

## Buddhism, Xuanzang, and the Tang Dynasty

### I. Gautama Siddhārtha (in Sanskrit) (566–486 B.C.)

- A. Various dates of birth and death of historical Buddha (Sakyamuni)
- B. Three Paradoxical Influences (both positive and negative)
  - 1. Brahmanic literature (*Upanishads*)
    - a. accepted: concept of *samsāra* (cycle of rebirths)
    - b. rejected: concept of *ātman* (self); idea that only Brahmins could escape *samsāra*; authority of Brahmanic literature; animal sacrifice
  - 2. Yoga (Yogic texts: *Mahābharata*)
    - a. accepted: introspection; meditation techniques
    - b. rejected: self-mortification; contorted postures; meditative planes as goal
  - 3. Asceticism (e.g., Jainism of Mahāhira)
    - a. accepted: *ahimsa* = non-violence (harmlessness); idea of non-attachment
    - b. rejected: extreme self-denial (asceticism)
- C. Objective: *Nirvana* = “emptiness” or “blowing out the flame”
- D. Middle Path — rejecting the extremes of luxury and denial

### II. Types of Buddhism

- A. Theravāda, or Hinayana (“Lesser Vehicle”) — Southern Buddhism (Sri Lanka, S.E. Asia)
- B. Mahāyāna (“Greater Vehicle”) — Northern Buddhism (China, Japan)
  - 1. Mantras
  - 2. Charms, Spells, Incantations
  - 3. Zen
- C. Vajrayāna (“Diamond Vehicle”) — Tibet
  - 1. Sacraments and rituals

### III. Writings

- A. Tripitaka (= “Three Baskets”)
  - 1. Sayings (*Sutra*)
  - 2. Rules of Discipline (*Vinaya* or *Dharma*)
  - 3. Systematic Philosophy (*Abhidharma*)

### IV. Tang [T’ang] Dynasty (618–907)

- A. Early Emperors
  - 1. Gaozu Emperor [Kao Tsu] (618–626)
  - 2. Taizong Emperor [T’ai Tsung] (626–649) (= Li Shimin)
- B. Xuanzang (602?–669) — Buddhist monk and pilgrim

## I. Dynasties

- A. Qin (Ch'in) Dynasty (221 BCE—210 BCE)
  - 1. Shi Huangdi (Shih Huang Ti) — “First Emperor”
  - 2. Li Si (Li Ssū) — chief minister
  
- B. Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE)
  
- C. Six Dynasties (220 CE–589 CE)
  
- D. Sui Dynasty (589–618)
  - 1. Wangdi (589–605)
  - 2. Yangdi (605–618)
  
- E. Tang (T'ang) Dynasty (618–907)
  - 1. Controlled territory as far west as Central Asia
  - 2. Capital: Changan
  - 3. Poets: 3000 known to us
  
- F. Five Dynasties (907–960)
  
- G. Song (Sung) Dynasty (960–1279) — only in south after 1127
  - 1. Height of technological innovation
  - 2. *A Record of Musing on the Eastern Capital* (Hangzhou) (1235)
  
- H. Jin (Chin) Dynasty (only in north: 1115–1234) — Jurchens
  
- I. Mongols
  - 1. Control north from 1215
  - 2. Yuan Dynasty (controls both north and south: 1279–1368)
  
- J. Ming Dynasty (1368–1644)
  - 1. Voyages of Zheng He (Cheng Ho), “the Three-Jeweled Eunuch”
  - 2. Focus on re-endorsing agrarian nature of economy; internal trade

## II. The Celestial Empire

### A. Intellectual/Cultural/Religious

1. *Tian Ming* (*T'ien-ming*) — Mandate of Heaven
2. *Qi* (*Ch'i*) – energy of nature
3. “Three Ways to One Goal”
  - a. Confucianism
    - (1) Confucian Synthesis—Ideology that held the Empire together
    - (2) virtues: benevolence, propriety, righteousness, wisdom, trustworthiness
    - (3) filial piety: to father and emperor
  - b. Taoism – (metaphysics, alchemy)
  - c. Buddhism
    - (1) Xuanzang (Hsuan-tsang) (602?–669)
    - (2) “Empress” Wu (690–705)
4. Three Poets
  - a. Wang Wei (699–759)—Buddhist
  - b. Li Bo (701–762)—Daoist
  - c. Du Fu (712–770)—Confucian

Gaozu [Kao Tsu] Emperor (= Liyuan [Li Yüan]) (618–626)

Jiancheng [Chien-ch'eng]  
Crown Prince  
d. 626

Li Shimin [Li Shih-min]  
Taizong Emperor  
(626–649)

Yuanji [Yüan-chi]  
d. 626

owed allegiance to by

owed allegiance to by

General Shi Yan-sheng

General Huo Da

*On Wine*

Have you not seen  
How the Yellow River, which flows from heaven and hurries  
toward the sea, never turns back?  
Have you not seen  
How at the bright mirrors of high halls men mourn their  
white hairs.  
At dawn black silk, by evening changed to snow?  
While there is pleasure in life, enjoy it,  
And never let your gold cup face the moon empty!  
Heaven gave me my talents, they shall be used;  
A thousand in gold scattered and gone will all come back again.  
Boil the sheep, butcher, the ox, make merry while there is time;  
We never drunk at all till we drink three hundred cups.

— Li Bo

*On His Baldness*

At dawn I sighed to see my hairs fall;  
At dusk, I sighed to see my hairs fall.  
For I dreaded the time when the last lock should go....  
They are all gone and I do not mind at all!  
I have done with that cumbrous washing and getting dry;  
My tiresome comb for ever is laid aside.  
Bet of all, when the weather is hot and wet,  
To have no top-knot weighing down on one's head!  
I put aside my messy cloth wrap;  
I have got rid of my dusty tasselled fringe.  
In a silver jar I have stored a cold stream,  
On my bald pate I trickle a ladle full  
Like one baptized with the Water of Buddha's Law,  
I sit and receive this cool, cleansing joy.  
Now I know why the priest who seeks Repose  
Frees his heart by first shaving his head.

—Bo Qui