

Going Deeper
World Religions – Glen Elliott

Eastern Religions
Pantheistic Monism
Hinduism & Buddhism

Pantheism

Monism

Hinduism

Vedic Literature (Vedas)

Book 1	Book 2	Book 3	Book 4
Hymns	Hymns	Hymns	Hymns
Rituals	Rituals	Rituals	Rituals
Hermits	Hermits	Hermits	Hermits
Philosophy Upanishads	Philosophy Upanishads	Philosophy Upanishads	Philosophy Upanishads

Hindu Thought From the Upanishads

- **Brahman** - One reality, the impersonal god-being, everything is an expression of Brahman
- **Maya** – “illusion,” false knowledge – the separateness of the world is an illusion
- **Karma** – “action,” an unbreakable law, every action has a consequence

Hindu Thought From the Upanishads

- **Samara** – transmigration of “souls,” reincarnation, an almost endless cycle
- **Moksha** – breaking free from samsara via knowledge, devotion of a deity and good karma

Bhagavad-Gita - “The Song of the Blessed Lord”

- Chapters 25-42 of an epic poem
- The warrior Arjuna prepares for battle
- The god Vishnu appears as Krishna and helps him prepare by giving advice from the Upanishads
- Life and problems are an illusion
- His duty is to fight
- Devotion to Krishna can gain him moksha

Code of Manu – Caste System

- **Brahmanas** - Brahmans are created for teaching, studying, sacrifice, giving/accepting gifts.
- **Kshatriyas** (pronounced “shatri”) - the warriors, created to protect people, give gifts, study, pleasure.
- **Vaishya** - traders, created to protect cattle, charity, study, trade, lend with interest, agriculture.
- **Shudra** - manual workers, to serve without envy of the other castes. A person was to begin at this level, and if they serve willingly and obediently, then they could gradually, via reincarnation move thorough the system to arrive at the exalted caste of Brahman.
- **Dalits** - Below these are the outcastes or untouchables

Code of Manu – Karma

If a man performs only good actions, he will be born a god;
if he performs mixed actions, he will be born a man;
if he performs only evil actions, he will be born a bird or animal.

Code of Manu – 4 stages of life for the upper class males

1. Student of the Vedas
2. Householder (30 yrs - 12 yr. old wife/
24 yrs - 8 yr. old wife)
3. Hermit (grandchildren are grown) to
meditate and offer sacrifices,
4. Wandering beggar

Main Hindu Gods

Brahma - the creator. The least popular with only two temples and no formal group of followers.

Shiva - the destroyer. The god of death, destruction, disease, reproduction (sexual) and dance. The most popular. The most common symbol is the trident. This god most closely parallels life in India.

Vishnu - the preserver. The god of love, benevolence, forgiveness and play. 10 incarnations.

The primordial sound of “Om” (actually “aum”) is the sound of the three gods

Shiva – the “destroyer”



Vishnu – the “preserver”



Polytheism – many gods

- The respected god Mithra is the giver of cattle. Cattle are not to be killed.
- Hanuman - the monkey god



Yoga – “union”

1. Vows of restraint - against harming living creatures and unchastity; non-violence, not stealing, don't covet, etc.
2. Internal emotional control - calmness, equilibrium
3. Practice of bodily postures (lotus position) & religious observances (deity worship)
4. Breath control to control mind
5. Control of senses - to shut out outside world (will power)
6. Extreme concentration on a single object
7. Meditation
8. Trance - the Yogi becomes one with Brahman

Buddhism

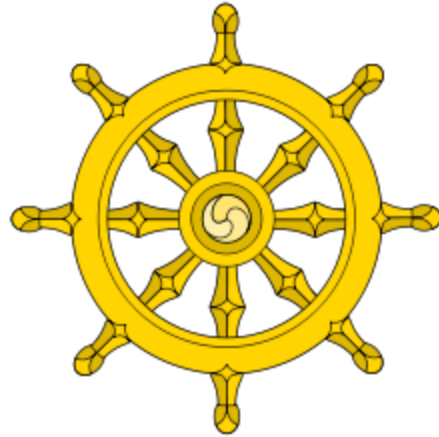
Siddhartha Gautama, The Buddha (“The enlightened one”) 563-483 BC



4 Noble Truths

1. Life is full of pain and suffering (birth, old age, sickness, death, sorrow, despair)
2. Pain and suffering are caused by craving (desire) for anything (pleasure, existence, etc.). We suffer because we crave that which is not permanent.
3. Pain and suffering is eliminated by ceasing to crave or desire. (non-attachment, abandonment, release). “Emptiness” is the goal of Buddhism.
4. Desire is eliminated by following the 8 fold path. The eightfold path will break the bonds that tie one to life and achieve release from the cycle. Release is to experience Nirvana, which means “extinguish” or “put out like a candle.”

The Noble Eightfold Path



Wisdom:

1. Right knowledge - the 4 noble truths.
2. Right aspiration/intention (commitment/will to growth to overcome desire and offer good will)

The Noble Eightfold Path

Ethical Conduct:

3. Right speech (truth) – don't lie, slander, gossip or speak harsh words
4. Right conduct/action -no killing, stealing, lying, adultery, drinking intoxicants – be kind, compassionate and honest
5. Right livelihood (occupations) – legal, peaceful and helpful

The Noble Eightfold Path

Mental Discipline:

6. Right effort (self-control)
7. Right mindfulness (self analysis & contemplation)
8. Right meditation/concentration (techniques of Yoga)

Summary of Buddhism

- The goal is Nirvana. It is not heaven or god. Nirvana is the moment of enlightenment.
- Buddhism is essentially atheistic. The ultimate reality is impersonal.
- Release is attained only by self-effort
- Buddha utilized samsara (transmigration) and karma from Hinduism