely that Buddhist monks, texts, and images began to trickle into China sometime in the middle of the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), the dynasty that gives its

name to the dominant ethnic group in China as well. During the stable years of that dynasty, China was run by a centralized bureaucracy. Emperor Wu (r. 140–87 BCE) in particular was responsible for extending Han influence into Central Asia, sending emissaries all the way to Bactria in 138 BCE. The military ventures and trade missions of the first few centuries were responsible for securing the overland route between China and the West. It was via this Silk Road that Buddhism and other Western traditions first entered China. By the end of the Han dynasty, Buddhist communities composed of foreign monks, native monks, and local lay supporters had been established in at least three areas: the capital of Luoyang (Henan) in central China, Pengcheng (modern Datong, Shanxi) in the east, and the Tonkin region (now Vietnam, ruled by China 111 BCE–939 CE) in the far south. Monks followed a celibate lifestyle and practiced the semi-monthly communal confession and recitation of the *prātimokṣa* rules, and laypeople observed periodic fasting. Buddhist statues were installed in public temples, sometimes alongside icons of Daoist deities. Han dynasty Buddhists also knew the rudiments of the biography of Śākyamuni. Buddhist philosophy of the time was already quite diverse, represented in early texts like the *Sūtra in Forty-Two Sections* and *Mouzi's Essay Resolving Doubts*. Scores of sūtras were translated by An Shigao (fl. 148–170 CE), a Parthian interested in meditation techniques and numbered lists of doctrines, and by Lokakṣema (Chinese, Zhi Loujiaqian, fl. 167–186 CE), a Yuezhi monk who propagated early Mahāyāna texts.

NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN BUDDHISM. Even after the dissolution of Han rule, Buddhism continued to grow in influence and numbers, as exemplified by the massive translation effort of Dharmarakṣa (Chinese, Zhu Faohu, fl. 265–313), a Yuezhi who was raised in Dunhuang. Under increasing military pressure from strong nomadic groups to the north, the unified Chinese Empire broke apart decisively in the early fourth century. From 317 until 589 CE the north was governed by a succession of strong regimes of various non-Han groups, especially the Tabgatch (Chinese, Tuoba), whereas south China was ruled by numerous Han aristocratic families. The bifurcation of political authority had important consequences for Buddhism.

In the south the landowning gentry extended the philosophical and literary experimentation that had begun at the end of the Han in a movement known as "dark learning" (*xuanxue*). The southern capital of Jiankang (modern Nanjing, in Jiangsu) was home to new reflections on texts by Laozi and Zhuangzi and on the *Book of Changes*. One of the most famous monks of the time, Zhi Dun (also known as Zhi Daolin, 314–366 CE), was interested in Buddhist understandings of the perfection of wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*), wrote commentaries on *Zhuangzi*, and offered a new analysis of the Chinese notion of principle (*lǐ*). Another member of a southern aristocratic family, Huiyuan (334–416 CE), wrote on Buddhist philosophy and the practice of seeking a good rebirth and championed the independence of the *saṃgha* from state authority. The fortunes of organized Buddhism

in the south rose to their highest symbolic level under Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty (r. 501–549 CE), who sponsored Buddhist ceremonies, promoted vegetarianism and social welfare, and oversaw the construction of lavish Buddhist temples.

In north China non-Han rulers frequently employed Buddhist resources to build a strong centralized government. The Central Asian monk Fotudeng (d. 349 CE) served the Later Zhao dynasty (328–352) for nearly twenty years and was famous for performing ceremonies to bring rain during times of drought and to assist the empire in warfare. Dao'an (312–385 CE) influenced many aspects of Buddhist philosophy. He wrote on meditation and emptiness, compiled a catalog of the translation of Buddhist texts into Chinese, led ceremonies for people seeking rebirth in Tuṣita Heaven, composed rules for monastic life, and suggested that the famous monk of Kucha, Kumārajīva (Chinese, Jiumoluoshi, 350–409/413 CE), be invited to China. With state support, Kumārajīva assembled a translation team said to number one thousand in the capital of Chang'an, where he rendered many texts, including key treatises of the Mādhyamika school. Kumārajīva's translation idiom and literary style, as seen in his *Lotus Sūtra* and *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa*, soon became the dominant form of Chinese Buddhist writing. His Chinese disciple, Sengzhao (373–414 CE), wrote unparalleled essays on the meaning of emptiness (*śūnyatā*; Chinese, *kong*). In institutional terms one of the most important developments in the north was the monk Tanyao's (fl. 470 CE) creation of two social structures under the Northern Wei dynasty (493–534 CE). After a period of state support for Daoism and the mass migration of families uprooted by warfare, Tanyao reasoned that the resources of Buddhism should be used to relieve poverty and encourage agricultural production. He proposed that families be grouped into units called *saṃgha*-households that would send grain to monasteries, which would in turn distribute food to the poor and the general populace in times of drought. He also founded buddha-households, work units of criminals and slaves attached to Buddhist monasteries who worked in the temple or farmed its land.

CENTRALIZED COSMOPOLITAN DYNASTIES. Traditional histories view the Sui (581–618 CE) and Tang (618–907 CE) dynasties as a golden age or high point of Buddhism in China. This interpretation puts too much emphasis on dynastic structures, underplays social history, and privileges certain kinds of doctrinal innovation in Buddhism. Nevertheless there are good reasons for considering these three centuries as China's Buddhist age.

The capital cities of Chang'an and Luoyang were home to a large national bureaucracy of officials recruited increasingly through a publicly administered examination, and they were also the destination of diplomats, armies, Buddhist monks, entertainers, and merchants from most of Eurasia. The Tang court maintained contacts with Arab rulers and sought Indian scholars knowledgeable in mathematics, medi-

cine, and astronomy. To most people outside of India—Uighurs and other Central Asian ethnicities, Tibetans, Koreans, and Japanese—the center of the Buddhist world was not India but China. The Japanese prelate Genbō (d. 746 CE) traveled to China and returned to Japan with over five thousand scrolls of Buddhist scripture, paving the way for later pilgrims like Kūkai (774–835 CE), Ennin (794–864 CE), and Dōgen (1200–1253). Buddhism dominated public religious life but did not blot out other traditions: Christianity in its Persian (Nestorian) form, Islam, and the Iranian religions of Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism were also known in some cities.

The ruling house of the Tang declared its descent from Laozi and officially claimed in 637 CE that the stability of the empire rested on the Daoist-inspired principle of effortless action (*wuwei*). This ostensive affiliation, however, never outweighed the value, personal and political, that the government saw in Buddhist rituals. Buddhist symbolism also played a crucial role in the career of Wu Zhao (624–705 CE), who had been empress (wife of Emperor Gaozong, r. 650–684 CE) but who seized control of the government, instituted a new dynasty (Zhou), and assumed the title of emperor in the year 690 CE. As a female monarch, Empress Wu could not easily draw on Confucian ideology to justify her rule. Instead, she turned to a variety of Buddhist regalia: she was portrayed as a incarnation of Maitreya and as a cakravartin king.

The most famous translator of Sanskrit scripture into Chinese was the Chinese monk Xuanzang (c. 600–664 CE). He was already considered a master of Buddhist philosophy when he embarked for India in 629 CE in search of authoritative texts and teachers. He traveled throughout Central Asia and India, studying intensively at the great center of Buddhist scholasticism, Nālandā (Bihar State, India), before returning to China in 645 CE. He carried back hundreds of texts and a knowledge of Sanskrit that few if any Chinese monks have ever matched. He translated seventy-three works into Chinese in a style known for its philological precision, and he composed a record of his journey detailing the geography, politics, and religious life of China's western neighbors. His exploits as an explorer also made him famous, and one thousand years later his legend was crystallized in the much-beloved vernacular novel *Journey to the West* (*Xiyōu jī*, also known as *Monkey*).

One of Xuanzang's most influential contemporaries was Daoxuan (596–667 CE). Daoxuan was an expert on the Vinaya, and he set new standards in the compilation of biographies, miracle tales, apologetic literature, and catalogs of the Buddhist canon. Rather than following Xuanzang's overland route, the Chinese monk Yijing (635–713 CE) traveled by sea to South and Southeast Asia. After more than twenty years abroad, he returned and translated fifty-six separate books, many of them devoted to monastic discipline. Amoghavajra (Bukongjingang, 705–774 CE), who was probably born in Ceylon (Sri Lanka), came to China and translat-

ed nearly eighty texts, including a key scripture on the *Vajradhātu Maṇḍala* and many shorter Tantric ritual books.

The Sui and Tang were Buddhist dynasties also in the sense that literary, artistic, and philosophical production was dominated by explicitly Buddhist work in hitherto unprecedented ways. The poet Wang Wei (701–761 CE) employed what could be considered a Buddhist poetics and inculcated an attitude toward nature that draws heavily from Buddhist ideas. Even the most famous anti-Buddhist writer, Han Yu (768–824 CE), who wrote a memorial protesting Emperor Xianzong (r. 805–820 CE) honoring the Buddha's finger relic, was influenced by the tradition he criticized. Han Yu believed the bone had dangerous powers, and his attempt to resuscitate Confucian ideas and revitalize classical prose depended on Buddhist versions of orthodox transmission. The writing of miracle tales, many of which concerned icons, assumed the validity of reincarnation. The popular practice of storytelling with pictures (evidenced in "transformation texts," *bianwen*) was inspired by notions of the salvific intervention of buddhas and *bodhisattvas*. Paintings of paradise scenes and icons of Buddhist deities could be found everywhere. Wu Daozi (also known as Wu Daoxuan, fl. 710–760 CE), a highly placed court painter, was famous for the Buddhist subject matter he chose. His contemporaries report that his renderings of hell struck terror into viewers and that he carried out the act of painting in an inspired, theatrical manner. Buddhist metaphors were so well known that they rarely required explanation: a bubble meant evanescence, a lotus flower symbolized purity amid filth, silence was a reference to Vimalakīrti's understanding of wisdom. The debates of the age were dominated by Buddhist problems like sudden versus gradual approaches to enlightenment, the mechanics of rebirth in paradise, and the effectiveness of spells (*dhāraṇī* and *mantra*).

Written sources dating from the Tang dynasty also provide unambiguous evidence of the spread of Buddhist celebrations, especially in temples, that may have started earlier. Temples, which were not isolated enclaves of monastics in the first place, were especially busy during annual festivals. The yearly cycle included the emperor's birthday, the imperial ancestors' memorial days, the lantern celebration of the new year (around January 15), the Buddha's birthday (February 8 or April 8), and the ghost festival (July 15). Rituals involving the offering of a gift to the *samgha* and the participation of monks and nuns were carried out for life-cycle events (safe childbirth, weddings, building houses, curing illness, deathbed rites, funerals, memorial services) or at the behest of the individual practitioner (for commissioning statues or attending lectures). Tang dynasty manuscripts also supply the first detailed evidence of the formation of societies or loose congregations at the local level, groups that came together for semimonthly meetings, to hear monks preach, or to help members of the group with funeral expenses.

THE FORMATION OF SECTARIAN IDENTITY. Like the early Tang emperors, the first emperors of the Song dynasty

(Northern Song, 960–1127; Southern Song 1127–1279) were lavish patrons of Buddhism. In many ways, however, the society they ruled and the religion they supported were quite different from those of earlier centuries. Wet rice cultivation became dominant, and the population of the south outnumbered that of the north. The gentry families who had controlled access to power declined at the same time that the use of paper money grew, a merchant class arose, and more and more people lived in cities. Wood-block printing, first used for the reproduction of Buddhist spells, led to the dissemination of all kinds of books. All of these changes meant that the general public to which Buddhism spoke and the wealthy classes whose support it sought were fundamentally different from its former clientele. The government virtually rescinded the tax-exempt status of the monkhood and made larger profits for the state through the sale of ordination certificates. The revival of Confucian thought among officials like Zhu Xi (1130–1200), although not yet constituting an official orthodoxy, began to offer comprehensive philosophical alternatives to Buddhist systems of thought.

Buddhist responses to this changing world resulted in a clearer definition of the relationship between elite Buddhism and other traditions as well as the drawing of clearer lines separating the various schools of Buddhism from each other. The very notion of a strong sectarian identity came into existence at this time through the writing of Chan histories, beginning with *The Record of the Transmission of the Flame [or Lamp] Compiled in the Jingde Era* (*Jingde chuan-deng lu*, 1004). Earlier literature had portrayed connections between masters and disciples as contending lineages that could coexist simultaneously. Song sources, however, advance the claim that the orthodox tradition originated at a single point (Śākyamuni smiling or wordlessly passing a flower to Kāśyapā) and continued in a mind-to-mind transmission with only one patriarch per generation. The "records of discourse" (*yulu*) detailing the words and deeds of masters were put together during the Song. Dahui Zonggao (1089–1163) emphasized sustained meditation on the phrase "No" (a response to the question of whether dogs possess buddha-nature), and full collections of past examples of "public cases" (*gongan*; Japanese, *kōan*) were rendered in classic form in anthologies like *The Blue Cliff Record* (*Biyān lu*, 1125).

The Chan myth of patriarchy assumed that the Song dynasty form of identifiable Chan monasteries had begun during the Tang. The vague notion of a Buddhist "school" (*zong*) was forged into a more exclusive sense of identity also in response to the new institutional structures implemented under the Song. The government exercised formal control over a system of public monasteries divided into three classes, Vinaya (*lǐ*), teachings (*jiào*), and meditation (*chán*), the greatest number of which was the latter. In this atmosphere even proponents of Tiantai ideas followed the dominance of Chan and portrayed their patriarchs as single pearls in an unbroken strand rather than as abbots of strong local monasteries. Such a conception underlies the new genre of Buddhist

history writing in Zhipan's (fl. 1258–1269) *Comprehensive Record of Buddhas and Patriarchs* (*Fozu tongji*), which was also influenced by developments in secular historiography. Genealogical exclusivity was even extended to the Pure Land tradition, which received its first formal list of unbroken patriarch succession from Tiantai writers in the thirteenth century. It should not be forgotten, however, that although sectarian rigidity existed as both rhetoric and institution, it was not universal. Most of Buddhist practice—attending festivals, making offerings to buddhas and *bodhisattvas*, seeking assistance at the local temple, praying for the salvation of one's parents—remained generic. Even the liturgies collected by self-avowed followers of the Tiantai school like Zunshi (964–1032) incorporated the practices of local cults. Buddhists of every persuasion continued to draw on Buddhist ideas that, though associated with one particular school or another, belonged to all: the one mind (Chan), Amitābha Buddha's vows (Pure Land), three thousand worlds in one moment of thought (Tiantai), and the realm of true reality (Huayan).

DYNASTIES OF NON-HAN RULE. Beginning in the tenth century three foreign, originally nomadic groups ruled as Chinese dynasties over portions of north China: the Khitan (Liao dynasty) from 946 to 1125, the Jurchen (Jin dynasty) from 1115 to 1234, and the Tangut (Western Xia dynasty) from 1038 to 1227. After that the Mongols, whose quadripartite dominance over Eurasia extended from Kiev and Bucharest in the west to Korea and Taiwan in the east, conquered all of China and established the Yuan dynasty (1206–1368). Whereas other dynasties could claim that China was a multiethnic and religiously plural empire, during the Yuan dynasty the already diverse Chinese polity was one portion of an even more diverse empire of global proportions. Europeans, the most famous of whom was Marco Polo (c. 1254–1324), traveled to and wrote about the Chinese part of the Mongol Empire, and Muslims from the Middle East and Central Asia directed financial administration for the Yuan government at the local level. Many traditions prospered in China under the Yuan. Despite the banning of all Daoist scriptures except the *Dao de jing* in 1281, four different Daoist movements flourished: Complete Perfection (Quanzhen), Grant Unity (Taiyi), Greatness of Perfection (Zhenda) in the north, and Correct Unity (Zhengyi) in the south. Mongol educators wittingly aided the institutionalization of Confucianism when they turned the *Four Books* (the *Analects* of Confucius, *Mencius*, *The Great Learning*, and *The Doctrine of the Mean*) with Zhu Xi's commentaries into the basis for the civil service examination in 1313.

Qubilai (Chinese reign name Shizu, r. 1260–1294) was instrumental in placing Tibetan Buddhist clergy at the apex of the Yuan religious establishment. He received consecration (*abhiṣeka*) into the cult of Hevajra (Tibetan, Dges pa rdo rje) in 1253 and named the Tibetan prelate Blo gros rgyal mtshan (Lodro Gyaltsen, the 'Phags pa bla ma, 1235–1280) the imperial preceptor in 1260. Tibetan Buddhism became the new state religion, existing on top of Chinese Buddhist

practices and those of other religious traditions. Buddhist symbolism proved amenable to many foreign groups who never forgot that Buddhism itself had begun outside of China. Buddhist mythology, in addition to offering models like the cakravartin monarch, easily accommodated the protector deities, shamanistic practices, and styles of ancestor veneration of the northern nomads. This complicated process of cultural mixing is apparent in the temple architecture, tomb building, and art that survives from these periods. Under the Xia dynasty the Chinese Buddhist canon was written in Tangut script, while the Yuan emperors sponsored both the printing of the Chinese canon and the translation of the Tibetan canon into Mongolian.

BUDDHISM IN LATE IMPERIAL CHINA. Although many events can be used to demarcate important breaks in the history of China between the fourteenth and twentieth centuries, long-term trends are also apparent during this period. One continuity is the threat to imperial sovereignty emanating from the millenarian mythology embedded in some forms of Buddhism and other religions. Daoism, Buddhism, and Manichaeism (and later Christianity) all contained subtraditions positing an imminent cataclysm of cosmic proportions and the replacement of the current regime with a new order ruled by a divine king. Buddhist versions of this eschatology, known since the fourth century, focused on the impending incarnation of Maitreya as a ruler. Already during the Yuan dynasty, Maitreya belief took new social and literary forms. This was a time of growth for sectarian groups—voluntary organizations of laypeople not based on family ties or attendance at temples but rather defined by Buddhist belief and practice. Their members read and recited a relatively new form of vernacular sacred text, “precious scrolls” (*baoj-uan*), which mixed mythology, moral guidance, and elements from a variety of religious traditions. Movements like the White Cloud (Baiyun) remained utterly conventional in insisting that members observe all forms of political authority. Other groups, such as the White Lotus (Bailian), frequently sought the immediate installation of new, purified regimes or were suppressed by the government for being suspected of rebellion. The man who became the first Ming emperor, Zhu Yuanzhang (1328–1398), was a local leader of one such movement in Anhui. His military success allowed him to wrest control from the Mongols and other adversaries and be enthroned as the Hongwu emperor (r. 1368–1398) of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). The succeeding Qing dynasty (1644–1911) was founded by the Manchu people of the northeast, descendants of the Jurchens. Their leader was considered an incarnation of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, and all of the Qing emperors made significant visits to the temple complex on Mount Wutai (Sanxi province), where Mañjuśrī was believed to have manifested himself. With Qing imperial support, the Buddhist canon was translated into Manchu in 1790. Following the pattern of earlier dynasties, emperors regulated and manipulated Buddhist institutions, and the Ming and Qing ruling houses accorded politi-

cal office to the highest ranking *bla mas* and other monastic authorities in Tibet and Mongolia.

Another important pattern of late imperial times is the seeming dissolution of distinctively Buddhist elements into Chinese society. During these centuries traces of Buddhism could be found almost everywhere yet not always recognized as such. Perhaps because it was so pervasive, the Buddhism of this period has received the least amount of scholarly research. The conceptual underpinnings of the ethical system of late imperial popular religion were heavily Buddhist. Although human centered, the worldview of Chinese religion had been englobed by a wider framework that included other species (animals) and forms of life (gods, hell beings). Every act, large or small, was thought to carry moral consequences, and ideas of *karma* were expressed in notions like “planting good roots” for future rebirths. Other myths, symbols, and rituals that derived from Buddhism had become a part of generic religious practice in annual festivals, rites of curing, exorcism, funerals, and pilgrimage. Buddhist monastic leaders like Yunqi Zhuhong (1535–1615) exhorted their elite followers to practice the releasing of life (freeing animals bound for the butcher), to adopt a vegetarian diet, and to refrain from wearing silk (the production of which kills silkworms) whenever possible. They promoted the joint practice of Chan-style meditation and the chanting of Amitābha Buddha’s name, and they sought rapprochement among all schools of thought. Even outspoken proponents of Confucian learning launched ideas that had been heavily influenced by Buddhism. Wang Yangming (formally named Wang Shouren, 1472–1529) shifted the focus of Confucian discourse from principle (*li*) to the power of the mind and the process of moral thinking. Much as Buddhists predicated the achieving of enlightenment on the inborn capacity to become a buddha, Wang believed that ethical discernment was possible because of every person’s “innate knowledge” (*liangzhi*). One piece of common wisdom in late imperial times was the slogan that “the three teachings are one” (*sanjiao heyi*). Different interpretations of the claim were offered—that Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism seek a common goal, or stem from the same metaphysical ground, or form three distinct stages of cultivation—but the basic idea (often called *syncretism*) was pervasive.

Increasingly during the Ming and Qing dynasties, Buddhism existed in a world that knew various forms of Christianity. Portuguese traders talked about their faith in the early 1500s, and a variety of European orders dispatched priests to China. Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), the most famous Jesuit in China, formulated a strategy for the propagation of Christianity after learning from the example of Buddhist missionizing. During his first years in China, Ricci adopted the dress of Buddhist monks; the two orders of monks did, after all, share a celibate lifestyle. Ricci soon felt the need, however, to distance himself from the role of ritual specialist and the suspicions cast on monks by the highest classes. He changed into the robes of the scholar, couched

his message in terms derived from the Confucian classics, and drew on ancient Chinese precedents to castigate Buddhism, Daoism, and the practices of popular religion. A more pervasive Christian influence began in the early nineteenth century, when Protestant missionaries first arrived in China. They aimed at the lower strata of society and worked at the local level. They formed congregations by preaching about Jesus, translating the Bible into the spoken language, disputing Buddhist ideas of reincarnation, and railing against belief in spirits.

BUDDHISM IN MODERN CHINA. Buddhism was never insulated from the cataclysms shaking Chinese society from the 1850s to the twenty-first century: Western military incursions, imposition of treaties and reparations, unprecedented natural disasters, the overthrow of the imperial system of governance in 1911, the founding of the Republic of China in 1912, civil war and rule by warlords, warfare and eventually occupation of most of China by Japan between 1937 and 1945, the victory of Mao Zedong’s (1893–1976) Communist Party and the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, continuing upheaval and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), the opening to foreign capital in 1978, and economic expansion and internationalization beginning in the 1990s. Propelled into the modern world so violently and in such a relatively short period of time (by comparison to Europe), China has offered many solutions to the problem of how to understand “modernity.” Chinese from all walks of life debated what form government should take, what place in the world order China should occupy, and what roles science and religion should play in modern society. The answers have been complicated and varied. Intellectuals like Hu Shi (1891–1962) distinguished between unscientific, tradition-bound schools of thinking and rational, practical, Sinified forms of religious thought—including some forms of Buddhism—that could be harnessed to modernity. Monks like Taixu (1890–1947), theorizing the proper social functions of Buddhism, advocated turning away from involvement in funerals and memorial services and focusing on more this-worldly concerns. Buddhist clerics in China debated the contradictions involved in armed resistance against the Japanese military, just as their Japanese brethren came to grips with and often contributed to the Japanese colonial enterprise.

Modern China provides an interesting testing ground for the interaction between Buddhism and Communism. Marxist thought in general treats religion as a superstructure of the pre-Communist state. From this perspective Buddhism is an ideology used to camouflage real suffering in the world, which is caused by ownership of the means of production (land) by the gentry and the consequent alienation of the masses. Following Mao’s exhortation, Marxist philosophers viewed Buddhist monks as a nonproductive class and criticized Buddhist idealism for its opposition to a materialist concept of history. The earliest land reforms in the 1940s began to expropriate the economic basis of the monastic livelihood, and the Cultural Revolution targeted monks, nuns,

teachers, doctors, and other counterrevolutionaries for harsh reeducation. Nevertheless freedom of religious belief is guaranteed in the Chinese constitution, adopted in 1954. Under new policies in the post-Mao era, private belief in any of five recognized religions (Daoism, Buddhism, Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism) is allowed. The Chinese Buddhist Association (Zhongguo fojiao xiehui), founded in 1953, is the government-supervised organization of clergy and laypeople. Under its auspices Buddha relics have been exchanged with other Buddhist countries, and intra-Asian missions have been sponsored. Having claimed political dominance over Tibet for centuries, the Chinese army took control of Tibet in 1959; the government formally recognized the authority of the Panchen Lama and derecognized the Dalai Lama, who escaped to India. For Tibetan Buddhists as well as Buddhist believers from other officially recognized minority groups (like those in Yunnan, Sichuan, Qinghai, and Xinjiang provinces), state entitlements are supposed to include the practice of traditional religion. How the government weighs this right against its perception of the overarching authority of the state to condone or extirpate any form of social action remains to be seen.

The future of Chinese Buddhism will depend increasingly on forms of Buddhism outside the Chinese mainland. Taiwan was ruled by the Japanese from 1895 to 1945, and the Nationalist Party (Guomindang or Kuomintang [KMT]) fled there in 1949. The Nationalists consciously distinguished their religious policies from those of their Communist foes and supported the practice of many forms of Chinese religion, including Buddhism. Many organized groups proliferated after the liberalization of laws regarding civic organizations in 1989, and religious revivals continued after the Nationalists lost the presidency in the 2000 elections. Taiwan in the late twentieth century saw the growth of many Buddhist organizations, including the Tzu Chi Foundation (or Buddhist Compassion Relief Merit Association [Fojiao ciji gongde hui]), founded by the nun Zhengyan (b. 1937), which emphasizes medical care, social welfare, and disaster relief; Buddha's Light International Association (Foguangshan), a broad-based, comprehensive organization of laypeople and clerics led by the monk Xingyun (b. 1927); and Dharma Drum Mountain (Fagushan), founded by the monk Shengyan (b. 1931), whose educational complex in northern Taiwan includes a Buddhist seminary, university, library, museum, and conference center. All three of these associations have branches active in other countries, Asian and Western, and they carry out exchanges with Buddhist groups in China.

Buddhist movements comprising laypeople and monastics continue to proliferate in the Chinese communities of Southeast Asia and the West. Just as Buddhism was originally carried into China from abroad, the undecided fate of Buddhism in China is now bound up with forms of Buddhism practiced elsewhere.

SEE ALSO Amoghavajra; Aśoka; Avalokiteśvara; Bhaiṣajyaguru; Buddhism, Schools of, article on Chinese Buddhism; Chinese Religion, overview article; Huiyuan; Kṣitigarbha; Kumārajīva; Nirvāṇa; Politics and Religion, articles on Politics and Buddhism and Politics and Chinese Religion; Taixu; Xuanzang; Yijing; Zhu Xi.

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STEPHEN F. TEISER (2005)

BUDDHISM: BUDDHISM IN KOREA

In any examination of the Korean Buddhist tradition, it is essential to recall that in no way was Korea isolated from

neighboring regions of Northeast Asia. During its prehistory, Korean culture was most closely akin to that of the seminomadic tribes of the Central and North Asian steppes. From the Warring States period (403–221 BCE) on, however, when refugees from the northern Chinese states of Yan, Qi, and Zhao immigrated to the peninsula to escape the ravages of the mainland wars, Han civilization began to eclipse that indigenous culture at an ever-increasing pace. It is for this reason that Korean Buddhism must be treated as part and parcel of a larger East Asian Buddhist tradition. Indeed, Korea's later appellation as the "hermit kingdom" notwithstanding, there was in fact an almost organic relationship between the Korean, Chinese, and, during its incipient period, the Japanese Buddhist traditions. Admittedly, the Silk Route afforded China closer ties with the Buddhism of India and Central Asia, and China's overwhelming size, both in territory and population, inevitably led to its domination of the doctrinal trends within East Asian Buddhism. This does not deny, however, that Korean exegetes working on both the peninsula and the Chinese mainland made seminal contributions to the development of what are commonly considered to be distinctively "Chinese" schools of Buddhism, such as Tiantai, Huayan, and Chan. At the same time, many Chinese Buddhist theological insights were molded into new forms in Korea, innovations comparable to the Chinese syntheses of Indian and Central Asian Buddhist teachings. Hence, any appraisal of characteristically East Asian developments in the Buddhist tradition cannot neglect to take into account the contributions made by Koreans.

THREE KINGDOMS BUDDHISM (C. LATE FOURTH CENTURY–668 CE). According to such traditional Korean historical sources as *Samguk sagi* (Historical record of the Three Kingdoms), *Haedong kosung chŏn* (Biographies of eminent Korean monks), and *Samguk yusa* (Memorabilia and mirabilia of the Three Kingdoms), Buddhism was transmitted to Korea from the Chinese mainland during the (Korean) Three Kingdoms period. The introduction of Buddhism into Korea is presumed to have occurred in 372 CE, when King Fujian (r. 357–384) of the Former Qin dynasty (351–394) sent a monk-envoy, Shundao (Kor., Sundo), to the Koguryŏ court with scriptures and images. Former Qin hegemony over the remarkably cosmopolitan region of eastern Turkistan had brought Chinese culture into intimate contact with Indian, Iranian, and Hellenistic civilizations, ultimately engendering a new, sinified form of Buddhism. Fujian's defeat, in 370, of the Former Yan state, which had for decades laid siege to Koguryŏ, initiated close ties between Fujian and his Koguryŏ contemporary, King Sosurim (r. 371–383). These contacts allowed this vibrant northern Chinese culture, which included the Buddhist religion, to be introduced into Korea. While a paucity of information remains by which we can evaluate the characteristics of the Buddhism of this early period, it is probable that it was characterized by thaumaturgic practices, a symbiotic relationship between the ecclesia and the state, Maitreya worship, and the study of scriptures affiliated with the Mahāyāna branch of Buddhism. A monastery is said to

have been erected for Sundo in 376, the first reference to a formal Buddhist institution on Korean soil.

Sundo was followed in 384 by the Serindian monk Maranant'a (*Mālānanda; *Kumārānandin), who is reputed to have come via sea to Paekche from the Chinese state of Eastern Jin (317–420). His enthusiastic reception by the royal court initiated the rapid diffusion of Buddhism throughout the Paekche kingdom. Less than a year after his arrival a monastery had been founded on Mount Han for Maranant'a and the first Korean natives ordained as Buddhist monks. In both Koguryŏ and Paekche, there is evidence that such schools as Samnon (Mādhyamika), Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma, Nirvāṇa, Satyasiddhi, and Ch'ont'ae (Chin., Tiantai) flourished, though few works from this period are now extant. Of vital importance for the dissemination of Buddhism throughout East Asia, however, was Paekche's nautical skill, which made the kingdom the Phoenicia of medieval East Asia. Over its well-developed sea lanes, Paekche began in 554 to dispatch Buddhist doctrinal specialists, psalmodists, iconographers, and architects to Japan, thus transmitting to the Japanese the rudiments of sinified Buddhist culture and laying the foundation for the rich Buddhist culture of the Asuka and Nara periods. Silla expansion throughout southern Korea also prompted massive emigration of Koreans to Japan (where they were known as *kikajin*), and many of the cultural and technical achievements of early Japan—such as the development of paddy fields, the construction of palaces and temples, and town planning—were direct results of the expertise introduced by these successive waves of emigrants. These advancements ultimately paved the way for Japan's first constitution, purportedly written by Prince Shōtoku in 604, and led to the Taika reform of 646, which initiated a sinified bureaucracy in Japan.

It was not until 529, following the martyrdom of Ich'adon (Pak Yŏmch'ŏk), that Silla, the last of the three kingdoms to consolidate its power, officially embraced Buddhism. Political exigencies were probably the catalyst for the acceptance of Buddhism in Silla. The Silla nobility, who continued their drive for peninsular unification, found strong incentive to embrace Buddhism in an effort to accommodate the newly conquered Koguryŏ and Paekche aristocracy, which had embraced Buddhism long before. The vital role played by the Buddhist religion as a conduit through which Chinese civilization was introduced into Silla closely parallels the sinification of non-Chinese tribes that occurred throughout Chinese history.

Three Kingdoms Buddhism seems to have been a thoroughgoing amalgamation of the foreign religion and indigenous local cults. Autochthonous snake and dragon cults, for example, merged with the Mahāyāna belief in dragons as protectors of the Dharma, forming the unique variety of *hoguk pulgyo* ("state-protection Buddhism") that was thereafter to characterize Korean Buddhism. One of the earliest examples of this amalgamation was the vow of the Silla king

Munmu (r. 661–681) to be reborn as a sea dragon after his death in order to guard his country and its new faith from foreign invasion. Buddhism and the state subsequently evolved a symbiotic relationship in which the monks entreated the buddhas and *bodhisattvas* to protect the state and the state provided munificent support for the dissemination of the religion throughout the empire. Many of the most visible achievements of the Korean church throughout its history, such as the xylographic carvings of the Buddhist canon undertaken during the succeeding Koryŏ dynasty, were products of this concern with state protection. Buddhist monks also sought to demonstrate correspondences between Korean ancestral heroes and the new religion, thereby accelerating the assimilation of the religion among Koreans. Attempts were made, for example, to prove that Hwanin, the Celestial Emperor, was identical to Śakra Devānām Indra (Chesŏk-ch'ŏn), the Indian and Buddhist king of the gods, and that Tan'gun, the progenitor of the Korean race, was the theophany of Śrī Mahādevī (Kilsang-ch'ŏn). Vestiges of the dispensations of previous buddhas were alleged to have been uncovered in Korea, and the advent of the future Buddha, Maitreya, was prophesied to occur in the south of the peninsula. Modern-day visitors to a Korean monastery will notice on the perimeter of the campus shrines devoted to the mountain god or to the seven stars of the Big Dipper, the presence of which is indicative of the synthesis of common sinified culture with Buddhism.

One of the most prominent institutions of Three Kingdoms Buddhism that is commonly assumed to have been indicative of this interaction between Buddhism and indigenous Korean culture was the Hwarang (Flower Boy) movement. According to the *Samguk sagi*, this movement was instituted around 576 by the Silla king Chinhŭng (r. 540–575), and was patterned upon a more primitive association of shamanesses. The formation of the Hwarang movement is considered to have been part of the expansionist policies of the Silla court, and was intended to instill in the sons of nobility a regard for ethical virtues and an appreciation of refined culture. A later Silla writer relates that they were trained in Confucian filial piety and national loyalty, Daoist quietism, and Buddhist morality. The prominent religious orientation of the Hwarang as related in this and other accounts militates against the popular notion that it was a paramilitary organization. The group aesthetic celebrations—such as singing and dancing out in the open—that are commonly associated with the Hwarang has suggested to a number of scholars the shamanistic activities of initiation journeys and pilgrimages. While the Hwarang's Buddhist affinities are far from certain, their eventual identification with Maitreya assured that tradition would regard the movement as one intended to disseminate the Buddhist faith among Koreans.

UNIFIED SILLA BUDDHISM (668–935). After the unification of the peninsula under the Silla banner in 668, the fortunes of the new religion expanded on an unprecedented scale. It was during this period that the major schools of scholastic

Buddhism that had developed in China were introduced into Korea. The doctrinal teachings that had begun to be imported during the Three Kingdoms period were consolidated during the Unified Silla into five major ideological schools: the Kyeyul-chong, which stressed the study and training in Buddhist monastic discipline (Vinaya); the Yŏlban-chong, which promulgated the teachings of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*; the Pŏpsŏng-chong (Dharma Nature), a uniquely Korean school of Buddhism that stressed a synthetic outlook toward Buddhist doctrine; the Wŏnyung-chong, which was the early Korean branch of the Flower Garland (Kor., Hwaŏm; Chin., Huayan) school; and the Pŏpsang-chong, derived from on the “consciousness-only” (*viññaptimātratā*) teachings of Yogācāra. Some of the greatest achievements of early Korean philosophy occurred during this period, and such important scholiasts as Wŏnhyo (617–686) and Ŭisang (625–702) forged approaches to Buddhist philosophy that would become the hallmarks of the Korean church from that time onward. Korean exegetes working in China also played major roles in the development of Chinese schools of Buddhism. Both Wŏnhyo and Ŭisang were important vaunt-couriers in the Huayan school, as reflected in their influence on the systematizer of the Chinese Huayan school, Fazang (643–712). Wŏnch'uk (613–696), a close disciple of Xuanzang (d. 664), was a prominent exegete in the Chinese Faxiang school, whose commentaries on such texts as the *Samādhinirmocana Sūtra* exerted profound influence on early Tibetan Buddhism.

It was during this era of ardent scholarly activity that one of the most characteristic features of the mature Korean Buddhist tradition developed: that of “ecumenism” or “synthesis.” From the inception of Buddhism in East Asia, the religion had formed around a number of disparate scriptural and commentarial traditions that had developed first in India and later in Central Asia. For this reason, the Chinese church became characterized by a loosely structured sectarianism. The various extremes each of these factional divisions took led to an attempt, begun first in China and considerably refined later in Korea, to see these various approaches, each ostensibly Buddhist yet each so different, in some common light, so as to find some means by which their discordant elements could be reconciled. Certain features of the Korean tradition contributed to the synthetic tendency of the religion. Owing to the smaller size of Korea and its monastic population, there was little hope that Buddhism could continue as a stable and influential force within the religious arena if it was divided into contentious factions. In addition, the constant threat of foreign invasion created the need for a unified, centrally organized ecclesiastical institution. The quest to discover the common denominators in all of these sectarian interpretations—and subsequently to use those unifying elements in order to establish an interdenominational approach (*t'ong pulgyo*) to the religion that could incorporate all elements of Buddhist philosophy and practice—was to inspire the efforts of all major Korean Buddhist philosophers. This attitude prompted the Koreans to develop

what remains one of the more ecumenical traditions of Buddhism to be found anywhere is Asia.

One of the most momentous developments in the history of Korean Buddhism occurred during the Unified Silla period: the introduction of the Chan teachings, known in Korea as Sŏn. The earliest transmission of Sŏn to the peninsula is attributed to the monk Pŏmnang (fl. 632–646), a Korean who is said to have trained with the fourth patriarch of the Chinese Chan school, Daoxin (580–646). While little is known of Pŏmnang's life or thought, there are indications that he attempted to combine the teachings of two distinct Chinese Chan lineages—that of Bodhidharma (c. fifth century), Huiguo (487–592), and Sengcan (d. 606) and that of Daoxin and Hongren (688–761)—with the synthetic *tathāgata-garbha* theory of the *Dasheng qixin lun* (Awakening of Faith). A successor in Pŏmnang's lineage eventually founded the Hŭiyang-san school, the oldest of the Korean Sŏn schools. During the eighth and ninth centuries, other Korean adepts returning from the mainland established eight other mountain Sŏn sites, forming what came to be known as the Nine Mountains school of Sŏn (Kusan Sŏnmun). Of these eight, seven were affiliated with the Hongzhou lineage of the Middle Chan period, which eventually evolved into the Linji school of the mature Chan tradition; one, the Sumisan school, was derived from the lineage of Qingyuan Xingsi (d. 740), from which developed the Caodong school. Korean masters on the mainland, however, also played major roles in the development of Chinese Chan. Perhaps the most prominent of these Koreans was the monk Musang, also known as Kim Heshang (680–756; alt. 684–762), who was regarded as a patriarch of the Baotang school of the Sichuan region, and was the first Chan master known to the Tibetans. Despite the continued traffic of Sŏn adepts between China and Korea, the entrenched position of the scholastic schools within the Korean ecclesia thwarted the propagation of Nine Mountains Sŏn. Continued frustration at their inability to disseminate their message led such Sŏn adherents as Toŭi (d. 825) and Muyŏm (799–888) to attack the scholastic schools directly, leading ultimately to a bifurcation of the Korean Buddhist church into two vociferous factions.

KORYŎ BUDDHISM (937–1392). The principal contribution of Koryŏ Buddhists to the evolution of the Korean church was the reconciliation they effected between the Sŏn and scholastic schools. It was Ŭich'ŏn (1055–1101) who made the first such attempt, by seeking to combine both the Nine Mountains and scholastic schools into a revived Ch'ŏnt'aek school. Ch'ŏnt'aek teachings are known to have been present on the peninsula prior to Ŭich'ŏn's time. A century before, for example, Ch'egwan (d. 971), a renowned Korean Ch'ŏnt'aek adept, had been invited to Tang China to reintroduce long-lost Tiantai manuals; during his expatriation Ch'egwan systematized the school's philosophies in his *Tiantai sijiao yi*, one of the most important of Chinese Tiantai exegetical writings. Ŭich'ŏn's efforts to revitalize the school, however, have led to his being considered the effective founder of its Korean branch. It appears that Ŭich'ŏn

regarded the meditative emphasis of the Ch'ŏnt'aek teachings as the ideal vehicle for accommodating the varying concerns of the Sŏn and scholastic schools. Unfortunately, his premature death at the age of forty-six brought a sudden end to his endeavor and left the sectarian scene still more unsettled.

Ŭich'ŏn's efforts were followed some three generations later by those of Chinul (1158–1210), a charismatic Sŏn master who was similarly motivated by a synthetic vision of the unity of Sŏn and the scholastic teachings. Unlike Ŭich'ŏn's scholastic orientation, however, Chinul sought to merge the various Buddhist schools of his time into a new Sŏn school that would synthesize a disparate variety of Buddhist soteriological approaches. Chinul introduced into Korean Sŏn practice the investigation of the “critical phrase” (Kor., *hwadu*; Chin., *huatou*), better known by the closely synonymous term *kongan* (Chin., *gong'an*; Jpn., *kōan*), as it had been developed in China by Dahui Zonggao (1089–1163). Chinul then sought to incorporate this investigation into the soteriological scheme of sudden awakening/gradual cultivation taught by Zongmi (780–841), and finally to amalgamate this approach to Sŏn with the interpretation of Hwaŏm thought given by Li Tongxuan (635–730). Chinul's synthesis of Sŏn and the scholastic teachings came to be regarded as a distinctively Korean school of Sŏn, called the Chogyek-chong. His efforts revitalized the enervated Koryŏ church, and marked the ascendancy of Sŏn thought in the Korean Buddhist tradition.

It was Chinul's disciple, Chin'gak Hyesim (1178–1234), who assured the acceptance of *hwadu* practice as the principal meditative technique in Korean Sŏn Buddhism. Following the model of Chinese thinkers of the Song dynasty (960–1279), Hyesim examined the points of convergence between the three religions of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism. This attempt to extend the embrace of Chinul's synthetic outlook so as to accommodate still other religions was to inspire a series of such investigations by later Korean authors. A Sŏn master of the later Koryŏ period, T'aego Pou (1301–1382), worked prodigiously to merge the remnants of the Nine Mountains Sŏn schools with the new Chogyek-chong, and sought to graft onto this ecumenical school the Chinese Linji (Kor., Imje; Jpn., Rinzaï) lineage, into which he had received transmission in Yuan-dynasty China. The efforts of these and other teachers assured that the Chogyek-chong would remain the predominant school of Korean Buddhism, a position it has retained down to the present.

CHOSŎN BUDDHISM (1392–1910). With the advent of the Chosŏn dynasty in 1392 the fortunes of Buddhism began to wane. While the official policies of the Chosŏn dynasty are commonly considered to have been Confucian in orientation, many of the kings continued to give munificent personal support to Buddhism. For example, the founder of the dynasty, Yi T'aego (r. 1392–1398), appointed the renowned monk, Muhak Chach'o (1327–1398), to the official post of preceptor to the royal family (*wangsa*), and the account of T'aego's reign in the *Yijo sillŏk* (Veritable record of the

Chosŏn dynasty) teems with references to his sponsorship of temple construction projects, maigre offerings to monks, and various Buddhist rites. Confucian bureaucrats, however, continued to pressure the throne for stricter selection procedures for Buddhist monks, limits on the number of monasteries and hermitages, reduction in the number of officially sanctioned sects, and reorganization of the ecclesiastical system, all in order to effect more centralized supervision of the religion. Such policies were formally adopted by T'aejong (r. 1400–1418), the third Chosŏn sovereign, and carried out on a massive scale by his successor, King Sejong (r. 1418–1450). In Sejong's proclamation of 1424, the Chogyŏ, Ch'ŏnt'aŏ, and Vinaya schools were amalgamated into a single Sŏn (Meditative) school, and the remaining scholastic schools were merged into the Kyo (Doctrinal) school. New regulations were adopted for obtaining monk's certificates, making ordination much more difficult, and many monks already ordained were defrocked. The official ranks of national master (*kuksa*) and royal master (*wangsa*) were abolished. Temple paddy lands and forest properties were confiscated by the state and the legions of serfs retained by the monasteries were drafted into the army. Buddhist monasteries were no longer permitted within the capital or major cities. It is not surprising that during this dire period, Buddhist activities were as much concerned with the very survival of the tradition as with novel scholarly and meditative endeavors.

During this extremely difficult period in Korean Buddhist history, it is Sŏsan Hyujŏng (1520–1604) who epitomizes the continued Sŏn orientation of the church. Drawing his inspiration from Chinul's earlier vision of the unity of the Sŏn and scholastic schools, Hyujŏng produced a succinct manual of practice, titled the *Sŏn'ga kugam* (Mirror of the Sŏn School). His other guides to Confucianism and Daoism were intended to sustain the reconciliation between Buddhism and its rival religions that was begun during the mid-Koryŏ and to outline their many similarities of purpose. Despite all the attempts of Hyujŏng's lineage, however, Buddhism's creative drive continued to wane.

BUDDHISM DURING THE MODERN ERA. Japanese inroads on the peninsula from the late nineteenth century onward presented both new opportunities and new pressures for the Korean Buddhist tradition. Following the ratification of the Korea-Japan treaty of 1876, Japanese Buddhist sects, beginning with the Higashi Honganji sect of Pure Land, began to proselytize among the increasing number of Japanese immigrants resident in Korea, an activity that soon spread to the native Korean populace as well. Remonstrations by Japanese Nichiren missionaries compelled the impotent Chosŏn court in 1895 to lift the centuries-old prohibition against the presence of Buddhist monks in the capital of Seoul. During the same period, a resurgence of Sŏn practice was catalyzed by the Korean Sŏn master Kyŏnghŏ (1857–1912) and his disciples, and successors in his lineage continue to teach today.

After the annexation of Korea in 1910, some Korean monks felt that the fortunes of the religion were dependent

upon arranging a merger with a major Japanese sect. Yi Hoegwang went so far as to negotiate a combination of the Korean church with the Japanese Sŏtŏ sect, but most Korean Sŏn monks regarded the gradualistic teachings of the Sŏtŏ sect as anathema to the subitist orientation of their own tradition, and managed to block the merger. Another movement threatened to further divide the Buddhist church. As early as 1913, Han Yongun (1879–1944), a Buddhist signatory to the 1919 Korean independence declaration and major literary figure, had shocked his contemporaries by advocating that monks be allowed to marry, a move he felt was necessary if Buddhism were to maintain any viable role in modern secular society. While this position was diametrically opposed to the traditional celibate orientation of the Korean ecclesia, the Japanese colonial government ultimately sustained it in 1926 with its promulgation of new monastic regulations that legalized matrimony for monks. Within a decade, virtually all monastery abbots were married, thereby producing a dramatic change in the traditional moral discipline of the Korean church. Other reform movements designed to present Buddhism in a way that would be more relevant to modern concerns arose with increasing frequency. Among the most prominent of these was Wŏn Buddhism, founded in 1916 by Pak Chung-bin, Sor'aesan (1891–1943), which combined Buddhist teachings with a disparate variety of elements drawn from Confucianism, Daoism, Tonghak, and even Christianity.

After independence in 1945, Korean Buddhism was badly split between two irreconcilable sects. The T'aego-chong, a liberal sect of married monks, had flourished under Japanese patronage and was based principally in the cities where it catered to the lay Buddhist population. The Chogyŏ-chong was a smaller, religiously conservative faction of monks who had managed to maintain their celibacy during the long years of Japanese occupation; their concern was to restore the meditative, scholastic, and disciplinary orientations of traditional Korean Buddhism. Only after years of intense conflict did the Chogyŏ-chong finally win government support for its position in 1954 and virtually all of major monasteries have reverted to its control. Now the predominant sect of Buddhism in Korea, the Chogyŏ-chong has had considerable success in attracting a new generation of lay believers and monastic postulants to the teachings and practices of Buddhism.

SEE ALSO Chan; Chinul; Confucianism in Korea; Fazang; Huayan; Korean Religion; Tathāgata-garbha; Tiantai; Ŭichŏn; Ŭisang; Wŏnhyo; Worship and Devotional Life, article on Buddhist Devotional Life in East Asia; Xuanzang; Zongmi.

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ROBERT EVANS BUSWELL, JR. (1987 AND 2005)

BUDDHISM: BUDDHISM IN JAPAN

Use of the phrase "Buddhism in Japan" suggests in part that, on the one hand, the modern terminology of the nation-state of Japan can be appropriately used throughout discussions of Buddhist belief and practice in the geographic area usually referred to as the "Japanese isles." On the other hand, the use of the language of "Buddhism" might suggest that Buddhist beliefs and practices developed as a singular phenomenon bearing internal consistency. Use of either of these concepts has limitations, since the nation-state of Japan developed only in the late nineteenth century, and Buddhism does not connote a singular institution or way of life followed in the Japanese isles. In particular, while we speak of "Buddhism" in the Japanese case, Buddhistic beliefs and practices did not historically constitute a creedal faith of the kind common to monotheistic religions; neither did it historically feature universally agreed-upon weekly liturgies (a Buddhist "Sabbath") nor, until the last few centuries, did it feature adherence to exclusively defined or otherwise well-defined sectarian organizations.

EARLY HISTORICAL CONTEXTS. The initial introduction of Buddhist images and implements to the Japanese isles is extremely difficult to date. Moreover, we are limited to later representations produced by members of the royal court of Yamato, the first literate and highly organized government in the isles, and those associated with them; and archaeological studies have only marginally helped us to gain access to the very earliest era of Buddhist influence. The mytho-history *Nihonshoki* (720 CE), produced by the Yamato court, as well as temple legends (e.g., *Gangōji garan engi narabi niriuki shizai chō*, probably a Heian era [794–1185 CE] compilation, yet based on a no longer extant eighth-century *Gangōji engi*) variously depicted the introduction of such figures in the form of gifts from the Korean kingdom of Paekche to the Japanese court in 552 CE or 538 CE.

Continental Asian influences. The Soga family, which drew upon the support of the large number of immigrant families in the capital area (and may have also had immigrant origins), was the most powerful clan of the court and sponsored the introduction of Buddhist clerics and objects, as well Buddhist construction, from the late sixth to mid-seventh centuries. In addition, in this connection the immigrant family of the Hata and, apparently, other immigrant families also constructed Buddhist temples at the time.

Prince Shōtoku. Although some of the other prominent families of the court drew their support from older families of the Japanese isles and argued that worship of Buddhist divinities would antagonize indigenous deities (*kami*), the Soga's efforts may have been bolstered through patronage by Prince Taishi Shōtoku (574?–622?), who is represented from the early eighth century on as having become an ardent supporter of the faith. The Sogas and Shōtoku seem to have seen buddhas and *bodhisattvas* as beings who offered a variety of benefits so long as they were approached through appropriate ritual. Moreover, the fact that all of the temples constructed prior to the mid-seventh century were erected in connection with efforts to protect specific clans—Asukadera, possessing the character of a “clan temple” of the Sogas, being most prominent—illustrates the extent to which the reception varied depending on the group, that there was no consensus in the larger court concerning its relevance, and that the thaumaturgical capacities of Buddhist ritual were central to their concerns more than enlightenment.

The Yamato Court in the late seventh century. Recent excavations have indicated that the government began to establish large temples in the seventh century. It is clear that in the late seventh century the court patronized Buddhist temples at the same time that it began also to promote a notion of the ruler as *tennō* (“heavenly thearch”) and high priest of the court, with the ancestral *kami* (deity) of his family represented as the highest in the realm. The offering of reverence to *kami*, on the one hand, and veneration of buddhas/*bodhisattvas*, on the other, seem to have been accepted and, presumably, openly supported by the larger court. Indeed, it would seem that most in the court saw the buddhas and *bodhisattvas* as similar to the native *kami* in their perceived capacity to offer a variety of benefits (*riyaku*). Discourses concerning *karma*, rebirth, and enlightenment seem to have been virtually absent during this early era.

BUDDHISM IN THE NARA AND EARLY HEIAN PERIODS. It was during the Nara period (710–784 CE) that Buddhist institutions began to flourish on a much larger scale and Buddhist practices came to have an impact on the general populace in the isles. Japanese monks' travel to China to study under eminent Buddhist clerics became increasingly prominent in the Nara and Early Heian (794–1185) periods, among which the most prominent were Saichō (c. 767–822) and Kūkai (774–835), who respectively founded the lineages of Tendai and Shingon.

The impact of the ruling family. The reign of the ruler Shōmu (r. 724–749) and his wife Kōmyō constituted a clear shift toward ever more visible support of Buddhist temples and clerics. Shōmu began to establish a set of temples and convents in every province of the realm: in this case, a provincial temple that included, among its features, a *stūpa* of seven stories, in which were to be installed copies of the realm-protecting sūtras, the *Golden Light Scripture of Victorious Kings* and *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Wonderful Law*, together with part of the first sūtra written in the sover-

eign's own hand; an accompanying nunnery was to be referred to as “convent for the *Lotus Sūtra* expiation rite,” in which nuns would perform regular repentance rites on behalf of the realm—evoking memories that the first Japanese Buddhist clerics had been nuns and had obvious ritual and thematic connections with native shamanistic traditions, associated generally with *kami* worship.

Shōmu and the court were supportive on a personal and broader level of the Nara Buddhist temples and to small Buddhist lineages that were developing in Nara. The well-known six lineages within the larger temples of Nara included: Sanron, Hossō, Ritsu (Skt., Vinaya), Jōjitsu (*satyasiddhi*), Kusha (*abhidharma*), and Kegon (Skt. Avatamsaka), the last of which seems to have been added only with the ongoing completion of construction of the head temple of the provincial system, Tōdaiji, in the 750s. In actuality, these lineages included only a small percentage of the monks residing in the great temples; for example, in the case of Tōdaiji, they included only roughly 2 percent of the some three thousand monks.

Shōmu's wife, Kōmyō, was an equally fervent patron of Buddhists. Her sponsorship of a sūtra-copying bureau, Tōdaiji administration, and convent construction indicate at least two important points about Buddhism in early Japan. First, it is clear that women of the court, particularly during the Nara period, were powerful sponsors of Buddhist activities. Second, such sponsorship, associated with efforts throughout continental Asia to collect Buddhist scriptures, constituted a forerunner of later efforts of Japanese sovereigns and temples to acquire newly copied or printed versions of the Buddhist canon (*daizōkyō*) and, in that connection, to establish large collections of Buddhist and related materials (*kyōzō*, *hōzō*).

The personal interest of Shōmu and the ruling house in Buddhism, while made problematic by his daughter's later relationship as *tennō* with the monk Dōkyō, also illustrates the close relationship leading families of the court had with Buddhist clerics from the Nara period onwards. Recent scholarship has made it clear that much of the vibrancy of Buddhism in the era was constituted in the employ of monks (or, sometimes, nuns) as family ritual practitioners or teachers. That is, monks were often invited, often for lengthy periods, to take up residence in the homes of leading aristocratic families; it is believed that such clerics spent most of their time engaged in rituals for the purpose of healing, bodily protection, and sometimes the more general avoidance of calamity (*sokusai*), and that such activities foreshadowed those of the guardian palace monks (*gojisō*) of the Heian period.

The increasing prominence of Buddhist discourses on karma, rebirth, and enlightenment. During the Nara period, beliefs in karma, rebirth, and occasionally enlightenment became prominent in the court as well as in regional families, especially those close to the capital area. The earliest Japanese didactic story collection, *Nihon ryōiki* (*Anomalous Tales of Japan*) by the Yakushiji monk Kyōkai (fl. 823), indi-

cates that many in the capital as well as regional areas believed in karma and related discourses like rebirth and indebtedness. Such developments may have been related to the activities of figures like Gyōki (668–749), who worked among the larger populace and was especially known for his help in the construction of landmarks such as bridges and water projects.

Thus, karma, rebirth, and notions of enlightenment were increasingly prominent among the larger populace, while the court, given its patronage of official Nara Buddhism, was clearly cognizant of such teachings and the Buddhist cosmology, which was distinct from that represented in the court mytho-histories concerning the ancestral *kami* of the ruling family. Moreover, Chinese Buddhist works depicting the lives of eminent monks commonly featured tensions between buddhas/*bodhisattvas* and native divinities, which may suggest a general parallel if not knowledge of earlier patterns of assimilation of native religiosity. Given such awareness, there were efforts, evident first through ritual practice and construction, to explain or resolve such ambiguity. First, small Buddhist temples called *jingūji* were constructed at shrine compounds like Ise and Usa from the eighth century on, in which clerics venerated buddhas/*bodhisattvas* on behalf of the *kami*, who were apparently seen as inferior and unenlightened beings in need of aid. Second, the ruling house itself incorporated Buddhist figures into its own ancestral veneration, as the shrine at Usa came to match Ise in its landholdings and prominence during the eighth century as a shrine of the ruling family; in particular, the main *kami* came, by the late eighth century, to be seen as not merely the spirit of the fifth-century ruler Ōjin but at the same time as the *bodhisattva* Hachiman (Yahata).

Nara Buddhism and the advent of new Buddhist lineages. A radical break did not actually occur in Japanese Buddhism with the move of the capital from Nara to Nagao-ka and, shortly thereafter, Heian (Kyōto). The great Nara temples authorized by the government remained large institutions, and the lineages within them remained the province of a small number of monks.

The ruler Kanmu (r. 781–806) moved the capital and made efforts to strengthen the authority of the sovereign. He also sponsored new monastic and other envoys to China and welcomed the related advent of new lineages of Japanese Buddhism. The monks Saichō and Kūkai were the first monks to introduce major new lineages after their respective studies in Tang China in the early ninth century.

Tendai lineages. Saichō, who trained primarily in Tian-tai Buddhism there, with some studies of esoteric Buddhism as well, returned first in 805 and gained the patronage of Kanmu. Saichō succeeded in convincing Kanmu to introduce a new system of ordination the next year; the system based the distribution of annual ordinands granted to temples on their affiliation with specific lineages, which increased the prominence of the lineages while at the same time, insofar as it was limited to males, producing a gendered

framework that would continue throughout the history of Buddhism in Japan. In this way, as scholars have recently noted, the novel production of male lineages at the same time seems to have constituted a major source of the precipitous decline that occurred in nuns' ordinations in the Heian periods.

Based on his studies in China, especially at Mount Tian-tai, Saichō created in his Tendai lineage a catholic study program that allowed for four major areas of concentration while promoting the *Lotus Sūtra* as the greatest scripture in Mahāyāna Buddhism: esoteric Buddhism (Tantra), meditation, precepts, and the "perfect teaching" (Tendai). With the permission of the court, Saichō established a precepts platform at the temple complex he had established at Mount Hiei, not far from the capital of Heian. There, he used the Mahāyāna *bodhisattva* precepts based on the *Fan wang ching* scripture in clerical ordinations as an alternative to the traditional precepts, which had been carried over from early Buddhist into Mahāyāna Buddhist ordinations throughout East Asia. Saichō, drawing on Chinese Tian-tai doctrine, divided Buddhist teachings into classifications of scriptures, with the *Lotus Sūtra* and *Mahānīrvāṇa Sūtra* at the apex, and added new classifications conferring priority on scriptures (*sūtra*) over clerics' treatises (*śāstra*); he especially criticized Hossō and Sanron for their dependence on treatises. His acquisition of a precepts platform, teachings, as well as debates he had with monks of the Nara temples, illustrate that Saichō was not on good terms with the leading Nara Buddhist institutions.

Shingon lineages. Kūkai also went to China in 804 but returned a year later than Saichō, in 806. Kūkai studied esoteric Buddhist (Tantric) discourse and practice in the Chinese imperial capital of Chang-an under the monk Hui-kuo, and given his master's death, he was given a large number of esoteric Buddhist scriptures, ritual implements, and Buddhist relics to take with him back to Japan. Kūkai initially found himself in a disadvantageous position vis-à-vis the Heian court, but he emphasized his unique possession of esoteric ritual knowledge and made a sustained effort to demonstrate it through performing esoteric Buddhist consecrations (*kanjō*; Skt. *abhiśeka*) on behalf of large numbers of people, including the retired ruler Heizei (r. 806–809) and the leading clerics of the Nara Buddhist establishment. Kūkai's teaching emphasized that proper initiation into and practice of three mysteries lead to realization of buddhahood in this very body (*sokushin jōbutsu*): body (use of appropriate hand gestures), speech (sacred verbal formulae, *mantras*), and mind (use of *maṇḍalas*).

Given that the court believed his claims to ritual knowledge, Kūkai was often called upon to perform rites such as rain prayer. His increasingly close relationship with the court culminated in its granting him the temple Tōji in 822. From 834, the Shingon lineage received annual ordinands from the government. Although Kūkai introduced esoteric Buddhist precepts, he did so in collaboration with the official system

of ordination, centered at Tōdaiji in Nara; thus, Shingon monks' ordinations would always be conducted only at Tōdaiji, guaranteeing an ongoing relationship between Shingon and the Nara lineages, especially Kegon and Sanron. In his later years, Kūkai retired to his remote temple complex at Mount Kōya, where he continued to write major treatises on esoteric Buddhism.

BUDDHISM IN THE MID-HEIAN AND KAMAKURA (1192–1333) PERIODS. From the mid-ninth century on, the royal court and those surrounding it underwent fundamental changes that made the Ritsuryō legal system, developed in the eighth century, increasingly irrelevant to the lives of the aristocrats and Buddhist clerics. The advent in 859 CE of the domination of the court by the northern Fujiwara family in the form of the system of chancellors and regents (*sekkantaisei*) governing on behalf of the *tennō* meant that the latter was increasingly reduced to primarily symbolic, ritual roles.

Annual court ceremonies and temple-shrine patronage. This development was also intimately related to the increasingly prominent series of annual court ceremonies (*nenjū gyōji*), the fuller outlines of which became apparent by the 840s and that included some major Buddhist rites, including the Latter Seven-Day Rite, the Misai-e Assembly, the Buddha's Birthday Assembly (Kanbutsu-e), the Buddha-Names Assembly (Butsumyō-e), and the Seasonal Sūtra Recitation (of the Greater Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra), the last of which would be performed first in 859 CE, corresponding to the beginning of the regent-chancellor system. Meanwhile, Buddhist ordinands were granted to pray for the salvation of the *kami* even at great shrines like Kamo and Kasuga, beginning the very same year; on the occasion of the petition, the Hiei monk Eryō (c. 802–860) employed, as the very first historical instance, the explanation that the *kami* were “traces” (*suijaku*) of the Buddha (*honji*, “essence”), a discourse that would become increasingly common from the eleventh century on.

Ritual knowledge, transmission, and the increasing prominence of esoteric Buddhist lineages. From the tenth to twelfth centuries, mid-ranking aristocratic families typically tried to acquire ritual knowledge that would be useful at court, often through trying to gain their sons employ in record keeping on behalf of the government. At the same time, of course, the northern Fujiwaras themselves attempted to gain unparalleled access to knowledge of such ritual, and in the era just after the unrivaled leadership of the great Fujiwara no Michinaga (966–1027), established the first of many great treasuries of the era: Uji (no) Hōzō, which included great quantities of documents, objects, and Buddhist scriptures.

Indeed, the introduction of esoteric Buddhist lineages, which emphasized the importance of initiation into—access to—secret rituals and the related possession of ritual knowledge, was undoubtedly also related to this trend in the court. The esoteric Buddhist lineages, while partially influenced by earlier examples of temples' amassing of large collections of

Buddhist scriptures, especially attempted to increase their collections of not merely Buddhist scriptures but also ritual treatises as well as oral transmissions (*kuden*) concerning ritual practice.

Shingon traditions drew upon the charisma associated uniquely with Kūkai's image to emphasize their esoteric lineages. Monks of Shingon lineage produced over time many biographies of Kūkai (*Kūkaiden*), though it is apparent that they wrote little along the lines of the treatises that Kūkai had himself produced; indeed, only one major treatise was written about Kūkai's works in the first two centuries after his death. From the late eleventh century on, when the larger aristocracy made increasing efforts to recover the high level of Chinese studies of the early Heian period, Shingon monks began to produce new editions of Kūkai's works and treatises on them, while the court scholar Fujiwara no Atsumitsu (1063–1144) wrote treatises about Kūkai's esoteric Buddhist writings.

Shingon lineages also increasingly began to splinter into lines of ritual and textual interpretation, particularly demonstrated in varied oral transmissions that usually claimed special access to knowledge of the “original teaching” (*honsetsu*) of Kūkai—interpreted as orthodox Shingon instruction. Partially in an effort to explain the oral transmissions concerning esoteric ritual practice, Shingon monks began to compile copious iconographic commentaries and other works, eventually producing extremely large manuscript treasuries.

The advent of Pure Land Buddhist discourses and practices. From early on, Tendai featured monks interested not only in esoteric Buddhist practice but also in the practice of the *nenbutsu*, that is, of chanting the name of the Buddha Amida (Sanskrit, Amitābha) in hopes of birth in his Pure Land at the time of death—or to help enable unsettled spirits find peace. Although there were clearly esoteric Buddhist elements in the Hiei monk Genshin's (942–1017) *Ōjō yōshū* (*Essentials for Birth in the Pure Land*, written in 985 CE), the work featured as its main theme the reasons for and means by which one can be born in the Pure Land of the Buddha Amida, and had a great influence on the aristocracy.

Meanwhile, semi-independent clerics increasingly inhabited areas adjacent to and sometimes distant from the major Buddhist monasteries, and they were referred to most commonly as ascetics or “holy ones” (*hijiri*). Perhaps influenced in part by the precedent of Gyōki, such figures typically had much more interaction with those in the general populace than other monks. They were commonly associated with one or the other of the major temple complexes, so they seem most often to have not been completely independent.

Since even the early ninth century veneration of prominent *bodhisattvas* such as Kannon, Miroku (Skt. Maitreya), and Jizō, and sometimes of resident holy men or mountain ascetics (*shugenja*) was increasingly common not only among aristocrats and the populace in the area in or near the capital but also in outlying regions. For many in the aristocracy and

in the larger populace, Buddhist practice had little to do with scholastic study or participation in a school of Buddhism but rather with the perceived powers of divinities in specific temples—such as at Kumano, where multiple divinities, identified as local manifestations of buddha figures like the Pure Land Buddha and Kannon, were prominent objects of pilgrimage and veneration throughout premodern times.

Tendai lineages and shifts in Heian Buddhism. The major Tendai temples at Mount Hiei and Onjōji (Miidera) profited from the combination of their locale in the mountains and comparative geographical nearness to the capital and, in that context, especially close relationship with leading aristocrats such as those in the northern Fujiwaras, the family that dominated court politics from the mid-ninth to mid-eleventh centuries.

Ryōgen (912–985) was in many ways a paradigmatic and particularly early example of a monk at Hiei who negotiated the difficult path to clerical success through parlaying personal skills and alliances with powerful figures of his era. Following his impressive performance at a debate on the occasion of the Yuima-e Assembly at Kōfukuji in Nara, Ryōgen became known to members of the court and, eventually, Fujiwara no Tadahira (880–949) and Fujiwara no Morosuke (908–960), the most powerful aristocrats of the day, became his patrons in exchange for a variety of ritual services. Two of the sons of Morosuke were ordained under Ryōgen. One, Jinzen (943–990), eventually became head of the complex at Hiei, where he not only engaged in regular rituals on behalf of his family but also received large private donations of estates directed to monastic halls he controlled; in this way, Jinzen amassed many estates and effectively directed their earnings to halls where members of his family would, ideally, continue to reside as monks in perpetuity.

By the late Heian era, in a manner similar to Shingon, Tendai lineages increasingly splintered along lines of distinct ritual and textual transmission. It was, in particular, monks of Tendai lineages who in this connection introduced more and more discourses related to “original enlightenment” (*hongaku*), which were originally rooted in Chinese commentarial works that concerned the dichotomy between gradual or ascending approaches to the Buddhist path and those based on initial acknowledgement of the practitioner’s inherently awakened status as “buddha.”

Buddhist knowledge, proselytization, and the rise of “new Kamakura Buddhisms.” Consideration of this explosion of literatures in the so-called established *kenmitsu* (exoteric-esoteric) lineages, apparent in Tendai discussions on *hongaku* and in Shingon efforts to uncover the “original teaching” (*honsetsu*) of the twelfth century and thereafter, indicates that what scholars have referred to as the “new Kamakura schools” of Japanese Buddhism did not, in any sense, exclusively demonstrate intellectual and religious vibrancy during the Kamakura and later eras.

For example, in connection with the explosion of literatures in the *kenmitsu* lineages, it is clear that they established

preaching traditions even before the advent of the new Kamakura schools. One occasion for such practice was that of esoteric ritual (*shuhō*), in which a ritual pronouncement (*hyōbyaku*) would be made, and the texts of such pronouncements came to be commonly assembled in collections by the mid-twelfth century; soon after, liturgical prayers (*kōshiki*) also became increasingly common, as they were read on the occasion of Buddhist assemblies. Another series of prominent examples of such traditions included the Agui preaching lines, which began with one of the sons of the illustrious scholar and politician Fujiwara no Michinori (Shinzei; d. 1159), the Tendai monk Chōken (c. 1126–1203).

Moreover, lay aristocrats were also intimately involved in the “popularization” and intellectual activities of Buddhism in the late Heian period. Such activity was often connected with aristocratic or royal cloisters (*monzeki*) following the same general pattern as represented by the halls Jinzen established at Hiei. Lay involvement was registered not merely in the writing by figures like Ōe no Masafusa (1041–1111) of ritual pronouncements and Fujiwara no Atsumitsu’s commentaries on Kūkai’s esoteric treatises, but also in figures such as the aristocrat Fujiwara no Yorinaga (1120–1156), who studied Buddhist logic under the tutelage of masters at the Nara temples Tōdaiji and, especially, Kōfukuji. Moreover, Ōe no Masafusa and other aristocrats continued the practice of compiling hagiographical accounts (*ōjōden*) of those thought to have been born in the Pure Land at the times of their deaths.

Meanwhile, warriors who proclaimed themselves Fujiwaras and governed at the autonomous area of Hiraizumi to the northeast in the twelfth century followed patterns established by the northern Fujiwaras and retired emperors, establishing complexes of temples where they were entombed and the objects of Pure Land mortuary practice; thus, even lay believers who were apparently of cultural backgrounds distinct from the population of the capital area appropriated Buddhist practices to embolden their authority and improve their destinies in the afterlife.

The prince-monk Shukaku (1150–1202) drew upon his privileged access to multiple lineages of Buddhist and court ritual, clerical and general scholarship, and poetry to inaugurate the construction of a vast manuscript collection at the main Omuro cloister of the Shingon temple Ninnaji. Indeed, cultural salons or enclaves such as that at Shukaku’s cloister, or those of certain other mountain temples in the area near the capital, brought together monks and aristocrats (sometimes disillusioned with capital politics) to engage in conversations (*kōdan*, *zōtan*), and thus helped give rise over time to a variety of aesthetic lineages. For example, Shingon and Tendai cloisters had a great impact on the development of literary treatises and poetry houses. Meanwhile, the powerful Tendai cleric Jien (1155–1225), in this connection, was not only a famous poet and rhetorician but also the author of the first treatise on Japanese history, *Gukan shō*.

The Nara Buddhist community, in fact, was also increasingly active. Although individual figures of Hossō lineage were prominent, such as the important scholar- and preacher-monk Jōkei (1155–1213), a grandson of Fujiwara no Michinori (Shinzei) who was well known in his day for his ritual pronouncements and liturgical prayers, practice of recitation of the historical Buddha's name (*shaka nenbutsu*), criticisms of Hōnen's (1133–1212) new Pure Land lineage, as well as faith in the *bodhisattvas* Miroku and Kannon, the lineages associated with Tōdaiji were most active, especially Kegon and Shingon. (Precept lineages also developed, which will be discussed in the next section.) Among the figures especially active were Chōgen (1121–1206), Myōe (1170–1232), Sōshō (1202–1278), and his disciple Gyōnen (1240–1321). Chōgen, a semi-independent holy man (*hijiri*) of Shingon lineage, was appointed the fundraiser for the rebuilding of Tōdaiji following its burning in the 1180s and supported Pure Land Buddhist practice through establishing a series of subsidiary temples—in that connection, acquiring buddha relics and promoting their veneration. Myōe attempted to restore Shingon and Kegon lineages to what he saw as their appropriate prominence—and like Jōkei openly opposed Hōnen's lineage; however, he is also known for his preoccupation with revelatory dreams, his establishment of the temple Kōzanji in Kyōto, related amassing of a large manuscript collection, authorship of a treatise on the esoteric *kōmyō shingon* death rite, and establishment of a convent for female survivors of the Hōjō family following the Jōkyū war.

Sōshō was especially eminent in Kegon studies, although he also had a broad background in the study of Buddhist logic, Yogācāra (J. Yuishiki), and *abhidharma* (J. Kusha). He was thus associated with the developing eclectic study tradition at Tōdaiji and left a massive corpus of commentaries and other works. Moreover, Sōshō, apparently in connection with the precedent of the recent Jōkei, became devoted to the *bodhisattva* Miroku, a topic about which he also wrote. His disciple Gyōnen became just as influential in the scholastic tradition at Tōdaiji, writing the famous work *Combined Study of the Eight Lineages* (*Hasshū kōyō*).

Thus, the monastic lineages of Tendai, Shingon, and the major Nara temples featured within their complexes and in their relationships with the court, aristocracy, and the larger population aspects often associated with the “new” Kamakura lineages. Temples of Nara as well as the Tendai complex at Hiei, moreover, sponsored buddha-relic assemblies open to women from the tenth century; in the latter case, such activity was undertaken especially with monks' mothers in mind, yet it also featured large processions in the capital that were attended by great numbers of the local populace. Female members of imperial house, especially retired empresses of the northern Fujiwaras, would be especially involved in relic veneration during the era of retired sovereigns. At the same time, fully ordained nuns became increasingly rare during the Heian period, and the major mountain complexes of the Tendai and Shingon lineages prohibited the presence of

women; and while female aristocrats would often take varying levels of tonsure as household nuns, particularly in their old age, such activities were most often taken after the death of a spouse or even in desperation and thus did not suggest that the conditions of female Buddhist practice in any sense matched that achieved in the Nara era.

Kamakura Buddhism. Given that those involved with “new” movements of the Kamakura period possessed a variety of relationships with their respective groups, it is useful to use the general category of “lineage” rather than “school” to analyze their activities.

The first Pure Land Buddhist lineage was that of Hōnen (1133–1212), who was trained at Mount Hiei but came to teach that only the chanting of the name of the Buddha Amida was appropriate to the Final Age of the Buddhist *dharma* (*mappō*), an ancient discourse introduced many centuries earlier that taught that the world would enter a darker era with increasing temporal distance from the life of the historical Buddha. The appeal of the Pure Land Buddha Amida was already especially associated with his ability to transform believers to his realm despite the problems of the Final Age, and such discourse was increasingly common not only in Tendai but also Shingon lineages. However, with the virtual absence of social mobility during Fujiwara preeminence as well as the increasing decentralization of power since the ascendance of the retired emperors—including the multiple power blocs all the more evident with the rise of the Kamakura shogunate—many in the aristocracy and greater populace realized the remarkably unstable character of their era and associated it all the more with the dire straits of *mappō*. Hōnen and his promotion of the exclusive practice (*senjū*) of the *nenbutsu* chant thus gained a ready audience, especially among the aristocracy. Given that Hōnen called for such exclusive practice, high-ranking Tendai clerics of Hiei and of other *kenmitsu* temples were incensed, so he not only originally had to leave Hiei but would eventually be exiled and repeatedly denounced. His numerous disciples developed multiple lineages of belief and practice, including that of Shinran (1173–1262) whose would become, like Hōnen's, one of the main schools delineated by the government among the major Buddhist institutions of the Tokugawa period. Another prominent yet unrelated Pure Land lineage developing from the late thirteenth century on was that of the Jishū, based on the beliefs and practices of the itinerant monk Ippen (1239–1289).

Among other novel lineages that began to emerge in the early Kamakura period were those focused on sitting meditation (Zen; Chinese, Chan), which particularly drew upon beliefs and practices of contemporary Buddhism in Song Dynasty China. The monk Eisai (alternatively, Yōsai; 1141–1215) was also initially trained at Mount Hiei and went to China, where he studied Tendai and Zen, the latter of which flourished in the Song. Eisai returned from China and established Zen temples from the 1190s on, and he freely drew upon Tendai and esoteric Buddhist teachings and practices

in his exploration of Rinzai Zen practice; though opposed by many in Nara and at Hiei, Eisai was supported by the Kamakura shogunate. Not long after, a Hiei monk named Dōgen (1200–1253) also traveled to China and studied the strict Zen of a contemporary master of the Cao-dong (J. Sōtō) lineage. Dōgen stressed the importance of “just sitting” (*shikan taza*) meditation as itself an end—attempting thereby to especially undercut any division between discourses of gradual and sudden attainment of enlightenment. It was, however, only with the developing Five Mountains (*gozan*) temple system of the Rinzai lineage, patronized by the Kamakura and then, especially, by the Ashikaga shogunates, that meditation lineages became increasingly prominent; from the late medieval era on, Zen temples would also become extremely prominent among the more general populace and were especially known for their performance of funerals, including the bestowal of posthumous ordinations (*kaimyō*). In the case of each of these kinds of temples, contrary to the images that would develop after Rinzai and Sōtō were assigned the designation of distinct schools in the Tokugawa period, it was common for temples to include monks affiliated with both lineages.

The Zen lineages spawned a number of convents. In fact, a system of Five Mountains Rinzai convents developed in Kyōto and Kamakura that complemented the more famous monastic system of the same name. A prominent nunnery was Tōkeiji in Kamakura. The wife of the late military ruler Hōjō Tokimune, who took the name of Kakusan (1252–1305) after her ordination, had studied with her husband under the Chinese Zen master Wu-xue (1226–1286), established Tōkeiji with her son in 1282; the convent, as a unique site outside of state restrictions, became prominent as a “divorce” nunnery for women who sought sanctuary from the seventeenth century on. In Sōtō Zen lineages, there were only a few convents, although fairly large groups of nuns were often trained in hermitages outside the gates of monasteries. At the same time, women were the object of the majority of recorded Sōtō Zen funerals in the late medieval era, which may be related to their status as lay patrons and, perhaps, to increasing associations of women with impurity in late medieval society, given the introduction of the Chinese “Blood-bowl” *Sūtra* (*ketsubonkyō*): the work depicted women’s assignment to birth in a blood hell due to menstrual blood and the necessity of performing rites for their salvation.

Another series of new lineages that developed were those of *Nichiren* or Lotus Buddhism, which were based on the teachings and practices associated with the monk Nichiren (1222–1282), who seems to have believed that he would reform Tendai lineages through returning them to exclusive practice of devotion to the *Lotus Sūtra*. Nichiren promoted the chanting of the title of the scripture and called for the establishment of a Buddhocracy, whereupon the world would be realized as a Buddha Realm. Nichiren’s lineages were also distinct insofar as Nichiren was himself from the

eastern region (*Kantō*) of the main island rather than the western area, which was where most of the other new lineages initially developed. A series of lineages would develop based on the teachings of his leading disciples; two of these lineages, Nichirenshū and Nichiren Shōshū, would become particularly prominent in later eras.

Over the course of the Kamakura period, Precept lineages also developed within *kenmitsu* Buddhism. Although the Sennyūji monk Shunjō (1166–1227), the Kōfukuji monk Kakuji (1194–1249), and Tōdaiji’s Enshō (1221–1277) were prominent figures, it was Eison (1201–1290) who had the greatest impact on the development of such lineages.

Eison, trained originally at the Shingon temple Daigoji in Kyōto and at Mount Kōya, inaugurated a Precept lineage (Risshū; later called Shingon Risshū) after developing a conviction concerning the importance of proper observance of the precepts and studying at the Nara Precepts temple Saidaiji in the 1230s. Eison also received instruction, at the time, in the “self-administered precepts” (*jisei jukai*) from the monk Kakuji at nearby Kōfukuji, in which one could administer one’s own clerical precepts rite—in cases where qualified precepts masters were absent—through taking a vow directly in front of an image of the Buddha. Eison established the Precept lineage at Saidaiji, where he engaged in large-scale ordinations for both lay and monastic believers; in this connection, he was especially devoted to the historical buddha Śākyamuni. Eison also helped revive the convent of Hokkeji in Nara when he administered the Precepts to nuns there in 1245, leading to the nunnery’s flourishing and reclassification as a subtemple of Saidaiji. Later, Eison, especially together with his active disciple Ninshō (1217–1303), came to engage in a variety of charitable activities for groups of so-called non-persons, or *hinin*, disadvantaged lepers and others at the margins of society (sometimes represented as having sacred powers to dissolve defilement).

In addition, *kenmitsu* Buddhist lineages spawned the beginnings of literatures and rituals of “Shintō” (originally pronounced Jindō) by giving rise in the late Kamakura period to new lineages that concerned themselves with understanding and appropriating the true character and power of the *kami*, which were understood in specifically Buddhist terms. It was, particularly, in Shingon Jingi (*kami*-worship) lineages and Tendai Jingi lineages that esoteric *kami* initiation developed. In particular, these lineages conducted so-called *shintō kanjō* consecrations patterned on initiatory *denbō kanjō* consecration rites. Just as the ruler began to undergo Buddhist consecration at the time of his accession (*sokui kanjō*) from the late thirteenth century on—and clearly related to its development—the Buddhist Jingi lineages developed such consecrations to enable initiates such as mountain ascetics (*shugenja*) and monks at shrines to ritually and symbolically acquire rulership in imitation of the *tennō*. In terms of ceremonial space, such activities ritually activated the trace essence (*honji-suijaku*) associations between *kami* and Buddha.

There were also discourses that cut across a large number of the new lineages that developed. As noted above, *hongaku* discourses in Tendai lineages and similar discourses in Shingon lineages (*honsetsu*, etc.) constituted important aspects of the explosion of Buddhist literatures of the era, especially from the twelfth century on. For example, discourses associated with the new lineages, such as attainment of enlightenment in an instant, focus on a single factor as the key to salvation, the universally encompassing character of enlightenment, and the fluidity of the relationship between moral causality and salvation all found expression in *hongaku* discussions.

BUDDHISM IN THE MUROMACHI AND TOKUGAWA PERIODS. Buddhist lineages and their temples underwent a series of fundamental changes over the course of the Muromachi (1336–1573) and Tokugawa (1600–1867) periods. At the same time, larger trends occurred in Buddhist belief and practice that, when considered with larger societal developments, provide insight into the extent and character of the “popularization” and, eventually, “nationalization” of Buddhism. Insofar as the Muromachi era witnessed the most unstable series of wars and related events in Japanese history, resulting in decentralized rule on an unprecedented level, it is not surprising that Buddhist lineages and their temples experienced varying combinations of growth and instability. Early on, divided imperial lines struggled mutually for political legitimacy. In this and related contexts, theories elaborating the meaning of *kami* within Buddhist cosmology reached new levels of complexity. The discourse of “origin trace” (*honji suijaku*), which had arisen in *kenmitsu* Buddhist circles from the Heian period on and positioned buddhas/*bodhisattvas* as essences with *kami* manifestations, became a linchpin not only for Buddhist Shintō initiations but also for all manner of “Shintō” theories within the *kenmitsu* temple complexes.

Changes in the *Kenmitsu* lineages. Meanwhile, institutionally, *kenmitsu* Buddhist lineages continued to thrive and prosper in a number of regions, while a number of the newer lineages continued to spread their practices, accompanied by their messages. The impetus to create larger and larger manuscript treasuries, increasingly accompanied by interest in continental Asian materials, particularly evident from the twelfth century on, continued throughout the Kamakura period and into the Muromachi period. Printing technology was appropriated to produce canons at Shingon’s Mount Kōya, and temples in areas such as Kamakura and Nara printed Buddhist scriptures, Zen literature, and other works from the continent. At the same time, the production and hand copying (*shosha*) of vast quantities of works continued especially in the Shingon, Tendai, multiple Nara, and most of the newer Buddhist lineages; although substantially produced even from the twelfth century on, legends of the origins of temples (*engimono*), temple documentary or ritual records (*monjo*, *kikigaki*, *kirigami*, etc.), a variety of commentaries (*zuzō sho*, *shō*, *shōmono*), compilations (*shū*, *ruiju*), and biographies (*den*) increased dramatically in the

thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Several of the major monasteries of the *kenmitsu* lineages, especially Enryakuji (Mount Hiei: Tendai), Onjōji (Tendai), Kōfukuji (Nara: Hossō), Tōdaiji (Nara: Kegon, Shingon), and Kongōbuji (Mount Kōya: Shingon), took advantage of the extremely decentralized conditions to not merely improve their economic conditions through attempting to acquire all manner of new lands and often engage in overseas trade, but to commonly establish fighting forces to serve on behalf of their interests. In connection with offerings of land, branch temples and shrines were often constructed, in which the resident Buddhist divinities or *kami* were commonly seen by those in the area as arbiters of natural forces and in need of propitiation or veneration. They routinely also established new temples, including sometimes relatively large manuscript collections, to spread ritual knowledge and, sometimes, monastic learning.

Zen and the culture of learning. At the same time, Zen lineages increasingly took unique positions among the newer lineages with their success at winning the patronage of the Ashikaga (Muromachi) shogunate, which came particularly to promote Rinzai Zen lineages and the Five Mountains system from the late fourteenth century on. The Zen traditions, similar to the relationship between the *kenmitsu* lineages and the larger aristocracy, began in their patronage by the shogunate to influence the production of new cultural practices and, eventually, aesthetic lineages. The leaders of the shogunate were especially interested in cultivating the cultural traits of the aristocracies of Japan as well as China, and certain arts associated with Zen presumably carried such traits (and, in part, Buddhist meaning as well). The development of Japanese landscape arts—especially landscape paintings and rock gardens—from the late fourteenth century on was especially indebted to those in the cultural enclaves of the Five Mountains Zen temples and convents. This culture of learning, commonly represented in the form of paintings of and literary references to the Zen monk’s study (*shosai*), included Buddhist contemplation, analysis, and discussion of continental Asian scholarship. Moreover, the shogunate academy Ashikaga Gakkō, which developed by the 1420s, was directly indebted to those in the Five Mountains institutions. In addition, beginning in the fourteenth century, the shogunate supported the inception of tea parties reminiscent of similar events in China. The monk Murata Shukō (1423–1502), who studied under the unconventional Zen cleric Ikkyū at Daitokuji, developed the first form of the later tea ceremony, which would eventually blend the influence of such aristocratic practice with those of the general populace.

Developments in other newer lineages. Meanwhile, recluses associated with Jishū and Precept lineages were heavily involved in Linked Poetry (*renga*) gatherings, which were similar to the cultural enclaves yet were marked by bringing together persons of different status on common ground. These figures were thus connected also with the “non-humans” (*hinin*)—itinerant priests, entertainers, traders, and

lepers often living in liminal riverbank areas (*kawara*), where cadavers were commonly left. The origins of such gatherings may have also been related to Eison's and Ninshō's activities of the self-administered precepts, which also brought together persons of differing classes in activity marked by equality, and constituted leagues (*ikkō*) that would transform into groups challenging authorities from the fifteenth century on. Other of the newer lineages of Buddhism variously made inroads into rural areas. Although lineages such as Shinran's and Nichiren's had moved to some degree into the rural areas of the eastern area (Kantō) of the main island as early as the late Kamakura era and the Jishū and Precept lineages were comparatively mobile, most of the newer lineages had little success in rural areas before well into the Muromachi period. It was particularly with the increasing decentralization of power and social mobility from the mid-fifteenth century on that the newer lineages became especially successful in attracting larger numbers of adherents, and such conversions were often made in connection with leagues (*ikkō*) that these lineages offered—that is, related to efforts to challenge the authority of local lords, their retainers, and governors. Shinran's True Pure Land lineage (Jōdo shinshū, or Ikko shū) became especially prominent from the fifteenth century, when the eighth patriarch Rennyo (1415–1499) led it. Shinran's teaching especially appealed to the general populace through its emphasis on the Final Age of the Buddhist *dharma* and, in that context, the notion that all, whether monk or lay, are equally incapable of contributing in any way to their own salvation; Shinran had indeed himself said he was “neither monk nor layman” and went so far as to take a wife (based on an instruction in vision from the *bodhisattva* Kannon)—the precedent for True Pure Land priests' marriage from that time forward. Arguing that only one recitation of the *nenbutsu* with faith was sufficient for birth in Amida's Pure Land, Shinran and his successors gradually developed a willing audience among the population, especially over the course of the Muromachi period, when traditionally accepted class distinctions were increasingly seen by some as fundamentally arbitrary in character. Rennyo, after his persecution by Hiei and move to the Hokuriku region of northern Japan, transformed the lineage by appealing especially to all classes of rural villagers (especially peasants and low-level samurai) and emphasizing the universal and simple character of Amidist beliefs and practices; in doing so, and given the gradual rise in literacy, Rennyo attempted to expand the number of people who could read monks' sermons in the lineage by encouraging use of the syllabary rather Chinese characters in their recording. He also promoted the use of parishes or confraternities (*kō*), where villagers met in the local place of practice (*dōjō*), located in a temple or in the home of a supporting layman, who was usually a low-level samurai. The *ikkō ikki* leagues that rebelled against local governors beginning in the 1570s, featuring the low-level samurai and large numbers of peasants—the latter of which did not want to pay rents to local lords—were often at variance with Rennyo's wishes, but following successes in Hokuriku in 1488 Rennyo went

on to take advantage of the new wealth, land, and military strength to establish the Honganji temple in the capital of Kyōto in 1496. The Nichiren lineage (Hokke shū) also became similarly powerful through the development of leagues, although in this case it converted its followers increasingly in urban areas, especially in Kyōto during the 1530s.

The arrival of Europeans and the nationalization of Buddhist “schools.” Following the mid-sixteenth-century appearance of the Europeans and their religion, the leading samurai destroyed the military powers of the Buddhists within decades. The newly formed ruling Tokugawa shogunate (1600–1867) then decided to incorporate Buddhists into its administrative structure. It first ordered each major “school” of Japanese Buddhism to have a main temple for the training of clerics and a strictly hierarchical system of main and branch temples, as well as possess rules for monks' status, discipline, and clothing within the organization. By order of the shogunate, a national system of main-branch temples (*honmatsu seido*) was developed, which forced all temples to affiliate with one or other of the nationally designated schools. The shogunate eventually required that all Japanese households (*ie*) register with and become parishioners of their local temple, a system that became universal by roughly the 1660s. The development of this national system of congregations or parishes (*danka seido*) meant that Buddhist institutions, which had directly or indirectly affected much of Japanese cultural and social life for a millennium, became even more pervasive. Each household, through its membership, could not easily change its affiliation from one temple or school of Buddhism to another, while it at the same time was required to support the temple, particularly through donating to clerics on the occasions of family funerals or related memorial rites. In this way, the members of most households came increasingly to associate Buddhist temples with death or mortuary rites. At the same time, it is clear that Buddhism thereby became an integral part of ritual life for virtually all Japanese. The traditional *kenmitsu* and the newer lineages tended to profit financially from the national system set in place by the shogunate. True Pure Land lineages, given the wealth of the Honganji, continued despite early subjugation efforts by the first shogun of the era, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616), to enjoy special privileges vis-à-vis the military government, such as the continuing right to marry. Most of the major temples increasingly offered a whole variety of ritual services on behalf of the local populations. Those with famous buddha, *bodhisattva*, or other images increasingly offered regular displays (*kaichō*) of their sacred icons. Buddhist monks typically asked, as had commonly been the case throughout history, for donations when they conducted occasional rituals, though in this case they also enjoyed the increasing benefit of the new series of required funerary and memorial rites. Meanwhile, temples of Shingon and other lineages undertook to reorganize and expand their manuscript collections not so much in connection with record-keeping requirements as an effort to revive their intellectual life, which had particularly suffered with the breakdown of

shogunal authority from the late fifteenth century on. Although the shogunate tried to retain control over religious practice, transinstitutional practices such as pilgrimage became more vibrant than ever. Meanwhile, various groups of so-called Kumano nuns traveled the isles and preached, sometimes promoting a physical pilgrimage but more often using “Kumano Ten-Realms *Maṇḍala*” (*kumano jikkai mandara*) paintings to endorse a spiritual pilgrimage to salvation—avoiding the torments of the blood hell, which they taught awaited most women at death. Moreover, the fact that print had become a virtually universal medium in the burgeoning merchant economy meant that a whole variety of easily accessible publications appeared in connection with practices like pilgrimage. Guidebooks to pilgrimage sites, literary descendants in part of the earlier temple legend collections, flourished as such sites grew more popular than ever before, despite the shogunate’s efforts to limit physical movement.

BUDDHISM IN THE MEIJI PERIOD (1868–1912) AND MODERN JAPAN. Given the increasing intellectual current of “nationalism” (*kokugaku*), which was not only connected with movement toward the development of a nation-state and modernization but also increasingly with a call for the return to full sovereignty of the *tennō* and the rejection of foreign influences, it is not surprising that Buddhist institutions, long gateways to continental learning and civilization, came to be subjected to all manner of criticisms.

Following patterns established on a small scale from the mid-seventeenth century on by lords of certain local domains, the new government immediately decided to separate *kami*-worshipping shrines from Buddhist temples by force, taking a policy of “Separation of *Kami* and Buddhas” (*shinbutsu bunri*) and producing what would come to be called “State Shintō” (*kokka shintō*). The sharply anti-Buddhist policies and tone of government statements created an atmosphere rife for exploitation, whereupon a virtual cultural revolution occurred in which Buddhist images and temples were purged throughout the Japanese isles. This purge, which came to known as “Expelling Buddhism and Destroying Śākyamuni” (*haibutsu kishaku*), began as soon as the new government policy was announced: a *kami*-worshipping priest led an armed group that stormed the Hie Shrine, part of the larger Enryakuji temple complex at Mount Hiei, and burned several hundred Buddhist images and scriptures. From this point on, violence against Buddhist institutions became rampant.

By 1871, the worst remnants of the purge were over, and Buddhist clerics, sometimes together with and sometimes in opposition to the government, began to make efforts to reconceive of and newly represent the relevance of Buddhist belief and practice to Japanese society. In response to the most prominent ideological attacks on institutional Buddhists—that monks and temples did not contribute to the nation, that their faith was foreign and counter to that of the nation, and that they held to ahistorical and mythic beliefs—

they responded by engaging, increasingly along transsectarian (ecumenical) lines, in working on behalf of the population by constructing hospitals, aiding the poor, helping those in prison, feeding the ill of other lands, and also using their organizations to aid the Japanese military overseas.

For institutional Buddhists, the national and international unity of their faith was mediated by a transnational Asian Buddhism. Speaking of the “Three Realms” (India, China, Japan), a Japanese term originally used prior to nation-states (which also appropriated the same Japanese word, *kokukuni*), they drew upon premodern discourses of the Tōdaiji monk Gyōnen and others who had attempted to legitimate Buddhist belief and practice in the Japanese isles through appealing to the presumed unified transmission of a singular and authentic Buddhist tradition. In the same period, Daisetsu Teitarō (“D.T.”) Suzuki’s (1870–1966) translation of *The Awakening of Faith* attempted to establish a “common ground” for all “true Buddhists” beyond attachment to “sectarian tenets,” in this case an essential Mahāyāna doctrine represented as in no way inferior to the presumably more scientific early Buddhism. While Suzuki’s work would later find a larger readership in Europe and the United States and come to stress discourses on buddha-nature in the context of Zen belief, *The Awakening of Faith* would be studied by modern Japanese scholars because of its influence on Tendai and other discourses concerning “original enlightenment” (*hongaku*) and interpreted by some as having reached its flowering in Japanese Buddhism. Such interpretations, combined with the emphasis on the Three Nations, are thought to have also contributed conceptually to pan-Asianism, which in the form of the Japanese policy of the “Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere” rhetorically helped to legitimize military aggression on the continent during the Pacific war. Recently, however, some other Japanese scholars would argue that Japanese Buddhism, especially in its emphasis on “original enlightenment,” was especially prone to antinomianism.

Another aspect of institutional Buddhism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that should be noted was the universalizing of clerical marriage. While monks sometimes possessed wives and children but did not speak openly of their presence (this was frequent enough that children had rights to a deceased monk’s property in the Heian period), it was only with Shinran and the True Pure Land lineages he founded that Buddhist clerics began to openly marry. However, Buddhist clerics as a whole now lost whatever privileges or exceptional aspects that had marked them; as a key part of this process, the government dismantled in 1872 all laws differentiating clergy from others in the populace—including official proscriptions against clerical marriage and meat eating (*nikujiki saikai*)—so most monks married. At the same time, almost all nuns, who unlike their male counterparts were not bequeathed family temples by their fathers and did not feel pressure to themselves bequeath—instead “left home” to enter the clergy—are unmarried to this day.

While monastic Buddhists were generally supportive of the war effort—and on peaceful terms with the militarists—the government was particularly distrustful of those in “new religions,” including Buddhist ones like Sōka Kyōiku Gakkai (later called Sōka Gakkai), Reiyūkai, Risshō Kōseikai, Shinnyoen, Gedatsukai, and Honmon Butsuryūshū. Members of many of the new religions were observed on a regular basis and often imprisoned. With the destruction of the major metropolitan centers and the freeing of the leaders of the new religions, the latter enjoyed tremendous successes during the early postwar era. All of the new religions, including those Buddhist in character, offered this-worldly benefits of various sorts (often healing) as well as related resolutions to spiritual/emotional problems.

Sōka Gakkai, a lay organization that began within the Nichiren Shōshū sect, grew from an organization of a few thousand at the beginning of the 1950s to a membership of more than 7 million by the early 1970s. This and other of the new religions were particularly successful in urban areas, where residents were often geographically separated from their larger families; one member of an urban family, often the wife or mother in the household, would commonly enter the movement, attend regular meetings, and eventually bring in other members. Sōka Gakkai featured regular group meetings for Buddhist practice featuring recitation of the title of the *Lotus Sūtra*, belief in the essential importance of active proselytization, and, in that connection, political action to promote world peace and salvation. Other Buddhist new religions tended to emphasize ancestor veneration as a major component, including Reiyūkai, out of which other new religions, such as Risshō Kōseikai, have developed.

From the 1970s on so-called “new-new religions” (*shin-shin shūkyō*) have developed, which generally share characteristics different from those of the new religions, and of which those of Buddhist character have also been active. While the growth of most of the earlier new religions slowed, these groups attempted to offer new responses to the changing conditions in contemporary Japan. For the most part, groups like Agonshū and Aum Shinrikyō, like their non-Buddhist counterparts, tended to appeal to youth through not merely this-worldly benefits but also a more critical stance vis-à-vis the current social and political situation.

Recently, institutional Buddhists have faced charges of social-class and gender discrimination. With regard to social discrimination, research during the last decades of the twentieth century clarified that some major sects of Japanese Buddhism, such as Zen, were involved historically in the use of “discriminatory precept names” (*sabetsu kaimyō*)—the application of discriminatory religious titles to those deceased of the outcast class (*burakumin*). Finally, the creation and increased use of *mizuko kuyō* rites, veneration of the *bodhisattva* Jizō (*mizuko jizō*) practiced on behalf of the spirits of aborted fetuses, from the 1970s on in some Buddhist temples had an integral relationship with advertising campaigns and broader temple efforts to increase profits; the motives of the temples

have been particularly called into question, and some have argued that such practices target young women by producing fear of the curses (*tatari*) of unsettled fetus spirits—thus constituting an unfair and discriminatory practice.

Institutional Buddhists have also been challenged by recent changes in death practices. The image of greedy monks has led some Japanese to prefer to forgo such funerals, choosing options such as common graves and the free scattering of the dead’s ashes.

However, alongside the growth of new practices transinstitutional rites of more traditional vintage like the Obon day of the dead as well as pilgrimage have been retained if not reinvigorated. Moreover, the New Year’s pilgrimage, while associated with Shintō shrines, is often made instead to Buddhist temples, where Buddhas and *bodhisattvas* are likewise approached with prayers. In addition, Buddhist pilgrimage circuits vibrant since the Tokugawa period, such as the eighty-eight-temple route undertaken to match the piety of the great Shingon master Kūkai, have become as prominent as ever.

Finally, we should note that the influence of Buddhist discourses on society has accompanied the vast increase in media. The development of the internet as well as the popularity of *manga* (comics), *anime* (animation), and films have contributed to a wide diffusion of Buddhist images and ideas. Buddhist temples, new (and “new-new”) Buddhist religions, and a variety of other Buddhist groups have taken advantage of the web to explain their teachings and offer other services. From the 1970s on, *manga* series such as the great Tezuka Osamu’s series entitled *Buddha* and *anime* series such as *Ikkyū-san* have enjoyed great popularity. Buddhist themes also figured prominently in novels and other literature. The prominence of Buddhist figures, themes, images, and teachings in these media indicates the extent to which Buddhism continues to have a vibrant and multiple influence on Japanese culture, while its institutional presence perdures despite a variety of challenges.

SEE ALSO Buddhism, Schools of, article on Japanese Buddhism; Japanese Religions, overview article; Missions, article on Buddhist Missions; Pilgrimage, article on Buddhist Pilgrimage in East Asia; Shintō; Shugendō.

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published in Japanese. Comparatively more introductory works include H. Byron Earhart, *Japanese Religion: Unity and Diversity*, 3rd ed. (Belmont, Calif., 2004) and Ian Reader, Esben Andreasen, and Finn Stefansson, eds., *Japanese Religions Past and Present* (Honolulu, Hawaii, 1993). Daigan Matsunaga and Alicia Matsunaga, *Foundation of Japanese Buddhism*, 2 vols. (Los Angeles and Tokyo, 1974–1976), is a detailed yet dated overview of the historical transmission of the best known lineages of Japanese Buddhism.

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increasingly establish the commonalities between the previously existing lineages and those newly developed in the Kamakura period, including relevant Shintō lineages. These include Mikael S. Adolphson, *The Gates of Power: Monks, Courtiers, and Warriors in Premodern Japan* (Honolulu, Hawaii, 2000); Bernard Faure, *Visions of Power: Imagining Medieval Japanese Buddhism* (Princeton, N.J., 1996); Richard K. Payne, ed., *Re-Visioning “Kamakura” Buddhism* (Honolulu, Hawaii, 1998); Mark Teeuwen and Fabio Rambelli, eds., *Buddhas and Kami in Japan: Honji Suijaku as a Combinatory Paradigm* (London, 2003); and Robert H. Sharf and Elizabeth Horton Sharf, eds., *Living Images: Japanese Buddhist Icons in Context* (Stanford, Calif., 2001). While the last of these works includes studies of Buddhism from the Muromachi and Tokugawa periods, the number of other prominent works remains comparatively few, and typically concern particular figures or institutions of the period or popular religious practices. Studies of figures include Peter Haskell and Ryūichi Abé, *Great Fool: Zen Master Ryōkan—Poems, Letters, and Other Writings* (Honolulu, Hawaii, 1996) and James H. Sanford, *Zen-man Ikkyū* (Chico, Calif., 1981). Prominent works on institutions or popular practices include Helen J. Baroni, *Ōbaku Zen: The Emergence of the Third Sect of Zen in Tokugawa Japan* (Honolulu, Hawaii, 2000); Martin Collcutt, *Five Mountains: The Rinzaï Zen Monastic Institution in Medieval Japan* (Cambridge, U.K., 1981); Helen Hardacre, *Religion and Society in Nineteenth-Century Japan: A Study of the Southern Kanto Region, Using Late Edo and Early Meiji Gazetteers* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 2002); Nam-Lin Hur, *Prayer and Play in Late Tokugawa Japan: Asakusa Sensōji and Edo Society* (Cambridge, U.K., 2000); Neil McMullin, *Buddhism and the State in Sixteenth Century Japan* (Princeton, N.J., 1984); D. Max Moerman, *Localizing Paradise: Kumano Pilgrimage and the Religious Landscape of Premodern Japan* (Cambridge, U.K., 2004); Joseph D. Parker, *Zen Buddhist Landscape Arts of Early Muromachi Japan (1336–1573)* (Albany, N.Y., 1999); and Duncan Ryūken Williams, *The Other Side of Zen: A Social History of Soto Zen Buddhism in Tokugawa Japan* (Princeton, N.J., 2005). There are numerous studies of Buddhism in the modern era, of which the most prominent are: Paula Kane Robinson Arai, *Women Living Zen* (New York, 1999); Helen Hardacre, *Lay Buddhism in Contemporary Japan: Reiyūkai Kyōdan* (Princeton, N.J., 1984); Helen Hardacre, *Marketing the Menacing Fetus in Japan* (Berkeley, Calif., 1999); Richard M. Jaffe, *Neither Monk Nor Layman: Clerical Marriage in Modern Japanese Buddhism* (Princeton, N.J., 2001); James Edward Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and Its Persecution* (Princeton, N.J., 1990); William LaFleur, *Liquid Life: Abortion and Buddhism in Japan* (Princeton, N.J., 1991); Ian Reader and George Tanabe, *Practically Religious: Worldly Benefits and the Common Religion of Japan* (Honolulu, Hawaii, 1998); Brian Daizen Victoria, *Zen at War* (New York, 1997); and Judith Snodgrass, *Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and the Columbian Exposition* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2003) on the “new” Buddhism of the Meiji period and the interaction with the West and Western Buddhologists. Jamie Hubbard and Paul L. Swanson, eds., *Pruning the Bodhi Tree: The Storm over Critical Buddhism* (Honolulu, Hawaii, 1997), focuses on the debate concerning contemporary Japanese scholars who have

criticized original enlightenment discourses in Japanese Buddhism.

Studies in Japanese

The great bulk of publications in the study of Japanese Buddhism has and remains in Japanese, and the volume of publication has dramatically increased in recent years. The most useful reference with which to consider the broader history of Japanese Buddhism has long been Tsuji Zennosuke, *Nihon bukkyōshi*, 10 vols. (Tokyo, 1944–1953), although there have been a large number of recent general works that address developments in theory and research. More recently, a series edited by Nihon Bukkyō Kenkyūkai entitled *Nihon no bukkyō*, 6 vols. (Kyōto, 1994–1996) and a volume edited by the same group called *Nihon bukkyō no kenkyūhō* (Kyōto, 2000) have offered the most rigorous series of general articles by leading contemporary scholars as well as the most up-to-date bibliographical essays on significant research that has been conducted on Japanese Buddhism in recent decades; the topics covered include not only the major historical periods, lineages of Japanese Buddhism, and *kami*-Buddha amalgamation but also the fields of Buddhist folklore, Buddhist literature, women in Buddhism, Buddhist art, and Buddhist architecture. For verification of the existence or historical validity of Buddhist texts, Ono Genmyō, ed., *Bussho kaisetsu daijiten*, 13 vols. (Tokyo, Supplementary vols. 12–13 ed. Maruyama Takao, rev. ed. 1964–1967) remains the best resource.

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BRIAN O. RUPPERT (2005)

BUDDHISM: BUDDHISM IN THE WEST

During the twentieth century Buddhism became globally distributed and established. Buddhists have set foot in Australia and New Zealand, in the southern region of Africa, and in most countries of Europe, as well as in South and North America. Buddhism outside of Asia is marked by a heterogeneity and diversity that is observable in all thus-denoted “Western” countries. The entire range of Buddhism’s main traditions and subtraditions can be found outside of Asia, often in one country and sometimes even in one major city, with some forty, fifty, or more different Buddhist groups in a single place. Buddhists of divergent traditions and schools have become neighbors—a rarity in Asia itself. Additionally, new Western Buddhist orders and organizations have been founded, signaling ambitious moves to create indigenized variations of Buddhist forms, practices, and interpretations. As the Western institutionalization of Buddhism rapidly accelerated in the closing three decades of the twentieth century, its research matured and became a recognized subject with numerous studies.

EARLY ENCOUNTERS. Very early information about Buddhist concepts can be traced to the records of the Greek philosopher Plutarch (first century CE). Plutarch writes about the Indo-Greek king Menander (Menandros, c. 155–130 BCE) and his conversation with the Buddhist monk Nāgasena, documented in the Pali text *Milindapañha* (Questions of King Milinda). The rise of Christianity and later of Islam blocked further exchange until Franciscan friars traveled to Mongolia in the thirteenth century. From the sixteenth century onwards, travelers and Jesuit missionaries to Tibet, China, and Japan left fragmentary accounts of Buddhist rituals and concepts. In the course of European colonial expansion, information was gathered about the customs and history of the peoples and regions that were subjected to British, Portuguese, and Dutch domination. Texts and descriptions began to be collected and translated in the late eighteenth century, although a distinction had not yet been

clearly made between Hindu and Buddhist treatises. Simultaneously, in Europe the Romantic movement gave rise to a glorifying enthusiasm for the East and for India in particular. The Asian world and its religious and philosophical traditions were discovered along with efforts aimed at tracing a genuine and pure spirituality that was supposedly lost in Europe through the victory of rationalism.

Discovery of Buddhism through texts. The credit for first systematizing the increasing amount of information on Buddhist texts and concepts goes to the Paris philologist Eugène Burnouf (1801–1852). His *L'introduction à l'histoire du buddhisme indien* (1844) presented a scientific survey of Buddhist history and doctrines. Burnouf imposed a rational order on ideas hitherto perceived as unrelated, in this way creating the prototype of the European concept of Buddhism. In the 1850s, Europe witnessed a boom of studies and translations, paving the way for an enhanced knowledge of and interest in the teachings. At this time Asian religion was essentially treated as a textual object located in books, Oriental libraries, and institutes of the West.

The writings of the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) inspired wide interest in Buddhist philosophy and ethics among intellectuals, academics, and artists. In the United States, the nineteenth-century transcendentalists Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Walt Whitman praised Indian philosophy and introduced translations, produced in Europe, to members of the American middle- and upper classes. Circles of aesthetic conversation and textual sources were the mediators that initiated the spread of and provided for the public presence of Buddhist ideas in Europe and the United States. The appeal of Indian spirituality was strengthened by the intervention of the Theosophical Society, founded by Helena P. Blavatsky (1831–1891) and Henry Steel Olcott (1832–1907) in 1875 in New York. In addition, Sir Edwin Arnold (1832–1904) published his famous poem *The Light of Asia* in 1879, followed by Olcott's *Buddhist Catechism* in 1881. Both works praised the Buddha and his teaching. Echoing this overt glorification of the Asian religion, a few Europeans became the first self-converted followers of the teaching in the early 1880s.

Though more Westerners took up Buddhist teachings as their new orientation in life, another twenty years passed before the first Buddhist organizations outside of Asia were formed. The Indologist Karl Seidenstücker (1876–1936) established the Society for the Buddhist Mission in Germany in 1903 in Leipzig. Likewise, the first British monk, Ananda Metteyya (Allen Bennett McGregor, 1872–1923), formed the Buddhist Society of Great Britain and Ireland in 1907 in London. By means of lectures, pamphlets, and books, the first professed Western Buddhists tried to win recruits from the educated middle- and upper social strata of society. These and related activities were polemically commented on by Christian clergy, who criticized the “nihilism” of Buddhism and the “foreignness” of the Asian religion to Europe-

an society. This debate was strengthened when a few committed men, including Anton Güth (1878–1957), ordained as Nyānatiloka, became monks in the Theravāda tradition in the early twentieth century and temporarily remained in Europe.

Internationalization: Toward a global Buddhism. To a certain extent the incipient Buddhist activities in Western countries relied on reformist approaches and modernist reinterpretations of Asian Buddhist concepts. In Ceylon (Sri Lanka), the center of South Asian Buddhist revival, educated urban Buddhists who had been influenced by Orientalist concepts emphasized the rational and scientific aspects of Buddhist teachings. These modernist Buddhists portrayed Buddhism as text-based, pragmatic, rational, universal, and socially active. Both European scholarship and the Western glorification of Buddhist ideas strengthened national and religious self-confidence in South Asia, further generating ideas of a missionary outreach. In addition, in 1880 Olcott and Blavatsky visited Colombo, Ceylon, and publicly took refuge in the Buddha, *dharma*, and *sangha*, becoming the first Westerners to do so in an Asian country.

In the two decades that followed, Olcott and the Ceylonese Anagārika Dharmapāla (1864–1933) worked together to renew the importance of Buddhism. In 1891, Dharmapāla set up the Mahā Bodhi Society, its aim being to restore the neglected site of Bodh Gayā in North India and to resuscitate Buddhism in India. These activities led to Dharmapāla's invitation to the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893. His well-received speech at this paramount event for the formal debut of Asian religions in the United States established Dharmapāla as the main spokesman of Buddhist revival in South Asia. It was in Chicago in 1893 as well that Carl Theodor Strauss (1852–1937) became the first American to formally convert to Buddhism on American soil. In the years to come Strauss and Dharmapāla worked jointly and traveled extensively around the world to spread Buddhist teachings. Overseas branches of the Mahā Bodhi Society were formed in the United States (1897), Germany (1911), and Great Britain (1926), in this way establishing the society as the first international Buddhist organization and its founder as the first global Buddhist missionary or propagandist.

Buddhism brought by immigrants. A different, non-modernist, and religiously more tradition-oriented line of Buddhism reached Western countries with the arrival of Chinese and Japanese migrants to the U.S. West Coast and later to South America. Gold had been discovered in California in 1848, and miners from China came in hopes of unearthing a fortune. By the 1880s the number of Chinese in California, Montana, and Idaho had grown to over 100,000 people. Upon their arrival, the immigrants built Chinese temples, the first two in San Francisco in 1853. During the next fifty years hundreds of so-called joss-houses, where Buddhist, Daoist, and Chinese folk traditions mingled, appeared throughout the western United States.

In striking contrast to the high esteem that Buddhist texts and ideas had gained among East Coast intellectuals, Americans on the West Coast devalued East Asian culture as exotic, strange, and incomprehensible. The Chinese laundrymen, cooks, and miners were regarded as unwelcome immigrants. In 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act restricted further immigration of Chinese nationals. In a similar way, Japanese who had come to the United States in search of work beginning in the 1870s faced racism and social exclusion. Buddhism was regarded as a foreign religion, causing a threat to the relationship between Japanese and American people. Nevertheless, two Jōdo Shinshū priests were sent in 1899 to support the spiritual needs of Japanese laborers, and the Buddhist Mission to North America became formally established in 1914.

More migrants from Japan arrived in Central and South America around the turn of the century. Japanese workers traveled to Mexico and Peru in 1897 and to São Paulo in Brazil in 1908. The laborers intended to work for only a few years on the plantations and then return to Japan. Most often, however, their stay turned into long-term residence. During the first forty years of residence in Brazil, only one Japanese Buddhist temple was established, in Cafelândia in São Paulo in 1932. Japanese workers were expected to assimilate as quickly as possible to Brazilian culture, an expectation that included, among other things, abandoning their “heathen practices” and converting to Roman Catholicism. A fair number did, as the Japanese saw conversion as necessary to the process of Brazilianization. On the other hand, the decision to change their status from sojourner to immigrant resulted in efforts to ensure the preservation of Japanese culture and identity. It was from the 1950s onward, after Japan’s defeat in World War II brought an end to the migrants’ hopes for return, that Buddhist and Shintō temples became established in Brazil. The Mission of Sōtō Zenshū in Brazil founded Busshinji temple in 1956, followed by the influx of other Buddhist traditions since the 1970s.

As in Brazil, World War II was a watershed for Japanese people in the United States. Acculturative processes had begun during the 1920s and 1930s to meet the needs of the American-born generation; these processes included education programs and such adaptations as referring to Buddhist temples as *churches* and to priestly personnel as *minister* or *reverend*. Paradoxically, adaptation accelerated tremendously during the time of the internment camps. From 1942 to 1945, some 111,000 people of Japanese ancestry were interned, almost 62,000 of them being Buddhists, the majority Jōdo Shinshū. Religious services in the camps were conducted in English, a demand that was later established as the norm. Of similar importance, formerly tight bonds with the mother temples in Japan dissolved. This emancipation from the normative Japanese model was expressed in the organization’s new name: No longer a “Mission [from Japan] to North America,” it became reincorporated as the Buddhist Churches of America in 1944.

Chinese in the United States remained mostly concentrated in Chinatowns along the West Coast. As the numbers of Chinese dropped due to the Chinese Exclusion Act, so did the number of temples. The other strand of Buddhism in the United States—made up of those who had converted to Buddhism—was no more successful at initiating Buddhist activities during the first half of the twentieth century. The appearance of the Japanese Rinzai Zen monk Sōen Shaku (1859–1919) at the World’s Parliament of Religions gave momentum to the practice of Zen meditation, which was strengthened by two disciples sent by Sōen Shaku to the United States: Zen masters Nyōgen Senzaki (1876–1958) and Sokei-an Sasaki (1882–1945). Although they stayed in the United States for years, the meditation groups they set up were met with little interest. It was not until D. T. Suzuki (1870–1966) returned to North America for a long stay in the 1950s that a psychologically reshaped Zen became popular.

BUDDHISM IN EUROPE DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. World War I brought an end to the incipient Buddhist movements in Europe. But Buddhism was taken up again immediately after the war, especially in Britain and Germany. In contrast to the early period, Buddhism was now beginning to be practiced, at least by its leading proponents. The teachings were not only to be conceived by the mind, but also applied to the whole person. Religious practices such as spiritual exercises and devotional acts became part of German and British Buddhist life during the 1920s and 1930s.

In 1921 Georg Grimm (1868–1945) and Seidenstücker initiated the Buddhist Parish in Germany. The committed group saw itself expressly as a religious community of Buddhist lay followers. Lectures by Grimm were attended by five hundred to one thousand listeners. In Berlin, Paul Dahlke (1865–1928) built the famous Buddhist House in 1924. In this house, which served as both residence and monastery, Dahlke led the same kind of ascetic and religious life as South Asian Buddhist monks. The divergent interpretations of the teachings of the Pali canon by Grimm and Dahlke led to the formation of two independent schools, which polemically disputed the central teaching of *anattā* (Pali, “no-self”). Both schools continued their work during the Nazi period (1933–1945), albeit restricted to small, private circles that were at times under Nazi political control. Buddhists were regarded by the Nazis as pacifists and eccentrics. With the exception of those who had abandoned their Jewish faith and become Buddhists—about a third of all Buddhists in German-speaking areas during the 1920s—no official or public persecution of Buddhism took place.

In London, Christmas Humphreys (1901–1983) formed the Buddhist Lodge of the Theosophical Society in 1924. A Buddhist shrine room was opened in 1925, and Buddhist festivals were celebrated. As a result of Anagārika Dharmapāla’s missionary efforts in Britain during the mid-1920s, British Buddhists founded a branch of the Mahā

Bodhi Society (1926) and established a Buddhist monastery with three resident Theravāda *bhikkhus* (monks) in London (1928–1940, reopened in 1954). It was the first time that several monks resided for an extended period outside of Asia.

In Europe, it was undoubtedly those who had adopted Buddhism as their new orientation in life who dominated the small Buddhist scene. Except for a few Buddhist activists, such as Anagārika Dharmapāla and some Japanese Zen Buddhists, no Buddhist migrants from Asia came to Europe during this time. However, there is an important exception to this pattern: In the early twentieth century, Mongolian Tibetan Buddhists from Kalmykia and Buryatia in Russia established sizeable communities in Saint Petersburg, the czarist Russian capital until 1917. They built a Dge lugs (Gelug) style temple and monastery in Saint Petersburg in 1909 to 1915. The first Buddhist monastery on European soil thus became established not by European convert Buddhists but by so-called ethnic or migrant Buddhists led by the Buryat-Mongol lama Agvan Dorzhiev. During the Communist Revolution in 1917, however, the temple was desecrated. Following the comparative calm of the 1920s, Buddhists and scholars were persecuted and murdered under Joseph Stalin's dictatorship (1930s–1953). It was not until the 1980s that conditions improved for Buddhists in Russia, and they were able to establish small communities and centers for different Buddhist traditions.

THE 1950S AND 1960S: SPREAD AND PLURALIZATION. In contrast to the first half of the twentieth century, the second half witnessed a boom of Buddhism outside of Asia. Western countries experienced a heavy influx of Asian immigrants and a tremendously expanded interest in Buddhist meditation, liturgy, and teachings among Westerners. World War II had brought an end to most public Buddhist activities in Europe. However, after 1945 Buddhists reestablished former Theravāda groups or founded new ones. Buddhist lectures were well attended and Buddhist books and journals well received. From the 1950s onwards, new Buddhist traditions were brought to Europe. Japanese Jōdo Shinshū was established in Britain (1952) and Germany (1956). The writings of Suzuki and Eugen Herrigel (1884–1955) popularized Zen meditation and art. Tibetan Buddhism won its first Western converts in Berlin in 1952 through the establishment of the Western branch of the order Arya Maitreya Mandala, founded by the German-born Lama Govinda in 1933 in India. In addition, the activities of Buddhist missionary organizations from South Asia gained momentum, an example being the Lanka Dharmaduta Society, founded in 1952, which sent Theravāda *bhikkhus* to the Berlin Buddhist House with the aim of spreading the *dharma*.

Buddhism spread more and more widely in various European countries as attractive books and translations became more readily available. Simultaneously, Asian teachers began visiting new Buddhist groups to lecture and conduct courses on a regular basis. During the 1960s a considerable change occurred in the way that members and interested people

wanted to experience Buddhism both spiritually and physically. Meditation became popular, and Buddhists and sympathizers filled courses in Theravāda *vipassanā* meditation and Japanese Zen meditation. Zen seminars (Jpn., *sesshin*) took place in increasing numbers, with teachers coming from Japan to guide newly formed groups.

In the United States, lecture tours by Suzuki instigated an upsurge of interest in Zen concepts and meditation. At the same time, “Beat Zen” and “Square Zen” created by Allan Watts, Allen Ginsberg, and Jack Kerouac, popularized Zen and attracted members of the emerging counterculture. Japanese teachers such as Sōtō Zen master Shunryu Suzuki settled in the United States as immigration regulations were relaxed during the mid-1950s and 1960s. In addition, various meditation centers were founded as young Americans returned from Japan having received a traditional religious education. Notable among these was Philip Kapleau (1912–2004), author of the instrumental *The Three Pillars of Zen* (1965) and founder of the Rochester Zen Center in New York (1966), and Robert Aitken (b. 1917), founder of the Diamond Sangha in the 1960s. Both were disciples of Zen master Hakuun Yasutani (1885–1974), founder of the Zen school Sanbo Kyodan in 1954. In addition to the explosive interest in Zen meditational practice, further Buddhist traditions arrived from Asia with Sri Lankan, Thai, Chinese, Taiwanese, Korean, and Japanese teachers. Among these traditions and schools, one of the most vigorous turned out to be the Sōka Gakkai from Japan, which claimed a membership of 500,000 people in the mid-1970s.

The first Australian Buddhist organization was founded in 1952, with a membership of mainly well-educated citizens. Leading Australian Buddhists, such as Charles F. Knight (1890–1975) and Natasha Jackson (1902–1990), regarded Buddhism as a triumph of rationalism and used it as a foil in their attacks on Christianity. Their specific approach was strongly intellectualized, and they went to great lengths to prove that Buddhism was fully consonant with scientific thinking. As in Europe and the United States, Zen, Pure Land, and Sōka Gakkai were also imported into Australia during the 1960s.

In general, during this time two characteristics stand out in contrast to the previous phases: Buddhism was no longer dominated by a single main tradition, as had been the case in Europe with Theravāda and in the United States with Mahāyāna Buddhism. Rather, since the 1950s, Buddhist teachers of various traditions arrived from Asia to win converts and to found centers. A plurality of Buddhist traditions emerged, substantially supplemented by the various Buddhist strands formed by immigrant Buddhists. Secondly, the shift from intellectual interest to practical application deepened and spread through increased interest in meditation.

FROM THE 1970S ONWARD: RAPID INCREASE AND ONGOING PLURALIZATION. The Zen boom of the 1960s was followed by an upsurge of interest in Tibetan Buddhism. Tibetan teachers such as Tārthang Tulku (b. 1935) and Chögyam

Trungpa (1939–1987) arrived in the United States in 1969 and 1970 and formed organizations that established European branches during the 1980s. Beginning in the mid-1970s, high-ranking lamas conducted preaching tours in Europe, North America, and Australia, as well in South Africa and South America in later years. Many Westerners who were involved in the protest movements and counterculture of the late 1960s became fascinated by Tibetan Buddhist rituals and symbols and the lives of the lamas. Within two decades, converts to Tibetan Buddhism were able to found a multitude of centers and groups, which at times outnumbered those of all other Buddhist traditions in a given country.

This rapid increase, accompanied by an expansion of existing institutions, led to a considerable rise in the number of Buddhist groups and centers associated with convert Buddhists. In Great Britain, for example, the number of Buddhist organizations nearly quintupled from seventy-four to four hundred between 1979 and 2000. In Germany, interest in Buddhism resulted in an increase from approximately forty to more than six hundred groups, meditation circles, centers, and societies between 1975 and 2004. In North America, Don Morreale's *Complete Guide to Buddhist America* (1998) listed 1,062 meditation centers in 1997, the majority having been founded since the mid-1980s. Similar patterns are observable in Australia, where the number of Buddhist groups rose from 167 to 308 between 1991 and 1998. As a result of large-scale immigration, especially of Vietnamese people, the number of Buddhists in Australia multiplied more than six times from 35,000 to 200,000 from 1981 to 1996. As in Europe and North America, numerous schools, branches, and traditions of Theravāda, Mahāyāna, Tibetan, and nonsectarian Buddhism have gained a firm standing in Australia, and in New Zealand as well.

In a parallel development, considerable numbers of Buddhists from Asian countries have come to Western Europe, North America, and Australia since the 1960s. In Europe, and France in particular, large communities of refugees from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia have emerged. Paris has become the center for Southeast Asian Buddhist migrants, although the largest Vietnamese pagoda in Europe was inaugurated in Hanover, Germany, in 1991. Furthermore, many refugees, migrants, and business people from Asian countries have found asylum or a place to work in Western Europe. Similarly, in Canada and the United States hundreds of thousands of migrants arrived after immigration regulations were relaxed in the mid-1960s.

Whether in North America, Western Europe, or Australia, in the process of settling down, migrants established their own religious and cultural institutions to preserve their identity and heritage. By visiting pagodas and temples, performing customary acts of devotional worship, and jointly celebrating Buddhist festivals, immigrant Asian Buddhists gained a home away from home. Most Asian migrant communities have turned out to be markedly conservative, presenting a primarily stable and familiar environment for their

members in the socioculturally foreign and often discriminatory environment. With the rise of second and third generations of immigrants from Asia, established role models and hierarchies are changing, and Asians in the West are pointing to language issues and calling for acculturated rituals, forms, and contents. Estimates of the total numbers of Buddhists in Europe at the beginning of the twenty-first century amount to around one million, two thirds of them Asian immigrants. In North America the number may be four to five times higher than in Europe, with Buddhists of Asian ancestry making up the vast majority.

Buddhism grew as well in both South America and South Africa beginning in the 1970s. Zen has captured the interest of non-Japanese Brazilians since the late 1970s, resulting in the establishment of numerous local meditation groups and centers. Likewise, Japanese traditions of Nichiren, Shingon, and Pure Land have gained followings. Tibetan Buddhism, arriving in Brazil the late 1980s, also experienced a boom during the 1990s. As in other non-Asian countries to which Buddhism spread, a plurality of schools and traditions has become established.

In South Africa, after an attempt to convert Indian migrant Hindus to Buddhism beginning in 1917, small Buddhist groups were formed during the 1970s in metropolitan centers. The emphasis was a nondenominational one, although followers of Tibetan, Zen, or Theravāda came together for joint meetings. One of South Africa's main Buddhist reference points became the Buddhist Retreat Center near Ixopo, formally inaugurated in 1980. In contrast to a prevalent ecumenical spirit, since the mid-1980s the various groups have begun sharpening their doctrinal identity and lineage adherence, and in many cases hitherto loose bonds with the Asian parent tradition or headquarters were strengthened. During the 1990s, Tibetan Buddhism gained a strong following as teachers started to stay permanently in South Africa. Likewise, Zen teachers and Theravāda *bhikkhus* settled in the country and firmly established their traditions.

PLURALITY AND GLOBAL INTERCONNECTEDNESS. Buddhism outside of Asia is deeply marked by its plurality and heterogeneity. A multitude of schools and traditions have successfully settled in urbanized, industrialized settings. The general traditions of Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Tibetan Buddhism are internally heavily subdivided according to country of origin (e.g., Theravāda from Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, or Laos); lineage (e.g., Tibetan Buddhism following Dge lugs [Geluk], Karma Bka' brgyud [Kagyū], Sa skya [Sakya], or Rnying ma [Nyingma]); teacher (Asian and Western, manifold); and emphasis on specific Buddhist concepts and practices. Flourishing in the West, these various Asian-derived schools and traditions did not remain unchanged, and various subschools have evolved. In addition, a second generation of Western teachers who are disciples to Western, not Asian masters, is maturing. These multifold developments have given birth to both traditionally oriented centers and

to independent centers favoring innovation and the creation of a "Western Buddhism." Noteworthy examples of the latter include the Insight Meditation Society in the United States and the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, founded by the British Sangharakshita in 1967.

The marked plurality of Buddhism outside of Asia has been intensified by the globalization of once local organizations. The British-based Friends of the Western Buddhist Order has spread worldwide. Organizations formerly restricted to the United States, such as the Insight Meditation Society or Aitken's Diamond Sangha, have established branch centers in Europe, Australia, and elsewhere. This global reach also came to apply to American Zen teachers, including Richard Baker Rōshi, Bernard Glassman Rōshi, and Prabhadasdharma Rōshi, as well as to prominent Vietnamese and Korean meditation masters, including Thich Nhat Hanh and Seung Sahn. Tibetan Buddhist organizations have created similar global networks. Lamas and teachers tour the globe untiringly, and they visit the multitude of local groups and centers, including Chögyam Trungpa's Vajradhātu organization (renamed Shambhala International), the Karma Kagyu centers affiliated with Ole Nydahl from Denmark, Sogyal Rinpoche's Rigpa organization, or the New Kadampa Tradition of Geshe Kelsang Gyatso.

Global interconnectedness has become greatly intensified as a result of the World Wide Web. Buddhist centers maintain their own websites, linked to sister centers and parent organizations, and facilitating the exchange and spread of information. Numerous so-called cyber-*sanghas* are available online, thus establishing a new form of Buddhist community. In these ways Buddhism adapts, as it has done continuously during its 2,600 years of history, to new cultural, political, and technological environments.

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MARTIN BAUMANN (2005)

BUDDHISM, SCHOOLS OF

This entry consists of the following articles:

EARLY DOCTRINAL SCHOOLS OF BUDDHISM
MAHĀYĀNA PHILOSOPHICAL SCHOOLS OF BUDDHISM
TANTRIC RITUAL SCHOOLS OF BUDDHISM [FIRST EDITION]
TANTRIC RITUAL SCHOOLS OF BUDDHISM [FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS]
TIBETAN AND MONGOLIAN BUDDHISM
HIMALAYAN BUDDHISM
CHINESE BUDDHISM
JAPANESE BUDDHISM
EAST ASIAN BUDDHISM

BUDDHISM, SCHOOLS OF: EARLY DOCTRINAL SCHOOLS OF BUDDHISM

The term *Hīnayāna* refers to the group of Buddhist schools or sects that appeared before the beginning of the common era and those directly derived from them. The word *Hīnayāna*, which means "small vehicle," that is, "lesser means of progress" toward liberation, is pejorative. It was applied disdainfully to these early forms of Buddhism by the followers of the great reformist movement that arose just at the beginning of the common era, which referred to itself as the Mahāyāna, or "large vehicle," that is, "greater means of progress" toward liberation. Indeed, the adherents of the Mahāyāna charged those of the Hīnayāna with selfishly pursuing only their own personal salvation, whereas they themselves claimed an interest in the liberation of all beings and vowed to postpone their own deliverance until the end of time. In other words, the ideal of the practitioners of the Hīnayāna was the *arhat* (Pali, *arahant*), the saint who has attained *nirvāṇa*, while that of the Mahāyāna was the *bodhisattva*, the all-compassionate hero who, resolving to become a Buddha in some far-distant future, dedicated the course of his innumerable lives to saving beings of all kinds. It would be more correct to give the name "early Buddhism" to what is called Hīnayāna, for the term denotes the whole collection of the most ancient forms of Buddhism: those earlier than the rise of the Mahāyāna and those that share the same inspiration as these and have the same ideal, namely the *arhat*.

Although it is directly descended from the earliest Buddhism—that originally preached by the Buddha himself—this early Buddhism is distinguished from it by the continual additions and reformulations of its adherents and teachers in their desire to deepen and perfect the interpretation of the ancient teaching. This constant, and quite legitimate, effort gave rise to many debates, controversies, and divisions that resulted in the appearance of a score of sects or schools. The actual, original teaching of the Buddha is accessible to us only through the canonic texts of these schools, texts that were set down in writing only about the beginning of the common era and reflect the divergences that already existed among these sects. Moreover, only a very small part of this vast canonic literature has survived, either in its original Indian language or in Chinese or Tibetan translation, and for this reason our knowledge of the doctrine taught by the Buddha himself still remains rather vague and conjectural. We do not