



The Four Noble Truths

- ❖ The Truth of Suffering
- ❖ The Truth of Arising –
Desire/Craving
- ❖ The Truth of Cessation
- ❖ The Truth of the Way

Buddha Reaches Nirvana

Out of Compassion, Lead a Life of Bringing Knowledge (Via His Teachings = Dharma) to Overcome Ignorance and Set Forth on the Path to Nirvana

- The First Sermon – The 4 Noble Truths and the Wheel of Life – Of those who Listened, 5 Achieved a Profound Initial Level of Understanding and Became Disciples/Monks

Death at the Age of 80 – Discouraged the Establishment of Successor – Thus No Central Authority – Guidance for the Monastic Life But No Doctrine or Creed – Entered via Meditative Trance the Final Nirvana

The Four Noble Truths

- Like Jesus, Buddha was interested in Bringing People to a Different Kind of Life (Practical and Therapeutic rather than Speculative and Theoretical) –
 - Nirvana Stands at the Intersection of the Moral Life and Wisdom
- A life of no-harm (both in terms of moral choice and self awareness – leaving the harm of desire/attachment) and its correlate of Compassion with a Profound Understanding of the Human Condition = The Four Noble Truths

In the End - What is Important is the Striving not the Conceptual Agonizing – the Man Shot with a Poison Arrow Metaphor

- Nonetheless – 45 Years of Teaching Produced Huge Amounts of Texts and Thus Much Discussion about Ideas/Concepts – At the End of the Day, Buddhism while Sounding Pessimistic, is like its Indian cousins, Optimistic – All is Well – And We Will All, in Time Reach Nirvana – In the Meantime, a Practical/Realistic Analysis of the Life Lived and a Path to Nirvana



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- The Truth of Cessation – Overcoming *Tanha = Nirvana*
- The Truth of the Path – How To Achieve the Cure – Not From Without (e.g., Grace) – But By Training and Constant Commitment (Becoming Monk/Nun thus Necessary?)
 - People Routinely Train for Sports or Professions – But Do Not Train for Life Itself - There Are Two Ways of Living – One a Random, Unreflective Way – Pushed/Pulled in Every Direction – “Wandering About” – The Second an Intentional Life – The Way – The Path – With Steep Grades, Dangerous Curves and Rest Areas

The Eightfold Path

Morality

- Right Speech
- Right Action
- Right Livelihood



Meditation

- Right Mindfulness
- Right Effort
- Right Concentration



Wisdom

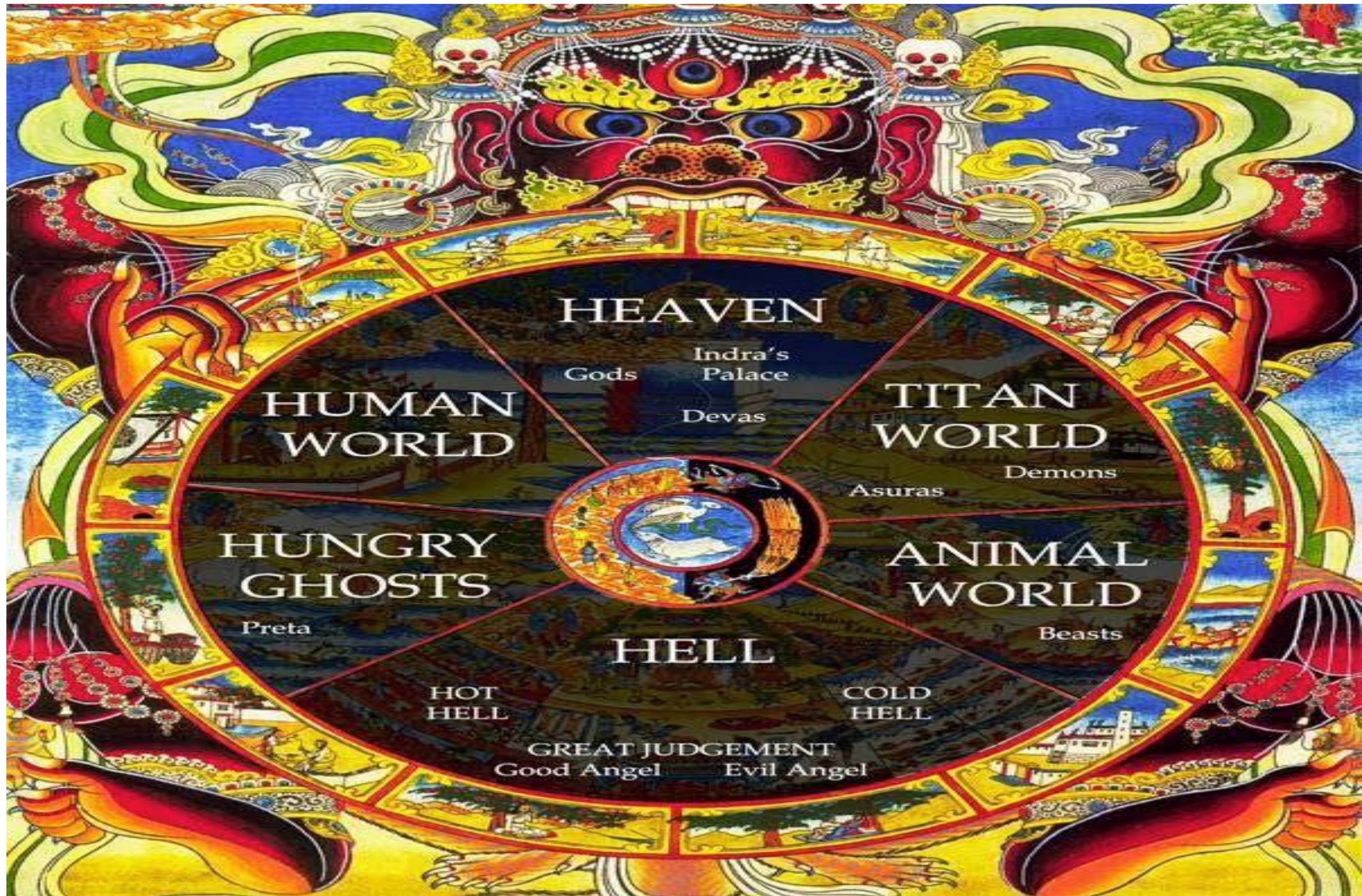
- Right Views
- Right Intentions

- Right View = **WISDOM**
 - A blueprint that One Can Trust – So the Noble Truths – Until Reason is Satisfied, It is Difficult to Take the Path
- Right Resolve/Intent = **WISDOM**
 - Does One Really Seek Enlightenment – Persistence is Indispensable
- Right Speech = **MORALITY**
 - Our Words Reveal Our Character – Does One Not Speak the Truth? – Why? – Does one use Unkind Words? Why? Right Speech will avoid Deceit and Be Charitable
- Right Conduct = **MORALITY**
 - As Above, the first Step is to Understand One's Behavior Objectively – How Often Was Self-seeking the motive rather than generosity? – Toward Selflessness and Charity
 - 5 Precepts – Do Not Kill – Do Not Steal – Do Not Lie – Do not Be Sexually Excessive – Do Not Drink Intoxicants
- Right Livelihood = **MORALITY**
 - For the Layman, Engaging in Occupations that Promote Life instead of Destroying It – E.g., Avoid Prostitution, Butcher, Brewer, Arms Maker... "Earning a Living is Life's Means, Not Life's End."
- Right Effort = **MEDITATION**
 - Reaching the End Requires Tremendous Effort – Virtues Developed, Passions Curbed – "Those who Follow the Way might well follow the example of an ox that marches through the deep mire carrying a heavy load. He is tired, but his steady gaze, look forward, will never relax until he comes out of the mire..."
- Right Mindfulness = **MEDITATION**
 - If We Could Really understand Life, Understand ourselves, we would find neither a problem. This requires a steady awareness of Every Action which requires periods of undistracted introspection. The Gradual disappearance of a separate self – consciousness – rather we are what we think, what we do
- Right Meditation/Concentration = **MEDITATION**
 - Through Yoga-type meditative practice, one is regenerated – changed into a different kind of creature who experiences the world differently – Shedding Delusion, Craving, Hostility

- Karma – In the Course of Following the 8 Fold Path, there are Karmic Realities that Impact the Flow of Birth and Rebirth - Karma is the ‘Elevator’ that moves one around in the Realms of Existence
 - Not Rewards and Punishments Given out by God but Consequence of Individual Moral Choices and Actions Based on those Choices – Individuals Have **Free Will** and ‘Create’ Themselves by Way of **Moral Actions**
 - **Grounded in the Moral Principle, Do No Harm**
 - Moral Actions have **Transitive and Intransitive Effects**
 - Impact on the Object of the Choice/Act
 - Impact on the Agent of the Choice/Act
 - Choices/Acts Give Shape To Character and Character Determines Self
“Sow an Act, reap a Habit; Sow a Habit, Reap a Character; Sow a Character, Reap a Destiny”
 - It is Not Fate but Karmic choice that Determines the self’s Character and Disposition (*Sankaras*) that in Turn Determines Destiny (the Fruit of the Choices)
 - Macbeth’s Ruthless Ambition...
 - Rebirth is then Karmically determined and Can Have Ongoing Consequences (“Stored Up Karma”) – Karma Is Not Predestined in Absolute Terms – One Can Make New Choices and Thus Redirect Rebirth

Karma and The Realms of Existence – Buddha Fully Grasped at Nirvana

- The Wheel of Life - The Realms Similar to Heaven/Hell - Although Hell is more like Purgatory – One Can Be Released After Evil Karma Runs its Course – Bad Karma Never Has the Last Word – There is always the Possibility of Providing an Opportunity for Good Karma – The Good that We do or can do will outlive or offset the evil we have done – But It may take some time(in purgatory?)/lives
 - Rebirth: As Animal – Not Desirable – Why So?
 - Governed by Brute Instinct and Lack the Intelligence to Recognize/correct the problem
 - As Ghost – Undesirable
 - Unhappy Spirits with Strong Attachments - Governed By Insatiable Desire
 - As Titan
 - Lust For Power – At Mercy of Violent Impulses
 - As Human – Desirable – Why so?
 - Human Existence Offers Constant Reminders of the Vagaries of Life (e.g., Sickness) As Well As an Opportunity to Understand/seek a Solution – With Reason and Free Will Can Grasp Dharma and Implement Teachings
 - As gods – The Multistory Abode of the gods
 - With the exception of the “Pure Abodes” – upper 5 heavens where the non-returners abide - gods are also beings that are subject to karma and rebirth – although at each stage the lifespan increases and thus rebirth is postponed – as much as millions of years



HEAVEN

Indra's Palace
Gods

Devas

TITAN WORLD

Demons

Asuras

HUMAN WORLD

HUNGRY GHOSTS

Preta

ANIMAL WORLD

Beasts

HELL

HOT HELL

COLD HELL

GREAT JUDGEMENT
Good Angel Evil Angel

The Great Schism

- With the death of the Founder, and the absence of a Successor or Central Authority, Disputes and Division Seemed Inevitable
 - The Great Schism Between the “Elders” and The “Universal Assembly” caused by:
 - Issues over interpretation of status of Arahants
 - Over modification of Monastic Rule
 - Issues Arising With the Spread of Buddhism and Its Encounter with New Ideas/Customs – Persistent Tendency in Religious Movements of Division Between Traditionalists/Literalists and More open-ended experimental Approach
 - The Schism Left in its Wake Theravada (Elders – vada = raft – Some called it Hinayana – Little Raft – movement preferred Thera = elder) and Mahayana (maha = Great Raft/Vehicle - A composite of Schools that Responded Positively to New Ideas...The Universal path to Nirvana)

- Mahayana – The Great Vehicle (of salvation) – Founded 100 BCE- 100 CE
 - The New Emphasis?
 - Bodhisattva – A Life Dedicated Not to Ones Own Salvation But to Well-Being of the World – Leading Others to Nirvana – Selfless Love (Agape) – Compassion (*Karuna*) – Not an Atonement/Redemption concept But Serving as A “Good Friend” – To Pure Land – Providing the Grace Needed to Attain Enlightenment

“A Guide to the Voyager, a ship, a well, a spring, a bridge for the seeker of the other shore.”
 - Note the Striking parallels to Christianity 1) dates of origin 100 BCE-100CE 2) The ideal of self-sacrifice for the good of others 3) self-less love

Buddhology – Revising the Concept of Buddha

- A Revised Concept of Buddha and Buddhology
 - An Embellished Image – semi-divine being
- Because of His Compassion Buddha would not ‘disappear’ into the Nirvana state – Rather Remained ‘out there’ to continue His Compassionate Work - Gave Rise to Devotional Practices and seeking Intercession
- Gave Shape to a Buddhology that Envisions 3 Bodies in 3 Dimensions:
 - Earthly – Human Body
 - Blissful Realm (heaven-like) – heavenly body
 - One with Eternal Reality – Transcendent Body
- The Expectation of Return – Multitudes would be Enlightened - A Buddhist Form of a Second Coming



Expanding Scripture/Canon – A Second Wheel of Dharma

- The Issue of the Canon (Pali Canon) — Sutras – Created By way of the Guidance of Buddha (since Buddha did not disappear)
 - *Lotus Sutra* (200 CE) – among others – Offered a Radical Revision of Buddha mythology
 - Buddha had Been Enlightened From Eternity – Only appeared to Be Fully Human And His Early Teachings Were an Accommodation to a Following that Was Incapable of Fully Understanding at the Outset – Children and Burning Building Parable...With Mahayana – Dharma Fully Revealed – **A Second Turning of the Dharma Wheel** - The “Great Vehicle vs The “Inferior Vehicle”

Theravada

- Human beings are liberated by self-effort, without supernatural aid
- Key virtue: Wisdom - *panna*
- Attainment Requires Constant Commitment and is seen Primarily in Monks/Nuns
- Ideal: The Arahant who Remains in Nirvana
- Buddha Inspires
- Minimal Philosophical/Doctrinal Speculation
- Minimal Ritual
- Practice Centers on Meditation
- Popular in South/SE Asia

Mahayana

- Human Efforts are Supported by Divine Powers and The Grace they Bestow
- Key Virtue: Compassion - *karuna*
- More inclusive of Laity – Religious Life applies to Life in the World
- Ideal: the *bodhisattva*
- Buddha as a Savior
- Elaborate Speculation- “2nd Wheel of Dharma” – Esoteric Teachings of Buddha
- Emphasis on Ritual
- Includes Petitionary Prayers
- Popular in East Asia (Japan, Korea, etc.)

- *Bodhisattva* and Its Elaboration

- Given the Central Place of *Bodhisattva* Concept/Identity in Mahayana Buddhism, There Was inevitable Embellishment

- Stages in the Career of the Bodhisattva – From Thought to Enlightenment (*bodhicitta*)– Commitment to ‘save others’ on the path of Compassion
 - As One Advanced in the Path of Compassion – A Bodhisattva Was Perceived as Increasingly “Celestial” – Even Entering the Same Realm as the ‘Heavenly Buddha’ - One of the celestial Bodhisattvas – Avalokitesvara - “The Lord Who Looks Down” (in compassion) – Dali Lama a manifestation of Avalokitesvara –
 - A Second Celestial Bodhisattva – Manjusri – The One Who Cuts Through Ignorance
 - Pure Land Buddhism
 - The Buddha of the Western Region (Amida) – Inhabits the Paradise (Sukhavati - Pure Land) and having gained Enlightenment, promised to Assist Others to be Reborn in this Paradise if they Called upon (chanted) his Name in Faith – by-passing the rigor of the Eight Fold Path

- Evolved into Buddha Realms with Multiple Buddhas and Bodhisattvas – Doing the Work of Compassion in Other World Systems Perhaps not Known to Us

- A Significant Departure from Early Buddhism (or making the implicit explicit?) and Its Emphasis on “you are a light unto yourself” – Individual Responsibility for ‘salvation’



Avalokitesvara

Pure Land
Paradise/Sukhavati



Manjusri

Japan and Zen Buddhism

- Zen Buddhism
 - Enlightenment via Intuitive Awakening – Flashes of Insight (*Satori*) That Occur in the Midst of Mundane Activities When One is Calm and Relaxed (rather than engaged in study or intellectual pursuit –an anti-intellectualism)
 - A Super-Rational Awakening via Art, Poetry, Motor Cycle Maintenance, Running....One Discovers Who We Really are Rather Than Changing Into Something Different – We are no-selves, ever changing participants in the InterBeing of the Universe
 - A Branch of Zen Buddhism (Rinzai) uses koans as the stimulus for meditation – Blasting away the Rational Wall – Seeking to Attain the Experience Itself – Not Thinking About
 - “Sound of one hand clapping”

Satori

- “I lost the boundary of my physical body...I felt I was standing in the center of the cosmos. I saw people coming toward me, but all were the same man. All were myself...I had believed that I was created, but now I must change my opinion: I was never created; I was the cosmos. No individual existed.”

- Nichiren and the Pure Land School
 - Rejected the Dependence on Buddha Amida and the Pure Land Quest
 - Replaced by the Lotus Sutra and Its Emphasis on innate Buddha-Nature in all humans and the ability to attain enlightenment in this lifetime. Utilized chant namu myoho renge kyo that would foster Buddha Nature and in turn lead to "[Bodhisattvas of the Earth](#)"
 -
 - Connected to A Program of Social-Religious Reform On the National Level (emphasis on social activism rather than contemplative monasticism) – A Land of Peace and Security from Which the Spread of Nichiren Buddhism Could go Forth – The Creation of Soka Gakkai International (SGI)

Tibet and Tantras

- Tantric (or Vajrayana or Mantrayana) Buddhism - The Word Tantra is formed from a from two Sanskrit Terms that Means – “Extension” and Weaving – As in Weaving a Carpet the warp and woof intertwine – so also Secret Teachings accessed via rituals, charms, the body – that Speak to the Interrelatedness of All Things – Sutra = public teachings of Buddha while Tantra is the Secret Teachings
 - What is Most Distinct in the Tibetan Form of Tantric Buddhism is that it Enables One to reach Nirvana in a single lifetime
 - The Rapid Journey On the Path is Made Possible by Utilizing all the Energies Latent in the Human Make-up – to Include those of the Body – in the service of the Spiritual Quest – Passions take on a Positive Value, in particular sexual passion
 - Sights, Sounds, Motion are all put to work – in the Case of Tibetan Monks The Goal is To Merge with Deities that are Invoked in Chants and Thereby Appropriate their Powers and Virtues – Enlightenment Through Identity with Tantric Deities
 - Dali Lama (lama = tantric spiritual guide/ Dali = Ocean ‘of wisdom’) – a Bodhisattva in the line of Avalokitesvara – Incarnated for the Sake of Channeling Compassion – The Unifying Figure for the People of Tibet – 14th – Another Reincarnation?