

dhists in France in *Bouddhisme et migration: La reconstitution d'une paroisse bouddhiste Lao en banlieue parisienne* (Paris, 1986).

Further country-specific documentation exists, for example, for Italy, Switzerland, Austria, the Netherlands, Norway, and Russia. The online annotated bibliography by Martin Baumann, "Buddhism in Europe," listed about 380 titles in 2001. It is available from <http://www.globalbuddhism.org/bib-bud.html>.

The history of Buddhism in Australia is well documented in Paul Croucher's *Buddhism in Australia, 1848–1988* (Kensington, U.K., 1989). Enid Adam and Philip J. Hughes give a picture of Buddhism's growth and composition by an analysis of census data in *Religious Community Profiles: The Buddhists in Australia* (Canberra, Australia, 1996). Michelle Spuler's *Facets of the Diamond: Developments in Australian Buddhism* (Richmond, U.K., 2002) describes the history and modes of adaptation of Robert Aitken's Diamond Sangha in Australia.

Buddhism in South Africa is covered by a small informative book edited by Michel Clasquin and Kobus Krüger, *Buddhism and Africa* (Pretoria, South Africa, 1999). Cristina Moreira da Rocha has set up an online bibliography on "Buddhism in Brazil," which is linked to the *Journal of Global Buddhism*, available from <http://www.globalbuddhism.org>. This journal also provides bibliographies on Buddhism in Australia, South Africa, Europe, the United States, and Canada.

Two prominent themes in studies on Western Buddhism are engaged Buddhism and the role and importance of women in establishing Buddhism in the West. Kenneth Kraft's *The Wheel of Engaged Buddhism: A New Map of the Path* (New York, 1999) focuses on Buddhism and sociopolitical engagement, as does Christopher S. Queen, ed., *Engaged Buddhism in the West* (Boston, 2000). Edited by one of the leading Buddhist women in the West, Karma Lekshe Tsomo's *Buddhism through American Women's Eyes* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1995) provides thirteen first-person accounts of Buddhist lives in the United States. Valuable additions are Marianne Dresser, ed., *Buddhist Women on the Edge: Contemporary Perspectives from the Dharma Frontier* (Berkeley, Calif., 1996), which includes twenty-five essays by American convert Buddhist women; and Sandy Boucher's *Opening the Lotus: A Women's Guide to Buddhism* (Boston, 1997).

Finally, comprehensive analyses of Buddhism in the West can be found in Stephen Batchelor's masterfully written narrative, *The Awakening of the West: The Encounter of Buddhism and Western Culture* (Berkeley, Calif., 1994), as well as in the broad-based scholarly volume edited by Charles S. Prebish and Martin Baumann, *Westward Dharma: Buddhism Beyond Asia* (Berkeley, 2002). Online sources on Buddhism in the West multiplied during the 1990s and early 2000s; notable online resources include the Australia-based BuddhaNet, available from <http://www.buddhanet.net>; the online *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, available from <http://jbe.gold.ac.uk>; and the *Journal of Global Buddhism*, available from <http://www.globalbuddhism.org>. All provide links to the multitude of homepages on specific Buddhist traditions, schools, and centers.

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BUDDHISM, SCHOOLS OF

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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

possess all the documents necessary to recover it with certainty: even by compiling all the doctrinal and other elements common to the canonic texts we do have, we can reach, at best, only a stage of Buddhist doctrine immediately prior to the divergence of these schools. Their texts have been preserved for us by the mere chances of history.

The Indic word, both Sanskrit and Pali, that we translate here as “school” or “sect” is *nikāya*, meaning, properly, “group.” In our context, it refers to a group of initiates, most likely monks (*bhikkhus*) rather than laymen, who sincerely profess to be faithful disciples of the Buddha but are distinguishable from other similar groups in that they base their beliefs on a body of canonic texts that differs from others to a greater or lesser extent. These differences between canonic texts involve not only their wording or written form but also a certain number of doctrinal elements and rules of monastic discipline. Despite the disaggregative pressures to which they were exposed (the same pressures, indeed, that created them), despite their geographical expansion and sometimes considerable dispersion, and notwithstanding the vicissitudes of history, which often posed new problems for them, most of these groups preserved a remarkable internal cohesiveness throughout several centuries. Still, schisms did occur within many of them, leading to the formation of new schools. Moreover, to judge from the documents we have—though these are unfortunately very scarce—it seems that relations among these various groups were generally good. Their disputes remained at the level of more or less lively discussion and degenerated into more serious conflicts only when involving questions of economics or politics.

Several factors account for these divisions and for the formation of these sects or schools. First of all, the Buddhist monastic community (*saṃgha*) never knew a supreme authority, imposing its unity by powerful and diverse methods, as was long the case in Christianity with its papacy. If we believe some canonic texts that seem to faithfully reflect reality, the Buddha himself was probably faced with several instances of insubordination on the part of certain groups of his monks and was not always able to overcome them. The oldest traditions, furthermore, agree that he did not designate a successor to head the community but only counseled his followers to remain faithful to his Doctrine (Dharma). This was a fragile defense against the forces that tried to break up the community once it was “orphaned” by the death of its founder.

For at least five centuries, the Buddha’s teaching was actually preserved by oral transmission alone, very probably in different, though related, dialects. This, and the absence of an authoritative ecclesiastical hierarchy in the *saṃgha*, constitute two obvious sources of progressive distortion and alteration of the message left by the Blessed One to his immediate disciples. Furthermore, this message was not entirely clear or convincing to everyone it addressed, leading Buddhist preachers to furnish explanations and interpretations of the teaching. Finally, the teaching given by the Buddha was far from a complete system containing solutions to all the prob-

lems that might occur to the minds of people as diverse as those it was destined to reach. Thus, monks and lay disciples, as well as people outside Buddhism but curious and interested in its doctrine—*brahman* opponents, Jains, and others—easily found numerous flaws, errors, and contradictions in the teaching. These troubled the *saṃgha* but pleased those who were determined to refute or discredit it. Although the Buddhist preachers who improvised answers to these varied questions and objections were guided by what they knew and understood of the Buddha’s teaching, their attempts expanded upon the original teaching and at the same time inevitably created new causes for differences and disputes within the heart of the community itself.

According to some eminent scholars, we must distinguish Buddhist “sects” from “schools.” Sects, under this interpretation, were invariably born from serious dissent over issues of monastic discipline. Such dissent resulted in a fracturing of the community, a *saṃghabheda*, or schism, the participants in which ceased to live together or carry on a common religious life. By contrast, schools were differentiated by divergences of opinion on doctrinal points, but their dissension in these matters never gave rise to actual schisms or open hostility. This interpretation is certainly attractive, but it must be mitigated somewhat by the recognition that the actual situation prevailing between the various communities of the early church was somewhat more complex and variable than that indicated by the theory advanced here.

ORIGIN AND RELATIONSHIP OF THE SECTS AND SCHOOLS.

All the documents from which we can draw information about the origin of the early Buddhist groups were written after the beginning of the common era and are therefore unreliable. Nevertheless, since the oldest of these texts generally agree on the main points, we can attempt to restore with a certain amount of confidence the common tradition from which they derive. This should provide a fairly accurate reflection of the true interrelationships among the sects and schools.

The first division of the community probably occurred toward the middle of the fourth century BCE, some time after the council of Vaiśālī but having no direct connection with this event, the claims of the Sinhala (Theravāda) tradition notwithstanding. The schism was probably caused by a number of disagreements on the nature of the *arhats*, who, according to some authorities, retained imperfections even though they had attained *nirvāṇa* in this world. Because they were more numerous, the supporters of these ideas formed a group called the Mahāsāṃghikas, “those of the larger community”; their opponents, who claimed to remain faithful to the teaching of the Buddha’s first disciples and denied that the *arhat* could retain any imperfections, took the name Sthaviravādins, “those who speak as the elders” or “those who teach the doctrine of the old ones.”

Each of these two groups were then, in turn, divided progressively into several sects or schools. Although we are in little doubt about their origins as Mahāsāṃghikas or

Sthaviravādins, we often do not know precisely how these subsequent sects were linked with the first two groups, nor do we know the circumstances or time in which they appeared. We are particularly bereft of information about the sects and schools that arose directly or indirectly from the Mahāsāṃghika.

Among the groups that developed from the Mahāsāṃghika were the Ekavyāvahārika, then the Gokulika, and finally the Caitika schools. The Ekavyāvahārika probably gave rise, in turn, to the Lokottaravādins, but it may be that the Lokottaravādins were simply a form taken by the Ekavyāvahārikas at a particular time because of the evolution of their doctrine. From the Gokulikas came the Bahuśrutīyas and the Prajñaptivādins. At least a part of the Caitika school settled in southern India, on the lower Krishna River, shortly before the beginning of the common era. From them two important sects soon arose: the Pūrvaśailas and the Aparāśailas, then a little later the Rājagirikas and the Siddhārthikas. Together, the four sects formed Andhraka group, which took its name from the area (Andhra) where they thrived during the first few centuries CE.

The Sthaviravāda group seems to have remained united until about the beginning of the third century BCE, when the Vātsīputrīyas, who maintained the existence of a quasi-autonomous “person” (*pudgala*), split off. A half century later, probably during the reign of Aśoka (consecrated c. 268 BCE), the Sarvāstivādins also separated from the non-Vātsīputrīya Sthaviravādins and settled in northwest India. This time the dispute was over the Sarvāstivādin notion that “everything exists” (*sarvām asti*). In the beginning of the second century, the remaining Sthaviravādins, who appear to have taken at this time the name Vibhajjavādins, “those who teach discrimination,” to distinguish themselves from the Sarvāstivādins, found themselves divided once again. Out of this dispute were born the Mahīśāsakas and the Dharmaguptakas, who opposed each other over whether the Buddha, properly speaking, belonged to the monastic community and over the relative value of offerings made to the Blessed One and those made to the community. At an unknown date about the beginning of the common era four new groups sprang from the Vātsīputrīyas: the Dharmottariyas, the Bhadrāyānīyas, the Śaṅṅgarikas, and the Sammatīyas. The Sammatīyas, who were very important in Indian Buddhism, later gave rise to the Avantaka and the Kurukulla schools. One group broke from the Sarvāstivādins: the Sautrāntikas, who can be identified with the Dārṣṭāntikas and the Saṃkrāntivādins.

Some of the Vibhajjavādins settled in southern India and Lanka in the mid-third century BCE and seem to have maintained fairly close relations for some time with the Mahīśāsakas, whose presence is attested in the same area. Adopting Pali as a canonical language and energetically claiming their teaching to be the strict orthodoxy, they took the name Theravādins, a Pali form of the Sanskrit Sthaviravādins. Like the Sthaviravādins, they suffered from

internal squabbles and divisions: some years before the common era, the Abhayagirivāsins split from the Mahāvihāras, founded at the time of the arrival of Buddhism in Lanka; later, in the fourth century, the Jetavanīyas appeared.

Finally, three sects derived from the Sthaviravādins present some problems regarding their precise relationship and identity. The Kāśyapīyas, whose basic position was a compromise between those of the Sarvāstivādins and the Vibhajjavādins, apparently broke from the latter shortly after the split that created the Sarvāstivāda and Vibhajjavāda *nikāyas*. More mysterious are the Haimavatas, about whom the facts are both scarce and contradictory. As for the Mūlasarvāstivādins, or “radical Sarvāstivādins,” they appeared suddenly at the end of the seventh century with a huge “basket of discipline” (Vinaya Piṭaka) in Sanskrit, much different in many respects from that of the earlier Sarvāstivādins. It is impossible to determine exactly what connection the Mūlasarvāstivādins had with the Sarvāstivādins.

Except for a few of the more important of these sects and schools—such as the Theravādins, who left us the treasure of their celebrated Sinhala chronicles—we know nothing of the history of these different groups. Their existence is nevertheless assured, thanks to the testimony of a fair number of inscriptions and other substantial documents. To judge from the information given by Xuanzang and Yijing, by the time they made their long visits to India in the seventh century, most of the sects had already disappeared. Of all the many groups descended from the original Mahāsāṃghikas, only the Lokottaravādins were still numerous and thriving, but only in a very specific location, Bamian (Bāmiyān, in present-day Afghanistan).

Here arises an important question, one whose answer is still uncertain: what connections existed between these early Buddhist sects and schools, known as Hīnayāna, and the groups formed by the followers of the Mahāyāna? Were any of them—in particular those of Mahāsāṃghika origin—converted in large numbers to the Mahāyāna, or did they perhaps give birth to it through the natural evolution of their doctrine? Should we interpret in this sense the expression Mahāyāna-Sthaviravādin, which Xuanzang used to refer to numerous Buddhist communities he encountered throughout India, and deduce from it that their followers were Sthaviravādins converted to the Mahāyāna? Or did believers of both groups live together, without mingling, in the areas where they were found? This second interpretation strikes one as more satisfactory; nevertheless, the first cannot be rejected definitively.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION. Two types of records inform us about the geographical distribution of the sects and schools: inscriptions and the reports of a number of Chinese pilgrims who came to India. Numbering only a few tens and ranging in time between the second century BCE and the sixth century CE, the inscriptions that mention early sects give us only spotty and very insufficient data. Although they

may actually attest to the presence of a given group in a specific place at a particular date, they leave us completely ignorant about the presence or absence of this sect in other places and at other times. The information supplied by the Chinese travelers, principally Xuanzang and to a lesser extent Yijing, is incomparably more complete, but it is valid only for the seventh century, when their journeys took place.

The study of these two kinds of sources—like that of the Sinhala chronicles, which are concerned mostly with Sri Lankan Buddhism—reveals some important general features about the early Buddhist schools. None of the groups was present everywhere throughout India and its neighboring countries; on the other hand, no area was the exclusive domain of any one group. For reasons that unfortunately nearly always escape us, certain groups were in the majority in some places, in the minority in others, and completely absent in still others but, as far as we can tell, coexisted in varying proportions with other groups wherever they were found. For example, in a number of places—especially those that history or legend made holy in the eyes of Buddhist devotees and were important places of pilgrimage—the monks of various sects lived together in neighboring monasteries and often venerated the same sacred objects—topes (*stūpas*), bodhi trees, and others. This was the case not only in the holy places in the Ganges Basin, where the major events in the Buddha's life occurred, but also far from there, in Sāñchī, Karli, Amarāvati, Nāgārjunikoṇḍa, and elsewhere. In Sri Lanka, the three great monasteries that became the centers of the three subjects of the Theravāda, the Mahāvihāra, the Abhaya-giri, and the Jetavana, were located on the outskirts of the island's ancient capital, Anuradhapura.

All of the sects and schools seem to have been present in the middle Ganges Basin, which is easily understandable since the principal places of pilgrimage were located there. The more important ones, which originated in both the Mahāsāṃghika and Sthaviravāda groups, also appear to have coexisted in eastern India, Bengal, and nearby areas, at least in the seventh century, as reported by both Xuanzang and Yijing.

The Theravādins always dominated most of Sri Lanka and still do today. In the eleventh century, they also largely converted the Burmese, followed a little later by the people of Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos, where they continue to exercise religious dominion today. In the seventh century, the Vibhajjavāda Sthaviravādins, who were very close, if not identical, to the Theravādins, likewise controlled all the Tamil country, the part of India nearest to Sri Lanka, and were also extremely numerous in the coastal region north of Bombay and near Buddhist holy places on the Ganges from which people embarked on journeys to Lanka and southern India.

Very little is known about the location of the sects most closely related to these. The presence of the Mahīśāsakas is recorded both in the Indian northwest, on the banks of the Krishna, and in Sri Lanka; that of the Dharmaguptakas in

the Indian northwest only; and that of the Kāśyapīyas mostly in the Indian northwest but also around Bombay. The Sarvāstivādins were clearly in a majority over all of northwest India, from the upper Ganges Basin to Kashmir, from the mid-third century BCE to at least the seventh century CE.

In the seventh century, the Sammatīyas formed the sect comprising the largest number of monks and generally controlled all of western India, from the middle Indus Valley to southeast of Bombay. They were also very numerous throughout the Ganges Basin and in eastern India. Several inscriptions testify to the presence, at the beginning of the common era, of Dharmottarīyas and Bhadrāyānīyas in the area of Bombay.

Data concerning the Mahāsāṃghika proper, and most of the sects that developed from it, are rare and widely scattered. We know for certain that the Mahāsāṃghika existed in northwestern India, around Bombay and on the banks of the lower Krishna. Caitikas also inhabited these last two areas but primarily the second, where Bahuśrutīyas also resided. By the seventh century, the Lokottaravādins had made Bamiān, in the heart of present-day Afghanistan, one of the main centers of Buddhism in the Indo-Iranian realms and were still very numerous there, as Xuanzang reports. The Pūrvaśailas, Aparāśailas, Rājagirikas, and Siddhārtikas prospered during the first centuries of the common era in the lower Krishna Valley, which they covered with magnificent monuments, but by the beginning of the seventh century they had almost disappeared.

MAJOR DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES. We are well acquainted with the principal doctrinal differences that gave rise to many of these schools, the basic ideas that distinguish them, and the reactions and rebuttals the various sects offered each other. In most cases, though, and particularly with regard to the apparently less important sects, our information is unfortunately too vague, and sometimes even contradictory or nonexistent, to tell us anything about the specifics of their doctrine.

Although many questions divided all or some of the schools, they did not provoke the formation of new sects. These debates were sometimes very important for the evolution of Buddhism as a whole. Often, various of the early sects that we might expect to hold similar views given their genesis in fact adopted doctrinal opinions at great variance with one another. Thus, there often came about, among schools with similar opinions on specific questions, entirely different groupings from those one would expect in light of their traditional relationships. Let us first examine the fundamental ideas that appear to have brought about the formation of the principal sects.

The Mahāsāṃghikas probably separated from the Sthaviravādins over the belief that certain *arhats*, although they had attained *nirvāṇa* in this world, could be subject to nocturnal defilements as a result of erotic dreams; that they still harbored vestiges of ignorance; that they had areas of

doubt on matters outside Buddhist doctrine; that they could be informed, indeed saved, by other people; and, finally, that they utter certain words when they meditated on the Path of Liberation. The Sthaviravādins denied these five possibilities, arguing that the *arhat* is completely free of all imperfections.

The Vātsīputrīyas and the schools that later developed from them, the Sammatīyas and others, believed in the existence of a “person” (*pudgala*) who is neither identical to the five aggregates (*skandhas*) that make up the living being nor different from them; neither within these five aggregates nor outside them. Although differing from the Brahmanic “soul” (*ātman*), denied unanimously by Buddhist doctrine, this “person” lives on from one existence to the next, thus ensuring the continuing identities of the agent of an act and of the being who suffers its effects in this life or the next. All the other schools rejected this hypothesis, maintaining the logical impossibility of conceptualizing this “person” and seeing in it simply a disguised form of the *ātman*.

The Sarvāstivādins claimed that “everything exists” (*sarvam asti*), that is, that the past and the future have real and material existence. This belief enabled them to explain several phenomena that were very important to Buddhists: the act of consciousness, which is made up of several successive, individual mental actions; memory or consciousness of the past; foresight or consciousness of the future; and the “ripening” (*vipāka*) of “actions” (*karman*), which takes place over a longer or shorter span of time, often exceeding the length of a single life. For the other sects, however, it was perfectly clear that what is past exists no longer and that what is to come does not yet exist.

The Kāśyapīyas, also called Suvarsṣkas, maintained a position between these two, namely, that a past action that has not yet borne fruit exists, but the rest of the past does not. This approach, however, satisfied neither the Sarvāstivādins nor their critics.

The Sautrāntikas distinguished themselves from the Sarvāstivādins insofar as they considered the canonic “basket of sermons” (*Sūtra Piṭaka*) to be the only one to contain the authentic words of the Buddha, whereas the “basket of higher teaching” (*Abhidharma Piṭaka*) is the work of the Blessed One’s disciples. According to some of our sources, the Sautrāntikas were also called Saṃkrāntivādins because they held that the five aggregates (*skandhas*) constituting the living being “transmigrate” (*saṃkrānti*) from one existence to the next; probably this should be understood to mean that, in their view, four of these aggregates were absorbed at the moment of death into the fifth, a subtle consciousness. It also seems that the Sautrāntikas can be identified with the Dārṣṭāntikas, who were often criticized in the Sarvastivada writings and apparently gained their name because of their frequent use of comparisons or parables (*drṣṭāntas*) in their discussions.

An important disagreement separated the Mahīśāsakas from the Dharmaguptakas. For the former, the Buddha is

part of the monastic community (*saṃgha*); hence a gift given to the community produces a “great fruit” (*māhaphalam*), but one directed specifically to the Buddha does not. The Dharmaguptakas, on the other hand, held that the Buddha is separate from the community, and as he is far superior to it—since it is composed only of his followers—only the gift given to the Buddha produces a great fruit. These two opposing views had considerable influence on the religious practices of early Buddhism.

The Lokottaravādins differed from other Mahāsāṃghika schools in holding that the Buddhas are “otherworldly” (*lokottara*), a word having several very different senses but which they employed loosely to attribute an extraordinary nature to the Buddhas. According to them, the Buddhas are otherworldly not only because their thought is always perfectly pure but also because they remain outside and above the world. Thus it would seem to be among the Lokottaravādins that we should seek the origin of Buddhist docetism, that is, the distinction between the real, transcendent, and infinite Buddha, the “body of doctrine” (*dharmakāya*), and the apparent Buddha, the “body of magical creation” (*nirmāṇakāya*)—a kind of phantom emanating from the real one. To rescue beings, the *nirmāṇakāya* becomes incarnate, taking on their form and thus seeming to be born, to grow up, to discover and preach the doctrine of enlightenment, and to finally die and become completely extinguished. The Lokottaravādins must have also extolled the extraordinary character of the *bodhisattva*, undoubtedly on account of their supernatural conception of the Buddhas. These singular notions lead one to believe that this sect played an important part in the formation of the Mahāyāna, whose teaching adopted and developed similar ideas.

As their name seems to indicate, the Prajñāptivādins were probably distinguished from the other schools that arose from the Mahāsāṃghika group because they taught that all things are mere products of linguistic convention (*prajñapti*) and, hence, are devoid of actual existence. One might see here the origin of the famous theory of the universal “void” (*śūnyatā*), which is one of the basic elements of the Mahāyāna doctrine and is the main theme, reiterated with the greatest insistence, of its oldest works, the first Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras.

Unfortunately, we do not know the basic premises of the other schools, whether they arose from the Sthaviravāda group or the Mahāsāṃghika. The data that have come down to us concerning a few of them, such as the Gokulikas (also called Kukkuṭikas), the Bahuśrutīyas, the Sammatīyas, and some others, are very doubtful, vague, or extremely obscure, even contradictory. For others, we possess no information at all.

As noted above, hundreds of controversies also set the various schools apart from one another without provoking new divisions of the community. Most of these debates apparently concerned only two or three sects and lasted for a short time—unless this impression is due solely to our lack

of information. On the other hand, certain of these arguments affected, and even impassioned, a large number of schools for long periods, sometimes for centuries, as evidenced by the treatises and commentaries on canonic texts that have come down to us. In these more important controversies the distribution of the sects between the two opposing camps is often independent of their derivational connections. It may be that relations of good neighborliness and, hence, ties based on geographical distribution favored such doctrinal alliances. In any case, I will point out the most significant of these divergences of opinion, which are important features in the history of early Buddhist thought.

The Sarvāstivādins, the Sammatīyas, and the Pūrvaśailas firmly believed in an “intermediate existence” (*antarābhava*) that linked death and rebirth. This concept was rejected by the Theravādins and the Mahāsāṃghikas. The latter, along with the Andhakas and the Sarvāstivādins, maintained that the *bodhisattva* may be born in the so-called evil existences (*durgati*), even in the various hells, to lighten the sufferings of the beings who live in them. The Theravādins denied that this was possible because, in their view, of the automatic retribution consequent upon all actions, a retribution that completely determines the circumstances of rebirths. According to the Vātsīputrīyas, the Sammatīyas, the Sarvāstivādins, and the Pūrvaśailas, the *arhats* could backslide in varying degrees and even lose *nirvāṇa*, but the Theravādins, Mahāsāṃghikas, and Sautrāntikas refused to accept this idea. The Theravādins, the Sarvāstivādins, and the Dharmaguptakas agreed that it was possible for the gods to practice the sexual abstinence (*brahmacarya*) of ascetics, whereas the Sammatīyas and the Mahīśāsakas judged this impossible. For the Theravādins and the Sarvāstivādins, there were only five fates (*gatis*), namely, those of gods, men, animals, starving ghosts (*pretas*), and the damned, but the Andhakas and the Vātsīputrīyas added another, that of the *asuras*, the superhuman beings who were adversaries of the gods (*devas*) yet were not devils in the Christian sense.

The Mahāsāṃghikas, the Theravādins, and the Mahīśāsakas taught that the clear understanding (*abhiśamaya*) of the four noble truths (*catvāry āryasatyāni*) was instantaneous, whereas the Andhakas, the Sarvāstivādins, and the Sammatīyas believed that it happened gradually. So important was this dispute that it was still the central theme of the council of Lhasa (held in the eighth century), where Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist teachers opposed each other in doctrinal debate. The Sarvāstivādins seem to have been alone in denying that “thought” (*citta*) is inherently pure and contaminated only by accidental impurities, a belief held by the Mahāsāṃghikas, the Theravādins, and the neighboring schools.

The Theravādins, the Vātsīputrīyas, and the Sammatīyas recognized only one absolute, or “unconditioned” (*asaṃskṛta*) *dharma*, namely, *nirvāṇa*, but the majority of schools also considered empty space (*ākāśa*) an uncon-

ditioned *dharma*. Several of them taught that “dependent origination” (*pratītya-samutpāda*), the path (*mārga*) of enlightenment, and sometimes other entities as well, in particular the “suchness” (*tathatā*) or “permanence” (*sthitatā*) of things, were equally absolute and unconditioned. Thus, the ideas of these schools were quite close to those of the Mahāyāna.

Several important debates centered on the nature of the passions, more specifically, latent passions or tendencies (*anuśaya*) and active passions or obsessions (*pariyavasthāna*). The Mahāsāṃghikas, the Andhakas, and the Mahīśāsakas set up a very precise distinction between them, while the Theravādins and Sarvāstivādins chose to see in them only two aspects of the same passions. For the Theravādins and the Sarvāstivādins, tendencies and obsessions alike were connected, or cofunctioned, with thought (*cittasamprayukta*), whereas for the Mahāsāṃghikas, the Vātsīputrīyas, the Sammatīyas, and the Mahīśāsakas, tendencies were unconnected, did not cofunction, with thought (*cittaviprayukta*), while obsessions were connected with it. As for the Andhakas, they held that obsessions and tendencies were equally separate from thought.

According to the Sarvāstivādins and the Vātsīputrīyas, ascetics of other, non-Buddhist beliefs (*tīrthika*) could, through their efforts, obtain the five lesser supernatural faculties (*abhiññā*) and thus work various miracles—perceiving the thoughts of others, recollecting their past lives, seeing the rebirths of creatures as conditioned by their past actions, and so forth. The Mahīśāsakas and the Dharmaguptakas, however, declared that the five supernatural faculties—like the sixth, the cleansing of impurities, that is, the attainment of *nirvāṇa*—could be acquired only by Buddhist ascetics treading the Path of Enlightenment.

The relation between “matter” (*rūpa*) and the mechanism of the ripening (*vipāka*) of actions (*karman*) also gave rise to disagreements. For the Theravādins, matter is independent of the ripening of actions, and it is not the fruit of this ripening. It is morally neither good nor bad but inherently neutral. In contrast, the Sarvāstivādins, Sammatīyas, and Mahīśāsakas taught that matter can be good or bad when it participates, through the body of man, in a good or bad act. Matter is also the fruit of ripening when it becomes the body—be it handsome or ugly, robust or sickly—received by a person at birth as a consequence of past deeds.

According to the Sarvāstivādins, the five forms of sensory perception are always associated with passionate desires (*rāgas*). The Mahāsāṃghikas and the Mahīśāsakas thought that they were sometimes associated and sometimes unassociated with them, while the Vātsīputrīyas rejected both these possibilities, declaring that the five forms of sensory perception are morally neutral by nature and thus can never be either good or bad.

LITERATURE. The literature of early Buddhism must have been very important in extent and interest because what has

been preserved for us, even though it represents only a small part of the whole, is considerable. The great majority of this literature vanished with the sects that produced it; let us recall that only one, the Theravāda, still flourishes today in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. Most of the schools have left us nothing, save perhaps a few fragments, isolated sūtras, and other brief works in the original Indian language or more often in Chinese translation. Which sects they belonged to nearly always remains undetermined.

Roughly half of what has been handed down to us is in the original Indian language, in a more or less “hybrid” Sanskrit, in various Middle Indic dialects, and above all in Pali. It is in Pali that the body of Theravāda literature, which we possess practically in its entirety, was written. The remainder, of approximately the same size, has come down to us only in Chinese or Tibetan translations. The scope of what was preserved in the Tibetan version, as far as the Hīnayāna in particular is concerned, is much more limited than that of the Chinese translation and, moreover, is confined almost solely to works of the Sarvāstivādins and Mūlasarvāstivādins. In Mahāyāna literature, in contrast, the enormous amount of material translated into Tibetan is virtually equal to what was translated into Chinese.

Thus, it seems that a greater proportion of the canonical literature—properly speaking, that which belonged to the Tripiṭaka (“three baskets”)—than of the postcanonical literature has been passed on to us. It comprises, primarily, the complete Pali Tripiṭaka, made up of its Sutta Piṭaka (“basket of sermons”), its Vinaya Piṭaka (“basket of discipline”), and its Abhidhamma Piṭaka (“basket of higher teaching”).

The Sutta Piṭaka, in turn, is composed of five Nikāyas, or “groupings,” bringing together the “long” (*dīgha*), “medium” (*majjhima*), and “grouped” (*saṃyutta*) sermons; those arranged according to number of categories (*aṅguttara*); and, lastly, the “minor” (*khuddaka*) sermons, the longest and most varied section of all. The *Khuddaka Nikāya* assembles the legends of the former “births” (*jātaka*) of the Buddha, legends recounting the “deeds” (*apadāna*; Skt., *avadāna*) of the great disciples, didactic stanzas (*gāthā*) attributed to them, a famous but anonymous collection of other instructional stanzas called the *Dhammapada*, and ten or so other equally varied works.

Like the other Baskets of Discipline that have survived, the Pali Vinaya Piṭaka essentially contains three parts. These provide detailed definitions and explanations of the numerous rules of discipline imposed on monks (*bhikkus*), those to be observed by nuns (*bhikkunīs*), and specific rules concerning the material life of both: the correct use of objects they were allowed to own, ceremony, sentencing of offenders, settling of disputes, and so on.

The Pali Abhidhamma Piṭaka consists of seven different works, in which the doctrine set forth in no particular order in the sermons (*suttas*) is reorganized, classified systematically, and fleshed out at numerous points. One of these seven

books, the *Kathāvatthu* (Points of controversy), refutes more than two hundred opinions held by other Buddhist schools and in the process reveals the doctrines peculiar to the Theravāda.

Sadly, we do not possess a complete Tripiṭaka from any other early sect, but more or less significant parts of several of them have been preserved. Thus, five Vinaya Piṭakas have come to us intact: those of the Mahāsāṃghikas, Mahīśāsakas, Dharmaguptakas, Sarvāstivādins, and Mūlasarvāstivādins, all in Chinese translation, plus more or less extensive fragments of the last two in the original Sanskrit. We have an entire Tibetan translation of the Mūlasarvāstivādins Vinaya Piṭaka, which is much more voluminous and written later than the others. In addition, we have a detached portion of the Lokottaravāda Vinaya Piṭaka under the name Mahāvastu (Great Tale) in Hybrid Sanskrit. This is actually a traditional and partial biography of the Buddha, heavily encrusted with legendry.

The non-Theravāda sects used the term *āgama* (“tradition”) for the four or five parts that made up their Sūtra Piṭakas, which correspond to the Pali Nikāyas. Five of these Āgamas, evidently complete, have survived in Chinese translation: the Dirghagama of the Dharmaguptakas; the Madhyamagama of the Sarvāstivādins; the Samyuktāgamas of the Sarvāstivādins and the Kāśyapīyas; and, finally, an *Ekottarāgama* that most probably belongs to a sect derived from the Mahāsāṃghikas but different from the Lokottaravādins. There are also more than 150 isolated sūtras, nearly all preserved in Chinese and a few in their original Indian language, but it is generally impossible to determine what school they come from. No collection corresponding to the Pali *Khuddaka Nikāya* survives, but we do have the Chinese translations of some seventy works similar to those that make up the Theravāda collection, as well as the Indian originals of a number of others.

Two complete Abhidharma Piṭakas have survived in Chinese translation: that of the Sarvāstivādins (one part of this also exists in Tibetan) and one entitled Śāriputra-abhidharma, which seems to have belonged to the Dharmaguptakas but was perhaps also influenced by the Mahāsāṃghika. Like the Abhidharma Piṭaka of the Theravādins, that of the Sarvāstivādins comprises seven works, but its overall structure is very different, as is its doctrine, although there are notable similarities between some parts of the two works. The Śāriputra-abhidharma, which is made up of four main sections, differs even more from the Theravādin text. For the most part these three collections definitely postdate the first appearance of the sects that composed them and defended their own positions in them. The teaching given by the sermons in the various Nikāyas or Āgamas of the Sūtra Piṭakas, in contrast, presents a truly remarkable consistency, whatever their school of origin, and, thus, a great fidelity to the common early Buddhist base, predating the community’s division into sects. The same is true for most of the monastic rules contained in the various

Vinaya Piṭaka, which are distinguished mainly by details of secondary or minor aspects of the ascetic life.

The postcanonical literature was undoubtedly very important, but even less of it remains than of the canonic material, and it is more unevenly distributed. Luckily, we possess in Pali the greater part of what was written by the Theravādins—commentaries on the canonic texts, treatises on doctrine, collections of legends, and devotional poems. We have also the principal Sarvāstivāda treatises, several commentaries on these works and on the major portion of their Abhidharma Piṭaka, as well as a few other late works. Unfortunately, the postcanonic literature available to us from all the other schools is limited to a half-dozen works.

The whole series of commentaries in Pali on the Theravāda canonic texts was composed in the fourth and fifth centuries CE by Buddhadatta, Buddhaghosa, and Dhammapala, who made use of ancient commentaries, now lost, in Old Sinhala. We also owe to Buddhaghosa, the wisest and most renowned of all the Theravāda masters, a substantial treatise entitled *Visuddhimagga* (The path of purity), in which the Mahāvihāra school's entire doctrine is set forth. Another famous treatise is the *Abhidhammatthasangaha* (Collection of interpretations of the higher doctrine), written by the Sinhala monk Anuruddha about the eleventh century. Other, less important treatises of the Mahāvihāra school were composed by various authors between the fourth and fifteenth centuries. Each of these works was the subject of one or more commentaries, most of which have not survived. Only one non-Mahāvihāra Theravāda work—strangely, in Chinese translation—is extant: a large treatise called *Vimuttimaggā* (The path of liberation), attributed to Upatissa, who must have lived some time before Buddhaghosa and was probably a master of the Abhayagiri school.

To the treatises may be added the *Lokapaññatti* (Description of the world), a fourteenth-century adaptation by the Burmese monk Saddhammaghosa of a lost Sanskrit work, and especially the well-known *Milindapañha* (Questions of King Milinda), likewise inspired by a lost work. This seems to have been a little Buddhist propaganda manual aimed at the Greeks and Eurasians, such as King Menander (Milinda), who lived in northwestern India in the second century BCE. Besides the Pali version, there are two Chinese translations of the *Milindapañha* that rather differ from each other and even more so from the Theravāda text.

The postcanonic Theravāda literature also includes instructional poems and collections of legends in verse or prose. Among the instructional poems are the *Anāgatavaṃsa* (History of the future), in which the monk Kassapa recounts the life of the next Buddha, named Metteyya, and the *Jinacarita* (Story of the conqueror), Medhakkara's account of the miraculous life of the historical Buddha. The *Rasavāhinī* (Transportress of flavors), translated into Pali by Vedeha from an Old Sinhala poem, is a collection of some one hundred legends meant to encourage a life of piety.

However, it is its famous chronicles, a genre almost entirely abandoned in ancient India, that make Theravāda literature stand apart from that of the other sects. The series of the *Dīpavaṃsa* (History of the island), *Mahāvaṃsa* (Great history), and *Cūḷavaṃsa* (Lesser history) records in verse the whole history of Sri Lanka, from its beginning to the end of the eighteenth century, from the very specific point of view of the "elders" (*theras*) of the Mahāvihāra, the principal Sinhala Theravāda school. Other chronicles recount, in grandiose verse style, the stories of sacred relics: the *Bodhivaṃsa* tells the story of the bodhi tree, the *Thūpavaṃsa* that of the principal mound of Anurādhapura, and the *Dāṭhavaṃsa* that of the Buddha's tooth.

The main works of the Sarvāstivādin postcanonic literature have generally survived in Chinese or Tibetan translation. Complete or partial Sanskrit originals of several of them have also been found.

Only two commentaries on the postcanonic literature of the Sarvāstivādins have come down to us. One concerns the rules of monastic discipline and is entitled *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya-vibhāṣā*; the other, called *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā*, comments on the *Jñānaprasthāna*, the principal work of the Abhidharma Piṭaka of this sect. This *Mahāvibhāṣā* (Great commentary) is an immense summation of the doctrine of the Sarvāstivādins or, more precisely, of their most important school, known as the Vaibhāṣika, "supporter of the (*Mahā*-) *Vibhāṣā*." It is one of the most voluminous works in all Buddhist literature.

The Sarvāstivādins left several treatises written in Sanskrit during the first few centuries of the common era. The principal and best known is the *Abhidharmakośa* (Treasury of higher doctrine), written by Vasubandhu in the fifth century and the subject of numerous commentaries, many of which are extant in the Sanskrit original or in Chinese or Tibetan translation. Vasubandhu was accused of holding Sautrāntika views by his contemporary Saṃghabhadra, a strictly orthodox Sarvāstivādin. Saṃghabhadra refuted these views in a large treatise entitled *Abhidharma-nyāyānusāra* (Consistent with the logic of the further doctrine) and in a long commentary on the didactic stanzas (*kārikās*) of the *Abhidharmakośa*. The Sarvāstivādins also composed a *Lokaprajñāpti* (Description of the world) according to Buddhist ideas, which has survived in Chinese and Tibetan translations.

The other schools have left only Chinese translations of a few treatises and commentaries, often very short and of unknown origin. Among the commentaries, which all correspond to complete or partial Vinaya Piṭakas, we may mention the *Vinayasamgraha* (Collection of Discipline) by the Mūlasarvāstivādin Viśeṣamitra and the *Vinayamātrikā* (Summary of discipline), the sectarian affinity of which is uncertain.

All that remains of the literature of the Vātsīputrīyas and related schools, which must have been considerable, are

the Chinese translations, sadly inferior and obscure, of two small treatises summarizing their teaching. The most important of these is entitled *Sammatīya-nikāya-śāstra* (Treatise of the Sammatīya sect).

Two other works of the same type have also survived in Chinese translation, but although they are better translated and are much longer, their sectarian origin presents some difficulty. One, called *Satyasiddhi* (Realization of the truths), written by Harivarman around the third century CE, teaches and defends the doctrine of a Mahāsāṃghika-derived school, probably the Bahuśrutīyas. The other is the *Vimuttimaggā*, mentioned above, whose author, Upatissa, probably belonged to the Sinhala Abhayagiri school; its Pali original was recently rediscovered.

The literary genre of devotional legends in verse or prose was also a great inspiration to authors of all sects, most of whom remained as anonymous as those of the canonic texts. Some of these works recounted the life of the historical Buddha, embellishing it with numerous miracles for the sake of greater glory. Two of the three most famous were preserved by chance in their Indian originals. These were composed in Hybrid Sanskrit, which is to say greatly influenced by the Prakrit dialects: the *Mahāvastu* (Great tale) and the *Lalitavistara* (Account of the sport), both important sources for the development of the Buddha legend. The first is a detached portion of the Lokottaravāda Vinaya Piṭaka, but in scope, as well as in specific subject matter, it can be considered a distinct and, moreover, rather late work. The *Lalitavistara* was first compiled by the Sarvāstivādins but later revised by followers of the Mahāyāna. In contrast with these two, the *Buddhacarita* (Story of the Buddha) was written in classical Sanskrit by one of the greatest Indian poets, Aśvaghoṣa, who lived around the second century CE; only half of the Sanskrit text has been recovered, but the Chinese translation is complete.

The collections of legendary material recounting the edifying deeds of Buddhist saints, or the previous incarnations of these or the future Buddha, are numerous, whether in Hybrid Sanskrit originals or in Chinese versions. We shall mention here only the best known, the *Avadāśataka* (Hundred exploits) and the *Divyāvadana* (Divine exploits).

NOTABLE PERSONALITIES. Be they Buddhists, *brahmins*, or otherwise, the Indians of ancient times had practically no interest in history as we understand it, with its concern for the exact recording of events, dates, names, and biographies of important figures in order to preserve a precise record of them. This is especially true for the history of Indian Buddhism and the lives of its great masters. With very rare exceptions, to us the masters are only names attached to one or more literary works or, much less often, to an important item or event in the history of Buddhism—such as an idea that was declared heretical, a dispute, or a council. Nearly always, we know nothing whatever of the lives of these people, including the regions where they were born or lived and the centuries in which they were active. Moreover, the scant in-

formation that tradition has preserved about them is either vague, contradictory, or obviously distorted by legend, obliging us to make use of it with great skepticism. Even the biographies of the principal Sinhala elders (*theras*) of the Theravāda sect, whose history is told at length and in detail by the chronicles of Sri Lanka, are hardly better known to us than those of the masters of other groups and schools of early Indian Buddhism. In any case, we possess infinitely less detail about the lives of these *theras* than about those of the kings, princes, and generals who studied the history of Sri Lanka and protected the island's monastic community for two thousand years. Nonetheless, these chronicles permit us to know the names of a much larger number of these Sinhala Theravāda elders than of the masters of other sects, and thanks to them we are generally informed with some precision about the time and place in which many of them lived.

Among the most noteworthy figures of the Theravāda, we must first point out the three great scholars to whom all of the commentaries on the Pali canon and several important treatises on doctrine are attributed. The most famous is certainly Buddhaghosa, author of the *Visuddhimaggā*. According to tradition, Buddhaghosa was an Indian *brahman* from Bihar who converted to Buddhism, then probably came to live in the Tamil country and afterward in the Sri Lankan capital, Anurādhapura, during the reign of Mahānāma (409–431). Buddhadatta, who was, it seems, a little older than Buddhaghosa, was probably born in the Tamil country, on the banks of the Kāverī, and spent most of his life there, but he probably sojourned in Anurādhapura as well. Finally, Dhammapāla was probably also a Tamil, born in Kāñcīpuram in the late fourth century, and most likely lived mainly in his native land but also journeyed to Lanka. Thus, it would seem that in the early fifth century, Tamil India was an important seat of Buddhist—or, more precisely, Theravāda—culture, on a par with Sri Lanka and perhaps even more active.

The reign of Parakkamabāhu (Parakramabāhu) I (1153–1186), an especially prosperous epoch for the Sinhala Theravādins, was made illustrious by a number of scholar-monks. The most famous was Śāriputta, a pupil of Kassapa of Udumbaragiri, who had played a pivotal role in the reform of the community ordered by the king and was himself a great scholar. Śāriputta turned his residence, the new monastery of Jetavana at Polonnaruwa, into the major center of knowledge and Buddhist learning of his time. Author of several authoritative subcommentaries on canonic texts, highly esteemed grammarian and poet, he was as well versed in Sanskrit as in Pali and composed his works in both languages. Several of his many students became learned monks and authors of valued literary works, notably Dhammakitti, Saṅgharakkhita, Sumaṅgala, Buddhanāga, Medaṅkara, and Vācissara.

In modern times, mention must be made of one first-rank figure whose influence on the evolution of Theravāda Buddhism was both decisive and extensive. Prince Mongkut,

the youngest son of the Siamese king Rama II, became a monk and, during the quarter-century that he spent in yellow robes, undertook a great reform of the community in his country. In particular, he founded a new monastic order, the Thammayut, which observed the rules of discipline more strictly than did its contemporaries, but he also kept abreast of the social realities of Siam and enthusiastically studied the culture and religions of the West. Becoming king on the death of his elder brother, he ruled under the name Rama IV (1851–1868), completing his work and transforming his country into a modern state largely open to trade and external influence. He is one of the principal architects of the great reform of Theravāda Buddhism that took place after the mid-nineteenth century not only in Siam but also in the neighboring kingdoms and in Sri Lanka. This movement was characterized by a return to the sources of the religion, namely the Pali Tipiṭaka, and also by a necessary and rational adaptation to modern circumstances.

The best-known figure of the Sarvāstivādins is certainly Vasubandhu, the author of the *Abhidharmakośa*. Unfortunately, our information about this great master is suspect and seemingly contradictory, so that his life remains a subject of debate. Is Vasubandhu the Sarvāstivādin identical with Vasubandhu the Yogācāra, the brother of Aśanga? Did he live in the fourth or the fifth century of our era? Was he born at Purusapura (present-day Peshawar) into a *brahman* family? Did he live in Kashmir, and then Ayodhya (present-day Faizābād), where he probably died? No agreement has been reached on these or other, lesser points of his biography.

We know even less about his principal adversary, Saṃghabhadra, except that he was Vasubandhu's contemporary, a Kashmiri, and a staunch defender of Vaibhasika Sarvāstivāda orthodoxy. As for other great teachers of this sect, to whom are attributed various interpretations of the notion of *sarvam asti* or the treatises that have come down to us in Chinese translation, they are hardly more than names to us: Vasumitra (one or several?), Kātyāyanīputra, Dharmasīrī, Ghoṣaka, Upāśānta, Dharmatrāta. . . . Indeed, the Sarvāstivāda's founder, Madhyāntika, who probably settled with his disciples in Kashmir during the reign of Aśoka, seems himself to belong more to legend than to history.

The founders of other schools are also nothing but names to us, and even these have been handed down: Mahādeva for the Mahāsāṃghikas, Vātsīputra for the Vātsīputrīyas, Uttara for the Sautrāntikas, and so on. We only know two or three other masters, whose names have been preserved by chance, such as Śrīlāta of the Sautrāntika and Harivarman, the author of the *Satyasiddhi*. Of Śrīlāta we know nothing more than his opinions, as these were criticized in Sarvāstivādin tracts. Harivarman was probably a *brahman* from the middle Ganges Basin, who most likely lived around the third century CE and was converted to Buddhism as a follower of one of the Mahāsāṃghika sects, probably the Bahuśrutīya, to judge from the study of his long treatise.

EXPANSION OF THE SCHOOLS OUTSIDE OF INDIA. Owing to the pious zeal of the emperor Aśoka, from the mid-third century BCE Buddhism began to expand outside of India proper, southeastward into Sri Lanka and northwestward into what is now Afghanistan. Numerous important epigraphic and archaeological monuments show that it soon prospered in both these areas. From this evidence and from the Sinhala chronicles we know that the Theravādins very quickly became, and remained, the dominant group in Sri Lanka, but we do not know exactly which sects flourished at the same time—during the last three centuries BCE—in the mountainous areas of the northwest, then called Gandhara and Kapiśa. It seems, however, that the Sarvāstivādins, traditionally believed to have originated in nearby Kashmir during the reign of Aśoka, began the conversion of these lands to Buddhism and were joined somewhat later by schools of the Mahāsāṃghika group.

A few very scarce inscriptions, but especially the reports of the famous Chinese pilgrims Xuanzang and Yijing, as well as the numerous discoveries of Buddhist manuscripts in Central Asia, provide information on the presence of various early sects outside India. Sects were found in Southeast Asia, Indonesia, Central Asia, and China in the first few centuries of the common era, especially in the seventh century.

At this same time, the Theravādins had found their way into Indonesia, where the Sarvāstivādins or Mūlasarvāstivādins were a strong majority. These two groups were extremely numerous and nearly alone in all of Central Asia, and they also flourished in southern China, where the Mahīśāsakas, Dharmaguptakas, and Kāśyapīyas prospered as well. These last three sects thrived in Indonesia, and Dharmaguptakas were also found in eastern China as well as in Shensi province. As for the Sammatīyas, they were in the majority in Champa, in the center of present-day Vietnam. Such is the information provided by Yijing.

The Chinese translations of three different works of early Indian Buddhist sects formed the basis of an equal number of distinctively Chinese schools, which were introduced shortly afterward into Japan. The oldest is known by the name Chengshi, which is the title of Kumārajīva's Chinese translation (411–412) of Harivarman's *Satyasiddhi*. The main doctrine of this treatise, which attracted and held the attention of its Chinese followers, distinguishes two truths: a mundane or relative truth and a supreme or absolute truth. It teaches that all things are empty of substance, not only the individual person made up of the five aggregates of phenomena, but also the whole of the external world. Thus, the teaching of this work would seem to lie between those of the Hīnayāna and the Mahāyāna or, more precisely, the Mādhyamika. The Chengshi school was in fact founded by two direct disciples of Kumārajīva, Sengdao and Sengsong, who each headed a different branch, one centered in Anhui and the other in Jiangsu. These two masters and some of their disciples composed many commentaries on the *Satyasiddhi* or, more exactly, on its Chinese translation, which

helped make it widely known throughout southern China. The leaders of the Chinese Mahāyānist Sanlun sect, who were faithful followers of the Mādhyamikas, vigorously combated this teaching, insisting that its concept of the void was mistaken. Their attacks resulted in the decline of the Chengshi school in the mid-seventh century and in its disappearance shortly afterward. Still, in 625, a Korean monk introduced the Chinese translation of the *Satyasiddhi* and its teaching to Japan, but the sect, which received the name Jōjitsu (after the Japanese pronunciation of Chengshi), found less success there than in China and was quickly absorbed by the rival school of Sanron, the Japanese form of San-lun.

The second sect was called Jushe, a transliteration of the Sanskrit *kośa*, because it was based on the famous *Abhidharmakośa* of Vasubandhu, translated into Chinese by Paramārtha in 563–567 and by Xuanzang in 651–654. The Sarvāstivāda realism expounded in this treatise was not very successful in China, where Mahāyāna doctrines were then dominant; consequently, the Jushe school died out in the late eighth century, when it was absorbed by the Chinese form of Yogācāra known as Faxiang. Previously, as early as 658, two Japanese monks, Chitsu and Chitatsu, had introduced the sect to Japan, where it became known as the Kusha. There it had less success and longevity as an independent school than in China, for Chitsu and Chitatsu themselves were followers of Faxiang, called Hossō in Japan. Hossō had already attained considerable importance, and it soon absorbed the Kusha school.

The third and final Chinese school derived from early Buddhism was quite different from the other two. Called Lǜ (“discipline”), it was established in the mid-seventh century by the eminent monk Daoxuan as a reaction against the doctrinal disputes that preoccupied Chinese Buddhists of the time. He maintained that moral uprightness and strict monastic discipline were much more necessary for the religious life than empty intellectual speculations. Consequently, he imposed on his followers the well-defined rules in the *Sifen lǜ*, a Chinese translation of the Vinaya Piṭaka of the Dharmaguptakas made by Buddhayaśas and Zhu Fonian in 412. Although his school never had many adherents of its own, it had a clear and lasting influence on Chinese Buddhism. Thanks to the school’s activities, the *Sifen lǜ* became, and remains, the sole collection of disciplinary rules to be followed by all Chinese Buddhist monks regardless of their school, including followers of the Mahāyāna. The school was introduced to Japan in 753 by the Chinese monk Jianzhen (Jpn., Ganjin), who was welcomed with open arms at the court of Nara. Known by the name of Ritsu (not to be confused with a homophonous branch of the Shingon sect), it is still active in Japan today (it also existed in China early in this century) but no longer has many adherents.

However, the only early Buddhist sect to thrive after spreading outside of India is the Theravāda. Its lasting success (it still flourishes today) can be explained by the fact that

it was established well before the common era in Sri Lanka, a relatively isolated region, and that it has almost always maintained a strongly preferential relationship with the island’s political authorities and has known how best to profit from it. Much less certain was the extension of this phenomenon to a compact group of countries of mainland Southeast Asia from the eleventh century, a time when Buddhism, especially the early, so-called Hīnayāna Buddhism, was dying out throughout India itself. At that time, Hīnayāna Buddhism could claim only a very few followers, scattered among small and failing communities, in the whole vast territory of India. We can understand how the effect of such a happy chance could have seemed miraculous to Buddhist devotees.

This process began in Burma, in the mid-eleventh century, when Anorātha, who ruled the central and northern parts of the country, conquered the southern, maritime region, where Theravāda monks had recently converted the ruler. Anorātha, too, soon adopted the Buddhist faith of the Theravādins. Driven by religious zeal, he compelled all of his subjects to follow his example. From that time on, Theravāda has remained the religion of the majority of the Burmese people.

Two centuries later, when the Thai descended from the mountains to the north and took control of the entire country known today as Thailand, the same process took place. Their king converted to the Theravāda and exercised all his authority to promote its extension to the whole of the population.

In the following century, under circumstances that are still poorly known, neighboring Cambodia, where Mahāyāna Buddhism and Hinduism had flourished until then, became completely Theravādin in a short space of time and has remained so to the present day. The petty kingdoms of Laos, stretched out along the middle Mekong, were not long in following suit.

In contrast to what had happened in India, this distribution of Theravāda Buddhism among a number of different countries, which were (except for Sri Lanka) in close proximity to each other, helped ensure the sect’s lasting prosperity. Indeed, when a monastic community in one of these countries found itself in difficulty or in decline, which happened a number of times here and there, the pious Buddhist king would ask for and receive help from another country’s ruler, who would then send him a group of knowledgeable, respected monks to resolve the problems in question and restore the Theravāda to its full value and strength. Similarly, whatever reforms and progress were made in one country quickly spread to the Theravāda communities in others. Such was the case in the last century, when the prince-monk Mongkut, who became King Rama IV of Siam, instituted great transformations that allowed the Theravāda to adapt to the modern world at the same time that he carried out a return to its distant canonic sources.

SEE ALSO Arhat; Buddhaghosa; Buddhism, articles on Buddhism in India, Buddhism in Southeast Asia; Buddhist

Books and Texts; Buddhist Philosophy; Councils, article on Buddhist Councils; Dharma, article on Buddhist Dharma and Dharmas; Eightfold Path; Four Noble Truths; Ganjin; Karman, article on Buddhist Concepts; Mahāsāṃghika; Missions, article on Buddhist Missions; Mongkut; Nirvāṇa; Pratītya-samutpāda; Saṃgha, overview article; Sarvāstivāda; Sautrāntika; Sinhala Religion; Soteriology; Southeast Asian Religions, overview article; Vasubandhu.

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BUDDHISM, SCHOOLS OF: MAHĀYĀNA PHILOSOPHICAL SCHOOLS OF BUDDHISM

Mahāyāna Buddhists in India developed numerous theories on a wide range of topics, and according to Buddhist think-

ers, all such theories must relate in principle to reaching *nirvāṇa*, the highest goal toward which Buddhists are meant to strive. Usually a theory prescribes a specific contemplative practice that will lead the Buddhist to that highest goal, and it is understood that the practice will lead to *nirvāṇa* only when guided by the theory that recommends it. Indian Mahāyāna Buddhists who accepted the soteriological importance of theory thus faced some critical interpretive tasks: select, defend, and articulate the correct (i.e., soteriologically efficacious) theory among competing theories.

As Mahāyāna Buddhist thought develops, these interpretive tasks focus on philosophical texts (*śāstras*) that become, for one reason or another, the inviolable sources of a theoretical system. The main Mahāyāna texts of this kind were composed by three Buddhist thinkers: Nāgārjuna (c. 150 CE), Asaṅga (c. 325 CE), and Vasubandhu (c. 325 CE). Although other thinkers' works also received considerable attention, the works of these three thinkers form the core of the Mahāyāna philosophical schools. Their texts and ideas are studied and interpreted again and again by each generation of Indian Mahāyāna thinkers until the virtual disappearance of Mahāyāna philosophy in India (c. 1400 CE).

As each generation's commentators take up the study of these foundational figures, they invariably employ a kind of dialectical method: arguments are couched as discussions between the proponent and the opponent of a particular notion. These dialectical arguments respond to a wide range of views, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist. Hence, formulating its own retorts and criticisms, each generation develops new and often multiple interpretations of seminal texts and concepts.

By the sixth century, the rapid accumulation of competing interpretations leads Mahāyāna thinkers such as Bhāvaviveka (c. 525 CE) to systematically employ terms for what are often called "philosophical schools." One obvious circumstance underlies this move: commentators fall into well-defined camps that adopt a particular moniker to identify their position. Followers of Nāgārjuna, for example, speak of their philosophy as Madhyamaka (the "Middle Way"), a term that Nāgārjuna himself coins. Subsequent generations of Madhyamaka thinkers are always concerned to defend and articulate the works of Nāgārjuna and, to some degree, the commentaries on Nāgārjuna composed by their predecessors. One thus encounters an unambiguous cohesion within Madhyamaka texts, as evinced by their intertextuality, the continuity of their ideas, their appeal to the same authorities, and so on. Hence, in using a single moniker to refer to many thinkers and their texts, Bhāvaviveka is simply reflecting the obvious cohesiveness of their textual traditions.

In describing Buddhist thought as "schools," however, another motivation is the confusion caused by the multiplicity of views that develop over generations. By Bhāvaviveka's time, Buddhist thought exhibits many variations, and if one adds the opinions of non-Buddhist philosophers, one arrives at a tangled knot of theory. Parsing authors and texts into

specific schools allows Buddhist thinkers to unravel that knot and present its various strands in a straightforward fashion. Instead of unpacking endless arguments between individual authors, one instead interprets them as debates between philosophical traditions.

The need to sort and classify the bewildering variety of Mahāyāna philosophical views becomes especially acute when Buddhism spreads to other regions, such as China and Tibet. Indeed, in Tibet an entire literature develops around the term *school*, and most Tibetan monastic libraries hold several dozen texts that are devoted to minutely parsing and classifying Indian philosophical systems. This literature, called *doxography*, has heavily influenced the academic study of Indian Mahāyāna thought. The success and influence of Tibetan doxographies stems in part from their ability to elaborate a general classification found in Indian doxographical texts. Enumerated in these terms, all Buddhist thought falls into the hierarchy of the "four schools": the lowest two, the Vaibhāṣika and the Sautrāntika, are not part of the Mahāyāna, but they provide the foundation for the higher schools; the latter two, Yogācāra and Madhyamaka, are considered Mahāyāna schools. This schema, along with its numerous subcategories, has become standard in the academic study of Mahāyāna philosophy.

Since it is so prominent, the model of the four schools will guide the discussion presented below. It will be useful, however, to begin with the problems inherent in the notion of "philosophical schools." An overview of the first two schools will then provide the overall context of Mahāyāna thought. After a concise historical synopsis, this entry focuses on the earliest historical forms of the two Mahāyāna schools, namely Madhyamaka and Yogācāra, along with a brief consideration of later developments.

"SCHOOLS" AND "PHILOSOPHY." The notion of a philosophical "school" is a difficult one, even in its English usage. In rough terms, a "school" is a voluntary association of various thinkers who articulate and defend a particular set of theories that are deliberately traced through a series of commentators to one or more original thinkers. A main concern in speaking of schools is the need to distinguish the mere avowal of a position from the systematic articulation and defense of that position within a tradition. To refer clearly to that type of systematic articulation, Indian Buddhist authors eventually settle on the term *siddhānta*, literally, the "conclusion" or outcome of one's theoretical arguments. It is this term that is often translated as "school."

Although clearly useful for Buddhist exegetes and academic interpreters, the concept of a *siddhānta* or school holds several problems. For example, if a taxonomy of schools is to be of any use, one must sort each thinker and his works into one school or another. In this sorting process, however, the way in which a thinker may resist or reinterpret his own school is all too easily lost. The sorting of thinkers into this or that school may also lead one to ignore noteworthy differences and create false boundaries. Candrakīrti (c. 625 CE)

and Śāntideva (c. 650 CE), for example, diverge significantly in their views, but since they are lumped together into the same school, their important differences may be ignored. Likewise, Dharmakīrti (c. 650 CE) and Śāntarakṣita (c. 750 CE) are sorted into distinct schools, but their thought may converge in ways that are not apparent in terms of their schools' definitions. Along these same lines, the taxonomy of schools does not fare well when confronted with liminal cases, where a thinker's allegiances are difficult to discern.

The English term *school* may also suggest a type of institutional coherence that does not apply to these philosophical traditions. It appears that only men wrote Buddhist philosophical texts, and nearly all were monks. As such, they received their sustenance through a monastic institution, and they held property in common with that institution. The practical circumstances of a monk's life and the norms that regulated his behavior were also guided by the rules passed to him upon ordination. If issues such as sustenance and behavioral norms lie at the core of a monk's institutional identity, then one must identify nearly every Buddhist philosopher first and foremost as a monk from a particular monastery regulated by the rules of a particular monastic tradition. Monastic traditions, moreover, were not distinguished by their philosophies; instead, each tradition was set apart primarily by its regional origin and the often mundane details of its rules. Hence, in institutional terms, an Indian Buddhist philosopher is first distinguished not by a particular philosophy, but rather by the regional affiliation and rules of his monastery's code. To put it another way, in some cases the color of a monk's robe indicated unambiguously the monastic tradition that he followed, but no such visible cue ever marked the philosophical school that he upheld.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to suppose that allegiance to a Mahāyāna philosophical school had no impact on a monk's life. Certainly, that allegiance located the philosopher within an intellectual community, one that extended across many monasteries in many monastic traditions; and it is clear that these intellectual communities engaged in both censure and approval of a thinker's works. A thinker's commitment to a Mahāyāna philosophical school also located him within a wider discourse on philosophy conducted by many traditions, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist. That is, although many Indian Buddhist thinkers did not compose their works in Sanskrit, Mahāyāna philosophers did use Sanskrit, and they thus shared a literary language with a wide range of non-Buddhist theorists. This may be one reason for the remarkable number of extended debates between Mahāyāna philosophy and these other, non-Buddhist traditions. In those debates, Mahāyāna Buddhist thinkers acted as intellectual defenders of the faith against philosophical critiques originating outside the Buddhist community, and this role probably impacted their lives in terms of patronage and prestige.

Another practical impact of allegiance to a school was the Mahāyāna notion of philosophy itself. Mahāyāna philo-

sophical texts cover many of the same topics and use many of the same methods found in Euro-American philosophical traditions. And, as in classical Greece, *philosophy* here must not be interpreted as dry theory, but rather as systematic thought that is meant to explain, guide, and sustain contemplative practices. This does not mean that every argument correlates straightforwardly with a contemplative practice—consciously or not, Indian Buddhist thinkers often made philosophical decisions that have no obvious relation to such practices. Nevertheless, in a fundamental way Buddhist thinkers link their arguments to specific contemplative practices, such as meditations that analyze personal identity. This linkage reflects the avowed soteriological context of all Buddhist thought, namely, the cultivation of meditative experiences that allegedly eliminate suffering and lead to *nirvāṇa*. Indeed, from the traditional view, the Buddhist thinker's philosophical work was itself a kind of spiritual practice that moved the thinker closer to these final goals. Philosophy is therefore called “seeing” (*darśana*), a metaphor that evokes a central goal of Buddhist contemplative practice: an experience (*anubhava*) in which one sees things as they truly are (*yathābhūta* *darśana*). Thus, in speaking of Mahāyāna “philosophy,” one must recall that it is implicated deeply in this type of contemplative goal.

Despite the problems noted above, the schema of the four philosophical schools remains useful. The usual procedure is to begin by discussing the first two schools: the Vaibhāṣika and the Sautrāntika. Doxographers maintain that these schools do not embody any Mahāyāna philosophy, and it is precisely for this reason that they are presented first. In doing so, doxographers are able to present the shared, foundational notions that run through all Buddhist thought.

FOUNDATIONAL THEORIES. From its earliest period, Buddhist thought rested on a straightforward set of claims about human goals and the means to achieve those goals. In brief, the main human goal is the elimination of suffering, and the means to that end is the elimination of the causes of suffering. The strands of early Buddhist thought that develop into Mahāyāna philosophy specify that suffering's cause is a type of “ignorance” (*avidyā*), a distorted way of seeing the world that stems especially from misconceptions about personal identity. Ignorance creates and sustains mental dispositions that motivate and guide actions, and since those dispositions are rooted in a fundamental error, the actions guided by them are doomed to failure. Ignorance, moreover, permeates the minds of all unenlightened beings; hence, all of their actions—including those aimed at their highest goal of eliminating suffering—end in frustration.

The solution is to eliminate the fundamental misconceptions about one's personal identity that fuel ignorance, and one does so by demonstrating that their object, an essentially real and immutable “self” or *ātman*, does not exist. The procedure is to engage in a type of reductive analysis whereby, with the aid of contemplative practices, one searches through the constituents of body and mind in order to deter-

mine whether any of them—singly or in combination—could be such a self. Having seen that there is no such self to be found, one uses meditation to deepen that experience and explore all its implications. Eventually one becomes free of the misconceptions that create suffering; hence, one attains *nirvāṇa*, utter freedom from suffering.

This basic theory, which also lies at the core of Mahāyāna philosophy, is the main concern of the *abhidharma*, a style of Buddhist thought presented in great detail by the Vaibhāṣika school. The most basic of the four schools according to Indian and Tibetan doxographers, the Vaibhāṣikas derive their name from the *Mahāvibhāṣa* (Great commentary) that is their inspiration. Their principal task is to articulate an elaborate taxonomy of all the truly real constituents of the body and mind in order to facilitate an exhaustive search for the self. These psychophysical constituents, called *dharma*s, are discovered through analysis to be the irreducibly real building blocks of the universe, and when one knows them as such, one is seeing mind and body as they truly are (*yathābhūtarśana*). Since a person is nothing other than those irreducible constituents of mind and body, and since no essential self or immutable identity is numbered among those constituents, one concludes that this alleged essential self (*ātman*) is not truly real.

This theory of “no-self” (*anātman*) is meant to demonstrate that no fixed essence lies at the core of personal identity, but it does not deny that in a contingent way, one can speak intelligibly of persons or selves. A traditional example is a chariot: when one performs the Vaibhāṣikas’ reductive analysis of a chariot, one finds only the parts, such as the wheels, axle, and so on. At the same time, one knows that there is no chariot separate from those parts; if there were, it would absurdly follow that the chariot would still exist even after its parts were removed. Hence, even though it may seem that a chariot exists, if one accepts irreducibility as a criterion of true existence, one must admit that no such chariot truly exists. Nevertheless, one is still able to use the word “chariot” intelligibly when engaged in the practical task of, for example, driving the chariot. Thus, in terms of practical actions and use of language, a chariot does exist.

Codifying these two ways of existing, the Vaibhāṣika refers to another key concept for the Mahāyāna: the “two truths” or “two realities,” namely the “ultimate” (*paramārtha*) and the “conventional” (*saṃvṛtti*). According to the Vaibhāṣikas, if one wishes to know whether an entity exists ultimately, then one employs their analytical techniques; if, at the end of that reductive analysis, the entity in question has not been reduced to some more fundamental constituents, one concludes that it is *ultimately* real. On the other hand, even if the entity is reducible to more fundamental constituents, one may decide that from a practical or linguistic point of view, it still appears to be existent. In such a case, the entity will be considered *conventionally* real because, although it does not withstand analysis, it does conform to the conventions that govern the use of language and

practical actions. Thus, since it can be reduced to more fundamental constituents, a chariot is not ultimately real. Nevertheless, in terms of the conventions that govern the use of the word *chariot*, it appears to be real for practical purposes; hence, a chariot is conventionally real. Likewise, since a person can be reduced to more fundamental constituents, no person is ultimately real; nevertheless, in practical and linguistic terms, one can speak of a person as conventionally real.

In order for the schema of the two realities to make sense, the Vaibhāṣika must explain precisely what it means for one to know that an entity exists ultimately. Their view amounts to a kind of taxonomic atomism: an ultimately real entity is irreducible, and one has full knowledge of this fact when one sees that the entity, due to its essence or nature (*svabhāva*), belongs to one or another of the irreducible categories that exhaustively account for all the stuff of the universe. In other words, the endpoint of the Vaibhāṣika analysis is not just that the thing in question cannot be broken down further, but also that one knows in an affirmative sense what it truly is by virtue of its nature; and one arrives at this knowledge by correctly categorizing the irreducible thing in question.

In emphasizing this taxonomic approach, the Vaibhāṣikas’ method betrays a realist attitude toward categories. This realism attracts the criticism of the second non-Mahāyāna school, the Sautrāntikas, who critique it by pointing to its naïve assumptions. One such assumption is the belief that categories—or more generally, words and concepts—refer in some direct and straightforward way to real entities in the world, such that the things expressed by a particular word or concept are understood to be the same. For example, when one uses the word or concept *blue*, one appears to be referring to a thing that is somehow, by its nature, the same as all other blue things. In fact, say the Sautrāntikas, words and concepts do not refer in this way to real things. Thus, the seeming sameness of each thing called “blue” is an illusion; in actuality, each thing is utterly unique, and its unique identity or nature cannot be fully expressed through words or concepts.

The Sautrāntika critique resorts to complex and technical arguments, but to appreciate its relevance to the development of Mahāyāna thought, one need only attend to a main outcome: namely, that the Sautrāntika view moves away from the notion that all things are fixed in categorical identities. For the Vaibhāṣikas, the universe is composed of irreducible elements, each of which belongs by its very nature to a particular category. But according to the Sautrāntikas, the nature of a thing cannot be fully captured by a categorical identity. This leaves open the explicit possibility that any given thing is susceptible to multiple interpretations at the level of words and concepts.

GENERAL TRENDS AND PROBLEMS IN MAHĀYĀNA THOUGHT. Examined through the traditional schema of the four schools, the first two schools—Vaibhāṣika and

Sautrāntika—are usually discussed in the somewhat contrived and ahistorical manner presented just above. Such an approach scarcely does justice to these two “lower” schools, but it does capture an important facet of Mahāyāna thought: namely, that it is explicitly rooted in non-Mahāyāna Buddhism. Mahāyāna thinkers accept all of the elements discussed above: namely, that the elimination of suffering is a main spiritual goal; that ignorance is the primary cause of suffering; that ignorance is eliminated by knowing things as they truly are; that on the theory of no-self, persons are not ultimately real; and that an entity that is not ultimately real may nevertheless be considered conventionally real. Rather than rejecting these basic theories, Mahāyāna thinkers modify them in a way that creates a conceptual transition—not a radical discontinuity—from the non-Mahāyāna to the Mahāyāna.

A key element in this conceptual transition is a fundamental change in the notion of *nirvāṇa*. In non-Mahāyāna thought, *nirvāṇa*, the state in which suffering has utterly ceased, stands in strict opposition to *saṃsāra*, the world of suffering. *Saṃsāra*, moreover, is literally created by ignorance, and on most accounts, this means that everything within *saṃsāra* is tainted by ignorance. For the Vaibhāṣika, this taint is an irreversible and indisputable fact about the *dharma*s or fundamental building blocks that constitute *saṃsāra*. *Nirvāṇa*, on the other hand, is utterly free not only of suffering, but also of the ignorance that causes suffering. Hence, on the Vaibhāṣika view, *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* must be entirely distinct.

In both literature and philosophy, Mahāyāna moves away from this strict distinction between *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. In a literary work such as the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra*, one learns that those close to true *nirvāṇa* are capable of seeing this world as a blissful paradise called a *buddha-field*, while those farther from that state still see it as a world of suffering. In the systematic texts of the first Mahāyāna philosopher, Nāgārjuna, one reads that in ontological terms, there is no difference whatsoever between *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. And in other systematic Mahāyāna works, *nirvāṇa* is redefined as “unlocated” (*apratiṣṭhita*) in that it is situated neither within the world of suffering that is *saṃsāra*, nor in a quietistic *nirvāṇa* that is diametrically opposed to that world. This new, nondualistic paradigm for *nirvāṇa* accompanies a redefinition of the highest goal for Buddhists. In short, for the Mahāyāna, the proper and highest goal of a Buddhist is not only the elimination of one’s own suffering, but rather the attainment of buddhahood: a state of perfect bliss in which, while still active in a world that appears to be one of suffering, one is maximally efficient at leading other beings to *nirvāṇa*. Buddhahood is the goal that guides the *bodhisattva* ideal, the Mahāyāna’s central ethical motif, which is based on a strong sense of compassion for all beings.

The Mahāyāna’s new paradigm emphasizes the nonduality of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, and to make good philosophical sense, it must be accompanied by a revision of the Vaibhāṣika

ontology. It can no longer be the case that the fundamental building blocks of reality are fixed by their very nature in immutable identities; that is, it can no longer be the case that the stuff of the world of suffering must always remain what it has always been, namely, the direct or indirect product of ignorance. Instead, it must be the case that the world appears as it does—as wracked with suffering or as a blissful buddha-field—not because of some fixed and essential nature of things, but instead due to the minds of the beings that are experiencing that world. Here is the relevance of the Sautrāntika’s critique of Vaibhāṣika thought: the nature of a thing cannot be fully captured by a categorical identity, and multiple interpretations of its identity are possible. It is crucial for Mahāyāna theory that the Sautrāntika critique be correct.

From a doxographical perspective, the Mahāyāna’s ontological revision is facilitated by extending the doctrine of no-self. The doctrine of no-self rejects the notion that persons have a fixed, essential identity: one may seem to be an ultimately real person, but in fact, one is not truly or ultimately a person because one is reducible to the real, fundamental elements of which one is composed. For the Mahāyāna, a similar critique applies to the fundamental elements or *dharma*s that supposedly make up the person: an infinitesimal particle of matter, for example, seems to be an infinitesimal particle, but it is not truly or ultimately an infinitesimal particle. Indeed, according to the Mahāyāna, all of the Vaibhāṣikas’ allegedly fundamental elements of the universe lack any fixed, essential identity as elements. All things are therefore completely mutable, and the world of suffering that is *saṃsāra* is not fixed in its nature: it can be the very locus of *nirvāṇa*.

By extending the critique of essential identity from persons to all the elements of the universe, Mahāyāna thinkers encounter three main issues. First, they must present a new style of critique that is not simply reductive; in other words, the claim that irreducible entities are not ultimately real cannot be supported by reducing them once more, since one will just arrive at the same problem. Instead, some other kind of analysis must be brought to bear. Second, Mahāyāna thinkers must specify what it means for one to see the true identity of things—to “see them as they truly are” (*yathā-bhūta-darśana*)—when that new analysis reaches its culmination. In other words, the Vaibhāṣika analysis leads to a straightforward and even intuitive conclusion: when one is looking at a chair, in fact what one is seeing is a bunch of irreducible particles of matter; the notion of a “chair” is just a convenient fiction. But if, as Mahāyāna thinkers maintain, even those irreducible elements are not truly real, what then is left for one to be seeing? This problem relates to the third issue: namely, that if even the fundamental building blocks of the world are not truly real, how then does one give an account of conventional reality? For the Vaibhāṣika, an entity such as a chair is not ultimately real because it can be reduced to its more fundamental parts. Nevertheless, in con-

ventional terms one may speak of a “chair” as real, and one can do so because the term *chair* actually refers to those irreducible parts that are functioning together in a particular way. Thus, for the Vaibhāṣika, the warrant for claiming that a chair or a person is conventionally real is precisely the fact that one can point to the ultimately real elements of which it is composed. Mahāyāna thinkers, however, deny the ultimately reality even of those elements. Of what, then is conventional reality constructed?

These three issues—the need for a new style of analysis, a new account of knowing things as they are, and a new approach to conventional reality—all raise another issue: namely, that Mahāyāna thinkers seem to be arguing that, to at least some degree, the Vaibhāṣikas and other non-Mahāyāna philosophers are just plain wrong. Not only do they seem to argue that many Buddhists are wrong, but since Mahāyāna thinkers accept the Vaibhāṣikas’ claim that their theories come from words of the Buddha, they seem to say that the Buddha was wrong too. To deal with this problem, followers of the Mahāyāna do not reject most of the previous canonical texts, perhaps in part because causing such a schism was considered as heinous as matricide. Instead, Mahāyāna thinkers sought a method to reconcile their innovations with the long established Buddhist community in which they were embedded. They settled on the notion of “skill in means” (*upāyakauśalya*).

Strictly speaking, “skill in means” may not be a philosophical concept, but it certainly functions as a philosophical method. In its most basic form, it amounts to this: the teaching must be tailored to the audience. That is, one presents theories and arguments at a level that the audience is capable of understanding, and if the audience cannot understand (or will inevitably reject) the highest level of one’s philosophy, one uses a lower level of analysis that will prepare the audience to understand or accept the higher level. In part this means that arguments must be couched in such a way that they fit into a hierarchy of levels, and as Mahāyāna thought develops in India, this attention to levels of analysis becomes the central motif of late Mahāyāna thought.

HISTORICAL SYNOPSIS. Considered in historical terms, the two Mahāyāna schools—Madhyamaka and Yogācāra—develop through the following stages: Nāgārjuna (c. 150 CE) composes the early Madhyamaka texts; Asaṅga and Vasubandhu (both c. 350 CE) compose the early Yogācāra texts; Dignāga (c. 450 CE) and Dharmakīrti (c. 625 CE), with the help of Bhāvaviveka (c. 500 CE), integrate a set of theories known as “Buddhist epistemology” into Mahāyāna thought; from the seventh century onward, Madhyamaka and Yogācāra subschools develop in reaction to the developments of Buddhist epistemology, and later Madhyamaka thinkers such as Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla (both c. 750 CE) create a synthesis that explicitly employs a hierarchy of schools representing levels of analysis. The discussion below focuses especially on early Madhyamaka and Yogācāra, and it concludes with a brief examination of their later subschools.

Early Madhyamaka: Nāgārjuna. The first systematic Mahāyāna thinker was Nāgārjuna, and his historical primacy is matched by his philosophical importance. As noted earlier, to move beyond early Buddhist thought Mahāyāna thinkers confront three main needs: a new style of analysis that moves beyond reductionism, a new account of knowing things as they are, and a new approach to the definition of conventional reality. Nāgārjuna’s approach to these issues sets the stage for all subsequent Mahāyāna thought.

To formulate a new style of analysis, Nāgārjuna must critique the claim that through a strictly reductive analysis, one comes upon things that are ultimately real. The early Buddhist style of reductive analysis is straightforward: one analyzes an entity by attempting to break it into its component parts, and if it cannot be broken down further, the entity is ultimately real. A chair, for example, is not ultimately real because it can be broken down into more fundamental parts; and when the analytical process is brought to its conclusion, one eventually arrives at irreducible, partless particles that are the basic stuff of the chair.

Thus, when a reductive thinker such as a Vaibhāṣika completes the analysis of a chair, he concludes that a chair is actually just many particles. Hence, in ultimate terms, a chair exists as something other than itself: what seems to be a chair is not ultimately a chair; instead, it is actually irreducible particles. But, for these reductive thinkers, an irreducible entity such as a particle does ultimately exist as itself because it cannot be reduced to anything more fundamental. As such, that entity has *svabhāva*, literally, “own-existence.” To speak of a thing’s *svabhāva*, therefore, is to speak of what a thing is in and of itself; in other words, it is to speak of its “essence,” the best translation of *svabhāva*.

To move beyond reductive analysis, Nāgārjuna focuses on this notion of essence. He accepts that, for an entity to exist ultimately, it must have an essence (*svabhāva*), but for him, to have an essence is not just a matter of being irreducible. Instead, he maintains that the notion of an essence is a way of indicating that the entity’s identity is utterly devoid of any dependence on other entities. In short, he understands the notion of essence as independent or nonrelational existence. Hence, in lieu of reduction, his analysis examines the ways in which an entity might be dependent on other entities. If the entity is found to be dependent, then one must conclude that it lacks essence (*svabhāva*) and is thus not ultimately real.

For Nāgārjuna, dependence comes in various forms. For example, he begins his most influential work by arguing that causally produced entities cannot have essences because they depend on their causes. His analysis of causality, however, is only part of a larger strategy: namely, the analysis of relations. Even entities that are not causally produced are susceptible to this analysis. Perhaps the most radical example is *nirvāṇa* itself, which reductionists such as the Vaibhāṣika consider to be an ultimately real element that is free of any causal conditioning. Nāgārjuna, however, maintains that it

is conditioned in another sense: one cannot give an account of what *nirvāṇa* is in itself without referring to its opposite, the world of suffering that is *samsāra*. In other words, *nirvāṇa* has no meaning without *samsāra*, just as “long” is meaningless without “short.” Nāgārjuna thus concludes that “*nirvāṇa* is not at all different from *samsāra*” (*Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā* 25.19).

When Nāgārjuna radically rejects any distinction between *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, he is not espousing some type of monism. Instead, he is drawing a consequence from a more fundamental point, namely, that *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa* lack essence. That is, in order to draw a distinction between them in ultimate terms, one must do so in terms of their essences—what each is in itself without depending on anything else. *Samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, however, both lack essence because the identity of each is dependent on the other. Hence, any attempt to draw any ultimate distinction between them must fail.

More important is another conclusion of Nāgārjuna’s analysis: since only an entity with an essence can be ultimately real, *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are not ultimately real. Nāgārjuna goes on to extend this analysis not just to *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, but to all things, and the upshot of his critique is that they all lack essence. In other words, to have an essence is to have some fixed, nonrelational identity, and no entity can fulfill this requirement. Moreover, since only a nonrelational entity—that is, one with an essence—could be ultimately existent, Nāgārjuna maintains that no entities whatsoever exist ultimately. To know all things as they are truly or ultimately is therefore to recognize that none exist ultimately.

Here one encounters the second issue that all Mahāyāna thinkers must face, namely, the need for a new account of “seeing things as they truly are.” As with the Vaibhāṣika, Nāgārjuna accepts that suffering can only be stopped by eliminating ignorance, and that to eliminate ignorance one must see things as they truly are. For the Vaibhāṣika, to see things as they truly are is to experience what is ultimately real, namely, the foundational elements of the universe. In doing so, one can eliminate ignorance: the confused belief that somewhere among those elements one will find one’s absolute, fixed identity or self (*ātman*). For Nāgārjuna, however, ignorance is not just a confusion about one’s personal identity; instead, it is the deeply ingrained cognitive habit that makes beings see *all things* as if they had some fixed, absolute identity or essence (*svabhāva*). Thus, to eliminate ignorance one must realize that no entity has any such essence, and this means that one must realize that no entity is ultimately real. But if no entity is ultimately real, what does it mean to see things as they truly are? At the end of the analysis, what is left that one could see?

To answer this question, Nāgārjuna employs a metaphor that runs throughout Mahāyāna thought. Inasmuch as no entity can have a nonrelational identity, every entity lacks essence, and Nāgārjuna speaks of this lack of essence as

“emptiness” (*śūnyatā*). Thus, to know an entity in ultimate terms is to know its emptiness, which is a metaphor for its utter lack of essence. The danger, however, is that one will construe this as some kind of absolute nothingness at every entity’s core. In that case, Nāgārjuna would be wrong to say that all things lack essence because they would have an essence, namely, that absolute nothingness. Responding to the danger of this type of nihilistic interpretation, Nāgārjuna points out that even emptiness lacks essence and is thus ultimately unreal. Thus, just as a person is empty of really being a person, emptiness is empty of really being emptiness. By understanding this “emptiness of emptiness” (*śūnyatā-śūnyatā*), one avoids nihilism.

Nāgārjuna may avoid nihilism, but many questions remain concerning the realization of things as they truly are. Here one should recall that such a realization comes not only through Nāgārjuna’s arguments, but also through their integration into a contemplative practice. But what sort of practice would it be? What kind of meditative experience would the arguments help to induce? It should already be clear that the meditation on things as they truly are—that is, the meditation on emptiness—cannot be an experience of some absolute nothingness or any other negative content. It would also seem problematic to hold that the meditation has positive content, such as an object. That is, the meditative experience of emptiness is an experience of any entity’s ultimate reality, and if that experience is of some object, then one might conclude that the object experienced was the fixed, ultimate essence of that entity. This would seem to contradict Nāgārjuna’s notion that all things lack essence. Hence, the meditative experience of emptiness apparently can be neither of something, nor of nothing.

This conundrum of emptiness clearly vexes subsequent Mahāyāna thinkers, and it leads to many developments in Mahāyāna thought. It also points to problems in the third issue that Nāgārjuna faces: an account of the conventional. As noted above, on Nāgārjuna’s view, if one seeks the fixed, nonrelational essence that would constitute the ultimate identity of an entity, one fails to find any such essence. And to exist ultimately, a thing must have such an essence; hence, one concludes that no entity exists ultimately. But as with the Vaibhāṣika, Nāgārjuna maintains that an entity that does not exist ultimately may nevertheless exist conventionally. Hence, even though he denies the ultimate reality of all things, including the Buddhist path, he does not at all mean to deny that many such things, most especially the Buddhist path, are real and valuable in a conventional sense.

Concerning the conventional, the Vaibhāṣikas are straightforward: it is just a matter of recognizing that words such as “chair” are convenient fictions that allow us to speak easily of what is really there, namely, many irreducible particles. Thus, conventionally real things are composed of the irreducible, ultimately real stuff of the universe. But for Nāgārjuna, there is no such stuff, nor does one find anything else that is “really there” in the case of a chair or anything else. How then does one make sense of conventional reality?

To answer this question, Nāgārjuna must redefine the notion of conventionality. For the Vaibhāṣika, a conventional entity depends on the ultimate because it is made from ultimately real stuff, but for Nāgārjuna the conventional and the ultimate define and depend upon each other through their mutual exclusion, as in other dyads such as “long” and “short” or *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. And since an ultimately real entity has an utterly independent or nonrelational identity, a conventionally real entity must be its antithesis: its identity is utterly dependent or relational. As Nāgārjuna puts it, “We say that emptiness is that which is interdependence” (*Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā* 8.24). In other words, when one sees that all entities fail the test of ultimacy because they are all empty of any nonrelational identity, one should also realize that if they have identities even conventionally, those identities must be rooted in the radical relationality that is “interdependence” (*pratītya-samutpāda*).

In seeing the conventional as interdependence, Nāgārjuna sets a theme for all subsequent Mahāyāna thought, but as with the notion of emptiness, he leaves many questions unanswered. For example, he has not addressed the Vaibhāṣikas’ basic intuition that the conventional is made up from ultimate stuff. In other words, the modality of conventional reality may indeed be interdependence, but does not such a concept presuppose that there are things standing in the relation of interdependence? A relation cannot exist without *relata*, so how could it make sense to speak of the relation that is interdependence if there are not really any entities to be related? These questions, along with the problems of knowing emptiness, create fertile ground for the growth of Mahāyāna thought.

Early Yogācāra: Asaṅga and Vasubandhu. Not long after Nāgārjuna, Asaṅga and Vasubandhu develop the other major strand of Mahāyāna thought, the Yogācāra (literally, “Practice of Yoga”). Also called *citta-mātra* (“mind only”), this school emphasizes mind (*citta*) or consciousness (*vijñāna*) in its responses to the three issues mentioned above, namely, style of analysis, seeing things as they truly are, and an account of the conventional.

In terms of analysis, Asaṅga and Vasubandhu largely follow Nāgārjuna’s lead. Asaṅga’s main style of analysis is also relational, but his focus is different. He begins with the assumption that the notion of an ultimately real personal identity is rooted in one’s sense of subjectivity. His analysis is relational because on his view, the reality of that subjectivity is tied to the reality of the objects that it allegedly knows. Hence, in order to follow previous Buddhist thinkers in demonstrating that there is no such fixed, ultimately real personal identity, he must show that all the objects allegedly perceived by this subjectivity are ultimately unreal. Therefore, the subjectivity must also be ultimately unreal because it can truly be a subjectivity only if it perceives objects.

Focusing on the relation between subject and object in this way, Asaṅga follows Nāgārjuna in extending the critique of essence beyond persons to the fundamental elements of

the universe, but unlike Nāgārjuna, his approach creates a more obvious bridge between non-Mahāyāna and Mahāyāna thought. That is, as with non-Mahāyāna thought, the main goal is still to refute one’s notion of an ultimately real self (*ātman*), but Asaṅga suggests that this goal is best reached by critiquing the self’s alleged objects. The intuition here is that the false impression of ultimately real selfhood is rooted in one’s sense of subjectivity as a perceiver of objects. Thus, in showing that there are no ultimately real elements that could serve as objects, Asaṅga is just offering a more profound and effective rejection of any fixed, absolute personal identity.

Asaṅga’s strategy requires some means to refute the reality of any entities that could be construed as objects existing in distinction from the subjectivity that perceives them. For the Vaibhāṣikas, those objects basically consist of the irreducible elements that they take to be ultimately real; hence, Asaṅga’s critique must demonstrate that all those elements are not ultimately real. Buddhist models of consciousness require that his analysis cover two general types of objects: mental objects, which are immaterial, and sense objects, which, being material, are allegedly composed of irreducible particles.

In terms of mental objects, Asaṅga develops a critique elaborated further by Vasubandhu. As with Nāgārjuna, the critique employs a relational analysis whereby an entity could be ultimately existent only if it is utterly free of dependence on other entities. Exploring an area not systematically addressed by Nāgārjuna, Asaṅga and Vasubandhu refute the ultimate reality of mental objects by demonstrating that their allegedly independent existence is contradicted by the linguistic and conceptual relationality that enables them to be mental objects in the first place. Their detailed arguments demonstrate that the referent of a word or concept is necessarily mind-dependent to at least some degree, and being dependent, that referent cannot be ultimately real.

The critique of sense objects, which thinkers such as the Vaibhāṣika take to be composed of irreducible particles, is developed especially by Vasubandhu. Here too the continuity with non-Mahāyāna thought is striking, for Vasubandhu chooses to employ a reductive analysis to demonstrate the ultimate irreality of such particles. But in contrast to reductionists such as the Vaibhāṣika, Vasubandhu is willing to reduce matter to the point where it no longer exists. In short, he demonstrates that irreducibility is incompatible with material existence: if material particles were irreducible, then they could have no size, but if they have no size, then how could an accumulation of them form gross objects such as jars or chairs? On the other hand, if they do have size, then they clearly are not irreducible, since they then must have parts, such as front, back, left, right, top, and bottom. The conclusion of this analysis is a philosophical idealism that totally denies the existence of matter. And although a few academic interpreters maintain that Vasubandhu does not mean to refute the reality of matter, such an interpretation ignores

all subsequent Indian commentators and all Tibetan doxographers.

The critique of mental and physical objects developed by Asaṅga and Vasubandhu differs in an important respect from Nāgārjuna's approach. For Nāgārjuna, when one reaches the conclusion of the analysis, one's "seeing things as they truly are" is just seeing emptiness, which is not readily construed as seeing anything at all; indeed, later Indian Madhyamakas will speak of it as the "seeing that is non-seeing." Asaṅga and Vasubandhu, however, see their analysis as ending in a realization that has a far more affirmative content. The positive nature of that realization is shown by the way they redefine emptiness. For Nāgārjuna, emptiness is utter lack of essence, and since all things are empty, all things lack essence; hence, they are all ultimately unreal. For Asaṅga and Vasubandhu, emptiness is the absence of subject-object duality in the mind of the perceiver. Thus, although ultimately real objects do not stand in opposition to some ultimately real subject, there remains nevertheless the undeniable fact of consciousness itself.

Asaṅga and Vasubandhu explain their new notion of emptiness through the theory of the "three natures" (*trisvabhāva*). The usual order of enumeration is: the constructed nature (*parikalpitasvabhāva*), the dependent nature (*paratrantrasvabhāva*), and the perfect nature (*pariniṣpannasvabhāva*). It is helpful to place the dependent nature at the head of this list because the other two—the constructed and the perfect—are actually two different modes of the dependent nature. That is, the dependent nature is the causal flow of consciousness itself: it is the sequence of one moment of consciousness produced by its own previous moment and going on to produce its own subsequent moment. This ongoing stream of consciousness can appear in two different modes. For ordinary persons, it appears with a dizzying variety of sensory and mental objects, and each mental moment except for the deepest sleep is replete with such an object. Asaṅga's and Vasubandhu's analysis of mental and sensory objects, however, demonstrates that none of these objects is ultimately real. Nevertheless—and this is the key ontological claim—the conclusion that the objects are ultimately unreal does not adequately account for the fact that those objects are appearing. Instead, one must see that denying the ultimate, independent reality of those objects is the same as affirming their conventional, dependent existence within the mind itself. To put it another way, when one sees the color blue, the apparent existence of the blue object as an external, independent object is false. But the fact that it is appearing to consciousness is undeniable, and since the Yogācāra analysis shows that it could not be external and independent of the mind, it must be within the mind itself. Seeing that flow of mind in that way—namely, as devoid of the apparent subject-object duality—is to see the perfect nature. Thus all objects and all subjects are not distinct, but this is not to deny their reality altogether. Rather, the denial of subject-object duality still leaves intact the causal flow of mind in which all those apparently dualistic experiences are occurring.

This critique of subject-object duality leads to a redefinition of emptiness. The "dependent nature" is a way of referring to the causal flow of mind that is "dependent" since each moment of consciousness is contingent upon its own previous moment, which acts as its cause. The "constructed nature" refers to the objects that appear in the mind such that they seem distinct from the subjectivity that apprehends them. It is "constructed" in that this dualistic distinction between subject and object is not innate; instead, it is created by ignorance. In this system, "emptiness" describes the causal flow of mind in terms of its ultimate mode, the perfect nature. That is, ultimately the causal flow of consciousness (the dependent nature) is *empty* or devoid of the seeming subject-object duality (the constructed nature) that appears in the ordinary experience that is the constructed nature. Thus, to see "emptiness" or the perfect nature is to see the causal flow of mind as it truly is, namely, utterly devoid of the subject-object duality that is the constructed nature.

A metaphor used in Yogācāra texts is helpful here. Suppose that a magician casts a spell on some stones such that his audience now sees them as elephants. The stones themselves represent the causal flow of mind. Those stones appear to the tricked audience as elephants, and this represents the constructed nature, namely, the fact that the mind itself (the stones) is appearing as something other than the mind (i.e., as elephants). The realization of the perfect nature is embodied by the magician who knows indubitably that he is actually seeing stones, which are empty of being elephants.

By redefining emptiness in this way, Asaṅga and Vasubandhu respond to a problem in Nāgārjuna's thought, namely, that he left no clear account of the conventional beyond a vague appeal to interdependence. Although they do not directly quote Nāgārjuna, Asaṅga and Vasubandhu seem disturbed by this vagueness, especially in terms of their concern for a "basis for affliction and purification" (*saṃkleśavyavadānāśraya*), that is, an ontological foundation for the fact that one can be afflicted by ignorance or liberated into *nirvāṇa*. For them, that basis is consciousness itself.

Turning to the issue of conventional reality, Asaṅga and Vasubandhu's theory of the three natures also enables them to give a more elaborate account than Nāgārjuna's. The conventional for these thinkers consists of the seemingly dualistic experiences that are the constructed nature. These would include all ordinary perceptions, as when one sees colors such as red and yellow. Such perceptions are driven by ignorance, in that the red and yellow colors seem distinct from the subjectivity that perceives them. These perceptions are not caused by material objects, since matter does not in fact exist. What, then, could cause such perceptions?

The answer is "foundational consciousness" or *ālaya-vijñāna*. Also translated as "storehouse consciousness," this form of awareness is entirely unconscious, but within it lie all the "seeds" (*bīja*) of experience, such as the perceptions of a red apple or of yellow corn. When one sees the red apple or the yellow corn, it is not that one's perception is caused

by some material object. Instead, various circumstances have come together to allow the seeds of those perceptions to ripen. One's world, in short, is just a projection of mind.

In arguing that the world is a projection of mind, however, Asaṅga and Vasubandhu are not proposing some kind of mental monism where everything is reducible to one universal mind. Their rejection of monism becomes evident when one asks: if the world is just a projection of one's mind, why is it that a perceptual object (such as an unpleasant smell) cannot become something else (the bouquet of a rose) merely by the intention of one's mind to make it so? Part of the answer is the conditioning of each individual's mind, whereby one's reality is incapable of such radical and immediate alterations. But part of the answer is also the influence of an infinite number of other minds. In other words, the "seeds" that ripen into experiences in one's own mind have been created not only by one's own previous experiences, but also by the experiences of all the minds of the beings around one. This notion of intersubjectivity, which in Yogācāra literature is tied to the workings of *karma*, enables the Yogācāra to surpass Nāgārjuna in their account of the conventional.

Later Yogācāra. From the standpoint of traditional doxography, all Mahāyāna thinkers after Nāgārjuna, Asaṅga, and Vasubandhu fall into one of two camps: Madhyamaka or Yogācāra. These two schools, however, are retroactively split into several subschools by doxographers in India and Tibet in an attempt to give some structure to the great variety of debates and disagreements that arise within both Madhyamaka and Yogācāra.

The divergent strands of Madhyamaka and Yogācāra arise largely in relation to a major development among a group of thinkers that, while not technically forming a "school," exhibit considerable coherence and continuity. This new philosophical approach was developed especially by the Yogācāra thinkers Dignāga (c. 450 CE) and Dharmakīrti (c. 625 CE), but Bhāvaviveka, a Madhyamaka thinker, also plays a major role. In terms of its overall concern, this new style of philosophy can be called "Buddhist epistemology," since its central aim is to give a detailed account of how one gains reliable knowledge, and how one justifies one's claims to knowledge. This epistemic focus arises in part due to interactions with non-Buddhist thinkers who, at Dignāga's time, were well ahead of their Buddhist counterparts in the study of such issues. One main topic was the analysis of oral arguments, and one way to trump an opponent in debate was simply to point out that his proofs were not well formed. Since formal debates within and between traditions may have been relatively common, Buddhist thinkers needed to come up with their own positions in this regard so as to defend their arguments against such a tactic.

The concern with justification of knowledge, however, also reflects the ongoing interest of Mahāyāna thinkers in providing an adequate account of conventional reality. For example, Buddhist epistemology texts discuss perception in detail, and they thus give Yogācāra thinkers the tools to ex-

plore a central question left unanswered by Asaṅga and Vasubandhu: namely, what is the status of one's mental content? This question may seem abstruse, but it is unavoidable in Yogācāra thought.

As noted above, on the theory of the three natures, to see things as they truly are is to see emptiness, and in this system this means seeing that the causal flow of mind is ultimately empty of subject-object duality. Hence, when seeing the color red, the color appears to be external to one's mind, and it seems that one is "inside" looking out at the world; but these are illusions created by ignorance. In fact, the color and the subjectivity perceiving it are both nothing but occurrences in the causal flow of mind itself. By developing a detailed account of perception, Buddhist epistemology uncovers an obvious question here that relates to seeing things as they truly are, that is, seeing things without the influence of ignorance. Specifically: when one sees the causal flow of mind as empty of subject-object duality, does one still see the color red, for example, but now in some nondualistic way? In other words, if a perception's duality is produced by ignorance, does this mean that even its sheer content is also contaminated by ignorance?

Employing the tools of Buddhist epistemology, some later Yogācāra thinkers such as Devendrabuddhī (c. 650 CE) answer this question by denying that ignorance contaminates all mental content. In other words, when one is seeing things as they truly are, one is indeed just seeing the mind itself empty of subject-object duality, but the perceptual content—such as a color or shape—can still appear in one's cognition; it is just that one experiences that content as identical to the mind. This position develops into the subschool known as "Proponents of True Content" (Satyākāravāda). One implication is that, for them, the perceptions of a buddha can include the type of content found in the mind of ordinary persons, with the exception that a buddha's perceptions will be free of subject-object duality.

Other Yogācāra thinkers, such as Śākyabuddhī (c. 675 CE), take the opposite tack. As "Proponents of False Content" (Alīkākaravāda), they maintain that not just the duality of the perception, but even the content itself is contaminated by ignorance. Hence, to be free of ignorance and see things as they truly are, one must experience the mind itself devoid not only of duality, but of any perceptual content at all. The implications for buddhahood are clear: since a buddha is utterly free of ignorance and always seeing the world as it truly is, a buddha cannot ever perceive the world that an ordinary person sees.

Later Madhyamaka and levels of analysis. As with Yogācāra, Buddhist epistemology also significantly impacts Madhyamaka thought. After Dignāga develops the early form of Buddhist epistemology, the Madhyamaka thinker Bhāvaviveka applies it to Nāgārjuna's arguments. In doing so, he critiques the commentator Buddhapālita (c. 500 CE) for failing to employ well-formed proofs or "independent inferences" (*svatantrānumāna*) that follow the rules of Bud-

dhist epistemology. Candrakīrti (c. 625 CE) later responds to Bhāvaviveka, and he does so by claiming that by insisting on well-formed arguments Bhāvaviveka is introducing a subtle form of essentialism into Nāgārjuna's critique of essence.

Candrakīrti's critique addresses a basic principle in Buddhist epistemology: in order for a proof to be well formed, the entity that is being analyzed must be perceptible to both participants in the debate. For example, to present a well-formed proof that a chair is not ultimately real, the chair itself must be perceptible to the person presenting the proof and to the person that is the target of the proof. Hence, when Bhāvaviveka refutes essentialist positions by using well-formed proofs, he must maintain that both he and his essentialist opponent can perceive the entity that they are discussing. On Candrakīrti's view, however, a Madhyamaka thinker should not use this procedure because it would require him to agree that the entity has some form of independent existence, and such an admission is anathema to a Madhyamaka.

Although it is not usually expressed in this way, the upshot of Candrakīrti's criticism is that a Madhyamaka thinker cannot fully inhabit the same perceptual world as the essentialist that he is critiquing. To do so would require that both the Madhyamaka and the opponent see the same thing, and this would require that the thing in question be somehow independent of the minds that are perceiving it. Being independent in that fashion, the thing would be essentially real, albeit in a subtle way. Candrakīrti therefore maintains that the only proper method for a Madhyamaka is to point out the "unacceptable consequences" (*prasaṅga*) that follow from the opponent's position, rather than attempting to present arguments based upon what both the Madhyamaka and his opponent can perceive.

Tibetan doxographers coin terms to categorize these two streams of Madhyamaka thought. Those who follow Bhāvaviveka in his use of Buddhist epistemology are called *Svātantrika*, that is, those who use well-formed inferences in their arguments. And thinkers who follow Candrakīrti are known to the Tibetans as *Prāsaṅgika*, namely, those who argue by pointing out unacceptable consequences.

For most Tibetan doxographers, Candrakīrti's Prāsaṅgika subschool is the highest form of Madhyamaka, but historically Bhāvaviveka's use of Buddhist epistemology became the norm for Indian Madhyamaka thinkers. Part of the reason for the enthusiastic adoption of Buddhist epistemology by later Madhyamakas may well have been their interest in a strategy first employed systematically by the Buddhist epistemologist Dharmakīrti. Dharmakīrti develops Buddhist epistemology in such a way that he can readily argue from multiple philosophical perspectives; indeed, large portions of his texts can be accepted equally well by Vaibhāṣika, Sautrāntika, and Yogācāra thinkers. Dharmakīrti is thus able to establish a common ground for debate and then introduce a wrinkle into his argument that suddenly points to a uniquely Yogācāra concept as if it were

the natural conclusion to an analysis that even Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas accept. This technique, which clearly rests on the notion of "skill in means" discussed above, creates levels of analysis within Dharmakīrti's work, and it enables him to address multiple audiences with great ease. Later Madhyamaka thinkers, most prominently Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla (both c. 750 CE) employ this method in nearly all their works, with the exception that their highest level of analysis is not Yogācāra, but rather Madhyamaka. Their use of levels of analysis also enables later Indian Madhyamakas to speak with greater precision and coherence about the relations among various schools of Buddhist thought, and it inspires the Tibetan doxographical enterprise that has encouraged the study of Mahāyāna thought in terms of schools.

SEE ALSO Abhinavagupta; Ālaya-vijñāna; Asaṅga; Buddhist Books and Texts; Buddhist Philosophy; Dharmakīrti; Dignāga; Mādhyamika; Mahasamghika; Nāgārjuna; Sakya Pandita (Sa skya Pandita); Śūnyam and Śūnyatā; Vasubandhu.

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BUDDHISM, SCHOOLS OF: TANTRIC RITUAL SCHOOLS OF BUDDHISM [FIRST EDITION]

[This entry was originally titled "Buddhism, Schools of: Esoteric Buddhism" in the first edition of the Encyclopedia.]

Buddhist esotericism is an Indian movement obscure in its beginnings. Combining yoga and ritual, it calls itself the Diamond Vehicle (Vajrayāna)—where *diamond* means "the unsplittable"—or the Mantra Vehicle (Mantrayāna)—where *mantra* means "magical speech." The revealed texts of the tradition are called *tantra*, in contrast to *sūtra* (the generic name of the non-Tantric Buddhist scriptures), but both these words have the implication "thread" or "continuous line." In the case of the Tantras, the "continuous line" can be understood in various ways: the lineage of master-disciple, the continuity of vows and pledges in the practitioner's stream of consciousness, or the continuity of practice leading to a religious goal.

Much of Tantric literature is ritualistic in nature, manifesting Brahmanic influence by the use of incantations (*mantra*) and the burnt offering (*homa*), both of which were employed for magical purposes as far back as Vedic times. Similarly, the notion of the "five winds" found in certain of the Tantras dates back to some of the Upaniṣads. Many of the hand gestures and foot stances of Buddhist Tantric practice are also found in Indian dance. However, as specifically Buddhist Tantras, such texts are colored both by Buddhist theories and practices and by the typical terminology of Mahāyāna Buddhism. These texts regularly employ such ancient Buddhist formulations as the triad body, speech, and mind, and draw upon such common Mahāyāna notions as the pair "means" (*upāya*) and "insight" (*prajñā*). The Tantras accept the old Buddhist ontology of three worlds filled with deities and demons, and contribute the premise that one can relate to these forces by ritualistic manipulation of one's nature (body, speech, and mind), thereby attaining "success" (*siddhi*) in such mundane forms as appeasing the deities, or the supermundane success of winning complete enlightenment (Buddhahood), possibly in a single lifetime. The old Buddhist terminology "son or daughter of the family," here the Buddhist family, was extended to refer to Buddha families. Initially, the texts propose a triad of three Buddhas or Tathāgatas: Vairocana, Amitābha, and Akṣobhya. Later, Ratnasambhava and Amoghasiddhi are added to make up a family of five, and Vajrasattva to make a family of six. A supreme Buddha, referred to variously as Mahā-Vajradhara, Heruka, or Ādibuddha ("Primordial Buddha"), is also mentioned. But the texts do not use the term "Dhyāni Buddhas" that is sometimes found in Western books on the subject.

INFLUENCE IN TIME AND PLACE. Buddhist Tantrism appears to have originated in eastern India and to have been transmitted orally in private circles from around the third century CE. When we speak of the period of the origination of the tradition, however, we refer only to that era in which Buddhist Tantras arose in syncretism with an already extant lore non-Buddhist in character, and not to some hypothetical ori-

gin of Tantrism per se. The first textual evidence of this current is found in chapters bearing the title *dhāraṇī* (a kind of *mantra*) within certain Mahāyāna scriptures. The ninth chapter of the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* (fourth century CE), for example, is devoted to magical formulas of supposedly meaningless sounds, which, when recited for one hundred and eight times, are claimed to ward off demons. The earliest Tantras are those that still give a leading role to Śākyamuni, the historical founder of Buddhism, perhaps placing him at the center of a *maṇḍala*. By comparing the names of the five Buddhas in the *Durgatipariśodhana Tantra* (i.e., Vairocana, Durgatipariśodhana, Ratnaketu, Śākyamuni, and Saṃkusumita) with those of the five Buddhas of the Mahākaraṇāgarbha Maṇḍala, which is derived from the *Vairocanābhīṣambodhi Tantra* (i.e., Mahāvairocana, Dundubhinirghoṣa, Ratnaketu, Amitāyus, and Saṃkusumitarāja) and with the five of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, derived from the *Tattvasaṃgraha Tantra* (i.e., Mahāvairocana, Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, and Amoghasiddhi), we can observe that the name Śākyamuni is still employed in the earliest Tantras but is later replaced by the name Amitāyus, and finally by Amitābha, resulting in the standard set of Buddha names of later times.

Between the third and the eighth centuries, these cults, with their "revealed" scriptures, were transmitted secretly from master to disciple, but by the eighth and ninth centuries a remarkable change had occurred in the fortunes of Buddhist Tantrism. Evidence of the growing influence of the movement may be seen in the fact that a king called Great Indrabhūti of Uḍḍiyāna is said to have been initiated into the Tantric mysteries at about this time. Other important evidence of the growth of the tradition is found in the texts of the period. Whereas the revealed Tantric works of earlier centuries were written in strict anonymity and attributed to divine authorship, now historical figures begin to attach their names to commentarial literature. Buddhaguhya (second half of the eighth century) wrote learned commentaries on the three Tantras mentioned above. A host of commentaries also arose on the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* and the *Śrī-Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* cycles by such celebrated writers as Saraha and the Tantric Nāgārjuna (author of the *Pañcakrama*). While some Tantric works had been translated in Chinese earlier, it was not until the eighth century that Tantrism would take hold in China, owing largely to the efforts of the monk Vajrabodhi and his disciple Amoghavajra. Their kind of Tantrism was transmitted to the talented Japanese monk Kūkai (posthumously called Kōbō Daishi, 774–835), who introduced to Japan an elaborate cult based on the "two Tantras," the *Vairocanābhīṣambodhi* and the *Tattvasaṃgraha*. This cult, a fusion of art, mysterious rituals, colorful costumes, religious music, and handsome calligraphy, would have a great cultural impact on Japan.

In this period certain Tantras were also translated into Tibetan. Tibet eagerly embraced these cults, and in time would produce native works on the most popular Tantras.

While a vast number of Tantric texts was translated into Tibetan, a lesser amount was preserved in Chinese translation. Chinese Buddhism generally disliked the Tantras, partly for their intricate ritualism, but more for the sexual symbolism, offensive to the Chinese mind, found in Tantras such as the *Guhyasamāja*. In Java, construction of the Borobudur monument, begun in the eighth century, shows Tantric influence in its use of *maṇḍalas* at its central stupa. It is also known that Atiśa, who arrived in Tibet in 1042 and became a towering figure in Tibetan Buddhism, had earlier studied for twelve years in the celebrated Tantric college of Śrīvijaya (now part of Indonesia). Thus it is clear that after the eighth century, Buddhist Tantrism was strongly entrenched in eastern India from Bengal north, had advanced to Nepal and Tibet, flourished for a time in China, became highly influential in Japan, and would establish a great school in the “Golden Isles” (Indonesia).

Tibet became an extraordinary center for Tantrism as well as the major storehouse of Tantric literature. The Indian *guru* Nā ro pa (956–1040?) was an important link in this development. It was Nā ro pa who transmitted Buddhist esotericism to the translator Mar pa, who in turn taught it to the poet Mi la ras pa. Thereafter, from this lineage arose the Bka’ brgyud pa school, continuing the Great Seal (*mahāmudrā*) teachings and the six yoga doctrines that had been taught by Nā ro pa. In modern times, the Tibetan tragedy has resulted in a number of Tibetan monk refugees transplanting their Tantric lineages to Europe and the United States.

BUDDHIST TANTRIC LITERATURE. The Tibetan canon classifies the Tantras into four groups, the Kriyā Tantras, the Caryā Tantras, the Yoga Tantras, and the Anuttarayoga Tantras. The translations of the revealed Tantras were included under the four headings in a section of the canon called the Bka’ ’gyur (Kanjur); the commentaries are grouped in a section of exegetical works called the Bstan-’gyur (Tanjur). The Sino-Japanese canon does not so group them. In the Tibetan canon, the two chief works of the Japanese Tantric school (Shingonshū), the *Vairocanābhishambodhi* and the *Tattvasaṃgraha*, are the principal works of the Caryā and Yoga Tantras, respectively. The *Hevajra Tantra* and the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*, works well known to Western scholars, belong to the Anuttarayoga Tantra class, and are respectively a “Mother” and a “Father” Tantra of this class. The status of the popular *Kālacakra Tantra*, definitely an Anuttarayoga class text, has been disputed. There is also a host of small works called *sādhana*, which set forth methods of evoking a given deity. The *Sādhanamālā* is a well-known collection of such works. Since in the Tantric tradition deities are arrayed in designs called *maṇḍalas*, there are also treatises devoted to *maṇḍalas* and their associated rituals. The *Niṣpannayogāvalī* is a work on twenty-six of these *maṇḍalas*. During the last period of Buddhism in India the popularity of Tantrism gave rise to a group of Tantric heroes called *mahāsiddhas* (“great adepts”), and tales were compiled concerning their superhuman exploits. Their Tantric songs are collected in a work

called the *Caryāgiti*. Other well-known Tantras include the *Mañjuśrī-mūla-kalpa* (a Kriyā Tantra), the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana* (a Yoga Tantra), and the *Mañjuśrī-nāmasaṃgiti*, which was commented upon both as a Yoga Tantra and as an Anuttarayoga Tantra.

The editor of the Tibetan canon, Bu ston (1290–1364), arranged the Tantras in their respective four classes according to a theory that in order for a Tantra to be a Buddhist one, it should be in some Buddhist family, headed by one of the Buddhas. In the case of the Anuttarayoga Tantras, the Mother Tantras were classified under one or another of seven Buddhas, in order: “Teacher” (Tib., *ston pa*, probably referring to Vajrasattva), Heruka (i.e., Akṣobhya), *Vairocana*, Vajraprabha (i.e., Ratnasambhava), Padmanarteśvara (i.e., Amitābha), Paramāśva (i.e., Amoghāsiddhi), and Vajradhara. The *Śrī-Cakrasaṃvara* and the *Hevajra* were included under Heruka. The Father Tantras were classified under six Buddhas, identical to those used to classify the Mother Tantras except that the first, “Teacher,” is omitted. The *Guhyasamāja Tantra* was classified under Akṣobhya and the *Yamāri* (or *Yamāntaka*) *Tantra* under Vairocana. The *Mañjuśrī-nāmasaṃgiti Tantra* and the *Kālacakra Tantra* were not included in this classification, presumably because they were classed under Ādibuddha, “Primordial Buddha.”

In the case of the Yoga Tantras, the basic scripture, called *Tattvasaṃgraha*, is itself divided into four sections corresponding to four Buddha families. Explanatory Tantras of the Yoga Tantra class could thus be classed in one of those four sections or families, or could emphasize either “means” (*upāya*) or “insight” (*prajñā*). For example, the *Paramādya* is classed chiefly as an “insight” scripture.

The Caryā Tantras were classified under three Buddha families, the Tathāgata family (under Vairocana), the Padma family (under Amitābha), and the Vajra family (under Akṣobhya). The *Vairocanābhishambodhi* is classed under the Tathāgata family; the *Vajrapāṇyabhiṣeka* is classed under the Vajra family; but the Padma family has no corresponding text among the Caryā Tantras.

The arrangement of the Kriyā Tantras is rather complicated. Using the same three families that govern the Caryā Tantras, the Kriyā Tantras make further subdivisions for the Lord of the Family, the Master, the Mother, Wrathful Deities, Messengers, and Obedient Ones. In addition, the Tathāgata family is subdivided into Uṣṇīṣa, *Bodhisattvas*, and Gods of the Pure Abode. For example, the *Suvarṇaprabhāsottama*, which was also quite popular as a Mahāyāna sūtra, is included under the Mother of the Tantras family. The Kriyā Tantras also include a category “Worldly Families” as well as “General” Kriyā Tantras, a category that includes the *Subāhupariprcchā*.

Naturally, there was always a considerable degree of arbitrariness in such categorizations; in fact, certain Tantras had a disputed status. The traditions carried to Tibet also classified the four divisions of Tantras according to their re-

spective deities and according to the preferences of the human performers. When classed in terms of deities, the division reflects degrees of courtship: laughing for the Kriyā Tantras, mutual gazing for the Caryā Tantras, holding hands for the Yoga Tantras, and the pair united for the Anuttarayoga Tantras. When arranged according to human performers, the respective preference for outer ritual or inner *samādhi* is the determining factor. Kriyā Tantras appeal to those with a preference for ritual over *samādhi*. In the Caryā Tantras, ritual and *samādhi* are balanced; in the Yoga Tantras *samādhi* prevails over ritual; and in the Anuttarayoga Tantras *samādhi* alone is the requisite practice. An unorthodox explanation of these four classes is found in Smṛti's commentary on the *Vajravīdāraṇā-nāma-dhāraṇī* (Kriyā Tantra, Master of the Family class). This author claims the four classes correspond to four kinds of Buddhist followers and the way in which they "cleansing with voidness." For the *śrāvakas* (i.e., Hinayāna monks) external cleansing purifies the body. For the *pratyekabuddhas* (*ṛṣi*s, "seers") inner cleansing purifies speech. For the Yogācāras (the Mind Only school) secret cleansing purifies the mind, and for the Mādhyamikas "reality cleansing" with a diamondlike *samādhi* unifies body, speech, and mind.

THE LANGUAGE OF BUDDHIST ESOTERICISM. Opponents of the Tantras have based their condemnations on what they read in such works. Since works of the Anuttarayoga Tantra class, the *Hevajra* and *Guhyasamāja Tantras* in particular, are still preserved in the original Sanskrit, modern scholars have consulted these for their conclusions about Tantrism and are usually unable to consult the Tibetan or Sino-Japanese versions of a wide range of Tantras. Some scholars accordingly have referred to Buddhist Tantrism by names such as the Vāmācāra ("left-handed path") or the Sahajayāna ("together-born path"), but the Tantras themselves do not use such terms, and in fact such designations fail to throw light on their contents. It should be recognized that the followers of the Tantric cults, including many Tibetan monks, would *never* presume to interpret a Tantra from the language of the revealed text alone. These invariably require the assistance of a commentary, perhaps one written by their *guru*. On such grounds a number of Tantras translated into Tibetan have traditionally been considered "off-limits" precisely because they were not transmitted with their "lineage," the authoritative explanation, or with "permission" (*anujñā*) to evoke the deity of the Tantra. Commenting on the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*, the Tantric Līlavajra observes that the literal interpretation of Tantric texts is the basis for misunderstanding them and practically admits that some of his contemporaries not only misunderstand the texts but also appeal to them in order to justify their own corrupt practices. In the same way, modern authors who are outsiders to the cult assume that the literal meaning is the only meaning, and thus wrongly explain fragments of Tantras available to them.

A commentary on the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* by the Tantric Candrakīrti sets forth four kinds of explanation of the sense of a given passage (cf. Wayman, 1977, pp. 116–117):

(1) the invariant sense (*akṣarārtha*), or literal meaning; (2) the shared sense (*samastāṅgārtha*), or sense of the text that is shared either with non-Tantric traditions or with Tantras of the three lower classes; (3) the pregnant sense (*garbhārtha*), by which is meant a meaning that either clarifies the doctrine of lust (*rāgadharma*), reveals conventional truth (*samvṛtisatya*), or considers the three gnoses (*jñānatraya*; i.e., Light, Spread of Light, Culmination of Light); and (4) the ultimate sense (*kolikārtha*), or the one that clarifies the Clear Light (*prabhāsvara*) or reveals the paired union (*yuganaddha*).

Equally important, the Tantras frequently use language that is deliberately obscure. In the Anuttarayoga Tantras this kind of arcane language is called *sandhyābhāṣā*, frequently rendered "twilight language" or "intentional language." In this highly metaphoric idiom the term "Diamond Body" (*vajrakāya*) is used to refer to menstrual blood, "Diamond Speech" (*vajravāk*) to refer to semen, and "Diamond Mind" (*vajracitta*) to refer to scented water. Clearly, Tantric language does not conform to our expectations of ordinary expository writing, where the clearer text is considered "better." In no other Buddhist tradition do the texts strive deliberately to conceal their meaning. But the Tantras have a synthetic character that combines such standard, and non-esoteric, practices as the contemplation of voidness (*śūnyatā*) with special secret practices all their own. The most basic meaning of "secret" in the Tantric tradition is that its theories and practices should be kept secret from those who are not fellow initiates, that is, from those who have not obtained initiation (*abhiṣeka*) or taken vows (*samvara*) and pledges (*samaya*). When these works explain the term "secret" (usually *guhya* in Sanskrit), they apply it to certain things that owe their secrecy to being inward or hidden, like the secret of female sexuality. A list of secret topics in this literature would comprise states of yoga, the circle of deities, and other experiences that are not accessible to ordinary consciousness and cannot be appreciated by the thoroughly mundane mind. Accordingly, it was never maintained that a person with initiation into a Tantric cult had thereby experienced such esoteric matters. Rather, it continues to be held that someone who had gone through such a ritual establishes a bond with a *guru* who will supply the lore of the particular Tantra and guide the disciple in its practice. Tantric language shares with many other Indian works a difficulty of interpretation. The compact style of Indian philosophical treatises, for example, is the cause for much dispute over their meaning. The Tantras compound this difficulty by the very nature of their contents, making interpretation of the texts all the more difficult.

TANTRIC PRACTICE AND ANALOGICAL THINKING. Tantric practice aims at relating man to supramundane forces or deities. In so doing, it makes use of two widely disparate systems of analogy. One procedure associates man and the divine by means of rules applicable to all practitioners. The other procedure assigns persons to one or another Buddha family according to the dominant personality traits of the individual practitioner. In terms of the four divisions of the Tantras,

the first two, the Kriyā and Caryā, make use of the first system. The latter two, the Yoga and Anuttarayoga, generally employ the second. Each approach has its supporters who claim that it provides a way to become a *sambuddha* (“complete Buddha”).

A preeminent Tantra of the first kind is the *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi*. This Tantra stresses the basic triad Body, Speech, and Mind—the “three mysteries” of the Buddha—and the prescribed practices by which certain attainments may be generated. Here, the human performer affiliates with the Body by means of hand gestures (*mudrā*); with the Speech by means of incantations (*mantra*); and with the Mind by means of deep concentration (*samādhi*), especially on the *maṇḍala*. In this Tantra, the transcendental Buddha is Mahāvairocana, and the human Buddha is Śākyamuni. This correspondence agrees with the division of the bodies of the Buddha into *dharmakāya* and *rūpakāya* that is found in early Mahāyāna Buddhism. In the same light, Kūkai, the founder of the Japanese Shingon school, explicitly identifies Mahāvairocana with the *dharmakāya*. It is noteworthy that the practice in the Caryā Tantra, in fact the practice based on the *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi*, has a twofold basis: “yoga with images” and “yoga without images.” In the former, one contemplates the inseparability of “self reality” (*ātmatattva*) from “deity reality” (*devatātattva*), and in sequence the performer meditatively generates himself into Vairocana with one face and two hands, making the *samāpatti mudrā* (“seal of equipoise”). The process is called the “subjective ground.” The performer then contemplates the Buddha Vairocana, like himself, in front of himself. This step is termed the “objective ground.”

In the “yoga without images” the mind is understood to have two sides, one mundane-directed (the *manas* face), the other supramundane-directed (the *buddhi* face). Upon reaching the limit of “yoga with images” one perceives as though before the eyes a configuration of the body of the deity on the mundane-directed side of the mind. The practitioner then follows this with a contemplation in which the deity body appears as a bright illusion on the supramundane-directed side of the mind. Through this process one achieves the same result as do practitioners of the early Buddhist meditations on “calming the mind” (*śamatha*) and “discerning the real” (*vipaśyanā*). This approach is directed to an ultimate goal indicated by the term “arising of the Tathāgata,” and chapters bearing this title are found both in the *Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi* and in the Mahāyāna scripture collection called the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*. The multiple Buddhas in this tradition of Tantric analogies are on the mental level; they may also be understood to refer indiscriminately to “all Buddhas” rather than to particular Buddha families.

The fasting cult of Avalokiteśvara, which uses the *mantra* “Om mani padme hūṃ,” employs a similar system of analogies. The famous six-syllabled formula is correlated with six Buddhas, six colors, and six realms of sentient beings. It is also recited during six times of the day and the

night. The individual performer must pass ritually through the six syllables. The situation is comparable to the youth Sudhana’s tenure of study under many different teachers in sequence, as portrayed in the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra* (part of the *Avataṃsaka*).

The second analogical system is formulated in the Yoga Tantra *Tattvasaṃgraha*. It consists of four sections. Persons of different predominant vices in their stream of consciousness are affiliated respectively with these sections, each presided over by a Buddha. The commentator Buddhaguhya explains that the fourth of these sections results from a merger of the Ratna family (as agent) and the Karman family (as the fulfilling action), but for convenience, the *Tattvasaṃgraha* usually mentions only Ratnasambhava as the presiding Buddha here. The correlation of persons with particular Buddha families indicates which of the predominant mind-based vices is to be eliminated by the “purification path” of the particular Buddha family. Each of the four paths in turn requires four kinds of *mudrā* (“seal”), but each path emphasizes one of the four and subordinates the other three. The first path emphasizes the Great Seal (*mahāmudrā*); the second, the Symbolic or Linkage Seal (*samayamudrā*); the third, the Dharma Seal (*dharmamudrā*); and the fourth, the Action Seal (*karmamudrā*). The paths have been expanded by the addition of four corresponding *maṇḍalas*.

According to Mkhas grub rje’s *Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras* the practice of these purificatory paths commences with an effort by the practitioner to generate the Symbolic Being, the practitioner’s own symbolization of the deity with whom he has established a link or bond. One then draws in (usually through the crown of the head) the Knowledge Being (*jñānasattva*), the deity in the absolute sense, who is usually said to emanate “from the sky.” Mkhas grub rje explains: “The purpose of executing the seals of the Four Seals is to merge and unify the body, speech, mind, and acts of the Knowledge Being with the body, speech, mind, and acts of the Symbolic Being. There would be no foundation for merger if either were present by itself.”

The Japanese school of Tantra called Shingon is based on the Vairocana scripture (mainly its first chapter) and the *Tattvasaṃgraha* (mainly its first section, “The Diamond Realm”). Thus, this school ignores the real clash between these two scriptures. Shingon employs two *maṇḍala* realms, that of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala (Jpn., Kongōkai), an unchanging “diamond” knowledge realm derived from the *Tattvasaṃgraha*, and that of the Mahākaraṇāgarbha Maṇḍala (Jpn., Taizō-kai), the changing realm of becoming that makes possible the “arising of the Tathāgata.” This latter *maṇḍala* is derived from the Vairocana scripture. In the terminology of Tibetan Tantrism, this theory and practice of becoming a Buddha is classified as Caryā Tantra because the scripture from which the Mahākaraṇāgarbha Maṇḍala derives is so classified. This is so because there is no attempt here to relate performers to particular Buddha families according to dominant fault as is the case in the Yoga Tantras.

The Yoga Tantra *Tattvasaṃgraha* serves here to add a further dimension of knowledge in the form of commentarial additions and related practices, so as to preserve consistency between the two *maṇḍala* (Jpn., *mandara*) cycles.

The Anuttarayoga Tantras continue the procedure of the Yoga Tantras, and, in the Father Tantras, allot distinct character to the five Buddhas for the purpose of a fivefold correspondence with five different kinds of persons. The Mother Tantras of this class raise the correspondences to six. The Anuttarayoga Tantras also have a basic division into two stages, a stage of generation (*utpattikrama*) and a stage of completion or consummation (*sampānnakrama*). Indeed, the stage of generation overlaps the Yoga Tantra by way of what it calls the “three *samādhis*,” named “preliminary praxis,” “triumphant *maṇḍala*,” and “victory of the rite.” Tsong kha pa’s *Snags rim chen mo* (Great treatise on the mantra path) elucidates the stage of generation in terms of six consecutive members, each of which corresponds to one of the three *samādhis*. These three *samādhis* can be used as a classification in Yoga Tantra practice as well. In fact, when generalized, the three are the three parts of every Buddhist Tantric ritual: the preliminaries, the main part, and the concluding acts.

The second stage of the Anuttarayoga Tantra, the “stage of completion,” deals with more concrete matters like the centers in the body (*cakras*) and five mysterious winds (first mentioned centuries earlier in the *Chāndogya* and other Upaniṣads). This stage comprises a six-membered yoga (*ṣaḍaṅgayoga*), also classified in five steps (*pañcakrama*). The five steps are accomplished in members three through six, while the first and second members represent a link with the stage of generation.

The Anuttarayoga Tantras also contain passages on the “higher initiations,” the practice of which includes elements often referred to by modern writers as “sexo-yogic.” Briefly speaking, these have to do with worship of the female, and, perhaps, a rite of sexual union in which the male performer does not emit semen. Before attempting any explanation of this topic, it would be well to mention that historically there were lay as well as renunciant Tantrics, just as there were lay as well as renunciant *bodhisattvas* in the Mahāyāna tradition. Among the Tibetan sects that practice Tantrism, it is only the Dge lugs pa that observes the Vinaya code of monastic morality. This does not mean, however, that the Dge lugs pa practices a “cleaned-up” Tantrism with the objectionable passages expurgated from the texts. As we have noted before, it is not necessary to read the Tantras in the literal manner without benefit of commentaries, as some modern scholars are wont to do.

The four initiations (*abhiṣeka*) of the Anuttarayoga Tantras begin with the “initiations of the flask,” rites taken in common with the three lower classes of Tantras. To this is added a “secret initiation,” an “insight-knowledge initiation,” and an initiation known as the “fourth” (also called *akṣara*, denoting “syllable” or “the incessant”). The secret initiation involves a mysterious “red and white element,” an experience

of “bliss-void,” and the implication that the initiation takes place in the *cakras* of the body (those centers ranged along the spine but said to exist as well in a subtle body). Treatises such as that by Mkhas grub rje distinguish between a *karmamudrā* (the female partner) and a *jñānamudrā* (“seal of knowledge”). The insight-knowledge initiation involves a sequence of four joys (*ānanda*) associated with the downward progress of the “melted white element”: descending from the forehead to the neck there is joy; descending to the heart there is “super joy” (*paramānanda*); descending to the navel there is the “joy of exhaustion” (*viramānanda*); and upon reaching the sex center there is “together-born joy” (*sahajānanda*), on which occasion the element is not to be emitted. If we are to assume that the element in question is indeed semen, how was it able to descend from the forehead?

There is also an Anuttarayoga Tantra explanation of the “four seals,” but it differs from that found in the Yoga Tantras. In the Anuttarayoga Tantra, two separate sequences of *mudrā* are employed, one for the stage of generation, the other for the stage of completion. These are discussed in chapter 36 of the Mother Tantra *Śrī-Cakrasaṃvara* and in Tsong kha pa’s commentary to this text, the *Sbas don*. For the stage of generation the sequence is as follows:

1. *Karmamudrā*: one imagines the external *prajñā* woman in the form of an attractive goddess.
2. *Dharmamudrā*: sacred seed syllables such as *hūṃ* are imagined in that body.
3. *Samayamudrā*: the radiation from the seed syllables is drawn back together in the circle of the completed *maṇḍala*.
4. *Mahāmudrā*: one imagines oneself as having the body of the principal deity.

The version for the stage of completion reverses the position of the *samayamudrā* and the *mahāmudrā*.

Particularly worthy of note is the difference in the description of the *prajñā* woman in the stage of generation and in the stage of completion. In the former, the practitioner approaches the *prajñā* woman only through his imagination, that is, he imagines that she is a goddess with radiating germ syllables in her body. He imagines drawing back the radiation into his own body as a *maṇḍala*, and finally imagines himself as the chief deity. In the stage of completion this woman can confer concrete joy in the four degrees of courtship previously mentioned in correlation with the four classes of Tantras (laughing, mutual gazing, holding hands, the two united). But there is also another *prajñā* woman, the one of the central channel (among the three said to be in the position of the spine). When the texts speak of a *prajñā* consort, which one is intended? Nā ro pa has some important information about this in his commentary on the *Hevajra Tantra*. He cites a verse from the *Mañjuśrī-nāma-saṃgiti* (10.14) referring to the four *mudrās*, and gives their order in agreement with the stage of completion described above, substituting *jñānamudrā* for *dharmamudrā*. He then makes this revealing statement:

The *karmamudrā* [i.e., the external woman] is the causal one, being initial, from which there is the together-born [*sahaja*] non-transiting joy. While this is indeed a truth [*satya*], there are two truths [conventional and ultimate], and [the *prajñā* woman of the *karmamudrā*] is true in a conventional sense, like a reflection in a mirror, but is not true in the absolute sense. Thus, one of keen intelligence should not embrace the *karmamudrā*. One should cultivate the *jñānamudrā* by such means as purifying the personal aggregates [*skandhas*], elements [*dhātus*], and sense bases [*āyatana*s] into images of deities, as the ritual of the *maṇḍala* reveals. By working them with continual friction one ignites the fire of wisdom [*jñāna*]. What is to be attained is the Great Seal [*mahāmudrā*]. How is it attained? Through that fire when the ham syllable is burnt [as is stated in the final verse of chapter 1 of the *Hevajra Tantra*]. The Great Seal is like a dream, a hallucination, and the nature of mind. One should embrace this [the Great Seal] until one realizes directly the Symbolic Seal [*samayamudrā*], which is not a perishing thing. (*Vajrapada-sāra-saṃgraha-pañjikā*, Peking Tanjur, Jpn. photo ed., vol. 54, p. 248–255.)

Nā ro pa thus acknowledges that some male Tantrics (presumably laymen) resort to the concrete woman as both “initial” (mother) and “together” (wife) in this part of the stage of completion. But he goes on to insist that one of keen faculty, striving for the high goal, will skip this *mudrā* and go directly to the inner *prajñā* consort, the ignited “fire of wisdom” that brings on the Great Seal. Staying on this Great Seal, which introspects mental processes as a hallucination, one realizes directly the *samayamudrā*, the *mahāsukhakāya*, or “body of great bliss.”

The above remarks should lend a more benign interpretation to the Tantras than has been the case in the past, when judgments such as “ghastly” were often passed on this literature. The style, of course, is quite unlike that of the older Buddhist scriptures.

RITUAL IN THE TANTRAS. The *maṇḍala* rites of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* cycle may be seen in outline form in the following sequence:

1. Rites of the Site: clearing the site; seizing (contemplatively) the site; elimination of the obstructing demons
2. Preparatory Acts: pitching the (initial) lines (in the *maṇḍala*) with chalk; preparing the flask (i.e., placement of the flask by the *maṇḍala*); beseeching the gods; preparation of the disciple
3. The Main Rite, beginning with *maṇḍala* construction: placement of the five colored threads (representing the five Buddhas); putting in the colors (in the colored areas of the *maṇḍala*); invitation of the gods (to take residence in the *maṇḍala*)
4. Initiations of the Flask: drawing the disciple into the *maṇḍala*; diadem initiation; diamond initiation; mirror initiation (after initiation); name initiation; emblem initiation (=bell initiation)

5. Offerings: offerings to the gods; offerings to the *guru*
6. Permission and Drawing Together: conferral of permission on the disciple to invoke the deity; drawing together of the deities who are in the *maṇḍala*
7. Concluding Acts: release of the magic nail, that is, dismissal of the deities along with a burnt offering (*homa*)

In order to work, each of these rituals must be accompanied by an intense awareness, referred to as *samādhi*, that could also be termed *yoga*. By “working” is meant that at all times the performer maintains a connection with the divine, as is confirmed by the *mantra* “*Samayas tvam*” (“You are the symbol”).

These rituals are replete with details that would take much space to set forth properly. A few details can be given about one that is especially interesting, the disciple’s entrance into the *maṇḍala*. The first phase is divided into “entrance outside of the screen” and “entrance inside of the screen.” While outside the screen, the disciple ties on a red or yellow blindfold. This is not removed until later in the ceremony, when the initiate receives a superintending deity by throwing a flower into the *maṇḍala*, after which it will be proper to view the complete *maṇḍala*. The preceptor tells the disciple to imagine in his heart a *vajra*, thereon a sun, and on this a black *hūṃ* syllable. He is then to imagine in his throat a lotus, thereon a sun, and on this a red *āḥ* syllable; and in his head a wheel, thereon a moon, and on this a white *om* syllable. He should also imagine that rays from those syllables make his body full of light. The preceptor guides the disciple to the east gate of the *maṇḍala*. Now, in the phase inside the screen, the disciple recites *mantras*. He begins with the east gate, reciting to both the deity of the center and the deity of the east gate. The east gate deity is addressed in order to empower oneself; the south gate deity, to confer initiation on oneself; the west gate deity, to turn the wheel of the Dharma for oneself; and the north gate deity, to make the ritual acts effective. He also bows at each gate: for the east, he bows with all the limbs, the diamond palms (i.e., adamant and thus unassailable by demons) advanced; for the south, he bows with the forehead, the palms joined at the heart; for the west, he bows with the mouth, the diamond palms joined at the top of the head; for the north, he touches the earth with the head, the diamond palms having been lowered from the top of the head and placed at the heart. Then at the east gate, the preceptor sets forth the pledge(s), contacting the disciple by taking his hand, or else by touching the disciple on the head with the *vajra*, and saying, “Today you may enter the family of all the Tathāgatas,” in recognition of the fact that entrance into the *maṇḍala* makes one their progeny; and that having seen the *maṇḍala* means the deities are revealed to the initiate.

The disciple is not to disclose the rituals he has undergone to others who have not entered the *maṇḍala*. Dire consequences are threatened for violating the pledge; guarding it yields magical success. Among the pledges is one requiring

that the initiate avoid the fourteen transgressions, especially the first one, disparaging one's master, and the seventh one, revealing the secrets to immature persons (that is, persons who have not been initiated). Both are transgressions of Dharma. After taking the pledge, the officiant goes through an imaginative process, the aim of which is to have the gnosis deity (*jñāna-sattva*) descend from the sky into the disciple. It begins with the officiant imagining the disciple in voidness, then generating him into a Buddha from a germ syllable, and then going through a sequence of *sādhana*s (evocations) in which he imagines the disciple's body filled with light. The disciple is induced to circumambulate the *maṇḍala* carrying a *vajra* in his right hand and doing a dance. The second phase is entering, in the sense of viewing, the *maṇḍala*. Still wearing the blindfold, the disciple is directed to throw a flower onto an area with five pictures representing Buddha families. The throwing of the flower constitutes entrance into the *maṇḍala*. The deity on whom the flower then falls is the superintendent deity (*adhideva*) for the disciple. The preceptor imagines that the Diamond Being is opening the Diamond Eye of the disciple; the disciple performs the same act of imagination and removes the blindfold, reciting the *mantra* "Om jñānacakṣuḥ Hūṃ Āḥ Svāhā," where *jñānacakṣuḥ* denotes the eye of knowledge. Then the preceptor says, "Now, by virtue of faith, may you see the reality of this *maṇḍala*! May you be born in the family of the Buddha, be empowered by *mudrā* and *mantra*, be endowed with all *siddhis* (magical success), be the best pledge (*saṃaya*)! May you realize the *mantras* with the sport of the *vajra* and lotus!" Thus the disciple is given the "initiation of the flower wreath," a process that establishes whether the disciple should receive other initiations. When it is the case of conferring permission on the disciple to evoke a particular deity, a different procedure is followed. Such evocations are undertaken after examining dreams and other omens.

The burnt offering is among the concluding acts of the ritual. There are four kinds of burnt offering, each corresponding to a different type of magical art: the worldly aims of appeasing the deities (*śāntika*), winning material prosperity (*prauṣṭika*), subduing demons (*vaśīkaraṇa*), and overpowering enemies (*abhicāruka*).

Judging from these various indications, one may conclude that Buddhist esotericism has considerable appeal to Buddhists who find fulfillment in ritual participation, who prefer a secret life that is religiously motivated, and who believe that by exercising all avenues of one's being (body, speech, and mind) one is speeding up the progress to enlightenment. The performer must be strong in imagination of images and in belief, and resolute in daily service to the presiding or tutelary deity.

SEE ALSO Avalokiteśvara; Buddhism, article on Buddhism in Tibet; Buddhist Books and Texts; Language, article on Buddhist Views of Language; Mahāsiddhas; Maṇḍalas; Mantra; Mar pa; Mi la ras pa (Milarepa); Mudrā; Nā ro pa; Prajñā; Samādhi; Shingonshū; Upāya; Zhenyan.

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ALEX WAYMAN (1987)

BUDDHISM, SCHOOLS OF: TANTRIC RITUAL SCHOOLS OF BUDDHISM [FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS]

When Alex Wayman's article, entitled "Buddhism, Schools of: Esoteric Buddhism," appeared in the first edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religion* in 1987, the study of Tantric and esoteric forms of Buddhism was just beginning to emerge from the margins of Buddhist studies in general. Since that time, it has come to occupy (or at least to share) center stage in most special areas of Buddhist studies. Accordingly, a thorough overview of the study of Buddhist esotericism as it now stands is a desideratum, but one that could not be realized in time for the present publication. The following brief remarks, together with the additions to the bibliography, must in the event serve to offer the reader an orientation to the present state of the field.

Just what is Tantric Buddhism? Though several definitions have been proposed, none has so far won universal acceptance. Several of the characteristics most frequently mentioned—recitation of *mantra*-like formulae, the practice of protective ritual, visualization, the ritual invitation of a divinity performed in conformity to the traditional Indian welcome of an honored guest—all of these are to be found in non-esoteric forms of Buddhism to varying degrees. At the same time, some practices that do seem to be exclusively Tantric, at least in the Buddhist context—for instance, internal systems of yoga relying on the subtle physiology, "Tantric sex," and the ritual ingestion of forbidden meats and intoxicants—cannot serve as the basis for a definition because they are absent from many forms of Buddhist Tantrism. The most plausible definitional feature that has been adduced is perhaps the requirement of *abhiṣeka*, the initiatory consecration, literally "aspersion," that is derived from early Indian coronation rites. Though referred to also in the sūtra literature of the Mahāyāna in connection with the Buddha's consecration of the highest *bodhisattvas*, the actual performance of such a rite on behalf of ordinary human aspirants seems to be uniquely characteristic of the major Buddhist esoteric traditions.

As this suggests, much of what has been considered typically Tantric in Buddhism is part and parcel of the ritual repertoire of non-Tantric Buddhism, chiefly (but not at all exclusively) within the Mahāyāna. Accordingly, some have expressed skepticism regarding the appropriateness of the no-

tion of peculiarly Tantric Buddhist "schools." The clearest example of a particular Buddhist sect or order defining itself as esoteric, over and against rival orders, is no doubt the Japanese Shingon sect. Whether or not distinctly Tantric schools existed in India and China remains a contested question, while in Tibet, because all Buddhist orders transmitted both Tantric and non-Tantric forms of Buddhism, Tantrism per se hardly serves to define any particular school. Esotericism thus may be best regarded as a widely ramified current within the Mahāyāna, and just what counts as esoteric is in most respects relative to the particular religious milieu being considered. The study of esoteric forms of Buddhism has thus tended to renounce the effort to locate essential characteristics that apply to all such traditions and to focus instead on specific developments in particular places and times. At the same time, genetic connections among differing Buddhist esoteric traditions may be noted—the cult of the cosmic Buddha Vairocana throughout much of Buddhist Asia is a case in point—and the rigorous, comparative study of these has yet to be undertaken.

Despite the popular image of Tantrism as a libertine and iconoclastic form of religiosity, scholars of Buddhism in many Asian countries have remarked on the striking relationship between Tantric Buddhism and monarchy, with its attendant interest in hierarchies of power, protection of the realm, and public order. Far from providing a vehicle of expression for radical free spirits (though perhaps it has been sometimes that), Buddhist Tantrism seems more often to have served the interests of conservative forces within religious orders and society at large.

Finally, owing to the strongly erotic component associated with some forms of Buddhist Tantrism—primarily the *anuttarayoga* traditions of India and Tibet (though eroticized elements of Japanese esotericism have also been noted)—there has been considerable interest in this aspect of Buddhism in relation to issues of sex and gender. While some have found a sort of proto-feminism in the Buddhist Tantras, a means to acknowledge and liberate feminine energies and perhaps real women as well, others have regarded this element of Tantrism as primarily a projection of masculine archetypes of the feminine. Social historical and anthropological research, clarifying the roles and status of women in actual communities adhering to the various forms of esoteric Buddhism, will enable scholars to interpret more precisely the discourses pertaining to women in particular Tantric texts.

SEE ALSO Avalokiteśvara; Mahāsiddhas; Maṇḍalas, article on Buddhist Maṇḍalas; Mar pa; Mi la ras pa (Milarepa); Nā ro pa; Prajñā; Samādhi; Shingonshū; Upāya.

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BUDDHISM, SCHOOLS OF: TIBETAN AND MONGOLIAN BUDDHISM

In introducing the “schools” of Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhism, several different phenomena in the formation of religious traditions must be distinguished. One may speak, for instance, of distinct orders or sects (*chos lugs*, or more specifically *rang rkang btsugs pa'i chos brgyud*), religious traditions that are set apart from others by virtue of their institutional independence, that is to say, whose unique character is embodied outwardly in the form of an independent hierarchy and administration, independent properties, and an identifiable membership of some sort. Such corporate religious bodies are of great importance in the Tibetan religious world, but they must not be confounded with lineages (*brgyud pa*), continuous successions of spiritual teachers who have transmitted a given body of knowledge over a period of generations but who need not be affiliated with a common order. Lineages may be highly specific, for instance, the line of teachers through which the study of a particular text or ritual method has been transmitted, or they may be of broader reach, as is the case when one speaks of the “lineages of practice” (*sgrub brgyud*), which have conserved significant bodies of religious tradition, including textual learning, liturgy, practical disciplines, iconographical knowledge, and so on. In this latter sense, lineages have often been the basis for the formation of the distinct orders. Finally, orders and lineages must both be differentiated from schools of thought, *grub mtha'* (“philosophical systems,” equivalent to *siddhānta* in Sanskrit). The adherent of a given Tibetan Buddhist order will, in the course of his career, usually receive instruction in (or at least derived from) a number of differing lineages and be exposed to several schools of thought. It should be noted, however, that the terminology introduced here is not

used in Tibetan with perfect regularity. At least one major author, Thu'u bkwan Chos kyi nyi ma (1737–1802), adopts the expression *grub mtha'* to refer to the major orders and lineages of Tibetan Buddhism. Nevertheless, even in this case, the term is chosen precisely because Thu'u bkwan's primary interest is the doctrinal and philosophical orientation of each of the religious traditions he considers.

These apparent complexities of usage had their origins in the very beginnings of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition under the Tibetan Empire of the seventh to ninth centuries. At that time, there was only one Buddhist order active in Tibet, that of the Mūlasarvāstivāda (Tibetan, *gzhi thams cad yod par smra ba*), one of the eighteen orders of early Indian Buddhism, whose monastic code, or Vinaya, was uniquely adopted by the Tibetans. At the same time, Tibetan Buddhists became familiar with several Indian Buddhist schools of thought, though the Madhyamaka, and in particular the Yogācāra Madhyamaka of the philosopher Śāntarakṣita (fl. c. 775), appears to have quickly become predominant. In this period too, lineages of instruction in contemplative practice, including some representing Chinese Chan and others associated with Tantric esotericism, began to disseminate their teachings among Tibetans.

Institutional, lineage-based, and philosophical or doctrinal ways of thinking about religious adherence in Tibet were thus from the beginning complementary, and in time they began increasingly to intersect with or to diverge from one another. Hence, the exact classification of the schools of Tibetan Buddhism has posed something of a problem, not only for modern researchers but for traditional Tibetan authorities as well. Thus, for example, Thu'u bkwan (Thuken, 1737–1802) recognizes eighteen distinct Buddhist traditions in Tibet—in this he is no doubt numerologically influenced by the stereotypical division of early Indian Buddhism into eighteen orders—but nevertheless he considers only seven of these as meriting treatment in depth. By contrast, the renowned fifteenth-century historian 'Gos lo tsā ba Gzhon nu dpal (Gö Lotsawa) organizes his great work, the *Deb ther sngon po* (Blue annals) on the principle of lineage, of which he treats about a dozen as particularly important but discusses many others inter alia. The eclectic master of the nineteenth century, 'Jam mgon kong sprul Blo gros Mtha' yas (Jamgön Kongtrül, 1813–1899), arranges his encyclopedia of the major lines of teaching, the *Gdams ngag mdzod* (Treasury of instructions), according to the scheme of the “eight great lineages of practice,” following the enumeration proposed by 'Phreng po gter ston Shes rab 'od zer (Trhengo tertön, 1517–1584). Finally, in the system best known in the West, the Tibetan government of the Dalai Lamas from the seventeenth century through 1959 recognized four major orders, though in fact several others continued to be active, even if not granted the status of independent orders by the central Tibetan government.

THE EIGHT MAJOR “LINEAGES OF PRACTICE.” For present purposes, this article considers the major lineages and their

roles in the formation of the orders following the scheme of the “eight lineages of practice.” Mongolian Buddhist orders have generally been derived directly from their Tibetan antecedents. Accordingly, this article refers to Buddhism among the Mongols where appropriate, to indicate the lines of Tibetan Buddhist transmission to them that were most influential. One must note too that the Tibetan Bon religion, which in its institutional dimensions must be considered a Buddhist order, is generally left out of the classificatory schemes mentioned here, though some writers—Thu'u bkwan is perhaps the best-known example—have also considered it in this context. As Bon is treated in the present work in a separate article, it will not be discussed here.

The “Ancient Translation Tradition” (Snga 'gyur rnying ma pa) includes all of those lines of teaching that maintain that their esoteric and Tantric traditions were derived from the texts and instructions transmitted during the time of the Tibetan monarchs of the eighth to ninth centuries, Khri Srong lde'u btsan (Trhi Songdetsen, 742–c. 797) above all. By the late tenth century such lineages were continued primarily by a lay priesthood that increasingly came to be attacked by proponents of the “new *mantra* traditions” (*gsang sngags gsar ma*) for adhering to esoteric teachings that, so the critics declared, had been corrupted. The formation of a distinctive Rnying ma pa (Nyingmapa) tradition was in some respects a reaction to such charges and involved both the elaboration of historical apologetics and the codification of the older Tantric transmissions, their special doctrines, and the rites connected with them.

Historically, the Rnying ma pa asserted the preeminence of the Indian Tantric master Padmasambhava, who came to be effectively deified. Other Indian and Tibetan masters of the eighth to ninth centuries, notably Vimalamitra and the translator Vairocana, were also claimed as forebearers. The teaching of these figures was considered to emphasize the organization of the whole gamut of Buddhist doctrine and practice into nine sequential vehicles (*theg pa rim pa dgu*), of which the last three, comprising the esoteric instructions of the highest Tantras, represented the distinctive heritage of the Rnying ma pa. The pinnacle of the system was taken to be the abstract and visionary approach to contemplation known as the Great Perfection (rdzogs chen [dzogchen]), the authenticity of which was sometimes contested by adherents of the newer schools. From the twelfth century onward, the Rnying ma pa came to rely increasingly on a tradition of renewed revelation, mostly of Padmasambhava's teachings, referred to as “treasure doctrines” (*gter chos*). Though widely contested, these came to play a major role in the formation of Tibetan religious culture generally.

The Rnying ma pa have always had an important following among lay Tantric adepts (*sngags pa*), sometimes organized in village-based communities. Though identifiable Rnying ma pa monastic institutions existed during the twelfth century and perhaps earlier, the organization of the Rnying ma pa as a distinct monastic order seems largely to

have emerged during the seventeenth century and reflects in part the political reforms of Tibetan religious organization under the government of the fifth Dalai Lama (1617–1682). At the same time, important lines of Rnying ma pa teaching have been preserved among the non-Rnying ma pa orders, including, for instance, the rites of the Tantric deities Vajrakīla and Yang dag Heruka among the Sa skya pa (Sakya), the “exceptionally secret” form of the deity Hayagrīva (*Rta mgrin yang gsang*) among the Dge lugs pa (Gelukpa), and the traditions of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* and many other teachings derived from the treasure doctrines among the Bka’ brgyud pa (Kagyupa).

Despite its emphasis on the practice of Tantric esotericism and though it has relied during much of its history on familial lineages of lay priests, the Rnying ma pa traditions have sometimes given rise to masters of the monastic traditions of Buddhist scholarship who have formulated distinctive doctrinal syntheses inspired by the special features of the Rnying ma pa teaching. Among the foremost are the lay adept Bsnyub Sangs rgyas ye shes (Nup Sangye Yeshe, c. tenth century), Rong zom Chos kyi bzang po (Rongzom Chözang, eleventh century), Klong chen Rab ’byams pa (Longchen Rabjampa, 1308–1363), Lo chen Dharmasrī (1654–1717), ’Jigs med gling pa (Jikme Lingpa, 1730–1798), and Mi pham rgya mtsho (Mipham Gyatso, b1846–1912).

The “Tradition of [the Buddha’s] Transmitted Precepts and Instructions” (Bka’ gdams pa [Kadampa]) is traced to the activity of the Bengali master Atīśa (982–1054) and his leading Tibetan disciples, notably ’Brom ston Rgyal ba’i ’byung gnas (Dromtön, 1104–1163). As the first of the new orders formed beginning in the eleventh century, it had its immediate antecedents in the late-tenth-century Buddhist revival in the Gu ge kingdom of western Tibet, spearheaded by the monk-king of Gu ge, Ye shes ’od (Yeshe-ö), and the celebrated translator Rin chen bzang po (Rinchen Zangpo, 958–1055). By 1042, when Atīśa accepted the invitation of the former’s successor, Byang chub ’od (Changcup-ö), to proceed to Tibet from the Vikramaśīla monastery in northeastern India, the renewal of Buddhism had been an ongoing concern in Gu ge for almost a century. After three years in residence there, where he composed his famous treatise on the Mahāyāna path, the *Byang chub lam gyi sgron ma* (Lamp for the path of enlightenment), Atīśa traveled to central Tibet and remained there for the last decade of his life. The Bka’ gdams pa, as a distinctive order embodying his tradition of teaching, received institutional form after his lay disciple, ’Brom ston, founded the monastery of Rwa sgreng (Reting) in 1057.

The Bka’ gdams pa were distinguished by a marked concern for moral rigor in the pursuit of the *bodhisattva*’s path. In some branches of the tradition, this resulted in an extreme emphasis on spiritual cultivation to the exclusion of the pursuit of learning. At the same time, Atīśa’s own scholarly proclivities meant that some of his successors tended by contrast

to emphasize study, so that the Bka’ gdams pa were equally associated with the development of scholasticism at Gsang phu (Sangphu, founded 1071) and other monastic colleges. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Bka’ gdams pa monastery of Snar thang (Narthang) emerged as a prominent scholastic center, renowned in particular for its traditions of learning in the *abhidharma* and other fields of Buddhist philosophy.

Owing to Atīśa’s association with the Gu ge kings, who were suspicious of the moral excesses attributed to certain adherents of the Tantras, and owing to certain cautions expressed in Atīśa’s own writings, the Bka’ gdams pa are sometimes regarded as a non-Tantric lineage of Tibetan Buddhism. Atīśa himself, however, was a Tantric adept and, despite the concerns expressed by some among his more puritanical Tibetan disciples, he did teach aspects of Tantrism in Tibet. His role in the promotion of the cults of Avalokiteśvara and Tārā was particularly great, and he is widely associated as well with an important tradition of instruction in the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*. Nevertheless, the characteristic emphasis of his teaching was upon the exoteric Mahāyāna doctrine of “emptiness imbued with compassion” (*stong nyid snying rje’i snying po can*; Sanskrit, *śūnyatā karuṇāgarbhā*), his insistence on which came to be emulated by all Tibetan Buddhist traditions. His Bka’ gdams pa successors created a remarkable corpus of literature concerning spiritual exercise, called “training (or purification) of the mind” (*blo sbyong*), in which such common acts as eating and drinking, walking, going to sleep, and even breathing serve as focal points for the cultivation of spiritual love and a keen sense of the relativity of transient things.

The Bka’ gdams pa tradition was therefore diverse in its nature, embodying elements of Mahāyāna ethical teaching, Tantrism, and formal Buddhist scholasticism. Its legacy was very widespread, and all of the later Tibetan orders, including the post-eleventh-century Rnying ma pa, reflect this to a great degree. Nevertheless, it was the Dge lugs pa order, whose foundation was inspired by Rje Tsong kha pa during the fifteenth century, that most self-consciously took up the Bka’ gdams pa mantle, even adopting “new Bka’ gdams pa” as a proper designation.

The “Tradition of the Path with Its Fruit” (Lam ’bras bu dang bcas pa) was derived ultimately from the teachings of the Indian *mahāsiddha* Virūpa as introduced into Tibet by ’Brog mi Lo tsā ba Śākya Ye shes (Drokmi, 992–1072) on the basis of the instructions of the *paṇḍita* Gayadhara. This way of esoteric practice was based primarily upon the *Hevajra Tantra*, and though it enjoyed a very wide diffusion, giving rise to a great many lines of transmission, it became from early on a special concern of the Sa skya pa order, which, with its suborders, has remained the particular guardians of the “Path and Fruit.” In its fundamentals, the teaching of the Path and Fruit emphasizes as foundational an understanding of the “three visions” (*snang gsum*): the impure vision of ordinary beings immersed in *samsāra*, the vision of

spiritual experience that characterizes the *bodhisattva* progressing on the path, and the pure vision of enlightenment. On this basis, one may embark upon the actual practice of the *Hevajra Tantra*, conceived in terms of “three continua” (*rgyud gsum*): the continuum of the ground, the nature of mind as forming a basis for spiritual progress; the continuum of the methodical path of yoga; and the continuum of the result, that is, the attainment of the gnosis of buddhahood.

The founding figure of the Sa skya pa was 'Khon Dkon mchog rgyal po (Khön Könchog Gyalpo, 1034–1102), who abandoned his clan's hereditary Rnying ma pa affiliations to become a disciple of 'Broḡ mi and in 1073 established the temple of Go rum at Sa skya, henceforth the family seat of the 'Khon clan. His family line produced, during the generations that followed, a succession of masters, the “five forebearers” (*gong ma lnga*), of capital importance for the entire later history of Tibetan Buddhism. Sa chen Kun dga' snying po (Sachen Kunga Nyingpo, 1092–1158), Dkon mchog rgyal po's son, did much to impart a distinctive character to the early Sa skya tradition, that of an aristocratic household that patronized the Buddhist religion generally, valued the refinement of learning, and maintained a special proficiency in Tantric ritual and yoga. One of 'Broḡ mi's chief successors, Zhang ston Chos 'bar (Zhangdön Chöbar, 1053–1135) became Sa chen's tutor, nurturing his charge to be a preeminent exponent of the system of the “Path and Fruit.” Two of Sa chen's sons, Bsod nams rtse mo (Sönam Tsemo, 1142–1182) and Grags pa rgyal mtshan (Trakpa Gyaltzen, 1147–1216), while following their father in remaining laymen, exclusively dedicated themselves to the family's religious and ritual tradition. It is in the writings of Grags pa rgyal mtshan that the Path and Fruit was definitively codified. He also was tutor to his nephew, Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (Sakya Paṇḍita Kunga Gyaltzen, 1182–1251), a monk who came to be recognized as one of the leading scholars of his day. Besides his numerous contributions to many branches of Tibetan learning, it was under his leadership that the Sa skya pa emerged as a major monastic order. His famous journey in 1246 to meet the ruler of the Mongol Empire, Godan Khan, came to be seen as the precedent for the Mongols' adoption of Buddhism, and his nephew, Chos rgyal 'Phags pa (Chögyal Phakpa, 1235–1280), the last of the five forebearers, became the spiritual preceptor of the Mongol ruler of China, Kublai Khan.

As a monastic order, the Sa skya pa have continued to emphasize training in refined textual scholarship, balanced with the practice of the esotericism of the *Hevajra Tantra* as taught in the Path and Fruit tradition. Of their two leading suborders, the Ngor pa (Ngorpa), founded by Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po (Ngorchen Kunga Zangpo, 1382–1456), and Tshar pa (Tsarpa), the former has enjoyed an extensive following, particularly in far eastern Tibet. The Sa skya pa produced a long line of outstanding doctrinal writers, who may be counted among the leading contributors to the development of Tibetan Buddhist philosophy. Noteworthy are

Red mda' ba Gzhon nu blo gros (Remdawa, 1349–1412), Rong ston Shes bya kun gzigs (Rongtön, 1367–1449), Gser mdog Pañchen Śākya mchog ldan (Serdok Panchen, 1428–1507), and Go rams pa Bsod nams seng ge (Gorampa, 1429–1489). Far from representing a unitary school dogma, these figures show considerable diversity in their approaches to the interpretation of Buddhist philosophical perspectives.

The “Succession of the Transmitted Precepts of Mar pa” (Mar pa bka' brgyud), most often referred to as Bka' brgyud pa, had as its particular domain the teachings of the Indian masters Tilopa (c. 988–1069), Nāropa (1016–1100), and Maitrīpa (1007–1085) as transmitted to Mar pa Chos kyī blo gros (Marpa, 1002/1012–1097). His tradition stressed the six doctrines (*chos drug*) of yogic practice and the culminating meditations of the great seal (*phyag rgya chen po*; Sanskrit, *mahāmudrā*), whereby the limits of all phenomena of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are determined (hence, “sealed”) in the realization of the ultimate nature of mind. The six yogas are:

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 ordinary experience becomes known;
3. Dream (*rmi lam*), in which one achieves the ability to consciously explore and to transform the possibilities that are 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 enable one to attain enlightenment swiftly during this very lifetime, the last two to achieve it at death.

The proliferation of lineages adhering to the teachings of Mar pa was extensive, and the many lines of instruction that arose among his followers and their successors almost all created their own distinctive formulations of the Bka' brgyud teaching. As Mar pa and his major disciples were laymen, these were initially transmitted primarily within familial lineages. Of these, the line of the Rngog (Ngok) clan enjoyed a particular eminence for their mastery of the esoteric lore of the *maṇḍala*, while the Mes specialized in the exegetical traditions of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*.

Mar pa's foremost disciple was the yogin Mi la ras pa (Milarepa, 1028/1040–1111/1123), who came to be regarded as Tibet's greatest poet and as a cultural hero exemplifying the ideal of the Tantric adept. His many students, such as Ras chung pa Rdo rje grags (Rechungpa Dorje Drak, 1084–1161), mostly adhered to his model, but one, Sgam po pa

Bsod nams rin chen (Gampopa Sonam Rinchen, 1079–1153), was a former physician who had been ordained as a monk in the Bka' gdams pa order following his young wife's tragic passing. It was Sgam po pa who formed the Bka' brgyud pa into a monastic order, and by stressing the path of gradual ethical self-cultivation as taught by the Bka' gdams pa, he created a unique synthesis of that teaching with the properly Bka' brgyud pa systems of yoga. Known as the "blending of the two streams" (*chu bo gnyis 'dres*), this synthesis has remained the normative teaching of all of the Bka' brgyud pa suborders. These are usually referred to as the "four great Bka' brgyud orders" (*bka' brgyud che bzhi*) founded by Sgam po pa's immediate disciples, among whom the leading disciples of Phag mo gru pa Rdo rje rgyal po (Phakmotrupa, 1110–1170) founded eight "lesser" orders (*chung brgyad*). (The terms *great* and *lesser* refer solely to their relative proximity to Sgam po pa and imply neither a quantitative nor a qualitative judgment.) The first Karma pa hierarchy, Dus gsum mkhyen pa (Dusum Khyenpa, 1110–1193), is numbered among the four "greats," whereas 'Bri gung Skyob pa 'Jig rten gsum mgon (Drigung Kyopa, 1143–1217) was prominent among the founders of the eight "lesser" orders. Among the eight is also counted Gling rje ras pa Padma rdo rje (Lingje Repa, 1128–1188), whose disciple Gtsang pa Rgya ras (Tsangpa Gyare, 1161–1211) founded the 'Brug pa (Drukpa) Bka' brgyud pa order, which in turn gave rise to several major suborders of its own. (The 'Brug pa later established itself as the religion of the state in Bhutan, a position it retains in the early twenty-first century.)

Some branches of the Bka' brgyud pa began to "internationalize" with patronage from the Xixia (or Tangut) Kingdom during the twelfth to thirteenth centuries, resulting in their competing with the Sa skya pa for Mongol support after the fall of Xixia in 1227. The second and third Karma pa hierarchs, Karma Pakshi (1204–1283) and Rang byung rdo rje (Rangjung Dorje, 1284–1339), both charismatic teachers and prolific writers, were among those who received imperial honors in China, whereas the 'Bri gung pa branch of the Bka' brgyud pa allied itself with the Mongol dynasty of Iran. Following the decline of Mongol power in Tibet during the mid-fourteenth century, given the loss of patronage this entailed for the Sa skya pa, it was the Phag mo gru pa Bka' brgyud pa order that came to dominate Tibetan affairs. The formal institution of Bka' brgyud pa colleges, emphasizing Buddhist scholastic study, dates from this time. For the next two centuries, Bka' brgyud pa masters made considerable contributions to the ongoing development of Tibetan philosophy, literature, and art. Examples include the seventh and eighth Karma pa hierarchs, Chos grags rgya mtsho (Chodrak Gyatso, 1450/1454–1506) and Mi bskyod rdo rje (Mikyo Dorje, 1507–1554), and theorists of the Tantras, Dwags po Bkra shis rnam rgyal (Dakpo Tashi Namgyal, 1512–1587) and the fourth 'Brug chen hierarchy, Padma dkar po (Pema-karpo, 1527–1592). Later luminaries of the Bka' brgyud traditions include Karma Chags med (Karma Chakme, d. 1678), who elaborated an original synthesis of the

mahāmudrā and Great Perfection approaches to contemplation, and Ta'i Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas (Situ Chöki Jungne, 1699–1774), editor of the famed Sde dge edition of the Kanjur and a renowned scholar of linguistics. Mar pa Bka' brgyud pa teachings have been widely transmitted among non-Bka' brgyud pa orders, for instance among the Dge lugs pa, a considerable portion of whose esoteric traditions originated in Mar pa's lineage.

The "Succession of the Transmitted Precepts of Shangs" (Shangs pa bka' brgyud) took its name from the Shangs Valley, where the early-twelfth-century master Khyung po Rnal 'byor, "the yogin of the Eagle clan," founded his community. Though there is considerable uncertainty about his precise dates and traditional chronologies generally assign his birth to the year 990, he appears in fact to have been born half a century or so later. Originally an adherent of the Bon religion, he converted to Buddhism and became at first a follower of the Rnying ma pa tradition. Like many others of his generation, however, he regarded India as the source of uniquely authoritative Buddhist teachings and so left Tibet to pursue his path in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal and in India proper.

During his travels in India Khyung po Rnal 'byor is supposed to have met numerous Tantric masters, including some who were at that time famed throughout the Tibetan Buddhist world. His foremost teachers, however, were two remarkable women, Niguma and Sukhasiddhi, the first of whom is referred to in his biography as Nāropa's "lady," a term that in this context is usually taken to mean "elder sister," though some say that Niguma had been Nāropa's wife. From Niguma, Khyung po learned a system of six yogas resembling the system taught by Nāropa as transmitted by Mar pa but differing primarily in its notable emphasis upon the topics of apparition and dream. The "six doctrines of Niguma" (*ni gu chos drug*), as they are known, continue to be practiced by Tibetan Buddhist adepts in the early twenty-first century. Khyung po's teaching as a whole was analogized to a tree, with the six doctrines as its roots, the "great seal" for its trunk, the "three means for integrating ordinary experience with the path" as branches, the red and white forms of the sky-faring goddess, Khecarī, for flowers, and as the fruit, the realization that body and mind are deathless and without deviation.

The line of Khyung po Rnal 'byor's disciples—Rmög lcog pa (Mokcokpa), Dbon ston Skyer sgang pa (Öntön Kyergangpa), Gnyan ston (Nyentön), down to Sangs rgyas ston pa (Sangye Tönpa, 1219–1290)—uniquely transmitted the entire body of these precepts in a strictly secret lineage until the last mentioned began to disseminate them among practitioners of Tantric yoga. The early secrecy of the lineage contributes to considerable historical obscurity, though hagiographies of Khyung po and his successors do exist. Though there were a small number of properly Shangs pa hermitages at times, the Shangs pa were never established as an independent order and their doctrinal lineage was trans-

mitted in later times among the Karma Bka' brgyud, Dge lugs pa, Sa skya pa, Jo nang pa, Rnying ma pa, and Zhwa lu pa orders. More recently, the Shangs pa teachings have aroused considerable interest among Buddhists in the West owing to the widespread activity of their leading twentieth-century representative, Kalu Rinpoche Rang byung kun khyab (1905–1989).

Zhi byed and Gcod. The related lineages of Zhi byed (zhije) ("Pacification") and Gcod (cö) ("Severance") originated respectively with the enigmatic Indian yogin Pha Dam pa Sangs rgyas (Phadampa Sangye, d. 1117) and his remarkable Tibetan successor, the *yoginī* Ma gcig lab sgron (Machig Labdron, c. 1055–1149). Although schools specializing in Pacification—as exemplified by the lineages of Rma Chos kyi shes rab (Ma Chöki Sherab, b. 1055), So chung Dge 'dun 'bar (Sochung Gendünbar, 1062–1128), and Kaṃ Ye shes rgyal mtshan (Kam Yeshe Gyaltzen, d. 1119)—were very widespread during the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, the teaching all but disappeared in later times. Pha Dam pa continued to be revered as a cultural hero, and the verse aphorisms attributed to him—*Ding ri brgya rtsa* (Century for the people of Ding ri)—is a popular classic of Tibetan gnomic literature. Severance, by contrast, permeated the entire Tibetan Buddhist tradition and is in the early twenty-first century preserved by all orders. Both of these systems of instruction seek to bring about realization as it is understood in the "Perfection of Wisdom" (Sanskrit, *Prajñāpāramitā*) sūtras by means inspired by esoteric Buddhist practice. This takes particularly dramatic form in the traditions of Severance, whose exquisite liturgies involve the adept's symbolic offering of his or her own body as food for all beings throughout the universe.

The "Yoga of Indestructible Reality" (Rdo rje'i rnal 'byor) designates the system of yoga associated with the *Kālacakra Tantra*, the "Wheel of Time," which was transmitted in Tibet initially by Gyi jo Lo tsā ba Zla ba'i 'od zer during the early eleventh century. A great many other lineages specializing in this Tantra also arose, so that it became one of the dominant esoteric traditions of the early second millennium.

The *Kālacakra* proposes in effect a system of universal knowledge, including astronomical calculation, medical tradition, and above all mastery of the internal disciplines of yoga. Indeed, these three domains—that of the universe without, the body within, and the esoteric realm of yoga—are treated homologously here, mapped onto one and the same divine *maṇḍala*. The *Kālacakra* became the basis for the Tibetan calendrical system among other branches of learning.

As a system of Tantric contemplative practice, the *Kālacakra* stresses a system of six yogas (*sbyor drug*): "withdrawal" and "absorption" are the yogas of body, whereby the purification of the subtle, central channel is achieved; "breath-control" and "restraint" are the yogas of speech, whereby the vital energies are caused to enter the central

channel and to be stabilized; "recollection" is the yoga of mind, whereby the incorruptibility of the enlightened mind is attained; and finally, "concentration" is the refinement of gnosis, whereby the coalescence of bliss and emptiness is realized.

During the fourteenth century, two approaches to the interpretation and practice of the *Kālacakra* became predominant. The first was that of Zhwa lu Monastery, which was given its decisive formulation in the writings of the celebrated scholar and editor of the canon, Bu ston Rin chen grub (Butön Rinchendrub, 1290–1364). Though Bu ston's background was in the Bka' brgyud tradition, Zhwa lu was a clan-based monastery tied to the Lce family, so that it was regarded as representing a small but independent order. The second major *Kālacakra* tradition emerged at the monastery of Jo nang, which in its origins was in essence a *Kālacakra* hermitage. Its chief representative was the philosophically controversial master Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan (Dölpopa, 1292–1361). While these two contemporaries were both widely revered, they arrived at opposing conclusions regarding the *Kālacakra*'s teaching in relation to Buddhist philosophy. For Dol po pa, the Tantra supported the controversial view that the definitive doctrine of Mahāyāna Buddhism was that of buddha-nature, not emptiness, so that the absolute could be considered not as empty in itself but only as extrinsically empty (*gzhan stong*) with respect to relative phenomena. In its own nature it was, rather, a plenitude of the qualities of the highest enlightenment. But, by contrast, Bu ston held that the discourse of buddha-nature was itself a relative way of speaking of the emptiness that stood as the true heart of the doctrine. The latter came to be favored in the Dge lugs pa order, and it is the "Bu ston tradition" (*bu lugs*) of the *Kālacakra* that continues to be transmitted in that order in the early twenty-first century, above all by the fourteenth Dalai Lama (b. 1935). The Jo nang pa order, which was suppressed for political reasons by the government of the fifth Dalai Lama during the seventeenth century, continued nevertheless to thrive in some parts of far eastern Tibet. Its controversial teaching of extrinsic emptiness became an important element in the nineteenth-century eclectic movement in Khams. The greatest of the Jo nang pa masters following Dol po pa was Rje btsun Tāranātha (1575–1634), a celebrated historian and Tantric commentator, whose later incarnation was recognized within the Dge lugs pa order in Mongolia. Known as the Jebtsundampa Hutukhtu, he was regarded as the "Dalai Lama of the Mongols" in pre-Communist society.

The "Service and Attainment of the Three Indestructible Realities" (Rdo rje gsum gyi bsnyen sgrub) represents what is in the early twenty-first century an extremely rare lineage of instruction, focusing upon the internal yoga of the subtle energy channels and vital energy and stemming from the teaching of the divine Vajrayoginī, as gathered by the Tibetan adept O rgyan pa Rin chen dpal (Orgyenpa Rinchenpal, 1230–1309) during his extensive travels in the northwestern quarters of the Indian subcontinent. The teaching

was popularized by O rgyan pa's successors during the fourteenth century, when several commentaries on it were composed, but subsequently it seems to have lapsed into obscurity. O rgyan pa also figures prominently as a transmitter of several of the major Bka' brgyud pa lineages, notably the 'Brug pa and Karma pa traditions.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE DGE LUGS PA ORDER. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the religious life of Tibet was dominated by the Sa skya pa and by the proliferation of Bka' brgyud pa suborders, most of which were, like the Sa skya pa, closely associated with important aristocratic households. The Bka' gdams pa maintained their prominence, whereas several smaller orders, especially the Jo nang pa and the Zhwa lu pa, had achieved considerable renown. Though the other lines of teaching discussed above—Shangs pa, Zhi byed, and Gcod—were also widely transmitted at this time, it is less clear that well-defined monastic orders had been formed on their basis. In addition, there were some monasteries—for example, Gnas rnying not far from Rgyal rtse (modern Gyantse)—which must be considered as representing unique orders in their own right and as sometimes enjoying considerable local influence. A further example along these lines is offered by the monastery of Bo dong, near the Yam 'brog lake, whose great master Phyogs las rnam rgyal (Chokle Namgyal, 1376–1451) created his own vast synthesis of Buddhist learning comprising over 130 volumes.

The most important development, however, was the emergence of an altogether new order, the Dga' ldan pa (Gandenpa), later best known as Dge lugs pa, the "Virtuous Ones." The founder of the Dge lugs pa was the great scholar Rje Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (Je Tsongkhapa, 1357–1419), who, however, certainly had no intention to create a new order. He saw himself, rather, as a custodian and rectifier of received tradition. Born in the far northeastern Tibetan province of Amdo (modern Qinghai), he came to central Tibet as a teenager and pursued rigorous studies with all the foremost luminaries of the age, including teachers of the Bka' gdams pa, Sa skya pa, Bka' brgyud pa, Zhwa lu pa, and Jo nang pa traditions. His dedication to the Bka' gdams pa teaching of the progressive path of the *bodhisattva* was such that he and his successors often came to be thought of as "new Bka' gdams pa" (Bka' gdams gsar ma), and his treatise *Lam rim chen mo* (Great progression of the path) is renowned as a definitive expression of this approach. From his main Sa skya pa teacher, Red mda' ba Gzhon nu blo gros (1349–1412), he acquired a special concern for the interpretation of the Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika philosophy of the Indian master Candrakīrti (c. 600–650) as well as an orientation to Tantrism that emphasized the primacy of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*.

Moreover, it was in collaboration with Red mda' ba that Tsong kha pa undertook his celebrated reform of the practice of the monastic code, or Vinaya. In his Tantric teachings, Tsong kha pa to a great extent continued Bka' brgyud pa traditions as well as the yoga of the *Kālacakra Tantra* as taught

in the Jo nang pa and Zhwa lu pa orders. Nevertheless, he thoroughly rejected the "extrinsic emptiness" doctrine of Dol po pa, regarding it as an extreme representative of persistent Tibetan misunderstandings of the Yogācāra philosophy of India, and though accepting the authority of the Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika, he developed his own distinctive interpretation thereof, which in many respects was not anticipated in the work of Red mda' ba. In short, though drawing on earlier tradition, Tsong kha pa formulated a novel synthesis of the Indian Buddhist legacy, strongly emphasizing careful textual study and the demands of logic.

Tsong kha pa attracted large numbers of talented disciples, who began at some point to refer to themselves after the name of the monastery their master had founded in 1409, Dga' ldan. This was soon replaced by the near-homonym Dge ldan pa ("virtuous"), which in turn gave way to the synonym Dge lugs pa. Because Tsong kha pa had followed the tradition of Bu ston in adopting a yellow ceremonial hat, in contrast to the red that was widely favored, his successors became known popularly as "yellow hats" (*zhwa ser*).

Tsong kha pa's followers appear to have shared a strong sense of corporate identity, reflected doctrinally in the writings of his leading students, including Rgyal tshab rje Dar ma rin chen (Gyaltsapje, 1364–1432), Mkhas grub rje Dge legs dpal bzang (Khedrupje, 1385–1438), and Dge 'dun grub pa (Gendün Drupa, 1391–1474), posthumously considered to be the first Dalai Lama. At the same time, a large number of new monastic centers emphasizing adherence to the Vinaya and rigorous programs of study based on the sustained practice of debate were established to promulgate his teaching. Examples include Se ra (1419) and 'Bras spungs (1416), in the vicinity of Lhasa. The latter, with as many as ten thousand monks, was, prior to 1959, considered to be the largest monastic community in the world. With the conversion by Bsod nams rgya mtsho (Sonam Gyatso, the third Dalai Lama) of the Mongol leader Altan Khan in 1578, the Dge lugs pa order became the predominant Tibetan Buddhist tradition among the Mongols, a position it continued to enjoy in the early twenty-first century.

Mongol intervention in Tibetan affairs brought about the consolidation of political power by the fifth Dalai Lama in 1642, so that the Dge lugs pa became, from this point on, the effective masters of Tibet. Coming in the wake of the preceding decades of civil strife, in which warring factions were generally allied with different orders, the Dalai Lama's regime sought to consolidate their control in part by a reorganization of religion. Numerous new Dge lugs pa monasteries were established throughout the country. Some older centers, particularly those of orders, such as the Karma pa and 'Brug pa Bka' brgyud pa, that had been allied with the Dge lugs pa's rivals, were forcibly converted. The Jo nang pa were altogether suppressed except for one nunnery within the Dalai Lama's domains. (The Bka' gdams pa by this time had been mostly absorbed into the Dge lugs pa order and

so no longer had an independent existence.) Despite these politically impelled changes and despite the insistence by some of the more extreme sectarian proponents that only one order need be recognized, it was generally agreed that some degree of plurality was nevertheless desirable. This came to be expressed in the notion that there were but four Tibetan Buddhist orders—Rnying ma pa, Sa skya pa, Bka' brgyud pa, and Dge lugs pa—a conception formalized by the official ranks and titles conferred by the government upon the hierarchs of these traditions.

SEE ALSO Bon; Buddhism, articles on Buddhism in Mongolia, Buddhism in Tibet; Dge lugs pa; Mādhyamika; Tibetan Religions, overview article; Yogācāra.

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BUDDHISM, SCHOOLS OF: HIMALAYAN BUDDHISM

The historical Buddha Śākyamuni, born in Lumbinī and raised in Kapilavastu, both in present-day Nepal, must have often set his eyes on the slopes and peaks of the Himalaya, the “abode of snow,” which can be seen on clear days from either of these places. Some 2,500 years after his birth, the Himalayan regions from Ladakh in the northwest across to Bhutan in the southeast are still suffused with the cultural practices of the Buddhist religion—its manifold rites, practices, and doctrines, its symbols and institutions, all reflecting with great clarity the different waves of the spread of the Buddha’s teaching to the Himalaya.

PATRONS AND PRECEPTORS. The region of Kashmir, where Buddhism was first diffused about 250 BCE, on the orders of King Aśoka, later became one of the gateways through which monastic and tantric lineages entered Tibet, especially during the so-called second spread (*phyi dar*), from the end of the tenth century onwards. Particularly instrumental in this phase of the introduction of Buddhism into the western Himalayas were the early kings of Guge Purang (a confederation whose territory included what is today known as Ladakh), who selected a group of young men and sent them to Kashmir to be trained as “translators” (*lo tsā ba*). One such link between the Indian and Tibetan cultures was Rin chen bzang po (958–1055), later preceptor to King Ye shes ’od and his family. Due to efforts like his, Western Tibet became a center of Buddhist thought and practice based on a direct knowledge of Indian canonical and philosophical literature. Royal patronage was continued by later kings, one of whom financed, for example, the Indian journey of Rngog Lo tsā ba Blo ldan Shes rab (1059–1109). Another key figure, for having established a famous Vinaya ordination lineage in Tibet, was the Kashmiri Mahāpaṇḍita Śākyaśrībhadrā (d. 1225), who was the last head of the Buddhist university of Vikramaśīla in Magadha and one of the teachers of Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan (1182–1251).

Vikramaśīla was already seeking out contact with Tibet and other Himalayan regions during its peak period in the second half of the tenth century, the most notable example being in the person of Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna (982–1054), another one of its heads to reach Tibet. In his case it was the family of the early kings of Guge Purang who issued the invitation, the monk-scholar from present-day Bengal arriving at their royal court in the year 1042. The influence of Atiśa was far-reaching, especially his insistence on the observance of the monastic rule and a restricted use of the Tantras. After his death this Buddhist school became known as the Bka’ gdams pa, which in turn served as the model for the “New Bka’ gdams pa,” or Dge lugs pa, founded by Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (1357–1419). This latter tradition was spread in the western Himalayas by a group of Tsong kha pa’s disciples called the “six great diffusers of the teachings to the borders.” It became prominent from the fifteenth century onward, with monastic lineages being established in Guge and Ladakh.

At about the same time, the Ngor pa tradition, a subsect of the Sa skya pa school, which had been founded by members of the ’Khon family to whom Sa skya Paṇḍita belonged, became influential in Purang. This religious shift was the result of Purang having become a dependency of Glo bo, another Himalayan kingdom (what is now Mustang in northern Nepal). Although this dominance of Glo bo over Purang was short-lived, it shows that the spread of Buddhist schools in the Himalayan region relied heavily on royal support for the definition and maintenance of their monastic institutions. This was true also in the next period in the history of the western Himalayas, when the rulers of Ladakh became the dominant political power and the twin countries of Guge and Purang faded into the background. The most popular Buddhist teacher during that time was Stag tshang ras pa (1574–1651), a religious figure still of great significance for the Ladakhi people. He was a member of the ’Brug pa subsect of the Bka’ brgyud pa school, and he was generously supported by the king of Ladakh, from whom he received a number of estates while acting as his preceptor.

A significant role in the diffusion of Buddhist traditions in the western Himalayas was also played by another subsect of the Bka’ brgyud pa school, the ’Bri gung pa, whose major zone of activity was the area around Lake Manasarovar and Mount Kailash. The hermitages around the sacred mountain were established by yogins following the example of their great fellow yogin Mi la ras pa (1028/40–1111/23), and were later occupied mainly by followers of the ’Brug pa, founded by Gling ras pa Padma rdo rje (1128–1188), and of the ’Bri gung pa, founded by Skyob pa ’Jig rten mgon po (1143–1217). These two schools left the strongest imprint on the tradition of Buddhist pilgrimages to Kailash, the “Snow Mountain Ti se” (*gangs ti se*), the legends surrounding their representatives being mainly responsible for the drive to idealize and spiritualize this Himalayan region. The ’Bri gung pa are said to have fostered innumerable numbers of “hermits” (*ri pa*), headed by what may be called a “rector” (*rdor ’dzin*), who supervised their spiritual life at the sacred mountain. In the fifteenth century the influence of the ’Bri gung pa in the Kailash area declined, doubtless under that of the Ngor pa tradition. In Ladakh, the ’Bri gung pa had become influential at the beginning of the thirteenth century, but when the ruling house became patrons of the ’Brug pas they lost their former standing there too, never to recover it.

A TRANSLATOR’S JOURNEY. The last Buddhist *mahāpaṇḍita* to reach Tibet during the second spread was the yogin Vanaratna (1384–1458) of present-day Bengal. He undertook three journeys to the plateau, where he assumed the role of preceptor of the Phag mo gru family, the rulers of Central Tibet before the Rin spungs pa took over. Vanaratna promulgated tantric transmissions, mainly from the cycles of the *Kālacakra Tantra*, the *Hevajra Tantra*, and the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*. Among his Tibetan disciples were two translators, ’Gos Lo tsā ba Gzhon nu dpal (1392–1481) and Khribs khang Lo tsā ba Bsod nams rgya mtsho (1424–1482), the former well known as the author of the famous

“Blue Annals,” a comprehensive historiographical work of Tibetan Buddhism written in the years 1476 to 1478.

Bsod nams rgya mtsho, also called the “Great Translator” (*lo chen*), had met Vanaratna during the latter’s final journey to Tibet in the years 1453 to 1454 and assisted him on the return trip to Nepal, where Vanaratna had taken up residence in a Buddhist *viḥāra* in Patan. More than ten years later the translator undertook the daring journey to the south on his own in order to receive further tantric transmissions. This journey is a late case of a *lo tsā ba*’s quest for authentic Buddhist teaching, showing how the natural barrier of the Himalaya was overcome by these motivated travelers.

The mountain chain was approached in the region of Chu bar, close to the Gaurīśankar peak (7,146 m), which is known to Tibetans as the “glaciers of the Goddess of Long Life” (*tshe ring ma’i gangś nams*). This area and its landscape is suffused, like the Kailash region, with the memory of Mi la ras pa, following whose example the translator is said to have appeased the local deities. Two routes could be taken from there onwards to the Nepal Valley. Bsod nams rgya mtsho chose the one passing through Dolakhā, a small independent kingdom to the northeast of the valley. Walking on treacherous paths through narrow gorges, he eventually reached Bhaktapur, the royal center of Nepal, ruled by King Jaya Yakṣamalla (r. 1424–1482). In the Govicandra Mahāvihāra in Patan the spiritual relationship with Vanaratna was renewed, and the Tibetan disciple obtained special tantric transmissions revealed to the Mahāpāṇḍita. One of these encounters took place in Śāntipura in the surroundings of the Buddhist stupa known today as Svayambhūnāth. After a pilgrimage to the different sacred sites of the Nepal Valley, including a triad of celebrated statues of Padmapāṇi Lokeśvara located within the cultural boundaries of fifteenth-century Nepal, Bsod nams rgya mtsho then left his teacher and Newar hosts and once again made his way through the dangerous gorges. Later he merely complained that he had not been able to collect medicinal plants growing in the Himalayan valleys in abundance, and compared his difficulties with the ones faced by an earlier Buddhist traveler.

In later times a second route, passing from Chu bar to Listi (to the west of Dolakhā), was normally taken by Tibetan priests making the journey to Nepal. Among these we find the Sixth Zhva dmar pa Chos kyī dbang phyug (1584–1630) and the Eighth Si tu Chos kyī ’byung gnas (1699–1774). Like Bsod nams rgya mtsho, in whose footsteps they followed, these hierarchs of the Bka’ brgyud pa school were warmly welcomed by Malla rulers, including Jagajjyotirmalla (r. 1614–1637) and Jagajjayamalla (r. 1722–1736).

“THE HIMALAYAN EXPERIENCE.” A widely used cultural corridor through which monastic and tantric lineages of the Buddhist religion entered the Tibetan plateau was Mang yul Gung thang, a kingdom in southwest Tibet located to the north of the Nepal Valley. During the time of the so-called earlier spread (*snga dar*) from the seventh to the ninth cen-

ries, the great adept Padmasambhava was the most notable person to have traveled through the region, where he subdued mountain gods and local spirits on his way to the court of the Yarlung kings in Central Tibet. The same route was used by Śāntarakṣita, the abbot who introduced the first Vinaya lineage into Tibet. Even Srong btsan sgam po, the first Buddhist ruler of the Yarlung dynasty, is believed to have undertaken a journey from Mang yul Gung thang to the Kathmandu Valley in order to bring back a statue of Padmapāṇi Lokeśvara to Tibet. This legend accounts for the importance of the Newar culture in the transmission of Buddhist religious and artistic traditions to the north, and points at the same time to the widespread circulation of these kind of narratives centering on Srong btsan sgam po, and their relevance to what has been called “the Himalayan experience” in the diffusion of Buddhism.

The introduction of the Buddha’s teaching to Tibet and neighboring Himalayan regions is a recurring theme within the cult of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, to whom is credited the conversion of uncivilized humans to the new religion. Instrumental in this scheme are a group of temples said to have been built during the reign of Srong btsan sgam po, and located for the most part in or near the southern valleys; these temples were held to be able “to tame the borders and areas beyond the borders” and thus secure the center, namely the Jokhang temple in Lhasa, for Buddhism. The whole process of “taming” (*’dul ba*) took on a special character when directed toward the Himalayan regions which, according to the Buddhist texts glorifying the deeds of Srong btsan sgam po, were wild and uncultivated. This notion was counterbalanced by authors who looked to the remote Himalayan regions in the south as a sort of earthly paradise, whose hillsides provided an ideal location for monasteries, and which was imbued with all the resources of nature needed for leading a life of Buddhist spirituality.

Both these cultural attitudes of viewing the Himalayan valleys as regions to be tamed and—especially in times of political turmoil—as sanctuaries to be sought out were cultivated and refined within the Rnying ma pa school, the followers of the great adept Padmasambhava. One of the most prolific writers in this respect was the “treasure-discoverer” (*gter ston*) Rig ’dzin Rgod ldem (1337–1408), whose texts describe various “hidden valleys” (*sbas yul*) ranging from the region of Mang yul Gung thang in the west to the Chumbi Valley between Sikkim and Bhutan in the east. This master acted as preceptor to the royal court of Mang yul Gung thang. Indeed the prophecies of Padmasambhava regarding its future rulers show that the idea of saving this royal branch of the Yarlung dynasty was a theme of central importance in the hidden-valley literature. These kind of texts state explicitly that sanctuaries in the Himalayan valleys are to be searched for during times when foreign armies threaten the security of Tibet. They can thus be understood as a reaction of the traumatized Rnying ma pas to the invasion by the Mongols in the thirteenth century and to their subsequent political dominion.

The supremacy of the Dge lugs pa school in Central Tibet four hundred years later, achieved with the help of their Mongol patrons, resulted once more in an increased production of this kind of literature and a more intense search for sacred abodes in the Himalayan borderlands. During this period, in the seventeenth century, the border-taming temple in Mang yul Gung thang functioned as one starting point for expeditions of Rnying ma pa treasure-discoverers to the south. The diffusion of Buddhist institutions and rites in such neighboring valleys as Glang 'phrang and Yol mo, located in present-day Nepal, must be seen as an outcome of these kinds of practices.

BUDDHIST MONARCHIES. The country of Sikkim, now part of the confederation of Indian states, was known to Rig 'dzin Rgod ldem under the name "Rice Land" (*'bras mo ljongs*). One of the monasteries that he founded, ruins of which still can be seen today, was within its borders. The greatest propagator of Buddhism in Sikkim appeared later: Lha btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med (1587–1650), another treasure-discoverer of the Rnying ma pa school and follower of the Great Perfection doctrine. In the year 1641 he, together with Kaḥ thog Rig 'dzin chen po and Mnga' bdag Sems dpa' chen po, installed the first Buddhist king in Sikkim. The names of the latter two masters allude to the earlier spread of further Rnying ma pa lineages in the country, namely to the Kaḥ thog pa of Eastern Tibet and to the Mnga' bdag pa, who followed in the tradition of the treasure-discoverer Zhig po gling pa (1524–1583) from Central Tibet. The epitome of the hidden valley transformed into a Buddhist kingdom was Brag dkar bkra shis ldings, a sacred site surrounded in the style of a *maṇḍala* by four miraculous caves in the four cardinal directions; these places continue to be pilgrimage destinations for all Sikkimese Buddhists.

During the rule of the next *dharmarāja* or *chos rgyal*, a strong connection was established with the teachers of Smin grol gling, an influential Rnying ma pa monastery in Central Tibet, and this led to the foundation of Padma yang rtse, a monastery which later supervised all the Rnying ma pa institutions in Sikkim. 'Jigs med dpa' bo (b. 1682), the second incarnation of Lha btsun Nam mkha' 'jigs med, received his spiritual training under Rig 'dzin Gter bdag gling pa (1646–1714), the hierarch of Smin grol gling, and following an invitation to Sikkim became the preceptor of the Sikkimese king. His activities at the beginning of the eighteenth century coincided with the suppression of the Rnying ma pa school in Central Tibet due to the Dzungar invasions and an edict of the Manchu ruler Yung chen. In the year 1718 Rje btsun Mi 'gyur dpal sgron (1699–1769), the daughter of Rig 'dzin Gter bdag gling pa, escaped the Dzungar armies and traveled to Sikkim; there she was welcomed by the king and by 'Jigs med dpa' bo. The "Rice Land," too, thus offered refuge in troubled times to the followers of Padmasambhava.

Parts of northern Bhutan, the modern Buddhist monarchy bordering on Assam, were regarded as hidden sanctuaries as well, as can be seen from the writings of Rig 'dzin Padma

gling pa (1450–1521). It was Zhabs drung Ngag dbang rnam rgyal (b. 1595) who founded a central government and established the borders of the "Land of the Thunder-Dragon" (*'brug yul*). A member of the Rgya family from Rva lung, from which family Rgyal ba'i dbang po (1428–1476), the second 'Brug chen hierarch of the 'Brug pa school, issued, he was forced to flee to the southern Himalaya upon claiming to be the incarnation of the fourth 'Brug chen Padma dkar po (1527–1592). The teaching tradition of the 'Brug pa school had already been introduced earlier to Bhutan, one of its representatives before the unification of the country being Kun dga' legs pa (1455–1529), the famous "Madman from Bhutan" (*'brug smyon*). Later on the country was ruled by a nominal head of state, an incarnate lama, while the secular administration was entrusted to a regent; these persons were known respectively as the Zhabs drung Rin po che and the Sde srid.

The fourth regent, Bstan 'dzin rab rgyas (1638–1696) was one key figure in the early phase of the 'Brug pa state, which lasted more than two hundred years before being replaced in 1907 by a modern monarchy. It was this regent who created a religious edifice at the famous cliff-side meditation cave of the great adept Padmasambhava at Stag tshang to the north of the Paro Valley (the site had earlier been in the hands of the Kaḥ thog pa), and he was also responsible for popularizing such religious practices as the display of massive appliqué hangings draped from monastery courtyard walls and the seasonal dance festivals dedicated to Padmasambhava. The forty-ninth regent, 'Jigs med rnam rgyal (1825–1881), is generally remembered for being the father of O rgyan dbang phyug (1862–1926), the founder of the modern monarchy. The latter's rise to political power was largely due to the encouragement shown and the rituals conferred upon him by his teacher Byang chub brtson 'grus (1817–1856). This lama from Central Tibet had traveled widely in Kashmir, Western Tibet, and Nepal, and he had conceived a special crown for his disciple: a magical battle helmet, which later became a symbol of royalty. Imbued with the essence of two forms of the great protector Mahākala, it was a conscious allusion to the role played by the raven-headed Mahākala in the first unification of Bhutan by Zhabs drung Ngag dbang rnam rgyal.

CRAFTSMEN AND ARTISTS. The legends concerning the enlightened activity of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara as the spiritual protector of the Himalayan region and the Buddhist king as his incarnation formed the ideological basis for monarchies like Sikkim and Bhutan from the very beginning. It is known, for example, that the first ruler of Sikkim held the teaching transmission of the "Hundred Thousand Proclamations of the Maṇi [Mantra]" (*maṇi bka' 'bum*), a heterogeneous collection of teachings ascribed to Srong btsan sgam po, and that in the seventeenth century prints of this collection were executed in the newly founded state of Bhutan.

This particular version can be traced back to an earlier edition, which is the oldest xylograph of this work after its

dissemination in the form of manuscripts for a period of about four hundred years. It was in Mang yul Gung thang that a first block print of the collection had been produced, and the person responsible for this and other large-scale printing projects in that region was a monk of the Bo dong pa school by the name of “The Incomparable” (*mnyam med*) Chos dbang rgyal mtshan (1484–1549). An expert in the field of Buddhist art and craftsmanship, he oversaw the first carved edition of the teachings associated with Srong btsan sgam po at the royal court of Mang yul Gung thang upon the death of his teacher Btsun pa Chos legs (1437–1521), another influential member of the Bo dong pa community. The workshop of Chos dbang rgyal mtshan produced further xylographs of writings of the ‘Brug pa and ‘Ba’ ra ba Bka’ bgyud pa schools, and also carved on wood blocks the oldest edition of the *Theg mchog mdzod* (a classic of the Great Perfection doctrine) and of the *bKa’ gdams glegs bam* (a collection of texts comprising hagiographical material and the esoteric teachings of the Bka’ gdams pa school). Chos dbang rgyal mtshan’s legacy to the monastic institutions of the Bo dong pa was a printed edition of a “stages of the path” (*lam rim*) manual by Bo dong Paṇ chen Phyogs las rnam rgyal (1375–1451), the founder of the school. This project, which occupied sixteen carvers for a period of over six months, was completed in Btsum, a hidden valley located in present-day Nepal. Chos dbang rgyal mtshan became involved in the popularization of this cultural phenomenon by virtue of being a disciple of such treasure-discoverers of the Rnying ma pa school as Rig ’dzin Mchog ldan mgon po (1497–1531) and Rig ’dzin bstan gnyis gling pa (1480–1553), both of whose collected writings he executed as block prints. This increased production of xylograph editions of Buddhist classics in southwestern Tibet, including the famous biography and spiritual songs of the great yogin Mi la ras pa, greatly enhanced the spread of these different literary traditions in the Himalayan valleys. It is possible to identify the individual carvers of such block print editions along with the artists who beautifully depicted the deities on their front and back pages.

One main seat of the Bo dong pa school was located in Porong, a nomadic region in the northern part of Mang yul Gung thang ruled by a local whose ancient capital was a place called “Big Tent” (*sbra chen*). In the 1960s, after the end of the rule of this family, the Porong area underwent dramatic change, but today the community has reorganized itself, its main monastery has been rebuilt, and the old block xylograph of Bo dong Paṇ chen has been reprinted.

FEMALE INCARNATIONS. Incarnate religious teachers have played an important role in the Himalaya, as hierarchs of Buddhist schools, as preceptors to royal families, or as “representatives” (*tshab*) of the great adept Padmasambhava in troubled times. In contrast to the great number of male “reincarnations” (*sprul sku*), the principle of female incarnate lineages seems to have been not very widely accepted. As *dākinīs*, or “sky-goers” (*mkha’ gro ma*), women are nevertheless held in high esteem, both as symbols of divinity and as religious practitioners, especially among followers of the

Rnying ma pa school. Once they achieve the status of holy women, they can thus become the legitimating source of male incarnate lineages; this can be seen, for example, in the cases of Rig ’dzin Padma gling pa, Rig ’dzin Bstan gnyis gling pa, and Rig ’dzin Jigs med gling pa (1730–1798), all of whom are regarded as reincarnations of female disciples of Padmasambhava (of the princesses Padma gsal, Nu ’byin sa le, and Ye shes mtsho rgyal respectively).

Although the number of female reincarnations has been relatively small, a few cases are still remembered among Himalayan Buddhists. The most well-known one is the so-called Rdo rje phag mo incarnation of Bsam sdings monastery near the lake Yar brog mtsho in Central Tibet. This divine lady is viewed as an emanation of Tārā, who for protective purposes assumed the appearance of a menacing animal, the “Diamond Sow” (*rdo rje phag mo*). The first member of this lineage was the youngest daughter of King Lha dbang rgyal mtshan (1401–1464) from Mang yul Gung thang, who later became the spiritual partner of Bo dong Paṇ chen Phyogs las rnam rgyal. In 1440 this princess, named Chos kyi sgron me, founded the monastery of Bsam sdings, a convent of the Bo dong pa school, with the support of the local ruler of Sna dkar rtse. The ruling family of this principality also cared for the next incarnation, the “Noble One” (*rje btsun ma*) Kun dga’ bzang mo (b. 1459). The translator Bsod nams rgya mtsho met her in Sna dkar rtse not long after his return from Nepal. In the following years this female incarnation is known to have actively promoted teaching traditions of the Bo dong Paṇ chen across the Himalayan region. Her role as a charismatic religious teacher was accepted by the great Buddhist masters of her time, including the second ‘Brug chen Rgyal ba’i dbang po and Lha btsun Kun dga’ Chos kyi rgya mtsho (1432–1505), the teacher of Kun dga’ legs pa, the Madman from Bhutan. The lineage of the Rdo rje phag mo incarnation continues down to the present time, with its twelfth member still residing at its place of origin.

Another female incarnate lineage is that of the Gung ru mkha’ ’gro ma from Eastern Tibet, which is known from literary sources but has not survived as a living institution. The reason for this may be sought in unflattering political prophecies that Gung ru mkha’ ’gro ma (also known as Lha rtse dpon mo) uttered with regard to the newly founded government of the fifth Dalai Bla ma Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682); as a result, the Dalai Bla ma expressed doubts about her spiritual authority, as stated in his autobiography. The divine lady was nevertheless credited with all signs of authenticity by Rong po Skal ldan rgya mtsho (1607–1677), a great master from Amdo. These events should not be interpreted as signs of misogynous behavior on the part of the religious and political head of seventeenth-century Tibet (he spoke without bitterness of the fourth incarnation of the Bsam sdings rDo rje phag mo). In any case, they are suggestive of an atmosphere of religious tolerance prevailing in Eastern Tibet (Kham and Amdo), the border regions of Lho kha and the Himalayan valleys in the south.

PILGRIMAGES AND STUPAS. Schools of Himalayan Buddhism developed following the spread of the Buddha's teaching to the mountainous region, and reflected the monastic lineages and tantric transmissions associated with places like Kashmir, Magadha, and Nepal. This process of religious transmission was completed by the fifteenth century, after which a reversed movement can be observed, with the now established religious traditions crossing back over the cultural boundaries to the south. One can trace this transition in the journeys of individual Buddhist travelers and in the practice of large-scale pilgrimages to sacred sites located in the Himalayan valleys. A conspicuous example of the latter is the migration of the Sherpa people from Eastern Tibet to the land south of Mount Everest in the sixteenth century, their search for a hidden valley leading to a permanent resettlement after they were displaced from their home country.

Sherpa Buddhism is characterized, like most local Buddhist cultures in the Himalaya, by foundings of temples and monasteries, the last major ones being under the inspiration of Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin nor bu (1867–1940), the great abbot of Rdza rong phu. Both this monastery, located on the northern side of the Everest massif, and the well-known Steng po che monastery (founded in the years 1915 to 1919) follow the teaching tradition of Smin grol gling. The rituals of this Rnying ma pa monastery in Central Tibet are kept alive in the Sherpa country through village festivals and the construction of stupas, which latter are recognized by the people as the containers of relics and as commemorative monuments.

Buddhist stupas like the ones of Svayambhūnāth and Bodhnāth in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal have been popular destinations of pilgrims for centuries. In the course of time, the upkeep of these religious shrines came into the hands of Tibetan priests. This led in turn to the construction of administrative buildings near the pilgrimage sites; in the case of Svayambhūnāth and Bodhnāth, these buildings date from the eighteenth century. The exodus of the Tibetan people from their homeland after the revolt in Lhasa in 1959 was one main reason for the subsequent increased construction of monasteries near the stupas. In these places one can witness a revival of the cultural and religious traditions of Himalayan Buddhism. This holds true as well for regions like Ladakh, Sikkim, and Bhutan, where the Tibetan diaspora has found refuge and is able to maintain its religious and cultural identity.

Pilgrimages to sacred sites associated with the life of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni have a long tradition in India, and this cultural practice was also taken up by Himalayan Buddhists. One interesting example is the pilgrimage to a spurious Kuśinagara (the place of Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*) in Assam, as advocated by followers of the 'Brug pa school in the sixteenth century. The archaeological site of Lumbinī, the birthplace of Śākyamuni Buddha, was discovered only in 1896; modern pilgrimages to this spot are a quite recent phenomenon. A stupa of impressive height has just been com-

pleted there by the 'Bri gung pa school—a sign of the continuing definition and maintenance of Himalayan Buddhism in the place where its founder was born.

SEE ALSO Buddhism, overview article.

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FRANZ-KARL EHRHARD (2005)

BUDDHISM, SCHOOLS OF: CHINESE BUDDHISM

Chinese Buddhism is typically described in terms of *schools*, a word used variously to refer to lineages of exegetical interpretation, styles of devotional or cultivational practice, or combinations of both. The earliest schools to emerge, from the fifth century onward, were exegetical lineages devoted to the interpretation of individual scriptures or groups of scriptures. Early examples include traditions based on Chinese translations of Mādhyamika or Yogācāra treatises, as well as on individual scriptures such as the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*. A tendency to greater conceptual inclusiveness culminated in the development of the systematic schools, often referred to as Sui-Tang schools because of the timing of their emergence during those dynasties (sixth to eighth centuries); primary examples are the Tiantai and Huayan (Flower Garland) traditions. At about the same time or slightly later there also developed identifiable modes of practice or modal traditions, so named because of the centrality of different forms of religious praxis to their identities; this refers to Pure Land devotionalism, Chan (Zen) meditation and dialogue practices, and esoteric Buddhist ritual endeavor.

TERMINOLOGY. The English term *school* evokes the philosophical traditions of ancient Greece, in which individual teachers guided small assemblies of (predominately male) students in different styles of intellectual discourse. This

usage privileges individual founders and doctrinal content over social features and religious praxis, and it implies a historical model that is of limited application to the exegetical schools and individual monastic communities of Chinese Buddhism, and is at best unwieldy when used for other types of Buddhist schools.

Japanese scholarship and the Japanese denominational model have had a significant and often unrecognized influence on Western-language interpretations of Chinese Buddhism since the late nineteenth century. Japanese scholars such as Nanjō Bun'yū (1849–1927) and Takakusu Junjirō (1866–1945) worked as students and research assistants with major scholars such as Max Müller (1823–1900) and Sylvain Lévi (1863–1935), respectively, during the formative years of European Buddhist studies and religious studies. Adopting their mentors' perspective on the importance of the Buddha as founder and of doctrine as his primary contribution, these Japanese authors and their later colleagues described Chinese Buddhism in terms of the founders, doctrines, and characteristic practices of the separate denominational entities that had crystallized in Japan during the Tokugawa period (1600–1868), when the Japanese government had imposed a fixed administrative structure on the religion there. Although this was an understandable projection of early Japanese Buddhology, it is important to remember that nothing like a Japanese "school," as an integrated denominational organization with prescribed doctrines and practices and clearly defined institutional assets, priestly specialists, and lay membership, ever existed in Chinese Buddhism.

There are also profound differences between the "schools" of Chinese Buddhism and those of the parent Indian tradition, where the various *nikāyas* (e.g., Dharmaguptaka, Sarvāstivāda) functioned as ordination lineages and only secondarily as exponents of particular doctrinal stances. It is somewhat more appropriate to use the philosophical identifiers Mādhyamika, Yogācāra, and so on to identify pan-Asian styles of interpretation, although there were no institutional links between Indian and Chinese adherents of such philosophical "schools," and participants in these philosophical traditions in the two cultures worked from very different sets of texts.

In contrast, ordination lineage was rarely if ever used as a sectarian identifier in China. Only a few different sets of Vinaya regulations were ever in use there, and from at least the seventh century on all Chinese Buddhist monks and nuns were ordained under the same set of monastic regulations translated from those of the Indian Dharmaguptaka ordination lineage. In addition, as far as we can tell, virtually all Chinese Buddhists, even those who specialized in the study of treatises labeled *Hīnayānist* in the East Asian tradition (such as the widely read *Abhidharmakośa* of the Sautrāntika-Sarvāstivāda authority Vasubandhu, for example), identified themselves with the Mahāyāna. In addition, the number of foreign missionaries who identified strongly with the non-Mahāyāna was extremely small. Thus, using

the terminology commonly applied to Indian Buddhism, all Chinese Buddhists belong to a single “school”—not a particularly helpful usage.

Finally, the rhetoric of *sect*, which is used in the literatures of sociology and religious studies to refer either to non-mainstream movements that challenge the status quo or to highly organized entities that prescribe totalistic programs of religious involvement for their members, is entirely inappropriate for the description of Chinese Buddhism prior to the emergence of the White Lotus Teaching and other popular movements of the fourteenth century and after.

EXEGETICAL LINEAGES. During the first four centuries of the common era, there was a gradually increasing number of Buddhist adherents and communities in China, but nothing that achieved the continuity or impact to be recognized as a distinctive school. This is true even of the highly esteemed Huiyuan (334–416), whose community on Mount Lu represented the ideal of early monastic life but did not continue to function as a coherent group after the master’s death. Thus, even though Huiyuan is famous for having led a group of 123 clergy and laypeople in meditative devotions to the Buddha Amitābha of the Pure Land, this was but one event within a broader fabric of activities. Although important as a historical precedent to the later Pure Land tradition, which dogmatically claims him as a founding “patriarch,” this cannot be considered the beginning of a Chinese Pure Land “school.”

Given the foundation of those first four centuries, the early fifth-century output of the great translator and exegete Kumārajīva (d. 409) provided Chinese Buddhists with the textual resources for the sophisticated understanding of their chosen tradition. In addition, Kumārajīva attracted a number of gifted monks, who studied with him and assisted with the editing and explanation of the newly translated texts. Many of his texts thus became the foci of significant exegetical activity, with his own students writing widely read interpretive essays and commentaries. Such lineages of study constitute the earliest hints of sectarian differentiation in Chinese Buddhism.

As Stanley Weinstein (1987) has observed, of the ten texts most commonly studied in south China during the fifth century, seven had been translated by Kumārajīva. Four of these were sūtras: the *Lotus of the Wondrous Dharma* (*Miaofa lianhua jing*, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*); *Teaching of Vimalakīrti* (*Weimojie jing*, *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa-sūtra*); *Perfection of Wisdom* (in two versions: *Bore jing*, *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*); and *Ten Stages [of the Bodhisattva]* (*Shizhu jing*, *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*). In addition, Kumārajīva produced a recension of the Vinaya known in Chinese as the *Ten-Recitation Vinaya* (*Shisong lü*), which derived from that of his own Sarvāstivāda ordination lineage. He also translated scholastic discourses, including an exposition of Buddhist analytical philosophy called *Treatise on the Perfection of Truth* (*Chengshi lun*, *Satyasiddhi-śāstra*), which later came to be viewed as anomalous because of its simplistic explanation of

śūnyatā or “emptiness,” and three Mādhyamika texts that came to be known collectively as *San lun* or *Three Treatises*. Kumārajīva’s translation of the *Commentary on the Great Perfection of Wisdom* (*Da zhidu lun*, popularly called *Da lun*, **Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa*), although completed in 405, was largely ignored until the second half of the sixth century, when its study was taken up by scholars in the *San lun* tradition. The three other major texts studied in fifth-century south China were the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* (*Niepan jing*), translated by Dharmakṣema in 421 and revised slightly by southern scholars shortly thereafter; the *Treatise on the Essence of the Abhidharma* (*Za apitan xin lun*, popularly referred to as *Pitan*, **Samyuktābhidharmahṛdaya-śāstra*), translated by Saṃghavarman around 435; and the *Sūtra of the Lion’s Roar of Queen Śrīmālā* (*Shengman jing*, *Śrīmālādevīsiṃhanāda-sūtra*), translated by Guṇabhadra in 436.

In the north, dynastic wars in the 420s and 430s and a persecution of Buddhism in the 440s made continued scholarly activity difficult. When lecturing on the scriptures and commentarial writing resumed in the last decades of the fifth century, monks there focused primarily on texts that had been ignored in the south or which had only recently been translated. The most prominent exception was the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, which was the subject of massive commentarial attention both in the north and at the court of Liang Emperor Wu (r. 501–549) in southern China. Texts studied in the north but largely ignored in the south include the *Flower Garland Sūtra* (*Huayan jing*, *Avataṃsaka*) translated by Buddhābhadda in 420; the *Sūtra on the Bodhisattva Stages* (*Pusadichi jing*, *Bodhisattvabhūmi Sūtra*), translated by Dharmakṣema in 418; and the *Four-Part Disciplinary Code* (*Sifen lü*), the Vinaya recension deriving from the Dharmaguptaka ordination lineage and translated by Buddhayaśas and Zhu Fonian in 405 or 408. Of the texts appearing for the first time in translation in the first half of the sixth century, the one that attracted the greatest attention in north China was the *Commentary on the Sūtra of the Ten Stages* (*Shidi jing lun*, commonly called *Di lun*), translated by Bodhiruci and others in 511. Learned monks in south China in the second half of the sixth century were similarly attracted by the *Compendium of the Mahāyāna* (*She dasheng lun*, *Mahāyānasamgraha*, commonly called *She lun*) and the *Treasury of the Abhidharma* (*Apidamo jushe shi lun*, *Abhidharmakośa*), both translated by Paramārtha in 563.

The exegetical lineages devoted to each of these texts (or sets of texts, in the case of the *San lun*) constituted “schools” only in the most minimal sense. In the first place, although individual monks were known as specialists in particular scriptures, most seem to have worked on multiple texts of various types. Second, although the lineage of study of any text might be traceable from one generation to the next, even when a student’s interpretation borrowed heavily from his teachers such connections were overwhelmed by the fluctuations in popularity of different scriptures over the decades. Third, monks often studied with multiple teachers, so that

exegetical lineages often “cross-pollinated” each other. Fourth, far from attempting to keep scriptural traditions distinct and independent, the interpretations of individual scriptures were played against each other, with the understanding of one scripture used as a guide for the analysis of totally different texts, and the understanding of Buddhism as a whole applied to the line-by-line interpretation of specific scriptures.

Weinstein concludes that for fifth- and sixth-century China there were five principle exegetical traditions based on Indian treatise literature: Chengshi lun, Di lun, San lun (including study of the *Commentary on the Great Perfection of Wisdom*), Pitan (Abhidharma), and She lun. To this we might add the exegetical traditions based on sūtra and Vinaya literature—Lü (Vinaya), Nirvāṇa, and Huayan—the result being the set most often referred to as “schools” in modern writings.

The term sometimes used in contemporaneous Chinese writings to describe these traditions of monkish learning, *zong* (which in Chinese originally referred to a clan temple, or the clan’s primal ancestor or ancestral deity, and by extension the clan as a whole), referred not to any kind of sectarian identity but to the “underlying theme” or “essential doctrine” of the text in question. Indeed, at the very end of the sixth century several “[study] group leaders” (*zhongzhu*) specializing in particular texts were accorded formal recognition by the Sui dynasty (589–618) government, with Emperor Wen (r. 581–605) assigning eminent monks residence at different major temples in Chang’an as leaders of the Di lun, Vinaya, Da lun (i.e., Da zhidu lun), and Niepan study groups, respectively. Based in part on this precedent, the teachings of all these exegetical traditions were transmitted to Japan before or during the Nara period (710–784), where their use as sectarian labels became institutionalized within Japanese Buddhism. However, as Abé Ryūichi has shown, even the study groups of Nara Buddhism were very small assemblies with overlapping memberships and entirely without administrative authority or institutional identity, so that the rhetoric of “school” is problematic in this case as well.

SYSTEMATIC SCHOOLS. A qualitative change in the nature of Chinese Buddhist schools occurred through the efforts of Tiantai Zhiyi (538–597). Zhiyi’s wide-ranging discussion of a number of major Chinese scriptures, integrated interpretation of Buddhism from the perspective of the very popular *Lotus Sūtra*, and intimate connections with the founders of the Sui dynasty led to the establishment of one of the most influential and long-lasting schools of East Asian Buddhism. The tradition he established came to be known as the Tiantai school, based on the name of the mountain in southeastern China (Zhejiang province) chosen as his major center; it also flourished in Korea (as the Ch’ont’ae school) and Japan (as the Tendai school). Although the Tiantai school fell out of favor during the early years of the Tang dynasty (618–906), it was “revived” by Zhiyi’s fifth-generation successor Zhanran, who was in fact the first to refer to his tradition as

“Tiantai school.” Later, Tiantai flourished to the extent of becoming effectively synonymous with all “teaching” monasteries (roughly 5 percent of all major public institutions) from the Song dynasty (960–1279) onward.

Zhiyi’s innovation was to combine (1) a set of interpretative schema intended to govern all Buddhist doctrine (as available in the East Asian subcontinent at the time); (2) a similarly comprehensive system of meditation practice; and (3) a specific institutional center and teaching lineage. One of the core elements of his teachings was the philosophy of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) derived from Nāgārjuna’s writings, particularly the *Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā*, represented in Chinese as the *Zhong lun* (*Treatise on the Middle*), one of the San lun or “three treatises,” and the *Commentary on the Great Perfection of Wisdom*, also attributed to Nāgārjuna but more likely a compilation by the translator Kumārajīva. This was combined with a multifaceted use of the *Lotus Sūtra*, both for its doctrinal implications and as inspiration for repentance ritual and meditation practice. From this scripture Zhiyi adopted the position that the various teachings of the Buddha were directed at sentient beings at different levels of spiritual capacity, using “skillful means” (*upāya*, *fangbian*) to adapt his message to the listener. Given this theoretical basis, and drawing extensively on the work of earlier Chinese commentators, Zhiyi outlined the “five times”—five separate periods of the Buddha’s teaching career—as well as different types of doctrine and methods of teaching used by the Buddha in different contexts. Although the details of this formulation cannot be included here, its implications were immense: Zhiyi provided a comprehensive explanation for the sometimes jarring differences between Buddhist scriptures, claiming that each different doctrinal message was intended to lead diverse congregations of followers upward to the single goal of buddhahood. In generating this schema Zhiyi built on earlier interpretations to signal the importance of such widely used texts as the *Flower Garland*, *Perfection of Wisdom*, *Vimalakīrti*, and *Nirvāṇa* sūtras, even while according his favored *Lotus Sūtra* pride of place as the very pinnacle of the Buddha’s teachings. Zhiyi was similarly inclusive and systematic in the realm of meditation practice, defining four categories of *samādhi* that covered virtually all possible approaches: constantly seated, constantly walking, mixed seated and walking, and neither seated nor walking. Indeed, his concrete prescriptions for so many different types of meditation practice became the standard set of guidelines for all Chinese Buddhists for the next several centuries.

In terms of lineage identity, Zhiyi considered himself to represent, not one of multiple sectarian units within Buddhism, but the most profound teachings of Buddhism itself, as transmitted from Śākyamuni through the Indian Mādhyamika philosopher Nāgārjuna (fl. 2nd c. CE) to his own Chinese teachers and then himself. Zhiyi’s fifth-generation successor, Zhanran, was the first to use the term “Tiantai school” (Tiantai *zong*), defending its superiority over other emergent schools of his day, and here the word

zong takes on a new connotation of the essential teaching of Buddhism as transmitted through a specific lineage from the Buddha Śākyamuni. The sense of transmission from one “golden-mouthed” master to another in this system was notably abstract, and it was only with the development of the Chan school (see below) that a much more concrete and straightforward succession of patriarchs emerged. Later developments in Chinese Tiantai include the emergence of “home-mountain” and “off-mountain” factions in the Song dynasty, with monks based either on Mount Tiantai or elsewhere generating different interpretations of Zhiyi’s teachings. Korean scholar-monks in the eleventh and twelfth centuries combined Zhiyi’s various formulations into a neatly organized doctrinal system, and this system came to be widely accepted in medieval Japan and later Chinese Buddhism.

Inspired by Zhiyi’s example, Chinese representatives of the Yogācāra and Huayan (Flower Garland) traditions sought to attract imperial support through similarly comprehensive interpretations of Buddhist doctrine. The great pilgrim and translator Xuanzang (600?–664) and his disciple Cì’ēn (Dasheng Ji, often referred to, probably inaccurately, as Kuiji; 632–682) introduced a substantial body of new texts as the basis of the so-called Faxiang school, while Fazang (643–712) built upon a tradition of scholarly and inspirational writing based on the *Huayan* or *Flower Garland Sūtra* to attract the support of Empress Wu (r. 690–705). The Faxiang (a widely used label in modern times, although it actually derives from the Japanese name Hossō) and Huayan (Jpn. Kegon) schools were extremely important in Nara-period Japan, and they remained important in different ways on the continent as well. Yogācāra was recognized for its doctrinal innovations regarding the nature of human consciousness and phenomenal reality, even though its specific positions never achieved widespread currency (in part through their philosophical complexity and in part through their contrast with Chinese preferences for more inclusive, even universalistic, doctrines). The Huayan school was similarly recognized for its elaboration of the mutual interpenetration of all phenomena (often using lists of mind-numbingly abstruse distinctions), but unlike Chinese Yogācāra it had a continuing legacy of visionary meditation and ritual practice that was accessible to accomplished scholars and ordinary people alike.

The systematic schools that appeared in the sixth to eighth centuries had enduring presences throughout the balance of Chinese (and, indeed, East Asian) Buddhist history. What sets these schools apart from the earlier exegetical lineages, as well as from other contemporaneous movements, was their particular combination of imperial support, religious breadth, and position within the textual tradition. In the first place, the founders of these schools all received unique levels of attention from the imperial rulers of their day. Zhiyi, for example, received special attention from the Sui dynasts as part of their campaign to conquer south China, while Xuanzang merited extraordinary acclaim be-

cause of his knowledge of the “western regions” and prodigious output as a translator. Fazang, for his part, was recognized as a precocious young monk and actively promoted by Empress Wu.

Second, although the Tiantai, Faxiang, and Huayan systems all had their distinctive emphases, each possessed a certain capaciousness that allowed for participation in different ways. The primary example of this is Zhiyi, whose encyclopedic attentions to the grand variety of Buddhist doctrine and meditation practice seemed to make a place for everyone and every approach. With his mastery of the latest trends in Indian Yogācāra, Xuanzang (and Cì’ēn) felt empowered to generate a comprehensive interpretation of Buddhist doctrine, which specified different alternatives available for those at different stages on the spiritual path. For his part, Fazang’s presentations of abstract tenets proved highly attractive to Chinese Buddhists at the time and in subsequent generations, allowing both highly intellectual philosophical responses and strongly visionary approaches to meditation practice.

Third, the capacious quality just described was made possible in each case by magisterial control of a given body of Buddhist scripture. The *Lotus* and *Flower Garland* sūtras were arguably the most popular large scriptures in China during the preceding several centuries, and the various texts of the Yogācāra made it one of the most important modes of intellectual interpretation. Although Zhiyi was not directly involved with the enterprise of translation, and Fazang only to a limited degree, the connection of all three men with the imperially sponsored domain of Buddhist scriptural production should not be overlooked.

Thus each of the systematic Sui-Tang schools represented a comprehensive doctrinal system, complete with a lineage-based justification of its transmission from the Buddha, and a characteristic set of positions regarding spiritual cultivation. We should remember, though, that the elite monks identified with these systematic schools were but a tiny fraction of the Chinese monastic community.

MODAL TRADITIONS. In the seventh and eighth centuries, three modes of religious practice emerged that were to become enduring features of Chinese Buddhism: Pure Land devotionalism, Chan (better known by the Japanese pronunciation “Zen”) meditation, and esoteric Buddhist (*mijiao*) visualization ritual. While very different from each other in terms of soteriological goals, devotional procedures, and ritual styles, these three modal traditions all (1) emphasized selected approaches to religious practice rather than attempting to be theoretically comprehensive; (2) allowed for great practical variation and participation by a wide range of individuals, from ordinary laypeople to sophisticated monks; and (3) had much more limited, and sometimes even antagonistic, relationships with Buddhist scriptural traditions.

The Chinese Pure Land tradition is based on a set of translated scriptures describing the Buddha Amitābha

(“Infinite Light,” also given as Amitāyus, “Infinite Lifespan”) and his paradise, the “pure land” (*jingtu*) or “land of bliss” (reflecting the Sanskrit *sukhāvatī*). Through his aeons of religious cultivation as the Bodhisattva Dharmākara, Amitābha created a realm totally unlike the ordinary world-systems of Buddhist cosmology, including their heavens, in making it easy for those reborn there to achieve enlightenment. Amitābha promised that those who were “mindful” (*nian*, “remember, think,” from the Sanskrit *anusmṛti*) of him for a mere ten moments of thought were guaranteed rebirth in his Pure Land. This was initially understood as an easy form of meditative visualization, in which one was aided by the graphic concreteness of the Buddha’s image. As mentioned above, this type of visualization was practiced at one time at Huiyuan’s community on Mount Lu.

During the sixth and seventh centuries, at Xuanzhongsi in north China (Shanxi province), there appeared a succession of monks who transformed the understanding of Pure Land practice, expanding it from the original visualization meditation just described to include ever greater emphasis on the oral recitation of the Buddha Amitābha’s name. Tanluan (c. 488–c. 554) emphasized that Pure Land practice was an easy path suitable for people living in a corrupt world, while Daochuo (562–645) argued that this practice was particularly appropriate for the final period of the Buddhist teachings (*mofa*; Jpn. *mappō*), since it would result in a face-to-face meeting with Amitābha at death. Since he also held that it was impossible to know when one achieved the requisite ten moments of pure sincerity in performing the *nianfo* (literally, “mindfulness of the Buddha,” almost always indicating Amitābha), Daochuo also directed his followers to perform as many oral repetitions as possible. Although Shandao (613–682) recommended the combined practice of sūtra recitation, visualization of Amitābha, and worshiping Buddha images, his primary emphases were that Pure Land practice was intended precisely for the ignorant and sinful, rather than the spiritually gifted or advanced, and that it consisted primarily of oral recitation. He also provided detailed instructions for how *nianfo* retreats were to be undertaken, either as ordinary religious practice aimed at liberation or as deathbed observations aimed at ensuring immediate rebirth.

Although these and other Chinese Pure Land masters were accomplished scholars, their commentaries and treatises argued that devotion to Amitābha could substitute for, rather than encompass and incorporate, other forms of Buddhist religiosity. Shandao in particular also promoted this style of devotionism by the widespread distribution of painted images of Pure Land scenes and the sponsorship of sculpted images of Amitābha and his attendant *bodhisattvas*. Nor were these the only Tang-dynasty proponents of Pure Land Buddhism. Meditation on Amitābha was included within Zhiyi’s “constantly walking” *samādhi*, which thus became the most widely practiced of the four categories in his system, and the increasing popularity of the recitation of Amitābha’s name led to the development of musical styles of recitation. This oc-

curred most notably on Mount Wutai in Shanxi, from which the melodic recitation of Amitābha’s name was transmitted to Japan by the famous pilgrim Ennin (794–864) and others. Since the Pure Land represented a paradise that could be reached after death, this practice became a key ingredient of deathbed observances, and there soon developed stories depicting devoted individuals who had achieved rebirth in Amitābha’s land of bliss. Since there was no clear-cut distinction between meditative and recitative *nianfo*, ordained and lay Buddhists of widely different social and educational backgrounds could all take part in the practice.

The word *Chan* transcribes the Sanskrit *dhyāna*, meaning “concentration meditation.” Chan has its roots in the meditation traditions of fifth-century Kashmir, but it first emerged as a discernable religious movement in the sixth and early seventh centuries as a north China group of ascetic practitioners who recognized the south Indian monk Bodhidharma (d. circa 530) as their progenitor. Then, after three-quarters of a century of incubation at various locations in central China, in 701 the movement emerged on the national scene at the court of Empress Wu. Many of the basic doctrines now associated with Chan were formulated in the early years of the eighth century, and the most famous of the school’s masters were active in central and south China in the late eighth and ninth centuries. It was not until after the fall of the Tang, however, in the Min regime of the far southeast (in what is now Fujian province), that the most distinctive features of the school—chiefly, its devotion to spontaneous repartee between masters and students, known as “encounter dialogue”—became public. Then, with the founding of the Song dynasty in 960, Chan became one of the dominant voices of Chinese Buddhism, its teachers monopolizing the position of abbot in nine-tenths of the largest monasteries throughout the country and its genealogically based style of self-understanding becoming the default mode of religious discourse.

The key to understanding Chinese Chan is its lineage schema, which proved to be far more compelling than the Tiantai school’s abstract and discontinuous list of sages introduced above. Based in part on Indian notions of master-student succession, Chan held that the true teaching of Buddhism was passed down from the Buddha Śākyamuni through a succession of Indian patriarchs to Bodhidharma, and then by a succession of Chinese patriarchs to the teachers of the present day. Since the doctrinal elaborations of the scriptures were unable to capture the true essence of this teaching, Chan rejected the textual tradition that had been so important in Chinese Buddhism for all previous schools, defining itself instead as a “separate transmission outside the scriptures” (*jiaowai bie zhuan*; Jpn. *kyōge betsuden*). This genealogical model is also the key to understanding Chan religious praxis, which was undertaken largely according to two different models. In the Caodong (Jpn. Sōtō) tradition, one was to nourish the buddha-mind within one (i.e., one’s buddha-nature, or the quality of originary or fundamental en-

lightenment in all sentient beings) to illuminate with its full potential, unhampered by the illusions of ordinary existence, a process known sometimes as “silent illumination” (*mozhao*; Jpn. *mokushō*). In the Linji (Jpn. Rinzai) tradition one was to demonstrate the active functioning of that buddha-mind in spontaneous interaction between enlightened master and aspiring student or, in later years, to interrogate famous examples of such interaction in one’s meditation practice. The type of spontaneous and often nonverbal interaction depicted in Chan texts is known as “encounter dialogue,” and the contemplation of pithy examples of encounter dialogue is known as “viewing the critical phrase” (*kanhua*; Jpn. *kanna*) Chan (often referred to, using the Japanese pronunciation, as *kōan* Zen), where the “critical phrase” is the climactic line of an anecdote that can only be understood by transcending ordinary thinking.

As an ideology of self-cultivation by religious professionals, Chan (unlike Pure Land) always remained centered within monastic institutions. Nevertheless, it attracted substantial literati interest, and its unique style of repartée was celebrated in diverse contexts of art and poetry, so that the image of the iconoclastic Chan master entered the shared repertoire of Chinese culture. Its genealogical model and iconoclastic tropes placed it in contrast with traditional forms of Buddhism, and Chan was able to flourish in part because it filled a vacuum left by the collapse of the state-supported translation enterprise after the end of the eighth century.

Esoteric Buddhism (*mijiao*) was introduced to China by three foreign missionaries in the eighth century: Śubhakarasiṃha (637–735), who arrived in Chang’an in 716; Vajrabodhi (671–741), who arrived in Guangzhou (Canton) in 720; and Amoghavajra (705–774), who became a disciple of Vajrabodhi’s at age fifteen in China, traveled to India after his master’s death, and returned to China in 746. Whereas magic-like techniques of recitation, visualization, and ritual had long been known from Indian sources, it was only from this period onward that there was introduced a comprehensive system of these techniques organized by the spatial metaphor of the *maṇḍala* (literally “circle,” here referring to concentric configurations of buddhas, *bodhisattvas*, and other deities). Promising both speedy achievement of enlightenment and the empowerment for ritual action by the most profound and awesome forces of the universe, esoteric Buddhism overwhelmed the imaginations of eighth-century Chinese and received lavish support from the imperial court.

Although the texts and ritual procedures introduced by these three masters, with the assistance of their gifted Chinese disciple Yixing (683–727), made a massive contribution to the ritual vocabulary of Chinese Buddhism that permeated the entire tradition, esoteric Buddhism gained only a limited acceptance in China as a distinct and separate school. Its advocates never produced intellectually substantial doctrinal statements, either of Indian or native Chinese origin (although there was a brief flurry of new texts introduced in the

last two decades of the tenth century), and even its two separate initiation lineages seem not to have been transmitted after the ninth century. Where Chan effectively benefited from the collapse of the translation enterprise, as an incipient systematic school (which it became in Japan, through the creative efforts of Kūkai) esoteric Buddhism floundered in China.

LATER DEVELOPMENTS. From the Song dynasty (960–1279) onward new subschools emerged in Chinese Buddhism, and some of the major schools took on each other’s characteristics. First, various “houses” and other sublineages developed with Chan, which retained its dominance in monastic institutions throughout the country. Second, Pure Land Buddhism began to describe itself by means of a lineage succession, a style of presentation adopted from Chan. Third, the Tiantai school witnessed competition between “home-mountain” (*shanjia*) and “off-mountain” (*shanwai*) factions, identified by their residence on Mount Tiantai or elsewhere and characterized by different understandings of Zhiyi’s teachings. Fourth, Tibetan Buddhism flourished for a time during the Yuan dynasty (1206–1368) and again during the Qing (1644–1911), especially at court, though anti-Mongol sentiments limited its more widespread dissemination. Fifth, there were numerous vectors of religious activity in Chinese Buddhism not normally considered discrete sectarian entities but which might usefully be considered in the same context; a primary example is the diffuse but extremely popular cult devoted to the salvific Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (known as Guanyin, Guanshiyin, Guanzizai, and other names in Chinese). Even granting these features, however, the sectarian labels that emerged during the Tang dynasty have remained in widespread use throughout the rest of Chinese history.

SEE ALSO Bodhidharma; Buddhism, article on Buddhism in China; Fazang; Huayan; Kuiji; Kumārajīva; Mādhyamika; Tiantai; Yogācāra; Zhiyi.

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BUDDHISM, SCHOOLS OF: JAPANESE BUDDHISM

Prior to its official introduction into the court in 552 CE, Buddhism had been brought to Japan by Chinese and Korean immigrants and was presumably practiced widely among their descendants. According to the *Nihongi*, an envoy of the king of Paekche presented Buddhist statues, sūtras, and other artifacts to the Japanese court in 552 (other sources give 538). The official introduction of Buddhism exacerbated the antagonism that had been developing between the internationalist Soga clan, which supported the court's recognition of Buddhism, and the more parochial clans, which considered the Buddha a *banshin* (foreign deity). To avoid further dissension, the court entrusted the administration of Buddhism to the Soga clan. The Buddhism promulgated by the Soga was primarily magical. However, aristocrats and court nobles were initially attracted to Buddhism as an intrinsic part of the highly advanced continental (i.e., Chinese and Korean) culture and civilization, which also encompassed Confucianism, Daoism, medicine, astronomy, and various technological skills. As it developed on the continent, Buddhism was not exclusively a religion, for it was also associated with a new, esoteric culture that included colorful paintings, statues, buildings, dance, and music.

Although Japanese understanding of Buddhism was superficial and fragmented in the early stages of assimilation, it gained religious depth through the course of history. The rise of Japanese Buddhism and the growth of schools or sects were closely related to and influenced by the structure of the state bureaucracy, which was itself in the initial stages of development. Yōmei (r. 585–587) was the first emperor officially to accept Buddhism, but it was his son, the prince regent Shōtoku (574–622), who was responsible for creating Japan's first great age of Buddhism. Although the sources provide very little precise information about his activities, Shōtoku is said to have been a great patron of Buddhism. In addition to building many Buddhist temples and sending students and monks to study in China, he wrote commentaries on three texts—the *Saddharmapūṇḍarīka* (*Lotus Sūtra*), the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, and the *Śrīmāla Sūtra*—and is supposed to have promulgated the famous “Seventeen-Article Constitution” based on Buddhist and Confucian ideas. Later, Shōtoku was worshiped as the incarnation of the *bodhisattva* Avalokiteśvara. His promotion of Buddhism fell strictly within the bounds of the existing religio-political framework of Japanese sacral kingship: he upheld the imperial throne as the central authority and envisioned a “multireli-

gious system” in which Shintō, Confucianism, and Buddhism would maintain a proper balance under the divine authority of the emperor as the “son of Heaven.” Shōtoku's religious policies, his indifference to the doctrinal and ecclesiastical divisions of Buddhism, his dependence on the universalistic soteriology of the *Lotus Sūtra*, and his emphasis on the path of the lay devotee significantly influenced the later development of Japanese Buddhism.

BUDDHISM IN THE NARA PERIOD. During the Nara period (710–784) the Ritsuryō state, based upon the principle of the mutual dependence of imperial law (*ōbō*) and Buddhist law (*buppō*), recognized Buddhism as a state religion and incorporated it into the bureaucratic system of the central government. Under these conditions Buddhism enjoyed royal favor, and temples and monks became wealthy. However, the state's sponsorship of Buddhism was not entirely altruistic. Throughout the Nara period the government was concerned with the political power held by the Buddhists. The state promoted Buddhism as a religion that could civilize, solidify, and protect the nation. Monks were encouraged to engage in the academic study of Buddhist texts, probably in the hope that they would settle in the government-controlled temples. These temples were presumably subordinate to the state and functioned as an intrinsic part of the state bureaucracy: priests were expected to perform rites and ceremonies to ensure the peace and order of the state, and monks and nuns were ordained under the state authority and thus were considered bureaucrats. The Ritsuryō government prohibited monks from concerning themselves with the needs and activities of the masses. However, those who were not granted official status as monks became associated with folk Buddhist activities. Movements of *ubasoku* (Skt., *upāsaka*; laymen), *hijiri* (holy men), and *yamabushi* (mountain ascetics) emerged spontaneously, integrating indigenous Shintō, Buddhist, and other religious and cultural elements. At the center of these movements were unordained magician-priests who lived in mountainous regions and who had acquired, through ascetic practices, shamanistic techniques and the art of healing. Later, these groups were to inspire powerful popular movements and would influence the development of Japanese Buddhism.

Prior to the Nara period Buddhism had remained non-sectarian. However, as the study of texts and commentaries on the sūtras became more intense and sophisticated, groups of scholar-monks organized themselves into schools or sects. Here, the term *sect* (*shū*) does not refer to an organized school but, rather, to a philosophical position based on the various sūtras. Differences between the sects were based solely on the particular text chosen as the focus of study: the ecclesiastical, doctrinal, or religious orientations of the individual sects were not mutually exclusive. Often, these sects were housed in a single temple and, under the restrictions imposed by the Ritsuryō government, they remained dependent on both the state and each other.

Of the six most noteworthy sects of Nara Buddhism, two were affiliated with the Hīnayāna tradition and four

with the Mahāyāna tradition. In the first category were the Kusha, based on Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa* (Jpn., *Kusharon*; Treasury of Higher Law), and the Jōjitsu, based on Harivarman's *Satyasiddhi* (Jpn., *Jōjitsuron*; Completion of truth). The Mahāyāna-affiliated sects included Sanron (Chin., *San-lun*), based on the *Mādhyamika Śāstra* (Jpn., *Chūron*; Treatise on the middle way) and on the *Dvādaśadvāra* (Jpn., *Jūnimon*; Treatise on twelve gates), both of which were written by Nāgārjuna, as well as on the *Śataśāstra* (Jpn., *Hyakuron*; One hundred verse treatise), written by Āryadeva; the Hossō sect (Skt., *Yogācāra*), principally based on the *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* (Jpn., *Jōyushikiron*; Completion of mere ideation) by Dharmapāla; the Kegon sect, based on the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* (Jpn., *Kegongyō*; Flower Garland Sūtra); and the Ritsu sect (Vinaya), based on the so-called Southern Mountain tradition of Chinese Vinaya studies, represented chiefly by the work of Daoxuan (596–667). In the early years of the Nara, the most prominent and prestigious of these sects was the Hossō, which was transmitted by Dōshō, a Japanese monk who had studied in China. The prestige of the Hossō gradually waned, to be replaced by the Kegon sect under the leadership of Roben. The Ritsu sect provided the codes and external formalities of monastic discipline. The remaining three sects represented, for the most part, academic and political alternatives to the more powerful temples.

SCHOOLS OF THE HEIAN: TENDAI AND SHINGON. The government's decision to move the capital from Nara to Kyoto was motivated in part by the need to regain the power held by the large, wealthy Buddhist temples. Toward the end of the Nara period, the effort to integrate Buddhism and temporal politics resulted in the accumulation of wealth and the acquisition of large tracts of private land by the Buddhist temples and the involvement in state politics by the more ambitious monks. This trend culminated in the so-called Dōkyō incident, which was, in effect, an attempt to make the religious authority of Buddhism supreme. Under the sponsorship of Empress Kōken (later, Shōtoku), Dōkyō, a monk in the Hossō sect, was promoted rapidly through the ranks of the state bureaucracy. In 766 Dōkyō was appointed "king of the Law" (*hō-ō*), and several years later he attempted to usurp the throne, an action that was quickly crushed by the court aristocracy. The government responded to this affair by once again affirming Buddhism's subordination to the state and enforcing traditional Buddhist discipline. Throughout the Heian period (794–1185), Buddhism continued to be promoted as the religion that would ensure the safety of the state (*chingo kokka*). The sects that arose in the Heian, however, were considerably different from the six Nara sects. Like their predecessors, the Heian sects depended on teachings recently brought back from China as a source of their religious authority. But rather than relying on Japanese and Chinese commentaries, as had their Nara counterparts, Heian-period monks began to focus their study on the actual sūtras, allegedly the words of the Buddha himself. In addition, the schools of the Heian were established by indi-

viduals who were considered de facto "founders" of sectarian lineages. They also tended to be centered in the mountains, that is, at a symbolic distance from political authority, and had their own systems of ordination. The two most important schools of this period were Tendai and Shingon (Chin., Zhenyan). Both stressed the importance of learning, meditation, and esoteric cults and mysteries. Most significantly, however, both schools attempted to establish a united center for Buddhism that would encompass all sects and unite Buddhism and the state.

Tendaishu. The founder of this sect, Saichō (767–822, also known by his posthumous title, Dengyō daishi), was a descendant of Chinese immigrants. In his youth, Saichō was trained in the Hossō, Kegon, and Sanron traditions; at the age of nineteen he was ordained at Tōdaiji in Nara. Thereafter, he withdrew from the capital city and opened a hermitage on Mount Hiei. Here, he began to study the writings of Zhiyi, the systematizer of Chinese Tiantai. During his travels in China, Saichō received the *bodhisattva* ordination (*bosatsukai*) from Daosui, was initiated into *mantra* practices (*mikkyō*) by Shunxiao, studied Zen (Chin., Chan) meditation under Xiaoran, and trained in the Chinese Vinaya traditions. Upon his return to Japan, Saichō established a Tendai school that synthesized these four traditions within the framework of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Saichō adhered to the T'ien-t'ai doctrine that recognized universal salvation, that is, the existence of the absolute nature of Buddhahood in all beings, and stressed the meaning and value of the phenomenal world. These teachings stood in opposition to the standard philosophical position of the Nara schools, best represented by the Hossō doctrine that claimed that buddhahood was accessible only to the religious elite.

Saichō's ecumenical approach won the approval of the court. With the death of his patron, Emperor Kammu, and the rise of Kūkai and the Shingon sect, Saichō's influence at court diminished. One of his dreams—that the court approve the establishment of an independent center for Tendai ordination—was granted only after Saichō's death. The Tendai sect continued to exercise a profound influence on Japanese Buddhist life for centuries after the death of its founder. Under Ennin (794–864), a disciple of Saichō, the full flowering of Tendai Esotericism (Taimitsu) took place. Ennin was also responsible for the transmission of the Nembutsu cult (i.e., the practice of invoking the name of Amida Buddha) from China. Enchin (814–891), another prominent Tendai monk, also propagated the Taimitsu tradition and was responsible for the formation of the so-called Jimon subsect of Tendai, a group that vied for ecclesiastical power with Ennin's Sanmon subsect. Additionally, many of the most prominent Buddhist figures of the Kamakura period studied at the Tendai monastic center on Mount Hiei, including Hōnen of the Pure Land sect, Shinran of True Pure Land, Eisai of Rinzai, Dōgen of Sōtō Zen, and Nichiren, whose school bears his name. Through them the Tendai legacy was firmly, if subtly, maintained in Japanese Buddhism.

Shingonshū. Kūkai (774–835, also known by his posthumous title, Kōbō daishi), the founder of the Shingon school, was originally a student of Confucianism and hoped to enter government service. According to various legends, he experienced a compelling desire to leave the capital and live in the mountains, where, it is said, he trained with shamanistic Buddhist priests. He was inspired by the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* (Jpn., *Dainichikyō*; Sūtra of the great sun buddha), which eventually led him to the tradition of Esoteric Buddhism (Vajrayāna). Between 804 and 806 he traveled in China, where he studied under Huiguo, the direct disciple of the Tantric master Amoghavajra. On his return to Japan he began to promote Shingon (i.e., Tantric) doctrine. At this time he wrote the *Jūjūshinron* (Ten stages of religious consciousness), in which he systematized the doctrines of Esoteric Buddhism and critically appraised the existing Buddhist teachings and literature. Under the patronage of Emperor Saga, Kūkai established a monastic center of Mount Kōya and was appointed abbot of Tōji (Eastern Temple) in Kyoto, which was granted the title Kyōō Gokokuji (Temple for the Protection of the Nation). In return for these favors, Kūkai performed various rites for the court and aristocracy.

According to the Shingon teachings, all the doctrines of Śākyamuni, the historical, manifested Buddha, are temporal and relative. Absolute truth is personified in the figure of Mahāvairocana (Jpn., Dainichi), the Great Sun Buddha, through the “three secrets”—the body, speech, and thought—of the Buddha. To become a Buddha—that is, to bring one’s own activities of body, speech, and thought into accord with those of Mahāvairocana—one depends on *mudrās* (devotional gestures), *dhāraṇī* (mystical verse), and yoga (concentration). The Shingon school developed a system rich in symbolism and ritual, employing *maṇḍalas* and icons to meet the needs of people on all levels of society. Like the Tendai sect, Shingon produced many outstanding monks in subsequent generations.

Owing to the support of the court and aristocracy, the Esoteric Buddhism of Tendai (Taimitsu) and Shingon (also called Tōmitsu; “Eastern Esotericism,” after its chief monastery, Tōji) prospered. While each school had its own principle of organization and its own doctrinal position, both sought the official authorization and support of the court. Therefore, as the power of the state declined, Tendai and Shingon evolved into religions associated solely with the elite, for whom they offered various magico-religious rites.

BUDDHIST SCHOOLS IN THE KAMAKURA PERIOD. The decline of the Ritsuryō system and the rise of military feudalism brought many changes to the organization and practice of Buddhism, although the basic ideology of the Ritsuryō persisted until the Ōnin War (1467–1477). It has been argued that the new Buddhist schools that emerged in the Kamakura period (1185–1333) transformed Buddhism in Japan into Japanese Buddhism. Unlike the schools of the Nara and Heian, which identified the religious sphere with the nation-

al community, the schools of the Kamakura attempted to establish specifically religious societies. The earlier schools had never seriously questioned the soteriological dualism that divided the path of monks from that of the laity, nor had they developed an independent community governed by normative principles other than the precepts. In spite of its otherworldly beliefs, Buddhism, as practiced in Nara and Heian Japan, was a religion grounded firmly in this world. The founders of the new schools in the Kamakura period had all studied at the Tendai center on Mount Hiei but had become dissatisfied with the emphasis on ceremonies and dogma, the perceived corruption of monastic life, and the rigid transmission of ecclesiastical office. In their stead, these religious leaders stressed personal religious experience, simple piety, spiritual exercise, intuition, and charisma. In many respects the practices and doctrines of the new schools reflect the eschatological atmosphere that had emerged toward the end of the Heian, when the country had experienced a series of crises, including famine, epidemics, war, and a deadlock of economy and politics. This sense of apocalypse found its expression in the widespread belief in *mappō*, the notion that Buddhism and society as a whole had entered an era of irreversible decline, and in the resultant popularity of the cult of Amida, which offered a religious path expressly intended to provide for beings living during *mappō*. In one way or another, these popular beliefs were incorporated into the most representative schools of the Kamakura period—Jōdoshū (Pure Land school), Jōdo Shinshū (True Pure Land school), Nichirenshū, and the Rinzaï and Sōtō schools of Zen.

Jōdoshū. Prior to Hōnen (1133–1212), the founder of the Jōdo sect, most Buddhist schools incorporated the belief in the Pure Land and the practice of Nembutsu as adjuncts to their other practices. It was only with Hōnen, however, that absolute faith in Amida (Skt., Amitābha) Buddha became a criterion for sectarian affiliation. Like many of his contemporaries, Hōnen had become disillusioned with his early training in the Nara and Tendai schools. He turned to the charismatic teachings of such masters as Eiku, who promoted the belief in *mappō* and the efficacy of the cult of Amida. Under their tutelage, Hōnen came to realize the impossibility of attaining salvation and sanctification through the practice of precepts, meditation, and knowledge. Instead, Hōnen held that one must seek the path to salvation in the Pure Land and the saving grace of Amida. In this, Hōnen was much influenced by Genshin’s *Ojoyoshu* (The essentials of rebirth, tenth century), a work that provides the theoretical basis for faith in the Pure Land. However, in his own work *Senchaku hongan nembutsushu* (Collection of passages on the original vow in which Nembutsu is chosen above all), Hōnen clearly departs from earlier forms of the cult of Amida. Here, Hōnen claims that one’s salvation depends exclusively on one’s “choice” (i.e., one’s willingness) to place absolute faith in the salvific power of Amida Buddha. The community Hōnen established in the capital city was structured on the notions of egalitarianism and faith and, thus, was able to transcend the social distinctions of kinship and

class. Such organizing principles made Hōnen's school a paradigm for the later development of Buddhism.

Jōdo Shinshū. Little is known of the formative influences in the life of Shinran (1173–1263), the founder of the Jōdo Shin school, except that he entered the Tendai monastery on Mount Hiei at the age of eight. When he was twenty-nine, Shinran met Hōnen, with whom he studied for six years. Shinran's notion of Amida Buddha's salvific power went far beyond that of his master. In holding that one's faith in Amida must be absolute, Shinran denied the efficacy of relying on one's own capacity to bring about redemption. His teachings went to the extreme of claiming that the recitation of the Nembutsu was an expression of gratitude to Amida rather than a cause of one's salvation. Shinran further stated that it is not man who "chooses" to have faith in Amida, but that it is Amida's Original Vow that "chooses" all beings to be saved. Therefore, even those who lead lives of crime and sin are saved.

Shinran's teachings represent a radical departure from traditional Buddhist doctrine. He reduced the Three Treasures (i.e., Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha) to one (i.e., Amida's Original Vow) and rejected the accepted methods of spiritual exercises and meditation as paths to enlightenment. He was critical of the government's persecution of Hōnen and argued that the secular authority of the state was subordinate to the eternal law of the Dharma. In the religious communities that surrounded Shinran, distinctions between the clergy and laity were eliminated; Shinran himself was married and had children. Although Shinran never formally established an independent sect, his daughter began to build a True Pure Land sectarian organization. This was the first time in the history of Buddhism in Japan that the continuity of a school was based on heredity.

Nichirenshū. Nichiren (1222–1282), eponymous founder of the sect, is perhaps one of the most charismatic and prophetic personalities in Japanese history. In the time he spent on Mount Hiei between 1242 and 1253, Nichiren came to believe that the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* (*Lotus Sūtra*) contained the ultimate and complete teaching of the Buddha. In many respects, Nichiren's thought is based on Tendai doctrine: he upheld the notion of *ichinen sanzen* (all three thousand spheres of reality are embraced in a single moment of consciousness) and advocated universal salvation, urging the nation to return to the teachings of the *Lotus Sūtra*. However, Nichiren was also a reformer. Rather than accept the traditional concept of the transmission of the *Lotus Sūtra* through ecclesiastical offices, Nichiren argued that it was transmitted through "spiritual succession." Thus, he saw himself as the successor to the transmission that began with Śākyamuni and passed to Zhiyi and Saichō. He also identified himself as the incarnation of Viśiṣṭacāritra (Jpn., Jōgyō), the *bodhisattva* to whom the Buddha is said to have entrusted the *Lotus Sūtra*. Other of his reforms included the attempt to discredit the established Buddhist sects, in particular, Pure Land and Zen. At the same time, however,

Nichiren incorporated many of their key notions and practices. With Shingon he shared the use of the *maṇḍala* and the concept of *sokushin jōbutsu* ("becoming a Buddha in this very body"), and with Pure Land he shared the practice of chanting (in this case, the title of the *Lotus Sūtra*) and the concept of the salvation of women and people whose natures are evil. Although Nichiren promoted the doctrine of universal salvation, his school developed into the most exclusivist and often militant group in Japanese religious history. Several modern Japanese movements trace their inspiration to Nichiren.

Zen Buddhism. In the Nara and Heian periods, Zen (Chin., Chan) meditation was a spiritual and mental discipline practiced in conjunction with other disciplines by all Buddhist sects. It was not until the Kamakura period, when the Linji (Jpn., Rinzai) and Caodong (Jpn., Sōtō) schools of Chan were brought from Song-dynasty China, that Zen emerged as a distinct movement.

Rinzaishū. The establishment of Rinzai Zen in Japan is associated with Eisai (1141–1215). Discouraged by the corruption of Buddhism in the late Heian, Eisai was initially concerned with the restoration of the Tendai tradition. He traveled to China, first in 1168 and again between 1187 and 1191, hoping to study the true Tendai tradition. In China, Eisai was introduced to the Linji school of Chinese Chan. At that time Chan was noted for its purist approach—its emphasis on a transmission that stood outside the classical Buddhist scriptures and what is termed the "direct pointing to the mind and perceiving one's own nature." In addition, the Chan monks in Song China refused to pay obeisance to the secular authorities. Eisai, however, was more conciliatory. He studied the practices, ceremonies, and texts of other schools and willingly paid obeisance to the Kamakura regime, which in return favored him with its patronage. Eisai strongly believed that one of the central tasks of Buddhism was to protect the nation and that Zen was a state religion. Far from approaching the common people, Eisai's form of Zen was elitist. Rinzai was established by Eisai's followers as an independent school, and while it remained an elitist group throughout the Kamakura period, its contributions to the cultural life of Japan were significant.

Sōtōshū. Dōgen (1200–1253), the transmitter of the Caodong school of Chinese Chan to Japan, entered the Tendai monastery on Mount Hiei when he was thirteen years old. His intense search for the certainty of attaining buddhahood drove him from Mount Hiei, first to a Pure Land teacher and later to Myōzen, a disciple of Eisai. Finally, in 1223, Dōgen traveled to China, where he attained enlightenment under the guidance of Rujing, a Chan master of the Caodong school. In 1227 Dōgen returned to Japan and began to expound Sōtō doctrine, eventually establishing an independent sect. As a student of the Caodong sect, Dōgen emphasized the gradual attainment of enlightenment through the practice of *zazen* (sitting in meditation), a meditative discipline that entailed sitting without any thought or

any effort to achieve enlightenment. Dōgen's notion of *zazen* (also called *shikantaza*) stood in marked contrast to Eisai's use of the *kōan* as a means to attaining sudden enlightenment.

In spite of his adherence to Caodong tradition, Dōgen is known for his independence and self-reliance. He was convinced that the truth of Buddhism is applicable to everyone—regardless of sex, intelligence, or social status—and that enlightenment could be attained even in secular life. This doctrine is best expressed in Dōgen's dictum that all beings *are* the buddha-nature. Dōgen also rejected the theory of *mappō* popular among other Kamakura Buddhists. He held that the "perfect law" of the Buddha was always present and could be attained by a true practitioner at any time. Dōgen's emphasis on faith in the Buddha represents yet another departure from traditional Zen teachings that stress self-realization. Because he claimed that the Zen practitioner must have faith not only in the Buddha but also in scriptures and one's masters, Dōgen's school is often characterized as sacerdotal and authoritarian. However, after his death, Dōgen's school was institutionalized and grew to be one of the most politically and socially powerful movements in later periods.

BUDDHISM IN THE MODERN ERA. As a result of the Ōnin War and the Sengoku period (a period of incessant wars among feudal lords), the political system was destined to undergo formal changes. Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582), Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598), and Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616), the three men who unified the nation, rejected the Ritsuryō system's principle of the mutual dependence of imperial and Buddhist law. The Tokugawa regime (1600–1868) instead adopted neo-Confucianism as the guiding principle of the nation, manipulating Buddhist institutions to strengthen its systems and policies. It maintained strict control over the development, organization, and activities of religious sects. The Tokugawa government continued to recognize and support all the Buddhist schools including those that the Muromachi government had deemed official religions. However, many of its policies toward Buddhism were stimulated by its persecutions of Christianity and its adoption of Confucianism as the state ideology. New sects and doctrinal developments were prohibited, forcing new movements, such as folk Nembutsu to go underground or suffer suppression. Existing schools forfeited their autonomy, and temples, monks, and nuns were institutionalized and routinized within the political structure. In many temples and local temple schools, particularly those associated with Zen, monks studied and taught the Confucian classics.

Along with political and economic modernizations, the Meiji restoration of 1868 brought significant changes to religious institutions. The Meiji government (1868–1912), which attempted to restore the actual rule of the emperor in a modern context, rejected some aspects of the religious policies of the feudal Tokugawa. It rejected the religious institution of Buddhism as a state religion and devised the hitherto

nonexistent State Shintō as a "nonreligious" national cult. The loss of government patronage and the decline in prestige, power, and security experienced by institutionalized sects of Buddhism forced them to cooperate with the government. The various sects worked within the structure of the imperial regime by performing ancestral and life-cycle rituals. However, the absence of government favor also brought about a spiritual awakening within Buddhism. Buddhist intellectuals attempted to integrate Buddhist thought and tradition into the newly acquired Western culture and technology. Throughout the Meiji and into the Shōwa period (1912–), popular Buddhism continued to thrive. Such movements as Kokuchūkai (Nation's Pillar Society), led by the ex-Nichiren priest Tanaka Chigaku, gained popularity in the nationalist fervor of the 1890s. Another folk movement to grow out of Nichiren was the Honmon Butsuryūkō (Association to Exalt the Buddha), founded by the former monk Ōji Nissen and concerned primarily with faith healing. The increased popularity of new religions and lay Buddhist associations such as Sōka Gakkai, Reiyūkai, and Risshō Kōseikai continues in post-World War II Japan.

SEE ALSO Amitābha; Amoghavajra; Buddhism, article on Buddhism in Japan; Dōgen; Enchin; Ennin; Genshin; Hiji; Hōnen; Huayan; Japanese Religions, overview article; Jōdo Shinshū; Jōdoshū; Mādhyamika; Mappō; New Religious Movements, article on New Religious Movements in Japan; Nianfo; Nichiren; Nichirenshū; Saichō; Shingonshū; Shinran; Shōtoku Taishi; Tendaishū; Tiantai; Yogācāra; Zen; Zhenyan; Zhiyi.

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MICHIO ARAKI (1987)
Revised Bibliography

BUDDHISM, SCHOOLS OF: EAST ASIAN BUDDHISM

The Japanese monk Gyōnen (1240–1321 CE) is well-known for his detailed work describing the origins of Buddhist schools and their transmission from India to East Asia. Because Gyōnen's understanding of these schools is clearly defined and is representative, in key respects, of other premodern East Asian sources, it will serve as a useful starting point from which to develop an understanding of the category "school" in the context of East Asian Buddhism. It will also serve as a basis for examining basic questions and relationships modern scholars face when trying to understand the development and transmission of these schools. Gyōnen's definition of "school" is also useful because modern Japanese Buddhist scholarship—a dominant intellectual force in the study of East Asian Buddhism—developed out of the sectarian tradition and institutions of scholar-monks like Gyōnen, and a number of Japanese universities are affiliated with modern Buddhist schools. His work also draws attention to relationships among East Asian schools of Buddhism, as well as to their collective relationship to Indian Buddhist schools, particularly their perceived fidelity to a "pure" or "original" Indian Buddhism.

TRANSMISSION OF BUDDHIST SCHOOLS IN THE "THREE LANDS." Among Gyōnen's collected works are general historical overviews of Buddhist schools and their lineages, including the *Sangoku buppō denzū engi* (Transmission of Buddhism in the Three Lands) and the *Hasshū kōyō* (Essentials of the Eight Schools). The former describes the transmission of Buddhist schools in the "three lands," or *sangoku*, of India, China, and Japan, and the latter details the eight "schools," or *shū*, of Japanese Buddhism. In these and other general works, Gyōnen understands "school" to be a lineage of masters and disciples united by their study of particular texts and doctrines. As such, both works contain detailed lists recounting these texts and doctrines, and describing the central figures from individual schools who have interpreted, lectured on, and propagated them.

In the *Sangoku buppō denzū engi*, Gyōnen identifies thirteen principal schools of Chinese Buddhism, including the Tiantai, Sanlun, and Chan, and traces their "uninterrupted transmission" through the "three lands," beginning with founding Indian figures and patriarchs such as Śākyamuni Buddha and Nāgārjuna, continuing through a line of Indian and Chinese masters, and eventually ending with Japanese teachers. Of these thirteen Chinese schools, he classifies eight as the traditional schools of Japanese Buddhism, which developed in Japan's Nara (710–794 CE) and Heian periods (794–1185 CE).

In these texts, Gyōnen generally uses *shū* (Chin. *zong*, Kor. *chong*) to refer to a school, but Mark Blum notes that he also refers to them as *ryū* ("stream") and *ke* ("house") (2002). Although *shū* is commonly used among premodern East Asian authors, other Chinese terms, often associated with particular schools or groups of schools, can be found: the Chinese character *bu*, "group" or "division," is generally used to refer to the schools of Hīnayāna Buddhism, whereas multiple words including *zong* appear in premodern East Asian sources to indicate the Mahāyāna schools that have predominated in the region. "Gate," "house," and "mountain," for example, are common designations for Chinese Chan, Korean *Son*, and Japanese Zen.

DEFINING "FULL-FLEDGED" CHINESE BUDDHIST SCHOOLS. These semantic problems have been compounded, moreover, not only because these individual words can have multiple meanings, but also because there is a lack of standardization in translation and usage in modern scholarly works. Even a cursory reading of the academic literature reveals scholars generally do not distinguish carefully among a number of terms used to translate *zong* and these other terms, including "school," "sect," "lineage," and "tradition," among others. Leo Pruden, for example, translates the term *shū*, appearing in the title of Gyōnen's *Hasshū kōyō*, as "tradition" (1994), whereas Mark Blum opts instead for "school" (2002). This ambiguity leads Blum to leave *shū* untranslated in some sections of his work, *The Origins and Development of Pure Land Buddhism: A Study and Translation of Gyōnen's Jōdo Hōmon Genrushō*, whereas John McRae adopts "school" in *Seeing through Zen: Encounter, Transformation, and Genealogy in Chinese Chan Buddhism* precisely because its ambiguity fits his interpretive framework.

In his description of Chinese schools of Buddhism in the first edition of *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Stanley Weinstein seeks to clarify some of these ambiguities by distinguishing among three principal meanings of *zong* in premodern Chinese Buddhist sources: a doctrine, the teaching of a text, and a school. He writes that the tendency of scholars to automatically translate *zong* as "school" has produced "persistent misconceptions about what actually constitutes a school in Chinese Buddhism" (p. 257).

As a doctrine, *zong* appears in statements such as "the doctrine of emptiness," or in the *panjiao* systems devised by Chinese Buddhists to rank the large number of sometimes contradictory doctrines they received from South Asia. The second meaning of *zong*, the teaching of a text, is tied to the work of Kumārajīva (344–413 CE), a central figure in the translation of Buddhist texts from Sanskrit into Chinese. The translations of Kumārajīva and later scholar-monks from the fifth and sixth centuries led to the development in China of "exegetical traditions" focusing on particular texts such as the *Dilun*, *Shelun*, and *Dalun*, whose members studied, lectured on, and commented on these works. Weinstein notes that monks of these traditions specialized in the interpretation of a particular text, and thus explicated its *zong*,

which he describes as the “essential doctrine” or “underlying theme.”

From among these exegetical traditions, Weinstein claims that only the Sanlun of Jizang (549–623 CE), which studies the *Dalun* and other texts, approaches what he defines as a “full-fledged school”: “a tradition that traces its origin back to a founder, usually designated ‘first patriarch,’ who is believed to have provided the basic spiritual insights that were then transmitted through an unbroken line of successors or ‘*dharma* heirs’” (p. 260). Because Jizang’s line ended only two generations after his death, however, Weinstein argues that it is only with the emergence of the Tiantai, Huayan, and Chan in the second half of the Tang dynasty (618–907 CE) that such schools could be found.

From among this group, Chan, for example, describes itself as an unbroken lineage of *dharma* heirs that can be traced from the figure of Bodhidharma—considered to be the twenty-eighth Indian patriarch and first figure to teach Chan in China—back to Śākyamuni Buddha. From the figure of Bodhidharma, moreover, Chan genealogical charts trace the development of these schools forward in time through a series of Chinese *dharma* heirs, whose lines were eventually transmitted to Korea and Japan. During Japan’s Kamakura period (1185–1333 CE), Gyōnen’s contemporaries Eisai (1145–1215 CE) and Dōgen (1200–1253 CE) traveled to China where they received certificates attesting their enlightenment and authorizing them to propagate the Linji (J. Rinzai) and Caodong (J. Sōto) Chan lineages. After returning to Japan, they transmitted these teachings to disciples who thus continued the tradition as an uninterrupted lineage of Japanese *dharma* heirs.

But even if the definition of school is restricted as Weinstein suggests, he and other scholars point out that the independent identities of Chan and these other schools were often after the fact creations of the disciples of their purported founders, sometimes a number of generations removed from the “first patriarch.” Thus, although they may be described as discrete lineages by later members, and often accepted as such by scholar-monks like Gyōnen, these schools were not necessarily seen in this way during the lifetime of the founder and possibly not even for generations thereafter. Despite these and other issues taken up below, critics claim that modern scholars have often accepted the descriptions of these schools in the work of Gyōnen and other premodern sources at face value, and have thus understood them to be self-contained entities that have been “transmitted without interruption” and that can be clearly distinguished from the doctrines and practices of other schools of Buddhism, other religious traditions, and society at large.

“TEXTUALITY OVERRIDES ACTUALITY.” Gregory Schopen asserts that the tendency to confuse such accounts in premodern sources like those of Gyōnen for actual conditions and practices has led to a situation in which “textuality overrides actuality” (p. 7). Schopen claims that texts serve as unreliable witnesses to the actual behavior of Buddhist monas-

tics because they often reflect sectarian commitments and polemical agendas, and are thus likely to present idealized accounts of particular schools, as well as the Buddhist community more generally. In response to these perceived deficiencies, Schopen has turned to the study of epigraphic data, and has produced results that challenge widely accepted images of monastic behavior. He asserts, for example, that this evidence proves that Buddhist monks and nuns in India held money, transferred merit, and engaged in other activities that contravene the rules of monastic conduct or that do not accord with basic tenets of Buddhism.

Although Schopen’s work centers on South Asia, other studies of East Asian schools of Buddhism reveal a similar disjuncture between idealized accounts of monastic behavior and actual practices. This body of scholarship covers a broad range of topics, including Bernard Faure’s research on Buddhism and sexuality, as well as Brian Victoria’s work on the connection between Zen and war. In *Zen at War*, Victoria argues that Zen Buddhist institutions and intellectuals helped create the ideological justification for the Japanese military’s aggression on the East Asian continent from the early to mid-1900s. He asserts that D.T. Suzuki and other such figures forged a close connection between the principles of Zen and the “warrior spirit,” or *bushidō*, and that these ideas were incorporated into the military’s rhetoric portraying its aggression as a “just war” meant to liberate East Asians from Western colonial domination, and unite them as “Asian brethren” within the Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere. In *Pruning the Bodhi Tree: The Storm over Critical Buddhism* (1997), Hakamaya Noriaki and Matsu-moto Shirō make a similar argument of a close connection among Zen, Japanese nationalism, and the military, and also assert that Sōtō Zen institutions and leaders have contributed to social discrimination in Japan against the *burakumin*, Koreans, and women, among other minority groups.

THE “CLASSICAL PARADIGM” OF BUDDHIST STUDIES.

Other studies seek to reveal the processes by which commonly accepted images of Buddhist schools have been shaped by the assumptions, methods, and frames of reference of traditional Buddhist studies, often described as its “classical paradigm.” Frank Reynolds states that this paradigm generally adopts “a positivistic view of historical methods and historical facts” (1999, p. 462), and, like Gyōnen, takes lineages, doctrines, and texts, which are often abstracted from their historical and social contexts, to be the central defining elements of Buddhist schools. Reynolds adds that this approach focuses on “origins,” and thus privileges Sanskrit and Pali texts, as well as Indian schools and doctrines, as the chief arbiters for judging the legitimacy of non-Indian texts and forms of Buddhism, including those of East Asia. Much like Gyōnen’s focus on “lands” in the *sangoku* paradigm, moreover, modern scholars often rely on “nation” as a key frame of reference for understanding the transmission and development of these schools, and are thus concerned with distinguishing among “national” varieties of East Asian Buddhism, or with judging the legitimacy of East Asian Buddhist

schools, texts, and doctrines as a group based on their perceived fidelity to Indian “originals.”

Robert Buswell asserts that the institutional history of North American Buddhist studies, an outgrowth of “area studies,” and other factors have contributed to the former tendency, and that this focus on the distinctiveness of modern, national varieties of East Asian Buddhism inhibits a fuller understanding of premodern East Asian Buddhist schools and their members. By viewing these schools anachronistically through the lens of the modern notion of nation, observers may fail to recognize the complex of factors through which premodern East Asian Buddhists would have “imagined” their individual identities, identities which Buswell notes were connected simultaneously to both translocal Sino-Indian Buddhist “macroculture” and to local relationships and commitments. He claims that these tendencies have also reinforced what have been historically uncertain geographic borders and precluded academic “cross-fertilization,” thereby preventing observers from viewing the development of these East Asian schools as part of broader processes of intercultural interaction. Buswell adds that this “national” approach has become so thoroughly ingrained in the academic training of Buddhist studies that it has rarely been questioned, and scholars thus “continue to hypostatize into inviolate traditions complex religious phenomena that involved multivalent levels of cultural interaction and symbiosis and intricate series of personal identities” (p. 73).

NIHONJINRON AND JAPANESE SECTARIAN SCHOLARSHIP. The structure of the *sangoku* paradigm also draws attention to the relations among the schools of these East Asian nations, particularly the differential treatment accorded Chinese Buddhist schools relative to those of the Korean peninsula. Whereas Gyōnen ascribes a central position to China as the bridge between Japanese and Indian Buddhism, he does not describe Korean schools of Buddhism in any detail. Although he does note that Buddhism was transmitted to Japan from the Korean peninsula in the sixth century CE, and that it was propagated by Shōtoku Taishi (574–622 CE) whose Buddhist tutors were peninsular monks, these schools were not seen to be of sufficient value to be included in the *sangoku* paradigm. And, whereas Blum makes a reasoned argument that Gyōnen’s omission in this regard was linguistic—that is, Chinese, but not Korean, was a sacred, canonical language of Buddhism—rather than racial, this omission is complicated by the history of modern relations that exists between Japan and its East Asian neighbors, particularly the events described by Victoria.

Some critics contend that common images of these “national” East Asian Buddhist schools have been shaped in fundamental ways by Japan’s racial attitudes and theories and by the intellectual paradigms and social structures of Japanese Buddhist scholarship. This body of work examines, for example, the ways in which the notion of a unified and unchanging Japanese “essence,” often referred to as *nihonjinron* (“discourse on Japaneseness”), informs studies in a broad

spectrum of Japanese cultural areas, including the works of National Learning (J. *kokugaku*), the Kyoto school of philosophy, and Zen and other schools of Buddhism.

A number of such studies also question how the institutional affiliations and agendas of Japanese Buddhist scholars, as well as the requirements for progressing within their scholarly communities, have delimited the range of acceptable topics and interpretive methods. T. Griffith Foulk writes that whereas Western scholars of Japanese Buddhism are deeply indebted to the research, guidance, and methods of their Japanese counterparts or mentors, there is a growing awareness that the latter’s scholarship often reflects the interests of sectarian institutions that developed out of those of Gyōnen and other such premodern monk-scholars, and which he describes as normative traditions. These observers claim that such interests have led scholars to focus on the history of particular Japanese Buddhist schools and lineages, as well as on the thought and lives and of their central figures, and thereby limited the breadth of scholarly inquiry by isolating scholars of Buddhism from other academic disciplines. The influence of these theories and methods extends, moreover, to the study of Chinese and Korean Buddhist schools. In the case of the former, for example, McRae, Sharf, and others point out that understanding of Chan and other Chinese Buddhist schools has been deeply influenced by these Japanese methods and attitudes.

KOREAN BUDDHIST IDENTITY AND “CULTURAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY.” To overcome the limits of these received methods, and to thereby bring the study of Buddhism into a broader-based discourse in the humanities, a number of scholars have applied the methods and theories of outside disciplines such as archaeology, anthropology, cultural studies, and literary criticism. These efforts include studies that investigate the interests and processes by which these premodern narratives have been created and transmitted, and identify the ideological and other functions they have played in the process of inventing schools as part of tradition.

One such example is Buswell’s study, “Imagining ‘Korean Buddhism’: The Invention of a National Religious Tradition,” which offers an alternative angle of vision for understanding the development of Korean Buddhist tradition by incorporating a number of these methods and theories, including Benedict Anderson’s “imagined communities.” In so doing, he reveals the limits of the traditional paradigm’s focus on “nation” by showing the complexity of Buddhist identity, particularly, the ways in which premodern Buddhist monastics of the Korean peninsula imagined themselves as actors within a number of translocal and local relationships and commitments.

Buswell claims that for much of the history of Buddhism on the Korean peninsula, it would have been “patently absurd” for monastics to view themselves in national terms as there was “no independent sense of a ‘Korean’ national tradition of Buddhism distinct from the broader Sino-Indian tradition during the premodern era” (p. 85). Rather, their

identities would have been defined by sectarian commitments, ordination lineages, functional positions (disciples of A, teachers of B, or as proselytists, doctrinal specialists, meditators, and so on), or local tribal or clan membership. Just as important, however, is that these monastics would also have imagined themselves to be participants in a pan-Asian Buddhist “macroculture.” Buswell notes that these groups tried to integrate peninsular Buddhism into this macroculture by forging connections to India’s King Aśoka, the Dragon King, and other translocal Buddhist models and authorizing mechanisms.

At the same time, however, these monastics actively sought to create a sense of their own “cultural self-sufficiency” by “inventing” legitimate local practices, figures, and texts, including the *Vajrasamādhi-sūtra*. Buswell asserts that the narrative describing the discovery of this text by a Silla envoy in the palace of the Dragon King was meant to establish the self-sufficiency and legitimacy of peninsular Buddhism relative to China by proving it was no longer in need of a constant influx of their texts and teachers. The *Vajrasamādhi-sūtra* also became a basic text in the development of Chinese Chan, and thus offers an important example of reversing the established direction of the flow of religious and cultural products from China eastward.

JAPANESE “CULTURAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY.” Even in Japan where governmental authorities have often exerted greater control over Buddhist schools compared to China and Korea, the identities of individual monastics have not always been clearly defined along either strict national or sectarian lines. Although state control created greater institutional separation and sectarian awareness—evident in the harsh and sometimes violent sectarian debates of Gyōnen’s Kamakura period—Buswell’s approach is still instructive. Gyōnen, for example, is known primarily for his affiliation with the Kegon and Vinaya schools, but also “imagined” himself as a Brahmā, or Buddhist “striver,” associated with teachers from the Pure Land and other schools. And much like the identities of premodern Korean monks described by Buswell, Gyōnen defined himself in both translocal and local terms. According to Blum, Gyōnen saw himself recording the transmission of transhistorical Buddhist truth embedded in “homogeneous time,” but that manifested in particular times and places—which Blum describes as the “particularity of the Japanese experience” (2002, p. 90). Within this “particularity,” Gyōnen imagined his identity in terms of his sectarian commitments to the Kegon school and position at Tōdaiji temple, as well as in functional terms—particularly as a commentator on the *Sangyō-gisho*, a collection of three Buddhist commentaries attributed to Japan’s Shōtoku Taishi.

This process described by Buswell of establishing and bolstering local “cultural self-sufficiency” is evident in the valorization and transmission of these commentaries, and in the evolution of the figure of Shōtoku as father of Japanese Buddhism and Buddhist exegete. Shōtoku is depicted in accounts from the eighth century as a devout practitioner and

generous patron of Buddhism, who later was linked to important Japanese Buddhist figures such as Kūkai (774–835 CE), Saichō (767–822 CE), and Shinran (1173–1263 CE), and was identified as the “first patriarch” or central figure in a number of Japanese Buddhist schools. These accounts relate that his keen intellectual interest and understanding of Buddhist doctrine, honed under the instruction of continental tutors, led to lectures at court on the *Śrīmālādevī Sūtra* and the *Lotus Sūtra*. These lectures are thought to constitute the basis for the composition of the *Shōmangyō-gisho* and the *Hokke-gisho*, two of the three commentaries attributed to him.

As Shōtoku’s image evolved and religious authority expanded, his human ties to continental teachers were downplayed, whereas his synchronic ties to translocal Buddhist figures increased. Over time, Shōtoku came to be seen as the reincarnation of a number of central Buddhist figures such as Śākyamuni Buddha, Queen Śrīmālā, Avalokiteśvara, and the Chinese Tiantai monk Huisi (515–577 CE). Among these previous births, Shōtoku’s former life as Queen Śrīmālā of India naturally authorized him to compose the *Shōmangyō-gisho* as it was an exegesis on the very text that she had proclaimed in Ayodhyā through the eloquence granted her by the Buddha himself.

The Japanese historian Tsuda Sōkichi argues that the compilers of these early Japanese texts sought to remake Yamato, or early Japan, in the image of China as described in its dynastic histories, and that accounts of Shōtoku’s lectures were fabricated as part of this greater effort. Tsuda believes that Shōtoku’s lectures, as well as other aspects of his Buddhist identity, were modeled on those given by Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty (r. 502–549 CE) and other Chinese sovereigns. Although Shōtoku’s authorship of the *Sangyō-gisho* is contested by Tsuda and a small number of other modern Japanese scholars, it has been seen by most observers as a crucial event in Japanese Buddhist history that served to create the “cultural self-sufficiency” of local Japanese schools and traditions. Regardless of the authenticity of their attribution to Shōtoku, they were accepted as genuine and were studied and transmitted by Gyōnen and other eminent Japanese Buddhist figures. Although Shōtoku’s Buddhist teachers from the Korean peninsula were not written out of the historical record, there was a gradual diminution in their influence on his development as a Buddhist practitioner and exegete. Over time, a body of myths emerged that portrayed Shōtoku in an equal, and sometimes superior, position to his teachers.

Two of the three commentaries begin with a declaration stating that the text is the work of King Jōgū (Shōtoku Taishi) “of the Great Land of Yamato,” and that it was not composed by anyone from across the sea. In 772 CE, a group of Buddhist monks accompanied a diplomatic mission to Tang China, where they presented copies of the *Shōmangyō-gisho* and *Hokke-gisho* to their Chinese hosts as proof of Shōtoku’s profound understanding of Buddhist doctrine and the high

standard of the traditions they represented. Based on this copy of the *Shōmangyō-gisho*, moreover, the Tang dynasty monk Mingkong (dates unknown) composed the *Shengman-jing shuyi sichao*, which was later copied and brought back to Japan by the Tendai school's Ennin (794–864 CE) and cited as proof of the value of the *Shōmangyō-gisho* and Shōtoku's greatness as a Buddhist exegete. In a postscript to a copy of Mingkong's commentary presented by the Japanese monk Eizon (1201–1290 CE) to Hōryūji in March 1256, he wrote that the text was by “an eminent monk from the Great [Land of] Tang” and that it added prestige to the “sublime text” of Japan's Shōtoku Taishi.

THE “ENCOUNTER PARADIGM.” Sharf asserts that Chinese Buddhism has often been viewed by modern scholars through the lens of the “encounter paradigm,” in which its schools, texts, and doctrines have been understood as the product of a protracted “encounter” between “Indian Buddhism” and “Chinese civilization.” He traces the formalization of this paradigm to the work of Arthur Wright, whose study, *Buddhism in Chinese History*, divides this process into four distinctive periods: preparation, domestication, independent growth, and appropriation. Although subsequent scholarship has argued over the details, Sharf contends that this view still prevails, and cites the influential work of Richard Robinson, which compares the Chinese Sanlun school of Jizang to its Indian “original” and finds the former to be, in some ways, “wanting” (p. 288, n. 15). Sharf believes that this paradigm, with its emphasis on “domestication and transformation,” has often led scholars to compare Chinese Buddhism to an imagined sense of “original” Indian Buddhism, and thus to question whether the Chinese “got it right” (pp. 7–11). This attitude has led in turn to suspicions of Chinese “apocryphal” texts, like the influential *Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith*, and the consequent devaluation of the schools and doctrines of East Asian Buddhism that developed in reliance on them.

These attitudes are evident in the arguments of the Japanese scholars Hakamaya Noriaki and Matsumoto Shirō, the central figures of “Critical Buddhism,” who harshly criticize a group of related Buddhist doctrines, including Buddha nature, *tathāgatagarbha*, and original enlightenment. These doctrines have been particularly popular in East Asian schools and have served as central topics in a number of Chinese Buddhist texts, including the *Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith*. In his article, “The Doctrine of *Tathāgata-garbha* Is Not Buddhist,” Matsumoto rejects these doctrines because, he claims, they posit an essential, underlying substratum to reality, which contravenes basic Buddhist tenets such as dependent origination, emptiness, and no-self.

In “Critical Buddhism and Returning to the Sources,” Dan Lusthaus states that this intellectual movement was an inevitable development that emerged, in part, because Japanese scholars of Buddhism like Hakamaya and Matsumoto have begun paying greater attention to Tibetan and Sanskrit materials, and reevaluating East Asian Buddhist schools and

teachings in light of these efforts. Lusthaus contends that Chinese Buddhists of the Tang dynasty deliberately attempted to separate Chinese Buddhism from Indian interpretations and methodologies. He identifies the choice by the Chinese of Paramārtha's (499–569 CE) sixth-century translations of Buddhist texts from Sanskrit into Chinese over those of Xuanzang's (600–664 CE) in the following century as a key moment in Chinese Buddhist history, a moment in which “East Asian Buddhism returned with deliberateness and passion to its own earlier misconceptions instead of returning to the trajectory of Indian Buddhism from which it believed it had been spawned” (p. 35). As such, Chinese Buddhism paid little attention to Indian Buddhist philosophers and logicians, and turned instead to a “Chinese hierarchical system and a crypto-Taoist dialectical reasoning” (p. 38).

This debate over the possible deviation of East Asian schools from “original” or “pure” Buddhism represents a basic division in the field over how to view the processes of the transmission and assimilation of Buddhism in local conditions. Whereas the Critical Buddhists and others focus on the perceived deviation or degeneration of Buddhism as it has been transmitted over time and space, others contend that such attempts to reconstruct “original” Indian Buddhism face not only insurmountable hermeneutical obstacles but also replicate the very “essentialization” that they decry. Peter Gregory responds to the arguments of Hakamaya and Matsumoto in his essay, “Is Critical Buddhism Really Critical,” by invoking the logic of Buddhist tenets, writing, “Only when we acknowledge that Buddhism lacks any defining, unalterable essence (an *ātman*, so to speak) and is itself the product of a complex set of interdependent and ever-changing conditions (*pratītyasamutpāda*), will we have a proper framework for understanding the process of its historical and cultural transformation and recognizing our own location in that stream we would call the ‘tradition’” (1997, p. 297).

Gregory and others argue that determining “true Buddhism” is a normative, theological issue, and scholars should not simply ignore or dismiss the beliefs of East Asian Buddhist figures, like Gyōnen, who were convinced of the authenticity of the teachings and texts they engaged and transmitted. In a similar way, Sharf writes that his study is “an argument for treating Chinese Buddhism as the legitimate, if misunderstood scion of sinic culture. Whatever else it may be, Buddhism is the product of Buddhists, and the Buddhists in the case at hand were Chinese” (p. 2). He argues that instead of trying to establish fixed or normative definitions of basic categories of Buddhism, scholars are better served by trying to understand their shifting and often hazy borders as well as their “rhetorical deployments.” Sharf suggests that the Chinese schools of Buddhism detailed by Gyōnen are better understood as “organizational categories applied after the fact by medieval Buddhist historians and bibliographers” (p. 7). And the term “Buddhism,” he writes, functions as a “placeholder,” and pure Buddhism is “an ana-

lytic abstraction posited by Buddhist polemicists, apologists, reformers, and now scholars" (p. 16).

SEE ALSO Buddhism, overview article and articles on Buddhism in China, Buddhism in Japan, and Buddhism in Korea; Buddhist Meditation, article on East Asian Buddhist Meditation.

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MARK DENNIS (2005)

BUDDHIST BOOKS AND TEXTS

This entry consists of the following articles:

CANON AND CANONIZATION
CANON AND CANONIZATION—VINAYA
RITUAL USES OF BOOKS
TRANSLATION
EXEGESIS AND HERMENEUTICS

BUDDHIST BOOKS AND TEXTS: CANON AND CANONIZATION

The canonical literature of Buddhism has a number of characteristics that make it unique among the religious scriptures of the world. First, the literature is not contained within a single canon: various regional, linguistic, and sectarian divisions have brought about the compilation of a number of separate canons. The scriptural collections that can be identified by language (e.g., Chinese, Tibetan, and Pali) vary from one another in significant ways, with few texts that found across all traditions. In addition to the multiplicity of canons, the various versions are marked by their sizes. Each canon