

Buddhism: Extinguishing the Flame of Desire

I. Gautama Siddhārtha (in Sanskrit)

- A. Various dates of historical Buddha's (Sakyamuni's) birth and death
 1. Southern Buddhists follow Ceylonese tradition (d. 544 B.C.)
 2. Japanese Buddhists accept a Northern tradition (d. 568 B.C.)
 3. Jōdo, Shin and Nishin sects adopted legend (d. 949 B.C.)
 4. Hakuji Ui, Buddhist scholar in Japan compared legends (466–386 B.C.)
 5. Western scholarly consensus of the moment (566–486 B.C. or 563–483 B.C.)

- 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 and meditation techniques
 - b. rejected: self-mortification and extreme contorted postures
 - meditative planes as goal
 3. Asceticism (e.g., Jainism of Mahāvira)
 - 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)
 1. extraordinary but not supernatural

- 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