Jainism and Buddhism

During the Vedic period, people who reacted against the rigid social hierarchy and against the religious monopoly of the Brahmins would withdraw into the forests where they pursued salvation through yoga (spiritual and mental discipline), special diets, or meditation.
Their goal was to achieve *moksha* — liberation from the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth or reaching the best karma that you could actually reach.

The ideas of these religious dissidents are reflected in the Upanishads.
Jainism

- Founded by Mahavira - lived between 599 and 527 B.C.E.
- Belief that everything in the universe has a soul and because of this should not be harmed
- Had to take occupations that would not harm any creature
  - Tradition of working in trade and commerce
  - Extremely wealthy community
Jainism

- Jains practiced nonviolence and went to extremes in their attempts not to kill any living thing.
- The most extreme went naked and starved themselves to death.
- Brush ants from their path.
- Wear masks to not accidentally suck in bugs.
Buddhism Basics

• Attempts to give answers to life’s questions

• Emphasis on “things to do” rather than “things to believe”

• Avoid speculative questions (creation, Supreme power, afterlife) since there was little possibility of definitive answers → instead spend time attempting to deal with the harsh realities presented by life here and now

• Tolerant to any religion that allows a person to find “truth” of himself/herself. Believe that setting an example which others may emulate.

• ULTIMATE GOAL → end suffering and attain absolute peace and joy


SIDDHARTHA GAUTAMA

- Siddhartha Gautama born 563 BCE into Kshatriya caste in present day Nepal
- Kingdom of Gautama
- Siddhartha had a legendary birth, life and death
- Prophecy given to his father...
Miracles, miracles, miracles...

- Immaculate conception - Siddhartha descended from Heaven and entered mother’s (Queen Maya) womb in form of baby white elephant (purity)

- Queen Maya carried Siddhartha for 10 months and could see him in the womb

- Gave birth from her side with assistance from tree branches

- Water poured from the sky

- At birth Siddhartha took 7 steps and said “this is my last birth”
Four Sights

- King wanted to shelter Siddhartha from unpleasantness of life
- At 29, Siddhartha visited the city and saw four sights:
  1) Old man
  2) Sick man
  3) Dead man
  4) Ascetic monk
FOUR SIGHTS

These sights compelled him to reflect upon:

- suffering
- death
- meaning of life
- ultimate fate of man

and inspired him to find a spiritual solution to problems of human life
He left his palace and for 7 years searched for the ultimate truth of life

Studied Hindu scriptures but found them lacking

Tried raja yoga (meditation) but sensed his sacrifices were not great enough

turned to asceticism and scourged and starved himself (1 grain of rice a day) = but no deep insight came

Determined best course was the MIDDLE WAY (path between both extremes; a lifestyle of moderation)
ENLIGHTENMENT OF BUDDHA

- Under a Bodhi tree (tree of Wisdom) he meditated
- Remembered all of his previous lives
- Resisted the combats of Mara (Evil One), who tried many temptations
- Removed craving and ignorance for himself

At dawn of his 35th birthday, his mind “pierced the bubble” of the universe, enabling him to realize the essential truth about life and the path to salvation

Achieved NIRVANA and was released from samsara (endless cycle)

Stayed in this state for 7 days

NIRVANA
= state of supreme realization and enlightenment
= understand truth of life and freedom from ignorance
= state of total liberation, truth, tranquility, peace
After achieving enlightenment, Buddha wanted to share his experiences and insights with others and traveled to Benares and encountered five ascetics.

Argued that no rituals, gods or any type of outside power could save man. The only salvation lies in the realization of the Four Noble Truths and the diligent pursuit of the Eight Fold Path.

Within years, Buddhist monasteries were emerging throughout India, establishing Buddhism as a religion.

The Buddha died in 486 BCE and achieved paranirvana (complete nirvana).
BUDDHISM INFLUENTIAL FROM 1ST TO 8TH CENTURIES

BUDDHISM TAKES HOLD IN TIBET 7TH CENTURY

SHAKYAMUNI LIVES IN THE REGION OF MAGADHA DURING 6-5TH CENTURIES B.C.E.

BUDDHISM ARRIVES ABOUT 2ND CENTURY B.C.E.

BUDDHISM ARRIVES IN 4TH CENTURY C.E.

BUDDHISM ARRIVES IN 6TH CENTURY C.E.

BUDDHISM IN DECLINE FROM 7TH CENTURY C.E., DISAPPEARS CA. 1200

BUDDHISM INTRODUCED IN CHINA 1ST CENTURY C.E.
What do Buddhists believe?

- Rebirth (reincarnation) results from attachments (karma)
- *Nirvana* is a peaceful, detached state of mind
- Achieving *Nirvana* means escape from the cycle of rebirth (samsara)

Once Gautama Buddha died, after 80 years of life in this world, having achieved *Nirvana* and teaching multitudes his way of life, he ceased to exist as a distinct being.

- Buddhism is non-theistic: *Buddha is not the Buddhist God* – he is just a revered teacher.
3 Characteristics of Existence

- **Annica** = impermanence (world in constant flux)
- **Dukkha** = dissatisfaction (all humans and animals experience suffering)
- **Anatta** = no self (no separate, eternal unchanging self)
FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

There is suffering.

Suffering has an origin.

Suffering can cease.

There is a path out of suffering.
What is the fundamental cause of all suffering?

Desire!

Therefore, extinguish the self, don't obsess about oneself.
The Eight-Fold Path

Fundamental Ethics of Buddhism is the Eightfold Path.

Buddhist scriptures are filled with stories illustrating compassion, charity and non-violence.
What is the Eight-Fold Path?

Wisdom:
• Right understanding
• Right motivation

Moral discipline:
• Right speech
• Right action
• Right livelihood

Mental discipline:
• Right effort
• Right mindfulness
• Right meditation
Eightfold Path

Nirvana

- The union with the ultimate spiritual reality.
- Escape from the cycle of rebirth.
FIVE PRECEPTS

1) Abstain from killing or harming living beings
2) Abstain from stealing
3) Abstain from improper sexual conduct
4) Abstain from false speech
5) Abstain from taking alcohol and harmful drugs
More Numbers and Concepts...

- **Triple Jewel or Three Refuges**: Buddha (guide), Dharma (path), Sangha (teachers)

- **Six Perfections**: giving, morality, patience, vigor, meditation and wisdom

- **Bodhisattva**: person who has attained nirvana but chooses to be reborn within samsara in order to help others on path of enlightenment

- **Nirvana**: escape from cycle of rebirth (based on karma, 8-fold path, enlightenment) to attain perfect freedom and bliss
Practices

- Meditation - lotus posture
- Bowing (three times)
- Offerings & Chanting Mantras: “Om Mani Padme Hum” which means “Hail, the jewel in the lotus”
- Karma
- Puja
- Dana (donations)
- Mudras
- Monastic Ideal
Symbols

- Wheel of Life
- Mandala
- Lotus Flower
- Stupa
- Temples
- Swastika
- Buddhapada
Hinduism vs Buddhism

- Buddha rejected Hindu belief that human inequality was based on hereditary distinctions and that salvation can only be achieved by elite few.

- **Same concepts**: reincarnation, samsara, karma, dharma, nirvana, raja yoga (meditation which held the key to enlightenment and the salvation of nirvana).

- **Rejected concepts**: caste system, Hindu rituals and offerings to gods, theories, language of Sanskrit (he used Pali), nirvana only if Brahmin caste, refusal to accept authority of Vedas and Upanishads.

- Buddhism view of Women: more equal in stance compared to Hinduism; women may endure more “suffering” (ie. childbirth). Buddha allowed either men or women from any caste to become monks or nuns and join the Sangha (brotherhood).
How does Buddhism differ from Hinduism?

Buddhism rejects...

- Authority of the ancient Vedic texts
- The Vedic caste system
- The Vedic and Hindu deities
- The efficacy of Vedic worship and ritual
- The concept of Brahman
How does Buddhism differ from Jainism?

Buddhism rejects...

- The concept of Atman (eternal spirit/soul)
- The practice of strict asceticism and withdrawal from the world (preferring the “middle way”)
- Vegetarianism as required
Buddhism 101

Founded:
- 6th century BCE

Founder:
- Siddhartha Gautama, otherwise known as the Buddha “Enlightened One”

Place of Origin:
- India

Sacred Books:
- oldest and most important scriptures are the Tripitaka, (The Three Baskets of Wisdom)

Number of Adherents:
- approximately 200 million close adherents, although some estimates surpass the 600 million mark. Precision is impossible...

Distribution:
- predominant faith in Burma, Ceylon, Thailand and Indo-China. It also has followers in China, Korea, Mongolia and Japan.

Sects:
- two principal schools are Mahayana and Theravadin (or Hinayana) Buddhism
### Religion or Philosophy?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Philosophy</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attempts to examine the meaning of life and universe</td>
<td>No sacrifices, worship, prayers, rituals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provides an ethical standard and an overall goal beyond this life</td>
<td>Rejected the principle of authority in religious matters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Despite Buddha’s wishes, he was defied after his death by some of his followers</td>
<td>No god personified father figure who created and presided over the universe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buddhism has taken on rituals, sacrifices, temple worship, elaborate scriptures and complex doctrines</td>
<td>Buddha- not proclaimed as a god but stated that he was “awake” and could point the way for an individual towards salvation</td>
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Impact of Buddhism

- Buddhism elevated the level of religious life and thought in most Asia.
- Forced Hinduism to remedy some of its abuses and revitalize its teachings.
- Major effect upon philosophy, education, literature and art of south Asia, India (Gupta period), China (T’ang Dynasty) and Japan (Zen Buddhism).
- However, many argue Buddhism has discouraged social progress (since it accepts life as full of suffering and does not produce a great concern or solutions regarding poverty, illiteracy, illness, pollution etc.).
- Spread of Communism (Communist takeover of China in 1949) led to nationalization of monasteries and all revenues) → government in exile in Tibet.