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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) | |