

Bahá'í

Shia Muslims regard Ali ibn Abu Talib, cousin and son-in-law of Muhammad, to be true caliph (successor) to Muhammad, along with his descendants—his son Husayn killed at Battle of Karbala in 680, a seminal event in Shia Muslim history—twelfth imam in line, Muhammad ibn al-Hassan, disappeared and will return as Mahdi (messiah) at some point in future

about 1839 a 20-year-old Persian man, Sayyid Ali Muhammad (1819-1850), traveled from Iran to Karbala in Iraq on pilgrimage—there he met followers of a Shia group called the Shaykhis, whose leader Sayyid al-Kazim prophesied that the Mahdi would soon be revealed—Sayyid Ali Muhammad came to see himself as successor to al-Kazim after the latter's death in 1843, and in 1844 he announced that he was the Bab (Arabic: gate), after receiving several religious visions, including of martyred Imam Husayn—as the Gate (also Manifestation of God), he foretold the imminent coming of the Mahdi, and declared that his purpose was to prepare humanity for his advent—wrote many works considered by Bahais to be revelations from God—after gathering many followers, he was arrested by Iranian ruler for heresy (he denied Quran was final revelation of God) and executed in 1850 in Tabriz, and some 20,000 of his followers throughout Persia were massacred—his movement continued with the name Babism

Mirza Husayn-Ali Nuri (1817-1892) one of the Bab's followers, came from a wealthy family with connections to Persian royalty—along with many other of the Bab's followers, he believed that Babis needed to break from Islam because the Bab's revelations marked a new dispensation of God's work in the world—began calling himself Bahaullah (Glory of God) around 1848—went into exile in Baghdad in 1851 following death of the Bab—after an assassination attempt against the shah by radical Babis (which he opposed), imprisoned in Tehran, where he had mystical experiences, including a vision of a “maiden from God,” who proclaimed him the messenger of God & the fulfillment of the Bab's prophecies—to avoid controversy with his brother, the nominal leader of the Babis, he went into self-imposed exile in Kurdistan in 1854, taking the guise of a Sufi dervish—soon became known for his wisdom, & wrote several works during that time—two years later returned to Baghdad, where he organized the disheartened Babi community & moved them in the direction of peace with their enemies—moved by Ottoman government away from Iranian border to Constantinople, but before he left, declared his understanding of himself as Messenger of God to a few followers, marking the beginning of the Bahai movement as distinct from the larger Babi movement, although his identity kept hidden from larger community (tradition of concealment in Shia Islam)

later moved to Adrianople, just W of Constantinople—after at least three assassination attempts by his brother, Bahaullah challenged him to appear in a local mosque so that God could strike down the imposter, and when brother declined to show, vast majority of Babis recognized Bahaullah as their leader, and as “he whom God shall make manifest,” as the Bab had prophesied—wrote several books & “tablets” (shorter works) on various religious topics related to Bahai, as well as letters to many prominent world leaders, asking them to set aside their material possessions, rule with justice, protect the rights of

the poor and oppressed, & make peace with their enemies—recipients of letters include Pope Pius IX, Napoleon III of France, Czar Nicholas II, Queen Victoria, Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria-Hungary, & rulers of Ottoman & Persian Empires, as well as various leaders in the W hemisphere—spent final years in Akka (Acre), Palestine (controlled by Ottomans), where he is buried

succeeded by his son Abdul-Baha (servant of Baha) (1844-1921), who took the message of Bahauallah to Europe & America, publishing his father's works widely & proclaiming a message of peace, social justice, & unity to churches, trade unions, universities, & the general public—Bahais now claim between 5 and 8 million adherents throughout the world—world headquarters in Haifa, Israel, where elected representatives come once every five years to elect members of the Universal House of Justice, which administers the affairs of the Bahai faith

Bahauallah saw himself not only as fulfillment of the Bab's prophecies concerning twelfth imam, but also as a successor to Adam, Abraham, Moses, Krishna, Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad, and the Bab, and thus to be the "Promised One" of all major world religions

beliefs:

- **All humanity is one family:** The Bahá'í teachings emphasize that all of us, as creations of one God, are part of one human family. Bahá'u'lláh said, "The tabernacle of unity hath been raised; regard ye not one another as strangers. Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch." People of nearly every background, in every nation, have become Bahá'ís.
- **Women and men are equal:** Full equality and a firm sense of partnership between women and men are essential to human progress and the transformation of society. "Women and men have been and will always be equal in the sight of God," said Bahá'u'lláh. The worldwide Bahá'í community has been at the forefront of the movement to advance the rights of women for more than a century.
- **All prejudice—racial, religious, national, or economic—is destructive and must be overcome:** Bahá'u'lláh gave special attention to the problem of prejudice. At the heart of His message is a call for mutual understanding and fellowship among nations, cultures, and peoples. There is, Bahá'u'lláh insists, only one human race. Prejudice—whether based on race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, or social background—must be overcome if humanity is to create a peaceful and just global society.
- **People must search for the truth without preconceptions:** One of the main sources of conflict in the world today is the fact that many people blindly and uncritically follow various traditions, movements, and opinions. Bahá'u'lláh emphasizes the fundamental obligation of human beings to acquire knowledge with their "own eyes and not through the eyes of others."
- **Science and religion are in harmony:** The Bahá'í teachings stress the fundamental harmony of science and religion. Bahá'ís consider that it is the same unique God who is both the Author of revelation and the Creator of the reality

which science investigates. If indeed there is only one truth (reality), it is not possible for something to be scientifically false and religiously true; contradictions are attributed to human fallibility and arrogance.

- **Economic problems are linked to spiritual problems:** The Bahá'í teachings envision that economic justice and prosperity will come about only when the essential connection between the spiritual and practical aspects of life is recognized. A satisfactory solution to the world's present economic crisis lies in a profound change of heart and mind which only religion can produce.
- **The family and its unity are very important:** Bahá'u'lláh came to bring unity to the world, and a fundamental unity is that of the family. Bahá'ís understand that the family is the basic unit of society and unless this all-important building block is healthy and unified, society itself cannot be healthy and unified. Bahá'í writings say, "If love and agreement are manifest in a single family, that family will advance, become illumined and spiritual."
- **There is one God:** The Bahá'í belief in one God means that the universe and all creatures and forces within it have been created by a single supernatural Being. Such designations as God, Allah, Yahweh, and Brahma all refer to the One Divine Being, Whose nature is unknowable and inaccessible to humankind. We learn about God through His Messengers, who teach and guide humanity.
- **All major religions come from God:** When Bahá'ís say that the various religions are one, they do not mean that all the creeds and organizations are the same. Rather, they believe God has revealed Himself through a succession of Divine Messengers, Whose purpose is to guide and educate mankind. They are expressions of a single unfolding Divine purpose, "the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future."
- **World peace is the crying need of our time:** Whether peace is to be reached only after unimaginable horrors precipitated by humanity's stubborn clinging to old patterns of behaviour, or is to be embraced now by an act of consultative will, is the choice before all who inhabit the earth. The Bahá'í community believes that humanity can confront this supreme trial with confidence in its ultimate outcome.

Jainism

Axial Age: term coined by German philosopher Karl Jaspers in 1950 to describe period between 800 & 200 BCE, a time of revolutions in thinking in Persia, India, China, and the West—great developments in religion & philosophy that continue their influence to the present day—origin of great religions like Zoroastrianism (Zarathustra), Judaism (Isaiah, Jeremiah), Buddhism (Siddhartha Gautama), Confucianism (Confucius), Daoism (Lao Tzu), authors of Upanishads in Hinduism—also great philosophers like Socrates, Plato, & Heraclitus, historians like Herodotus & Thucydides, the poet Homer, the scientist Archimedes, mathematician & philosopher Pythagoras, etc.—philosopher Eric Voegelin called this period "The Great Leap of Being"

in India, rise of *sramana* in early Axial Age, a religious movement parallel to but distinct from traditional Vedic religion that gave rise to Hinduism—*sramana* (Skt.) means "one who strives" or "laborer," used especially of wandering ascetics monks (and nuns)—this

movement led to development & propagation of ideas such as *ahimsa* (non-violence, lit. “do not injure”), *samsara* (cycle of birth, life, death, rebirth), *karma* (deeds that give rise to *samsara*), and asceticism—tradition continued by both both Buddhism & Jainism

two other important figures of Axial Age were **Parshva** (23rd *tirthankara*, c. 800-700) and **Mahavira** (24th and last *tirthankara*, c. 500-400), seminal figures within Jainism—*tirthankara* (Skt.) means “ford-builders,” and are people who construct path through the great ocean of worldly life, allowing others to follow the path to *moksha*

dharma is Sanskrit word meaning Law in a universal or abstract sense, and encompassing notion of behavior proper to maintaining order of universe—on human level, encompasses ideas like duty, religion, justice—also applies to inanimate objects, describing their natural properties and actions—religions originating in Indian subcontinent & having *dharma* as core concept are called dharmic religions, and include Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Jainism

Jainism may be described, only half-jokingly, as the oldest world religion that no one knows about, at least in the West—word derives from Skt. word *jin*, which means “to conquer,” in ref. to battle with passions & bodily pleasures undertaken by Jain ascetics—the one who wins this battle called *Jina*, or Jain

Jains believe that their religion has always existed, with no beginning or end—they identify 24 *tirthankaras*, humans who have achieved a state of *Kevala Jnana*, or absolute knowledge of the Soul, & help other attain both enlightenment & liberation (*moksha*)—although Jains list 24, only the last two *tirthankaras* are considered by scholars to be historical persons, or at least the only two for whom there is any concrete historical evidence

Parshva was born into royal family in India in Varanasi in N India—at age 30 renounced world & became monk—led a monastic order with many followers, both ascetic and lay (half a million acc. to a traditional Jain text)—achieved *moksha* at 100—considered by many scholars as actual founder of Jainism

Mahavira also born into royal family, in Bihar in NE India, perhaps a contemporary of the Buddha—at age 30, after having married & fathered a daughter, left home to pursue spiritual awakening—joined group of ascetic followers of Parshva—left group & wandered land naked for 12 years—in 13th year of wandering attained *kevala jnana*, or omniscience—traveled throughout India for 30 years teaching tenets of Jainism—had 11 disciples, all of whom achieved *kevala* as well—last to achieve *kevala* was Jambu, who was last person to achieve *kevala* in this world cycle—achieved *moksha* and *nirvana* (ultimate peace of mind, free from *samsara*) at 72

Henceforth the Venerable Ascetic Mahavira was houseless, circumspect in his walking, circumspect in his speaking, circumspect in his begging, circumspect in his accepting (anything), in the carrying of his outfit and drinking vessel; circumspect in evacuating excrements, urine, saliva, mucus, and uncleanness of the body; circumspect in his thoughts, circumspect in his words, circumspect in

his acts; guarding his thoughts, guarding his words, guarding his acts, guarding his senses, guarding his chastity; without wrath, without pride, without deceit, without greed; calm, tranquil, composed, liberated, free from temptations, without egoism, without property; he had cut off all earthly ties, and was not stained by any worldliness: as water does not adhere to a copper vessel, or collyrium to mother of pearl (so sins found no place in him); his course was unobstructed like that of Life; like the firmament he wanted no support; like the wind he knew no obstacles; his heart was pure like the water (of rivers or tanks) in autumn; nothing could soil him like the leaf of a lotus; his senses were well protected like those of a tortoise; he was single and alone like the horn of a rhinoceros; he was free like a bird; he was always waking like the fabulous bird Bharunda, valorous like an elephant, strong like a bull, difficult to attack like a lion, steady and firm like Mount Mandara, deep like the ocean, mild like the moon, refulgent like the sun, pure like excellent gold; like the earth he patiently bore everything; like a well-kindled fire he shone in his splendour.

—Kalpa Sutra 118

Jainism the dominant religion throughout N India & parts of S India during much of period between 5th C BCE and 8th C CE—religion began to decline in numbers beginning in 8th C CE due to several factors, including rivalries with other religious traditions (Buddhism, reform movements within Hinduism), loss of royal patronage, fragmentation of religious community—further decline after Muslim conquests in India—now between 4 and 5 million Jains, mostly in India, though some in UK, Canada, Kenya, & US

two major branches of Jainism: Digambara & Svetambara—Digambara monks wear no clothes, & since women cannot go about naked, nuns wear white clothes but are considered inferior to monks—Svetambara monks & nuns both wear white robes, & women treated equally with men—they believe Mallinatha, 19th *tirthankara*, was a woman—in both cases ascetics beg for food (or accept gifts of food & water)

doctrines of Jainism:

- *ahimsa*: non-violence toward all living creatures, esp. sentient creatures—this leads to vegetarianism, wearing masks to filter bugs, straining water, etc.—ultimate goal is friendship with all creatures
- non-absolutism: respecting views of others, encouraging dialog with members of other faiths, for example
- non-possessiveness: balancing of needs & desires, detachment from possessions
- cyclical view of time, with six ages of 21,000 years apiece making up one world cycle

- universe called *loka*, and it is unimaginably vast, yet finite, and divided into three regions: Middle Realm (inc. India), hell (progressive layers below Middle Realm), & heaven (place of gods)—for beings born into these regions above & below Middle Realm, stay there only a relatively short time before being reborn
- two categories of existence: *jiva* and *ajiva*, those with a soul and those without
- goal of life is liberation (*moksha*) and salvation from *samsara* (cycle of birth, life, ...)—gods play no role in human salvation, which must be achieved through human effort
- all souls (*jiva*) are encumbered with matter (*ajiva*) because of *karma*—religious life strives to cleanse impurities that tarnish *jiva*, returning soul to its original state of purity & freeing it from cycle of *samsara*—*karma* is process in which matter dirties the soul
- *kevala* is omniscience that leads to *moksha*, liberation—*kevalin* are knowledgeable not just about spiritual matters but of absolutely everything, including one's own past lives, the nature of one's inner self, the external world, the lives of others (past, present, & future)—*kevala* frees the *jiva* completely from the effects of *karma*, thus allowing it to be liberated (achieving *moksha*)—one who has attained *kevala* goes on living in the world of *samsara*, until at death obtaining *moksha*
- “three jewels” of Jainism: right faith (*darshana*), right knowledge (*jnana*), right practice (*caritra*)—these function together, like the legs of a stool
- although Jamba was last Jain in this world cycle to attain *kevala*, later Jains seek heavenly rebirth by eliminating *karma*—Jains see rebirth as occurring immediately after death, unlike Hindus & Buddhists, so no need for elaborate rituals for the dead

Jain ascetics practice “the five great vows”:

- *ahimsa*, avoiding inflicting violence on other life forms
- abstain from lying
- do not take what has not been given
- renounce sexual activity
- renounce possessions

six obligations of ascetics:

- equanimity, achieved through meditation
- praise of *tirthankaras*
- veneration of teachers
- repentance
- laying down the body (standing or sitting motionless for periods of time)

- abandonment (renunciation of specific food or activities for certain periods of time)

some Jain ascetics end their lives with a fast to the death, seen as effective means of eliminating *karma*, since eating always involves risk of harming other living beings

Jain practices of laypeople include: *dana*, or ritual giving to ascetics, and worship of both gods (who can meet needs, such as good weather or healing) and *tirthankaras*—Jain temples contain numerous images of *tirthankaras* as aids to worship—pilgrimages to one of five sacred mountains or to a sacred shrine encouraged—all Jains vegetarian, also avoiding foods like eggs and fruits & vegetables with large numbers of seeds, so as to avoid destroying life unnecessarily

Buddhism

civilization in Indus Valley (modern Pakistan, India, China) dates to at least 3rd M BCE—apparently followed cult of Mother Goddess common in ANE, as evidenced by numerous female figurines discovered—invaders from W brought IE language (forerunner of Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu, sister language branch of Avestan, Farsi), weaponry (esp. horse-drawn chariot & later iron smelting technology), & religious ideas (sky gods, priestly traditions)—developed into Vedic religion, forerunner of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism—early Vedic literature includes Rig Veda (hymns) & other Vedas (mid to late 2nd M BCE), worship of devas (shining ones)—religious ideas & traditions continued to develop in 1st M BCE, & Upanishads began to be written in 1st M BCE, interpretations of older Vedic material

sramana traditions developed about this time, including belief in existence of soul (*atman*), transmigration of souls (part of *samsara*), & quest for freedom (*moksha*) from cycle of life & death

two different reactions to changes in Indian society: military involvement & religious seeking, esp. through wandering—some wanderers sought liberation through self-awareness, meditation, withdrawal from world—other wanderers sought free in visions, ecstatic experiences, insight through perceived phenomena—the Buddha was one of these wanderers

view of history in W is linear series of specific events—in E, esp. India, history is viewed as part of endless cycle of cosmos, which exists eternally

Buddha not a personal name but a Skt title meaning “one who has awakened”—one who is bound for enlightenment is a *bodhisattva*—**Siddhartha Gautama** born in mid-6th C BCE, or possibly early 5th C—born at Lumbini in modern Nepal into royal family, or at least leading political family—married & had a son—as member of local aristocracy, would have been trained in religious law & custom, statecraft, grammar, logic, & other arts & sciences—as member of warrior caste he would have been expected to have either military or political career—this training led to his comfort speaking with kings & aristocrats he met on his journeys—at age 29 he left family & embarked on journey of

discovery lasting 6 years, at end of which he received enlightenment & was thereafter known as the Buddha—spent next 45 years traveling through NE India teaching his views—died at age of 80, having achieved *nirvana* & thus escaping the cycle of death & new life

no continuous ancient story of Buddha's life, but drawn from early Buddhist sources such as **Pali canon**, the oldest canonical Buddhist text, tracing back to oral traditions from time of Buddha, written in Pali, a language related to Sanskrit & close to dialect probably spoken by Buddha—committed to writing in 1st C BCE in Sri Lanka—Pali canon divided into three parts: **Discourses** or sermons of Buddha, **Monastic Discipline**, & **Higher Teachings**—one sutra in Pali Canon called Discourse of the Great Decease, & recounts last few months of Buddha's life—other early Buddhist texts from 1st - 3rd C CE recount events from Buddha's life

for Buddhists, four events in Buddha's life are significant: birth, enlightenment, first sermon, death—sites at which these events took place are places of pilgrimage today:

- **birth:** Buddha's mother had dream that white baby elephant entered her side during pregnancy—auspicious sign—tradition for women to return to ancestral families to give birth, but on way she went into labor & gave birth standing up, holding onto branches of Sal tree, & baby born from her side without pain—various other supernatural sign accompanied his birth, including report that he stood up & walked 7 steps, then declared himself “chief of the world”
- **enlightenment:** as young man, Siddhartha came to understand realities of sickness, aging, & death, & realized he had no control over them—on journeys outside city, father sought to have streets cleared of sick & poor, but luck (or the gods) conspired to let him see an old man, a sick man, and a corpse—upon learning that all people are vulnerable to sickness, aging, & death, he pondered his life—on a subsequent journey outside the city he came across a *sramana* in an orange robe & resolved to become a wanderer, too—left parents, wife, & son & became *sramana* wanderer, living an austere life dependent on alms—found a religious teacher (guru) & began studying with him, including a meditation technique known as “sphere of nothingness,” which allowed mind to transcend body & achieve deep spiritual peace—later studied with another guru a meditation technique called “sphere of neither perception nor non-perception”—he attempted severe austerity as path to enlightenment, but these paths were dead ends, & he became convinced that ideal lifestyle was one devoid of extremes of either self-aggrandizement or self-denial—tried different form of meditation, & this one led to four different levels of trance—one night, while sitting beneath a banyan tree (later called the Bodhi tree, or enlightenment tree), he obtained three kinds of “true knowledge”: ability to recall details of past lives in detail, ability to see death & rebirth of others in accordance with their karma, & “**Four Noble Truths**,” namely: (1) truth of suffering, (2) truth of the origin of suffering, (3) truth of the cessation of suffering, and (4) truth of the path to the cessation of suffering (the **Eightfold Path**)—this event is the Buddha's enlightenment, later embellished with other supernatural features in later versions of story

- **first sermon:** sought out five companions who had earlier abandoned him because of his decision to abandon extreme asceticism—sermon called “Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dharma” & speaks of “middle way” between self-indulgence & extreme austerity—all five embraced his teachings, & this event is recognized as founding of Buddhism—soon gathered many more followers
- **death:** as death approached Buddha became sick & knew he was dying, but refused to appoint a successor—at end he lay down between two Sal trees, which bloomed, even though they were out of season—Buddha gave instructions to his disciples, then passed through several layers of trance before entering **nirvana**

Noble Eightfold Path (fourth Noble Truth)—way to end suffering & transition from *samsara* to *nirvana*:

1. right view: seeing & accepting Four Noble Truths
2. right resolve: developing right attitudes such as freedom from desires, friendliness, or compassion
3. right speech: avoiding lies, divisive speech, hurtful speech, gossip
4. right action: abstaining from wrongful conduct such as stealing or killing
5. right livelihood: not engaging in occupation that harms or causes suffering to others, whether human or animal—honesty in business, not cheating others—avoiding professions such as trade in weapons, living beings, meat, alcoholic drink, or poison
6. right effort: developing one’s mind through meditation to replace negative thoughts with positive
7. right mindfulness: developing constant awareness in four areas: in relation to one’s body, feelings, mood or mental state, thoughts
8. right meditation: developing mental clarity & mental calm by concentrating the mind through meditation

karma for Buddhists is not just any action but actions that reflect a moral choice—intention directly linked to karma—this was modification of traditional Vedic concept of karma, which focused more on ritual acts than on morality of acts (cf. also ANE concept of sin as both ritual & moral acts)—in discussion with Jain on which of three modes of action—body, speech, or mind—had greatest power to produce karma, Jain said body, but the Buddha said mind

karma comes in two forms, bad and good—bad karma (*karma* proper) results from bad action—six basic forms of motivation, which are associated in pairs of bad & good: greed, hatred, delusion / nonattachment, benevolence, understanding (cf. innermost part of wheel of life)—karma may bear fruit in same lifetime, or it may effect several lifetimes hence—karma affects one’s caste, social standing, physical appearance, character, personality—karma not eradicated in one lifetime carries over to future lifetimes—karma not the same as fate, for non-karmic events can happen merely as a result of chance or freewill

good karma may also be called merit and results from good deeds that spring from good motivations (e.g., not good deeds for the sake of earning merit, which are thus motivated by greed)—merit applies to next life just as karma does, so may result in rebirth in a higher realm, as a god, for example

six realms of rebirth:

- gods (*devas*): realm of bliss, the most comfortable and sought-after of the realms, but has disadvantage of being so easy that most inhabitants use up good karma they had previously accumulated and are eventually reborn in lower realm
- asuras (demons, demigods): more pleasurable realm than that of humans, but plagued by envy of devas—souls may be reborn in this realm because of good intentions but bad actions
- humans: realm of mixed pleasure and suffering, but in some ways most advantageous realm, because presence of suffering offers best opportunity for enlightenment
- animals: inhabitants arrive in this realm because of stupidity or prejudice in previous life—can see human realm just as asuras see realm of devas
- ghosts: filled with sentient beings called hungry ghosts who suffer from constant hunger and thirst but can never satisfy their desires
- hell (*naraka*): place of torture and constant suffering—rebirth here the result of hatred in previous life

unlike in W religious, inhabitants of these realms, even gods & hell, not sentenced there permanently but will eventually be reborn in a different body, perhaps in another realm

often represented as part of wheel of life (*bhavacakra*)

- three animals (pig, snake, and rooster) at center representing “three poisons” of greed, hatred, & delusion, forces that generate bad karma & fuel endless cycle of rebirth
- outside this is layer that represents good & bad karma
- six realms of rebirth
- twelve links of dependent origination, aka *nidanas*, which identify origin of suffering in ignorance: some of these links are ignorance, feeling, craving, and becoming
- monster holding wheel represents impermanence
- moon above wheel represents liberation from samsara
- Buddha pointing to moon means liberation is possible

after Buddha died around 483 BCE (some say around 400), Buddhist community began assembling & committing to writing traditions about Buddha along with teachings, sermons, etc.—traditional division into three “baskets” (Discourses, Monastic Discipline, Higher Teachings) attributed to this period, although third “basket” probably finalized somewhat later—new sacred texts appeared over next several centuries—each school of Buddhism has somewhat different collection of writings that it identifies as canonical—

great ruler Asoka created empire in India that encompassed most of subcontinent, except for southern part of India, spread Buddhism throughout region—Buddhism spread throughout India & into NW & C Asia, then later into SE Asia as well—largely displaced from India by 13th C CE

about 350 BCE a council was held at which Great Schism between **Elders & Great Assembly** over proposed expansions to monastic rules—each of these groups further divided over time—tradition associated with Elders led eventually to Theravada school, & tradition associated with Great Assembly led to Mahayana school

Theravada Buddhism arose from Elder faction of Great Schism in 3rd C CE, only Hinayana (Lesser Vehicle) tradition (aka **Nikaya** Buddhism) to survive to present—emerged from Sri Lanka to spread to Burma, Thailand, Laos, & Cambodia—fidelity to Pali Canon—believe in perfection of *arhats*, which all people should aspire to be—38% of Buddhists today

Mahayana Buddhism developed in India about 200 BCE out of Great Assembly faction, which was the majority tradition—name means Greater Vehicle, seeing itself as liberating vehicle for masses—new scriptures called “Perfection of Wisdom” literature—emphasis on compassion for all sentient beings, emptiness of all phenomena, transcendent nature of Buddha, attainment of Buddhahood by following *bodhisattva* path—*bodhisattva* is a “Buddha-to-be,” an “enlightenment being” who voluntarily puts off attaining Buddhahood in order to lead all sentient beings to enlightenment, even sharing merits with all sentient beings—identified earlier Buddhist groups as Hinayana, or Lesser Vehicle—*arhats* are seen as lower on scale of enlightenment than *bodhisattvas* by Mahayanas because of latter’s altruism—over time split into various derivative groups—spread to Nepal, Tibet, China, Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Malaysia, Mongolia—about 56% of modern Buddhists are in Mahayana tradition

Vajrayana Buddhism focuses on Tantric writings & passing along of sacred traditions from teacher to student—these traditions largely kept secret from outsiders—practice of Tantra techniques to attain Buddhahood—techniques include recitation of mantras, practice of various yoga techniques (breath control, certain hand positions, etc.), use of visual aids such as mandalas to enhance or focus meditation, use of ritual objects such as bell & drum—6% of all Buddhists

doctrines of Mahayana include **emptiness** (*sunyata*, absence of inherent essence in all phenomena), **perfection** (six religious practices to be observed by all on the *bodhisattva* path: perfection of giving, behavior, forbearance, diligence, meditation, wisdom), **compassion**, **three bodies of the Buddha** (physical or apparitional body, enjoyment body, Dharma body), encountered by Buddhists as they ascend toward enlightenment

Buddhists generally reject the notion of the *atman* (soul) as illusory—in reincarnation, traditional teaching says karma is what carries over from one life to next—some forms of Mahayana Buddhism, however, believe that an eternal true self does exist in each individual, identical to the Buddha himself, which is called the person’s **Buddha**

nature—it is not a substantial self (*atman*), which leads to attachment, but rather an expression of emptiness, which leads to nonattachment

Pure Land Buddhism focuses on teachings about Amitabha Buddha, who in a former life was a king who renounced his kingdom to become a *bodhisattva*—through his great goodness, after five eons as a *bodhisattva*, he created the realm of Ultimate Bliss, also known as the Pure Land, where he reigns as a celestial Buddha—adherents of Pure Land Buddhism strive to enter Pure Land, a place of gods, people, flowers, fruit, and wish-granting trees, where people are instructed by Amitabha until they attain enlightenment—after this they may choose to become a *bodhisattva* and return to any of the six realms to lead sentient beings out of *samsara* or to stay in Pure Land and attain Buddhahood there, thus escaping *samsara* and helping others there escape as well—people may enter Pure Land by reciting name of Amitabha repeatedly, entering Pure Land on basis of their faith in Amitabha and the grace given them by the Buddha on the basis of his accumulated merit

Zen Buddhism carried from China (Chan Buddhism) to Japan, focused on meditation rather than sacred texts—Zen teachings offer potential for direct realization of the Buddha nature possessed by each sentient being—some Zen schools, in addition to meditation, study *koans*, or traditional questions with answers that can require a great amount of effort to consider

82. Nothing Exists

Yamaoka Tesshu, as a young student of Zen, visited one master after another. He called upon Dokuon of Shokoku.

Desiring to show his attainment, he said: "The mind, Buddha, and sentient beings, after all, do not exist. The true nature of phenomena is emptiness. There is no realization, no delusion, no sage, no mediocrity. There is no giving and nothing to be received."

Dokuon, who was smoking quietly, said nothing. Suddenly he whacked Yamaoka with his bamboo pipe. This made the youth quite angry.

"If nothing exists," inquired Dokuon, "where did this anger come from?"

21. The Sound of One Hand

The master of Kennin temple was Mokurai, Silent Thunder. He had a little protegee named Toyo who was only twelve years old. Toyo saw the older disciples visit the master's room each morning and evening to receive instruction in *sanzen* or personal guidance in which they were given *koans* to stop mind-wandering.

Toyo wished to do *sanzen* also.

"Wait a while," said Mokurai. "You are too young."

But the child insisted, so the teacher finally consented.

In the evening little Toyo went at the proper time to the threshold of Mokurai's sanzen room. He struck the gong to announce his presence, bowed respectfully three times outside the door, and went to sit before the master in respectful silence.

"You can hear the sound of two hands when they clap together," said Mokurai. "Now show me the sound of one hand."

Toyo bowed and went to his room to consider this problem. From his window he could hear the music of the geishas. "Ah, I have it!" he proclaimed.

The next evening, when his teacher asked him to illustrate the sound of one hand, Toyo began to play the music of the geishas.

"No, no," said Mokurai. "That will never do. That is not the sound of one hand. You've not got it at all."

Thinking that such music might interrupt, Toyo moved his abode to a quiet place. He meditated again. "What can the sound of one hand be?" He happened to hear some water dripping. "I have it," imagined Toyo.

When he next appeared before his teacher, Toyo imitated dripping water.

"What is that?" asked Mokurai. "That is the sound of dripping water, but not the sound of one hand. Try again."

In vain Toyo meditated to hear the sound of one hand. He heard the sighing of the wind. But the sound was rejected.

He heard the cry of an owl. This also was refused.

The sound of one hand was not the locusts.

For more than ten times Toyo visited Mokurai with different sounds. All were wrong. For almost a year he pondered what the sound of one hand might be.

At last little Toyo entered true meditation and transcended all sounds. "I could collect no more," he explained later, "so I reached the soundless sound."

Toyo had realized the sound of one hand.

Nichiren Buddhism founded by Nichiren, a Japanese Buddhist monk who lived during the 13th C—focus on Lotus Sutra, associated with the last years of Buddha's life, as key to enlightenment—especially important was reciting the title of the Lotus Sutra (*Nam Myoho Renge Kyo*, or Homage to the Scripture of the Lotus of Good Teaching)

Tibetan Buddhism emphasizes study of Buddhist texts, & most recognize 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, as their spiritual leader—others recognize different lamas—Tibetan *Book of the Dead (Book of Living and Dying)* describes 49-day journey of the self from death to entry into an unborn baby, gives instructions on choosing a proper womb, among many other topics

Zen & Tibetan Buddhism are most popular forms of Buddhism in U.S.—about 1.2 million practitioners

Jatakas are traditional stories about the Buddha's former lives in human and animal form, for example, as deer, monkey, dog, bull, bird, elephant, king, beggar, deva—various collections, but largest is part of Pali Canon (547 poems)—in these stories, Buddha exhibits some virtue that is moral of tale

Maitreya: future Buddha who will teach the pure dharma to a world that has almost completely forgotten it—world will be greatly changed in his time, with oceans much reduced in size, humans living tens of thousands of years—Buddhist “messiah,” but seen as a metaphor of compassion by Nichiren Buddhism—some Muslim scholars see Muhammad as fulfillment of Maitreya prophecy, while Bahais see Bahauallah as fulfillment

meditation ties all forms of Buddhism together, because it was through meditation that Buddha attained enlightenment

other Buddhas: Siddhartha Gautama is considered the 28th named Buddha in the Pali Canon, with at least one more (Maitreya) to come—one of most important was Dipankara Buddha, who predicted to young ascetic named Sumedha that he would be a Buddha in a future life—Mahayana Buddhists recognize many additional Buddhas, some celestial rather than terrestrial, such as Amitabha, important in Pure Land Buddhism

Hinduism

like Buddhism & Jainism, Hinduism grew out of combined culture & religious traditions of original developers of Indus Valley civilization (earth/mother goddess worship, 2500 BCE, likely speakers of Dravidian languages now prevalent in S) and Aryan invaders (sky gods, etc., 1500 BCE)—local religious traditions also incorporated over time—this combined culture (Vedic) early on dominated by Aryan language (Sanskrit), gods, & ideas—for example, god **Shiva** not present in earliest Vedas (e.g., Rig Veda), but becomes very important god in later writings (e.g., Upanishads), & probably originally a god worshiped by Dravidians—this process called **universalization**, where dominant classes (Great Tradition) adopt practices of the lower classes (Little Tradition) & legitimize them by incorporating them into the cultural form (or religious practices) of the upper classes (cf. similar development in Christianity, with cult of Virgin Mary in W Hemisphere)

“**Hindu**” & “**Hinduism**” are fairly modern coinages, derived from Sanskrit name of Indus River, *Sindh*—originally used to distinguish certain traditional Indian religious and

cultural practices and beliefs from other traditions that were easily identifiable & could be named (Islam, Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity)—as the name of a major religious tradition, Hinduism is much less coherent than other traditions mentioned, with adherents who worship many, many different gods (one tradition says 300 million different gods) and accept wide variety of sacred texts, as well as those that put little value in sacred texts at all—nevertheless certain common threads among most Hindus:

- Vedas accepted as sacred texts by most
- *samsara* (cycle of birth, life, death, rebirth) & *karma*
- worship of various gods
- notion of Brahman (absolute reality)

oldest Hindu scriptures are four **Vedas**, with oldest the **Rig Veda**, composed over several centuries, achieving final form about 1000 BCE—other three are Sama, Yajur, and Atharva Vedas, finalized in centuries following Rig Veda—contain hymns to various gods, chants, prayers, & ritual instructions—youngest Vedic text, at least in its final form & in terms of acceptance, is Atharva Veda, which in addition to hymns contains blessing & curses, chants designed to secure cure for illness & enhance virility & fertility, philosophical speculation, theories of warfare, medicinal practice, & astrological speculations

later compositions over many centuries include Brahmanas, Aranyakas, and Upanishads—all these early compositions oral, passed on from teachers to disciples by memorization—**Upanishads** are latest sacred texts that are widely accepted among Hindus and contain speculative philosophical treatises, often in form of conversation between teacher & student—still later texts important to many Hindus are **Epics** (which focus on *dharma*, or proper behavior) and **Puranas** (which focus on *bhakti*, or worship of individual deities)

by 6th C *sramana* movement had come to India, with emphasis on asceticism, *samsara*, karma, and *ahimsa* (nonviolence)—originally independent of Vedic religion, but eventually had tremendous influence on it (e.g., substitution of grains & yoghurt in sacrifice instead of animals)—time of challenge to Brahmin priesthood, which drew its authority from Vedic scriptures—Jainism & Buddhism rejected divinely inspired nature of Vedic scriptures and caste system, with its Brahmin priests supported by those scriptures, but orthodox Hindus continued to see Vedas as sacred texts, though supplemented by newer texts such as Upanishads, and they continued to see caste system as valid

after brief incursion of Alexander the Great into W edge of Indian subcontinent in 326 BCE, Mauryan dynasty arose and reached its greatest extent under Aśoka—although Aśoka was a convert to Buddhism, he also supported other *sramana* movements, as well as more traditional Hinduism

breakup of Mauryan dynasty in 187 BCE led to emergence of several small states & revival of orthodox Hinduism, which had undergone changes based on influence of ideas from *sramana* traditions, such as importance of *ahimsa* and critique of animal

sacrifices—cults of Vishnu and Shiva became widespread at this time, and great Hindu epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, which both advocate the worship of Vishnu through two of his avatars, Rama and Krishna

in 7th C CE devotional worship of personal god (*bhakti*) became popular in India, with Vishnu & Shiva the main objects of worship, primarily through chanting and singing—Islam became an important force about the 11th C, with Muslim rulers controlling parts of India for several centuries, esp. areas that are now Pakistan & Bangladesh—Hinduism continued to develop in various ways in response to new influences, such as Islam, Christianity, and British imperialism

many important Hindu deities, some dating to oldest Vedic times & others more recent:

- Agni (fire god), Indra (storm god & king of the gods), Mitra (god of contracts & friendship), & Varuna (water god) date to pre-Vedic period, mentioned in Hittite-Mitannian treaties
- Brahmā (not Brahman) is creator deity & one of *trimurti*, the three forms of Brahman—depicted as god with four bearded faces, red, with four arms, mounted on a goose and holding one of various objects such as a water pot or the Vedas
- Shiva is second member of *trimurti*, the destroyer god, but also god associated with wisdom, extreme asceticism, & also has tremendous creative power—sometimes depicted as ascetic yogi, so extreme that ashes rather than blood flow in him—sometimes shown mounted on bull, with snakes as belt or around neck, with Ganges river flowing through his hair, & third eye in middle of forehead representing wisdom—sometimes represented by a pillar or vertical carved stone, representing a phallus & this Shiva’s creative power
- Sati/Parvati is wife of Shiva who commits suicide when she is insulted by her father, who dislikes Shiva and thus doesn’t invite the two of them to a great sacrifice to which all other gods are invited
- Ganesha is a guardian deity & son of Parvati, also god who can remove obstacles—depicted with head of elephant, mounted on a mouse
- Vishnu is the third member of *trimurti*, the preserver deity, who provides continuity for universe & himself transcends the “end” of the universe and the universe’s rebirth—often depicted with four arms, blue skin, & lotus flower extending from his navel up into the sky, upon which is seated Brahmā—Vishnu frequently represented through ten principal avatars, including fish, tortoise, boar, Rama, Krishna, and, in some traditions, Buddha (though rejected by Buddhists)
- Krishna is most popular avatar of Vishnu, hero of the *Bhagavad Gita*, where he offers counsel to the warrior Arjuna—numerous tales of Krishna’s birth, childhood, & other stages of life—in one, king has heard that his sister’s eighth child would kill him, so he tries to kill the boy, who turns out to be Krishna, but

fails—he then attempts to kill all baby boys in kingdom, but Krishna manages to escape & kill him—as he grows older he is enormously attractive to all the local women, who in turn loves all of them, but especially one named Radha

- Sarasvati, in later traditions the wife of Brahmā, who is actually more directly involved in creative activity than her husband—goddess of speech—depicted with four arms, holding a sitar, dressed in white, mounted on a swan
- Kali is goddess of destruction that time brings to all things—depicted with black or dark blue skin, naked, hideous in appearance, with human body parts around her neck and waist—sometimes associated with Shiva as his consort—modern images often depict her in less gruesome form, & some forms of tantric Hinduism worship her as highest deity
- Devi or Mahadevi Durga, the great (formidable) goddess—sometimes seen as embodiment of all goddesses—warrior goddess who slays demons and drives them from heaven, restoring the gods to their rightful place—also seen as cosmic mother (Ma), independent of male deities

six orthodox Hindu philosophical schools:

- Sankhya: dualistic philosophy that divides universe into Purusha (supreme consciousness or Self) and Prakrti (nature or materiality)
- *Yoga: comes from word “unite,” cognate with “yoke”—emphasis on meditative practices designed to produce union with ultimate reality
- Nyaya: inquiry into the acquisition of true knowledge (epistemology), including study of logic, rhetoric, & grammar (medieval trivium)
- Vaiśeṣika: study of reality, a precursor to science
- Mimamsa: reflections on older Vedic scriptures (esp. Vedas themselves)
- *Vedanta: reflections on younger Vedic scriptures (*anta* = later), the Upanishads

two important Hindu epics: *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*—focus on *dharma*, right practice, law, religion

Ramayana an epic poem of about 20,000 verses, composed between 400 BCE & 400 CE—Rama, an avatar of Vishnu, born into a royal family, and as a young man wins the hand of a princess through feats of strength—although his father tries to appoint him to the throne, his favorite wife reminds him of his promise to make her own son Bharata king—Rama agrees that it was a king’s *dharma* to keep his word, so he retreats with his wife Sita to the forest, as Sita believes it is a wife’s *dharma* to accompany her husband—eventually they are joined by Rama’s brother Lakshmana—they have many adventures, killing various demons of the forest—eventually a powerful demon devises a plot to trick the brothers and kidnap Sita—Rama eventually rescues her with help from the monkey king Hanuman, but he is uncertain of Sita’s chastity—Sita volunteers to pass through the fire, and the fire god Agni declares her pure—Rama returns to take his rightful throne, but the people mistrust Sita’s chastity, and Rama abandons her in the forest, unaware that she is pregnant with twins—many years later her twin sons return to the palace and recite

the *Ramayana* (tale of Rama) to Rama himself, who realizes who they are and that Sita must still be alive—he invites her to come serve as queen, but she prays for the earth to open up and swallow her, since she no longer wanted any part of her former life

Marabharata an even longer epic poem of about 100,000 verses, about five times longer than *Iliad* and *Odyssey* combined, composed between 200 BCE & 200 CE—tale of royal family and brothers who are rivals for a wife and for a kingdom—eventually Arjuna, the greatest warrior among the brothers, draws his army up in battle against his brother Duryodhana—as his charioteer he chooses his good friend Krishna, king of a neighboring land, who is secretly an avatar of Vishnu—when Arjuna sees many friends and relatives arrayed against him and realizes when the battle starts he will have to kill many of them, he despairs and thinks about declining to fight, but Krishna convinces him of the vital importance of *dharma* fighting against *adharma*, both by convincing arguments and also by partially revealing his true identity—this section of epic called *Bhagavad Gita*—Arjuna finally defeats his enemies after a great battle—*Bhagavad Gita* considered a sacred text in its own rite

Bhagavad Gita speaks of three yogas, or sacred paths to spiritual knowledge:

- Jnana yoga: path of transcendent knowledge. even knowledge beyond the ordinary confines of the body, space, & time—advocates study in order to liberate oneself from desires that delude the soul
- Karma yoga: path of action, particularly non-selfish action to serve others, perform certain rituals, & accumulate benefits which result in better rebirth—Mahatma Gandhi a practitioner of Karma yoga
- Bhakti yoga: path of devotion—first mentioned extensively in earlier texts like some of the Upanishads, *Bhagavad Gita* advocates devotion to Krishna
- some people add fourth yoga: Raja Yoga: path of physical exercise & meditation, which leads to higher levels of consciousness as difficulty increased

Vedanta is school of Hinduism that advocates radical nondualism—sees only one thing as absolutely real in entire universe: Brahman

Upanishads discuss concepts of Brahman & Atman—Brahman is ultimate reality, underlying essence of material world—identified with *atman*, or self, the innermost part of individual beings—wise who perceive that “I am Brahman” become all of reality

if epics teach *dharma* through narrative, Puranas, writings somewhat later than epics, teach *bhakti*, or devotion to the gods—these traditions grew tremendously & became dominant

bhakti traditions & theistic sects:

- Shaivism: centered around devotion to Shiva & related gods, like Ganesha—probably largest of *bhakti* sects
- Vaishnavism: centered on worship of *Vishnu*—growing influence of *Bhagavad Gita* led to worship of Vishnu and Krishna, one of his avatars

- Saktism: tendency towards identification of various gods with one another & ultimately to claim one absolute deity/reality, Brahman

four traditional divisions in Hindu society:

- Brahmins: priests, scholars
- Kshatriya: warrior class, rulers, soldiers
- Vaishyas: herdsmen, farmers, artisans, merchants
- Shudras: laborers

outside this division are the Dalits, the Untouchables—in Middle Ages Indian society further fragmented into hundreds of castes—caste system abolished in modern Indian state, but still influential throughout India, esp. in rural areas

sacred syllable Om or Aum, considered to be Brahman as sound—meditating on and repeating the syllable could reveal the nature of Brahman—Om considered to be the beginning and end of all speech—*mantra* is sacred utterance, generally a syllable or verse from Vedas, that is perceived as a mental vibration, a thought that, when repeated, can invoke a Hindu deity, worship the deity, and finally dismiss the deity—for Mimamsa school of philosophy, *mantra* is sonic manifestation of the intrinsic features of ultimate reality (Brahman)

maya in Vedas meant wisdom & power, but in later Hindu thought, esp. Vedanta thought, *maya* is illusion, that which appears real but isn't actually real, the duality of the perceived universe in contrast to Brahman—one must see through *maya* in order to achieve *moksha* (liberation)—*moksha* achieved in different ways in different branches of Hinduism, including one of the four forms of yoga, removing ignorance, attaining union with God (Shiva or Vishnu), or giving up one's will to God

Hindu temple usually devoted to one god, esp. in Vedanta traditions—worshippers bring food & drink to set before statues of gods—idol is bathed, clothed, & redressed—worshippers wander around temple visiting different idols & offering food—outside temple are other smaller shrines to related gods (e.g., temple to Shiva, Ganesha, Sati, & Parvati in outside shrines)—worshippers leave temple with food, even those who didn't bring any with them in the first place

Hindu funeral custom involves cremation of body—practice of Sati (named after Shiva's wife Sati, who immolated herself after her father humiliated Shiva), where recent widows would throw themselves on husband's funeral pyre, occasionally practiced in some Hindu sects, though banned in others—ultimately banned by British and now Indian governments

Sikhism

Guru Nanak born in 1469 in village near Lahore in Punjab region of NW India (modern Pakistan) to Hindu parents—as young man had both Hindu & Muslim friends, dissatisfied with traditional forms of worship—sought out holy men, both Hindu &

Muslim, to learn from them—became convinced of oneness of God & importance of drawing closer to God through meditation & singing hymns—began composing hymns (cf. Psalms attributed to David & others in Judaism, early Christian hymn writers including Ephrem Syrus, Gregory Nazianzus, Pope Gregory the Great, Hindu Vedas)

stories about his childhood include great wisdom (instructing teachers by describing symbolism of first letter of alphabet, which in Arabic & Persian resembles straight line, as indicating oneness of God), story in which sleeping child's head shaded by hood of cobra

acc. to tradition, Nanak would rise early each morning, bathe in the river, meditate, & lead others in singing hymns—one morning when he was about 30, Nanak didn't return from his morning swim, so townspeople assumed he had drowned, but dragging river produced no body—three days later Nanak returned to village but remained silent for whole day—when he spoke, he said,

There is neither Hindu nor Muslim, so whose path shall I follow? I shall follow God's path. God is neither Hindu nor Muslim, and the path which I follow is God's.

described a vision he had had, in which he was taken to court of God, who gave him a cup of *amrit* (nectar, but used in Vedas as drink that confers immortality on gods, as does ambrosia in Greek mythology)—God said to him,

This is the cup of the adoration of God's name. Drink it. I am with you. I bless you and raise you up. Whoever remembers you will enjoy my favor. Go, rejoice in my name and teach others to do so. I have bestowed the gift of my name upon you. Let this be your calling.

Guru Nanak spent next 20 years traveling far & wide (traditionally, E to Assam, S to Sri Lanka, N to Himalayas, W to Mecca & Baghdad), visiting holy sites & meeting wide variety of religious people—also proclaimed his own understanding of God & God's message

on one occasion on his journeys, Guru Nanak was visiting famous Hindu shrine, & found himself among *Brahmins* throwing water toward the sun as an offering to their ancestors—Nanak threw water in opposite direction, saying, “If you can throw water to your dead ancestors in heaven, surely I can throw water to my fields in Punjab”—on another occasion an angry Muslim woke the sleeping Nanak to complain that his feet were facing Mecca, which he found insulting—Nanak replied, “Then turn my feet in some other direction where God does not exist”

Nanak returned to Punjab & founded Sikh community (*sikh* = disciple)—built temple that serves as prototype for Sikh *gurdwaras* today—other Sikhs recognized Nanak as highly revered guru, or teacher, & he sat on special chair when addressing congregation—first in line of ten gurus in Sikh tradition

as his death approached, his Hindu & Muslim followers argued whether to cremate him, acc. to Hindu tradition, or bury him, acc. to Muslim tradition—Nanak instructed his Hindu followers to put flowers on his right side, Muslims on left side, & whichever flowers were still fresh in morning could do what they wanted with his body—he then covered himself with sheet in preparation for death—next morning all flowers still fresh, but his body gone

succeeded by series of gurus, considered to be revealers of truth & linked by sharing same divine essence, though not considered divine, just spiritually gifted

#	Name	Date of birth	Guruship on	Date of ascension	Age
1	Guru Nanak	15 April 1469	20 August 1507	22 September 1539	69
2	Guru Angad	31 March 1504	7 September 1539	29 March 1552	48
3	Guru Amar Das	5 May 1479	26 March 1552	1 September 1574	95
4	Guru Ram Das	24 September 1534	1 September 1574	1 September 1581	46
5	Guru Arjan	15 April 1563	1 September 1581	30 May 1606	43
6	Guru Har Gobind	19 June 1595	25 May 1606	28 February 1644	48
7	Guru Har Rai	16 January 1630	3 March 1644	6 October 1661	31
8	Guru Har Krishan	7 July 1656	6 October 1661	30 March 1664	7
9	Guru Tegh Bahadur	1 April 1621	20 March 1665	11 November 1675	54
10	Guru Gobind Singh	22 December 1666	11 November 1675	7 October 1708	41
11	Guru Granth Sahib	n/a	7 October 1708	n/a	n/a

Guru Arjan, the 5th guru, responsible for collecting & compiling **Adi Granth** (“first book”), the Sikh sacred scripture in 1603-4—contains hymns & poems by his predecessor gurus, other poets, & himself—1430 pages in standard configuration (primarily in Punjabi, but also Sanskrit, Persian, & other N Indian languages)—referred to as Sri Guru Granth Sahib (“holy master-teacher book”)

Guru Gobindh Singh considered most important guru after Guru Nanak—trained in military techniques, traditionally represented as worldly prince, ready for battle—though

Sikhs originated as religious bridge between Hindus & Muslims, Gobindh Singh let Sikh troops in several battles against Moghuls rulers (Muslims), though eventually made peace with them—two important innovations: creation of *Khalsa* & designation of Adi Granth as his successor-guru

in 1699, perceiving need for loyalty & cohesion among Sikhs in face of challenges, raised sword in front of community gathered at festival & challenged any Sikh ready to die for him to come forward—one man stepped forward, entered tent with Gobindh Singh, & Gobindh Singh emerged with bloodstained sword—guru then asked for other volunteers—one by one four others came forward, entered the tent, & community watched as guru emerged without them but with a bloody sword—finally Gobindh Singh emerged from tent with all five men alive & well, saying that this was the kind of loyalty that the community needed—these five came to be called the *Panj Piare*, “beloved five,” & were original five members of what Gobindh Singh called the ***Khalsa***, the community of “Pure Ones”—others volunteered to join *Khalsa*, while larger Sikh community called *Panth* (*Khalsa* comprises about 70% of modern *Panth* of 23 million)

second innovation was decision not to appoint a human successor but to designate sacred scripture Adi Granth as his successor guru, after supplementing earlier version with words of ninth guru (## 6-8 didn’t leave any writings)—Guru Gobindh Singh’s writings collected after his death in separate volume (along with other contemporary poetic writings) called Dasam Granth (“book of the tenth master”)—most Sikhs don’t view Dasam Granth as scripture, though Nihang Sikhs do—however, those portions acknowledged as contributions of Guru Gobindh Singh in Dasam Granth considered to be scripture by Sikhs, & portions of Guru Gobindh Singh’s words recited in Sikh daily prayers—Adi Granth placed on chair in center of Sikh *gurdwara* originally reserved for human gurus

third collection of important Sikh texts called Rahit, & consists of instructions for performing rituals, standards for Sikh living, etc.

gurdwara—Sikh worship temple—unlike traditional Hindu temples with only one door, Sikh *gudwaras* have doors on all four sides, symbolizing Sikh’s openness to all people, including adherents of all four known religious traditions of N India (Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Islam), & also openness to all castes

Five Ks:

- Kes (uncut hair)
- Kangha (wooden comb)
- Kara (steel bracelet)
- Kirpan (short sword)
- Kachh (pair of shorts, worn under clothes)

Sikhs seek liberation from cycle of rebirth through devotional praise of God, esp. by meditation on divine name

Adi Granth begins with summary of Sikh doctrine, the *Mul Mantra* (beginning of Adi Granth), recited during morning prayers:

There is one Supreme Being, the Eternal Reality, the Creator, without fear and devoid of enmity, immortal, never incarnated, self-existent, known by grace through the Guru. The Eternal One, from the beginning, through all time, present now, the Everlasting Reality.

Sikhs view God as “the One beyond time” and as “without form”—God considered neither male nor female—Sikhs often refer to God as “the Guru,” or *Waheguru* (wonderful teacher) among other titles—Sikhs see God as Creator, Preserver, & Destroyer, fulfilling all three roles of the Hindu *trimurti* Brahmā, Vishnu, & Shiva—though God is separate from creation, God is immanent in creation & thus approachable through loving devotion

Sikhs advocate kindness to all living things, but they also believe humans are especially dear to God & that other creatures are put on earth to provide for humans—thus Sikhs are not opposed to eating meat, though many Sikhs (like many Hindus & all Jains) are vegetarians

chief problem with humans is *haumai*, which may be rendered as egoism, self-reliance, or pride—lust and greed for the world, anger and pride regarding the world, & attachment to the world are all aspects of *haumai*—five vices (five thieves) associated with *haumai* are:

- lust
- anger
- greed
- attachment
- pride

these vices distance people from God and doom them to continue in *samsara*—*maya* is not illusion in the sense that the world itself is unreal (as in Hinduism) but that the values of the world (five thieves) are unreal

in contrast, five virtues are:

- truth
- contentment
- compassion
- humility
- love of God

Guru Nanak taught five stages in a person’s progress toward union with God:

- piety: honoring God’s law and seeking to help others
- knowledge: world is beyond comprehension, but others have experienced God in their hearts

- humility: knowing God within the heart
- being filled with the power of the spirit: realizing that God is in their heart & knowing that beyond death they can join God
- experience of truth: entering into union with God

karma in Sikhism is action that results in cycle of rebirth, as in other Indian religious traditions, but in Sikhism *karma* can be overcome in present life by proper understanding of God's truth, proper conduct in accordance with that understanding, and God's grace—thus the cycle of *samsara* for Sikhs is not seemingly endless

Guru Nanak rejected authority of both Vedas & Quran, relying instead on idea of liberation through grace of God, who lies within the heart—rejected traditional ritual practices of Hinduism & Islam in favor of direct experience of God & teaching of gurus—thus pilgrimages, fasting, ritual purification, circumcision, and wearing the veil are prohibited (but not specifically Sikh rituals like the five Ks, or baptism as part of the initiation into the Khalsa)—however, *dharma* understood by Sikhs to mean following the path of righteousness as laid down by the Gurus, esp. the Adi Granth

Sikhs value families & explicitly reject living as a recluse, beggar, yogi, monk, nun, or celibate (in contrast to Buddhists & Jains, for example): “The faithful do not wander around begging” (Adi Granth, 15th Pauri)—Sikhs also prohibit sexual relations outside marriage

Sikhs reject eating meat killed in accordance with Islamic (or Jewish) custom, which includes slitting the throat and allowing the animal to bleed to death—in contrast, Sikhs (and Hindus) only eat meat from an animal whose head has been cut off with a single stroke of a sword or axe

Sikhs also reject the use of tobacco or alcohol, though one group of Sikhs (Nihangs) use cannabis as an aid to meditation

Sikhs have no clergy—anyone is permitted to read from the Adi Granth during worship

Chinese religion

modern humans settled in Yellow (second longest in Asia) & Yangtze (longest in Asia) River valleys at least 25,000 or 30,000 years ago (*Homo erectus* there c. 1.4 million ya)—Neolithic agriculture from 6th & 5th M BCE—writing developed sometime before 1200 BCE

Pinyin is standard way for writing Chinese today, replacing earlier Wade-Giles format—so now Mao Zedong vs. Mao Tse-tung, Daoism & Daodejing vs. Taoism & Tao Te Ching, Laozi vs. Lao Tzu, Beijing vs. Peking

continuous record of Chinese history from **Shang Dynasty** (1600 -1046 BCE)—earliest examples of writing in China—**oracle bones** date from this period

Zhou Dynasty (1046 - 256 BCE) longest lasting Chinese dynasty—both Lao Tzu (Laozi) (*Tao Te Ching* or *Daodejing*) & Confucius (*Analects*) lived during this dynasty, as did Sun Tzu (*Art of War*)—note that both Daoism and Confucianism arose during the **Axial Age**—during this period kings began to use the concept of the **Mandate of Heaven** to justify their rule—civilization centered around Yellow River at beginning of dynasty, but spread south to Yangtze River over centuries

after about two centuries, local leaders, who gave nominal allegiance to Zhou kings, began to establish small realms of their own—this is called **Spring and Autumn Period** (722-476 BCE), named after *Spring and Autumn Annals* of the State of Lu, a vassal state of the Zhou Dynasty and home of Confucius, who was traditionally viewed as the author of the work, though doubtful—covers years 722 to 481 BCE year by year—during this period centralized Zhou control dissipated, & Zhou Dynasty controlled only E of former kingdom

next period, also mostly within nominal Zhou Dynasty, was **Warring States Period** (476 - 221 BCE), characterized by constant wars among the five most powerful states in China—last Zhou king overthrown in 256 BCE

during Spring & Autumn Period & Warring States Period many different religious and philosophical school arose, called the **Hundred Schools of Thought**—these schools of thought included:

- Confucianism
- Daoism
- Legalism: human nature corrupt, so only strict enforcement of laws by state can produce ordered society
- Mohism: based on idea of universal love, “everyone is equal in the eyes of heaven”—opposed Confucian emphases on ritual & music as extravagances—opposed war, except perhaps in self-defense
- School of Yin-yang: explained universe in terms of *yin* (dark, cold, female, negative) & *yang* (light, hot, male, positive) and Five Elements (water, fire, wood, metal, earth)
- School of Diplomacy: emphasized diplomatic approach to politics
- Agriculturalism: agrarian movement that advocated communalism & egalitarianism—believed ideal ruler would work in the fields alongside subjects

Warring States Period came to an end with rise of **Qin Dynasty** (221-206 BCE), led by the first emperor of China, who unified traditional Chinese homeland for first time—though dynasty only lasted 15 years, took several important steps that would resonate throughout the rest of the history of Imperial China (to 1911): started Great Wall of China, introduced centralized government, produced a unified legal code, developed the written language, & established standards of weights & measures (including currency)

Han Dynasty (206 BCE - 220 CE) brought long period of relative stability to China, expanded its borders W & S—Silk Road trade routes, from China to SE Asia, both E & W India, & all the way to the Mediterranean Sea, started during Han Dynasty—elevated

Confucianism, with a healthy dose of Legalism, to official state religion—established imperial universities to promote Confucian teachings & prepare students for careers in government service—Han Dynasty gave its name to largest ethnic group in modern China

Tang Dynasty (618-907) saw China reach its greatest extent, stretching from Pacific Ocean to Aral Sea, with a population of about 50 million and its capital Changan was largest city in world, with population of 1 million—Buddhism became dominant religion among common people during this period

Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) was established by Mongol ruler Kublai Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan, in imitation of other Chinese imperial dynasties—during this time Marco Polo visited China & served at Kublai Khan's court—first dynasty to rule all of China from Beijing—Black Death killed about 30% of Chinese population during 14th C, then spread to Europe in 1348

Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) saw rise of neo-Confucianism, increase in isolationism

Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) was second non-Han dynasty (after Yuan), founded by Manchus of Manchuria in N China—promoted Confucianism

Sun Yat-sen led rebellion against Qing emperors and overthrew last imperial dynasty, establishing Republic of China & serving as its first president—succeeded by Chiang Kai-shek, who eventually lost in power struggle with Mao Zedong & communist party—atheism the dominant religion among Chinese rulers, but traditional Chinese religious practices continue, along with new movements such as Falun Gong, a mixture of Buddhist and Daoist teachings

oracle bones & turtle shells from Shang period indicate an important part of Chinese religion from that time forward: ancestor worship—questions written on bone or shell, then put in fire, and diviner read subsequent cracks and interpret answer from ancestors—questions included things like whether to go to war or gender of royal offspring

Confucianism

this method of questioning ancestors & gods developed into tradition associated with *Book of Changes*, or ***Yijing*** (*I Ching*)—oldest ms dates to Warring States Period (5th C BCE), but tradition may date back to late 2nd M BCE—book of divination, based on random drawings of stalks or tosses of coins—6 lines, either *yang* (complete) or *yin* (incomplete), taken in order, so 64 possibilities—*Yijing* offers interpretations for each outcome

shift from Shang to Zhou dynasty of tremendous importance in development of Chinese religion—chief god of Shang was Shangdi, the eponymous ancestor of the Shang royal house—he was worshiped as the king's ancestor, but as their ancestor he always favored the Shang household—when Zhou overthrew Shang, they proclaimed that Shangdi had withdrawn his approval of the Shang dynasty because of their lack of ***De*** (integrity,

power, virtue) and granted rule to the Zhou—furthermore, the god’s name was not really Shangdi but rather Tian, the sky-god or power from above—Tian granted the mandate to rule to an individual king or a dynasty as long as they followed the *Dao*, or way of Tian—this mandate called *tianming*, the mandate of Tian, and traditionally rendered the “**mandate of heaven**”—this mandate claimed by Chinese kings until end of Imperial China in 1911—rulers & functionaries who did not follow the *Dao* of Tian, which included performance of certain rituals such as sacrifices to ancestors & god, moral integrity as ruler, decisions concerning matters of state, conduct at weddings and funerals, and leadership during war, were subject to the withdrawal of the mandate, loss of *De*, and overthrow of the dynasty

one other book from this time that has remained influential throughout history is *Art of War* by Sun Tzu—though not a religious text in the traditional sense, it may be seen as an application of Chinese philosophical and religious thought in the context of warfare, “the greatest affair of state”—thirteen chapters:

1. Initial Estimations
2. Waging War
3. Planning Offensives
4. Military Disposition
5. Strategic Military Power
6. Vacuity and Substance
7. Military Combat
8. Nine Changes
9. Maneuvering the Army
10. Configurations of Terrain
11. Nine Terrains
12. Incendiary Attacks
13. Employing Spies

some Confucians of later period rejected *Art of War* because it advocates the use of deception and spies, which they considered to betray a lack of integrity—nevertheless, read & used readily by both ancient Chinese leaders and modern leaders such as Mao Zedong, Vo Nguyen Giap (N Vietnamese general), and, after translation into English in early 20th C, Douglas MacArthur

five books from this time period revered as sacred texts by many Chinese of subsequent generations, esp. Confucians:

- *Yijing (Book of Changes)*: divination manual
- *Sanli (Three Texts about Rituals)*: various rituals
- *Shijing (Book of Songs)*: songs about common people’s everyday experiences & hymns about courtly life going back to the early Zhou period
- *Shujing (Book of Documents)*: governmental documents & conversations at court, purportedly from Zhou period, but some later as well
- *Chunqiu (Spring and Autumn Annals)*: chronological outline of events from state of Lu

although these books reflect traditional Chinese religion out of which both Confucianism and Daoism would emerge, they became central to Confucian thought (Daoists value *Yijing* above the others and have their own texts as well)

name “Confucianism” invented by Jesuit missionaries to China in 16th C—in China, traditionally identified as school/tradition of scholars (*ru*), many of whom were in government service—became prevalent in later Zhou Dynasty (1046 - 256 BCE) & became official ideology Chinese state & ruling elites in Han Dynasty (206 BCE - 220 CE)—acknowledged various gods, but focused on this world & human responsibilities in it, including rites performed on behalf of gods

Confucius (551-479 BCE) born in state of Lu in NE China—original name Kong Qiu, but popularly known as Kongzi or Kong fuzi (Master Kong), from which Westerners derived Confucius—lived during Spring & Autumn Period (770 - 476 BCE), a time of political fragmentation & social upheaval—Confucius sought to stabilize government by injecting moral & ritual standards, supposedly based on teaching of ancient sages—disheartened by conditions in state of Lu, Confucius traveled to other states in search of a ruler who would implement his desired reforms, following the true *Dao*, which had been lost (thought manifested in earlier Chinese dynasties & even early Zhou period)—finding none, he returned to Lu & spent remainder of his life teaching his disciples—Confucius was perhaps first person in history to make teaching his primary vocation—Confucius saw Duke of Zhou, who succeeded his brother King Wu (first Zhou emperor), as ideal ruler (1042-1030 BCE), because he consolidated new dynasty, presided over time of peace & prosperity, & stepped aside when King Wu’s son old enough to take his rightful place on throne—kind of a patron saint for followers of Confucius

main source of teachings of Confucius is *Analects*, compiled by disciples shortly after his death, though some later material as well from disciples—primarily concerned with human life & social order, but believed in *Tian* (heaven) and claimed that his teachings were based on cosmic *Dao*, which made humans part of the larger order of the universe (cf. Stoic idea of *Logos*)—accepted existence of gods & spirits of ancestors but counseled people to keep their distance from them—refrained from discussing nature of the afterlife (though he apparently believed in one) & was critical of those who left society to live as recluses (cf. Sikhism)

main point of teachings was perfection of human conduct in life—two cardinal virtues: ritual & benevolence—the two are related, because a good person who manifests benevolence in everything he does is a person whose behavior is perfectly in accord with ritual—ritual originally referred to sacrificial rites directed toward gods & ancestors but came to include all formal duties & polite manners of everyday life, & Confucianism’s references to ritual have this broader sense

social harmony results from each individual recognizing his/her rightful place in society & acting accordingly out of an attitude of duty & sincerity, so both outer form & inner motivation important—benevolence refers to genuine love for others within society & concern for their wellbeing—benevolence is foundation for other virtues such as righteousness, loyalty, & faithfulness—benevolence based on the *Dao* of heaven &

assumes the intimate relatedness of shared humanity (cf. *דסח* in Judaism)—opposed to selfishness & egoism

Confucius accepted standard class divisions & social structures of Chinese society, advocating that people live in accordance with their various relationships with others—five principal relationships:

- father & son
- ruler & subject
- husband & wife
- older & younger brother
- friend & friend

assumes patriarchal structure of society & inherent hierarchy with rulers, males, & elders above subjects, females, & youth—recognizing the potential for abuse within such a structure, Confucius taught reciprocal responsibilities in all relationships—for example, wife owes husband obedience & respect, and husband owes wife kindness and provision (cf. Christian *Haustafel* in Eph 5:21-6:9)—Confucianism allowed subordinates to object to unethical behavior on part of superiors, but required considerable care in expressing objections

central feature of Confucius' teaching was commitment to government service—public service & government vocation considered the highest calling in society, because person was serving entire community or state—those in government service, and especially ruler, needed to be people of higher moral character so as to serve as examples and inspirations to others, and also to ensure societal cohesion—person of cultivated moral character called a “gentleman” (*junzi*)

after Confucius' death, during Warring States Period, Confucianism just one of the Hundred Schools of Thought, so had to compete with many rivals for minds of Chinese people—Mohists critical of Confucian emphasis on elaborate rituals for ancestors & the dead (funerary rites), as well as Confucian acceptance of stratified social order (as opposed to egalitarianism)—Legalists rejected value of benevolence in ruling the state (cf. Machiavelli)

two most famous proponents of Confucian thought during Warring States Period were **Mengzi** (Mencius) & **Xunzi**—Mengzi believed that humans are basically good, although they could do bad things if they lost their way—fundamental human goodness illustrated by fact that anyone will stop to help a child who has fallen into a well—opposed to strict regulations & harsh punishments—education a better solution to problem of “lost mind of virtue”—four inborn virtues:

- benevolence
- righteousness
- ritual
- wisdom

in contrast, Xunzi believed that humans are basically evil, without an internal moral compass—however, they can be trained in ways of morality, & this is purpose of Confucian education—goodness is a product of conscious effort—Xunzi disagreed with Mengzi’s theoretical stance, which contrasted with his more realistic stance—rulers during Han era & for most of next 1000 years saw Xunzi as more important of the two thinkers, but during Tang Dynasty (618-907), Mengzi came to be considered the more authoritative interpreter of Confucianism, & that evaluation continues to present in eyes of most Confucianists

Emperor Wu (140 - 86 BCE) of Han Dynasty established imperial academy that used Confucian classics as core curriculum—government students tested over their knowledge of these texts, & admission to government service required extensive knowledge

after demise of Han Dynasty in 220 CE, Confucianism challenged among ruling elite by Daoism and later by Buddhism—Confucianism continued to be important source of thought, though often in syncretized form—**Tang Dynasty** (618-907) saw revival of Confucianism along with reunification of China & establishment of strong central state—Confucian scholars during this period produced standardized forms of canonical texts, as well as commentaries on the texts—Confucian scholars also responsible for compiling official histories and literary anthologies & bibliographies—renewal of Confucianism among scholarly elites paralleled by growth in acceptance of Buddhism by masses—interplay of three religious traditions illustrated by common saying, “**Confucianism for the external world, Buddhism and Daoism for the inner world**”

Confucian scholar **Han Yu** (768-824) led a reform movement that advocated return to simple, unadorned writing practices of earlier period, as evidenced in Confucian classics, & also return to central messages of Confucianism found in the classics, especially as interpreted by Mengzi—critical to some extent of Daoism, but particularly critical of Buddhism, which he saw as a foreign religious tradition that misunderstood traditional Chinese society & customs

during **Song Dynasty** (960-1279), several “masters” of Confucianism opposed encroachment of Buddhist ideas (& to a lesser extent Daoist ideas) in China—despite this opposition, they were influenced by certain aspects of both Buddhism & Daoism, expanding the traditional Confucian emphasis on interpersonal relationships in the context of the state to include metaphysical speculation about the nature of the universe and reality—also emphasized spiritual growth of individual in his progress toward **sagehood**—widespread success of Neo-Confucianism led to decline of Buddhist influence in China

most famous & influential Neo-Confucianist thinker was **Zhu Xi** (1130-1200)—passed social service exam for entry into government service at extraordinarily young age of 18—argued for (re-)establishment of local academies to promote Neo-Confucianist ideas—acknowledged his debt to earlier Neo-Confucianists, & he incorporated some of their ideas into his writings—famous for theoretical & philosophical writings—for example, taught that all reality is seamless mixing of principle (universal pattern) & vital force (transforming principle into actual material objects—cf. Plato’s Theory of Ideas)—

the Supreme Ultimate is the essential pattern of reality (cf. Neoplatonic concept of God as Form of Forms)—Zhu Xi promoted new, streamlined version of Confucian canon, consisting of **Four Books**:

- *Analects of Confucius*
- *Mengzi*
- *Great Learning* (part of *Three Texts about Rituals*)
- *Doctrine of the Mean* (part of *Three Texts about Rituals*)

Zhu Xi wrote commentaries on each of these Four Books, as did other later Neo-Confucian scholars—these canonical texts & commentaries remained central texts for understanding Confucianism until early 20th C—for Zhu Xi main goal of Confucianism is individual's moral improvement & quest for becoming a sage rather than traditional Confucian emphasis on preparation for public office—human mind a battlefield where the true nature (principle) battles self-centered emotions & desires—moral cultivation requires uncovering essential goodness that is inherent in all people through gradual removal of impurities of thought & obstructions that prevent true nature from becoming fully manifest in “resplendent perfection”—asserted that contemplation can be one effective means of achieving these goals—study of the *Dao* included examination of both inner world and outer world—study of outer world included extension of knowledge of material objects (i.e., science) and human affairs & events—Zhu Xi's interpretation of Confucianism became officially sanctioned in Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) & focus of civil service exams from 1313 (under the Yuans) until they were abolished in 1905—Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucianism spread beyond China into other parts of Asia, most notably Korea, where the Choson Dynasty (1392-1910) adopted it as its official ideology—also influential in Japan among Samurai elites

alternate form of Neo-Confucianism called School of Mind that arose during Ming period stressed the quest for sagehood through reflection & illumination from within rather than exegesis & study of canonical texts—since mind contains intuitive knowledge, genuine wisdom can be found within the individual—another alternate form of Neo-Confucianism called School of Han learning, emphasizing classical canonical texts and criticizing Zhu Xi's metaphysical speculations

Daoism

Dao means “way,” but can also be translated “path”—as a verb, “to say, speak, or lead”—can refer to impersonal creative force of universe that establishes *yin* and *yang*, from which emerge the “myriad things” (i.e., everything)

in Confucianism the *Dao* revolves around proper patterns of human behavior—in Chinese Buddhism *Dao* was used as translation of words such as *Bodhi* (awakening), *marga* (path), and Nirvana

most thorough investigation and explication of the *Dao* found in Daoism—if focus of Confucianism is social realm, focus of Daoism is the natural world, including its

transcendent (supernatural) aspects—Daoism often viewed as complement to Confucianism rather than a rival

Daoism difficult to define precisely, because it incorporates wide variety of diverse views and invites ambiguity—it might be called the first postmodern religion, except that it dates to at least 5th C BCE—Daoism developed in interaction with Confucianism, Buddhism, & traditional Chinese religion—some see Daoism as an elevated expression of popular religion

earlier Daoism (5th C BCE - 2nd C CE) primarily philosophical, but beginning in 2nd C CE became more organized as a religion, though never organized as hierarchically as Roman Catholic Christianity or as doctrinally defined as Shia Islam, for example—rather than having a point of origin or fixed boundaries like many other religious traditions, varieties of Daoism may be viewed as having common center of texts, rituals, traditions, and communities

Laozi (Master Lao) regarded as founder of Daoism tradition—traditionally identified as a 6th C BCE archivist named Lao Dan within the Zhou Dynasty—purported author of book called *Laozi*, better known in W as *Daodejing* (*Tao Te Ching*), the Book of the *Dao* and the *De* (the Way and Power/Virtue/Integrity)—divided into two sections, first dealing primarily with *Dao*, second with *De*—book put together in present form by 3rd C CE, but earlier mss date to 4th or 3rd C BCE—possibly list of anonymous aphorisms passed down in oral form & eventually committed to writing—foundational text of Daoism, basis for all later Daoist works—because of its inherent ambiguities, interpreted in variety of ways in both ancient & modern world: as philosophical or religious classic, as political work, as book dealing with military strategy, as transcendent spiritual masterpiece

Dao presented as the one unchanging constant in the universe, amid constantly changing realm of finite—the indivisible & underlying reality of universe—the *Dao* is void, ineffable, & mysterious, representing a reality that is in fact nameless, yet it is everywhere manifest & permeates everything (cf. *Bhagavad Gita*, where Krishna claims to be present everywhere and in everything, somewhat different from traditional Christian concept of God’s omnipresence, because God completely separate from created order, closer to Stoic idea of *Logos*)

Daoism envisions an ideal world free from the constraints of “civilized society,” in contrast to Confucianism, for which civilized society is the ideal—for the Daoist, civilization is inherently filled with mindless competition & obsession with wealth & power—achieving harmonious unity with *Dao* achieved not through rituals or deeds but through *wuwei*, non-action—not inaction, but method of spiritual cultivation and being that brings one into harmony with universe—non-action also the best way to restore world to its primordial harmony which it lost with advent of civilization

about two centuries after Laozi lived another Daoist sage named **Zhuangzi** (Master Zhuang), born Zhuang Zhou (traditionally 368-286 BCE)—also name of book of 33 chapters, the first 7 of which associated with Zhuangzi and rest from other sages up to

3rd C CE—includes narratives as well as aphorisms—some of these narratives include Laotzi & Confucius, the latter generally caricatured as strict moralist, but sometimes portrayed as promoter of Daoist ideas—*Zhuangzi* deals with many of same themes as *Daodejing*, such as unity of the *Dao*, value of serenity & withdrawal, celebration of nature—critical of political involvement as hopelessly unproductive, incapable of producing meaningful change—only hope for change comes from within, when selfish desires & ambitions are conquered—sage realizes union with *Dao* without getting entangled in narrow dogmatism, such as that found in Confucianism—wise person avoids intellectual & moral rigidity, taking instead a relativist standpoint—once one realizes the true *Dao*, it is possible to be at peace with oneself, one's neighbors, and all others, even in times of great loss

text of *Zhuangzi* shows increased awareness of & interest in exploration of inner world—portrayals of contemplation & meditation, references to “sitting and forgetting,” “preserving the One,” “fasting the mind” (i.e., emptying it of all thoughts & images)

in early period Daoism absorbed ideas from other traditions in Hundred Schools of Thought, including Confucianism, Mohism, Legalism, & school of Yin and Yang—traditional Chinese idea of creation adopted by Daoism: original primeval force divided into two complementary elements, *yang* (pure, light element that moved up to form heaven) and *yin* (dense, heavy element that moved down to create earth)—human world between the two & made up of parts of both

late Han period a time of political & social upheaval, & series of Daoist sages arose called Celestial Masters, leaders of messianic movement that transformed Daoism into recognizable religious institution, even setting up a self-ruled theocratic state in SW China that was egalitarian, accepting women as full-fledged members of community—unlike Confucianism, Daoism welcomed sages who withdrew from society & lived lives of contemplation—Laozi figured as deity in some later Daoist communities—in others he was the paradigmatic immortal being, attaining immortality through learning & meditation

between 364 & 370 a man named Yang Xi (330-386) received a series of divine revelations revealing new class of supernatural beings above immortals of earlier Daoist thought—these beings called *zhenren*, or perfected beings, descending from a high heaven called Supreme Clarity (*Shangqing*)—revelations focused on seeking & acquisition of immortality—later followers of Supreme Clarity Daoism collected Yang Xi's texts & treated them as scripture—as movement grew, it became more institutionalized, with distinctive rituals, ecclesiastical hierarchy, & monastic communities—largest & most influential form of Daoism from 6th through 10th C

another influential form of Daoism that emerged shortly after Supreme Clarity Daoism was Numinous Treasure (*Lingbao*) Daoism—also based on series of divine revelations, focused on communally-oriented, liturgical forms of worship rather than inner contemplation—influenced by Confucianism & esp. Buddhism—produced number of sacred texts reflecting divine revelations, many of which are similar or virtually identical to Buddhist texts—various levels of heaven & hell also reminiscent of Buddhist teachings

in early medieval period Daoist texts collected into three “caverns” (cf. three baskets of Buddhist canon):

- Cavern of Perfection (Shangqing scriptures)
- Cavern of Mystery (Lingbao scriptures)
- Cavern of Divinity (Three Sovereigns scriptures)

other texts added over the centuries, so that it eventually contained more than 1500 separate titles

Daoism reached its peak of influence during Tang Dynasty (618-907)

Shinto

kami are spirits of natural phenomena and revered ancestors worshiped in Shinto—often associated with divine forces in nature (sun, rain, sea, wind), others identified with specific locations or objects (waterfall, mountain, animals, trees)—*kami* are part of nature and so contain both positive & negative characteristics—earliest *kami* were spirits associated with earth & important for hunter-gatherer societies in Japan—after domestication of rice, many *kami* seen as protectors of crops, gods of sun and rain, etc.—some *kami* are associated with diseases of various sorts—others are believed to punish those who do not honor the *kami*—some historical individuals, such as departed emperors, worshiped as *kami* after their death—18th C Shinto scholar said *kami* is anything that can fill people with awe and wonder (cf. *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*)—*kami* believed to live both in man-made Shinto shrines and in place of natural beauty, such as an old tree or

Daijōsai (Great Food Festival): first Shinto harvest festival celebrated by new emperor—last performed in 1990 when Akihito became emperor—though harvest festival Niinamesai celebrated every year by emperor in his capacity of chief priest of Shinto, first year has special meaning—after taking ritual bath & putting on white silk robe, emperor meditates until time to begin festival—emperor walks barefoot, with attendants rolling out a mat before him so his feet don’t touch the ground—enters ritual building called Yukiden, where he waits in small room while ancient music played—then enters ritual hall, seats himself on mat, & eats offering of rice and sake (rice wine)—same offerings on another mat for *kami*—emperor leave Yukiden, washes again, then enters almost identical building called Sukiden and repeats same rituals—each celebration takes three hours

between 80,000 and 100,000 Shinto shrines in Japan, from very large to very small—entrance marked by ceremonial gate, or *torii*—ceremonies involve food offerings to *kami*, laid out slowly and elaborately, followed by chanted prayer thanking shrine’s *kami* for blessings of past year & asking for blessings for coming year—then food removed, to be eaten later by priests & their families—most sacred part of shrine is *honden*, or inner sanctuary, where *kami* believed to dwell—*kami* represented in room by *shintai*, or divine substance, a holy object concentrating the sacred power—*shintai* may be sword, mirror, stone, or even piece of paper with *kami*’s name written—object enshrined in box, which

is covered with many layers of decorative cloth—never opened, so actual object inside may not have been seen for centuries & may actually have been forgotten—illustrative of important principle in Japanese culture, where that which is most sacred is hidden—lend mystery to object—*honden* not entered except on special feast days, when priests will enter & offer sacrifices before *shintai*

shrine festival has four basic stages of ritual:

- purification—shrine & grounds ritually swept clean
- presentation—solemn ceremony bringing offerings to *kami*
- prayer—reading of *norito*, or prayer
- participation—all worshipers present evergreen branches on offering table, sip sake, then enjoy themselves in a kind of carnival within the shrine precincts

greatest Shinto shrine is Grand Shrine of Ise, located near Pacific Ocean far from any cities—like all Shinto shrines, made of wood, with no nails or other metal except for decorative gold—two separate shrines about 5 miles apart, one dedicated to Amaterasu, the sun goddess considered ancestress of imperial line, & Toyouke, the ancient food goddess—most important festivals at this shrine are harvest festivals—each shrine rebuilt from scratch every 20 years—emperor travels to Great Shrine of Ise to report to *kami* the important events of the nation—in 1945 Emperor Hirohito traveled to shrine to report Japan's defeat in WWII

five features of Shinto:

- purity vs. impurity
- traditionalism
- importance of *matsuri* (shrine festivals) & practical forms of religious expression
- sociological role of religion
- polytheism & the theoretical expression of Shinto

purity vs. impurity: sacred space & time important in Shinto—*torii* gate marks boundary between outer world of pollution & inner world of purity associated with *kami*—*matsuri* mark festival days as different from ordinary time—simplicity of Shinto shrines reflect proximity to nature & its own natural purity, which is also associated with *kami*—natural realm more pure than human realm—tops of hills & mountains particularly important as dwelling places of gods in ancient times—blood, sickness, & death are especially impure, and for this reason weddings and birth celebrations are done in Shinto shrines, while funerals are generally held in Buddhist shrines

traditionalism: doing things as they have always been done important in Shinto, as in larger Japanese culture in general—fires to cook rice offerings in shrines started with fire drill, using friction to ignite fuel, as in ancient times—clapping twice before saying prayer to *kami* just as important as bowing to an acquaintance—dealings with *kami* must follow traditions as well—traditions can change if inspired by emperor, who is considered to be a living *kami*, or high priest of Shinto (e.g., venerating emperor's

portrait in schools)—traditions can also change in light of revelations from *kami* by recognized Shinto religious authorities

practical forms of religious expression: belief in Shinto doctrines not as important as performing rites correctly, including joyful celebrations associated with *matsuri*—pilgrimages to shrines important to one's family or profession another rite that followers of Shinto are expected to do—sacred mountains like Mt. Fuji important pilgrimage destinations too, as are Shinto shrines along the route to the summit

sociological role of Shinto: participation in Shinto worship is manifestations of one's identity as member of community: family, business, town, nation—most evident at local level, where Shinto priests summoned to bless laying of cornerstone of new buildings

polytheism: unlike Hinduism & Daoism, which have many gods but tend to see those gods as expressions of single underlying reality, Shinto stresses distinctives & local character of individual *kami*—polytheism requires mythology, & Shinto mythology expressed in two books, the *Kojiki (Chronicles of Ancient Times)* from 712 CE, and the *Nihongi (Chronicles of Japan)* from 720 CE—both written at time of rising Buddhist influence in order to preserve pre-Buddhist narrative of country & to legitimate imperial rule—creation myth speaks of two primeval parents, Izanagi and Izanami, who descended from High Plain of Heaven on the Floating Bridge of Heaven & created earth, as well as islands of Japan, various *kami* of the mountains, ocean, rivers, trees, & rice—Izanami gave birth to fire god and burned herself, so had to descend to underworld, land of dead—Izanagi went to look for her, but she was already decayed, so he returned to earth—sun goddess Amaterasu emerged from his left eye, moon god Tsukiyomi from his right eye, and wind god Susanoo from his nose—Susanoo a troublemaker, & before too long Amaterasu had hidden herself in a cave, refusing to come out—eventually coaxed out by using a mirror so she could see her brilliance, and the call of a rooster, her sacred bird

Emperor Meiji and Empress Shoken led rapid modernization of Japan in late 19th & early 20th C—introduced Meiji Restoration, which revived state Shinto rituals after overthrow of Tokugawa Shogunate, which had ruled from 1600 to 1868 as feudal Japanese military government, ruled by a shogun and supported by samurai (military class)