

Chapter 5-

Buddhism

Buddha-Dharma-Sangha

Life + Teachings of the Buddha (the awakened one)

-Siddhartha Gautama

-Born approximately 500 BCE

-In the Kshatriya caste (warrior/king/landowner?)

-Before he was born his parents went to go see an oracle (fortune teller) and they said he would be one of two things, a warrior/king or a spiritual seeker; so his father feared the spiritual seeker he kept him in the compound, giving him everything he can imagine only surrounding him around the young and healthy in hopes to prevent the oracles fortune.

-“The Four Sights” ~ the beginning of turning away from his existing life (rich, protected etc.)

1. Old man- around him were only young and healthy people so he had never seen an old person

2. Sick person- grew up in almost a germ free environment, so he had never seen anybody sick/never been sick

3. Dead person- a corpse that had maggots in it because it had been left on the street

4. Spiritual Seeker- limited from the compound

-Left home to seek spiritual truth in traditional methods (like a sanyassin)

-Mother died during childbirth

The Middle Way

-After 6 years of strenuous ascetic practices Siddhartha Gautama attains the middle way:

-Self – denial: asceticism, mortification, and complete renunciation of all things worldly

-Self – indulgence: eat, drink, be merry, do what ever feels good

-Middle Way- takes best of both

Enlightenment

-At Bodh Gaya, he experiences Supreme Awakening (sees previous lives, wheel of karmic effects and reincarnation, causes of suffering and ways to end suffering)

-Tempted by Mara, but begins to teach, first with his closest students, then throughout Asia.

The Dharma

-The core teachings of the Buddha

Sacred Texts

The Dhammapada

-Sermon of the Four Noble Truths

-The Twin Verses

-On the Self

The Three Marks (or Seals) of Existence

1. Impermanence (anicca)

-Nothing is permanent—everything changes

-Existence or non-existence depends on a series of causes and effects

-Dependent Origination: mental and physical phenomena are conditioned

-“The world is woven of interconnected threads.” Thich Nhat Hanh

2. Dukkham (also first noble truth)

-There is (or life involves) suffering (unsatisfactory/painful/frustrating)

3.No self

-There is no separate self. What appears as separate and enduring identity is a “composite”, a changing constellation of various influences.

-The individual is a combination of five aggregates, the five skandhas (bundles/heaps)

The Four Noble Truths

1. Life is frustrating, painful, unsatisfactory (suffering- dukkha)

2. There is a cause of suffering-desires, attachment to illusions/desires

3. When what causes it ends, suffering ends

4. The way, or path, to end the cause of suffering

- The noble eightfold path

The Five Skandhas (aggregates of a person)

1. Form/Matter

2. Feeling/ Sensation

3. Perception/Cognition

4. Impulse/ Mental Formation

5. Consciousness

The Wheel of Life

Six Realms of Existence:

1. Animals

2. Hell Beings

3. Hungry Ghosts

4. Gods

5. Demi-Gods

6. Humans

The Three Poisons

1. Greed (attachment/desire/clinging) => antidote is generosity/contentment

2. Snake (Aversion/anger) => antidote is loving-kindness/ compassion/ patience
3. Pig (Ignorance/ delusion) => antidote is insight/ right understanding/ wisdom

Meditation

- Samatha (calm, focus)
- Vipassana (insight)
- Zazen (just sitting)
- Metta (loving-kindness)

The Goal

- Nivana
 - Cessation
 - Extinguishing/blowing out (of candle)

Sangha

- Sangha (order of disciples) forms, free of caste system, Monks (bikshus) and nuns (bikshunis) and also laity people
- After Buddha's death, no successor, just the teachings of Dharma
- oLife in simplicity and pursuit of meditation and teaching

Buddhist Ethics

A skilled mind

- A mind that is skillful avoids actions that are likely to cause suffering or remorse
- Rules of moral conduct for Buddhists differs according to whether it applies to the laity or to the monastics
- Avoiding any action which is likely to be harmful

Five Precepts

-A lay Buddhist should cultivate good conduct by training in what are known as the "Five Precepts"

-These are not commandments but are training rules

To undertake the training to:

1. Avoid taking life
2. Avoid taking things not given
3. Avoid sexual misconduct
4. Refrain from false speech
5. Abstain from substances which cause intoxication and heedlessness

The Spread of Buddhism

- Early Buddhism in India:
 - 2 forms of Buddhism:

Theravada:

- Oldest form; the teaching of the elders
- South East Asia