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| **Chinese and Japanese Buddhism: Differences** |
| ***Chinese Buddhism*** | ***Japanese Buddhism*** |
| **Early History****(beginning ca. 50 CE)** | **Early history****(beginning ca. 538 CE)** |
| ▪ China's *two strands of ideology*: (1) Confucianism (social philosophy) and (2) Daoism (religio-philosophical system) ▪ *Problems faced in Buddhism’s transmission* to China: (1) monasticism, (2) the Sangha, (3) Buddhist teachings.▪ *Causes for later successful transmission* of Buddhism: (1) ethics, (2) philosophy, (3) notion of skilful means, (4) emphasis on practical side of Buddhism, (5) cooperation with Daoism (later rivalry existed). | ▪ Japan had the *indigenous religious tradition* of Shintō. In time, it borrowed heavily from Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism.▪ *Success in Buddhism’s transmission to Japan*: (1) appeal of its art and ritual, (2) protective powers, (3) ethics, (4) status as a state religion (by Prince Shōtoku, 573-622), (5) building of temples, (6) monks’ introduction of writing, (7) introduction of six schools of Chinese Buddhism.▪ *Problem faced in Buddhism’s transmission* to Japan: Buddhism (Nara) was mainly for the elite and became corrupt and politically meddlesome. |
| **Schools of Chinese Buddhism** | **Schools of Japanese Buddhism** |
| ▪ ***Sanlun (‘Three Treatise’ school)***~Mādhyamika in Chinese form.~Based on three key texts: (1) *Madhyamaka-kārikā*, (2) verses of Nāgārjuna, (3) work of Āryadeva.▪ ***Faxiang (‘Characteristics of Dharmas’ school)***~A form of Yogācāra.~Introduced by pilgrim-translator Hsϋan-tsang (602-64).▪ ***Zhushe (Chu-she)***~A form of Sarvāstivāda, based on the study of the *Abhidharma-kośa*. ~Introduced by translator Paramārtha (499-569).~Note: Paramārtha was also author of two influential texts in Chinese Buddhism: (1) ‘Treatise on the Buddha-nature’ and (2) ‘Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna’. ~The *Tathāgata-garbha* is portrayed in cosmological terms as the ‘One Mind’ that encompasses the whole of reality, both awakened and unawakened; as a single, universal reality, rather than as is typical of Indian Buddhism, an aspect of individual beings. This monistic view has parallels with the Brahmanical idea that the Self (*Ātman*) is identical with Brahman, the sacred, and that ‘everything is *Brahman*’, and also with the Daoist idea of everything as the play of the *Dao*.▪ ***Zhenyan (Chen-yen; the ‘Mantra’ or ‘Efficacious Word’ school)***~A late import, arriving in the eighth century.▪ ***Tiantai (T’ien-t’ai) school***~Founded by Zhiyi (Chih-i), 539-97, and named after Mount ‘Heavenly Terrace’.~Emphasized study and meditation, as well as the Buddha-nature as present in all things, and that the world is non-different from the ultimate ‘One Mind’, thusness, emptiness or *Nirvāna*. ~The Buddha is seen as the saviour of all and the ‘three vehicles’ are united in one.▪ ***Huayan (Hua-yen) school***~Founded by meditation-master Dushan (Tushun), 557-640.~The *Avatamsaka Sūtra* took pride of place.~Emphasized ultimate reality as immanent in the world, like the *Dao*, and as fathomable by penetration into the thusness of any natural phenomenon (as did the Tiantai school).▪ ***Lϋ (‘Vinaya’) school***~Introduced around 650 CE.~Based on the Śrāvakayāna-emphasizing Dharmaguptaka school.~Emphasized study of monastic discipline.▪ ***Jingtu (Ching-t’u) or ‘Pure Land’ school*** ~Tanluan (476-542; former Daoist) first organized the school.~Became the most popular form of Buddhism in China.~Based on three main *Sūtras* related to Amitābha and the ‘Instruction on the Array of the Happy Land’ (Vasubandhu)▪ ***The Chan School (or ‘Meditation’ school)***~Founded by semi-legendary Indian monk Bodhidharma.~Emphasized meditation as *the* method for attaining awakening.~Has an iconoclastic streak for undercutting attachment.~Discursive thought and its ‘dualistic’ distinctions are disparaged.~Insight arises by direct mind-to-mind transmission from master to pupil – study is secondary.~’Innate nature’ within the mind is the Buddha-nature.~Other people and their teachings cannot really *make* a person see their Buddha-nature – this comes as a direct intuition, when the practitioner totally stops looking outside himself for ultimate reality.~Became popular among monks, artists, and intellectuals.~Developed powerful, new methods of practice.~Influenced by Daoism in its spontaneous style. | ▪ ***Tendai school (Tiantai)*** ~Came from China in 805.▪ ***Shingon (Mantranaya Zhenyan)*** ~Came from China in 816.~Important idea was ‘original’ or ‘innate’ awakening/enlightenment – saw all phenomena as having the awakened nature of a Buddha. ~Religious practice aimed at knowing that one was already a Buddha, rather than becoming a Buddha.~In sum: The Shingon worshipped Vairocana. ▪ ***Jōdo-shū (‘Pure Land school’)***~Formed by Hōnen (1133-1212) and Shinran (1173-1263). ~Taught faith in Amida (not ‘self-power’) – salvation comes from gratefully accepting Amida’s saving grace, *not* by any good works. Even a person’s faith comes from grace, for the all-pervading power of Amida can be found within one, prompting the Buddha-nature to overcome arrogance and sin.~In sum, the Pure Land schools worshipped Amida.▪ ***Rinzai Zen***~Introduced from China by monk Eisai (1141-1215).~Successful among the samurai.~Reliance on the *kōan*.▪ ***Sōtō Zen***~Introduced by Dōgen (1200-53).~Emphasized a strict and simple life of monastic discipline and *zazen*, or ‘sitting meditation’.~*Sūtras* are direct mind-to-mind transmission of truth.~Reading the *Sūtras* leads to faith in the Buddha and ultimate reality.~*Zazen* is a return to true Buddhism of the Buddha – a natural and easy method open to all and encompassing all other practices.~ *Zazen* is not a method to attain awakening, but a way of exhibiting one’s innate Buddha-nature.~Dōgen: Sit in *zazen* with faith that one is already a Buddha – the process is one of self-forgetting in which the Buddha-nature gradually unfolds its infinite potential throughout one’s life.~In sum: The Zen schools revered the earthly Śākyamuni, but not the heavenly one.▪ ***The Nichiren School*** ~Named after the monk Nichiren (1222-82).~The *Lotus Sūtra* seen as expressing the essence of Buddhism.~Advocated a ‘self-power’ method: To chant the forumula *Namu myō-hō ren-ge kyō* – to activate the Buddha-nature. |
| **Reference**:Harvey, P. (2013). *An introduction to Buddhism: teachings, history and practices*. 2nd edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.Harvey (2013). Pages 210-235.Alexander Peck (13 May 2015) |