

# World Religions: Buddhism

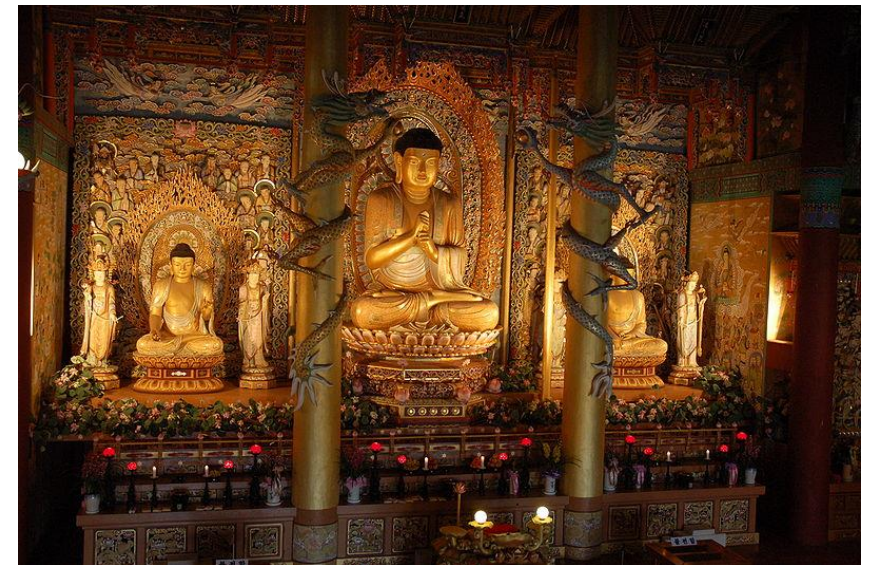
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AP Art History

# Buddhism

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- The "middle way of wisdom and compassion": The balance between two extremes (extreme indulgence and extreme asceticism)
- A 2500-year-old tradition that began in India and spread and diversified throughout the Far East.
- A philosophy, a religion, and a spiritual practice followed by more than 300 million people.
- Based on the teachings of the Buddha.

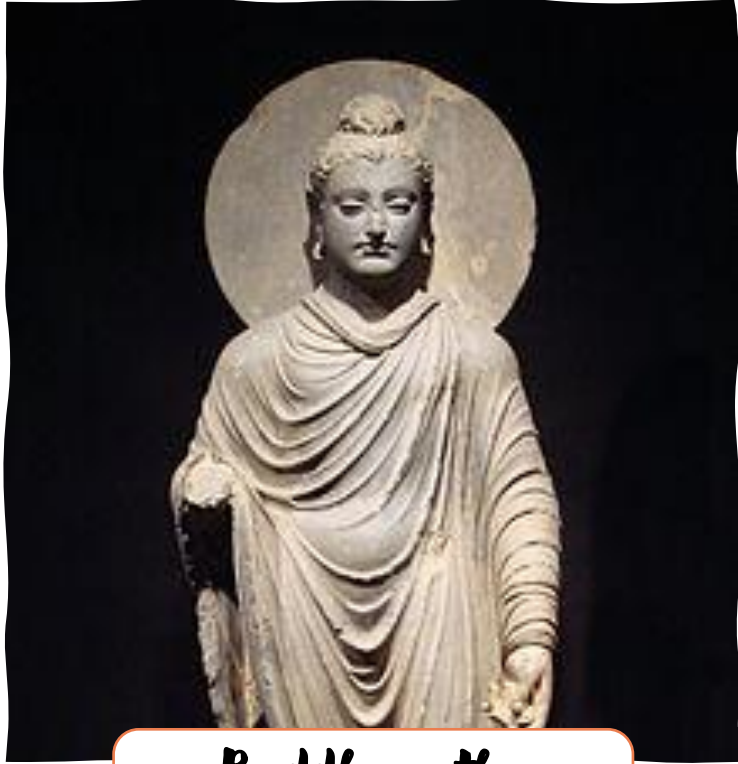




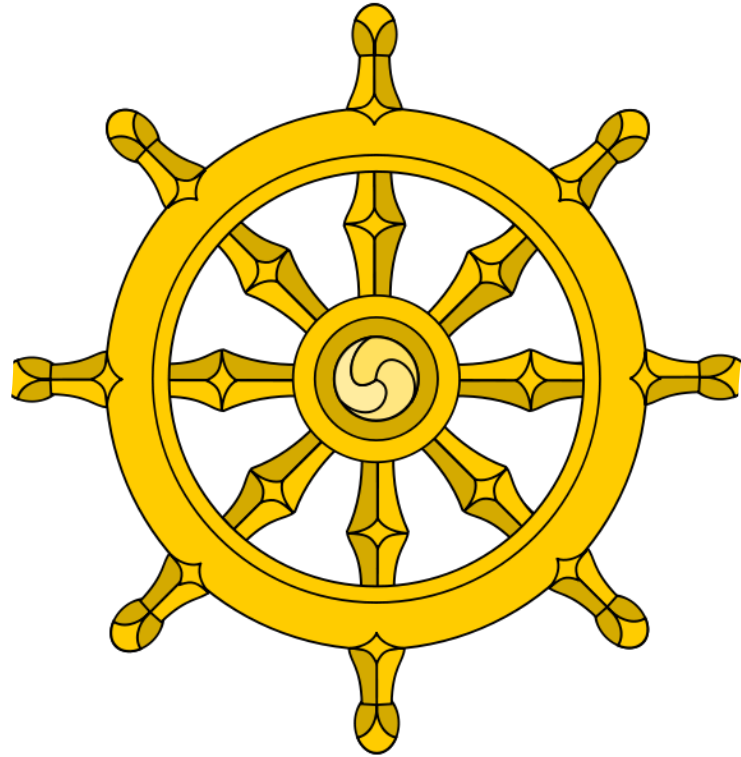
## *Mahabodhi Tree*

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This is a descendent of the original tree where Buddha meditated to seek answers to human suffering.



Buddha – the  
teacher



Dharma – the  
teachings



Sangha – community  
of monks

# The Three Jewels of Buddhism

# Who was Buddha?

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- Born Siddhartha Gautama - of noble caste in India, 563 B.C.E.
- Raised in great luxury
- Empathy for the suffering of others; rejected the life of luxury to seek enlightenment and the solution to suffering
- Followed a strict ascetic lifestyle
- Sat in meditation, achieved *Nirvana* - an awakening to the truth about life, becoming a Buddha, the "Awakened One"
- Spent the remaining years of his life teaching others how to achieve the peace of mind he had achieved.





# What did Buddha teach?

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- The Four Noble Truths:
- To live is to suffer
- The cause of suffering is self-centered desire & attachments
- The solution is to eliminate desire and attachment, thus achieving *Nirvana* ("cessation" or "extinction")
- The way to *Nirvana* is through 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

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**What is the Eight-Fold Path?**

# What do Buddhists believe?

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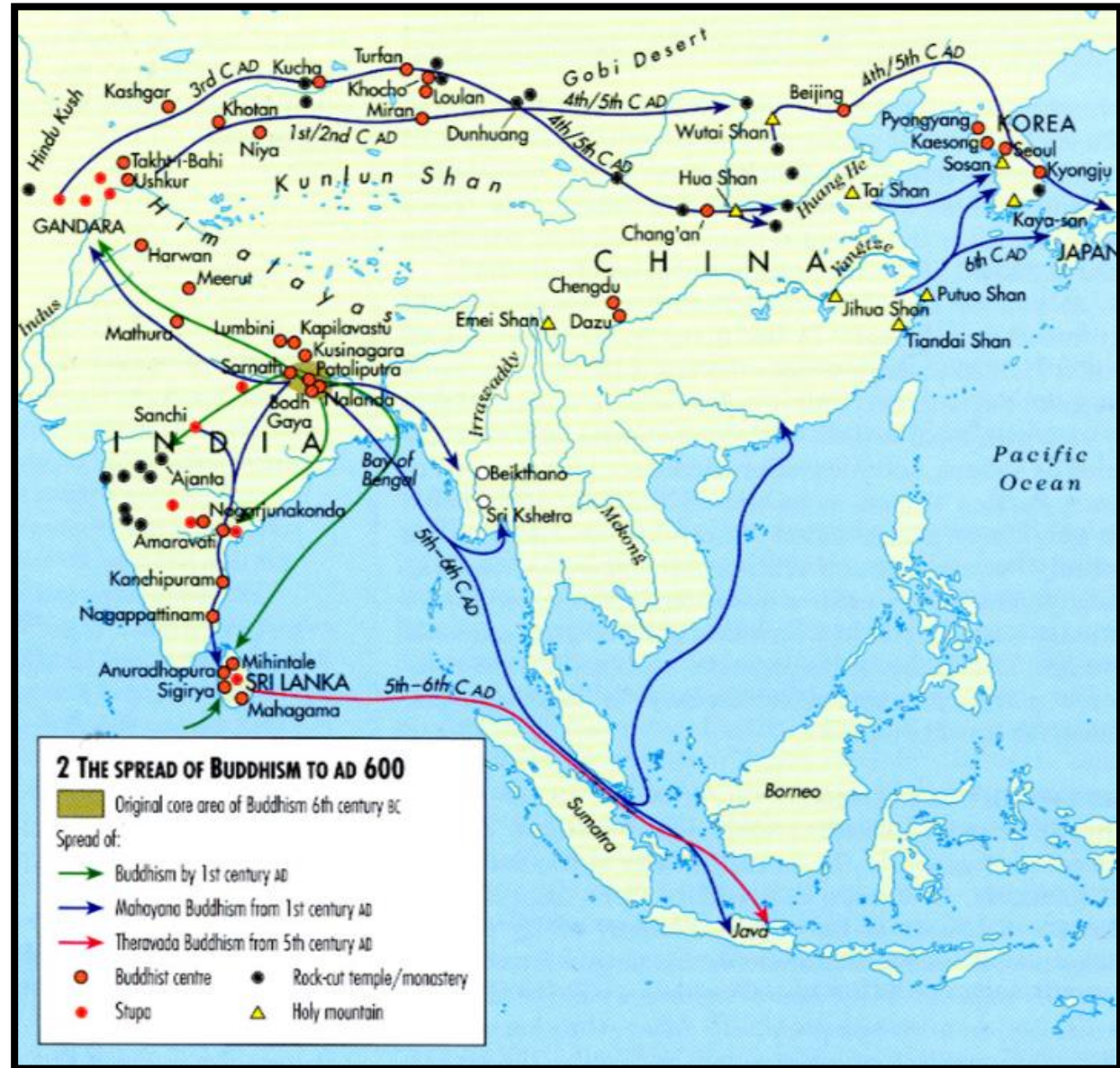
- Rebirth (reincarnation) results from attachments (karma)
- Nirvana is a peaceful, detached state of mind
- Achieving Nirvana means escape from the cycle of rebirth
- Once Gautama Buddha died, he ceased to exist as a distinct being
- Depending on your source, Buddhism is ...
  - Buddha is not the Buddhist God - he is just a revered teacher (Non-theistic)
  - Buddha has become their monotheistic deity (Monotheistic)





# The Spread of Buddhism

- Within two centuries after the Buddha died, Buddhism began to spread north and east into Asia
- By 13<sup>th</sup> century Buddhism had disappeared from India.





# Theravada Buddhism

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- The Way of the Elders
  - Oldest school of Buddhism
  - Found in southern Asia (Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand)
  - Monasticism is the ideal life for achieving Nirvana
  - Focus on wisdom and meditation
  - Goal is to become a Buddha
  - Fairly unified in belief & practice (some cultural differences)

# Mahayana Buddhism

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- The Great Vehicle
  - Developed first century C.E.
  - Found in Northern Asia (China, Japan)
  - Lay Buddhism - Buddhism for the masses
  - Devotional - seek guidance from *Bodhisattvas*
  - Focus on compassion
  - Goal is to become a *bodhisattva* and assist others toward enlightenment
  - Diverse schools and sects including:
    - Pureland, Nichiren, Tendai, Shingon



**Phoenix Hall, Byodoin, Uji, Kyoto Prefecture,  
Japan, Heian Period, 1053**