

What is Religion

Religion is a response to:

- the human condition, namely **anomie** (meaning a lack of meaning)
- chaos
- death

Religion responds to it through putting us in touch with the sacred:

- ultimate in what is real
- ultimate value
- ultimate meaning
- ultimate wholeness

It explains the relationship from my life, to others, to the world.

Religion connects us to what is sacred through:

- myth
- symbol
- ritual

Myths are narratives or stories that touch the core of our being (meanings and values in our lives).

Symbols are a shorthand way of communicating profound information. Connecting complex ideas with an image for communication.

Ritual many kinds of rituals to connect with the sacred, recreate things, rights of passage,

What Makes a Religion

- Theoretical - what is said or written
 - doctrine - what people believe about the sacred
 - philosophy - applies logic and consequences to beliefs
 - myths - provide narrative to those beliefs
- Practical - our action in response to our beliefs
 - ritual - things we do to commemorate/acknowledge/recreate the sacred and our connection to it
 - ethical - how we behave in connection to our religion
- Sociological
 - community - provides support and the way that tradition is passed on

Methodology

We approach religion as a human phenomenon.

Religion can be:

- study
- describe
- analyze

We can provide a picture of the main elements of a tradition such that believers of it will recognize it.

We can examine how religions can remain living.

Hinduism I: Early History and Basic Concepts

February 3, 2017

Hinduism: The Term

Hinduism is an umbrella term. Some are elite others are devotional. Many practices are regional. Hinduism is a very flexible religious tradition, adapting and incorporating many traditions, and tries to provide a path for everyone.

A **hindu** is someone who:

- accepts the vedas as authoritative
- accepts the caste system (not applicable outside india)
- self defined

The Indus Valley Civilization

Centered around harrapa and mohenjo-daro

- Active 3000-1500BCE
- urban centers
- streets in grid pattern
- indoor plumbing
- governed by theocracy

Symbols are found here that will later be incorporated

- Water - there are large tanks throughout the city meaning water was used in religious practices
- Fertility - female, male, animal, and nature symbols
- Proto-Shiva - the god of all dualities, a very thin figure seated in meditation with a helmet of horns in between the horns are vines, it has an erect phallus

Indo-Europeans

The term for the mass migration into india around 1500BCE. At this time the indus valley civilization was in decline and were probably overcome by the incomers through war. Some scholars think they conquered through assimilation instead of war.

- about 12 tribes
- cattle herders (pastoralists)
- three classes, warriors, priests, herders
- the **Arryans** are the tribe that settled into india

The religion of the indo-europeans was called the vedic religion because they are based on the Four Vedas or the **Veda** (this is the four Vedas and the three commentaries attached to each).

The Four Vedas

The Vedas were heard by the elders.

Rig

- hymns of praise to gods and goddesses
- oldest and most important

Sama

- liturgical arrangement, organizes the order in which the hymns should be sung

Yajur

- outlines the formulas used during sacrifice
- outlines where the formulas are to be used
- describes how a sacrifice should be performed

Atharva

- The most recent
- day to day needs of people
- spells and charms
- information on medicine

Vedic Religion

Vedic religion focused on worship of the gods through sacrifice, petition, and praise, in order to reap benefits both now and in future life.

They believed that the breath (or **atma**) lived on after the body so they believed in heaven after death.

Most vedic gods were nature figures:

- **Ushas** the dawn
- **Varuna** cosmic order (brought good or evil to humans)
- **Agni** fire

Sacrifice was very important. Sacrifice is what brings order out of chaos. Human order is based on the sacrificial order so human and cosmic order are eternal and define.

The creation of the world and human order is outlined in the **Hymn of Parusha** from the rig veda. There is more than one creation myth, but this is the biggest. Purusha was a great being where all living and non living things are a quarter of him and the heavens are three quarters. The gods sacrificed him out of which the veda was formed along with all animals.

- mouth = brahman
- arms = kshatriya
- thighs = vaishyas
- feet = shudra
- mind = moom
- eye = sun
- mouth = indra and agni
- breath = wind
- navel = atmosphere

- head = heaven
- feet = earth
- ears = quarters

Through sacrifice:

- the world was made
- the world is sustained

Gods and humans work together to maintain order.

The Three Commentaries

Each Veda has three commentaries on it.

- Barhamana
- Aranyaka
- Upanishad

The commentaries comment on the meaning of the text. They keep the tradition living because the understanding of the text can change throughout history.

Brahmanas These were written in 1000-800 BCE. These were ritual manuals and laid out the powers of the priest, but they also contain speculations on the nature of the religion. It asks if there are many gods or only one and what is it that is important about the sacrifice.

Aranyakas These written in 1000-800 BCE. They work as a bridge between the brahmanas and the upanishads. Commonly they are referred to as the forest books because they speculate on things on the part of hermits that went to live in the forest to think about these things.

Upanishads Most important of the commentaries. Often called the Vedanta (end of the Vedas). They contain the culmination of the speculation about humans, the cosmos, the sacrifice and their relation to each other. Here we find many ideas that are not found in other texts. For instance sacrifice is internalized and cosmologized. This means that the sacrifice is transformed into inner asstetic meditation. Mediation creates a fire inside thus the sacrifice is internal. What happens within a person has a consequence in the cosmos connecting the 2.

Samsara and Karma

The Upanishads represent the culmination of brahmanical thought. Over time a notion developed that life and death are not a permanent thing. We eventually fall from heaven to be reborn. This is called **samsara**. In the west reincarnation is considered a positive thing (we can go back and do better this time). With samsara the repeated birth/death is a bad thing. Ideally we want to stay in heaven instead of being reborn. Think of having the same thing over and over, no matter how good that thing is you'd eventually hate it.

Karma propells the wheel of samsara. **Karma** means act or deed or performance. It has different meanings for the various religions.

- Vedic - the act of sacrifice
- Hindu - following your role or duty, called **dharm**
- Buddhists, Janes and Hindu - being a moral person

Karma is treated as a law of cause and effect. The effects for karma is consistent to the deeds you did in your life. If you were a scrouge in your life then in the future you will be in need of charity.

Karma doesn't determine your life or rebirth, it conditions it. Think of it as setting the parameters for your existence. You can still do what you want in life, but Karma makes it easier or harder to do so. It limits your potential (think of a short person trying to play basketball). Karma controls where we begin (physical, social, and character conditions). Karma also controls your luck throughout life.

Basically we are all trapped on a wheel (samsara) powered by our past actions (karma). We are reborn into three spheres:

- superhuman realm: where the gods live
- the realm of humans and animals
- the realm of ghosts and demons

The gods can never get off the wheel. They are simply taking advantage of their good karma at this moment to be reborn as gods. Animals also cannot get off the wheel, they are suffering the effects of bad karma. Only humans can get off the wheel. This is why human life is considered rare and precious.

A popular story is that a human rebirth is as rare as a turtle that lives on the bottom of the ocean that only surfaces once every thousands years surfaced at the exact moment a yoke dropped down putting it on the turtle randomly.

We should focus on doing actions that will improve our karma. A special kind of knowledge can free us from samsara.

Brahman, Atman, and Moksha

Atman = Brahman.

Brahman originally referred to the words used in the sacrifice. Through the speculative period it came to mean the one reality. This refers to the power that stands behind everything, and the reality that permeated everything.

Atman originally meant breath. The atman is what goes to heaven after death. Eventually it came to be understood as the soul or essence of a person, their true self.

Brahman is the cosmic soul and atman is the individual soul, thus these two are the same,

Brahman is the one power; the source of all.

Story A boy went away to school and when he comes home he believes he knows more than his father. His father asks him if he has learned an instruction containing many paradoxes (where the unlearned becomes learned, unheard heard, and so on). His father explains that through a lump of clay knowledge of all clay may be learned. The modification is only through speech (basically its only the name we give things, we must learn its true self). In the beginning this world was just being, one only with a second. Some say that in the beginning there was nonbeing but how could being come from nothing? The being thought to self, may I be many and may I procreate and thus made fire. Fire did the same thing and made water. Water did the same and made food. Then being wanted to make names and forms (let everything be tripartite). When you keep breaking things to their essence we find the essence that they come from and it is this that we are all made of. This is the one, the brahman.

Monism is the concept of one reality

Tat Tvam Asi - that you are

Moksha - knowing that atman and brahman are one at the core of your being brings you freedom from the wheel.

Jivamukti - a freed soul, one that has attained moksha, when this soul dies atman merges with brahman

Summary

The speculative period of the brahmanas and upanishads changes ideas about sacrifice, the nature of reality, and the goal of life. Sacrifice is internalized and cosmologized. Samsara-Karma-Moksha, new ideas about reality are introduced. Brahman the one reality (the cosmic soul) is introduced. The cosmic soul is the human soul (Atman = Brahman). Understanding this unity brings moksha and breaks you out of samsara. Proper actions (gaining good karma) can bring us closer to this but will not get us fully to moksha.

Defintions

Veda

samsara

karma

moksha

Brahman

Atman

Rig

Sama

Atharva

Ushas

varuna

Agni

Aryan

Purusha Sukta

Brahmana

Aranyaka

Upanishad

TEXTBOOK CH3

Hinduism II: Classical, Medieval, and Modern Periods

February 3, 2017

Classical Period

Yogasutras and Dharmasutras

Classical Period

lasted 400 BCE - 400 AD showed a bunch of new texts come into play.

Up to this point the collection of texts used were called the **shruti** (meaning what is heard) and consisted of:

- rig veda
- sama veda
- yajur veda
- atharva veda
- brahmanas
- aranyakas
- upanishads

The new texts to form during the classical period are called the **smriti** (meaning what is remembered). These have less authority than the veda but are far more accessible. They develop on earlier ideas and form new ones. Here there develop more paths to moksha. They consist of:

- yogasutras
- dharmasutras
- epics
 - bhagavad-gita
 - ramayana
- puranas
- tantras

Yogasutras

These were compiled by **Paranjali**. He organizes and systemizes the existing material about the meditative tradition. They emphasize withdrawing from society, meditation, asceticism, and the value of knowledge when attaining moksha.

Dharmasutras

Dharma means duty, these texts talk about the duties of each class in society. The social order is based on eternal order and layed out in the purusha sukta. The dharmasutras codify the duties of each class mentioned in the purusha sukta. Birth is added to class which evolves into the caste system. The most famous of the dharmasutras is **The Law Code of Manu**.

Ramayana

Most important of the new literature are the epics. These are collections of stories with religious meaning making them the most accessible texts for all. The heroes provide models for life and devotion.

Ramayana is the story of Rama a righteous ruler and Sita the perfect wife. Rama gets banished to the forest due to politics. His brother and wife go with him. Sita doesn't have to go but insists. Sita gets kidnapped by Ravana (a demon). Eventually Rama wins her back. He returns to take back his kingship. His subjects speculate about how she was captured by Ravana and if she had been faithful to Rama. Sita undergoes a test of her virtue. She makes a vow of truth and stands in the middle of a fire and doesn't get burned. Eventually people start speculating again. Rama needs the loyalty of his people but they are questioning his honor due to the rumors around his wife. He knows that she has been loyal, but his duty comes first so he banishes her.

The moral of this is duty before desire.

Bagavad-Gita

The second part of the epics is called the **Mahabharata** and this core of this is called the **Bhagavad-Gita**. The main moral of this is that action (namely selfless action) is better than no action. It lays out three paths for action.

In it **Arjuna** is faced with a dilemma. He is the great hero for the pandavas which are at war against the kuravas about who should rule the country. Before the largest battle of the war Arjuna asks to go to the middle of the field to see the battle lines and armies on both sides. His charioteer is Krishna (an avatara of Vishnu responsible for moral order). He looks at his enemies and sees all these people on the battle field (teachers, sons, friends, so on). Seeing this he decides that he does not wish to fight. He realizes these people are very important members of society and wonders what will happen to society if these people are all killed. Due to this he refuses to do his duty as a warrior.

The main content of the Bhagavad-Gita is a dialog between Arjuna and Krishna. Krishna corrects Arjuna's misunderstandings:

- Arjuna mistakenly believes that anyone can kill or be killed, he says that the atma is the eternal soul and cannot be killed
- Arjuna wonders what will happen to society once these people are killed, he says the lord set up this social arrangement of society so Arjuna should not question it.
- Arjuna is a warrior so he should do his duty (to fight), if Arjuna performs his duty he can make spiritual progress (do so without thought of reward, selflessly)
- Arjuna's duty can be considered a gift to god, an act of devotion

This lays out the path of action and devotion. Scholars believe this is a response to a historical event. Many young people were effected by the rise of other religious groups (like Janes and Buddhists) that advocated withdrawing from society. Too many people were withdrawing from society which was threatening the social order. By laying out the paths of action and devotion it allows people to make spiritual progress while still maintaining society.

The Three Paths

The path of knowledge, this is the path described in the Upanishads and Yogasutras. We retire to an isolated place to do yoga and meditate in order to gain knowledge on the oneness between Atma and Brahman.

The path of action, it is better to stay in society and perform your duty selflessly than to withdraw and follow the path of knowledge (only few can take that).

The path of devotion (this is the one that the Bhagavad-Gita prefers), is total devotion to one's god. This is another way of selflessness, everything in your life becomes submerged in love of god. Devotion to god can raise someone's karma.

Summary

Each group of texts focus on one aspect of Hindu identity:

- Yogasutras: withdrawal, knowledge, individual fulfilment
- Dharmasutras: duty, social order, cosmic order
- Epic: something for the human heart, devotion, love of god (reciprocal love)

The main message of the classical period of hinduism is that it provides a path for people of all abilities and classes.

Medieval Hinduisim

This is 400-1800 CE. This shows the rise of **bhakti**, meaning devotion. This comes from the Bhagavad-Gita. A new set of texts also come forth here, called the Puranas which provide a history and proper methods of worship for specific gods. The most notable are the Vishnu and Krishna puranas. The most popular are the stories of Rama and Krishna. They are exemplars of a loving relationship with god.

Devotional Groups tend to fall into two categories. The **Vaishnavites** worship the avatars of Vishnu. The **Shaivites** worship the avatars of Shiva. A subgroup of shaivites are the **lingayats** (called because they wear a linga, icon for shiva's linga on their necks) also known as the Virashiva and they reject the caste system. This period also has a rise for the goddess Shakti (Shiva's powerhouse). She is the female aspect to Shiva, but is also a goddess in her own right. She has manifestations known as Devi, Kali, and Durga. People devoted to Shakti are called the **Shaktas**.

Chaitanya was a notable person during this period (1486-1533). He was responsible for a major revival of Krishna worship and began the religious practice of publicly singing and dancing, called **Kirtan**. This got carried to the west in the 1960's called the Hare-Krishnas, their correct name was International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON).

Medieval Philosophy

6 schools emerged during this time to rationalize and systematize the earlier teachings.

Samkhya was a school and provided the basis for yoga and the Jain religion. It is a philosophy of dualism, there are two equally real entities (matter and spirit). The spirit is trapped in the matter so this school looks to liberate the consciousness from the matter. In order to stop the wheel of samsara you need to liberate the soul from matter.

Advaita Vedanta is the most influential school. A famous philosopher from this school was Shankara (788-820) who derived the equation A=B. He also distinguished between two types of Brahman. Nirguna Brahman meaning Brahman without attributes, the true Brahman (the highest manifestation). The secondary form of Brahman was Saguna Brahman meaning Brahman with attributes. This would be the manifestations of the Vishnu, Shiva, and Shakti, and their avatars. The other gods were aspects of Brahman, but these gods ARE Brahman. Liberation is found when one dies and the Atman joins Brahman.

Visitadvaita also contained a very influential philosopher named Ramanuja(1017-1137). He disagreed with Shankara and thought that Saguna Brahman was the highest manifestation or Brahman. This provided the foundation for the devotional movement. He also believed that was a slight distinction between god and atma after death so that the soul could continue in eternal adoration to god. For Ramanujan, Brahman was a huge body made up of souls allowing the dead to continue in adoration of god.

Dvaita Vedanta was founded by Madhva. He believed that there was an eternal distinction between the self and God. He expanded on Ramanuja's distinction. For him the self and god had always and would always be separate.

Mimamsa is a school very popular in India and not the west. This argues for the eternality of the Vedas and provide the philosophical foundations for the importance of ritual and duty for liberation.

Nyaya school of logic.

Vaisheshika was an atomistic school. Believing that the world was created by atoms.

The above two schools saw logic and cosmology as a way to liberation.

Tantra

This focuses on Shakti and evolved in the medieval age. Tantra believes that moksha can be attained through ritual and yoga centered on shakti's power. All tantra is based on a correspondance between the macro and microcosms. Macrocosm is the sacred universe and the microcosm is the human body. The body is a sacred geography with certain cosmic centers known as chakras. The purpose of tantra is to unite the macro and microcosm. Doing this unites the devine and human, male and female, and unites shiva and shakti. The practice of this focuses on activating the sacred forces in the body through ritual and yoga. Ultimately we want to unite intelligence and creative energy.

Mandelas Another way to unite the micro and macrocosm is through **mandelas**. These are drawings of the sacred universe. They can also be considered as the temple or palace as the home of a god. Drawing a mandela is a religious practice. We want to unite the drawing of the universe (mandela) with our inner drawing of the universe.

Mantras These are sacred sounds. Some of them are words with meaning or verses and some are meaningless sounds. They do not have to make gramatical or intellectional sense. The sounds made when reciting mantras if said in the right tone can unite with the sound of the cosmos. Aum is the most famous mantra representign the primordeal sound.

Rituals Right handed practice includes mandelas, mantras, and yogas. The left handed practice is only for a restricted number of practitioners as it is very dangerous. This is because it uses items that are considered poluted in hindu ritual. The five m's (all words begin with m in sanskrit):

- meat
- fish
- wine
- parched grain
- sex

Modern Period

During this period india was under colonial rule and hinduism is being attacked by christian missionaries. There is a dual response of reform and revival against christianity. Each branch focused on social reform, primarily on the caste system and place of women.

Brahmo Samaj Stared around 1828. This was a variation on hinduism that had no ritual or custom and instead was more rational and humanistic. The founder was Ram Mohan Roy (?-1833) believed that the vedas and upanishads taught primitive monotheism. The second leader was Debendranath Tagore (1817-1905) was a great poet. He extended Roy's thoughts to focus more on reason and conscious. The vedas should be tested by the inner light of reason. This meant the Vedas were not authoritative until the meshed with human reason.

Arya Samaj Founded in 1875 by Swami Ddayananda Saraswati (1825-1883). This focused on social reform

Independance Movement

The biggest name in the independance movement is **Ghandi** (1869-1948). Another well known figure of the independence movement was **Aurobindo** (1872-1950). Both were imprisoned. Ghandi is most notable for founding non-violent resistance, known as **Satyagraha** or "grasping the truth". Aurobindo withdrew from society after being imprisoned. He wanted to reform society by reforming the individual. It was his thought that society should be transformed so that the individual could make spiritual progress.

East Comes West

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi(1917-present) was a famous teacher of hinduism in the west. He taught the beatles and other celebrities. He wanted to develope eastern spirituality and present it in form more available to westerners. This resulted in the invention of transcendental meditation which is the practice of taking the hindu devotional aspects out of the context of meditation. This secularized hinduism making much far more accessible leading to a large boom in its practice.

Swami Bhaktivedanta Prabhupada (1886-1977) brought Chaitanya's teachings (Krishna worship) west resulting in the ISOKC reaching north america.

Hindu Worlds of Meaning

February 3, 2017

Ultimate Reality

Brahman is the sacred power that pervades and maintains all things. There are two levels of knowing brahman. **Nirguna** is knowing brahman without attributes and **Saguna** is knowing brahman with attributes. Nirguna Brahman is formless and impersonal so its usually described by stating what it is *not*. Basically this is known intuitively with the equation $A=B$. For **Shankara** this is the highest expression of Brahman. Saguna Brahman is the creative power of brahman embodied in Vishnu, Shiva, Devi, and their avatars. **Ramanuja** was a proponent of this form of Brahman.

Devotional Groups Vaishnavites worship Vishnu as the highest as he is concerned with cosmic stability. When cosmic stability is threatened he produces an avatara, two well known ones are Krishna (Bhagavad-Gita) and Rama (Ramayana). Shaivites worship Shiva as the highest as he is the lord of all dualities. A subgroup are the Virashivas (or Lingayats). The Shaktas worship Shakti and her manifestations (Devi, Durga, and Kali) as the power behind Shiva. She has the power of creation and by association destruction.

Gods and Goddesses These are all aspects of Brahman. The major gods mentioned above are Brahman. Its estimated that hinduism has 330 million gods. This is because everyone responds to the devine differently and associate with it differently.

Dharma and Samsara

Dharma This is the eternal unchanging order and everything has a proper place and function. Expanded into each person has a given place and function to fulfill to maintain the eternal order (built into caste system). So it outlines the eternal order and the duties we must follow to maintain it.

Karma Literally this is "act" or "deed". Its not a reward or punishment, but more of a law. Our actions determine the circumstances of our rebirth. Karma is our Dharma basically.

Moksha This is liberation from the wheel of samsara which pulls us away from the world (usually for meditation and yoga) which contrasts with Dharma, our duty to fulfill in the world. One requires us to be away from the world and the other requires us to be an active participant in it. This paradox is solved with the three ways (there are three ways to acheive moksha while still fulfilling dharma).

Samsara This is the eternal wheel of birth and rebirth (creation, and destruction).

The Three Paths to Liberation

These are described in the Bhagavad-Gita.

Path of Knowledge Inana Marga includes mantras. Aum, A for the waking state, U for the dreaming state, M for the deep state, the silence in between is the Atman. It also includes Yoga (the 8 stages of Patanjali).

Path of Action Karma Marga describes action without desire, meaning we act without concern of the rewards for it. When we act without external desires it develops "cool" karma which is less likely to keep us in samsara. Actions done with desire produce "hot" karma which keeps us on samsara more tightly. The path of action is best described in Arjuna's hesitation to fight in the war. The Karma Marga on its own does *not* provide moksha.

Path of Devotion Bhakti Marga is the worship and love of the great gods. Similar to the path of action this is an act of selflessness. We abandon our selves in our love of the gods. The path of knowledge is only for those with the time and leisure to withdraw from the world, so women and sudras cannot follow it (they are specifically excluded). Anyone is able to practice the path of devotion though. We should be able to feel the love of god in a multifaceted way (as a mother or child and so on). quote

"United with the great God of the universe, who is also the inner soul of one's heart, one rises above the bondage of karma and finds joy, peace, and ecstasy in the power of the Beloved One."

Hindu Ritual and the Good Life

The vedic rituals and sacrifice are still performed today. The **Agnihotra**, or fire ceremony is the most important one. The **Puja** is a ceremony celebrating the gods (either at home or a temple) where offerings are placed and icons are worshiped. Going to the temple allows you to see and be seen by the god, called **Darshan**, and it confers blessings.

Festivals **Durga Putra** is a festival celebrating Durga's defeat of the demon. **Divalid** is the festival of lights (in the fall) celebrates Lakshmi (the goddess of good fortune and light). **Holi** is a time when fires are set and games are played.

Geography India is a sacred land. The **Kumba Mela** is a ceremony held every 8 years or so where the two great rivers meet. **Mt. Kailasa** is considered the center of the universe. **Banaras/Varanasi/Kasi** is the most sacred city.

Samskaras These are life cycle rituals. The most important is the sacred thread ceremony where a young man is presented with the sacred thread that marks him as "twice born". This is his religious birth where he takes on his rights and responsibilities as an adult hindu. Marriage is another one of these rituals, as is death. **Samnyasin** is someone who renounces the social order (there is a ceremony for this) to become an individual. This is following the path of knowledge.

Art Its a thing.

Society and the Ethical Life

Hinduism has a very specific social order, the caste system. This combines the class system with birth.

- Brahman = Priests, studies and teaches the sacred texts
- Kshatriya = Warriors, protector of the people and administration of government
- Vaishyas = Producers, provides economic needs of society
- Shudras = Servants, serve upper class

All castes have specific duties and responsibilities and are vital to maintaining the social order of society and the cosmos.

The servant class and women are not allowed to hear or study the veda. A caste has been developed below the shudras called the outcaste where people who don't fit in the other castes go, its officially known as the **Scheduled Classes**.

Caste Jati refers to birth. Each of the four classes have a caste attached to them. You are born in to a caste. People marry within their own group and eat together. There are certain occupations that only that caste can do. The caste you are born into due to your karma. So you are born where you belong. You cannot progress into other castes in this life, you must be reborn into them. The caste system should provide a place for everyone (provides a strong sense of identity) and everyone is in their place (provides a strong sense of stability). By fulfilling your role and by doing so supports each other. Brahmins are at the top due to their ritual purity.

Some believe that castes have no place in modern society. Violent caste reform is very common in india.

The Path of the Jains

April 7, 2017

Jain Sacred Story

The jains believe that everything in the universe has a soul. Even inanimate objects. Some objects even have more than one soul. The universe is alive.

The sacred story begins with **Mahavira**. He was so committed to ahimsa he didn't kick in the womb. He made the great renunciation as a young man. He pulled out all of his hair with his hands. For 12 years he practiced asceticism and ahimsa. After this time Mahavira attained liberation, called *Kevela*.

Ascetism Jain ascetics refrain from food, movements, over indulgences of all kinds.

Ahimsa non violence, towards all living beings. Remember that the universe is full of living beings.

Jains cover their mouths with masks to prevent the accidental ingestion of life in the air, it must be worn at all times. Even the statues have this mask. The shvetambaras's wear simple white robes, but the digambaras's do not, they are *sky clad*. The monks carry whisks to sweep the ground before they walk to move all earth beings out of the way. They also carry a staff for walking and support and a bag/begging bowl. shvetambaras's are allowed a begging bowl, digambaras's are not.

Jain Sects

Shvetambaras norther group, wear white robes (for protection from the elements), allow women in because they believe that women are capable of attaining enlightenment as women

Digambaras *sky clad*, southern group, do not allow women in they must be reborn as men before they can attain enlightenment, they have no bowl and must accept alms with their hands. The enlightened engage in no worldly activity, they enter a spiritual realm completely

The evolution of these groups occurred in 300 BC. There was a famine and several jains moved to the south. When they returned north they found the norther monks had deviated from the correct path (according to them). This results in some variation between the texts of these groups.

The Story of the Man and the Well

This story is told all throughout india. A certain man oppressed by poverty left his home to another country. He passed through the land and got lost after a few days. Eventually he found a forest in which there was a mad elephant charging him. A evil demoness also appeared before him. He ran towards a nearby banyon tree. Unfortunately it was too tall and he could not reach the nearest branch. He saw a well nearby which he dove into. He clung to some reeds in the wall, since at the bottom of the well were a bunch of snakes including a mighty black python. He saw two large mice, black and white, gnawing on the reed clump. The elephant arrived and kept charging the banyon tree. A honeycomb fell from the tree and fell into the well causing him to be stung by a bunch of bees. Some honey fell on his head and dripped into his lips. This lead to him only want more honey and rid his mind of all the bad things in his life currently.

This parable is used to clear the minds of those on the way to liberation. The man is the soul, his wandering through the forest represents the four types of existence. The elephant is death, and the demoness is old age. The banyan tree is salvation where there is no more fears, but no sensual man can climb it. The well his human life, the snakes are passions that overcome people to the point that they don't know what to do. The tuft of reed his man's allotted time on earth, while the soul is embodied. The mice are dark and light karma. The bees are manifold diseases that torment a man. The python is hell. The drops of honey are trivial pleasures.

This shows a negative view of life in samsara and show how serious the situation is and how slight the chance of salvation is. We have to seize control of our situation and climb the banyan tree. A wise man would know that he cannot climb the tree so he would ignore the honey and focus on the path up the tree.

Jain Worlds of Meaning

Atheistic, no creator of the universe. They believe that the universe had no beginning and goes through endless cycles. Move from unhappy to happy (progressive) and back (regressive). In these cycles there is a brief moment in the middle which is the only place you can get enlightenment. In each half cycle 24 Jinas (conquerors, liberated ones) will appear. Mahavira was the last one in our cycle. This means that no one can become enlightened during this cycle.

Mahavira followed Parshva the 23rd Jina and built on his teachings.

You should still follow the religious path even though you have no change to become enlightened since you might slip back.

Dualism they accept that there are two real principles. Consciousness (jiva) and matter (ajiva). These are real and exist on their own. They are always separate.

At some point in time, for unknown reasons, consciousness got caught up in matter. This caused the creation of everything. Consciousness is trapped in matter which is what causes suffering.

Karma is a subtle matter that coats and sticks to the consciousness. It changes the soul (shape), causes confusion and obstruction. Karma also determines the type of embodiment you might suffer.

There are infinite ways that a soul can become embodied. There are infinite souls in infinite configurations. Statistically enlightenment is rare.

Path to Liberation

We need to separate our consciousness from matter. This is done through asceticism and ahimsa. All the ascetic practices burn off karma from the consciousness. Ahimsa prevents the accumulation of more karma. If this is all done you get *Kevela* where the consciousness is freed of all matter and floats to the top of the universe.

The soul tends towards improvement. There is always hope as your soul always seeks improvement. It needs a transforming event like viewing a Jain statue or hearing a Jain talk. This event redirects the soul towards *kevela*.

The path is seen as a 14 rungged ladder. Everyone begins in ignorance. During a middle cycle you can experience a transforming event. The fourth rung gives you insight to reality. Souls climb and fall, but with insight we know that the path will eventually be successful.

The path to liberation is the same for monks and laity. This causes closeness between the community and the faithful. This is partially responsible for the lasting power of Jainism.

Monks/Nuns take 5 restraints and everyone else takes 12 vows. The laypeople have to have a good livelihood. Agriculture and animal husbandry is not allowed. Jains are known for their animal shelters, particularly for the stray cows that wander India. They collect these animals and provide a shelter for them.

Monks and laity both engage in fasting. Saints commit suicide by fasting for 3 months when they are ready to ascend.

5 Vows (monastics take this much more seriously):

- non-violence - most important

- truthfulness - not only not lying, but also not using speech that would hurt others
- non-stealing - people should also not do anything to harm others
- chastity
- non-attachment

3 Merit Vows:

- limit area of activity - being careful about things that might harm other living beings
- limited use of items
- no carelessness in daily thoughts, words, or deeds

4 Disciplinary Vows:

- meditation
- limiting space
- ascetic's life
- vow for charity

Ritual and the Good Life

Once the soul rises to the top of the universe, it is no longer accessible, they cannot assist us. You can only rely on yourself for enlightenment.

Worshipping the Jinas is not asking them for help, instead it is reflection on their merits and vowing to follow in their footsteps.

Fasting is the most important ritual for jains.

The laity may worship other gods and goddesses as well, since jains are surrounded by hindus.

There are some festivals and life cycle rituals.

Jain Contributions to the World

One of the biggest contributions of the jains is the concept of ahimsa. This greatly influenced the hindu culture around it, it encourage vegetarianism. It was used by Gandhi to drive the independence movement. Gandhi then influenced Tolstoy and MLK and brought about a world wide movement towards nonviolence.

Jains have also contributed much to philosophy. They brought about the idea of relativity. When you look at a problem you look at it from one perspective. There are many perspectives to every problem. To get close to the truth you need to look at all perspectives.

The jains also did great work towards preserving knowledge from all perspectives even different religions.

They were also awesome architects and artists.

Buddhist Foundations

April 7, 2017

Indian Background

Buddhism arose in india during a time of great change:

- technological: invention of the iron plow revolutionized agriculture, allowing someone to produce more with less people, invention of iron weapons increased damage in war
- social: kinship system broke down (oligarchy ended) a single tribe of many families exercised control over land and was ruled by the head of these clans distributing profits as needed, the iron plow broke this system as individual clans could have the land and many people were not needed for the work displacing them so they moved into cities, this lead to urbanization

Life of Buddha: Birth and Early Life

There are few historical details, most of what we know is religious in text. There is no life story in early texts. In recent discussion there has been debate about the dates of buddha (it was 566-486, but now we think its more like 490-410). There is about a hundred years of difference so if we accept these dates we need to question the history of that era.

The first biography is from 200 bc, called the *buddhacarita* (deeds of the buddha). It was written by a famous poet called *asvaghosa*.

The buddha was born in *Lumbini* in southern napal. His mother was on her way to her home villiage to have her baby. She became tired and stopped in lumbini for a rest. She bathed and leaned against a tree under which she had her baby. This tree is a modern relic. The king ashoka established this as the birth place of buddha. He erected a pillar to mark the place.

At his conception his mother had a dream about a white elephant entering her side. Her husband called the sooth sayers who said that the she would give birth to an exceptional son. He had only two possible careers, one was to become world conquerer, or a great religious leader. His father (a king) was concerned that his heir would take the religious path. The sages told him that if we wanted buddha to become a world conquerer he should keep the baby from seeing any forms of suffering. So his father was ultra careful to keep him from experiencing any unpleasantness.

So buddha followed in his fathers footsteps. He married a woman named *Yashodhara* was intelligent, beautiful, and spiritual. They had a son *Rahula*.

Life of the Buddha: The Four Sights

Siddhartha was driven from his world conquering destiny by The Four Sights. The king tried to protect him from seeing anything unpleasant so he would have the palace parks cleared before he was allowed to enter them, since they were public parks.

While he was out he saw an old man. He had never seen anyone not young before. Siddhartha wondered what it was and his charioteer replied that it was old age. Siddhartha was not a fan. The servant had to break the news to him that old ages happens to everyone.

His father did not like that so he moved Siddhartha to the summer palace and invited some dancers and singers over for a party. While Siddhartha was out and about he saw a diseased man (probably leprosy). Once again he wondered what it was and his servant had to explain that disease happens to everyone.

On the third occasion they saw a funeral procession where the family was weeping. This also shocked Siddhartha. His servant had to explain yet again that death comes for us all.

The fourth sight was that of a mendicant. Siddhartha thought the man looked very calm and peaceful. His charioteer explained what a mendicant was. When Siddhartha returned to the palace he had decided to become a mendicant.

He saw his family once while they were sleeping and left the palace with the charioteer. He gave the charioteer everything he had and walked into the forest to become spiritual.

Life of the Buddha: Ascetic Life

He followed the traditional way of asceticism and meditation. This first teacher was **Arada Kalama** who worked with him to develop the a sophisticated spiritual stage called the *sphere of nothingness*. Kalama was so impressed that he wanted to share leadership with Siddhartha, but he knew he hadn't found the truth yet.

He then studied with *Udraka Ramaputra* who helped him attain an even higher state, the *sohere of neither perception no non-perception*. The teacher was so impressed that he offered to become Siddhartha's disciple and give him all of his disciples. Siddhartha still knew he didn't have the answer so he left.

He lived on his own in a life of great austerity. Sever food deprivation, he became so thin that when he touched his stomach he could feel the vertebrae in his back. He perfected the technique of breathing suspension. This breathing suspension was supposed to bring him alter state of consciousness. All that happened was that he got a headache that interefered with his concentration on the truth so he stopped.

Finally he was offered some food by a lay woman so he took some. His disciples thought he was giving up on his quest and left. He hadn't given up. He had instead found the Middle Path. The spiritual life is hard and difficult and needs strength. This means that it requires nourishment. Control of the senses is what is important, not just pain.

He wandered around thining about this until he finds the **Bodhi Tree** where he sat down. He vowed not to move until he had reached his goal. There he sat and meditated, he recalled a spontaneous trance he had entered once as a child when he sat and watched a farmer working.

At this point great concern was raised in the temple of **Mara**, the god of death, obstacles, and temptation. He did not want Siddhartha to reach enlightenment so he tried to get him to stop. First he sent a hoard of demons to frighten him. Then he sent beautiful women to tempt him. Finally he confronted Siddhartha. Nothing he did could stop the man and he he reached enlightenment by the end of that night.

Nirvana the state beyond birth and death, the ultimate goal for all buddhists.

The Life of the Buddha: Enlightenment, Three Knowledges

After attaining enlightenment Buddhad gained three knowledges:

- knowledge of his past lives, he could look back on his past lives to see the karmic connections
- ability to see the karmic chain of others, to understand why people had been born as they had, also why an enlightened teacher can help you to progress
- knowledge that for him rebirth had ended, the knowledge of the four noble truths, the knowledge of reality
 - reality is impermanent
 - reality is without essence
 - reality is ultimately unsatisfactory

The Four Noble Truths

After enlightenment the buddha gained the 3 knowledges:

- his karmic history
- other's karmic history
- the four noble Truths

Buddha wanted to share enlightenment with someone. When he looked with his 3rd eye he saw that both of his teachers had died. His 5 former disciples were at the **Deer Park at Sarnath**. His disciples wanted to give him a rough time, but as he approached they got him a seat. He seemed different to them but they still gave him a hard time. Buddha preached enlightenment. They were skeptical, but he pointed out that he was a changed man. They recognized the authority that comes from pure knowledge.

During his preachings that day one of this disciples gained insight. After a few days all 5 of his disciples gained enlightenment. This formed the **sangha**, the community.

The main alter at the temple in deer park has a gate that you can enter and **circumambulate** the alter. This means you walk around keeping the religious artifact/person to your **right**. The walls of the main temple has many drawings of the events in Siddhartha's life.

The five noble truths bringing enlightenment to the disciples of buddha is known as the *first turning of the Dharma Wheel*. The first teaching.

The First Noble Truth

There is suffering.

There are three types of suffering:

- ordinary suffering - generic physical discomfort
- impermanence - losing something, all things leave
- component parts - everything is made of parts so these parts will definitely come apart
 - the soul is made of parts, called **the five aggregates**
 - this entails inherit suffering

You cannot avoid suffering.

Everyone suffers.

Things are ultimately unsatisfactory, because all things in the end lead to suffering.

The Mustard Seed Story There was a widow without family, all she had was her son. Her son died. She could not accept it and wouldn't leave the body of her dead son. She wandered around the country side asking others for help. Eventually she found a village where a buddha lived that might be able to help. The buddha told her to collect 1 mustard seed from every home in the village that has not experienced death. She went from village to village but she could not find a single home that had not experienced death. Finally she understood that death is natural and had her son cremated. She returned to the buddha and thanked him. Buddha made her into a nun.

The Second Noble Truth

Suffering is caused by ignorance and craving.

Craving The best definition for craving is excessive desire, obsession. Craving is described as a fire of lust, hatred, and delusion. These cause suffering.

Ignorance Ignorance about the nature of reality and the nature of the self.

- Annica: impermanent
- Anatta: without essence
- Dukha: ultimately suffering

The primary core of this ignorance is about the nature of the self. We believe there is an essence to the self, the soul. We think that is our true nature. This is notion leads to problems. It means that we view the world from our perspective instead of seeing things as they are. Our view of reality is distorted by our perspective. The presence of lust, hatred, and delusion is what causes this.

We strengthen our sense of self by acquiring material possessions because they make us feel important. This cuts us off from other people, we make divisions. It also changes how we see things, outside of our ownership of it. When we look at “my” thing it imposes characteristics on the object that might not be true.

This distortion of reality causes attachment and clinging to things. This then causes suffering when the impermanence of the world takes that from us.

According to Buddhism we are not a soul. This is a very harmful view. The nature of the self is ever-changing. We are made of 5 components:

- matter
- feeling
- consciousness
- mental formations
- perception

This idea of the everchanging self is **Anatman** or no-soul.

The Third Noble Truth

There is an end to suffering, **Nirvana**

The buddha is often compared to a physician. He diagnosis the condition, suffering. He looks for the cause of the condition, ignorance and desire. He administers a treatment, the noble truths.

You can attain nirvana while still living. This is the ultimate goal of all buddhists. It is inexpressible. It is the state of perfect freedom and grasp of the nature of reality. Freedom brings compassion.

Nirvana literally means “blown out” this refers to extinguishing the fire of desire.

Two kinds of Nirvana:

- nirvana with support - meaning support of the body
- nirvana without support

The effects of karma are always experienced, the body being one of those effects. If you experience nirvana while still in your body, when you die its called **parinirvana**.

There are 10 questions that the buddha never answered. When someone asked him them the refused to respond. One question is what happens to the arhat(one who has attained nirvana) after death. This puzzled **Ananda** the buddha’s cousin/attendant for many years. The buddha explained it as, there is no way to explain the answer to that question accurately, whatever he would have said would have been misinterpreted. You cannot explain nirvana to one who had not experienced it.

The Fourth Noble Truth

There is a path to the end of suffering.

The path is the **Noble Eight Fold Path** it is summarized into three categories:

- morality
- meditation
- wisdom

These are compared to a three legged stool, they support each other. If any of them are missing it won't work.

The Founding of the Sangha

After the buddha and his disciples became enlightened we have the starting of the buddhist monastic community. Once they had 60 arhants the buddha sent them out into the world to spread word. There is a community of monks, called **Bikkhus** and nuns, called **Bhikkhunis**. The community of nuns was formed about 5 years after that of the monks. This is an intentional community. This means that the bonds between them are chosen and not just given at birth. Everyone here is united in their intention to attain nirvana and help others to do so.

When a person becomes a buddhist they take the three refuges:

- buddha
- dharma
- sangha

Death of the Buddha and the First Council

After the buddha died his remains were divided into groups and given to communities that supported the buddhism. These relics were encase in a *stupa*. These are based on ancient burial mounds for heroes. That have a summit that contains a relic of the person they represent. Here is where people can meditate on the excellences of the buddha.

The First Council This is found in the pali cannon of the Theravada sect of buddhism. People were concerned about maintaining orthodoxy (correct belief) and orthopraxy (correct practice) now that the buddha was dead. They wanted to preserve the buddha's teachings. A council was convened with 500 arhants. These people represent a pure vessel into which the teachings and practice of buddhism could be poured. This resulted in the 3 baskets.

Three Baskets This is the scriptural corpus of the theravada teachings. The frist is the dharma basket which held the teachings of the buddha. He gave a number of talks on a variety of topics and they are recorded here. It begins with "thus I have heard". Its usually in the form of question and answer. The second basket is the vinaya basket and it outlines the monastic discipline. It outlines the list of rules for monks and the rest of the community. This basket is incredibly important. As long as the vinaya is preserved buddhism will last. The third basket is the Abhidharma. These were not added at the first council, but at the third council. This is the philosophical texts that bring together the buddha's teachings.

Buddhist Transformations

April 7, 2017

Historical Transformations: Ashoka

The reign of king ashoka is the second most important event after the death of buddha. He was a world conquerer that united most of the subcontinent of india together. He was heavily influenced by buddhism.

The last major battle of his was against the *Kalingas*. This was a vicious battle with 150k deaths. This amount of violence disgusted him so he vowed to be a *dhammaraja*, a righteous ruler.

His reign was marked by many innovations. Many people traveled the roads at that time so he built way stations along routes. He ended animal sacrifice in many festivals. He cut down the number of animals consumed in the palace. Those sentenced to death had some days to settle their affairs before being executed. All over the country pillars were erected with edicts on them teaching people how they should live their lives.

He was a great supporter of buddhism and aided its root in india.

Historical Transformations: Early Schools

After the buddha's death the sangha got dispersed widely. Variations in practice occurred.

There were about 18 early schools and new thinking emerged. A group was identified as separate from the 18 schools. Today only one of the 18 schools remains, the **Theravada**. Often scholars refer to the 18 schools collectively as the theravada, but this is not quite correct. Another group, separate from the early schools was the **Mahasamghika**, or large assembly. It developed new ideas.

Mahasamghika these people introduced the idea that the buddha was transcendental. This is different from the theravada who believed that he was just a historical figure. The Mahasamghika sect also did not include lay people in their decision making (this is an error in the textbook).

Mahayana There has been discussion about a new form of buddhism, or the second turning of the wheel. This stemmed from the mahasamghika. This is not fully proven, but the two share ideas.

Rise of Mahayana

This is first visible to us in the production of new scriptures. They claim to be the word of the buddha. This is odd since buddha has been dead for a while at this point. They have this notion of a cosmic buddha, that he is a principle rather than historical person. This means that revelation was always available through visions or dreams, or other such methods. They also have many buddhas existing in many buddha-fields.

They believed in a more inclusive practice. They had more faith in the ability of lay people to make spiritual people. Mahayana means large/great vehicle. It saw itself as greater than the traditional ways.

Aspiration They saw themselves as greater in terms of aspiration. Their texts have new religious heroes. Previously the heroes were the arhant, now we have the bodhisattva. This a person that has taken a vow that they will attain enlightenment for others. This vow minimizes the contributions of the arhant since they are just people who have achieved enlightenment. The aspiration of enlightenment for selfless reasons is seen as a higher aspiration than achieving it for yourself.

Compassion They also saw themselves as greater than the previous tradition in compassion as well since they seek salvation for all beings rather than just the self. This means the arhant's compassion is limited and some texts go as far as to call them selfish.

People They also saw themselves as greater since they have more people (greater vehicle holds more people). They include a wider range of practice, so more people can practice.

Three Bodies Theravada held that there were two bodies of buddha, human where he taught, and dharma, the embodiment of truth. The mahayana have their own version of this. They too have the notion of the dharma body as the transcendent body of the truth. They differ in that they add a third body that is the bliss body that is the type of spiritual body this is the body that bodhisattva have. It allows them to manifest their bodies in many ways and can travel to the pure land to listen to the teachings of a buddha. For the theravada the form body was the form of the historical body, but for the mahayana the form body is the many forms buddha can take (since they believe there are many buddhas)

- form
- dharma
- bliss

Buddhist Schools: The Madhyamika School

This is a school from the mahayana sect. It was founded by **Nagarjuna** that introduced the notion of **shunyata**, or emptiness. They use language as an example.

The terms nirvana and samsara mean nothing on their own, they need to be placed in opposition to each other. All language is based on binary opposites. Emptiness refers to how all things are relational, they are empty of essence.

There is no point at which analysis of something would end. When we looked at the concept of dependent co-arising there was this idea that there were base pairings that all things could be broken down into, emptiness does not have this. Everything is empty of own-being/substance.

Buddhist doctrine are meant to help us find the truth, not representations of the truth.

Prasanga Method This was a method designed to demonstrate emptiness and provide the opponent with the feeling of emptiness. It was a negative dialectic. Every argument of the opponent is demolished but no opposing argument is put in place. They do not take the opposite stance and instead disprove both sides of the debate. Nothing is put in place, there is no conclusion.

Buddhist Schools: Yogacara

Some people felt the notion of emptiness was frightening. In response the yogacara school was formed. It is often called the mind-only school because it gives dominance to the mind when it comes to perception.

We never see things the way they are in themselves, we only see our perception of them. Everything we see is filtered through our perception and thus distorted. They have three basic levels of consciousness,

Level of the Senses In indian philosophy there are six senses since the mind is considered a sense. Everything comes in through the senses.

The Level of the I We don't just perceive we add ourselves to it.

Storehouse of the Consciousness This stores all our memories, some karmic some physical. This, unlike the above levels is passive. Below this is the level of emptiness, *tathagatagarbha*. It is the level of pristine consciousness.

So yogacara agrees with the concept that everything is empty, but they have the storehouse consciousness which is empty of defilements, but does infact exist. Their argument is that consciousness exists

Buddhist Schools: Comparison of Theravada and Mahayana

Theravada	Mahayana
pali cannon as scripture	accept pali but add new texts
see buddha as human	see buddha as cosmic principle, there are many
two bodies of buddha, dharma and form	three bodies, dharma, form, and bliss
arhant as example	bodhisattva as example
an individual must find salvation on their own	you can gain assistance from bodhisattvas through worship
south and south east asia	east asia

Buddhist Schools: Tantric Buddhism

There is a third turning of the dharma wheel, tantric buddhism. Its very different from the other traditions and very complicated. Also called **Vajrayana** in tibet, meaning *thunderbolt* or *diamond*. It could be called diamond because it is indestructable.

It talks about the indestructible union of pure wisdom and passion. It is also esoteric in that there are secrets you need to have you teacher pass on to you.

Also called **shingon** in japan, it is an effective means to liberation but is considered dangerous. Instead of suppressing desire and cutting it off at its roots, it tries to channel that energy and purify it.

This also created new texts, but kept them secret. It used many methods of purification.

- rituals
- mantras
- mandalas
- visualization
- ritual sex

They feel that the sacred beings of mahayana text are within us. We all have the potential to become one. When we worship a deity we are worshipping that quality in ourselves.

Worlds of Meaning: Dependent Co-Arising

Dharma Dharma refers to the truth, about reality, understanding of this gives liberation. This also refers to the buddha's teachings.

Dependent Co-arising Dependent Co-arising means that everything has a cause and all causes are multiple. This is how they say that there is no self-existent thing. Everything is the product of something else.

Nature of the Self The self is also the effect of dependent co-arising. It is the combination of the five aggregates, matter, feeling, mental formations, perception/cognition, and consciousness (at the center). We cannot describe ourself using only one of the aggregates. 'Me' is just a handy way of referring to an ever changing collection of aspects.

Arising of Suffering Ignorance causes psychic constructions, meaning thoughts and ideas and mental constructs. Out of ignorance we developed these ideas and act upon them. These actions cause us to accumulate karma and cause us to be reborn. Ignorance and ideas are the past causes for our coming into existence. Our physical being's interactions with the world are the present effects. This then leads to desire which leads us to further acts and more karma causing rebirth. The fact that we exist is the present causes for our rebirth. Its a big ass cycle.

- ignorance and psychic constructions → past causes
- consciousness, names and forms, sense organse, contact, and sensations → present effects
- desire, attachment, and existence → present causes
- birth, old age, death → future effects

Example A dude wants an ice cream, but has no money. Desire has arisen, he now has thoughts and the will to do something. He then sees a woman with a purse so he decides to steal it. We now have karmic action with this. Because of these action he gets reborn. Thus the cycle begins again.

Worlds of Meaning: Nirvana, Emptiness, and Tathagatagarbha

Nirvana The ultimate goal is nirvana, either with or without support. Nirvana with support refers to support of a living body. When this person dies we don't know what happens, the buddha refused to answer that question.

Emptiness This is very similar to dependent co-arising. Nirvana is considered absolute and unconditioned. Nirvana is the same as samsara in this emptiness concept. Both are empty because they make no sense without each other. This means that nirvana is not self existent, it has causes and these causes are multiple. All things are equal in their emptiness meaning there should be no distinctions between them.

Tathagatagarbha Garbha means embryo or womb. Tathagata is another term for buddha. Gata means to go and tatha means suchness. So its the womb of the one who has gone to suchness. This idea influenced all mahayana. The concept of suchness is used alot by the yogacara. Its a positive description of emptiness. The buddha nature is empty of all defilement. This means that it truly exists, the yogacara equates it with the storehouse consciousness. This buddha nature is within each of us.

Worlds of Meaning: The Eight Fold Noble Path

This is the fourth noble truth. It describes how to reach liberation.

Wisdom The entails *right understanding* of the four noble truths. This leads us to *right intention* which is to follow the path to enlightenment.

Moral Conduct *Right speech* entails no useless or abusive speech. *Right act* means acting morally. *Right livelihood* means doing a job that doesn't harm others.

Meditation This is where wisdom and morality are integrated into us. This includes *right effort* which is the effort it takes to meditate fully. *Right mindfulness* is putting you mind to meditating on the right content. Finally *right concentration* is focusing fully.

Path of the Bodhisattva You become a bodhisattva by taking the vow to bodhicitta which is to become fully enlightened for the benefit of all living beings. All the rules of how the bodhisattva should behave is gathered in a 10 stage path. After the 8th stage you are irreversible (you are going to become a bodhisattva). The description of a bodhisattva are the same as the buddha, unlike the buddha that continue to be reborn to help everyone else.

Worlds of Meaning: Four Sublime States

These are meditative states where one begins with the self and extends the states to all others. We start meditating on a topic as it pertains to the self and then grow it to include more and more living beings until it applies to the whole of creation. This eventually lets you lose the distinction between the self and the rest of the world.

- boundless love
- boundless compassion
- sympathetic joy
- equanimity

Ritual and the Good Life: The Five Precepts

The five precepts are the basic moral guidelines for all buddhists, lay people and monastics alike.

- refrain from murder → compassion
- refrain from theft, also includes manipulation → generosity
- refrain from inappropriate sex, means harming others or self centered sex
- refrain from abusive speech, includes saying mean things as well as lying
- refrain from intoxicants, these make you more prone to break other precepts and can lessen your mental focus

As you refrain from an activity you will expand the opposite in your consciousness.

Ritual and the Good Life: Ritual Times and Festivals

Uposatha This is often referred to as the buddhist holy day. Comes on half and full moon. Monks and nuns join the community and chants the monastic rules together. This renews their vows and unites the community in purity. This is also when the laity can come to the monastery.

Vesakha Celebrates buddha's life and death.

Rains Retreat Monks and nuns take a rains retreat for 3 months. They do not travel. This was traditionally the time of the monsoon. Travel was dangerous and the monastics did not want to harm the rain spirits. So they all stayed in and focused on their personal development. At the end of this there is a large ceremony where the laity bring the monks and nuns the things they will need for the next year.

Ordination When one decides to become a monk/nun. This is a major ceremony in which you receive your robe and bowl from a preceptor. They are then questioned about their will to join, then they are instructed, and accepted.

Ritual and the Good Life: Buddhist Nuns

This order was founded 5 years after the order of monks. This is recorded in the vinaya. The nuns order was debated and the buddha was reluctant about it at first, but he did say that women are equally capable of attaining enlightenment. The initial reluctance of the buddha might show evidence of social context or it might have been added later during translation or re-dictation by monks.

The order of nuns died out in theravada countries. It lasted in sri lanka and burma until the 13th century, never reach thailand or tibet. The monk order in sri lanka died out once and almost another time. In those cases the monastic order was reestablished by monks from thailand and burma but this did not happen to the nuns. There is no recorded reason for this. Many in the theravada community believe that women must wait until the next buddha comes to get a new nun

order. They can take the 10 basic precepts of novice initiation. There are not 10 fully ordained nuns so no new ones can be ordained.

The nun order has continued in china since the 4th century. In the last 20 years many nuns from theravada countries have taken full ordination in china. There is also a very active female sangha in thailand that also ordainates women from other countries. These ordinations were not accepted by their home countries. The argument is that chinese buddhism is mahayana buddhism, not theravada. The chinese vinaya comes from one of the 18 schools that are very similar to theravada. There is still great debate on the issue, but its moving towards a reestablishment of the female sangha.

The nuns get trained in social service work and work very hard on their own spirituality.

Sakyadhita This organization has worked hard on the bukkhuni sangha. The name means *daughters of the buddha*. It was founded in 1987 after a conference of buddhist nuns where they discussed their difficults and to work together. One of its major mandates was the reestablishment of the bukkhuni sangha where it no longer existed.

The Way of the Sikhs

April 7, 2017

Sikh is the disciple of the guru, where guru can mean one of the 10 historical gurus, or the sacred scripture (adi granth/granth sahib), or god.

The sikh traditions formed during the devotional movement in india. Kabir is a devotional poet, many of his poems are in the sacred text.

Guru Nanak As a child exposed to islam and hinduism. He often asked holy men about their beliefs. When he was 30 he had a transformative experience. One morning he disappeared for 3 days. He had been carried to gods presence where he had been given a cup of nectar and the mission to rejoice in gods name and teach others to do so. For a day after he emerged he said nothing, then he said that "there is neither hindu nor muslin, I shall follow god's path, he is neither". He then traveled, accompanied by **Mardana** that played an instrument along with his hymns. He settled in Kartapur. In the homes of disciples there would be a room for them to gather and sing, called the *sangat*. The singing is called *Kirtan*.

teachings:

- one god
- experience god through love and devotion
- ignorance and self centeredness keeps us from loving god (we believe that the world is separate from god)
- we become dominated by passions
- samsara is because we are separated from god

the soul can rejoin with god only the guru knows the way, it involves inner preparation of the heart to receive gods grace. To do this required kirtan and meditation on gods name. There should be no inequality since all were devine sparks from gods love and we must all be equal. He reject ritual as well since it did not bring us closer to god/

Guru one who drives away darkness and teaches enlightenment, giving voice to god the true guru.

10 Gurus

Guru nanak transfered his mission to the second guru, called **Lenha**, meant to be his successor. He changed his name to guru **Angad**, which means part of me. This means that angad was part of him and inherited his charisma and mission.

Guru **Amar Das** started to collect the hymns and poems to write the sacred text. He also created festivals.

Guru **Ram Das** had a relationship with the current muslim ruler, Akbar. This ruler was very open and interested in religion and invited holy men to come talk to him. Akbar loved Ram Das and gave him some land at Amritsar where the Golden Temple (holiest place) was constructed. Ram Das also created the *Langar* or free kitchen which would serve anyone from anywhere could receive a free meal.

At this point the line of gurus became hereditary.

Guru **Arjan** started the golden temple building and finished the sacred text. He was the first martyr when muslim rulers wanted to get rid of other religions.

Guru **Hargobind** created the two swords of authority.

Guru **Har Rai**

Guru **Har Krishnan**

Guru **Tegh Bahadur**, also a martyr

Guru **Gobind Singh**, the community was under considerable stress so he created a military defence force, called the Khalsa (a community of the pure defenders of the community if necessary). He did this by explaining to the community and asked for volunteer. 5 men volunteered and they started the khalsa, they are called the *beloved ones*. The markings of a khalsa are called the 5 k's,

- uncut hair (kes)
- comb (kanga)
- dagger (kirpan)
- wristguard (kara)
- short pants (kachera)

They also had a string code of conduct. The khalsa are open to women. Men take the name Singh (lion) and women take the name Kaur (princess). Not all sikhs are members of the khalsa, they must be initiated.

Guru Gobin Singh says that after himself the sacred text will become the guru thus making himself the last guru. He also creates the **Dasam Granth** a collection of works.

After the gurus death the military problems did not stop so **Ranjit Singh** took over and created a small kingdom that was eventually taken over by the british colonization.

Communities and Modern Challenges

Three main groups:

- Singh - largest group, not all are members of the khalsa, not all agree with the idea of creating a sikh state.
 - contemplative community - devoted to scholarship
 - military - more aggressive in the goal of creating a sikh state
- Udasi - ascetic
- Saha-dhari - split from the main group because they rejected the idea of a military community

There is conflict within the community about how to create the sikh state and how to achieve it. They want a piece of the punjab region which was gained when india gained its independence. Around 2.5 million sikhs were relocated into india when the punjab region was divided.

They also have problems with keeping young people tied to the tradition in the modern world. They are also pressured to join the hindu religion and they have many practitioners spreading throughout the world.

Sikh Worlds of Meaning

God is both transcendent and immanent. God is everything and there is nothing outside him, but god can be known by us in a personal way. He is revealed in his name *Nam* and Sati Nam (God is truth) is an object of meditation.

The Universe is real but not eternal and has no independent existence outside of God. Overall the world is good and beneficial, so the tradition is world affirming.

Soul is spark from the divine fire, receptacles for gods divine love. The migration of souls by karma is controlled by god. Nirvana is union with god.

The Human Predicament Our soul is good and could join with god, but our ego centric nature stops that. This causes us to turn to the desires of the world instead of God.

The Path Hear the word of the guru which reverberates with god's name. Repeating the divine name, meditating on it, and kirtan.

Ritual and the Good Life

Daily worship at home or at the Gurdwara (meeting place). After singing praises and hymns at the gurdwara you receive karah prasad (which is food made of gi and sugar made into a ball).

Baisakhi celebration of the new year and formation of the khalsa

Divali also celebrated it by sikhs (usually associated with hindus), this is celebrated as the release of guru hargobind from prison.

Celebrations for the birthdays of gurus, and sacred times for the martyrdom of gurus. Initiation into the khalsa is a major life event.

The langar is a sacred duty

Chinese Religions 1

March 31, 2017

Background: Common Elements

Common Elements Chinese religions are rooted in concrete experiences, practical in orientation, and syncretic (people practice many religions based on their need or inclination, its not exclusive).

Common Values Prosperity, longevity, and posterity (leaving something behind to be remembered by)

Most religions are rooted in *agrarian*, farming images. There is a center on the mean (middle or harmony) and family (primary social unit).

Four Main Sources The **ancient religions** draw from animism, ancestor worship, and folk religion. Animism is based on belief that there is one living reality, there is spirit in everything. Here is where we get divination. **Confucianism** is another source of religion founded by *Kong-zi* and focuses on the five classics. **Daoism** was founded by *Lao-zi* in the *Dao de Jing*. The final source is **Buddhism**, specifically the pureland school or ch'an school.

Background: Early History

Period of Cultural Heros (3000-2200BCE) This period emphasizes the respect for people who made practical contributions to society. Here we have praise for those that domesticated animals. This is also the era where the institution of family life was formed (this included extended family). Agriculture was also instituted during this time. This era had a **Five Emperors Period**. *Huang Di*, the yellow emperor, the symbolic ancestor of all people. He instituted all arts (writing, music, etc).

Xia Dynasty (2200-1750BCE) Here we have the development of silk. The wheel and bronze work are also invented.

Shang Period (1751-1111BCE) This is the start of the feudal era. The feudal system is very important to the Chinese culture. Confucian thought says that this is the perfect system. There is a strict hierarchy all the way down to the family unity. This was also the time of a theocracy where the ruler was the political and religious ruler. *Shang Di* was the high god of the time, "The Lord Above". There were other gods, but he was most important, ancestor of ruling clan. Only the king worshiped Shang Di. This period had the institution of ancestor worship and divination.

Zhou Dynasty (1123-221BCE) This was the golden era of Chinese history, it was the model of an ideal Chinese society. The notion of heaven (called *Tian*), a righteous rule over all replaces Shang Di as "the sacred". It is much less personalized. The Duke of Zhou establishes the king as the son of heaven. He is ruling on earth on behalf of heaven. They developed the *Mandate of Heaven*, heaven gives the right to rule to a righteous ruler and if he strays heaven will take it from him. This is the reason given for the change in dynasty, the Shang had lost the mandate of heaven so the Zhou took over. **Li**, the concept of proper reverential ceremonies (an expression of cosmic order), grew in importance.

Background: Ancient Religions

Yin and Yang These are complimentary opposites and play heavily into the Chinese notion of balance and harmony. Both are necessary and must be balanced. A fundamental tenant of Chinese medicine is to try to balance yin and yang.

Five Elements Wood, fire, water, metal, and earth. These elements are causal, they make things come into existence and determine their nature.

Yijing This is a method of divination. It started with the casting of stones and developed into a complicated method of casting sticks. You ask a question and do a complicated patter of casting sticks.

Confucianism: Beginnings He was probably a poor aristocrat, no mention of his parents or wife. We think that he had a son and daughter. Little is known about him. He wanted to restore the culture and religion of china to the Zhou ideal.

Human Dilemma He believed that the cause of the chaos of his era was due to a breakdown in morality and values. He believed in a trickle down effect where the break down in morality of the rulers lead to a break down in morality of the common folk. He felt that things were so bad that the leaders oppressed the people and caused them to respond with violence. We could solve the social anarchy by returning to the ideals.

Teachings He focused on restoring the old ideal and not establishing anything new.

Mandate of Heaven He expanded on this and established this Zhou idea. He removed all notion of anthropomorphism of the concept of heaven. Heaven was a righteous principle that required rulers to be righteous to keep their mandate to rule on behalf of heaven. Part of being righteous is that rulers should be concerned about the people that they rule. This idea was surprisingly revolutionary at the time. Righteous rule led to peace and harmony. Righteous rulers created righteous subjects.

Confucianism: The Social Order

The Rectification of Names Every title/role comes with a set of rights and responsibilities. People should fulfill only their own duties.

Ideal Social Order Very hierarchical and patriarchal.

The Five Relationships These are all understood to be reciprocal.

- emperor - subjects → being benevolent is rewarded with loyalty
- father - son → being loving is rewarded with reverence
- husband - wife → being good is rewarded with obedience
- elder brother - younger brother → being gentle is rewarded with respect
- elder citizen - younger citizen → being considerate is rewarded with deference

Confucianism: The Five Classics

We can learn how to return to the ideals of the Zhou by looking at five classic texts.

- history
- changes

- poetry
- rites
- spring and autumn annals

His disciples compiled the *Analects*, his teachings, after his death. It is often considered the sixth classic.

Through studying these we can learn the virtues of an ideal society and become people of *ren*.

Ren This is the term humane goodness. It indicates conscientiousness and reciprocity. Its characters are those values. Conscientiousness is doing one's duty and reciprocity is behaving properly based on the relationships.

Li This is the notion of propriety and respectful ritual. You must perform the ancient rights properly. Confucius added inner li. The external ritual reforms us internally into a respectful person. Confucius did not believe that ritual worked, but he felt that li was important in building a person that is respectful internally and solidifying our relationships. He also added the notion of filial piety, respect to your elders.

Confucianism: Later Confucians

The primary interpreter of Confucius was **Menzi** (372-289BCE). He believed that humans are essentially good.

Four Essential Beginnings Menzi believed we have four values that we are born with. We are all born with a sense of **humanity**, mercy. He describes a child that has fallen into a well, everyone goes to help the child before asking anything about the child. We are all born with **righteousness**, we all have sense of shame. We know when we have done something wrong. We are all born with **propriety**, we know what respect is. Finally we are born with a **wisdom**, we have an innate sense of right and wrong.

- humanity
- righteousness
- propriety
- wisdom

Social and Political Institutions Menzi also felt that institutions exist for the benefit of people. If those institutions nurtured the goodness that we are born with, then we would have an ideal society. Evil arises due to these institutions not nourishing it. The scholar fulfills a priestly role, they must teach the classics and by doing so enables people to nourish their own goodness.

Xunzi (300-238BCE) Differed greatly in his ideas. Human nature is essentially selfish. If left alone we would do only what is best for us. He believes that goodness can be acquired through education and law. The classics put restraint on our natural selfishness. Through study we learn goodness. Rewards and punishments from the law can help people become good.

Legalists This group adopted Xunzi thought and eventually overtook the Zhou Dynasty that had been declining. The brought in the **Qin Dynasty** (221BCE). This dynasty united china through an unprecedented level of violence. This violence is speculated to be what caused the dynasty to fall quickly. They used Xunzi ideas to implement their violent rule. All non-legalist thought was persecuted causing confucian thought to go underground.

Han Dynasty Replaced the Qin dynasty when it fell. They were still violent but less so. They looked to find other ways to keep the country united. Many scholars were brought in to figure it out. *Emperor Wu* was impressed by a confucian scholar, *Dong Zhongshu*, who argued that confucian thought should be used to govern the state. This led to a revitalization of confucianism. The emperor adopted a new role of channeling cosmic forces to provide harmony for the state. This turned china back into a theocracy again. Confucianism became the new religion of the state. Confucius became a god during this time, temples are build and rituals for him.

Confucianism: Neo-Confucians

This arose during the **Song Era**(960-1280CE), became dominant in the **Ming Dynasty**(1368-1644CE), and controlled thought from the Qing dynasty to the revolution.

Literati The government held examinations to become a civil servant giving individuals roles in the government. This established a bureaucracy that ran the empire. The **literati** were those that had passed the exam. These became the dominant group during the song era. Some delved into politics, but others attempted to recover the ideal of a righteous person, *ren*. This is what Confucius wanted for us.

Sages These are the literati seeking *ren*. Often they presented themselves as the sages of old. They worked to identify with the nature of thing and to seek the heavenly principle. A sage brought harmony to everyone around them. A metaphysical aspect starts to encroach on confucianism. The heavenly principle is universal and found in all things which is why sages sought to identify with all things.

Chou Tun-i The founder of neo-confucian philosophy. He and a group of thinkers worked out cosmology and metaphysics based on confucian thought. This was called the **great ultimate**. This is what generated yin and yang, the elements, and all creation. All of creation is united under this principle. Sages wanted to identify with this principle.

Li This started as the proper performance of ritual, confucius added a moral dimension, and the neo-confucians turned it into a principle. Li is one, its manifestations are many. We discover the one by investigating internal and external things.

Zhu Xi He organized all these thoughts into a system. At its head was the great ultimate. Every phenomenon has its own defining principle.

Daoism: The Dao

Laozi (640-?BCE) There are many legends about him, but scholars think he is a compilation of scholars at the time that rebelled against confucianism as it was too artificial and structured. They felt that true harmony came without structure through getting in touch with the natural rhythms of the universe. Laozi means old master, it comes from the legend that his mother was pregnant for 60 years. At 160yo he decided to go west as he was disgusted with the corruption of his land. The border guard refused to let him pass before he recorded his wisdom. So he wrote the *Daode Jing*.

Daode Jing One of the most translated books in the world. It describes the mysterious flow that goes through the universe,

All chinese religions use the term dao, but they all interpret it differently:

- confucian → the way of tian
- buddhism → karma
- daoism → the sacred principle of nature, the flow of life

The dao is the source of all existence, it contains all opposites. It is unchanging.

De This is any particular form of the dao, it is constantly changing.

Daoism: Wuwei

The highest good is to be in harmony with the dao. We do this through **Wuwei**, it means literally non-action. It actually refers to no non-natural action. Confucius believed that human fulfillment is through rules, daoism seeks fulfillment through non-action. There is emphasis of weakness and passivity. It is explained through trees in a storm, they bend in the wind, straightening when the wind is done. Willows bend, oaks break. Be like the willow.

Social Order Action provokes reaction, this is what causes problems in society.

Natural Action This is action that comes from within. It is likened to the female since they represent passivity. It is also compared to uncarved blocks since they have limitless potential. Society is regrettable necessity. You may resist if someone is trying to interfere with your wuwei. Only defend yourself.

Virues of the Wise You can live in harmony with other citizens through three principles.

- mercy, being merciful means you will receive mercy
- frugality, you will never be the object of envy
- never be first, you will never be the object of jealousy

Daoism: Political Thought

Government is inversely proportional to order. Every time you pass a law you create more law breakers. If you keep people ignorant they will not develop expectations, and thus be easier to fulfill. Give people the opportunity to find balance, do not try to lead them.

Daoism: Later Daoism

Zhuangzi (369-286BCE) Is the primary interpreter of Laozi's thought. The *Zhuangshi* is his writings. It contains all sorts of odd stories about non-conventional saints. We distinguish between things but all things are the product of the dao which makes them nature. The sage must be in tune with the dao. Being in harmony with the dao you rise above the conventional. The sage does not distinguish between things (beauty and ugly, joy and sorrow, etc) and instead accepts all as a natural process.

Daoism: Religious Daoism

Religious daoism built upon the philosophical daoism. It incorporated techniques and rituals from them. The primary goal is long life and immortality. Sages rise above the conventional, they interpret this as immortality. They often did yoga and consuming weird things. The 5 elements were very valued. They also believed there was a plant on the *Isle of the Blessed* that could give immortality.

Qi This is the primordial breath. It is present in gods, astral bodies, and nature. Religious daoism focused heavily on qi. We want to renew our qi, this is the source of immortality. You can call down the gods through ritual and they actualize cosmic forces in your body to renew your qi. Ingesting things is called *alchemy*. They often consumed mercury and arsenic to transform the human body into an immortal. Elaborate breathing and gymnastics, as well as diet and ritual sex were also used to reach immortality.

Isle of the Blessed There were frequent expeditions to reach the isle of the blessed.

Gods and Goddesses The *Queen Mother of the West* is a very important goddess. This resulted in the movement of carrying amulets of the queen mother to protect yourself from danger.

Daoism: Sects

Way of Heavenly Peace Their leaders were priests and military officers. They worshiped laozi as a god, creator of the world. Their sacred book was the *Scripture of Great Peace*, it focused on how to restore the government, bring peace, and restore the health of people. Also known as the “yellow turbans”, they instituted a rebellion to bring an end to the Han dynasty.

Way of the Celestial Masters Developed later in the Han period. It is still influential today.

Orthodox Unity Sect

Also is active today, centered in Taiwan.

Maoshan Most important during the Tang dynasty. They built many temples and trained many new priests. They practiced many rituals to bring down cosmic powers and meditated. Their leader was very prevalent.

Total Perfection Sect Rose up during the Song dynasty, founded by *Wang Ze*. Studied many other religions like Buddhism and Daoism. He had some interactions with Daoist immortals that led him to live in a cave for a while. After that he lived in a thatched hut before he burned it down. This sect was a group of eccentric ascetics, but they attracted many followers. This was the first sect with a monastic system, they wanted a simple life. They practiced inner alchemy and self-perfection. They incorporated Confucian and Buddhist doctrine as well.

Chinese Religions 2

March 31, 2017

Buddhism in China

Buddhism is very focused on otherworldly things while chinese culture is very focused on this world, but for a while it was quite popular.

Arguments Against Many people were against the rooting of buddhism in china. It was a foreign religion and china was very against anything foreign as barbarian. They received many different buddhist texts that contradicted each other which made it hard to sort it all. The language barrier was another problem. The chinese also felt that buddhism had too much emphasis on non-worldly concepts. They also disliked the notion of karma because it put animals and humans on the same level, they heavily rejected vegetarianism. The heaviest resistance came against the monastic system since chinese culture put so much emphasis on family and children. The chinese felt that the buddhist monks were parasites since they did no work for their food.

Arguments For The introduction of buddhism came at a time of great upheaval. Barbarians were common and were quite impressed with buddhism, they felt it could unite their territories. The chinese were also very impressed by the bodhisattva. Life of the peasantry was hard in china so the bodhisattva were attractive. They also like the notion that no matter how low your position you still possessed the buddha nature. Karma was also a welcome idea because it meshed well with confucian ideals because it helped strengthen social order. The translation of buddhist texts gave them more insight into it. Confucianism did not explain life after death so they used the buddhist concepts. Daoist philosophy was already very similar to buddhist ideas so the translation often used daoist term and was used to expand daoist philosophy. They adapted the monastic life as the movement to the monastery as a movement to a new family as the abbot was like a father. The monks started working and producing, this is what allowed the zen tradition to survive persecution (the monasteries were often in isolated areas and self sustaining). Finally buddhist monks in china agreed to bow to the emperor (as opposed to in india where monks were higher).

Buddhist Schools: The Tiantai and Huayan Schools

The chinese wanted to explain the contradictions within the various buddhist texts they had.

The Tiantai School Established by *Zhiyi* (538-597). It categorized the texts to account for contradictions between them. It had that the buddha taught in stages so he had to keep them simple for a bit.

1. theravada
2. simple mahayana
3. advanced mahayana (emptiness)
4. lotus sutra

Huayan School They also felt that the buddha had to teach in stages which lead to the contradictions. They thought he started with the full knowledge and had to dumb things down as he went, so he then jumped down to theravada. They also believed that the absolute and the temporary were infused with each other. Emptiness is that from which all things

come and it is the absolute. The temporary is the form that issues from emptiness. These are infused. Everything is a manifestation of the absolute and this explains the relationship between all living beings.

1. theravada
2. mahayana
3. emptiness
4. garland sutra

Pureland Buddhism

This focuses on the concept of the *degenerate age*. There is an idea that all things decay over time, even dharma. Enlightenment becomes more difficult because individuals become less competent. The narrative focuses on a specific bodhisattva, **Dharmakara**.

Dharmakara He was a monk that heard a particular speech that led him to take the bodhicitta. He vowed that he would create a pureland where it would be easier to attain enlightenment. The goal is now to be reborn in the pureland since full enlightenment is not easy here. Supposedly Dharmakara fulfilled his vows and becomes the buddha **Amitabha** and creates the pure land **Sukhavati**. Everything there is designed to make us think about dharma to help us attain enlightenment. It is described as very lush.

Ritual You recite a homage to the buddha Amitabha 10 times and fill your mind with this image. This recitation purifies the mind and allows rebirth into the pure land.

New Developments Less emphasis on the recitations and more emphasis on the grace of Amitabha. The idea was that the recitation alone was not enough, you needed an act of grace as well. We now have the notion of faith “in” someone instead of faith “that” the buddha’s words are true. We also see a shift to a more simplified religious practice. No longer were people focusing on meditation and instead recitation and homage. This makes it much easier for people to practice. The view of enlightenment became much more inclusive as well. The people who more traditional sects would say cannot attain enlightenment are allowed into the pure land by the grace of Amitabha.

Chinese Development Pure land was developed in India but it flourished in china due to the help of three patriarchs. *Tanluan*(476-542CE) was the first and most notable. He move away from many forms of practice to put more emphasis in the recitation and your faith in Amitabha. Instead of complicated rituals you should put most of your effort into your faith and recitation.

Buddhist Schools: Chan Buddhism

This was instituted in china in the 5th century by *Bodhidharma*. There are many stories about this guy. One is that he was summoned by the emperor who complained that he has helped buddhism alot and wants to know how much merit he has accrued. Bodhidharma said “none”. He was banished to the north where he meditated for nine years until his legs fell off. This shows that in chan buddhism one must be totally dedicated to meditation above all.

Chan buddhism believes that you can attain enlightenment without assistance. Meditation is the best path to this.

Dharma Assembly (732CE) This event was convened to discuss the views on enlightenment and succession between the northern and southern schools. The northern school held that enlightenment was gradual, the souther school believed that it was sudden. The southern school was taken by the sixth patriarch *Huineng*. The southern school won. Enlightenment is sudden and the same in all beings. The same buddha nature dwells in everyone.

Key Points Meditation is the most important ritual. There are stories about zen masters destroying texts, many sutras were very important and these master had already committed the texts to memory. Do not take these stories literally, instead these show the idea that we can become too attached to scholarly knowledge and this can halt our progress on the path. Chan buddhism also has the notion of mind to mind transmission. A chan master has a duty to produce a dharma successor, one who has the same mastery of dharma as the master. The mind of the disciple and that of the teacher become as one. **Gongon/Koan** are stories and riddles that help us explore dharma. There is no simple answer, reason cannot really be applied, they are meant to push the mediator beyond this.

Buddhist Schools: Persecution 845

There were many schools that developed in china and were supported. In 845 a daoist emperor came into the throne and instituted a persecution of buddhism. It only lasted about a year but it devastated all but the pure land and chan schools. Pure land survived because it had become a mainstream religion, it had too many followers to just kill them all. Too much of society had it in them. Chan was a more elite practice. It was spared because their monasteries were in remote areas and they were self sufficient. The main stream population also greatly respected chan monks and monasteries so they worked to protect them

Worlds of Meaning: Religious Concepts

Shang Di The concept of heaven comes from the Shang dynasty, it was a divine personality that probably evolved from the ancestor gods of the ruling family. He controlled nature and brought good and evil to humanity.

Tian The Zhou dynasty added the idea that heaven was a universal moral order. It was not a personality, but a cosmic power. Tian gives the right to rule to a specific group, the **Mandate of Heaven**. The Zhou use this as an argument for them taking the throne from the Shang.

Personal or Impersonal This has been a running debate about heaven. *Maozi* said it was like a caring father. *Xunzi* said it was just the operation of the universe. *Liu Yuxi* explains both positions and concludes that it is heaven that produces and reproduces, and it is humans that create moral order and regulation.

The Cosmos The world is self evolved, there is no creator god. Prior to all categories there was chaos. The cosmos is represented as an egg, outside the egg is chaos, the white is heaven, and the yolk is earth. Chaos is sometimes identified with the dao. From the dao we get yin and yang, heaven and earth, everything.

The Dao This creates everything. It cycles yin and yang to rise and fall. It also operates the five elements which are always moving and changing.

Humans Humans have two souls, the yang or heavenly soul, and the yin or earthly soul. The yin soul is buried in the earth and the yang soul goes upwards to heaven.

Path of Transformation For daoist this is a path of withdrawal, meditation, and wuwei

Worlds of Meaning: Religious Daoism

This operates on two levels, that of the expert/priest and that of ordinary people.

Expert/Priest They must learn the religious registry and all the rituals. They must nourish the life forces within, spirit, breath, and spermatic essence. These are concentrated in the cinnabar fields, the head, the heart, and the belly. These are also the places where the *Three Pure Ones* reside. These are the cosmic gods. They must preserve and draw down the lord of heaven, the lord of earth, and the lord of humans. The lord of heaven is the representative of the primordial breath, the lord of earth of the spirit, and the lord of humans of the seminal essence.

- head - lord of heaven - primordial breath
- heart - lord of earth - spirit
- belly - lord of humans - seminal essence

The expert must renew the yang and learns the techniques for calling down the three pure ones. Restoring yang forces is also done through diet, exercise, and meditation. The expert can also act on behalf of the community, all cosmic energy moves through the expert into the community. **Jiao** is the rite of cosmic renewal which involves offerings to the pure ones (the offerings must be pure).

- wine
- tea
- cakes
- fruits

This is different from the meat offerings that are often made to the more popular gods. The worship of the three pure ones is done by the priest alone, away from the people. The power of the ritual goes through the expert into the community.

Ordinary People Use the experts to renew yang energy. They worship at temples and they worship their ancestors. Evil and suffering occur because we are out of balance so ordinary people must seek balance.

Worlds of Meaning: Popular Religion

Popular religion focuses on the immediate and practical concerns of human life. These are rituals that:

- expel evil spirits
- protect property
- bring prosperity, health, longevity
- respect the ancestors
- favor the gods

Many gods of popular religion were once human and became elevated. The relationship is reciprocal. You make a donation and the god provides the service. If the god does not act the person can appeal to another god.

The gods have a hierarchy, likened to a heavenly court. At the top is the *Jade Emporer*, also known as the lord of humans. In the second layer are the *city gods*, the *tai shan*, and the *household gods*. Under the city gods are the *tudigong*, local gods. Under the household gods are the *Zaojun*, god of the cooking stove, he keeps a ledger of the family's deeds and reports them to the Jade Emperor.

Divine Figures The most revered figure is **Guanyin**, the bodhisattva that you can come and request for help in all things. **Mazu** was once a young girl that saved her brother but not her father, so she is associated as a goddess of the sea.

Mediums, writers (communicates with ancestors), and healers are also common in popular religion. Feng shui is another aspect

Ritual Life **Qing Ming** is a day of honoring the ancestors. You clean their graves and renew family ties with a feast. It also ushers in spring. **Ullambana**, the feast of souls. You give offerings and burn spirit money. This month is where the gates of purgatory are left open to allow souls to wander about. Buddhist monks are busy during this time. **New Year** is a major festival. The **Dragon Boat Festival** is also very popular in southern china.

Japanese Religions

March 31, 2017

Shinto

Japanese religion is *syncretic* meaning they practice rituals from various religions. They do not maintain a separation between the human and spiritual worlds.

Shinto This is an umbrella term for a variety of practices. Usually it refers to religion before buddhism arrived in japan. **Kami** are spiritual beings that shinto practices focus on. These can be natural phenomenon (like mt fuji), or human (like after a momentous even occurs in someone's life), or buddha/boddhisattva (buddhism became integrated with local religions). The most important kami is *Amaterasu*, the sun kami. This is the circle on their flag.

Amaterasu Became important in the Jomon period. Her sacred objects were curved beads, a sword, and a mirror.

Each clan originally had a representative kami and the leader of the clan was that kami's priest. During the Kofun period one clan became dominant, they became the imperial line. Their kami was amaterasu, she became the kami of all of the people of japan. The emperor was her preist and he descended from amaterasu. He, *Jimmu* was the great grandson of *Ninigi* who was the grandson of Amaterasu.

Texts We know about the kami from stories in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*. The creation of the land, imperial family, and japanese people was from *Izanagi* and *Izanami*. They churned the waters to create the lands. They gave birth of all of the other kami. When Izanami gave birth to the kami of fire was burned and had to go to the underworld. Izanagi wanted to follow her but she chased him out. He had to cleanse himself and in doing so he cried a single tear which became Amaterasu.

Buddhism: History

Buddhism was introduced in 552CE from korea. Images and texts were sent as a gift to the imperial court. The emperor and shinto priests were concerned. He gave the image to a general *Soga no Iname* that was very supportive of buddhism. He was very pleased and practiced with his family. A pestilence swept over japan and buddhism was blamed. All evidence of buddhism was purged from the country. At this time a huge fire destroyed the great hall in the imperial palace. It returned again 50 years later. This time monks and nuns came and taught the texts.

Prince Shotoku (573-622) One of the main drivers for the adoption of buddhism. He was very well learned on buddhism, confucianism, and shinto tradition. He formulated the first constitution(604), the *17 point constitution*. The three religions were recommended turning them into state religions.

Nara Period (710-784) This is the era of the first buddhist schools and the temple to the sun buddha *Dainichi*. They were concerned that this temple would offend amaterasu, an emissary was sent to consult her and she said that she was one with the sun buddha. This provoked a convergence of shinto and buddhism, they were practiced interchangeably until the 19th century

Buddhism: Developments

Saicho (767-822) He introduced the Tendai system of buddhism. Buddhism had become very lax and involved in the imperial court. This school was very strict and required a 12 year training period before you could become a monk. This ensured that people joined the faith for the right reasons and not just for political gains.

Kukai (773-835) He introduced **Shingon** buddhism, a form of tantric buddhism. It had much ritual and pagentry which made it very popular. It influence the arts and culture greatly.

Kamakura Period (1192-1333) along with the **Muromachi Period**(1333-1600) were times of great turmoil. There was a lot of uncertainty and violence. The sages declared that a degenerate age had begun. Rule was by military power from the Shogunate. The samurai flourished here. They were great participants of the arts that came from buddhist monistries. The code of bushido was also established here. This disciplined them to avoid unnecessary chaos. It included elements from the three major religions:

- confucian - loyalty to his lord unto death
- buddhist - meditation (usually focused on death) allowed the samurai to become fearless, they no longer feared death
- daoism - martial arts, practice a movement until it is natural

Buddhism: Rinzai/Hakuin

Eisai (1141-1215) He was a Tendai monk that traveled to china and brought back Rinzai(Sudden) Zen. He wanted to establish it as a second school but tendai monks resisted it. He was supported and protected by the samurai. He also introduced tea to japan and recommended it for its medicinal properties and as a break from meditation. It is from this that we associated samurai with rinzai zen.

Hakuin (1686-1768) He reformed rinzai zen. This happened during the tokugawa period. In china the sudden school of zen (the Chan) had developed koans, riddles, to help the disciple think beyond language and reason. Hakuin developed a training system around koans. They became the focus of rinzai zen study. Today it takes 10 years to go through the list of koans.

You begin the koans with great hope. You start to apply rational thought to it. After bringing your insight to your master he rejects it, this cycles for a long time until the student develops the *great doubt*. This is doubt that you can ever solve the koan. This puts you in a bind and causes your mind to seize up. Hakuin likens it to sheet of ice, brittle and hard, susceptible to cracks. Something comes and cracks your mind which provokes the *great death*, death of the ego. This is immediately followed by enlightenment.

Buddhism: Soto Zen

This was the gradual school.

Dogen (1200-1253) He was a tendai monk. He provided the intellectual foundation for all zen. He is recognized as one of the great masters of buddhism in japan. He had a fundamental question: *if we all have buddha nature, then in some senses we are already enlightened, why do we have to seek enlightenment?* He concluded that we don't just have to sit, **za zen** just sitting. This is a pointless meditation. This is a demonstration of the enlightenment we already have.

Buddhism: Nichiren

Nichiren (1222-1282) He established his namesake school. He was very critical of other buddhist schools and felt nothing wrong with persecuting them. He also criticized the country and its leadership. He felt that japan had abandoned the

true buddhist path and it needed to return or suffer great defeat. These thoughts got him exiled twice. This ended when he predicted a mongol invasion properly. Nichiren believed he was a bodhisattva that would establish the lotus sutra as the full and final revelation of the buddha. Japan needed to follow the lotus sutra to maintain itself as a great nation.

Soka Gakkai This was a lay organization developed after the second world war. It was associated with nichiren buddhism. It became an international organization and became very popular in america.

Buddhism: Pureland

This had similar popularity in japan as it did in china.

Honen (1133-1212) Established pureland as a separate school called *Jodo Shu*. It emphasized recitation of the *nembutsu*, homage to the buddha amitabha, called *Amida* in japan. It focused on Amida's vow to reassure you of salvation in the pure land.

Shinran (1173-1262) Honen's prime disciple established the *Jodo Shin Shu*, the True Pureland School. There are likenesses drawn to MLK. People are totally incapable of any self-power in achieving salvation. He had a deep sense of our inability and our need for grace. This lead him to leave the monastic life as useless, so he disrobed and married. This established the tradition of married monks in japanese buddhism. We have to rely compleley on Amida, all we have to do is accept the gift from Amida. When we chant the nembutsu we are not reassuring ourselves since we cannot do anything, we are just thanking Amida.

Buddhism: Meiji Restoration and Post War

Meiji Restoration (1867-1945) This is the time in which imperial rule was restored in japan. The borders had also been closed for nearly 200 years. When its borders were opened everyone was fascinated with western goods and technology, many scholars feared for the loss of japanese traditions. At this time the tea ceremony was integrated into the school system so that the practice would not be lost. The fascination with wester stuff lead to a resurgence in shinto, called **Nationalist Shinto**.

Nationalist Shinto There was a move to separate buddhism from shinto. This was done by making shinto the cultural heritage of all japan regardless of religious affiliation. Now shinto was not just one of their religions.

Manifest Destiny This was the idea that the japanese were a people born of the gods which gave them the destiny to rule all of asia. They wanted to form an asian block against western interference. This lead to imperialistic exercises including the occupation of korea. This ended with the atomic bombs.

Post War The idea of a nationalistic shinto was disestablished. A separation of church and state was placed in the constitution. The emperor gave up his divine status.

Worlds of Meaning: Shinto

Shinto The religious practices in japan from before buddhist movements. It means the way of the kami. Kami are the inner power of nature. The world is good, pure, and beautiful, it is moving towards a good end. Humans are children of the kami. We were originally pure but we are imperfect and limited. Pollution obstructs the positive flow of the kami and their blessings. Shinto focuses on the notion of pollution and purity rather than right and wrong. Negative things are discouraged as they block the flow. So shinto is a pat of purification.

The Four Affirmations **Tradition** is extremely important, a ritual must be very precise. We must pass the method of ritual down through family lines, we must try to do it exactly the same way as our ancestors. Often people do not know why a ritual is the way it is but we keep it going. **Purification** is very important, and most rituals start with water purification. **Life in the World**, shinto is very affirming of living your life here. All of your interactions here are important. **Festival** is important because it is where the people and the kami meet. There are four elements to shinto festival.

- tradition
- purity
- life in the world
- festival
 - purification
 - offerings to the kami
 - prayers for help and honoring the kami
 - participation

Worlds of Meaning: Buddhism

Shingon tantric, founded by *Kukai*. Focused on sun buddha *Dainichi*, all of the universe is his body. Meditation and ritual can allow us to connect to his power. The three mysteries of the buddha:

- body
- speech
- mind

Pureland One of the largest, relies on grace and faith in Amida. Practice focuses on nembutsu, *Namu Amida Butsu* (honor to amida the buddha). Honen says recitation of this releases the power of amida to us. Shinran says we are already saved so we must rely totally on amida, the nembutsu is showing gratitude.

Zen path of self transformation, you must use your own power to attain enlightenment in any age. Dogen provided the foundation and the concept of zazen, just sitting. Hakuin provided rinzai zen, he brought the koan riddles to push you through the great doubt, great death, and into the great enlightenment.

Ritual and the Good Life

Home Worship Shines to kami and/or buddha/boshisattva. Kami shrine = kamidon, buddha shrine = bustsudon

Torii These are the cross bars that mark the line between the sacred and profane (think of the beautiful arches with roofs). This shows that you are entering a sacred space.

Meditation Very important in the buddhist tradition, along with chanting.

Rights of Passage The *cherry blossom festival* is well celebrated. The *obon festival* honors the ancestors, people go to graves and give offerings and thanks. The *buddha's birthday* is another widely celebrated occasion.

Conclusions and Reflections

March 31, 2017

Challenges to Religion

Modernism This is associated with the beginning of the enlightenment. It increased secularism. Religion no longer dominates our view of the world, it has been supplanted by science, medicine, and politics. Religion is kept separate from everything else which makes it challenging for religion to keep its relevance.

Globalization The world is shrinking. We have more contact with other religions. This challenges our religious view of our world.

Rapid Change Modern society changes far quicker than religion can. We always feel insecure due to this constant change. This causes us to retreat and retrench. Often times this is religion that we retreat to, causing conservatism.

Violence Conflicts are now much more publicized. Religion still plays a large role in many modern conflicts. Adding religion to a conflict deepens it and escalates it. Religion engages in our core values and this causes a pattern of escalation then we get a holy war.

Holy War There are three factors that are common cross culturally to a holy war:

- success is thought of as inevitable, it is fought on behalf of god and god will always be victorious
- long timelines, people are willing to fight for a long time because it is on a cosmic level
- individual sacrifice, people are much more willing to sacrifice in a holy war because they will be rewarded after death

Future of Religion

Religion will continue to be until **Anomie**, **Chaos**, and **fear of death** are removed from the human experience. Religion can play a positive role in the world:

- mutual understanding and respect - try to understand others, all religions say the human view of the sacred is limited for us to achieve mutual understanding
- vision of the good life for all
- religious commitment supersedes commitment to the state or other groups - religion can be subversive and cause people to reject immoral governments
- inter religious cooperation - global concerns requires global cooperation

Dialog: Approaches

All Religions are the Same We might want to develop a super religion, or global theology. This option is rejected because many religions are already multifaceted and contradictory. When we look at new religious movement or personal

religions we cannot expand this global theology to encompass them. We would be ignoring the integrity of the individual religions. The context is what makes religious symbols.

Dialog is Impossible We cannot get people to agree on an exclusive truth. Dialog needs to involve listening and understanding instead of trying to convert people. Here we are just trying to find the exclusive truth. Linguistic problems are a big hindrance here. Much can be lost in translation. We can try to communicate using basic human qualities which can get points across much better. Dialog between different faiths does happen, we can understand each other.

Process of Dialog

How can we make religious dialog more effective.

Being Self Aware bracket your preconceived notions. Put your ideas on the shelf for a while when trying to understand someone.

Walking in their moccasins by bracketing our own notions we try to enter the universe of symbols of someone else. Try to walk in their moccasins to see their religion from the inside to the best of our abilities.

Return Home examine the new ideas that we learned from walking in their moccasins. Make meaningful comparisons with our own religion

Integrate Use our new knowledge to see our own ideas clearer and try to understand the other better.

Guide to dialog:

1. grasp of ones own tradition - we need to understand ourselves before engaging in dialog
2. goal is not conversion - we just want to understand, not win
3. respect for others
4. willingness to share - be vulnerable, show what is most valuable to us
5. willingness to learn - try to grasp their ideas, willingness to grow and change