

Concepts and Contexts of Buddhism:

History of Buddhist Timeline:

560 BCE	Birth of Siddhartha Gautama in northeastern India, the founder of the Buddhist faith
483 BCE	Death of the Buddha, Buddhism spreads and changes along with Indian political institutions
273-232 BCE	Maurya Dynasty: Asoka (ruler) becomes an active patron of Buddhism - the political might of Mauryans brought about full institutionalization of Buddhism
200 BCE-100 CE	Mahayana Buddhism develops as a major Buddhist sect and spreads from India to China, Korea, Japan, and southeast Asia. It is believed to be founded by Nagarjuna
300-400 CE	Influential Lotus Sutra texts are written in Sanskrit and later translated to Chinese
c. 550 CE	Buddhism arrives in Japan
c. 1222-1282 CE	The Japanese monk Nicherin promotes Buddhist reform based on the Lotus Sutra
c. 1250 CE	Eisai , a Japanese Buddhist monk, brings the Ch'an Buddhist tradition from China to Japan, where it becomes the foundation of the Samurai tradition and Zen Buddhism

Context - Religious Belief: Buddhism

Basic beliefs of Buddhism:

- the belief that all *existence implies sorrow*
the cause of sorrow is attachment to work and self, causing rebirth (*reincarnation*)
- this attachment (and reincarnation) can be dissolved through the *elimination of desires*
(*desire* binds the self to a countless succession of rebirths)
- this *cessation* of rebirth can be accomplished by the following **Eightfold Path**
(which prescribes simple practices of *right thought, right speech, right action*)

Four Noble Truths achieved through meditation. These are the four main tenants of Buddhism:

1. Life brings suffering.
2. The desire for pleasure, power, and immortality are the roots of suffering.
3. Suffering ceases when desiring ends.
4. Desire ends via the **Noble Eightfold Path** of right view, intention, speech, action, livelihood, effort, awareness, and concentration.

Vairochana Buddha - the celestial or transcendent Buddha

Shakyamuni Buddha - also called Siddhartha Gautama, the historical Buddha who is believed to have lived sometime between the 6th and 4th centuries BCE

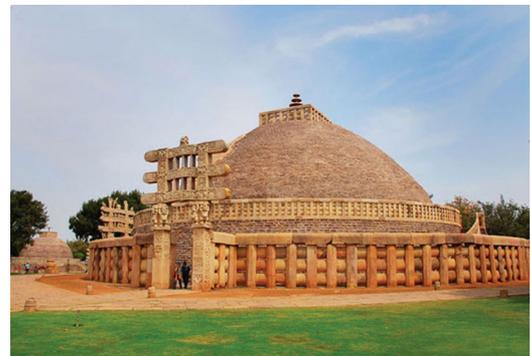
Theravada Buddhism - individual project - southern region of Asia - Thailand, Cambodia

Mahayana School - Buddha was a savior and often a God - a God concerned with man's sorrows above all else. The Mahayana form of Buddhism is a collective project in Tibet, Mongolia, Vietnam, Korea, China, and Japan.

Bodhisattva - beings who are capable of enlightenment but who forego it in order to help other living beings towards salvation (often serving as attendants to the Buddha - aids to his teachings). Presented in princely dress and ornament.



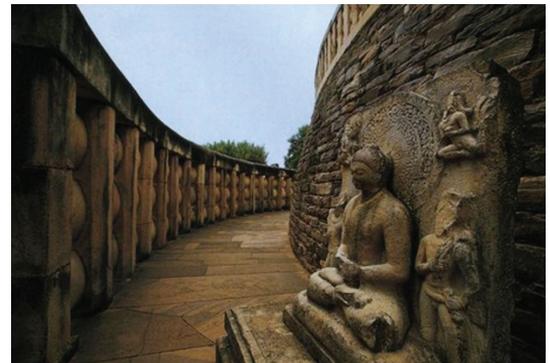
192 - Great Stupa at Sanchi



182 - Buddha, Bamiyan
Afghanistan



198 - Borobudur Temple
meditating Buddha



192 - Great Stupa at Sanchi
ambulatory