So I started looking through ideas about life and death in the play, with a particular eye towards Buddhism, as there is that giant set piece in the third scene. I found a book, *Beyond the Threshold* that talks about an overview of Buddhism with regards to the afterlife, and I came across the concept of *dukkha*, a specific type of suffering that comes with the impermanence of life, and the passing of happiness. This concept may prove useful for the director in looking at motivation. While I can't yet prove that this takes place in some kind of Purgatory, I can say, especially in the third scene, that the Young Woman is certainly reacting to this suffering. She is constantly trying to fix things, like the cork underneath the desk, only to have them undone by the maid, creating a perpetual impermanence. Also, she is battling this suffering, by not accepting it and moving on. I may not have the entirety of the motivation, but there is definitely something here.

The text also talks about the different doctrines of Buddhism through the centuries, as well as the idea of *Nirvana*, and rebirth. This might be something to play with in regards to the death screen moments. Using this, we can see if the idea of reincarnation is to be applied, the type of rebirth that may be happening as the screen is placed in front of the Young Woman.

Off to find more stuff on this Purgatory idea....
CHAPTER SIX

Buddhism

From within the atmosphere of the myriad gods, rituals, and ideas that made up religion in India, what today are known collectively as Hinduism, a child who would change religious thought was born. Named Siddhartha Gautama, of the Shakya clan, he would eventually be known simply by the title of Buddha, founder of what was to become the most pervasive religion in Asia. Buddhism may be traced back to a single semi-historical/semi-legendary man, but centuries have brought it a life of its own as the religion and philosophy have evolved and adapted to an ever-expanding environment, its adherents bringing Buddhism across Asia and the world.

Though history is vague, scholars have made some conclusions about the man who would be the Buddha.¹ Most importantly, it is likely that Gautama was a real person and that he was born circa 563 BCE and lived for eighty years.² Much else is a mixture of history and legend. He was a prince, heir to become chief of his clan, whose father made every effort to raise his son in a sheltered atmosphere far from the troubles of the outside world. Astrologers had warned that the young prince would forsake his royal heritage after encountering four men, so his father did all he could to prevent it. Gautama’s curiosity brought him to explore beyond the walls of his home, however, and the shock of what he experienced put him on a journey toward enlightenment. Specifically, he encountered the four men prophesied; each of whom brought home the hitherto unknown reality of suffering through life and death. After seeing a terribly sick and crippled man, followed by an old and withered man, and finally the rotting body of a dead man, Gautama was struck by the fact that sickness, old age, and death
were the natural process of every person and that all the wealth and comfort of his father's home was useless in avoiding this. In his despair, he then encountered a fourth man, a wandering mendicant who inspired Gautama to follow certain ascetic methods of the Indian tradition in order to find escape.

This he did, leaving his wife and family behind. Depictions of the Buddha invariably include the long, pierced earlobes, which symbolize, among other things, the extravagances of wealth and his subsequent rejection thereof. His ascetic efforts led only to more suffering, however, and after years of wandering Gautama decided there must be a better means of discovering the truth and meaning of life. To this end, he adopted the concept of the Middle Way, between self-denial and self-indulgence. He sat under a type of fig tree, since called the Bodhi tree, and waited in deep meditation. After a great deal of time, enlightenment suddenly came to him and he realized the doctrines, dharma, that would become the foundation of Buddhism.

As his faculties for awareness grew ever broader, he was struck with three visions. First, memories of his past incarnations came to him, revealing that he had lived through the cycle of birth and death for eons. Second, he became acutely aware of the procession of humankind through the suffering of birth, old age, and eventually death. Finally, he achieved knowledge of the workings of the universe and understood that "all things, except for nirvana and space, arise and pass away, and that the existence of all things is dependent upon a number of causal conditions." Once realized, Gautama went forth as the Buddha, preaching his insights to all that would listen.

India had long been open to new religious ideas, new gods and goddesses, but Gautama, as the Buddha, was proposing something very different. He attained enlightenment not through some exterior forces, nor through devotion to some god or another, but through and within himself. For Gautama, the power of enlightenment was, as Walpola Rahula puts it, a wholly mortal affair. The realization of truth was not a divine revelation but came to the Buddha through his own efforts as he sat and thought.

Merv Fowler delineates three important distinctions between the Hinduism from which Gautama sprang and the early Buddhism that he espoused. First, ritual was rejected as an impairment to personal enlightenment, and with it was rejected the hierarchical caste system of karmic advancement. The Buddha completely rejected the notion that enlightenment should only be available to those who practiced rituals and read the Vedas, which were only available to the brahmin caste. Second, asceticism and excess were to be avoided in favor of the Middle Way, a path anyone could follow given the will to do so. Finally, while the Hindu pantheon was recognized, the existence of these gods had no bearing upon enlightenment and truth. Peter Harvey calls Buddhism "trans-

polytheistic," as it accepts many gods but is of real importance. The Buddha did an successive lifetimes, however, and adapt rituals.

As for the teachings of the Buddha and later writers, Gautama spread his message after his death. The first Buddhist Council around 483 BCE, with the purpose of purifying Buddhism, and organized them into three sets of baskets. This collection of rules, parables, and sermons Buddha were handed down from or They were finally committed to writing in the second BCE, by which time a certain amount of divergent schools of Buddhist thought.

Of the eighteen early schools of Buddhism "Doctrine of the Elders," remains to the fundamental texts of the Theravadins and, of pages-long, it is impossible to know ei
ture BCE, by which time a certain amount of thought is lost. Still, the Pali canon of historical Buddha, thus providing the the Buddha that is possible.

In order to understand the Buddhist understand how the Buddha conceived life. Gautama in the concept of the Four Noble Truths:

Bhikkhus [monks], it is through not knowing to Noble Truths that this long course of of Dukkha [suffering]: the noble truth the cessation of Dukkha; and the n Dukkha. But now, bhikkhus, that the is the craving for existence, destroys and there is no fresh becoming.

The long course of birth and death next (samsara), which is based upon will be discussed later. Dukkha is suf all things in this world. Rahula argu ing is misleading, as it may tend to
and that all the wealth and comfort of this. In his despair, he then encountered who inspired Gautama to follow a monastic lifestyle in order to find escape.

Deprivations of the Buddha inspired, which symbolize, among other things, the means of discovering the truth and the concept of the Middle Way, bear upon a type of fig tree, since meditation. After a great deal of time, and he realized the doctrines, dharma, Buddhism.

The broader, he was struck with three vibrations came to him, revealing that he and death for eons. Second, he became an ankhand through the suffering of birth, old age, knowledge of the workings of things, except for nirvana and space, arise of all things is dependent upon a number and, Gaṇḍakī went forth as the Buddha, 12

Religious ideas, new gods and goddesses, but something very different. He attained interior forces, nor through devotion to some in himself. For Gautama, the power of one puts it, a wholly mortal affair. The realization came to the Buddhas through his distinctions between the Hinduism of early Buddhism that he espoused. First, at to personal enlightenment, and with it system of karmic advancement. The Buddha: enlightenment should only be available to the Vedas, which were only available to sm and excess were to be avoided in favor of gods follow given the will to do so. Finally, envisioned, the existence of these gods had no truth. Peter Harvey calls Buddhism "trans-

polytheistic," as it accepts many gods but always looks beyond them for what is of real importance. The Buddha did accept the common Indian concept of successive lifetimes, however, and adapted that of karma to avoid the need for rituals.

As for the teachings of the Buddha himself, we must rely on the words of later writers. Gautama spread his message orally, and his followers did likewise after his death. The first Buddhist Council met soon after the Buddha's death, around 483 BCE, with the purpose of preserving the central doctrines of Buddhism, and organized them into three sections, known as the Tripitaka, or three baskets. This collection of rules, parables, anecdotes, and quotations from Gautama Buddha were handed down from one generation to the next for centuries. They were finally committed to writing in the Pali language during the first century BCE, by which time a certain amount of schism had created numerous different schools of Buddhist thought.

Of the eighteen early schools of Buddhism, only the Theravada tradition, the "Doctrine of the Elders," remains to this day. The Pali canon contains the fundamental texts of the Theravadins and, translated into English, runs thousands of pages long. It is impossible to know exactly what was said by the Buddha himself, and certainly, the vast majority of debate among the various early schools of thought is lost. Still, the Pali canon provides the earliest written source to the historical Buddha, thus providing the closest insight into the original ideas of the Buddha that is possible.

In order to understand the Buddhist conception of death, one must look first at how the Buddha conceived life. Gautama's philosophy of life is encapsulated in the concept of the Four Noble Truths, as described (ostensibly) in his own words:

Bhikkhus (monks), it is through not realizing, through not penetrating the Four Noble Truths that this long course of birth and death has been passed through and undergone by me as well as by you. What are these four? They are the noble truth of Dukkha (suffering); the noble truth of the origin of Dukkha; the noble truth of the cessation of Dukkha; and the noble truth of the way to the cessation of Dukkha. But now, bhikkhus, that these have been realized and penetrated, cut off is the craving for existence, destroyed is that which leads to renewed becoming, and there is no fresh becoming.

The long course of birth and death is the cycle of rebirth from one life to the next (samsara), which is based upon the Indian notion of reincarnation, and will be discussed later. Dukkha is suffering stemming from the impermanence of all things in this world. Rahula argues that simply translating dukkha as suffering is misleading, as it may tend to portray Buddhism as a pessimistic religion.
On the contrary, Buddhism should be seen as a realistic faith and a proper understanding of *dukkha* will help to make this clear. It is not that *dukkha* is simply suffering, though pure suffering plays a role in its meaning, but it is also the kind of suffering that comes with the passing of happiness, as when a good friend leaves for a long trip, and also includes the general suffering that is contingent on a failure to understand the true nature of reality as preached by the Buddha. Accordingly, material reality is transitory and reliance upon it and craving after it can only lead to suffering. The ultimate fate of every person is to grow old, become ill, and die. The process of birth, life, and death is thus fleeting and cause for suffering. The origin of *dukkha* can be found in the craving for and longing after the impermanent. By continuing to chase after the temporary pleasures of life, suffering will always exist. Attachment to this world will result in rebirth after death, remaining stuck in the cycle of *samsara* and suffering. Cessation of *dukkha* and escape from this torturous cycle can only come through enlightenment and the elimination of ignorance and desire. Finally, the way to enlightenment is outlined in the so-called Eightfold Path, which instructs followers to be vigilant in their conception of the world, and everything in it, as merely temporary and thus to behave accordingly. That is, by bearing in mind the impermanence of all things, including most importantly the individual self, the three evils of desire, anger, and ignorance will be eliminated.

Whereas Hinduism stressed the underlying unity between the self, *atman*, and the surrounding reality, Buddhism denied any such reality for either the self or its surroundings as these things remained wholly impermanent and ephemeral. In the words of P. T. Raju, “the I-am has no ontological status.” What each individual experiences as a continuing and consistent self is in reality an illusion obscuring the fact that there are only fleeting moments coming together in aggregates and passing away as quickly. The self that is now is already different from the self that was a moment ago. The continuity of selfhood is a fallacy perpetuated by ignorance. Raju further states that, “[r]ealizing this renders one immune to the fear of death since there is really nothing which death can attack.” In fact, death and birth are unimportant. The goal is nirvana and release from the continuum of rebirth.

Unlike the Hindu concept of *moksha*, in which the self escapes *samsara*, often uniting with the underlying order of the universe, nirvana takes on a wholly different meaning for Buddhists. A Sanskrit word meaning “to extinguish,” or “to blow out,” nirvana has commonly been misinterpreted to mean the extinction of the individual self, but this is inherently false, “a Buddhist heresy.” Since the Buddha claimed that there was no real, permanent self in the first place, there is no “self” to be extinguished. Nirvana instead represents the extinguishing of desire, anger, and ignorance. It is the state in which all attachments to the illusions of self and this world say of nirvana: “Calming of all conditioned extinction of ‘thirst,’ detachment, cessation state of mind in which no attachments whiteness of simply being without striving to becve.

Buddhism is often considered a mystical *nirvana*, and Gautama doubtless felt the experience as he sat meditating under the tree as a distinct class of human experience, as mentioned briefly in the context of other re ters. The psychologist William James famous such experiences: a noetic quality, subsequent feeling of passivity throughout. The noetic experience is in that the mystic gains an experience in the universe. These experiences have with God, Brahma, the absolute, or nirvana. Importantly, these experiences demonstrate boundaries we perceive between self and tinctions and that the ultimate reality doe in mind, it is likely that there is some em* moksha* and Buddhist nirvana, though the plain the experiences are diametrically opp ence of some union with an absolute is though a variety of religious frameworks these experiences.

The attainment of nirvana is no simple matter many years of intellectual seeking and i Buddhists, the Eightfold Path describes the so that eventual enlightenment will take eons. As Gautama’s awareness expar lives leading to his final incarnation as “Path to Purity” describes how every perso incarnations through meditative practice, abilities like clairvoyance. Through each individual cause the accretion of either a major difference between Hindus and B works.

Whereas in Vedic Hinduism ritual sacrifice good *karma*, Buddhism emphasizes the role and parcel with the Buddha’s rejection of
ments to the illusions of self and this world are utterly eliminated. The Buddha says of nirvana: "Calming of all conditioned things, giving up of all defilements, extinction of 'thirst,' detachment, cessation, Nibbana [Nirvana]." Nirvana is a state of mind in which no attachments whatsoever impinge upon the peacefulness of simply being without striving to become or to cease.

Buddhism is often considered a mystical tradition because of the emphasis on nirvana, and Gautama doubtless felt the expansion of awareness of the mystical experience as he sat meditating under the famous fig tree. Mystical experiences, as a distinct class of human experience, appear cross-culturally, and have been mentioned briefly in the context of other religious traditions in preceding chapters. The psychologist William James famously delineated four main features of such experiences: a noetic quality, subsequent ineffability, transiency, and the feeling of passivity throughout. The noetic quality is essentially the core of the experience in that the mystic gains an expanding awareness of his or her place in the universe. These experiences have variously been interpreted as a union with God, Brahma, the absolute, or nirvana, as in the present context. Most importantly, these experiences demonstrate to those who have them that the boundaries we perceive between self and other in daily life are arbitrary distinctions and that the ultimate reality does away with separateness. With this in mind, it is likely that there is some empirical connection between the Hindu moksha and Buddhist nirvana, though the theoretical frameworks used to explain the experiences are diametrically opposed. That is to say, the core experience of some union with an absolute is common to all mystical traditions, though a variety of religious frameworks have been elaborated to account for these experiences.

The attainment of nirvana is no simple task, having come to the Buddha after many years of intellectual seeking and meditation. According to Theravada Buddhists, the Eightfold Path describes the prescription for living appropriately so that eventual enlightenment will take place, but it is a process that could take eons. As Gautama's awareness expanded, he remembered countless past lives leading to his final incarnation as Shakyamuni. Indeed, Buddhaghosa's "Path to Purity" describes how every person has the capacity to recall previous incarnations through meditative practice, as well as a number of other psychic abilities like clairvoyance. Through each lifetime, the thoughts and actions of each individual cause the accretion of either good or bad karma. Again, there is a major difference between Hindus and Buddhists in their ideas of how karma works.

Whereas in Vedic Hinduism ritual sacrifice and prayer was enough to increase good karma, Buddhism emphasizes the role of intention over simple action. Part and parcel with the Buddha's rejection of Vedic authority, this move allows any
person the ability to improve his or her karma simply through earnest devotion to doing good, rather than relying upon the brahmin priest for salvation. Thus, by following the Eightfold Path and avoiding such unwholesome acts as killing, stealing, lying, or slander, good karma, or merit, may be amassed. Karma is important as it has a direct cause-and-effect relationship to each individual’s life state. Happiness is brought by good karma, while suffering stems from bad karma. Not only can suffering and misery in this life be attributed to bad deeds done within this lifetime, but the evils of past lives certainly have their impact as well. Just as Hindus believe accumulated karma will determine one’s subsequent incarnation, so Buddhists acknowledge the role in determining the fate one is to be reborn into, however different their definitions of karma itself and the mechanisms behind it.

For many, there seems to be an inherent contradiction in the ideas discussed thus far. Since there is no self, how can it be said that one will be reborn after death? Rāju expresses the problem thus:

The Buddhists, unlike the Vedantists, do not seem to have elaborated the idea of a subtle body, apparently because the idea of a durable subtle body conflicts with their doctrine of momentariness. But for logical reasons, the idea of a subtle body must be posited. Otherwise, we cannot understand what transmigrates. If it is only some karmic (“ethical”) potencies which transmigrate, then the being from which they are transmitted will have to be different from that to which they are transmitted. Thus, the former being need not worry about transmigration at all because it perishes absolutely after only a moment. Its perishing must be as good as emancipation, and salvation, consequently, ought to be spontaneous and instantaneous. But such could not have been the view of the Buddhist teachers. There is, therefore, a lacuna in their argument.¹⁶

In fact, no such lacuna appears, and one could hardly expect a philosophical system to remain effective with such a gaping hole. The problem seems to stem more from semantics than from a problem of logic. Just as the illusory self exists throughout one lifetime, so it carries over when reborn, Rāju argues that a person would need not worry about bad karma for there is no soul connecting this life with the next, but this misses the point that there is no soul in this life to begin with. Vījñāna, consciousness, is made up of ever-changing aggregates that manifest a semblance of continuity through the effect of memory. Just as I might have vague memories of being three years old, so I might also have memories of living a previous life. In either case, that which is being remembered and that which is doing the remembering are connected only through a series of cause-and-effect relationships, called karma. Certainly, vījñāna, as the locus of thought-moments, shares some affinity with the Hindu ātman or Christian soul, but Buddhists reject the reality of both. “Thenceforth I recognized karma as a concept transcendent to birth and death and all beings. I knew that the Buddha had taught the doctrine of the anatta, the non-existence of the self.”¹⁷

With this in mind, it is possible to see the individual. One’s actions lead to karmic effect linked with a series of thought-moments. These aggregates make one karma that requires resolution, there will and the world is achi

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gether and the state of nirvana is achieved.

Rebirth itself can take many forms. Good or bad karma is reflected in the basic six modes of existence, divided at least in the present realm of reality. More and more detailed states, but for the standing, it is sufficient to discuss primal
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Because of their wicked conduct, their u break up of the body, after death... go hell... Owing to their conduct in agre
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None of these states is permanent, results in either rebirth or nirvana. This slim, though, as the human mode of be
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With this in mind, it is possible to speak of rebirth as related to karma and the individual. One's actions lead to karmic consequences along a linear chain of cause-and-effect linked with a series of ever-changing aggregates and thought-moments. These aggregates make up the illusory self. As long as there is karma that requires resolution, there will continue to be aggregates. Once detach-ment from the material world is achieved, the aggregates cease to come together and the state of nirvana is achieved.

Rebirth itself can take many forms, depending upon the karma involved. Good or bad karma is reflected in the birth-state of each individual. There are basically six modes of existence, divided into three good and three bad modes, at least in the present realm of reality. These modes are further divided into more detailed states, but for the sake of simplicity and ease of understanding, it is sufficient to discuss primarily these six. The higher modes of being consist of humans, lower gods (asuras), and higher gods (devas). The lower modes are animals, hungry ghosts (preta), and hell-beings (narakas). On this, the Buddha said:

Because of their wicked conduct, their unjust conduct . . . some beings with the break up of the body, after death . . . go the bad way, come to places of pain, to hell . . . Owing to their conduct in agreement with the teaching, their consider-ate conduct, some beings with the break up of the body, after death, go the good by, come to the heavenly world.

None of these states is permanent, however. Every life comes to an end and results in either rebirth or nirvana. The chances of avoiding rebirth are very slim, though, as the human mode of being is the only one that may lead to nirvana. Both the higher and lower beings remain attached to material things. The higher gods are either distracted by the excessive lavishness of heaven, or overly wrapped up in philosophical thoughts. The lower beings are stuck in the sensual world, remaining either too dull to achieve enlightenment or forced to purge themselves of tremendous evils. While Gautama urged his followers to focus upon following the right path in this world, there are a great many descriptions of the heavenly and hellish realms in the early Buddhist literature.
Ashvaghosha’s poem, “Nanda the Fair,” provides great detail into one of the higher heavens, that of the god Indra. The poem tells the story of the monk Nanda and how he was carried to the higher realm to witness its splendors and learn a special lesson. Here, lush trees, beautiful flowers, and wondrous fragrances fill the landscape. Musical instruments grow like flowers, and the flowers and trees are themselves made of precious jewels. All manner of beautiful birds flit about happily singing. But the real prizes are the celestial nymphs. “They are always in the prime of their youth, and libidinous enjoyment is their only concern.” The warning is given, however, that even these are impermanent lives and how much worse suffering would be to lose paradise than it is to lose life now. Thus, a sensual heaven exists but it is to be rejected just as the material reality of here and now should be rejected.

Another tale describes the otherworldly journeys of King Nimi. In addition to visions of the devaloka, King Nimi actually met with Indra and sat with the gods. He also visited a great number of other heavenly realms, and was taken on a tour of the hells as well. In the lower regions, he witnessed countless tortures of the most horrible kind. He watched as sinners were tossed onto heaps of burning ash. Others had their throats cut before being hurled into boiling water. Starving sinners were forced to sate themselves on urine and feces while the thirsty drank pus and blood. Gossipers and liars were dragged about by hooks in their tongues. The Anguttara Nikaya describes how the evil person after death is seized by hellish beings and brought before the Hindu god, Yama, who then reviews his or her evil deeds and directs them to the appropriate hell for purification. Accumulated karma determines the actual fate, and Yama’s presence here seems more as an intermediary and a carry-over from Hinduism, than anything else. In fact, Bimala Charan Law notes that the descriptions of hell-states found in Buddhism and Hinduism are essentially the same. Where they differ is in the mechanism behind the process.

Ray Billington argues that the lowest modes of being should be considered as merely states of mind rather than actual modes of existence. He further suggests that the notion of animals being reborn as humans is preposterous as no creature lacking the freedom to choose could build up good karma. Though Billington draws support from later thinkers, both assertions are poorly founded, based upon highly biased suppositions. For one thing, there is no reason to consider negative modes of existence as mental states while still considering the higher heavenly states and nirvana as somehow real. Certainly, the Pali Buddhist texts follow the Hindu tradition of regarding them as real, inasmuch as Buddhists can regard anything as real. To assume that animals cannot accrue karma can only be based upon Western notions of human superiority. Additionally, some states of being simply act as means to engender the building up of any more, whether good or evil. In any case, the individual’s rebirth will depend upon the new state is actually directly caused by the previous acts of the individual. Performing good deeds leads to a better rebirth, and evil deeds lead to a hellish existence in a subsequent life. The rewards and punishments for good and evil acts are described in detail in the list of past births and present punishments. Those who oppress others, those who hold power and wealth, are shown to earn money even in great effort. The ta of similar fates. The closer one stays to the the Buddha, the better life one is to be born in, however, and to have no faith in what the life in hell is to bring.

Another common form of punishment involves the ghost. Individuals whose sins may not have been harnessed by the wheel of karma brought about by the Buddhist doctrine. The Pāṇḍavaśuddhi introduces a number of tales in which the ghost of a person who had been unjustly accused, is sent to purgation. The ghost takes on a form that is sufficiently horrible to scare the hearers and make them believe in the existence of such ghosts. The ghost of his or her former teacher, the better life is to be born in, and to have faith in what the Buddha says. The situation of hungry ghosts is prob the Pāṇḍavaśuddhi introduce the possibility of being in the world to one in the past. There is the story, for instance, of a man who was turned into a ghost because of his luxurious hair. Out of jealousy, some woman from heaven’s palace filled with fire, and therefore could not be brought to the land of the dead. The passing ship found her castle, the sailors could not accept clothing from them, and the ghost donor, the clothing to a monk, the monk...
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or evil. Performing good deeds leads to a better life, while evil ones lead invari-
ably to a hellish existence in a subsequent life. The Pali texts are full of exam-
les of such just rewards or punishments. People who give gifts of food will live
long and healthy lives; those who offer houses gain palaces full of wealth; those
who dig wells for the public will never need water; those who offer medicine are
forever free from disease. And so the list goes. And the same is true of sinners
and their punishments. Those who oppress others by confining them suffer
madness; those who assault and batter, become lepers; those who steal cannot
earn money even with great effort. The tale of King Nimi describes a number of
similar fates. The closer one stays to the Eightfold Path and the doctrines of
the Buddha, the better life one is to be born into. To oppose these doctrines,
however, and to have no faith in what the Buddha is alleged to have said, leads
to hell.

Another common form of punishment comes from being reborn as a hungry
ghost. Individuals whose sins may not have been grave enough to warrant hell,
but who continue to harbor base attachments to the material world may be re-
born as ghostly beings continually starved but never able to satiate themselves.
The Petaavatthu details a number of tales involving these tortured spirits. A va-
riety of forms are available in which the hungry ghosts might appear, some with-
ered and emaciated, others bleeding and full of pus. As a whole, these spirits
take on a form that is sufficiently horrible to reflect their hell-like state, and like
other forms of purgation, such existence often teaches the individual the error
of his or her ways and leads to a better life when that one ends.

The situation of hungry ghosts is problematic, however, in that the stories of
the Petaavatthu introduce the possibility of transferring merit from a person liv-
ing in the human world to one in the petaloka, the world of these hungry spir-
its. There is the story, for instance, of a woman of Benares who was known for
her luxurious hair. Out of jealousy, some local women had some special drugs
mixed into her shampoo that caused her hair to fall out from the roots. This
woman from Benares was often generous and kind, but once fell victim to the
temptation to steal some particularly fine raiment. After she died, she was then
reborn in a huge palace with her flowing locks restored. The problem was, she
had no clothing and therefore could not leave the ghostly palace. When a
passing ship found her castle, the sailors offered to help. She told them that she
could not accept clothing from them, being a ghost, but that if they were to
donate the clothing to a monk, the merit might be transferred to herself. They
carried out her instructions and she soon emerged “with a sweet smile on her face, draped in the finest garments.”

That every person is uniquely responsible for his or her own karma and fate is seen as a cornerstone of Buddhist philosophy. The transfer of merit seems originally to have been rejected as a reflection of the brahminic control of karma in the traditional Indian system. As ritual experts, the brahmin regularly received offerings that would in turn bring favor upon those who gave them, in effect making the brahmin the distributors of good karma. The Theravadin monks apparently fell into the same situation and eventually filled this role, despite the philosophical rejection of it. This apparent contradiction was one of many that emerged within Buddhist thought in the centuries after the Buddha’s death. As stated earlier, the Theravada school was one of eighteen early Buddhist schools of thought. As the centuries ticked by, the differences between these schools widened until a second Buddhist Council was convened in 383 BCE to deal with the conflicts. The teachings of Gautama were again discussed, with divergent utterances harmonized. The early view taught that since the Buddha’s enlightenment had been the instantaneous source of his wisdom, nothing new could be added and there could thus be no development in thought. This traditional way of thinking came into conflict with a new view that conceived the Buddha as a semidivine being capable of updating his ideas through the inspiration of others. Somewhere between god and man, the Buddha was believed to have the power to transmit enlightenment to humans, of which Gautama was but one of many. It became clear at this council that the orthodox traditions of the Theravadin were in a minority as a new form of Buddhism had risen in popularity. Mahayana, or Greater Vehicle, remains the more popular form of Buddhism today, encompassing a great number of further subdivided schools. Theravada was pejoratively labeled Hinayana, or Lesser Vehicle, by this new faction.

The third Buddhist Council of 250 BCE saw the Pali canon finally written down. Until this point, oral history had been passed from one generation to another, and it is easy to imagine how more than two hundred years of oral history might have led to variance of understanding. In addition, an infusion of Hindu ideas had crept back into Buddhism in forms such as the transfer of merit. By this point, Mahayana had begun to solidify as an alternative within the larger spectrum of Buddhism.

H. Wolfgang Schumann effectively delineates eight key differences between the orthodox Theravadin and the Mahayana traditions. Mahayana holds a more idealized view of the human condition, emphasizing that not only is the self an illusion but all suffering is also an illusion. Mahayana posits an idea similar to the Hindu notion of an underlying unity in all things, the underlying connectedness of all things. Whereas the like any other, who achieved enlightenment believes the Buddha to have been a projective urges followers to take the example shown b individually, whereas Mahayana holds that simply through devotion. Mahayana te and karma is possible, though it was shown t into later Theravadin thought as well. The goal is individual enlightenment, the M the state of bodhisattva, where the enlighten same state before going on to nirvana. The Thera the Theravada school believes it to be a reler, while the Mahayana tradition beli derlying interconnectedness of all things a separable within this life. Finally, Mah help the world, whereas Theravada aims t treat and escape the world.

These differences mark the Mahayana Buddhism appealing directly to the aver monk, though it probably arose original monks. Also, it incorporates several eleme lore, and religion, which no doubt made ing to a broader audience as well. Despite Mahayana still remains within the context upon the teachings of the Buddha and m:

The analogy of the wheel is often used to two, the hub of the wheel being Theravac views are inevitably derived from orthodox these beliefs different and extended inter

Mahayana had an early advantage ove appeal to the masses. The Doctrine of ti ing for lay people to follow. The avera ing the Eightfold Path, and thus incaps the most extraordinary cases. Indeed, o succeed in this goal with a lifetime dev once again placing liberation in the h that aspect of brahminism originally reje eons it might take a Theravadin to a
emerged “with a sweet smile on her face” for his or her own karma and fate. The transfer of merit seems to be an aspect of the deification of the Buddha as ritual experts, the brahmin regularly preyed upon those who gave them, in return for good karma. The Theravadin school eventually filled this role, despite its apparent contradiction was one of the most important theologies in the centuries after the Buddha’s death. One of the earlier schools was one of the schools in the 1123ce, when the Council was convened in 383 BC, the chins of Gautama were again discussed. The early view taught that since the Buddha, as the infinite source of his wisdom, were thus to be no development in the world came into conflict with a view of divinity being capable of updating his ideas anew and the Buddha, enlightenment to humans, of course. It became clear at this council that the Theravada were a minority as a new form of Buddhism, or Greater Vehicle, remains the more compassionate a great number of the teachings of the Buddha and many of the fundamental doctrines.

The analogy of the wheel is often used to describe the relationship between the two, the hub of the wheel being Theravada and the spokes Mahayana. Core beliefs are inevitably derived from orthodox doctrines, but Mahayana has given these beliefs different and extended interpretations. Mahayana had an early advantage over the Theravada tradition in its greater appeal to the masses. The Doctrine of the Elders was considered too constricting for lay people to follow. The average person is incapable of strictly following the Eightfold Path, and thus incapable of entering into nirvana, except in the most extraordinary cases. Indeed, only Theravadin monks could normally succeed in this goal with a lifetime devoted to practicing the Eightfold Path, once again placing liberation in the hands of the clergy in a way similar to that aspect of brahminism originally rejected by the Buddha. Impatient with the pace it might take a Theravadin to achieve a birth favorable to achieving
nirvana, Mahayana provides the means by which anyone can achieve awakening in this lifetime. Carl Becker argues that the apparent self-centered nature of Theravadin meditation can be "ironically" contrasted with Gautama's anatta theory of no-self. This interpretation of Theravada simplistically states a perceived inner contradiction in that Theravada denies the existence of a self yet urges its adherents to meditate without a care for any other person. In reaction to this, the Mahayana tradition posited that the Buddha, and subsequent bodhisattvas, had achieved enlightenment but refrained from entering completely into nirvana. Instead, these individuals existed in some other form of existence in order to wait for every other being to achieve enlightenment, and in fact help them to achieve that end.

The beginnings of such ideas can be traced to the Buddha's death and his subsequent veneration. There is a link between the growing devotion to the bodhisattvas and the bhakti cults that were emerging in India in the second century BCE. Certainly, both of these phenomena grew out of the increasing tendency for people to turn to individual worship of chosen deities, rather than rely heavily on the brahmin, or Theravadin monk as the case may be, as intermediary between humans and the ultimate goal of personal liberation from samsara. After the Buddha's death, his remains were burned according to Hindu custom and his bones were then passed on amongst monks as sacred relics. Many of these relics were buried in mounds called stupas, which became sites of veneration. Buddhist temples were often later erected at these locations. Alongside the monks, many lay people came to visit these sites to make offerings to the memory of the Buddha. With a genuine reverence was combined the hope that such veneration would lead to the acquisition of good karma. Already at this early stage, many assumed that the Buddha was able to bear witness to their entreaties from some other realm.

By the first century CE, Mahayana scriptures, which emphasized universal salvation, were being added to the Buddhist canon. Buddhism had entered China at this point and was influenced by the indigenous ideas it encountered. One of the best known of these new texts is the Saddharma-pundarikasutra, or the Lotus Sutra. This is the first written source that describes the Buddha as a universal savior. These texts, as a whole, outline the methods by which every person might achieve transcendent nirvana—no longer a higher quest for enlightenment in terms of endeavoring to the means to correct living, but simply the escape from the general suffering of daily life. Schumann describes three means of salvation for the common person as the Bodhisattva Way, the Way of Faith, and the Cultic Way.

The Bodhisattva Way relies heavily upon the compassion of the bodhisattvas, those who have attained enlightenment but have delayed nirvana in order to help save the masses. By their very passion, it is thought that because of their suffering, they are incapable of refusing from a bodhisattva, all that one must do is ever, the supplicant agrees to commit to passed by the bodhisattvas themselves. In the moral pact with the bodhisattvas. On the c of the supplicant, but on the other, this in passion to all he or she may be across in seems at first to be quite a simple path, the too lofty for many of the weaker willed. "To sow in its passive aspect, is in its active po erance which Buddhism offers."

The Way of Faith offers a more comfort maintaining a devout faith in Gautama, as a hood, will lead to salvation. Of the many sc arisen, Pure Land Buddhism is that most re: This particular school predominates the Bu sused in more detail in the next chapter. through devotion to a particular Buddha, variously named Amitabha, Amitayus, or heavenly Pure Land. These Pure Land s are described previously in that they represent but they are conceived of as much more fe reversal of the notion that humankind is increasing emphasis on the supernatural. H ined, the ultimate goal remains, at least n and achieving nirvana. Still, it is not diffic ifed with reaching such a paradise, espec ical notion of nirvana, not to mention the that every individual experiences in cons xion, existence in some form of concrete does the relatively esoteric idea of nirvanc

Straying further afield from the inti Cultic Way provides a means to nirvana The Lotus Sutra describes how the wot Buddha, as well as offerings of flowers a ing at the temples are a ritualized path ticed by even the most noncommittal I the actions much more so than on the
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order to help save the masses. By their very nature, the bodhisattvas define com-
passion. It is thought that because of their desire to see every person released
from suffering, they are incapable of refusing any request for help. To attain help
from a bodhisattva, all that one must do is ask. In exchange for this help, how-
ever, the supplicant agrees to commit to the strict morals of compassion es-
poused by the bodhisattvas themselves. In doing so, an individual comes into a
moral pact with the bodhisattvas. On the one hand, they will ensure the safety
of the supplicant, but on the other, this individual must also show equal com-
passion to all he or she may come across in life. So, while the Bodhisattva Way
seems at first to be quite a simple path, the commitment required of it remains
too lofty for many of the weaker willed. “The Bodhisattva Way being easy to fol-
low in its passive aspect, is in its active portion the most difficult way to deliver-
erance which Buddhism offers.”

The Way of Faith offers a more comfortable route to bliss. It is thought that
maintaining a devout faith in Gautama, and others who have attained Buddh-
hood, will lead to salvation. Of the many schools of Mahayana thought that have
arisen, Pure Land Buddhism is that most readily associated with the Way of Faith.
This particular school predominates the Buddhism of the Far East, and will be
discussed in more detail in the next chapter. For now, it is sufficient to explain that
through devotion to a particular Buddha, the most common of which is a figure
variously named Amitabha, Amitayus, or Amida, a person might be reborn in a
heavenly Pure Land. These Pure Lands are similar in many respects to the devakula
described previously in that they represent sensual realms of beauteous paradise,
but they are conceived of as much more fortuitous and closer to nirvana. This is a
reversal of the notion that humankind is closest to achieving nirvana, placing
increasing emphasis on the supernatural. However these paradises might be imagi-
nated, the ultimate goal remains, at least nominally, that of transcending even that
and achieving nirvana. Still, it is not difficult to see how the masses might be satis-
fied with reaching such a paradise, especially given the density of the philoso-
phical notion of nirvana, not to mention the common sense connection to one's self
that every individual experiences in conscious life. Certainly, to the common
person, existence in some form of concrete paradise holds a far greater appeal than
does the relatively esoteric idea of nirvana.

Straying further afield from the intentions of older forms of Buddhism, the
Cultic Way provides a means to nirvana for even the most superficial Buddhist.
The Lotus Sutra describes how the worship of relics, stupas, and images of the
Buddha, as well as offerings of flowers and incense, combined with music mak-
ing at the temples are a ritualized path to nirvana. Such rituals are easily prac-
ticed by even the most noncommittal Buddhist, many placing the emphasis on
the actions much more so than on the intention.
In the Mahayana tradition, two Buddhist scholars stand out as being of primary importance to the evolution and establishment of key ideas. They are Nagarjuna and Vasubhandu, and the ideas of each are important to Buddhist notions of life and death.

Nagarjuna is the earlier of the two, though there is, as is so often the case, debate over when he actually lived. Recent scholarship conventionally dates Nagarjuna to between 150 and 250 CE, placing him firmly during the revolutionary period when the Mahayana texts came into existence and Buddhism most radically changed upon entering China. While at the forefront of Mahayana thought, Nagarjuna made efforts to harmonize the new scriptures with the traditional ones to keep the new doctrines closely aligned to the original teachings of Gautama. He is most famous for blurring the line between samsara and nirvana, arguing that there was in fact no distinction between the two at all. This school of Mahayana Buddhism became known as Madhyamika, or the School of the Middle Way, where the Middle Way eliminates the need for binary opposites. The following passages from the Madhyamika Karika are attributed to Nagarjuna:

17. It is not maintained that "the Venerable One exists after death" nor is it maintained "he does not exist" or "both or neither."

18. It is not maintained that "the Venerable One exists while remaining in the world" nor is it maintained that "he does not exist or both or neither." [sic]

While both the Theravadin and Mahayana traditions accept the doctrine of no-self, this idea becomes increasingly obscured in the Mahayana popular tradition, and Nagarjuna's goal was to maintain a conservative stance and keep any notion of dualism out of the picture. There is no belief in a self that is extinguished in nirvana, although Western scholars have often mistakenly picked that up as the core teaching of Buddhism. Similarly, there is not an underlying unity hidden by other states of existence. Though paradoxical, according to Nagarjuna, both life and death, samsara and nirvana, are the same and different at once. Further expressing this paradoxical reality, Nagarjuna states:

30. It is not established that I existed in the past, because this one is not the very same one who existed in previous lives.

31. It is not established that I did not exist in the past, because this one is not different from the one who existed in previous lives.

By attacking the dichotomy of opposites, Nagarjuna wished to reveal the relativity of reality. Three levels of truth are distinguished. The first two levels form the bivalence of untruth and relative truth. Within the context of ignorance, certain things seem to be either true or false, however, is that of ultimate truth, which is of rational discourse. Nirvana and experiencing the ultimate truth. It is as if there is a fantasy, not recognizing reality for what it is, doing and effects are all the same. Simply reality is in fact a misperception, and theurreality, which has considerable in death. Certainly, this line of argument is logical, requiring direct experience or faith to have been as concerned with the effe simply breaks down common modes thought of as locked in the cyclic, the negation of opposites and speculation and thus begins the work.

The second great father of Mahayana, the help of his brother Asanga, converted sufficiently impressed with the new ideas. While dates are debated, but a fair estimate would have been around 500 CE. His philosophy took Nagarjuna's train of thought, effective truth as wholly inexact, and falsity in this realm were supposed that the essential element in sensuousness, which is conscious, is necessary between relative truth and untruth. Yogacara is another Buddhist school, and sometimes also School, or Vijnanavada. Consciousness of these thoughts are illusory, based upon sensuousness turns upon itself and conceives, cogito ergo sum. The perceived sensuousness itself is real. It must be point-indicated a self in any sense, but simply exists. The mystical experience of enlightenment that there is both consciousness and non-consciousness.

The notion of alaya-vijnana or store explains the transmigration of a person describes the alaya-vijnana underlying the ocean underlies a wave. In this at rises and falls, always drawing from the...
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though there is, as is so often the case, a certain conventionality dates the
place him firmly during the revolu-
tions of existence and Buddhism.

While at the forefront of Mahayana thought, scholars harmonize the new scriptures with
texts closely aligned to the original.

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natural level of ignorance, certain things seem to be either true or false. The third category of truth,

rarely, is that of ultimate truth, which defies description, being beyond the

ale of rational discourse. Nirvana and enlightenment are the only means of ex-

periencing the ultimate truth. It is as if those who are unenlightened are living in a

on, not recognizing reality for what it is. "Defilements, karmas, bod-
ly entities, doers and effects are all similar to the nature of an imaginary city in

sky, a mirage and a dream." 38 Simply put, all that one perceives as normal

reality is in fact a misperception, and the only way to lift the veil is through

nirvana, which obviously has considerable influence on related concepts of life and
death. Certainly, this line of argument is much more esoteric than rationally

logical, requiring direct experience or faith to accept, but Nagarjuna seems not to

have been as concerned with the effectiveness of the argument as much as simply

breaking down common modes of thought, for it is these modes of thought that keep one locked in the cycle of

life, death, and rebirth. In this relativistic view of truth and the negation of opposing concepts, the door is open for

further speculation and thus begins the wide history of Mahayanist thought.

The second great master of Mahayana Buddhism is Vasubhandu, who, with
the help of his brother Asanga, converted to Mahayana philosophy after being
sufficiently impressed with the new ideas put forward in the texts. Again, his
dates are debated, but a fair estimate would place him around 316 and 396 CE. 39

His philosophy took Nagarjuna's train of thought one step further. Accepting
first that absolute truth was wholly ineffable, and second that our concepts of

truth and falsity in this realm were subjective and relative, Vasubhandu sur-
nised that the essential element in reality was consciousness, vijnana. Con-
sciousness, which thinks, is necessary in order to make the distinctions be-

tween relative truth and untruth. Yogacara, as the school of Vasubhandu and his
brother is known, is sometimes also known as the "Consciousness-Only
School," or Vijnanavada. Consciousness is that which conceives thoughts. Most
of these thoughts are illusory, based upon ignorance, especially when the con-
sciousness turns upon itself and conceives of a self, as in Descartes's famous axiom, cogito ergo sum. The perceived self is, of course, an illusion, but the con-
sciousness itself is real. It must be pointed out that consciousness here does not
indicate a self in any sense, but simply that a thought processor of some kind ex-

ists. The mystical experience of enlightenment provides the empirical evidence

that there is both consciousness and no-self at once.

The notion of alaya-vijnana, or store-house consciousness, was introduced to
explain the transmigration of a person from one life to the next. R. C. Amore
describes the alaya-vijnana underlying regular consciousness in the same way as
the ocean underlies a wave. 40 In this analogy, each lifetime is but one wave that
rises and falls, always drawing from the same store-house. This represents an
The shamans of Tibet became incorporated into the Buddhist framework as mediumistic mouthpieces of both the gods and the dead. Mediums were incorporated into monasteries and would become possessed with either some minor god or goddess or the spirit of a dead person. Depending upon the nature of the entity, the words might be considered prophetic or not. The mediums in these cases are often not in control of the communications and are considered possessed by the entities involved. This is an important counterpoint to the Theravada belief that possession of any kind, despite its appearance in Theravada cultures, is to be avoided as it disrupts the inner calm regularly sought. Alongside the passive mediums, there are also shamanic sorcerers who wield magical powers over the dead, as well as possessing a number of other powers such as the ability to summon hail and rain. While the mediums can convey messages from beings in other realms, it is these necromancers who must actually deal with them on their own planes. These shamans have the ability to leave their bodies at will and travel to the worlds of spirits or demons and, when the entities are malignant, negotiate amicable terms or battle them psychophysically. Alexandra David-Neel, during her ten years with the hermit monks, or lamas, of Tibet, encountered numerous reports of such voyages, as well as a great variety of other magical and paranormal phenomena. In addition to psychic battles, she found these shamans also conducted exorcisms, had the power to kill with a word, and routinely facilitated the journeys of the spirits of the deceased to the next world.

This “next-world” in Tibetan Buddhism is an in-between state after death but before rebirth. This state is called bardo, and it is the unique contribution of Tibetan Buddhism found in the famous Tibetan Book of the Dead. The title of this text (Bardo Thos-Grol) is actually better translated as The Great Book of Natural Liberation Through Understanding in the Between, but the former title has stuck in the Western mind. The purpose of this great text, written by the “great adept’s adept,” Padma Sambhava around the eighth century CE, is to help guide the dying and the dead through the period of being in-between. A combination of maintaining the right frame of mind and knowing how to treat various deities and saints is essential. The readings in the text are aimed not only at providing instructions for the subsequent journey, but also at maintaining a clear and positive mental state upon entering death. The text is to be read to the dead person’s body in the belief that the consciousness will gain from such reading while it remains near the body, preparing to depart for the bardo state. The fourteenth Dalai Lama points out that, “the attitude just before death is very important; for, if even a moderately developed practitioner is disturbed at that time, manifest desire or hatred will be generated.” Obviously, desire and
hatred are to be avoided at all costs as two of the three karmic roots of all suffering.

The opportunities to purge such evils from one’s consciousness extend past the moment of death, however, and for those who have the benefit of the Book of the Dead, the in-between state might be used to consciously influence the rebirth state. Where the Bon shamans saw multiple spirits departing from the body, Tibetan Buddhism describes the consciousness (vijñana, or man-she in Tibetan) as that which leaves the body at death. Just as the Bon shamans would also guard against the haunting presence of these spirits, so too the Tibetan Buddhists must guard against evil spirits invading the dead body and causing it to rise from the dead as a kind of zombie or revenant. While karma is still seen as the final arbiter of rebirth, the “evolutionary momentum” is seen as fluid in the bardo, thereby creating an atmosphere lax enough to leave room for last minute change. Thus, a continuing consciousness from one life to the next exists in Tibetan Buddhism, perhaps reflecting the influences of both the native Bon religion and Hindu ideas.

During the bardo state, the individual adopts a spiritual body, in effect an ethereal double similar to that described in ancient Egypt. Without guidance, the individual might not realize that he or she is dead and will wander in a ghostly form until the next birth. The intermediary state may last for as long as forty-nine days after which time rebirth is thought to be certain. Still, rebirth could take any number of forms as described in the Pali canon.

An interesting feature of the bardo state is the perception of nirvana as a kind of light. The natural tendency is to shy away from the awesome power of it and only those who have mastered the appropriate methods will be able to overcome this fear. Becker sees similarities between this description and that of modern near-death experiences involving a tunnel and a being of light.

Because Tibetan Buddhism suggests the continuation of consciousness between life and rebirth, their notion of rebirth is considerably more like the reincarnation of Hinduism than any other major form of Buddhism, though it still retained the quintessential Buddhist denial of the self. This fact is exemplified in the spiritual head of Tibetan Buddhism, the Dalai Lama, a title given to the reputed incarnation of Chenrezig, the Bodhisattva of Compassion and patron of Tibet. The first Dalai Lama was discovered in the sixteenth century CE when a boy began to make claims that he was the reincarnation of the great Tibetan renaissance leader, Gendun Druppa. From the moment he could speak, the child claimed memories of the recently dead icon, who had himself been considered by many to be the embodiment of the Bodhisattva of Compassion. The claims were thoroughly tested until it was determined that the uncanny memories that the boy had of this other life could

be verified and that this child possessed knowledge he was in fact who he claimed to be. Noted Druppa, yet another boy was found who claimed to be a subsequent incarnation. It was possible to recall all of one’s previous lives and continue living from one lifetime to the next.

And so a clear evolution of thought can be seen in India and neighboring countries. Buddhism, in the next chapter as Buddhism entreats Mahayana Buddhism, in the next chapter as Buddhism encounters Mahayana to Tibetan Buddhism, the core dharma have remained unchanged. The abilites well-versed in the sacred texts of Bihing has replaced the strict codes of conduct today. Theravada Buddhism is present in Sri Lanka, as well as in southern Asia, namely Mahayana is more popular in Nepal. And Tibetan Buddhism, in addition to having a great deal of interest in the West.

No references.
be verified and that this child possessed knowledge that he could not have unless he were in fact who he claimed to be. After the death of this newly incarnated Druppa, yet another boy was found who exhibited similar capabilities and claimed to be a subsequent incarnation. While Gautama had claimed that it was possible to recall all of one's previous births, there is no clearer example of a continued being living from one life to the next than the Dalai Lama.

And so, a clear evolution of thought can be drawn out in the history of Buddhism in India and neighboring countries. Further developments will be examined in the next chapter as Buddhism encounters the religious ideas of China. While there has been some tendency toward laicization, especially in many forms of Mahayana Buddhism, in the transformation from Theravada through Mahayana to Tibetan Buddhism, the core teachings attributed to Gautama Buddha have remained unchanged. The ability of individuals, and not necessarily those well-versed in the sacred texts of Buddhism, to achieve personal awakening has replaced the strict codes of conduct espoused by the early Theravadin monks. Today, Theravada Buddhism is predominant in southern India and Sri Lanka, as well as in southern Asia, namely Thailand, Burma, Laos, and Cambodia. Mahayana is more popular in Nepal, China, Vietnam, Korea, and Japan. And Tibetan Buddhism, in addition to being the religion of Tibet, also attracts a great deal of interest in the West from those interested in more esoteric ideas.

Notes

1. For a good, basic introduction to the life of the Buddha, see Michael Pye, The Buddha (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1979).

2. Though these dates have been widely accepted, there remains dispute, leaving any conclusion far from certain. See R. F. Gombrich, "Dating the Buddha: A Red Herr ing Revealed," in The Dating of the Historical Buddha Part 2, ed. H. Bechert (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), pp. 237–259.


10. Raju, in Holck, Death and Eastern Thought, p. 10.