

Schedule

Oct 30	Hinduism and Buddhism in Western Modernity	“Buddhism” Pages 49-50 “Hinduism” Pages 130-131
Nov 1	Abrahamic Religions	No Readings!
Nov 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Quiz2. Review Outline of Ritual Theory Assignment3. Tutorial on Field Research Assignment	Read the comments on your returned Outline of Ritual Theory Assignment



BUDDHISM: HISTORIES PRACTICES

Last Class

- Buddha's enlightenment, teaching, death
- Four Noble Truths
- Three Jewels
- Pali Canon
- Theravada Buddhism
- Mahayana Buddhism

Outline

Vajrayana Buddhism

Buddhist Cosmology

Karma and Rebirth

The Self

Gender

Rituals and Practices

Finish History (time
permitting)

Focus on

■ Vajrayana

■ Samsara

■ Anatman

■ Meditation

Arhat vs. Bodhisattva

- Arhat, attain enlightenment during life, highest rank after Buddha
 - Highest rank in Theravada Buddhism
 - Attain pari-nirvana at death
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- Bodhisattva, enlightened being
 - Highest rank in Mahayana Buddhism (above arhat)
 - Continue to be reborn in world until everyone attains pari-nirvana

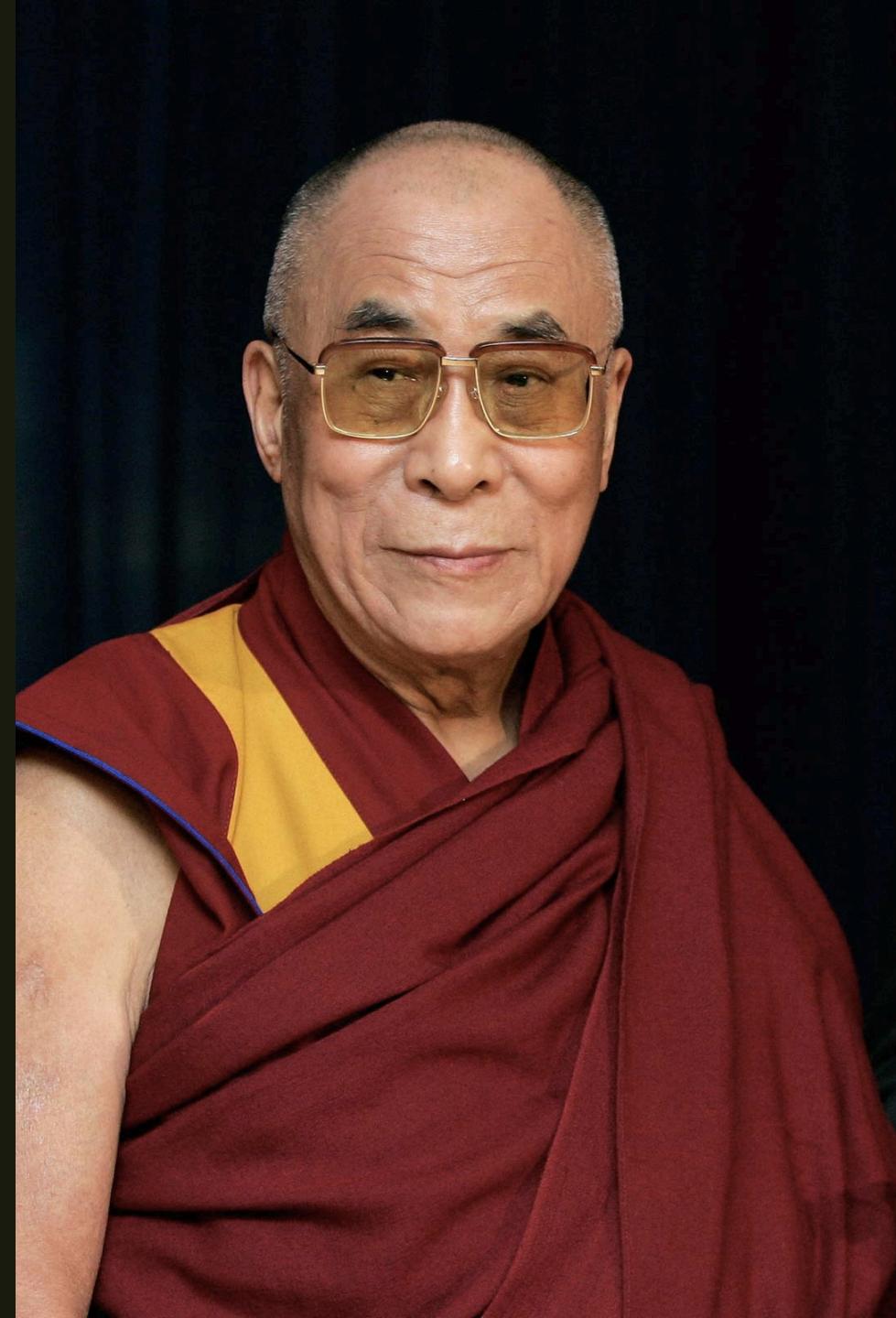
Distinct to Mahayana

1. Adherents aspire to become bodhisattvas
 - Consider enlightenment attained by arhats inferior to bodhisattva
2. Cosmology proposed an infinite universe with many heavenly worlds inhabited by countless buddhas and bodhisattvas
3. Shakyamuni not just a human who attained enlightenment, but a transcendent buddha in the expanded universe
4. Propose that all phenomena lack an inherent nature of their own due to Dependent Origination

Vajrayana Buddhism in Tibet

- Third major school of Buddhism
- The Vajra (thunderbolt) Vehicle
- Use new and esoteric writings called *tantras*
- Combines sutra-like sermons with powerful rituals and meditation
- Provides quicker and more direct path to nirvana
- Referred to as the “third turning of the dharma wheel”

- Most commonly associated with Tibet
- The Dalai Lama is a concept and figure distinct to Vajrayana Buddhism
- He is the leader of Vajrayana in the world



Cosmology and Samsara

- Universe has no creator
- Universe is without beginning or end
- Universe composed of worlds like our solar system
- Buddhist texts mostly pay attention to our world
- Being constantly reborn into the world is *samsara*
- The only way to escape samsara is nirvana

Karma and Rebirth

- Karma (lit. action) refers specifically to actions which influence the agent in the future
 - *What does this mean?*
- Karma refers only to motivated or intentional actions
- Breathing and blinking don't count
- Karma carries ethical dimensions

Six Realms of Rebirth

1. Realm of gods in heaven
2. Realm of lower gods
3. Realm of human beings
4. realms of animals
5. Realm of hungry ghosts
6. Realm of hell

Rebirth

- Because of impermanence, nothing lasts forever
- Every being in hell will eventually be released
- Even gods in heaven will die and descend to lower realm
- Must become a buddha to escape

The Self

- No eternal soul
- Living beings do not have permanent, essential spirit
- Self is comprised of **five aggregates**, components that make up the human soul
 1. *Material form*
 2. *Sensation*
 3. *Perception*
 4. *Will*
 5. *Consciousness*

Anatman

- *Anatman* mean “no-soul” or “no self”
- A distinguishing feature of early Indian Buddhism
- Distinguishes Buddhism from Hinduism since it is not the soul that is reborn in **samara**, but a combination of the **five aggregates**

Gender

- Buddhism has ugly history of misogyny (like most human institutions)
- Buddha story makes clear that women are spiritual obstacles to male enlightenment
- Women are dangerous objects of desire that need to be overcome

Gender

- Buddha's adoptive mother Mahaprajapati wanted to join the sangha
- Buddha initially said no, but eventually conceded that women can reach nirvana and could practice as nuns, but nuns have eight additional rules to follow
- These rules do not aid their spiritual development, but protect the men in the monastery

Gender

- In spite of obstacles, story of Mahaprajapati shows Buddhism's complex and ambiguous relationship towards women

Rituals and Practices



Meditation

Classically, two forms

1. Shamatha: tranquility or calmness, freeing mind of distractions

Meditation

- Second form called vipashyana (means insight)
- More advanced
- Activates Buddha nature within to produce enlightenment
- Among lay practitioners, called “Insight Meditation”

Meditation

- Can also meditate on words or sounds
- Zen Buddhists meditate on koans (sophisticated and paradoxical statements on enlightenment)
- Pure Land Buddhists meditate with devotional chant-like prayers

Meditation

- Vajrayana Buddhism use mantras and dharana spells in devotional meditation
- Here they direct their minds toward the devotion of a divinity
- Here meditation looks like "worship"

Spiritual Goals

- Attain good karma for rebirth
- Human rebirth is valued among both clergy and laypeople
- Nirvana not possible in other realms, so a human rebirth is desirable
- In Mahayana, rebirth in the Pure Land (Mahayana heavenly realm) is common spiritual goal

Worldly Concerns

- Buddhists not nihilistic, not simply concerned with future rebirths
- Worldly concerns include physical health, safe travel, good fortune, and protection against evil forces
- Buddhist gods can be asked to provide rain for crops, or help heal illness