CHAPTER II
BUDDHISM AND TAOISM DURING THE GOLDEN AGE

1. The Historical Background of India and China during the Times of the Buddha and Lǎo Zǐ

1.1. Religions and Culture milieu

Throughout the history of India, religion has been playing an important part of the country’s culture. The vast majority of Indians associate themselves with a religion, and religious tolerance is established in both law and custom. The sixth century B.C. is one of the cardinal epochs in human history. It was an age of extraordinary mental and spiritual unrest in several regions widely apart. In India ardent spirits were unusually active in quest of Truth.¹ Ancient India had two philosophical streams of thought, the Śamaṇa religions and the Vedic religion, parallel traditions that have existed side by side for thousands of years.² Both Buddhism and Jainism are continuations of Śamaṇa traditions, while modern Hinduism is a continuation of the Vedic tradition. These co-existing traditions have been mutually influential. As the once-nomadic peoples who produced the PGW pottery settled into agrarian life in the Gangetic region, the religion they had originally practiced changed and adapted. Key concepts of Hinduism, such as reincarnation, actions (Karma), fate, duty (Dharma), and the four varṇas ‘classes’ developed during this time. These new ideas were well adapted to agrarian or even urban settled life; they explained and justified the

social and economic divisions of Gangetic society in terms of an individual’s good or bad conduct in former lives. Taking together these concepts created the basic worldview assumed by all indigenous religions in India.

The Vedic Hinduism or Brahmanism that developed out of the religion of the Rig-Veda in this period, 1000-400 B.C. was as different from modern Hinduism as the ancient Old Testament Hebrew religion was from today’s Christianity. Vedic Hinduism centered on rituals addressed to Vedic gods, performed by Brahman priests around a sacred fire. Some gods represented the natural elements—Agni, the fire; Surya, the sun; or Soma, the deified hallucinogenic plant used in rituals. Others had human characteristics or were associated with a moral or ethical principle: the god Indra was a mighty warrior, while Varuna stood for cosmic order, rita. In later Hinduism some of these Vedic gods: Indra, Agni, Surya, would become minor figures in the Hindu pantheon, while others, like Varuna, would disappear entirely. Gods barely mentioned in the Vedic text such as Vishnu would later assume much greater importance. Vedic fire rituals from the simplest to the most elaborate involved offerings of vegetable or meat foods or drink to the gods. In return the sponsor of the sacrifice might receive a powerful reign for a king or a good crop for a householder, a fruitful marriage, or a lifetime lasting a hundred years. Vedic rituals had no fixed place of worship—no temple, hall, or building was used—nor did they involve icons or images of the gods. The mode of worship was performance of sacrifices which included the chanting of Rigvedic verses, singing of Samans and ‘mumbling’ of offering mantras ‘Yajus’. The priests executed rituals for the three upper classes ‘Vañña’ of Vedic society, strictly excluding the Sudras. People offered for abundance of rain, cattle, sons, long life and

gaining ‘heaven’. Vedic religion evolved into the Hindu paths of Yoga and Vedanta, a religious path considering itself the ‘essence’ of the Vedas, interpreting the Vedic pantheon as a unitary view of the universe with ‘God’, Brahman seen as immanent and transcendent in the forms of Ishvara and Brahman. These post-Vedic systems of thought, along with later texts like Upanishads, epics namely Gita of Mahabharat, have been fully preserved and form the basis of modern Hinduism. The ritualistic traditions of Vedic religion are preserved in the conservative Śrauta tradition, in part with the exception of animal sacrifice, which was mostly abandoned by the higher castes by the end of the Vedic period, partly under the influence of the Buddhist and Jain religions, and their criticism of such practices.⁴

Several Samaṇa movements are known to have existed before the 6th century B.C.E. dating back to Indus valley civilization, where they peaked during the times of Mahavira and Buddha. Samaṇa adopted a path alternate to the Vedic rituals to achieve liberation, while renouncing household life. They typically engaged in three types of activities: austerities, meditation, and associated theories or views. As spiritual authorities, at times Samaṇa were at variance with traditional Brahmin authority, and they often recruited members from Brahmin communities themselves, such as Cānakya and Sāriputra.⁵ Traditionally, a Samaṇa is one who has renounced the world and leads an ascetic life of austerity for the purpose of spiritual development and liberation. According to typical Samaṇa worldviews, a human being is responsible for their own deeds and will reap the fruits of those deeds for good or ill. Liberation, therefore, may be achieved by anybody irrespective of caste, creed, color or culture in contradistinction to certain historical caste-based traditions.

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⁴ Ibid., pp.24-26.
providing the necessary effort is made. The cycle of rebirth, Saṃsāra, to which every individual is subject, is viewed as the cause and substratum of misery. The goal of every person is to evolve a way to escape from the cycle of rebirth but samaṇic traditions dispense with the rites and rituals of popular religion as factors in the attainment of emancipation and emphasize instead the paramount importance of ascetic endeavor and personal conduct.

Mahāvīra and Gautama Buddha were leaders of their Samaṇa orders. According to Jain literature and the Buddhist Pāḷi Canon, there were also some other Samaṇa leaders at that time.⁶ Thus, in Mahāparinibbāna Sutta⁷ a Samaṇa named Subhadda mentions: “The leaders in religious life who are heads of companies of disciples and students, teachers of students, well known, renowned, founders of schools of doctrines, esteemed as good men by the multitude—to wit, Purāṇa Kassapa, Makkhali of the cattle-pen, Ajita of the garment of hair, Kaccāyana of the Pakudha tree, Saṅjaya the son of the Belaṭṭhi slave girl, and Nigaṭṭha of Nātha clan.” The fullest exposition of Samaṇa leaders’ views is to be found in an early discourse entitled “Sāmaññaphala Sutta” of the Dīgha Nikāya.⁸ Samaṇas held a pessimistic world view of Saṃsāra as full of suffering or Dukkha. They believed in Ahimsa and rigorous ascetic practices. They believed in Kamma and Mokkha and viewed rebirth as undesirable.⁹ As opposed to Samaṇas, Vedics held an optimistic world view of the richness in worldly life. They believed in efficacy of rituals and sacrifices, performed by a privileged group of people, who could improve their life by pleasing certain Gods. The samaṇic ideal of mendicancy and renunciation, that the worldly life was full of suffering

⁷ DB. II, pp.165-166.
⁸ Ibid., pp.69-75.
and that emancipation required giving up of desires and withdrawal into a lonely and contemplative life, was in stark contrast with the Brahminical ideal of an active and ritually punctuated life. Traditional Vedic belief held that a man is born with an obligation to study the Vedas, to procreate and rear male offspring and perform sacrifices. Only in his later life he may meditate on the mysteries of life. The idea of devoting one’s whole life to mendicancy seemed to disparage the whole process of social life and obligations.\textsuperscript{10}

China enjoys a unique position in the history of religious thought, in that it possesses an unbroken religious record of at least 3000 years, without counting the semi-historical and legendary periods of tradition, anterior to the time when fleeting-thought was first committed to intelligible literature.\textsuperscript{11} The nature of the earliest religion of the Chinese is in dispute. There are those who contend that it was monotheism and that it was later corrupted by polytheism and by the worship of ancestors and of spirits residing in various natural objects. Others and this is the present tendency believe that the theistic elements in some of the ancient literary remains were late accretions and that the primitive faith was probably a mixture of animism, including the worship of ancestors, and of reverence for forces and objects of nature, such as Heaven and Earth and some of the heavenly bodies, whose cooperation was regarded as necessary to the well-being of man.\textsuperscript{12} Whatever Chinese religion may have been in its primitive stages, there were ceremonies in honor of ancestors. Spirits of varying degrees of potency were believed to reside in many natural objects such as mountains and rivers and to demand reverence. Some of

\textsuperscript{10} Govind Chandra Pande, \textit{Life and Thought of Šaṅkarācārya}, 1\textsuperscript{st} Indian edition, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1994, p. 135.
\textsuperscript{11} J. Dyer Ball, \textit{The Celestial and His Religions or The Religious Aspect in China}, Hongkong: Messrs, Kelly and Walsh, Ltd., 1906, pp.4-5.
the stars were highly esteemed. Heaven and Earth, particularly the former, were held in great veneration and sacrifices were offered to them.\(^\text{13}\)

Early Chinese writers tell that Fú Xī, 伏羲 (B.C. 2953-2838), was the first Emperor to organize sacrifices to, and worship of, spirits. In this he was followed by the Yellow Emperor, (Huáng Dì, 黄帝) (B.C. 2698-2598), who built a temple for the worship of God, in which incense was used, and first sacrificed to the Mountains and Rivers. He is also said to have established the worship of the sun, moon, and five planets, and to have elaborated the ceremonial of ancestral worship. From the time of Yellow Emperor to the beginning of Zhōu Dynasty (周朝) there was a long ancient history of worship. Finally, when the Shāng Dynasty (商朝) sank into the lowest depths of moral abasement, King Wǔ (武王), who charged himself with its overthrow and who subsequently, became the first sovereign of the Zhōu dynasty, offered sacrifices to Almighty God, and also to Mother Earth. The Zhōu dynasty lasted from B.C. 1045 to B.C. 256. It was China’s feudal age, when the empire was split up into a number of vassal States, which owned allegiance to a suzerain State.

Several events of a supernatural character are recorded as having taken place under the Zhōu dynasty. In B.C. 756, one of the feudal Dukes saw a vision of a yellow serpent which descended from heaven, and laid its head on the slope of a mountain. The Duke spoke of this to his astrologer, who said, “It is a manifestation of God, sacrifice to it.” In B.C. 651, Duke Huán of the Qí State (齊桓公), one of the feudal nobles, wished to signalize his accession to the post of doyen or leader of the vassal states by offering the great sacrifices to God and to Earth. Much has been recorded by the Chinese on the subject of sacrifice, more indeed than can

be easily condensed into a small compass. First of all, there were the
great sacrifices to God and to Earth, at the winter and summer solstices
respectively, which were reserved for the Son of Heaven alone. Besides
what may be called private sacrifices, the Emperor sacrificed also to the
four quarters and to the mountains and rivers of the empire; while the
feudal nobles sacrificed each to his own quarter, and to the mountains and
rivers of his own domain.\textsuperscript{14}

Ancestor worship is the original basic Chinese religion. According
to ancient law, the highest King of China, also called the Son of Heaven,
sacrificed to Heaven, Earth and other gods- especially those of famous
mountains and rivers. Seigneurs or officials were accredited to sacrifice
to respective gods.\textsuperscript{15} Ancestor worship seeks to honor the deeds and
memories of the deceased. This is an extension of filial piety for the
ancestors, the ultimate homage to the deceased as if they are alive.
Instead of prayers, joss sticks are offered with communications and
greetings to the deceased. There are eight qualities of Te (Bā Dé, 八德) for
a Chinese to complete his earthly duties, and filial piety (Xiào, 孝) is the
top and foremost of those qualities. The importance of paying filial duties
to parents and elders lies with the fact that all physical bodily aspects of
one's being were created by one’s parents, who continued to tend to one’s
well-being until one is on firm footings. The respect and the homage to
parents are to return this gracious deed to them in life and after, the
ultimate homage. The Shī (尸) “corpse or personator” was a Zhōu
Dynasty sacrificial representative of a dead relative. During a shi
ceremony, the ancestral spirit supposedly would enter the personator,

who would eat and drink sacrificial offerings and convey spiritual messages.\textsuperscript{16}

Chinese folk religion is a collective label given to various folkloric beliefs that draw heavily from Chinese mythology. It comprises the religion practiced in much of China for thousands of years, which included ancestor worship and drew heavily upon concepts and beings within Chinese mythology. Chinese folk religion is sometimes seen as a constituent part of Chinese traditional religion, but more often, the two are regarded as synonymous. Chinese folk religion is composed of a syncretistic combination of religious practice. Chinese folk religion also retains traces of some of its ancestral belief systems, which include the veneration of the sun, moon, earth, the heaven, and various stars, as well as communication with animals.\textsuperscript{17} It has been practiced by Chinese people for thousands of years. Ceremonies, veneration, legends, festivals and various devotions associated with different folk gods, deities and goddesses form an important part of Chinese culture today.

In the early years of the Zhōu dynasty, Chinese culture, it will be recalled, was already fairly far advanced. As under the Shāng, the basic industry was agriculture. Millet, rice, wheat, and barley were the chief cereals. Some of these, together with the methods of growing them, were quite possibly of foreign origin, introduced in Zhōu and pre-Zhōu times. Fermented liquor was made from both rice and millet and was perfumed with aromatic plants. Vegetables of many varieties were raised, and numerous fruits were cultivated. The mulberry was particularly useful, because its leaves nourished the silk-worms and so were essential in the production of the most characteristic of Chinese textiles. Several kinds of cultivated plants were employed in the production of cloth. The pig and


the chicken were then, as now, with the dog, the omnipresent live stock, and there were other types of domestic animals. Iron came into use sometime during the dynasty, but did not entirely supplant bronze. During the Zhōu urban civilization was spreading, centering in capitals of the feudal princes and of the Wang. Between city dwellers and the rural population a gulf tended to exist. The town, dominated by the aristocracy, seems to have had a market place, an altar to the earth a raised mound of beaten soil and the ancestral temple of the ruling lord. It was surrounded by a wall and a moat. This town may have succeeded in part the earlier holy place which had been the center of peasant life, an identification which may have assisted the feudal chiefs in their domination of the rural community.18

This culture, so rich and vigorous, had its original seat in the North China plain and the valley of the Wèi （衞）. It did not remain there, however, but spread to the outlying districts, only partly Chinese in blood, where were those great states in whose hands lay the political destinies of the land. The agents of the spread seem chiefly to have been scholars, statesmen, and aristocratic adventurers from the older China, who, seeking employment at the hands of the powerful but semi-barbarous chieftains on the frontier, tutored these rulers in the civilization which they respected and copied while they domineered over its possessors.19 It was a process which, in its essence, Chinese history was often to see reproduced the conquerors yielding to the culture of the conquered. China was expanding, by the migration both of the Chinese and their culture. The way was being prepared for new and startling developments. Divided politically but vigorous intellectually, China was to be united under one strong rule. In doing so, it was to display fresh

cultural growth. The formation of the new Empire was to be accompanied not only by marked political changes, but by extensive alterations in the economic, social, and intellectual life of the people. Future developments, revolutionary in many ways though they were, did not efface the cultural contributions of the Zhōu and its predecessors. The emphasis on ceremonial, the forms of ritual, the family system, the growing regard for certain ethical standards, were to persist, some of them studiously unaltered, to our own day. In many respects, before the final downfall of the Zhōu, Chinese culture had taken on its definitive ideals. The history of the Spring and Autumn period (Chūn Qiū Shí Dài, 春秋時代) testifies to an aggregation of several independently developed regional ethnic and cultural clusters into a large, multistate, multicultural system setting the stage for the further interaction and integration that took place in the subsequent Warring State period (Zhàn Guó Shí Dài, 戰國時代).

1.2. Political Situation

The political structure of the ancient Indian appears to have started with semi-nomadic tribal units called Jana. Early Vedic texts attest several Janas or tribes of the Aryans, living in semi-nomadic tribal state, fighting among themselves and with other Non-Aryan tribes for cows, sheep and green pastures. These early Vedic Janas later coalesced into Janapadas of the Epic Age. The term “Janapada” literally means the foothold of a tribe. The fact that Janapada is derived from Jana points to an early stage of land-taking by the Jana tribe for a settled way of life. This process of first settlement on land had completed its final stage prior to the time of Buddha. The Pre-Buddhist North-west region of Indian sub-continent was divided into several Janapadas demarcated from

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20 Ibid.
each other by boundaries. Each of these Janapadas was named after the Khattiya tribe or the Khattiya Jana who had settled there-in.\textsuperscript{21} Ancient Buddhist texts make frequent reference to sixteen great kingdoms and republics which had evolved and flourished in the northern, north-western parts of the Indian subcontinent prior to the rise of Buddhism in India. Aṅguttara-Nikāya,\textsuperscript{22} at several places, gives a list of sixteen great nations: Kāsi, Kosala, Aṅga, Magadha, Vajjī, Malla, Cheti, Vaṅga, Kuru, Pañcāla, Maccha, Sūrasena, Assaka, Avanti, Gandhāra and Kamboja. Another Buddhist text Dīgha Nikāya mentions only first twelve Mahājanapadas and omits the last four in the above list.\textsuperscript{23}

Indian history assumes a more or less definite shape towards the close of the seventh century B.C. There was no paramount power in Northern India at this period, but the whole country was divided into a number of independent States. Some of the States were monarchical, but other had republican or oligarchic constitution. Though monarchy was usual in ancient India, tribal states also existed, which were governed by oligarchies. The term “republic” is often used for these bodies, and though it has been criticized by some authorities, it is quite legitimate if it is remembered that the tribes were not governed like the Republic of India by an assembly elected by universal suffrage.\textsuperscript{24} The four important royal dynasties that stand out prominently at this period are the Haryankas in Magadha, the Aikshvākus in Kosala, the Pauravas in Vatsa (Kosambī), and the Pradyotas in Avanti. It is interesting to note that the kingdom of Kuru-Pañchala, Kāsi and Matsya, celebrated in the

\textsuperscript{22} GS. I, p. 192; GS. IV, p. 172; 174; 175.
\textsuperscript{23} DB. II, p.237.
Mahābhārata, continued at this period, although they ranked as minor powers.

Of the non-monarchical States Vijjis of Mitthilā, the Sakyas of Kapilavatthu, and the Mallas of Pāvā and Kusinagara were mostly prominent. The Vajjis formed a confederacy of eight different clans, the most prominent of which were the Lichhavis, who had their capital at Vesāli. There were, besides these states, a number of democratic or autonomous clans such as the Bhaggas of Suṇāsumagiri, the Bulis of Allakappa, the Kālāmas of Kesaputta, the koliyas of Rāmagāma and the Moriyas of Pipphalivana.25 No one of these was of much political importance. And the tendency towards the gradual absorption of these domains, and also of the republics, into the neighboring kingdoms was already in full force. There were several other names of tribes of which it is not yet known whether they were clans or under monarchical government. These territories whether confederacies, kingdoms or empires, were typically controlled by local rulers or rajas and by laws and officials to different degrees. There are very early mentions of dynastic succession, as also of courts, councils and advisers.26 Their capitals were fortified cities, often located along strategic trade routes, surrounded by the agricultural villages and towns they controlled. Five out of the six largest cities in the Gangetic region in this period were the political capitals of such “great-clan territories.” Political life in the Gangetic region, however, was just as volatile and competitive as religious life.27

There were matrimonial alliances between many of these States, but that did not prevent the outbreak of hostility among them. Each of the four important royal dynasties, mentioned above, tired to establish its

supremacy, and aggrandize itself at the cost of minor States.\textsuperscript{28} For example, Pajjota, King of Avanti, fought with Udaya, king of Kosambī, although the latter was his son-in-law, and at another time he threatened Rājagaha, the capital of Magadha. Pasenadi, king of Kosala, was already master of Kāsi, and his son afterwards conquered the Sakya State of Kapilavastu. Again Bimbisāra, king of Magadha, annexed Aṅga, and his son Ajātasattu conquered the Lichhavis of Vesāli. All these kings—Pajjota, Udaya, Bimbisāra and Pasenadī—flourished in the second half of the sixth century B.C. At the beginning of the fifth century B.C. the Pauravas and the Pajjota seems to have retired from the contest for supremacy, which was thus left to be fought out between the Haryankas of Magadha and Aikshvākus of Kosala. A fierce and protracted struggle ensured between Pasenadī and Ajātasattu, and although the results were indecisive for a long time, victory ultimately inclined to the Magadha kingdom. Henceforth Magadha stands out as the supreme power in Northern India, a position which was ultimately destined to convert her into the greatest empire that India had ever seen.\textsuperscript{29}

By the sixth century B.C., the ancient China had gradually developed a multistate system. The first two and a half centuries of the Eastern Zhōu are known as the Spring and Autumn period (Chūn Qiū Shí Dài, 春秋時代), which cover the years 722–481 B.C. The main arena of activities in the Spring and Autumn period was the alluvial plain of the Yellow River (Huánghé, 黃河) and Shāndōng Peninsula (山東半島), as well as the Huái (淮) and Hàn (漢) River valleys. It eventually expanded to include much of present-day Shānxī (陝西), Shānxī (山西), and Héběi (河北) in the north and the Yangzī or Cháng Jiāng (長江) River valley in


\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
the south. The people who inhabited these areas belonged to both Zhōu and non-Zhōu groups, the latter often labeled “barbarians.” The states in the east had been established by scions and relatives of the Zhōu royal family. There were fifteen major states: Qí (齊), Jìn (晉), Qín (秦), Chǔ (楚), Lǔ (魯), Cáo (曹), Zhèng (鄭), Sòng (宋), Xǔ (許), Chén (陳), Wèi (魏), Yān (燕), Cài (蔡), Wú (吳), and Yuè (越).

By the mid-seventh century B.C. the Zhōu world was dominated by four powers: Jìn, Chǔ, Qí, and Qín. All four of these powers were located in the peripheries, while those states in the Central Plain, such as Zhèng, Sòng, Lǔ, and Wèi, were becoming ever less important in interstate politics. The four major powers, Jìn, Chǔ, Qí, and Qín, had each acquired a sphere of domination, while the status of the Zhōu royal house had become even further reduced. Both Jìn and Chǔ which played the central roles on this historical state for the next two centuries, realized that they had to coexist with the other powers, especially Qí, and Qín in the east and west, respectively. These developments had a profound impact on the last century of the Spring and Autumn period.

During the heyday of Zhōu feudalism, there were hundreds of small states. The feudal structure depended on the relationship between the lord and these vassal states, and on a kinship system known as Zōngfǎ (宗法). The supreme lord was the Zhōu king, upon whom the Mandate of Heaven or rule was considered to have been bestowed on a hereditary basic. As the Son of Heaven, the king enfeoffed relatives to be rulers of vassal states. Since the king and these rulers were members of the same royal house, their descendants were also related. In the respective states, the rulers were served by ministers (Qīng, 卿) and high officers (Dài Fu, 夫) who were again kinsmen. Each of these kinsmen had his own

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31 Ibid., p.559.
32 Ibid., p.562.
households, fief, and domain. The lowest ranking Zhōu aristocrats were the Shì (士) also related to their lords by blood or by marriage. In theory, the Zōngfǎ system provided for the succession of the Zhōu kings and the rulers of the various states by primogeniture. In each generation, the eldest son took his place in the principal lineage (Dà Zōng, 大宗). Any idealized framework exists only in theory. So too was the Zhōu Zōngfǎ system little more than a principle of organization. In the Western Zhōu period, the system was sustained by the maintenance of mutual relations between lord and vassals, mediated through elaborate rituals such as court visits, renewals of oaths and vows, reconfirmations of appointments, and so on. Many bronze inscriptions testify to these practices.\(^{33}\) A statistical study of the extent of activities of persons of various statuses mentioned in the Chronicle of Zuǒ (Zuǒ Zhuàn, 左傳) shows that in the first three decades of the Spring and Autumn period, 722–693 B.C., the most active figures were sons of rulers. In the middle period, especially between 632 and 513 B.C., ministers played the most active roles. The shi gained significance during the last five decades 512–464 B.C. Indeed, from the mid-seventh to the mid-sixth century B.C., state and interstate activities were dominated by ministerial houses. The last part of the sixth century B.C., however, witnessed a decline in their influence, internal struggles actually causing the extinction of many of them.\(^{34}\)

Thus was the stage set for the Spring and Autumn period. With the fall of the Western Zhōu, there had disappeared the system that had held the Zhōu together, whereby the Zhōu king served simultaneously as the patriarch of the royal lineage and as supreme lord of the nobility. This

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\(^{34}\) Cho-yun Hsu, Ancient China in Transition: An Analysis of Social Mobility, 722-222 B.C., Stanford: Leland Stanford Junior University, 1965, Tables 1, 2, 3, 8 and 9.
status, regarded as having been conferred by the Mandate of Heaven, was confirmed periodically by rituals and ceremonies performed in conferences, court visits, and ancestor worship.\textsuperscript{35} The history of the Spring and Autumn period thus marks the first phase in a transition from the Western Zhōu feudalism toward the unified empires of the Qín and Hàn dynasties. The history of this period witnessed an expansion of the Zhōu world toward its peripheries. Though there was ostensibly an effort to preserve the Zhōu cultural and political order, the Bà (霸) system which was supposed to serve the function of guardian of the Zhōu feudal system, actually served to transform this order, laying the foundation for the eventual empire of the Qín and Hàn period. It was by no means intended to be sheer hegemony through military might, but rather to restore the authority of the Son of Heaven. This transformation was not just political in nature, but also extended into social, economic, and intellectual sphere.\textsuperscript{36}

1.3. Economical Situation

Even though there has been as yet no attempt to reconstruct a picture of the economic conditions any period in the early history of India, Piṭaka and other Pāḷi works furnish interesting information on the economic condition of India at the time of the rise of Buddhism.\textsuperscript{37} As at present, the bulk of the people then lived in villages. The population of a village was concentrated within a relatively small area, as the dwelling were all clustered together to ensure safety. Around the villages there were arable fields divided into plots by channels for water or marked by a common fence. The holdings were usually small, but larger ones were not

altogether unknown. The village folk had common rights over the adjacent forest and the grazing grounds, where the cattle belonging to various householders were sent under the charge of a collectively hired herdsman.\textsuperscript{38} The rural economy was based on what may be called ‘peasant proprietorship’. But no owner could sell or mortgage his part of the land without the consent of the village council. He cultivated the fields himself, but often employed laborers or slaves for the purpose. There were no big estates or landlords. The king received the tithes and his share, varying from one-sixth to a twelfth, of the produce in kind through the headman. The latter was an important person in the village. He carried on there the business of the government. At that time he was probably either a hereditary officer or was elected by the village council, which also helped him in maintaining local peace and security. The village residents were endowed with a sturdy civic spirit. They united of themselves in such undertakings as laying irrigation channels, building mote-halls, rest-houses, etc. The women extended their full co-operation in these works of public utility. On the whole, each village was self-sufficient, and life was simple and unsophisticated. There were few rich men and paupers. Crime was rare, but people sometimes suffered greatly from famines occasioned by droughts or floods.\textsuperscript{39}

The main industry of the people was agriculture. Besides, they had made considerable progress in such crafts as wood-work including cart-making and ship-building, architecture, leather-dressing, pottery, garland-making, weaving, ivory-work, confectionery, jewelry, and work in precious metals. There were other occupations, e.g., tanning, fishing, hunting, dancing, acting, snake-charming, rush-weaving, etc., to which

\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Ibid.}, p.105.
was attached a social stigma. In the view of the King there were the best examples of such crafts: elephant-riders, cavalry, charioteers, archers, army folk, slaves, cooks, barbers, bath-attendants, confectioners, garland-makers, washer-men, weavers, basket-makers, potters, clerks and accountants. These are just the sort of people employed about a camp or a palace. Besides the peasantry and the handicraftsmen there were merchants who conveyed their goods either up and down the great rivers or along the coasts in boats or right across country in carts travelling in caravans. Silks, muslins, the finer sorts of cloth and cutlery and armor, brocades, embroideries and rugs, perfumes and drugs, ivory and ivory work, jewelry and gold and silver—these were the main articles in which the merchant dealt. The older system of traffic by barter had entirely passed away never to return. The later system of a currency of standard and token coins issued and regulated by government authority had not yet arisen. Transactions were carried on, values estimated, and bargains struck in terms of the Kahāpaṇa, a square copper coin weighing about 146 grains, and guaranteed as to weight and fineness by punch-marks made by private individuals. Besides the coins, there was a very considerable use of instruments of credit. The great merchants in the few large towns gave letters of credit on one another. There were no banking facilities. Money was hoarded either in the house, or buried in jars in the ground, or deposited with a friend, a written record of the transaction being kept. The number of those who could be considered wealthy from the standards of those times was very limited. There was a score of monarchs, whose wealth consisted mainly of the land tax, supplemented by other dues and perquisites; of a considerable number of wealthy

40 Ibid., p.106.
42 Ibid., p.98.
43 Ibid., p.100.
nobles, and some priests, to whom grants had been made of the tithe arising out of certain parishes or counties or who had inherited similar rights from their forefathers; of about a dozen millionaire merchants in Taxila, Sāvatthi, Benares, Rājagaha, Vesālī, Kosambī, and the seaports, and of a considerable number of lesser merchants and middlemen, all in the few towns. But these were the exceptions. There were no landlords. And the great mass of the people were well-to-do peasantry, or handicrafts-men, mostly with land of their own, both classes ruled over by local headmen of their own selection.44

As well as the state, another element did much to control prices and standard of work. This was the guild, a form of industrial and mercantile organization which played a big part in the economy of ancient India. There are faint and uncertain references to some sort of guild organization even in Vedic literature, but the time of the composition of the Buddhist scriptures guilds certainly existed in every important Indian town, and embraced almost all trades and industries. The guild united both the craftsmen’s co-operatives and the individual workmen of a given trade into a single corporate body. It fixed rules of work and wages, and standards and prices for the commodities in which its members dealt, and its regulations had the force of law, and were upheld by the king and government. The guild was headed by a chief, usually called the “Elder” who was assisted by a small council of senior members. The office of Elder was usually hereditary and held by one of the richest members of the guild. In the Pāli scriptures the Elders is invariably described as a very wealthy man, often with much influence at the palace, and counseling the king himself. These and other emblems were sometimes granted by royal charter, and were carried in local religious processions by the guild-men. Some guilds had their own militias, which served as

44 Ibid., pp.101-102.
auxiliaries of the king’s armies in time of need. The guild had power not only over the economic, but also over the social life of its members.\textsuperscript{45}

In the oldest Pāḷi books there are accounts of the journeys of the wandering teachers and especially for longer journeys, they will generally have followed already established routes, this is incidental evidence of such as were then in use by traders. Later on, these routes actually followed by merchants, either on boats, or with their caravans of bullock carts.\textsuperscript{46} The roads were dangerous to the merchant-caravans. Many of the trade routes linking centers of civilization passed through dense jungle and over hills where wild tribes dwelt. There were whole villages of professional robbers, ready at all times to waylay the merchant. In these circumstances merchants preferred to share their perils together as many as five hundreds men travelling in caravan. Pāḷi literature tells of band of professional caravan guards, who would undertake to give guidance and safe conduct over a specified route, and who seem to have been a regular feature of the caravan trade, at least where the merchant corporations did not provide their own guards.\textsuperscript{47} Along with the family-run business and individually owned business enterprises, ancient India possessed a number of other forms of engaging in business or collective activity, including the economic organizations of merchants, craftsmen and artisans, and perhaps even military entities. The use of such entities in ancient India was widespread including virtually every kind of business, political and municipal activity. The period of 600 B.C. was marked by intensive trade activity and urban development.

In the days when Zhōu feudalism prevailed, land and labor were the only resources that yielded wealth. Sending the Zhōu people out to establish vassal states was a simple way to reach sources of wealth seized

by military occupation. Along with this feudal structure, exchange of materials during court visits and interstate conferences, as well as by marriage dowries, gifts, or tribute, linked the lords and vassals and served to redistribute the wealth. Ideally, such control should have been conducted through the feudal framework. In a hierarchy of authority and status, the lord would bestow on a subordinate land and the population who lived there. Part of the wealth produced by these people was then given to the lord for support. At the base of this economic pyramid were the peasants, who were assigned to work the farms, in return for which they were fed and clothed. The peasant was in a state of servitude, rendering productive labor in exchange for basic subsistence.\(^{48}\)

A so-called well-field system, first described in the Mencius, was an idealized land tenure system, of the Zhōu period. This system, the name of which derives from Chinese character for “well (Jǐng, 井)” organized individual lots for each of eight peasant houses around one central lot that they were to work jointly for the benefit of their lord. In this system, the peasant paid the lord in services rather than rent. However, the peasants were not slaves; they probably had a degree of discretion with respect to their productive activities. In other words, the relationship seems to have been a close tenancy rather than contractual servitude. In theory, the entire Zhōu kingdom belonged to the royal house; no one other than the king could have full claim to their land.\(^{49}\)

Once released from manorial restrictions, the peasants had more incentive to increase productivity. In the Spring and Autumn period in both North and South China there were at least two major cereal crops, millet and wheat in the north, and rice and millet in the south. Legumes, originally grown in the Shanxi highland, had spread widely. It should be

\(^{49}\) \textit{Ibid.}, pp.108-112.
noted that broad beans were originally a common plant in the area of the Rong people in the northern mountains. Differentiation of millet into subspecies, Shù (黍) and Jì (稷) and an increased significance of wheat as one of the main crops made it possible for farmers to rotate their crops, a strategy that also enhanced productivity. For instance, wheat could be planted in winter for summer harvest, while millet to grow three crops in two years. The rotation of crops also helped to preserve the fertility of the fields. This was the first step toward intensive farming.50

The use of iron implements, especially iron plowshares, could also have substantially contributed to efficient farming. It has always been disputed whether or not bronze tools were used in agriculture. In the past decades, however, no fewer than 300 bronze implements of various kinds have been found in archaeological excavations, distributed widely across many provinces. It seems that bronze was used for these implements until replaced by the less expensive and sturdier iron. Iron was then used to cast spades, hoes, and sickles, as well as plowshares.51 Two issues regarding the development of metallurgy need to be addressed here. They are the level of bronze-casting techniques and iron technology. Bronze casting had a long history in ancient China. Shāng and Zhōu bronze vessels were cast in a great variety of sizes and shapes, decorated with many kinds of ornamental designs, and inscribed with lengthy texts. By the Spring and Autumn period, the technique of bronze casting advanced in several ways, including the use of the lost-wax technique to produce different shapes. The skills made it possible to produce bronze works of great artistic merit.

Advances in agriculture and basic industries were associated with the rise of an active market economy. In Zhōu feudalism, distribution of wealth was conducted through channels dictated by political authority. Gift giving, rationing, tributes, and corvée labor formed a network for the collection and redistribution of resources. With the collapse of this network during the Spring and Autumn period, a new economic exchange system gradually emerged.\textsuperscript{52} The road system had already been well developed in the Western Zhōu period. The vassal states were expected to maintain highways, as well as to provide security for them. Water transportation was also good, enabling large shipments of grain to be transported on the rivers.\textsuperscript{53} In addition, it seems that there was a network of roads between the capitals of the four major states, with the royal capital region and Jīn at the center. An important economic indicator is the appearance of minted coins. In Western Zhōu bronze inscriptions, gifts in terms of Bèi (貝), cowries, representing units of wealth, are often mentioned. The worth of real estate and valuable items could be valued in numbers of strings of cowries. Precious metals, gold, and copper also could be used for exchange purposes. Yet in the daily life of the ordinary people, bartering of materials in kind was commonplace.\textsuperscript{54}

Bronze money began to circulate in the late Spring and Autumn period, the archaeological evidence for which is Bù (布), spade-coins. These spade-coins are bronze miniatures of a two-pronged digging implement with a socket for a handle. Archaeologists classify these early coins into two groups. One group has been excavated mainly in Shanxi, the area of Jīn. That these Kōng Shǒu Bù (空首布) spade-coins retain a hollow socket for handle, suggests that the coins of the Spring and Autumn period represent an early stage of development in which the

\textsuperscript{54} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 112-114.
actual implement was imitated. Their distribution around the Zhōu capital and Jìn seems to reflect that these areas must have been busy centers for a brisk exchange of goods. The state of Jin had been at the center of interstate politics for such a long time throughout the Spring and Autumn period that it would be natural for its money to have been widely circulated. The number of spade-coins in circulation must have been very large, as is shown by the discovery at a single site of a hoard of more than a thousand.\(^5\) Nevertheless discoveries of spade-coins of the Zhōu type have been even more numerous than the Jin pieces.\(^6\) The appearance of minted coins reflects an active exchange of material wealth that the old feudal economy could not have accommodated. A related phenomenon that also helps to substantiate the prevalence of a market economy is the rise in status of merchants and the increase of their activities. In the state of Zhèng, in particular, merchants enjoyed a special relationship. The state provided them with protection, while they informed the state court of any unusual conditions in their profession. In the state of Wey, as well, artisans and merchants often were consulted in state politics. What is more, by the late part of the Spring and Autumn period, some merchants in the capital of Jìn had become very powerful elements of society, living luxuriously and exercising political influence.

The emergence of private traders as a phenomenon seems to be due to several factors. One is a better road system that connected all regions, perhaps resulting from the frequent interstate contacts necessitated by the Bà (霸) system. Another is a layered economy owing to better productivity in agriculture and more demand for goods. Advances in various kinds of industries must also be associated with business prosperity. However, this prosperity brought a disparity in the distribution

of wealth. By the late part of the Spring and Autumn period, a portion of the population appears to have been impoverished, needing to live on loans and aid from the wealthy. Economic growth in ancient China picked up momentum in the Warring States period, with private ownership of land and new manufacturing and commercial activities. When coupled with demographic growth, all of this culminated in urbanization and commercialization. But the initial stage marking a tremendous transformation took place in the Spring and Autumn period.

The Spring and Autumn period witnessed transformations in all aspects of the Zhōu world. No sooner had King Píng of Zhōu (周平王) established a court in the eastern portions of the Zhōu kingdom than the feudal structure started to disintegrate. The former vassal states took their futures in their own hands, initiating wars with cutthroat competition. Contentious rules expended their territory, extinguishing neighboring states. There were power struggles within states among branches of the ruling house. These wars eventually reduced the number of states from several hundred to less than a few tens. Likewise, even in these states, there were only a few noble houses that survived the repeated power struggles. The number of fallen nobles must have been many times that of those who thrived. Some of the former elite, however, became responsible for the dissemination of knowledge and the establishment of a code of conduct that became adopted by the courtiers. Among the many developments that mark the Spring and Autumn period, the following are perhaps the most important: the establishment of the Bà (霸) system of recognized leadership among the states; the assimilation of the southern state of Chǔ and later the states of Wú and Yuè into the political order, such that an unprecedented degree of cultural pluralism was achieved; the

concentration of authority in the states, both through the recruitment of capable ministers and also through new governing structures such as the Xiàn (獻) county organization; the gradual emergence of private land ownership; the beginning of iron casting; far-flung commercial activities; and, perhaps most important of all, the rise of the Shì (士) class and with it, the dramatic intellectual breakthrough brought about by Confucius. In all of these aspects, the two and half centuries of the Spring and Autumn period brought changes with profound effects both for the following Warring States period and, indeed, for all subsequent Chinese civilization.\footnote{Ibid.}

2. The Lives of the Buddha and Lǎo Zī

2.1. The Life of the Buddha

2.1.1. The Birth

It is a peculiar thing, and very characteristic of the real meaning of the true Buddhism, that there is no life of the Buddha in the Buddhist Scriptures.\footnote{T.W. Rhys Davids, \textit{Buddhism: its History and Literature}, 2nd Edition, London: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1907, p.87.} Out of two places of the Scriptures the first of these passages in the Mahāpadāna sutta\footnote{DB. II, pp.6-7.} is really a legend, which gives not only the length of life, city, caste, parents, and chief disciples but also in exactly the same phraseology the same detail concerning the six previous Buddhas. The other is in the Buddhavaṃsa,\footnote{I. B. Horner, \textit{The Minor Anthologies of the Pāli Canon}, Part III, London: Pali Text Society, 1975, p.95.} a poem not reckoned as canonical by all schools, which uses much the same phraseology, and

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\footnote{Ibid.}
extends the information to twenty four preceding Buddhas.\textsuperscript{63} Such legends are indeed of the greatest possible historical value from the comparative point of view. Similar legends are related of all the founders of great religions, and even of the more famous kings and conquerors in the ancient world. In a certain stage of intellectual progress it is a necessity of the human mind that such legends should grow up.\textsuperscript{64} The generally accepted accounts says that he was a Sākiyan, son of Suddhodana, chief ruler of Kapilavatthu, and of Mahā Māyā, Suddhodana's chief consort, and he belonged to the Gotama-gotta. His chief wife is known under various names: Bhaddakaccā or Kaccānā, Yasodharā, Bimbā, Bimbasunārī and Gopā. She, later, comes to be called Rāhulamātā because their son is called Rāhula.\textsuperscript{65}

The early history of Buddhism is bound up with the life of its founder, the Buddha whose actual historical figure is generally accepted. Most of what is known of the Buddha comes from later accounts rather than contemporary historical records made during his lifetime. In 1896 a team of Nepalese archaeologists discovered a marker honoring the Buddha’s birthplace. The birthplace of the Buddha is identified with Rummindei,\textsuperscript{66} by the discovery of an Asokan pillar bearing an inscription which states that “By His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King, consecrated twenty years, coming in person, was worshipped this spot, in as much as here was born the Buddha Sakyamuni. A stone bearing a figure was caused to be constructed and a pillar of stone was also set up, to show that the Blessed One was born here. The village Lumbini was

\textsuperscript{64} T.W. Rhys Davids, \textit{Op. cit.}, 1907, p.94.
\textsuperscript{66} This village is now known as Rummindei, but to the local people as Rupan-dehi, in the subdivision (Mal) Bithri, Jila (district) Bithri, of the Nepal Government. (Radhakumud Mookerji, \textit{Asoka}, London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1928, p.202).
made free of religious cesses and also liable to pay only one-eighth share of the produce." In Suttanipāta it is said:

The Bodhisatta, excellent jewel, incomparable, has been born in the world of men for their benefit and happiness in the village of Sakyans, in the Lumbini country.\(^{68}\)

At the time of the Buddha’s birth, the area was at or beyond the boundary of Vedic civilization and it is even possible that his mother tongue was not an Indo-Aryan language.\(^{69}\) At the time, a multitude of small city-states existed in Ancient India, called Janapadas. Republics and chiefdoms with diffused political power and limited social stratification, were not uncommon amongst them, and were referred to as gaṇa-saṅghas.\(^{70}\) The Buddha’s community does not seem to have had a caste system. It was not a monarchy, and seems to have been structured either as an oligarchy, or as a form of republic.\(^{71}\)

The country of the Sakya or Sākiya where the Buddha was raised is known only from Buddhist writings as Kapilavatthu. Modern investigation has placed it in the north-east portion of the United Provinces, and along the borders of Nepal between Bahraiash and Gorakhpur.\(^{72}\) It was far to the east of the Holy Land of Brahmin tradition, and there can be but little doubt that, at the time, the inhabitants of that district were many respects more independent of the Brahmins than the countries farther west. There is no evidence that there was any large number of Brahmins settled in the country, which was inhabited by a high-caste tribe, forming the Sakya clan. Mr. Beal, the late translator of

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\(^{68}\) \textit{Nālaka Sutta} (GD. P. 78).


so many Chinese Buddhist books, was of opinion that this very word “Sakya” was sufficient evidence to show that the clan was of Skythian, and therefore of Mongolian, origin.\(^7_3\) Apart from the legendary and historical facts the day of the Buddha’s birth is widely celebrated in Buddhist countries as Vesak.

### 2.1.2. The Chronology

Chronology is one of the most besetting problems in ancient Indian history. The available sources are insufficient for the reconstruction of exact chronological information. Though there is general agreement that the Buddha lived for eighty years, but precisely when, is hard to point out without drawing criticism. Innate inconsistencies in the traditional Buddhist chronology have been suggested form time to time.\(^7_4\) Some sources give the date of the Buddha's birth as 563 B.C.E. and others as 624 B.C.E. but Theravada Buddhist countries tend to use the latter figure. This displaces all the dates in the following table about sixty one years further back. On the above basic, the timeline of the Buddha is figured thus:

- The Buddha’s birth – 563 B.C.E.
- The Buddha’s enlightenment – 528 B.C.E.
- The Buddha’s demise – 483 B.C.E.

There is controversy about the base date of the Buddhist Era with 544 B.C. and 483 B.C. being advanced as the date of the Parinibbāna of the Buddha. Hence the approximate date of the Parinibbāna is between 485 and 481 B.C. which accords well with

the Mahayana dating of 483 B.C. The latest calculation, however, shows
the 397 B.C. may only be taken as a rough approximation to the year in
which the Buddha expired.\textsuperscript{75}

2.1.3. The Lifeworks

Buddhist mythology states that the Buddha went to meditate
beneath a pipal tree, now known as the Bodhi tree. Later that night the
Buddha was to realize the Four Noble Truths, achieving enlightenment
during the night of the full-moon day of the month of May, Vesakha at a
place now called Buddhagayā. After this enlightenment, the story
continues that the Buddha sought out five companions and delivered to
them his first sermon, the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta\textsuperscript{76} at Sarnath.
The Buddha taught that those in search of enlightenment should not
follow the two extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification.
Avoiding these two extremes, the Tathāgata discovers the middle path
leading to vision, to knowledge, to calmness, to awakening, and to
Nibbāna. This middle path is known as the Noble Eightfold Path, and
consists of right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right
living, right endeavor, right mindfulness, and right concentration. This is
the fundamental framework of the Buddhist teaching which came out
form the very first step of the Buddha’s lifework.

The traditional story of the Buddha, like those of most saints and
heroes of ancient days, has suffered much at the hand of higher criticism.
Some of the references to him in those parts of the canon which purport
to give his teachings verbatim are by no means reliable. Even the
“Sermon of the Turning of the Wheel of the Law”, which is said to be the

\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Ibid.}, p.48.
\textsuperscript{76} BD. IV, p.15.
first sermon preached after the Buddha’s enlightenment, and which is the basic teaching of all Buddhist sects, is dubious authenticity, and in the form in which it is not among the earliest parts of the canon. Despite such contentious facts, it is believed that the Buddha started his Dhamma missionary by delivering the first discourse.

For forty five years of his life, the Buddha is said to have traveled in the Gangetic Plain, teaching his doctrine and discipline to an extremely diverse range of people—from nobles to outcaste street sweepers, mass murderers such as Aṅgulimāla and cannibals such as Āḷāvaka. This extended too many adherents of rival philosophies and religions. Thus the Buddha who regarded no wealth, no rank, no caste, came to the poor and the despised, as well as to the rich and the noble, urging them to affect their own salvation by a pure and unblemished life. Virtue opened the path of honor to high and low alike; no distinction was known or recognized in the Buddhist community. Thousands of men and women responded to this appeal, and merged their caste inequalities in common love for their teacher and common emulation of his virtues. The Buddha founded the community of Buddhist monks and nuns along with laity to continue the dispensation after his Parinibbāna and made thousands of converts. His religion was open to all races and classes and had no caste structure. He was also subject to attack from opposition religious groups, including attempted murders and framings. The Buddha, however, did not give up his mission till the last day of his life.

79 Based on the Buddhist Literature, the people who visited the Buddha for discussion or had interviews with him or received instruction and guidance direct from him are approximately counted as 308 (Ibid., p.808-810).
80 43 monks, 13 nuns, 11 laymen and 10 laywomen are listed as the Buddha’s most eminent disciples as having possessed pre-eminence in some particular respect. (GS. I, pp. 16-21).
2.1.4. The Last Day

According to the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta which has been resorted to as the principal source of reference in most standard studies of the Buddha’s life though first committed to writing hundreds of years after his death, the Buddha, at the age of eighty, announced that he would soon reach parinibbāna or the final deathless state. At the scene of the Buddha’s parinibbāna, which took place in Kusinārā where Parinibbāna Stupa is located, the Buddha mentioned Dhamma as the teacher, stating that “The Truths, and the Rules of the Order, which I have set forth and laid down for you all. Let them, after I am gone, be the Teacher to you”. “Behold now, brethren, I exhort you, saying: Decay is inherent in all component things. Work out your salvation with diligence,“ was the Buddha’s last word.

2.2. The Life of Lǎo Zǐ

2.2.1. The Birth

The principal source of information about Lǎo Zǐ’s life is a biography in Shǐ Jì, “Records of the Grand Historian” by Sī Mǎ Qiān. In the biography section of this book it is stated that Lǎo Zǐ

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82 DB. II, p.107.
83 Ibid., p.128.
85 The remains of the Parinivana Stupa and Parinivana Temple, when rediscovered, were covered in a 40 foot high mound of bricks surrounded by a dense thorny forest. General Alexander Cunningham, an archaeological surveyor, would prove the site to be that of Gautama Buddha’s passing. (Alexander Cunningham, The Ancient Geography of India: The Buddhist Period, London: Trubner and Co., 1871, pp.430-433).
86 DB. II, p.171.
87 Ibid., p.173.
(老子) was born in the hamlet Qū Rén (曲仁) “Good Man’s Bend,” Lì Xiāng (厲鄉) “Grinding County,” Kǔ Xiàn (苦縣) “Thistle District,” of Chǔ (楚) “Bramble land.” His family was Lǐ (李) gentry “Plum.” His proper name was Ēr (耳) “Ear,” his posthumous title Bó Yáng (伯陽) “Prince Positive,” his appellation Dān (聃) “Long-lobed.” An equally important shrine in the history of the veneration of Lǎo Zǐ lies far to the northeast of Chéng Dū (成都), at Lù Yì (鹿邑), Lǎo Zǐ’s putative birthplace. It is, at this site, the Tài Qīng Gōng (太清宮), Palace of Grand Clarity, that Emperor Huán (桓) of the Later Han dynasty is known to have authorized sacrifices to Lǎo Zǐ in the years 165–166. An inscription called Lǎozi Míng (老子銘), written by Pien-Shao in 165 C.E. not only describes the sacrificial procedures but also documents the understanding people had of Lǎo Zǐ at the time.

This inscription begins with a summary of the facts known about the Lǎo Zǐ, repeats the account of Shǐ Jì (史記) and gives a concrete description of Lǎo Zǐ’s birthplace. Emperor Wén (文), 541-604 C.E., the founder and first emperor Suí Dynasty (隋朝), refurbished the Tài Qīng temple at “Lǎo Zǐ’s birthplace,” and ordered a great literary figure, the official Xué Dào Héng (學道衡), to compose an inscription text which closely parallels the Lǎozi Míng, wherein the Emperor Huán first hailed

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89 Based on the finds of the archaeological project at the Tai-qing Temple site in Lu-yi County, Henan Province, the Archaeological Institute of Henan Province reached the preliminary conclusion in the summer of 1997 confirming that Lǎo Zi was born at the Tai-qing Temple, Lu-yi County of Henan Province, known as the Quren Village, Lai Township, Hu County of the State of Chu in the Spring and Autumn period. (Chichung Huang, *Tao Te Ching: A literal Translation with Notes and Commentary*, California: Asian Humanities Press, 2003, p. 25).
the divinized Lǎo Zǐ in 159 C.E. In the stone tablet the birth of Lǎo Zǐ was mentioned thus:

Then did the True Man get his birth,
As ‘neath the Bear the star shone down.
All dragon gifts his person graced;
Like the stork’s plumage was his hair.
The complicated he resolved, the sharp made blunt,
The mean rejected, and the generous chose;
In brightness like the sun and moon,
And lasting as the heaven and earth.

Few scholars today would subscribe fully to the Shǐ Jì report. Indeed, it contains virtually nothing that is demonstrably factual, and there is no choice but to acknowledge the likely fictional nature of the traditional Lǎo Zǐ’s figure. Such Disagreements abound on every front, including the name Lǎo Zǐ itself. Although the majority takes “Lǎo Zǐ” to mean “Old Master,” some scholars believe that “Lǎo” is a surname. In many chapters of Zhuāng Zǐ, when Master Zhuāng mentions the Old Master’s name, he uses Lǎo Zǐ and Lao-Tan alternatively. These instances irrefutably verify that Lao-Tan was Lǎo Zǐ’s alias. The story of Lǎo Zǐ reflects a conflation of different legends. Popular legends say that he was conceived when his mother gazed upon a falling star, stayed in the womb for sixty two years, and was born when his mother leaned against a plum tree. He accordingly emerged a grown man with a full

94 TT. II, James Legge, (tr.), p. 317.
grey beard and long earlobes, which are a symbol of wisdom and long life.  

The various texts add new information about Lǎo Zǐ’s legend, expending the beginning of his life to include his identity with the Tao, creation of the world, and periodic descent as “teacher of dynasties,” embellishing his birth by increasing his time in the worm and giving him the physiognomy of a sage, and extending his life after the emigration by either having him wander west and convert the barbarians to his teaching known as Buddhism or by ascending back to heaven and returning to reveal various Taoist teachings in China.  

However, it is clear that by 100 B.C.E. if not earlier, Lǎo Zǐ was already shrouded in legends and that Sī Mǎ Qiān could only exercise his judgment as an historian to put together a report that made sense to him, based on the different and sometimes competing sources at his disposal. Apart from a very meagre notice of his life in the “Records of the Grand Historian” which was uninformative and ambiguous, history reveals very little about him, and gives no information whatever connected with even such basic data as parentage, date of birth, childhood, education, or youth.

### 2.2.2. The Chronology

The Date of Lǎo Zǐ’s birth is the third year of the Emperor Ding-Wang (周定王) of the Zhōu dynasty (606-586 B.C.E), which corresponds to the year 604 B.C.E. The earliest reliable reference to Lǎo Zǐ is found in the Records of the Grand Historian, which combines three stories. In the first, Lǎo Zǐ was said to be a contemporary of Confucius (551–479 BC). In the second, Lǎo Zǐ was Lǎo-Lái-Zǐ (老來子) “Old Master”, also a

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contemporary of Confucius, who wrote a book in 15 parts. In the third, Lǎo Zǐ was the Grand Historian and astrologer Lǎo-Dān (老聃) “Old Long-ears”, who lived during the reign (384–362 BC) of Duke Xiàn (獻公) of Qín. G.G. Alexander sketches the timeline of historical events: “A comparison of dates will show that Lǎo Zǐ was born fifty-five years before the birth of Confucius and thirty-five before Pythagoras, whilst Sakya Muni was laying the foundations of a religion which was to be professed by myriads, though the purity of his doctrines was, in the course of time, to be so encrusted and overgrown with puerile superstitions, that the teaching of the great Indian religious reformer is scarcely to be recognized.”

2.2.3. The Lifeworks

In “Records of the Grand Historian” the career of Lǎo Zǐ was simply stated that “In Zhōu he was in charge of the secret archives as state historian.” James Legge who translated the stone tablet of the temple of Lǎo Zǐ, highlighted Lǎo Zǐ’s work thus: “From the time of Fu-Hsi down to that of the Kau dynasty, in uninterrupted succession, dynasty after dynasty, his person appeared, but with changed names. In the times of kings Wan and Wu he discharged the duties, of Curator of the Royal Library, and of the Recorder under the Pillar. Later on in that dynasty he filled different offices, but did not change his appearance.” Lǎo Zǐ had received the appointment of a Register or Historiographer at the Imperial Count of Zhōu in the city of Loyang where the greater portion of his life was spent in study and in the performance of the duties of his office. The

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102 TT. II, James Legge (tr.), p. 313.
duties he had to perform at the Imperial court were regarded as of the very highest importance, and belonged to an office which dated from the earliest historical period.

Under the two first dynasties the number of officials employed as “Historiographers” was limited to “the Historiographer of the Right” and “the Historiographer of the Left,”—the duty of the former was to register the Imperial edicts and commands, and to take note of such matters as might more especially appertain to the Emperor and his ministers and the duty of the letter was to record all occurrences and events which might bear upon or illustrate the instruction and general condition of the people. During the dynasty of Zhōu the number of these officials is said to have been increased to seven:—The first had to take cognizance of, and record, all that concerned the general government of the Empire; the second, everything which might be connected with the feudatory states; the third, all observations and calculations connected with astronomy; the fourth, the noting down of all calamities, unusual events, and phenomena; the fifth, the registration of all edicts, ordinances, and legal enactments; the sixth, to chronicle all the incidents connected with the royal progresses and expeditions, and to tabulate all information concerning foreigners, including notices of, and translations from, their books; the seventh had entrusted to him the preparation of memorial notices of the Emperor and members of the Imperial family. Though there is no record of particular department Lǎo Zǐ belonged, he may have been attached to more than one possibly at the commencement of his career. This reportedly allowed him broad access to the works of the Yellow Emperor and other classics of the time.

In “Records of the Grand Historian” it is stated that Lǎo Zǐ cultivated Tao and virtue. He taught that one should efface oneself and be without fame in the world. The stories assert that Lǎo Zǐ u never opened a formal school, but he nonetheless attracted a large number of students and loyal disciples. There are numerous variations of a story depicting Confucius consulting Lǎo Zǐ about rituals. The interview of Confucius and Lǎo Zǐ runs thus: “Confucius once traveled to Zhōu because he wished to ask Lǎo Zǐ about rites. Lǎo Zǐ said: “The sages you speak about have long withered along with their bones. Also, when a gentleman attains proper timelines, he rides in a carriage; when his time has not come, he wanders about with the wind. I have heard that a good merchant fills his storehouses but appears to have nothing; a true gentleman is overflowing with virtue but looks as if he was fool. Give up your prideful airs and your manifold desires, get rid of your stiff deportment and your lascivious thought. All these do you no good at all. I have nothing else to tell you.” At the time of his interview with Confucius, Lǎo Zǐ must have been approaching his ninetieth year and he had reached a very advanced age when he decided on leaving the declining territory of Zhōu. On arriving at the frontier of the State, he was prevailed upon, by the Warden of the Passes, to stay his steps, until such time as he had committed to writing the opinions, which it is quite evident had already gained him a widespread reputation. Thereupon Lǎo Zǐ wrote a book of two parts consisting of five thousand and odd words, in which he discussed the concepts of reason and virtue. Such was the origin of the Tao-Te-Ching, Lǎo Zǐ’s arguably outstanding work of all time.

2.2.4. The Last Days

In “Records of the Grand Historian”, it is stated that no one knows where Lǎo Zǐ died. In the inscription for Lǎo Zǐ, “Lǎozi Míng,” it is stated that Lǎo Zǐ was born from primordial energy, came down to earth, and eventually ascended back to the heavenly realm as an immortal. In his namesake book Chuang-Tzu mentioned a story about Lǎo Zǐ’s death describing the funerals of the master to which many grieving disciples attended. It is the major problem to identify the historical documents and legendary illusions which overshadow the reality of Lǎo Zǐ. Even though it is not possible to attain the accuracy of his death, Lǎo Zǐ has never ceased to be generally respected in all circles in China. To the people he was a saint or a god and to the Taoists he was an emanation of the Tao and one of their greatest divinities.

3. The Establishment and Development of Buddhism and Taoism

3.1. Phases of Development in Buddhism and Taoism

Buddhism began around the fifth or fourth century B.C.E. as a small community that developed at a certain distance, both self-perceived and real, from other contemporary religious communities, as well as from the society, civilization, and culture with which it coexisted. Thus, the Buddhism of this period was characterized as “sectarian.” The primary factor that expresses Buddhism’s emergence as a new sectarian religion is the community’s recognition of the ascetic Gautama as the Buddha who

109 Ibid.
111 TT. I, James Legge, (tr.), p. 201.
had reportedly uttered as a new and ultimate source of sacred authority. During the pre-Asokan period the Buddhist community was a specifically religious community only tangentially involved with issues of political order and social organization. Early Buddhists were so preoccupied with individual salvation, and the early monastic order so oriented toward “otherworldly” attainments, that early Buddhism’s sectarian character was intrinsic, rather than simply circumstantial.

Buddhism has never lost the imprint of the sectarian pattern that characterized its earliest history, largely because the sectarian pattern has been reasserted at various points in Buddhist history. But Buddhism did not remain a purely sectarian religion. With the reign of King Asoka, Buddhism entered a new phase of its history in which it became a “civilizational religion,” that is, a religion that was associated with a sophisticated high culture and that transcended the boundaries of local regions and politics. Asoka’s actual policies and actions represent only one aspect of his impact in facilitating the transition of Buddhism from a sectarian religion to a civilizational religion. The transformation of Buddhism into a civilizational religion also involved doctrinal and scholastic factors. Developments in the areas of symbolism, architecture, and ritual were also significant components in the transformation of Buddhism into a civilizational religion. By the beginning of the Common Era Buddhism’s civilizational character was well established in various areas of India and beyond. By the middle centuries of the first millennium C.E., Buddhism as a civilizational religion had reached a high level of development across Asia.

During the three centuries from the second century B.C.E. through the first century C.E. Buddhism became a powerful religious force in virtually all of India, from the southern tip of the peninsula to the Indo-Greek areas in the northwest, and in Sri Lanka and Central Asia as well.
New polities seeking to secure their control over culturally plural areas emulated Asoka’s example and adopted Buddhism as an imperial religion.¹¹⁴ During late Mauryan times the civilizational and imperial dimensions had not been clearly differentiated. However, by the beginning of the Common Era Buddhism had become a civilizational religion that transcended the various expressions of imperial Buddhism in particular geographical areas. For more than a thousand years, from the time of King Asoka to about the ninth century, Buddhism exhibited a civilizational form that began as pan-Indian and ultimately became pan-Asian in character. Like the sectarian pattern that preceded it, this civilizational pattern left an indelible mark on all subsequent Buddhist developments.

Buddhism never completely lost either its concern for inclusiveness or its distinctively international flavor. But beginning in about the fifth century the civilizational structure suffered increasingly severe disruptions, and a new pattern began to emerge. All across Asia, Buddhism was gradually transformed, through a variety of historical processes, into what it is called “cultural religion.” The transformation of Buddhism from a civilizational religion to a cultural religion depended on a fundamental realignment in the structure of the Buddhist community. Buddhism expressed itself as a cultural religion through different kinds of ritual at different levels of society. It was through these ritual forms, more than in any other way, that it became an integral component in the life of different Asian peoples, molding cultures in accordance with its values and being itself molded in the process. Once Buddhism became established as a cultural religion, it was these rituals that enabled it to maintain its position and influence, and to do so century after century on

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp.1091-1092.
Buddhism as a whole has not yet developed a distinctive character in the modern period. On the contrary, there is a great deal of continuity between the historical development of Buddhism and the current responses and innovations. Thus the sectarian, civilizational, and cultural patterns continue to exert a predominant influence in the evolution of Buddhist tradition. For more than two millennia Buddhism has been a powerful religious, political, and social force, first in India, its original homeland, and then in many other lands. It remains a powerful religious, political, and cultural force in many parts of the world today.

The development of Taoism stretches throughout Chinese history. It originates prehistoric China and its doctrine and associated practices were revised and refined throughout the ages. According to Taoist tradition, the religion was first developed by Lǎo Zǐ who authored the Tao Te Ching. Taoism originally began as a philosophy, or a method for seeking knowledge and wisdom. Its basic concepts and beliefs are established in the Tao Te Ching. In the second century B.C.E. philosophical Taoism, Dào Jīā (道家) gave rise religious Taoism, which also included ancient folk beliefs involving the worship of dead ancestors, the nature gods, and the search for immortality, or life after death. Religious Taoism is also known as Dào Jiào (道教). During this account there is the question of the relationship between “philosophical Taoism” and “religious Taoism”. This distinction is much like the distinction between contemplative Taoism and the kind of Taoism seen as purposeful or practical Taoism, concerned with the achievement of longevity. Thus, it is possible and appropriate to add another constituent to the definition of Taoism: the combination of or addition to techniques

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115 Ibid., pp.1089-1098.
of immortality, with the ultimate aim of achieving an experience that is at least religious if not mystical. In the same way, it is arbitrary to separate the empirical approach to longevity techniques from the theoretical thought. Nothing objective can be said about such a separation since there is always tendency toward a dialogue between empiricism and theory: each in turn leads and advances the other, in a series of confirmations and refutations.\textsuperscript{117}

In early Han dynasty, one of the earliest religious Taoist movements was Huáng-Lǎo-Dào (黃老道) “The Way of the Yellow Emperor and the Old Master” formed by the Huang-Lao masters, who were devoted both to Lǎo Zǐ and to the first emperor of China. The Huang-Lao masters blended the ideas of Wú Wéi (無為), or effortless action, with spiritual techniques for achieving immortality. They became powerful advisers at the court of the Hán Dynasty (202 B.C.E. - 220 C.E), despite the fact that Confucianism had been declared the state religion.\textsuperscript{118}

The next major development in religious Taoism came with the revelations, or teachings that came directly from Lǎo Zǐ, given to Zhāng Dào Líng (張道陵) in 142 CE. He became the first of the great Celestial Masters, and his religious movement became known as the Tiān Shī Dào (天師道) “Way of the Celestial Masters.” This religious movement also became known as Wǔ Dòu Mǐ Dào (五斗米道), the Way of the Five Pecks of Rice, so named because of a donation or household tax of that amount of rice given annually to the priests of the religion. Zhāng Dào Líng’s major message was that the world-order would soon come to an end, and be succeeded by an era of “Great Peace,” (Tài Píng, 太平). The Celestial Masters continued to grow in power and number. In the mid second century C.E., under the administration of Zhāng’s grandson, Taoism


found official recognition as a religion and Lǎo Zǐ received imperial recognition as a divinity.\textsuperscript{119}

The earliest commentary on the Tao-Te-Ching is that of Hé Shàng Gōng (河上公), the “Riverside Master”, a legendary figure depicted as a teacher to the Hàn emperor Wén.\textsuperscript{120} The Yīn (陰) and Yáng (陽) and five elements theories date from this time, but were not yet integrated into Taoism.\textsuperscript{121} The name Dào Jiā (道家) comes from the Hán Dynasty. In Sima Qian’s history it refers to immortals; in Liu Xiang it refers to Lǎo Zǐ and Zhuāng Zǐ. Dào Jiào (道教) came to be applied to the religious movements in later times. The two terms were used interchangeably until modern times.

During the Three Kingdoms Period 220-265 C.E., the movement of Neo-Taoism, Xuán Xué (玄學), “Mysterious Wisdom” which is the focal school of thought in Chinese philosophy came to arise and it focused on the texts of Lǎo Zǐ and Zhuāng Zǐ. Xuanxue members, such as Wang Bi, neo-Taoist philosopher were not religious in any sense and they combined elements of Confucianism and Taoism to reinterpret the Yì Jīng (易經), Tao-Te-Ching, and Zhuāng Zǐ.\textsuperscript{122} In the third and fourth centuries Taoist alchemist Gé Hóng (葛洪), also known as Bào Pū Zǐ (抱朴子), “Master Embracing Simplicity” was active and he had great influence on later Taoism.\textsuperscript{123} Major Taoist scriptures were produced during this time period, including The Shàng Qīng (上清) “Supreme Clarity” (365–370 C.E.) and Líng Bǎo (靈寶) “Sacred Treasure” scriptures (397–402 C.E.) Táo Hóng Jǐng (陶弘景), who is considered to be true founder of Shàng Qīng school, allowed for the creation of Shàng Qīng Taoism as a popular religion. The Líng Bǎo scriptures added some

\textsuperscript{121} \textit{Ibid.}, p.7.
\textsuperscript{123} \textit{Ibid.}, p.78.
Buddhist elements such as an emphasis on universal salvation.\textsuperscript{124} Also during the Six Dynasties period, the Celestial Master movement re-emerged in two distinct forms. The Northern Celestial Masters were founded in 424 century by Kòu Qiān Zhī (寇謙之) and a Taoist theocracy was established that lasted until 450 C.E. The Southern Celestial Masters were likely made of those adherents who fled Sichuan and others who fled from Luoyang after its fall in 311 C.E. These various followers of The Way of the Celestial Master coalesced to form a distinct form of Taoism known as the Southern Celestial Masters, who lasted as a distinct movement into the fifth century.\textsuperscript{125} In the fifth century reforms in the Way of the Celestial Masters led to its acceptance by even more of the higher classes of Chinese society. The reforms brought the religion more into line with the level of organization that Buddhists, with their emphasis on order in daily life, practiced. This organizational change helped make Taoism the state religion of North China for a time. Similar reforms happened in the south, with court ritual added to the religion to make it more acceptable.\textsuperscript{126}

The Táng Dynasty (618–907 C.E.) marked a high point for religious Taoism. The founder of the dynasty, Lǐ Yuān (李淵), claimed to be a descendant of Lǎo Zǐ. Though Taoism gained official status at that time it was forced to compete with Confucianism and Buddhism, its major rivals, for patronage and rank. Emperor Xuán Zōng (玄宗) (685–762 C.E.), who ruled at the height of the Táng, wrote commentaries on texts from all three of these traditions. He sent monks to collect further teachings to add to the Taoist Canon which is recognized as the second Dào Zàng (道藏). This marks the beginning of a long-lived tendency within imperial China, in which the government supported all three

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., p.153.
movements. Taoist texts, along with those of Confucianism, were used for civil service examinations under the Táng. During the Táng Dynasty, Zhèng Yī Dào (正一道), the Way of Complete Orthodoxy movement emerged as a transformation of the earlier Tiān Shī Dào movement. Like Tiān Shī Dào, the leader of, Taoism was known as the Celestial Master.

During the Sòng dynasty Several Sòng emperors, most notably Huī Zōng (徽宗) (1100-1126 CE.) were active in promoting Taoism, collecting Taoist texts and publishing editions of the third Dào Zàng. The school of Taoism named Quán Zhēn (全真) was founded during this period. The Sòng Dynasty saw an increasingly complex interaction between the elite traditions of organized Taoism as practiced by ordained Taoist ministers, Dào Shì (道士) and the local traditions of folk religion as practiced by a new class of non-ordained ritual experts known as Fǎ Shī (法师).

While Taoism suffered a significant setback in 1281 when all copies of the Dào Zàng were ordered burned, this holocaust gave Taoism a chance to renew itself. Nèi Dān (内丹), a form of internal alchemy or spiritual alchemy, became a major emphasis of the Quán Zhēn sect, whose practitioners followed a monastic model inspired by Buddhism. One of its leaders, Qiū Chǔ Jī (丘處機) became a teacher of Mongol emperor Genghis Khan, before the establishment of the Yuán Dynasty (1271–1368 CE.). Before the end of the dynasty, the Celestial Masters sect and Buddhism again gained preeminence.
The first Míng ruler, Tài Zǔ (太祖) (1368–1399 C.E.), attempted to manage Daoism by establishing various agencies governing the religion, regulating the number of monks and nuns who could be ordained, and mandating the maximum age at which they could do so. Tài Zǔ favored the Zhèng Yī order, but tolerated the Quán Zhēn movement.132 In 1406, Míng emperor Zhū Dì (朱棣) commanded that all Taoist texts be collected and combined into a new version of the fourth Dào Zàng. The text was finally finished in 1447, and took nearly forty years to complete.133 The fall of the Míng Dynasty and the subsequent establishment of the Qīng Dynasty by the Manchus were blamed by some literati on religion, specifically Taoism. They sought to regain power by advocating a return to Confucian orthodoxy in a movement called Hàn Xué (漢學), “National Studies.” This movement returned the Confucian classics to favor and completely rejected Taoism. During the eighteenth century, the imperial library was constituted, but excluded virtually all Taoist books.134

During the Qīng dynasty (1644–1911 CE.), strict imperial control, standardization of Taoist traditions under the aegis of Zhèng Yī and Quán Zhēn, and growing lay involvement were intensified. While Qing rulers gave precedence to the Zhèng Yī order in state ritual, they also appreciated the organizational strengths of Quán Zhēn, with its strict rules for clerics. Over the course of the dynasty, the Longmen branch of Quán Zhēn rose to domination.135

In modern China, the official body governing Taoist practice is the Chinese Taoist Association, formed in 1956 and officially approved by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 1957. Operating from Bái Yún Guān

the White Cloud Temple in Beijing, the organization coordinates Taoist practice and controls the initiation of priests and nuns. At first, the association, following Qīng precedent, recognized only Zhèng Yī, Celestial Master and Quán Zhēn traditions. During the government-sponsored mass movements of the 1960s and 1970s, all Taoist holdings were returned to state control. Following the Cultural Revolution, and particularly from 1979 forward, governmental control of religious practice has relaxed considerably and many Taoists began reviving their traditions throughout the country. Subsequently, many of the more scenic temples and monasteries have been repaired and reopened. This is an exuberant growth of Taoism on all aspects of the religion.136 In the twenty-first century Numerous Taoist religious sects survive in China and on the island of Taiwan. Both countries have national Taoist associations, and all schools and sects of Taoism regard Zhāng Dào líng as the First Celestial Master. In the early twenty-first century, however, all Taoists followed the words of the current Celestial Master. Taoism has spread to other Asian countries, including Thailand, Vietnam, Korea, and Japan and has reached the West.137

3.2. Brief Survey of the Buddhist and Taoist Canons

3.2.1. The Buddhist Canon

The canonical literature of Buddhism has a number of characteristics that make it unique among the religious scriptures of the world. While it is possible to witness the widespread uses of the Buddhist canons, the more difficult matter is the way in which such a massive

136 Ibid., p.2189.
amount of information was assembled and codified. The sophistication of the content indicates that the canons were produced as part of an intensive training and study environment. In the beginning the texts were preserved orally and were recited for the followers by monks. These recitations were probably of two types. The first was the recitation of the Dhamma—the remembered words of the Buddha—identified by the preamble, “Thus have I heard.” In addition to these types of teachings, later to be codified as Sutta, there was a second division that related to Vinaya, the rules of conduct for those who lived by monastic rule. Eventually the canon was expanded to include a third category called Abhidhamma, a special exegetic literature that organized the teachings found in the suttas into numerical categories.\textsuperscript{138} Given this tripartite division, the Buddhists referred to the canon as a whole as the Tipitaka, Three baskets:

1. Vinaya Piṭaka, the Basket of Discipline
2. Sutta Piṭaka, the Basket of Discourses
3. Abhidhamma Piṭaka, the Basket of Higher Expositions

\textbf{3.2.1.1. Vinaya Piṭaka}

The Vinaya Piṭaka is made up of rules of discipline laid down for regulating the conduct of the Buddha’s disciples who have been admitted as bhikkhus and bhikkhunis into the Order. These rules embody authoritative injunctions of the Buddha on modes of conduct and restraints on both physical and verbal actions. They deal with transgressions of discipline, and with various categories of restraints and

admonitions in accordance with the nature of the offence.\textsuperscript{139} The Vinaya Piṭaka outlines the core Buddhist ethical teachings, ordination procedures, and community ritual guidelines. While the ethical and social behavior models have been consistent, the expression and structure of the Vinaya Piṭaka have been reformulated, expanded and interpreted. The pressures of rapid growth and social involvement brought about changes in Vinaya Piṭaka. These changes mark significant differences in Buddhist intellectual and social history in different cultures, times, and places.\textsuperscript{140}

The Vinaya Piṭaka is made up of five books:\textsuperscript{141}

1. Pārājika, the Major Discipline
2. Pācittiya, the Minor Discipline
3. Mahāvagga, the Greater Division
4. Cūḷavagga, the Smaller Division
5. Parivāra, the Accessory

Vinaya-Piṭaka is also divided into four partitions: Suttavibhaṅga, Khandhakas, Parivāra, and Pātimokkha. The first is subdivided into Pārājika, and Pācittiya. The second comprises Mahāvagga, and Cūḷavagga.\textsuperscript{142}

Pārājika Pāḷi which is Book I of the Vinaya Piṭaka gives an elaborate explanation of the important rules of discipline concerning Pārājika and Saṃghādisesa, as well as Aniyata and Nissaggiya which are minor offences. The Pācittiya Pāḷi which is Book II of the Vinaya Piṭaka deals with the remaining sets of rules for the bhikkhus, namely, the Pācittiya, the Pāṭidesanīya, Sekhiya, Adhikaraṇasamatha and the

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corresponding disciplinary rules for the bhikkhunis. The Mahāvagga Pāli which is Book III of the Vinaya Piṭaka, deals with all those matters relating to the Saṁgha which have not been dealt with in the first two books. Mahāvagga Pāli, made up of sections known as Khandhakas.

Cūḷavagga Pāli which is Book IV of the Vinaya Piṭaka continues to deal with more rules and procedures for institutional acts or functions known as Saṁghakamma. The twelve sections in this book deal with rules for offences. The last two sections describe two important events of historical interest, namely, the holding of the first Synod at Rājagaha and of the second Synod at Vesāli. Parivāra Pāli which is Book V and the last book of the Vinaya Piṭaka serves as a kind of manual. It is compiled in the form of a catechism, enabling the reader to make an analytical survey of the Vinaya Piṭaka. All the rules, official acts, and other matters of the Vinaya are classified under separate categories according to subjects dealt with. The Parivāra Pāli provides general principles and guidance in the spirit of which all the Saṁgha Vinicchaya proceedings are to be conducted for settlement of monastic disputes.143

3.2.1.2. Sutta Piṭaka

As the Vinaya Piṭaka is the best source of information relating to the ancient Buddhist Order and the monk-life, so also is the Sutta Piṭaka or “the Basket of Discourses”, the main source for the Doctrine of the Buddha as expounded in argument and dialogues and also for that of his earliest disciples. The Sutta Piṭaka contains prose dialogues, legends, pithy sayings, and verses. It contains, in prose and verse, the most important products of Buddhist literature grouped in five collections

named Nikāyas. The first four of these consists of suttas or discourses which are either speeches of the Buddha or dialogues in prose occasionally diversified by verses. These four are cognate and homogeneous in character. A number of suttas reappear in two or more of them. There is little difference in the doctrines they contain. The same mode of discussion prevails in these Nikāyas. The Sutta Piṭaka is divided into five Nikāyas:  

1. Dīgha, the Long Discourses  
2. Majjhima, the Middle-length Discourses  
3. Saṃyutta, the Connected Discourses  
4. Aṅguttara, the Numerical Discourses  
5. Khuddaka, the Minor Collective Discourse

The Dīgha Nikāya or Dīgha Saṃgaha is the first book of the Sutta-Piṭaka and is a collection of long discourses. It is divided into three parts, Sīlakkhandha, Mahāvagga, and Pāṭheyya or Pāṭhikavagga. It contains thirty-four suttas, each of which deals fully with one or several points of Buddhist doctrine.  

The Majjhima Nikāya is the second book of the Sutta Piṭaka. It is known as the “Middle Collection” or the collection of discourses of medium length. It is divided into three books each consisting of fifty suttas, paññāsas though the third book containing two suttas in excess of fifty. This Nikāya deals with almost all the points of Buddhist religion. The suttas of this Nikāya throw light not only on the life of Buddhist monks but also on such subjects as Brahmaṇa sacrifices, various forms of asceticism, the relation of the Buddha to the Jainas, and the social and political conditions prevailing at the time. The four noble truths of the

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Buddhist religion, the doctrine of form or action, refutation of the soul theories, different modes of meditation, etc., are discussed in this Nikāya.\footnote{Ibid., pp.115-116.}

The Saṃyutta Nikāya is the third Nikāya of the Sutta Piṭaka. This collection of discourses has 7762 suttas of varied length, generally short, arranged in a special order according to subject matter into five major divisions, Sagāthā Vagga, Nidāna Vagga, Khandha Vagga, Saḷāyatana Vagga and Mahā Vagga. Each major Vagga is divided into fifty-six groups known as Saṃyutta related subjects grouped together.\footnote{U Ko Lay, Op. cit., 1991, p.82.}

The Aṅguttara Nikāya is the fourth Nikāya of the Sutta Piṭaka. This Collection of Discourses, containing 9557 short suttas is divided into eleven divisions known as nipātas. Each Nipāta is divided again into groups called vaggas which usually contain ten suttas. The discourses are arranged in progressive numerical order, each Nipāta containing suttas with items of Dhamma, beginning with one item and moving up by units of one till there are eleven items of Dhamma in each Sutta of the last Nipāta. Hence the name Aṅguttara meaning ‘increasing by one item’, the first Nipāta, Ekaka Nipāta, provides in each sutta single items of Dhamma called the Ones, the second Nipāta, Duka Nipāta, contains in each Sutta two items of Dhamma called the Twos, and the last Nipāta, Ekadasaka Nipāta, is made up of suttas with eleven items of Dhamma in each, called the Elevens.\footnote{Ibid., p.107.}

The Khuddaka Nikāya is the fifth and the last division of the Sutta Piṭaka. Khuddaka Nikāya contains the largest number of treatises and the most numerous categories of Dhamma. Although the word “Khuddaka” literally means “minor” or “small”, the actual content of this collection can by no means be regarded as minor, including as it does the two major
divisions of the Piṭaka, namely, the Vinaya Piṭaka and Abhidhamma Piṭaka according to one system of classification.\textsuperscript{149} Its contents are of different times. Some of its parts belong to the earliest period while others to the latest stratum of the Pāli Canon. It is composed for the most part in verse, and contains all the most important works of Buddhist poetry.\textsuperscript{150} The lists of treatises are as follows:

1. Khuddakapāṭha, the Text of the Minor Sayings
2. Dhammapada, Verses on Dhamma
3. Udāna, Verses of uplift
4. Itivuttaka, As it was said
5. Suttanipāta, the Group of Discourses
6. Vimānavatthu, Stories of the Peta Mansions
7. Petavatthu, Stories of the Departed
8. Theragātha, Psalms of the Brethren
9. Therīgātha, Psalms of the Sisters
10. Jātaka, Stories of the Buddha’s Former Birth
11. Mahāniddesa, the Major Exposition
12. Cūḷaniddesa, the Minor Exposition
13. Paṭisaṃbhidamagga, the Path of Discrimination
14. Apadāna, an Anthology of Legends
16. Cariyāpiṭaka, the Basket of Conduct
17. Milindapañha, Questions of King Milinda
18. Petakopadesa, the Methodology of Piṭaka
19. Nettipakaraṇa, the book of Guidance

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., p.122.
3.2.1.3. Abhidhamma Piṭaka

Abhidhamma is the third great division of the Piṭaka. It is a huge collection of systematically arranged, tabulated and classified doctrines of the Buddha, representing the quintessence of his Teaching. Abhidhamma means Higher Teaching or Special Teaching; it is unique in its abstruseness, analytical approach, immensity of scope and conduciveness to one’s liberation.\textsuperscript{151} The Abhidhamma Piṭaka comprises seven works:

1. Dhammasaṅgaṇī, Enumeration of Dhamma
2. Vibhaṅga, The Analysis
3. Dhātkathā, Discourse on Elements
4. Puggalapaññatti, A Designation of Human Types
5. Kathāvatthu, Points of Controversy
6. Yamaka, The Pairs
7. Paṭṭhāna, Conditional Relations

The Dhammasaṅgaṇī, the first book of the Abhidhamma, and the Paṭṭhāna, the last book, are the most important of the seven treatises of Abhidhamma, providing as they do the quintessence of the entire Abhidhamma. The Dhammasaṅgaṇī enumerates all the dhammas phenomena i.e., all categories of Nāma, namely, consciousness and mental concomitant, and Rūpa, corporeality. Having enumerated the phenomena, they are arranged under different heads to bring out their exact nature, function and mutual relationship both internally in our own being and with the outside world. The Dhammasaṅgaṇī begins with a complete list of heads called the Mātikā. The Mātikā serves as a classified table of mental constituents treated not only in the Dhammasaṅgaṇī but in the entire system of the Abhidhamma.

The second book of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, Vibhaṅga, together with the first book Dhammasaṅgaṇī and the third book of Dhātukathā, forms a closely related foundation for the proper and deep understanding of the Buddha’s Dhamma. Whereas Dhammasaṅgaṇī provides a bird’s eye view of the whole of the Tika and Duka groups with further systematic arrangements under classified heads, Vibhaṅga and Dhātukathā give a closer view of selected portions of those groups bringing out minute details. The Vibhaṅga is divided into eighteen Chapters, each dealing with a particular aspect of the Dhamma, its full analysis and investigation into each constituent. The arrangement and classification into groups and heads follow the same system as in the Dhammasaṅgaṇī. Vibhaṅga may therefore be regarded as complementary to Dhammasaṅgaṇī.

Dhātukathā studies how the dhammas listed in the Tikas and Dukas of the Mātikā are related to the three categories of Khandha, Āyatana and Dhātu in their complete distribution i.e., five khandhas, twelve āyatanas and eighteen dhātus. These are discussed in fourteen ways of analytical investigations which constitute the fourteen chapters of Dhātukathā. Although this third book of Abhidhamma Piṭaka is a small treatise, it ranks with the first two books forming an important trilogy, which must be thoroughly digested for the complete understanding of the Abhidhamma Vibhaṅga, the second book, has one complete chapter devoted to the analysis of dhātus, but the subject matter of Dhātu is so important that this separate treatise is devoted to it for a thorough consideration. The method of analysis here is different from that employed in the Vibhaṅga.

In the Puggalapaññatti individuals are given more weight and space. The first three books of the Abhidhamma investigate the absolute Truth of Dhamma in a planned system of detailed analysis employing
such terms as Khandha, Āyatana, Dhātu, Sacca and Indriya. These terms are mere designations which express things that exist in reality and are therefore classed as the conventional usage of the first type. To the second type of conventional usage belong such expressions as man, woman, deva, individual etc., which have no existence in reality, but nevertheless are essential for communication of thoughts. It becomes necessary therefore to distinguish between these two types of apparent truths. Different types of individuals are classified in ten chapters of the book.

Kathāvatthu, like Puggalapaññatti, falls outside the regular system of the Abhidhamma. It does not directly deal with the abstruse nature of the Dhamma. It is mainly concerned with wrong views such as Person exists, Self exists, Jīva exists which were prevalent even in the Buddha’s time, or wrong views such as ‘Arahant falls away from Arahantship’ which arose after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha. The style of compilation of this treatise is quite different from that of other treatises, written as it is in the form of dialogue between two imaginary debaters, one holding the heterodox views of different sects and the other representing the orthodox views.

Yamaka sets out to define and analyze the interrelationship of dhammas and puggalas as they exist in these three worlds, Sattaloka, Sañkhāraloka and Okāsaloka. This is accomplished in the form of pairs of questions, which gives it the title of Yamaka. Anuloma, the logical process of conversion and Paṭiloma, complete inversion is applied to determine the complete import and limit of a term in its relationship with the others. An equivocal nature of a term “Saṃsāra” is avoided by showing, through such arrangement of questions, how other meanings of the term do not fit for a particular consideration.
Paṭṭhāna, the seventh and last book of the Abhidhamma, is called the Mahā Pakaraṇa, the ‘Great Book’ announcing the supreme position it occupies and the height of excellence it has reached in its investigations into the ultimate nature of all the dhammas in the Universe.\textsuperscript{152}

3.2.2. The Taoist Canon

The Dào Zàng, (道藏) “Treasury of Tao,” or Taoist canon, is a vast collection of texts in a wide variety of genres that comprehensively define Taoism and its scriptural development through the ages. Along with revealed books, ritual texts, inspired poetry, and other religious documents, this library of the Tao contains works on subjects of broad interest to students of Chinese thought-philosophy, cosmology, medicine-as well as encyclopedic compendia, literary anthologies, and collected works of individual authors. At every turn, the Dào Zàng holds new and significant discoveries in store that are transforming our perceptions of Chinese religion and society. Throughout history the “Taoist Canon,” has suffered from the lack of official status, the lack of agreement about the contents across different Taoist sects, the tendency to include ever more works, much overlap among the works making it up, which copied constantly from each other, little coherence in content from one work to another, the inclusion of liturgical and meditational texts that make little sense without orally transmitted exegesis, rarely stable and often lost, the lack of adequate indexing, and a tradition that regarded the details of Taoist practice as secret, so that different families transmitted different collections of Taoist books, and none wanted to have their versions

\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., pp.141-148.
published. Though the Dào Zàng “Treasury of Tao” that is widely called “Taoist canon,” it should be thought of not as a sacred “canon” but rather as an ever-expanding library of materials in which Taoists have found value. There has never actually been a definitive collection of “canonical” scriptures that Taoists—of any period—have honored to the exclusion of “non-canonical” works, nor has there been any boundary between “sacred scripture” and other cherished texts. The Dào Zàng was originally compiled during the Jin, Táng, and Sòng dynasties. It can be traced at least seven different attempts, of which the first is perhaps the most influential, even though it is lost. The version surviving today was published during the Míng dynasty in 1444 CE. The Míng Dào Zàng includes almost 1500 texts. Following the example of the Buddhist Tipiṭaka, it is divided into three Dòng (洞), “caves” or “grottoes.” They are arranged from “highest” to “lowest:

1. Authenticity Grotto, Dònghén (洞真部): Texts of Supreme Purity
2. Mystery Grotto, Dòng Xuán (洞玄部): Texts of Sacred Treasure
3. Spirit Grotto, Dòng Shén (洞神部): Texts of Three Sovereigns

These Three Grottoes, Sān Dòng (三洞) are regarded as the major groups of Canonical Texts. Each of the above Three Grottoes has the following twelve chapters:

1. Main texts, Běn Wén (本文類)
2. Sacred Symbols, Shén Fú (神符類)
3. Commentaries, Yù Jué (玉訣類)

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154 Ibid., p.30.
155 Ibid., p.36.
4. Diagrams and illustrations, Líng Tú (靈圖類)
5. Histories and genealogies, Pǔ Lù (譜錄類)
6. Precepts, Jiè Lǜ (戒律類)
7. Ceremonies, Wēi Yí (威儀類)
8. Rituals, Fāng Fǎ (方法類)
9. Miscellaneous Arts, Xiàng Shù (像術類)
10. Biographies, Jì Zhuàn (記傳類)
11. Hymns, Zàn Sòng (讚頌類)
12. Memorials, Biǎo Zòu (表奏類)

3.2.2.1. The Major groups of Canonical Texts

The first grotto, Dòng Zhēn (洞真部), is concerned mainly with meditation and is the highest phase of initiation for a Taoist master. It includes books of the Shàng Qīng “Consummate Purity” School and apparitions of Wèi Huá Cún (魏華存), founder of Shàng Qīng. Besides, it also included here are some Líng Bǎo charms and liturgies, as well as the Yellow Emperor’s Classic of Esoteric Charms, Huángdì Yīnfú Jīng (黃帝陰符經).

The second grotto, Dòng Xuán (洞玄部), is concerned mainly with rituals and is the middle phase of initiation for a Taoist master. It includes the Líng Bǎo “Spiritual Treasure,” scriptures and some Shàng Qīng texts are also to be found here, including the Huángtíng Nèijǐng Yù Jīng (黃庭內景玉經).

The third grotto, Dòng Shén (洞神部), is concerned mainly with exorcisms and is the lowest phase of initiation for a Taoist master. This section originally included the “Scriptures of the Three Sovereigns” Sanhuang Jing (三皇經). In later canons this section includes the Tao Te

156 Ibid., p.21.
Ching, Zhuāng Zǐ, and related materials, as well miscellaneous later texts attributed to Lǎo Zǐ. In today’s canon this section also includes some Líng Bǎo texts, including the Běidòu Yánshēng Jīng (北斗延生經).

3.2.2.2. The Minor Groups of Canonical Texts

As well as the Three Grottoes there were Four Supplements that were added to the Canon. These were mainly taken from older core Taoist texts apart from one which was taken from an already established and separate philosophy known as Tiān Shī Dào, “Way of the Heavenly Masters.” The four supplements are:

1. Great Mystery, Tàixuán Bù (太玄部)
2. Great Peace, Tàipíng Bù (太平部)
3. Great Purity, Tài qīng Bù (太清部)
4. Orthodox One, Zhèngyì Bù (正一部)

The first one originally included the Tao-te-ching, Zhuāng Zǐ, and Liè Zǐ. It was moved to Dòng Zhēn group in Táng dynasty. In today’s canon this section is largely devoted to texts of Internal Alchemy, “spiritual alchemy” including the Cāntóng Qì (参同契) and the Huáng Dì Nèi Jīng (黃帝內經). The section also includes the Yúnjí Qīqiān (雲笈七籤) and some works of the External Alchemy, “chemical alchemy”. The second one includes the Tàipíng Jīng (太平経), as well as some Líng Bǎo charms and rituals.

The third one is largely given over in the modern canon to writers who are not normally classified as Taoists, including Mòzǐ (墨子), Sūnzǐ (孙子), Hán Fēi Zǐ (韓非子), etc. The “Treatise on Actions and their Retributions” Tàì Shàng Gǎnyìng Piān (太上感應篇), and the “The Sage Who Embraces Simplicity” Bàoǔ Zǐ (抱朴子) are also in this section.

157 Ibid., pp.14-17.
The fourth and final one includes the “Registers of the Classic Orthodox Practice” Zhèngyī Méngwēi Lù (正一盟威籙), used by the “Celestial Masters Sect” Tiān Shī Dào (天師道), as well as rituals and charms associated with Celestial Master Taoism. A few Shàng Qīng scriptures are also placed in this section.  

3.3. Various Schools in Buddhism and Taoism

3.3.1. Schools in Buddhism

The history of Buddhist schools depends upon reconstruction of the major events in the early history of Buddhism in India: the life of the Buddha; the communal recitations or councils; the so-called first schism; and the fragmentation of the monastic community after this initial schism. Virtually all later sources agree that the first schism within the early Buddhist community occurred with the separation of the Mahāsaṅgika, or “those of the great community,” from the remaining monks referred to as Sthaviras, or the “elders.” This spilt went on widening and in the course of time several sects came into existence out of those two primitive schools.

In the history of the succession of schools traditional sources maintain that eighteen schools: twelve sub-sects of Sthavira: Sthavira or Theravāda, Mahiṃsāsaka, Sabbattha, Kassapiya, Saṃkantika, Suttavāda, Dhammaguttika, Vijjiputtaka, Dhammutariya, Bhadrayāṇika, Chandāgārika, and Saṃmitiya and six of Mahāsaṅghika: Mahāsaṅgika,

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Gokulika, Paṇṇattivāda, Bahulikavāda, Ekavyohārika and Cetiyavāda.\textsuperscript{161}

In the early twenty-first century there exist three main types of Buddhism:

1. Theravāda School
2. Mahayāna School
3. Vajirayāna School

3.3.1.1. Theravāda School

Theravāda, “the Teaching of the Elders”, is the oldest surviving Buddhist school. It was founded in India. It is relatively conservative, and generally closest to early Buddhism.\textsuperscript{162} The Theravādan accounts of its own origins mention that it received the teachings that were agreed upon during the Third Buddhist Council, and these teachings were known as the Vibhajjavāda, “doctrine of analysis” group. Vibhajjavādins saw themselves as the continuation of orthodox Sthaviras, “teaching of the Elders,” and after the Third Council continued to refer to their school as the Sthaviras or Theras, “The Elders,” even though their doctrines were probably similar to the older Sthaviras but were not completely identical.\textsuperscript{163}

Theravada bases its practices and beliefs on the original teachings of the Buddha as gathered in the Pāli Canon and it is often recognized as the school most representative of early Buddhist doctrine and practice. Theravāda has a strict interpretation of the Buddha’s teachings and places great emphasis on the final step in the Eightfold Path which is considered to be the best way to attain enlightenment. Theravāda is most popular in Southeast Asia and is sometimes referred to as Southern Buddhism.

\textsuperscript{161} Mhv., Wilhelm Geiger, (tr.), p.26.
Theravāda is followed by 38 percent of Buddhists, or 124 million people, in the early twenty-first century. It is the main religious tradition in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos. It is also found in parts of China, Malaysia, and Vietnam.\textsuperscript{164}

3.3.1.2. Mahayāna School

The historical source of the name “Mahāyāna” is polemical and the origins of Mahāyāna are still not completely understood.\textsuperscript{165} It is believed that it originated in south India in the first century C.E.,\textsuperscript{166} or the first century B.C.E. Other scholars point to evidence that Mahāyāna originated in north-west India in the first century C.E. Some scholars say that Mahāyāna could have initially developed in the southeast of India as a non-monastic tradition and that later it underwent a process of monasticization and emerged in the north-west of India as a monastic movement.\textsuperscript{167} Mahayana Buddhism is sometimes called Northern Buddhism because it is most popular in parts of Asia north of India, such as China and Japan.

Three sources appear to have made significant contributions to the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism: the early Buddhist schools, biographical literature of the Buddha composed by people said to have belonged to “the vehicle that praised the Buddha,” and Stūpa worship.\textsuperscript{168} The commonly expressed misconception that Mahāyāna started as a lay-inspired movement is based on a selective reading of a very tiny sample of extant Mahāyāna sutra literature. A scholarly consensus about the

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origin of the Mahāyāna has not yet been reached, but it has been suggested that by the time Mahāyāna in India became mainstream in the 5th century C.E., it had become what it originally most strongly objected to a fully landed, sedentary, lay-oriented monastic institution. Before that, the Mahāyāna movement may well have been either a marginalized ascetic group of monks living in the forest, or a group of conservatives embedded in mainstream, socially engaged early Buddhist monasteries. Most scholars conclude that Mahāyāna remained a marginal movement until the 5th century C.E.¹⁶⁹ Before the 11th century C.E., the Mahāyāna sutras were still in the process of being revised. Thus, several different versions may have survived of the same sutra. These different versions are invaluable to scholars attempting to reconstruct the history of Mahāyāna.

Mahāyāna Buddhism takes the basic teachings of the Buddha as recorded in early scriptures as the starting point of its teachings, such as those concerning kamma and rebirth, the four noble truths, the middle way and the eightfold path. Whereas these basic teachings are preserved in the Pāḷi canon, transmitted by the Theravādin tradition, Mahāyāna Buddhists use different recensions of these discourses in compilations known as the “Āgamas,” and which largely overlap with the Pāḷi Canon in content. In addition to accepting the scriptures of the various early Buddhist schools as valid, Mahāyāna Buddhism also maintains large additional collections of sutras not found or recognized in Theravāda Buddhism. In Mahāyāna Buddhism, these Mahāyāna sutras have a greater importance than the Āgamas.¹⁷⁰ Mahayana Buddhism developed and revealed more than two thousand new passages to be added to the

Buddhist collection of sacred texts.\textsuperscript{171} The most important element in the institutionalization of Mahāyāna was perhaps the establishment of Buddhist universities. In these centers of learning the elaboration of Buddhist doctrine became the most important goal of Buddhist monastic life. Mahayana scholars trained disciples from different parts of the Buddhist world and elaborated subtle systems of textual interpretation and philosophical speculation.\textsuperscript{172} Mahāyāna Buddhism is most commonly practiced in Nepal, Vietnam, Korea, China, Japan, Tibet, and Mongolia. It is followed by 56 percent of all Buddhists or about 185 million people in the early twenty-first century.\textsuperscript{173}

3.3.1.3. Vajrayāna School

Vajrayāna Buddhism is also known as Tantric Buddhism, Tantrayāna, Mantrayāna, Esoteric Buddhism and the Diamond Vehicle. Vajrayāna is a complex and multifaceted system which evolved over several centuries and reveals much inconsistency and a variety of opinions. Vajrayāna probably came into existence in the 6\textsuperscript{th} or 7\textsuperscript{th} century C.E.,\textsuperscript{174} while the term Vajrayāna first came into evidence in the 8\textsuperscript{th} century C.E.\textsuperscript{175} The Vajrayāna derives its name from the centrality of the concept of Vajra in its symbolism. The word ‘vajra’ means both “diamond” and “cudgel.” It is therefore a metaphor for hardness and destructiveness. Spiritually, it represents the eternal, innate state of Buddhahood possessed by all beings, as well as the cutting edge of wisdom.\textsuperscript{176}

There are differing views as to where in the Indian sub-continent Vajrayāna began. Some believe it originated in Bengal, now divided between the Republic of India and Bangladesh, with others claiming it began in Uddiyāna, located by some scholars in the modern day Swat Valley in Pakistan, or in South India. The earliest texts appeared around the early 4th century. Nālanda University in eastern India became a center for the development of Vajrayāna theory, although it is likely that the university followed, rather than led, the early Tantric movement. Vajrayāna Buddhism had mostly died out in India by the 13th century, and the vast majority of the practices were also available in Tibet, where they were preserved until recently. Tibetan Buddhism is the most well-known form of Vajrayāna Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhist communities in northern India remain the primary practitioners of Tantric Buddhism in India and the entire world. Vajrayāna Buddhism is followed by 6 percent of Buddhists.\(^{177}\)

### 3.3.2. Schools in Taoism

The major division in Taoism occurred between Dào Jiā (道家), philosophical Taoism and Dào Jiào (道教), religious Taoism. Some scholars believe that there is no distinction between Dào Jiā and Dào Jiào.\(^{178}\) Most scholars who have seriously studied Taoism, both in Asia and the West, have finally abandoned the simplistic dichotomy of Dào Jiā and Dào Jiào, philosophical Taoism and religious Taoism.\(^{179}\) The early and late Taoist movements, however, evolved into the categorization of Taoist schools and sects:

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1. Tiān Shī Dào (天師道), the Way of the Celestial Masters
2. The Shàng Qīng (上清), Supreme Clarity school
3. The Líng Bǎo (靈寶), the Sacred Jewel school
4. The Quán Zhēn (全真), Complete Perfection School

3.3.2.1. Tiān Shī Dào (天師道), the Way of the Celestial Masters

The first major sect in religious Taoism was Tiān Shī Dào (天師道), “the Way of the Celestial Masters” founded in West China in the second century of Han dynasty. The founder was Zhāng Dào Líng (張道陵), who claimed to have begun receiving new revelations from Lao-Tzu in 142 C.E. In the 4th and 5th centuries the Celestial Masters divided into two distinct offshoots, the Northern and Southern Celestial Masters. During the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368 C.E.), Zhèngyī Dào (正一道), the Way of Complete Orthodoxy claimed lineage to the Celestial Masters. They became one of the two leading schools of Taoism in China, along with Quán Zhēn Tao. The Celestial Masters have survived into the 20th century. In 1949, after the communists gained power in the mainland, the remaining Celestial Masters fled to Taiwan, where they still live today. Followers honor the founder, Zhāng Dào Líng, as an immortal, a spiritual being who has attained greater awareness and understanding of the Tao. The Celestial Masters sect remains the most important form of religious Taoism to this day. 

3.3.2.2. The Shàng Qīng (上清), Supreme Clarity School

The Shàng Qīng School began during the aristocracy of the Western Jin dynasty. The first leader of the school was lady Wèi

Huácún (魏華存) (251-334 C.E.) and her disciple Yáng Xī (杨羲) (330-386 C.E.) who formally founded the school, 30 years after her passing, supposedly had revelations and transcribed texts from a group of immortals and spirits that appeared to him. Yáng’s Shàng Qīng scriptures eventually formed the basis of the school’s beliefs and eventually came to be collected in the first of the tripartite divisions of the Taoist canon.\(^{182}\) After the death of Yáng, the preservation of such a significant portion of Yáng’s writings is due to the efforts of Táo Hóngjǐng (陶弘景) (456-536 C.E.), who structured the theory and practice and compiled the canon and he is often considered to be true founder of the Shàng Qīng School.\(^{183}\) His prestige greatly contributed to the development of the school that took place near the end of the 5th century.

From the 6th to the 10th century, Shàng Qīng would be the most prominent Taoist sect and would gain favor among aristocrats of the Táng Dynasty court. The Shàng Qīng scriptures were regarded as possessing a high literary quality that previous Taoist scriptures did not, and their vivid esoteric imagery was an inspiration to artists and poets.\(^{184}\) During the second of half of the Northern Sòng dynasty, the influence of Shàng Qīng Taoism declined at the court, but still remained. Under the Yuán dynasty, the Shàng Qīng School integrated itself under the Zhèngyī alliance. From the thirteenth century, the Shàng Qīng School lost much of its authority as the Celestial Masters gained ascendancy.

### 3.3.2.3. The Líng Bǎo (靈寶), Sacred Jewel School

The Líng Bǎo School was an important Taoist school that emerged in the early fifth century C.E. It began when the Líng Bǎo...
scriptures were revealed to Gé Cháofu (葛巢甫), who claimed that the scriptures came to him in a line of transmission going back to Gé Xuán (葛玄) (164-244 C.E.) who was a mythological member of the Chinese Ge family and a prominent figure in the development of early Chinese history of Taoism. Gé Cháofu transmitted the scriptures to two of his disciples, and the scriptures quickly gained immense popularity.\(^{185}\)

Líng Bǎo scriptures are all based on a text known as Wǔ Fú Xù (五符序) “the Text of the Five Talismans” compiled by Gé Cháofu.\(^{186}\) The Five Talismans provided the framework of the remainder of the Líng Bǎo canon which itself is a mix of previous Taoist traditions, combining features from the Shàng Qīng School and the Celestial Masters. In 471 C.E., a Taoist ritualist and bibliographer Lù Xiūjìng (陸修靜) (406-477 C.E.) compiled a catalogue of all the Líng Bǎo texts, and also was responsible for reorganizing and standardizing Líng Bǎo ritual. This organization of texts and ritual provided a solid foundation on which the Líng Bǎo School prospered in the subsequent centuries.\(^{187}\)

The Líng Bǎo School is a synthesis of religious ideas based on Shàng Qīng texts, the rituals of the Celestial Masters, and Buddhist practices. Many Líng Bǎo beliefs are borrowed from Buddhism. One significant concept borrowed from Buddhism was that of reincarnation.\(^{188}\) Despite a belief in reincarnation, the Líng Bǎo School maintained the traditional Taoist idea that certain techniques could allow an adherent to achieve immortality.\(^{189}\) The integration of Buddhism within Líng Bǎo practices and beliefs ensured that Buddhist


elements would remain an important aspect of later Daoism, and also aided in integrating Buddhism into all levels of society in China.\textsuperscript{190}

The Líng Bǎo School lasted for about two hundred years until it was absorbed into the Shàng Qīng School during the Táng Dynasty. While it did not survive as a distinct entity, its ritual apparatus did, and it forms the basis for present-day Taoist ritual practice. In addition, many of the innovations introduced by the Líng Bǎo School have survived to the present, including the Dòng Xuán, its division of the Dào Zàng.\textsuperscript{191}

### 3.3.2.4. The Quán Zhēn (全真), Complete Perfection School

The Quán Zhēn School emerged in the 12\textsuperscript{th} century, during the rise of the Jìn Dynasty. It was founded by a charismatic preacher, Wáng Zhé (王喆) (1113-1170 C.E.) to whom two immortals: Zhōnglí Quán (鐘離權) and Lǚ Dòngbīn (呂洞賓), taught Taoist beliefs and instructed in secret rituals in 1159. In 1167, Wang converted adepts, seven of whom were selected by later hagiography as the first generation of Quán Zhēn masters: Mǎ Yù (馬鈺), Tán Chùduān (譚處端), Liú Chǔxuán (劉處玄), Qiū Chǔ Jī (丘處機), Wáng Chùyī (王處一), Hǎo Dàtōng (郝大通), and Sūn Bùèr (孫不二). The Quán Zhēn School did not become widespread during Wáng Zhé’s lifetime, but after his death his school attracted a large following and also gained the attention of the ruling class because of the efforts of these seven disciples and it was regarded as the first Taoist monastic order in the history of Taoism.\textsuperscript{192}

Mǎ Yù succeeded Wáng as head of the school and Sūn Bùèr went on to establish Qīngjìng Pài (清靜派), the Purity and Tranquility School, one of the foremost branches of Quán Zhēn. Another notable disciple of


Wáng was Qiū Chǔ Jī who founded Bái Yún Guān (白雲觀), the White Cloud Monastery in Beijing. Qiū Chǔ Jī was the founder of the school called Lóngmén Pài (龙门派), Dragon Gate Taoism. Qiū was on good terms with the Mongolian monarch Genghis Khan who put him in charge of religious affairs in Mongolian-controlled China. As a result, the Quán Zhēn School continued to flourish long after Wáng’s death and become one of only two major Taoist divisions that still exist today, the other being the Celestial Masters.¹⁹³