

Week 1

- Who was the Buddha?
 - The three treasures: Buddha, dharma and sangha
 - Main branches of Buddhism
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Who was the Buddha?

The three treasures Buddha, dharma and sangha

- Manifesting three treasures (genzen sanbō 現前三) lit. before one's eyes three treasures
- Maintaining three treasures (jūji sanbō 住持三宝) lit. abiding three treasures
- Absolute three treasures (ittai sanbō 一体三宝) lit. one body three treasures

Main branches of Buddhism

- Theravada: way of the elders (arhats)
- Mahayana: great vehicle (bodhisattvas)
- Vajrayana: lightning or diamond vehicle (Dainichi Nyorai/cosmic Buddha)

Syncretism with Daoism, Confucianism, Shinto and Shingon

Next week: Four Noble Truths, Eightfold path. precepts

For more advanced study and reflection

- Consider what it means to take refuge, and why we don't just say we "believe" in the Three Treasures.
- Consider the relationship between the *sanbukki* (Three Buddha Days) and the Absolute Buddha treasure. Why do we continue to observe these days, beyond showing basic gratitude to the human founder of our tradition?
- Consider why it was the Mahayana teachings that spread throughout Asia via the Silk Road, making Buddhism a universal religion. Take into account the ideal practitioner in each of the three schools.

	<i>Manifesting</i>	<i>Maintaining</i>	<i>Absolute</i>
Buddha	Shakyamuni as a historical person	drawings and statues as well as teachers	Awakening itself
Dharma	Shakyamuni's teachings	written sutras	the way the universe works; the true reality of all beings
Sangha	the community of people who practiced with him during his lifetime	contemporary practitioners in temples and dharma centers	all beings throughout space and time

