BUDDHISM

A Supplemental Resource for **GRADE 12**

World of Religions

A CANADIAN PERSPECTIVE

Manitoba

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Preface

How to Read These Profiles

These profiles are intended to provide an overview of a number of religious traditions and faith groups. Each profile focuses on a specific religious tradition and emphasizes

- the origins and development of each religious tradition or faith group
- the continued evolution and change of each religious tradition or faith group
- the internal diversity (or intra-religious diversity) of each religious tradition or faith group

While we hope these profiles provide helpful and useful introductions to each religious tradition or faith group, we caution teachers and students to keep in mind the following:

- The profiles provide only an overview and not a detailed or in-depth review of each religious tradition or faith group. They also do not capture the totality of diversity within each religious tradition or faith group.
- Religions do not develop and grow in isolation from political, economic, social, and historical factors, including other religious traditions and faith groups. This knowledge is critical to understanding religious influences in specific social and historical contexts.
- Religious expression will reflect national, cultural, geographical, and other factors.
- While the authors of the backgrounders have taken efforts to present the information in a balanced and unbiased form, there may exist differing points of view and interpretations of historical developments and other aspects of the religious traditions or faith groups.

A Note on Language and Terminology

Throughout this document, we have used transliterated versions of Buddhist terms as suggested by the experts and resource people that assisted in the development of this resource. Please note that transliteration is not an exact science and there will be variations in the transliteration of the original terms used dependent on several factors. These include, but are not limited to,

- regional, sect, cultural, linguistic, and other variants in the spelling and pronunciation of the original Buddhist terms
- variations in the names and terms used for specific persons, items, concepts, and other elements of Buddhist beliefs, rituals, icons, and practices
- regional, cultural, and other variants in the English language that will affect the transliteration of specific terms

A glossary of basic Buddhist vocabulary follows.

Glossary of Basic Buddhist Vocabulary

Resources used to compile this glossary include the following:

Glossary of Basic Buddhist Vocabulary, https://webspace.ship.edu/cgboer/buddhavocab.html

Glossary of Buddhist Terms, by Buddha Dharma Education Association and Buddha Net, www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/history/b_gloss2.htm

Glossary of Buddhist Terms, Modern Kadampa Buddhism, https://kadampa.org/reference/glossary-of-buddhist-terms

Glossary of Buddhist Words, Gaia House, https://gaiahouse.co.uk/glossary/

A Glossary of Pali and Buddhist Terms, Access to Insight: Readings in Theravada Buddhism, www.accesstoinsight.org/glossary.html

Abhidharma Pitaka: (1) One of the three baskets of Buddhist sacred texts. The term simply means "higher Dharma," or "higher teachings", which is a systematic attempt to define The Buddha's teachings and understand their interrelationships. (2) A collection of interpretative and analytical writings based on lists of categories drawn from the Buddha's teachings in the discourses, which were added to the Buddhist Canon several centuries after The Buddha's life.

Ajaan (Ajahn, Achaan): Thai term for teacher or mentor.

Amida (Amitabha): The Buddha of the "Pure Land" or of "Infinite Light." This Buddha is the main focus of devotion in the Pure Land School of Chinese Buddhism, and the Jodo and Shin Schools of Japan. He resides in the Land of Ultimate Bliss (Pure Land), in which all beings enjoy unbounded happiness. Pure Land Buddhists believe that people who are fully devoted, and recite or call upon his name by the time of dying, will be born in the Land of Ultimate Bliss and received by Amitabha.

Anagami (Non-returner): A being who has overcome the five hindrances that bind the mind to *samsara*, the cycle of rebirth, and who, after death, will appear in one of the Brahma worlds called the Pure Abodes. In the pure abodes, they will attain *nirvana/nibanna*, and will never return to this world.

Ananda: One of the Shakyamuni Buddha's Ten Great Disciples. Buddha's friend, cousin, and favourite disciple, and the monk who remembered the *Sutras*.

Anatman (Anatta): Not-self, self or ego not ultimately real.

Annitya (Anicca): Change, impermanence of all things, including us.

Arahant: A "worthy one" or "pure one." A person whose mind is free of defilement and thus freed from *samsara*. A title for The Buddha and the highest level of his noble disciples.

Arhat: A monk who has abandoned all delusions and will never be reborn in *samsara*. One who has completed the discipline required to attain liberation.

Asuras: Titans or demigods.

Attachment: A deluded mental state that sees an object, regards it as a cause of happiness, and wishes for it.

Avalokiteshvara (Avalokitesvara, Kwan Yin, and Kwannon): Bodhisattva of Compassion. One of the principal *Bodhisattvas* in the Mahayana Buddhist tradition.

Avidya (Avijja): Ignorance, delusion.

Bardo: Tibetan term for the period between death and rebirth.

Bhante: Venerable sir, a Sri Lankan term often used when addressing a Theravada Buddhist monk.

Bhagava: The blessed one, another name for the Buddha.

Bhikkhu/Bhikshu: A Buddhist monk.

Bhikkhuni/Bhikshuni: A Buddhist nun.

Bodigaya: A town in Bihar where Buddha was enlightened at age 35.

Bodhi: Enlightenment, awakening. The spiritual condition of a Buddha or Bodhisattva.

Bodhi Tree: A fig tree. Buddha gained enlightenment under a Bodhi tree.

Bodhicitta (Bodhisatta): 'Mind of enlightenment' or a being (striving) for "Awakening". The term used to describe The Buddha before he actually becomes Buddha, from his first aspiration to Buddhahood until the time of his full Awakening. In general, the term *bodhichitta* refers to a being who aspires to attain full enlightenment in order to enlighten all beings.

Bodhisattva Vow: By taking the Bodhisattva Vow, the person undertakes to follow the Bodhisattva's way of life by practicing the six perfections of giving, moral discipline, patience, effort, concentration, and wisdom.

Bodhidharma: The monk who brought Buddhism to China.

Bodhisattva or Bodhisatta: An enlightened being who remains in this existence to help others achieve liberation. One who seeks to attain Liberation for the welfare of all beings.

Brahma: In Buddhism, the great one or supreme *deva*, who resides in the first form realm, and who convinced Buddha to teach after he achieved enlightenment.

Brahma Viharas: The four 'noble' qualities of the heart and mind which may be achieved through specific meditative practices. They are: *Metta/Maitri* (loving-kindness), *Karuna* (compassion), *Mudita* (appreciative joy), and *Upeksa/ Upekkha* (equanimity).

Buddha: (1) The historical figure Siddhartha Gautama who lived in an area that is now India and attained awakening or enlightenment in the sixth century BCE. His teachings are the basis of Buddhist traditions. (2) Any person who has achieved awakening or enlightenment. A Buddha is a person who is completely free from all delusions, faults, and mental obstructions. Every living being has the potential to become a Buddha.

Butsu: Japanese term for Buddha.

Ch'an (Chan): A Chinese Buddhist tradition that is the ancient ancestor of Zen Buddhism.

Ching-T'u: Chinese term for Pure Land.

Citta: Basic mind or consciousness.

Citta-matra: Mind only, idealism.

Dalai Lama: The title was first given by the Mongolian ruler Altan Khan to Sonam Gyatso (CE 1543–1588). Although he was the first to be so-called, he became known as the third Dalai Lama, as his two previous incarnations were posthumously given the titles of first and second Dalai Lama. Traditionally, the Political leader of Tibetan Buddhists.

Deer Park: The place where Buddha gave his first sermon, in Sarnath, near Benares, to the five *sadhus*.

Dependent Origination: "One thing leads to another," all is connected.

Devas: Gods.

Dharma (Dhamma): Buddha's teachings, insights, and realizations.

Dharma/Dhamma-vinaya: The Buddha's own term for the religion he founded.

Dharmakaya: Buddha-mind, the pervasive essence.

Dharmapada (Dhammapada): An extensive and foundational *sutra* that consists of two sections and 39 chapters, with 423 short verses of The Buddha teachings, which were given at various times and places. It is considered the "original" teaching of the Buddha, one that may be used for reference, moral instruction, and inspiration.

Dharma Wheel: A collection of Buddha's teachings.

Dhyana (Jhana): Mental absorption, or meditation. A state of strong concentration focused on a single, physical sensation.

Deity (Yidam): A Tantric-enlightened being.

Dogen Zenji: The monk who brought Soto Zen to Japan.

Dorje: Tibetan term for the thunder-bolt symbol used in art and ritual magic.

Duhkha (Dukkha): Suffering, distress, lack of peace. First noble truth.

Dzogchen: Tibetan tantric techniques for rapid enlightenment.

Eightfold Path: The Buddhist path of practice leading to the cessation of suffering and dissatisfaction articulated by The Buddha in the Four Noble Truths, and comprising of Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.

Empowerment: In Tibetan Buddhism, a special potential power to attain any of the four Buddha bodies that is received by a Tantric practitioner from his or her Guru, or from other holy beings, by means of Tantric ritual.

Enlightenment: Complete elimination of all negative aspects of the mind and perfection of all positive qualities.

Five Precepts: The five ethical commitments made by lay Buddhists or practitioners.

Four Noble Truths: Duhkha, Samudaya, Nirodha, and Marga—Gandharvas: angelic beings who provide the gods with music.

Geluk: An order of Tibetan Buddhism founded by Lama Tsong Khapa and his disciples in the early fifteenth century.

Gassho: Japanese term meaning to join the palms of one's hands in a posture of reverence or respect.

Gati: Realm. Used to refer to the six realms (gods, titans, humans, animals, ghosts, and demons).

Gautama (Gotama): Buddha's family name.

Heart Sutra: A summary of the vast Prajnaparamita literature, it is chanted daily in Zen monasteries.

Hinayana: A pejorative term for southern (Theravada) Buddhism meaning "small or lesser vehicle or journey". A group who called themselves followers of the Mahayana, the "Great Vehicle", used the term. They used the term to distinguish those who only recognized the earliest discourses as the word of the Buddha. The Hinayanists refused to recognize the later discourses, composed by the Mahayanists, which they claimed were the teachings that The Buddha felt were too complex for his first generation of disciples. Mahayanists believe that Buddha secretly entrusted these more complex teachings to underground serpents. The Theravada school of today is a descendent of the Hinayana.

Indra: A major *deva* in Buddhism, but also originally the Hindu sky god.

Jodo, Jodoshin: The Japanese word for Pure Land.

Kalapa: Buddhist and Hindu term for the period of time between the creation and recreation of a world or universe. Traditionally, believed to represent four hundred and thirty-two million years in the lives of mortals.

Kapilavastu: The Shakyan capital where Buddha grew up.

Karma/Kamma: The concept that all intentions and actions have consequences for all beings, whether they may be positive or negative.

Karuna: Compassion, sympathy, or mercy for others. The special kindness shown to those who suffer. One of the four *brahma vihara*.

Kashinagara: Where Buddha died (near Lumbini), in a grove of sala trees.

Kathina: A Theravada ceremony, held in the fourth month of the rainy season. The lay community gives the *sangha* of *bhikkhus* a gift of cloth to one of their members, and this cloth is then made into a robe before dawn of the following day.

Lama: A name for a Tibetan tantric master, now often used to refer to any respected monk or teacher.

Liberation: Freedom from suffering and dissatisfaction through the uprooting of greed, hatred, and delusion.

Loka: The world, refers to the three spheres or levels of existence comprising the whole world in Buddhist cosmology.

Lotus Sutra: Shortened name for the Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Law, or Saddharma-pundarik-sutra in Sanskrit. Considered to be one of the most important *sutras* of Mahayana Buddhism. In brief, this *sutra* states that all sentient beings can attain *Buddhahood* and that all Buddhists should aspire to do so. The sutra also indicates that The Buddha is eternal, and represents the ultimate form of Buddhist practice, which is the way of the *Bodhisattva*.

Lumbini Grove: The place where Buddha was born, during his mother's trip to her parents' home.

Mahakyashapa: The monk who understood the silent sermon and led the first council.

Mahamaya or Mayadevi: Buddha's mother, who died seven days after his birth.

Mahaprajapati: Buddha's aunt and stepmother, first ordained Buddhist nun, founder of the lineage of Buddhist nuns.

Mahayana (Great Vehicle): A northern Buddhist tradition that incorporates later scriptures. The main Mahayana traditions are Tibetan Buddhism and Zen Buddhism.

Maitreya: The name of the future Buddha, who will be born in our world. He is a friendly and benevolent Buddha, usually depicted as a chubby, laughing Buddha.

Maitri: Caring, loving kindness displayed to all you meet. One of the four *brahma vihara*.

Manas: I-consciousness, mind, intelligence.

Mandala: A microcosmic diagram, a complex, circular, and symmetrical image. It is a power circle and object of contemplation in the rituals of Tantric/ Tibetan Buddhism.

Mantra: A phrase or syllable repeated during meditation.

Mara: The personification of evil and temptation. A *deva* associated with death and hindrances to enlightenment. It was Mara who tempted Buddha under the Bodhi tree.

Marga: The path, track; the eightfold noble path; the fourth noble truth.

Mudita: Sympathetic joy, being happy for others, without a trace of envy. One of the four *brahma vihara*.

Mudra: Symbolic hand positions. *Mudras* are an essential element in Buddhist iconography. Statues or paintings of The Buddha or Bodhisattva will often represent them using various mediation postures and mudras.

Nagas: The great serpents (or dragons, or water creatures). The king of the Nagas protected Buddha from a storm.

Namu Amida Butsu: Japanese chant that is a veneration to Amitabha Buddha; the mantra of Pure Land schools.

Narakas: Demons (hell beings).

Nichiren: A Japanese school of Buddhism and the name of its founder. It emphasizes chanting in its practice.

Nirmankaya: Gautama/Gotama, the historical Buddha.

Nirodha: The containment of suffering; the third noble truth.

Nirvana (Nibanna): The cessation of suffering and dissatisfaction through the elimination of greed, hatred, and delusion. Liberation, enlightenment, release from *samsara*.

Pagoda: Typically an east-Asian multi-story memorial structure that is an elaboration of the upper portions of a *stupa*.

Pali: An ancient Indian language related to Sanskrit which was used to record the earliest Buddhist scriptures in Sri Lanka.

Pali canon: A collection of Buddhist sacred texts, the Tripitaka, used by Theravada schools of Buddhism.

Pancha shila: The five moral precepts: avoid killing or harming any living thing; avoid stealing; avoid sexual irresponsibility; avoid lying or any hurtful speech; and avoid alcohol and drugs which diminish clarity of consciousness.

Pitaka: Basket, referring to the Tripitaka or collection of scriptures.

Prajña (Paññā): Wisdom. The goddess of knowledge. Buddha's mother was considered to be an incarnation of her.

Prajñaparamita: A massive collection of Mahayana texts, which include the Heart and Diamond Sutras.

Pretas: The hungry ghosts.

Puja: A ceremony in which offerings and other acts of devotion are performed. Commonly, the devotional observances conducted at monasteries daily (morning and evening).

Pu-tai: Sometimes referred to as the 'laughing Buddha.' He was a Chinese monk believed by some to be the incarnation of Maitreya.

Pure Land: Chinese/Japanese sects, which emphasize the veneration of Amitabha Buddha. Also known as Ching- T'u, Jodo, and Jodoshin.

Rinzai Zen: A Zen sect that makes extensive use of *koans*.

Rishi: A sage (usually a hermit).

Roshi: Japanese term for the Zen master of a monastery.

Rupa: A form, the physical body and senses.

Samadhi (Samatha): Meditation.

Sambhogakaya: Buddha as a *deva* or god.

Samsara: The cyclic wheel of the Buddhist concept of existence from which beings should aspire to escape; birth-life-suffering-death-rebirth.

Samskara: Mental formations (emotions and impulses).

Samudaya: The root of suffering; the second noble truth.

Sangha: (1) The community of monks and nuns. (2) The entire Buddhist community including lay Buddhists.

Sanskrit: An early or ancient language of northern India, modified and used as a religious language by some Buddhists.

Satori: Zen term for enlightenment.

Sensei: Japanese term for teacher or mentor.

Sentient Being: A being who has not yet reached enlightenment.

Shakyamuni: Another name for The Buddha, meaning sage of the Sakyas.

Shakyas: Gautama Buddha's clan, a noble clan that ruled an area of southern Nepal.

Shamatha (samatha): Calmness, peacefulness.

Shila (sila): Morality.

Shuddodana: Buddha's father.

Siddhartha Gautama: The historical Buddha.

Six Realms: Refers to the six earthly realms of the gods, *asuras*, humans, animals, *pretas*, and *narakas*.

Skandhas: The parts of the self.

Smrti (sati): Mindfulness, meditation.

Son: A Korean variant of Chan or Zen Buddhism.

Soto Zen: A Zen sect, which emphasizes Shikantaza meditation.

Sthaviravada: The Sanskrit term for Theravada, the "way of the elders."

Stupa: A Sanskrit term originally describing a simple tumulus or burial mound enshrining relics of a holy person, such as The Buddha, or an object associated with his life. Over time, *stupas* have evolved into tall, spired monuments that are common in temples in Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Burma and in the *pagodas* common in China, Korea, and Japan.

Sukhavati: Sanskrit for Blissful Land or the "Pure Land" of Amitabha.

Sutra (Sutta): Literally, it means thread and in Buddhism refers to a discourse or sermon by The Buddha or one of his disciples.

Sutra (Sutta) Pitaka: Another of the three baskets of Buddhist sacred texts, which are the teachings or discourses of the sayings of the Buddha. After the Buddha's death, the *suttas* were passed down in the Pali language according to the established oral tradition. They were first presented in written form in Sri Lanka around 100 BCE. There are over 10,000 suttas that were collected in the Sutta Pitaka, one of the principal bodies of scriptural literature in Theravada Buddhism. The Pali *suttas* are widely regarded as the earliest record of the Buddha's teachings.

Tantra: Any text from a collection of later mystical writings, called the Tantras. The Tantras are especially important aspect of Vajrayana/Tibetan Buddhist practice.

Tantrayana: Also called Vajrayana. A school of esoteric Tibetan Buddhism, which emphasizes not only meditation but also the use of symbolic rites, gestures, postures, breathing, incantation, and other secret means.

Taras: Twenty-one female saviours, born from Avalokiteshwara's tears. Green Tara and White Tara are the most well-known.

Tendai: Chinese Buddhist sect also known as the White Lotus School.

Thai Forest Tradition: A Theravadan monastic lineage in Thailand emphasizing the precepts of simplicity and renunciation.

Theravada: The Buddhist tradition of the Elders based on the Pali scriptures. It is the only surviving form of southern or early Buddhism. Currently it is the dominant form of Buddhism in Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Burma.

Three Bodies of Buddha: The three meanings or natures of Buddha: *nirmankaya*, *sambhogakaya*, *dharmakaya*.

Three Fires (or Poisons): The causes of suffering.

Tripitaka/Tipitaka (Three Baskets): The earliest Buddhist scriptures consisting of the Vinaya Pitaka, Sutra Pitaka, and Abhidharma Pitaka.

Upali: The first person ordained as a monk by The Buddha, a barber, and the monk who remembered the Vinaya or code of the monks.

Upeksa (upekkha): Means equanimity, levelness, or grace. One of the four *brahma vihara*.

Vajrayana: Tantric Buddhism (thunderbolt vehicle), of which Tibetan Buddhism is a primary example.

Vedana: Sensation, feeling.

Vijnana (Vinnana): Consciousness or mind.

Vinaya Pitaka: One of the key parts of Buddhist sacred texts. Also known as the discipline basket which is the code of behaviour for monks.

Vipaka: The "fruit" of willed act, the consequences of one's actions.

Vipassanā (Vipashyana): (1) A term that literally means seeing deeply or clearly. It may also be translated as penetrative or deep insight, or clear intuitive insight into physical and mental phenomena as they arise and disappear, seeing them for what they actually are. (2) An alternative name for Insight Meditation.

White Lotus School: Buddhist sect focusing on the Lotus Sutra, also known as T'ien T'ai or Tendai.

Yama: The king of the Buddhist concept of 21 hells.

Yashodhara: Buddha's wife, whom he married when they were both 16.

Yidam: A mental image of a god or another entity used for meditation.

Yoga: A system of spiritual development derived from the teachings of the second century BCE Indian teacher Patanjali. It comprises the practice of specific physical postures, breathing exercises, and meditation.

Yogacara (or vijñañavada): The Buddhist school that emphasizes the primacy of consciousness.

Zazen: Sitting meditation in Zen Buddhism.

Zen: A meditative form of Buddhist practice that developed in China in the fifth to seventh centuries and then spread to Japan and Korea. Also known as Ch'an, Chan, Son, or Dhyana.

Introduction

What Is Buddhism? A Brief Summary

Buddhism is a religious tradition that traces its origins to ancient India. Buddhism encompasses a variety of schools, beliefs, and spiritual practices primarily based on the original teachings attributed to The Buddha. "The Buddha" refers to Siddhartha Gautama (also known as Shakyamuni) who was born around 560 BCE in northern India and is considered the founder of Buddhism.

A *Buddha* is one who has attained an ideal state of intellectual and ethical perfection. The term *Buddha* literally means enlightened one. Traditionally, Buddhists believe that a *Buddha* is born in each eon of time, and that Siddhartha Gautama was the seventh *Buddha* in the succession.

The term Buddhists is of more recent and Western origins. In Asia they were known as the followers of The Buddha Dharma (Dhamma) or Buddha Sasana. Buddhism would be more accurately called Dharma-ism.

Buddhism is the fourth largest religion in the world after Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism. Today there are more than 700 million individuals worldwide for whom Buddhism is a way of life.

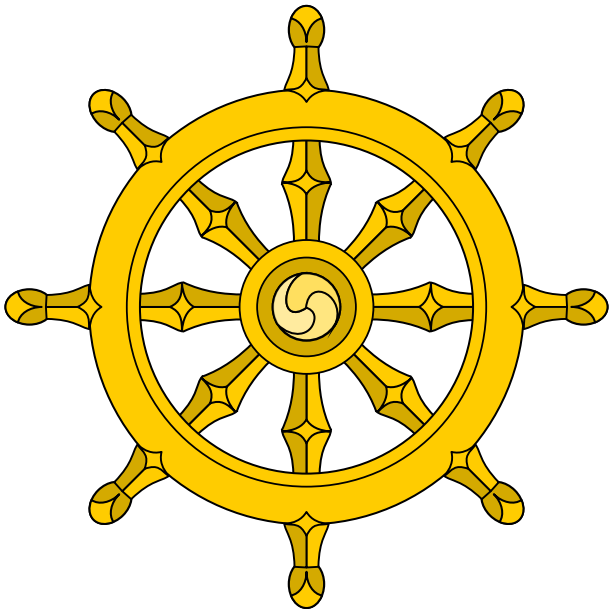

Figure 1:
Eight-spoke Dharmacakra or Dharma Wheel

It is believed Buddhism came to Canada about 120 years ago with the arrival of Chinese and Japanese immigrants and the establishment of a Jodo Shinshu Temple in Canada. The Canadian Buddhist population is small but growing. In 2001, there were approximately 300,000 Buddhists in Canada based on the 2001 census. From 2001 to 2011, 2.8 % of all immigrants were Buddhists according to the 2011 National Household Survey.

A Religion, Philosophy, or Way of Life?

Although Buddhism is often classified as a major world religion, this classification is disputed by some and in part dependent on one's definition of religion.

Buddhism can be understood as being a spiritual tradition and "a love of wisdom." In this light it can be seen as being primarily a philosophy of life or way of living (*Liusuwan*). Traditionally, the ultimate goal in Buddhism was for human beings to achieve *nirvana* (or *nibanna*), that is to be free from the cycle of suffering (*samsara*) that humans experience. For some schools the focus is on the individual achieving *nirvana*, while for other schools it is about helping other human beings achieve *nirvana*, as well as the individual themselves. The Buddhist life path can be summarized as having the following three aspects:

- Morality, virtue (*Sila*): To lead a moral and virtuous life.
- Mindfulness or Concentration (*Samadhi*): To always be mindful and be aware of one's thoughts and actions.
- Wisdom (*Panna*): To develop wisdom and understanding.

Today, for devotees of modern or Western Buddhism, the goal may be less about achieving *nirvana* and more about developing wisdom, cultivating a good heart, and maintaining a peaceful state of mind.

In Buddhism there is no creator god at the centre of the belief system and it is not centred on the relationship between humans and a god. While gods exist in Buddhism, they are not permanent and eternal. Buddhism is non-theistic, as believing in a God or gods is not a central belief. Although, for those that see religion from an Abrahamic perspective or whose religious beliefs are centred on the existence of a metaphysical creator being or beings, this may seem to disqualify Buddhism as being a religion, not all definitions of a religion require a centralized belief system based on a creator god or set of gods. Buddhism does have certain religious aspects. In Buddhist scriptures, the metaphysical aspects of reality that are typically associated with religion are discussed. While the Buddhist teachings stress this is not as important as the practice of Buddhism; they are a part of Buddhist teachings. Perhaps the most "religious" aspects of Buddhism are

Figure 2:
The Great Buddha of Kamakura (Kamakura Daibutsu)

the Buddha's discussions of the afterlife and the various realms of existence. As well, Buddhism addresses a number of questions about human beings and society that may be seen as being similar to religious questions, such as "Why is humanity so diverse?" and "Why is the world or life so unfair?". (Liusuwan)

For these reasons, Buddhism is usually included in world religions studies and for many is considered a religious creed or belief system.

Siddhartha Gautama: the Founder of Buddhism

Buddhism was founded in the north-eastern region of India in what is now Nepal and is based on the teachings of Siddharatha Gautama, the *Buddha*, or the "Enlightened One" (British Broadcasting Corporation). It shares a history and relationship with Hinduism and other religions from the Indian subcontinent.

The Buddha was born to a noble family (*Kshatriya*) of the Shakyas people in North East India. Though some accounts of his life are more elaborate than others, the texts preserved in Sanskrit, Pali, Chinese, Tibetan, and other Buddhist languages agree that Siddhartha was born in Lumbini Garden (present-day Nepal), attained awakening in Bodhgaya (India), began teaching just outside of Benares (Varanasi), and entered complete *nirvana* (passed away) in Kusinara (Kasia, India).

He was trained in athletic skills and was instructed in the spiritual disciplines of the day, which were based on the *Vedas* (Hinduism). His father ordered that he be protected and shielded from the difficulties of life many of the poor experienced. He was not to have contact with ugliness, sickness, old age, and death.

However, in his early twenties, he became disenchanted with his life. He sought a more profound meaning to life and the freedom to experience all aspects of life. Thus, Gautama left his privileged life and began a life as a wandering monk seeking wisdom and truth. He studied under the well-known teachers of his day, learning deep meditation and followed the *yogic* practices. For six years, he starved and punished his body, thinking that the body and its desires were an obstacle to spiritual development. Eventually, Gautama gave up his extreme practices and began to eat normally again.

He decided to meditate deeply under a Bodhi tree to seek his answers and, through meditation, he eventually realized the Four Noble Truths and achieved Enlightenment (*nirvana/nibanna*) under the tree. He then began to share his experience with others.

Buddha is not a god or a deity, nor did he ever claim to be one. Having achieved personal enlightenment and *Buddhahood*, he sought to teach others the path to enlightenment based on his own experiences.

Diversity of Buddhism

Diversity of interpretation and practice has been a feature of Buddhism since its early origins in India and the development of the different schools of "Indian Buddhism" that arose after the Buddha's physical death. Buddhism today encompasses various systems of philosophy, practice/meditation, and ethics; however, Buddhism may be seen to have evolved into two or sometimes three major traditions, branches, or categories of schools. The first two are Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, and the third is Vajrayana Buddhism. As Vajrayana Buddhism draws on and is founded on Mahayana scriptures and philosophy, it is classified a subcategory or branch of Mahayana Buddhism. Today, these three branches are present throughout the world and in all major Western countries. In Asia, they are distributed and represented geographically as follows:

- **Theravada** is the dominant form of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia, Burma (Myanmar), and Laos.
- **Mahayana** is dominant in China, Japan, Taiwan, Tibet, Nepal, Mongolia, Korea, and most of Vietnam.
- **Vajrayana** is associated with Tibetan Buddhism as well as a Japanese school called Shingon.

Theravada tradition bases its philosophy, meditation, and ethics on the **Pali** texts (Pali is an ancient language of India) compiled by Buddhists in India and Sri Lanka. Eventually, it spread through Burma, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Thailand, and other Southeast Asian countries.

The Mahayana tradition primarily based its philosophy, meditation, and ethics on the **Sanskrit** canon or scriptures from northern India. Eventually it spread to Korea, Vietnam, Japan, and other East Asian countries by way of Central Asia and China. It also spread from China and India to Tibet and from Tibet to Mongolia.

As each tradition spread, it changed to accommodate the language, culture, customs, and attitudes of the new country or peoples without losing its central message.

Increasingly there are references to *Modern Buddhism* or *Western Buddhism*, terms generally referring to a phenomenon which began to emerge in the late 19th century as Buddhism began to be introduced and practiced in the Western world. Western or modern Buddhism is guided by traditional Buddhist principles, but adapted for the Western cultures and world. Some aspects of Asian Buddhist practice such as chanting, music, and dancing are often not found in Western or modern Buddhism. As well, there is less emphasis on monasticism and a tendency towards the blending of practices and beliefs of the various Buddhist schools.

Sacred Buddhist Scriptures

The Buddha did all of his teaching orally and his teachings were then disseminated orally to others by his followers. As well, he adapted his teachings to suit various audiences, and there are therefore different versions of some of his teachings. His teachings were only written down and compiled into written texts many years after his passing.

In some religions, sin is believed to be the origin of human suffering. In Buddhism, there is no concept of sin. For Buddhists, the root cause of human suffering is *avidya* or ignorance.

Buddhism does not have a single book or collection of sacred texts that is used or recognized by each school or sect. Instead, each branch of Buddhism has its own canon or collection of scripture which it has developed and used. The origins and description of the canons that are used in contemporary Buddhism follow.

PALI CANON

Buddha's teachings were put in written form in Sri Lanka in the Pali language around 25 BCE. This version of Buddhist scriptures is known as the **Pali Canon** (*Tipitaka*). The Pali Canon is considered to be one of the earliest and most comprehensive, compilations of early Buddhist teachings.

The Pali Canon is used by **Theravada** Buddhists which are prevalent in the South and Southeast Asian countries of Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Burma (Myanmar). The Pali canon is composed of "three baskets" or *Tipitaka*. The three baskets are as follows:

- **The Sutta Pitaka:** A collection of discourses mostly attributed to the Buddha, but some of which are attributed to disciples.
- **The Vinaya:** The precepts or rules governing the monastic community which regulate the life of monks and nuns according to rules attributed to the Buddha.
- **The Abhidharma:** This is a collection of Buddhist philosophical writings.

The Pali Canon (complete collection of scriptures and sacred texts) was translated into Chinese, Japanese, and Tibetan. As well, more recently, the Pali Canon has been translated either completely or partially into English and other European languages.

Sanskrit Canon

The Buddha advised his followers and monks to teach in the different languages of the people in the locations or places they visited or in which they lived. In India, the followers and monks first taught in Sanskrit. In the first century CE the Buddha's teachings were compiled into written form, also in Sanskrit. This version is now known as the Sanskrit Canon. Different

versions of the Sanskrit Canon existed, but all were similar in form and content.

The Sanskrit Tripitaka, or Canon, consist of the same three categories of texts as the Pali Canon, namely

- **Sutra Vaibasha:** The *Dharma*, or the five *Agamas*, corresponded to the five *Nikayas* of the Pali Canon.
- **Vinaya Vaibasha:** These are the precepts or rules governing the monastic community, which regulate the life of monks and nuns according to rules attributed to the Buddha.
- **Abhidharma Vaibasha:** This is the scholarly philosophical analysis which differed from the corresponding section of the Pali Canon.

The Sanskrit canon/scriptures were translated into Chinese while some parts were translated into Tibetan and, more recently, into English.

Mahayana Texts

With the growth of Mahayana Buddhism, new *Sutras* were written. The teachings in the Sanskrit Canon was incorporated into the Mahayana texts. The new *Sutras* were based on the existing texts but new material was added to incorporate the Mahayana ideas.

Buddhism came to China in the first century CE. The Sanskrit texts of different traditions were taken to China and the translation of the texts into Chinese went on from 200 CE to about 1200 CE. The Chinese Tripitaka, or Canon, was compiled and followed the same pattern of three basic categories of texts. These were the *Sutra*, *Vinaya*, and *Abhidharma Pitakas*, and they included the original Chinese Sutras.

The **Chinese** or **Mahayana Canon** are the scriptures mainly used in the east-Asian countries of China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. There are a few versions of the Chinese Canon. The **Taisho**, which was completed in Japan, is often considered to be the modern standard edition.

Tantric or Vajrayana Texts

Tantric Buddhism, which developed in India, later became dominant in Tibet. Tantric Buddhism is an esoteric and highly symbolic form of Buddhism, which focuses on mystical practices and concepts as a path to enlightenment. With the growth of Tantric Buddhism, new Tantric texts came into being dealing with new ideas. The Buddhist Tantras are a varied group of Indian and Tibetan texts which outline unique views and practices of the Buddhist tantric religious systems. Tantras are key texts of Vajrayana Buddhism. The tantras

may be divided into four categories that deal with the following various aspects of Tantric Buddhism:

- **Kriya tantra:** ceremonies and ritual acts
- **Carya tantra:** practical rites which combine ritual acts with meditation
- **Yoga tantra:** meditation and spiritual practice—Yoga in this sense is not referring to physical movements and postures (i.e., Hatha Yoga) but to tantric spiritual disciplines or practices including deity yoga and guru yoga.
- **Anuttarayoga tantra:** supreme or higher mystical practice

The Sanskrit tantra texts were translated into Tibetan and were edited in the 14th century in 333 volumes. The Tibetan literature comprises the following two parts:

- **Kanjur** (Translation of the Word of the Buddha) includes the *Vinaya*, *Sutra*, and *Abhidharma*, as well as the *Tantric* texts.
- **Tanjur** (Translation of Commentaries) consists of commentaries on the main texts, hymns, and also writings on medicine, grammar, and so on.

The Tibetan or Vajrayana Canon are the scriptures mainly used in the central-Asian countries of Tibet, Bhutan, the Himalayas, and Mongolia.

Overview of Foundational Beliefs

Gods and Buddhism

Buddhism is sometimes called an atheistic religion, but some Buddhists would describe it as being non-theistic, meaning that believing in a God or gods really isn't the point of Buddhism. While Buddhists do not believe in a creator God, there are different types of god-like creatures and beings called *devas* (divinities) which appear in the early scriptures of Buddhism. Within contemporary Buddhist belief and practice, Vajrayana Buddhists continue to use tantric deities in their esoteric practices. As well, there are Buddhists who believe that devotion to Amitabha Buddha will bring them to rebirth in the Pure Land.

In traditional Buddhism, *devas* are usually depicted as characters living in a number of other realms, separate from the human realm. In these realms, they have their issues and problems. They have no roles to play in the human realm. In contrast, in polytheistic religions, common practice is to call on the gods to intercede on one's or the group's behalf.

In Mahayana Buddhism, however, the universe is populated with celestial Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who are worshipped as gods and goddesses. The historical Buddha is honoured in this way, but most other Buddhist deities are adapted from the cultures Buddhism has encountered, from the Hindu pantheon in its home culture of India to the the indigenous religions of Tibet, China, and Thailand.

Beliefs about Death and Reincarnation

Like Hindus, Buddhists believe that humans experience death and rebirth. One must go through many cycles (*samsara*) of birth, living, and death. After many such cycles, or when a person releases their attachment to a worldly existence, they can attain enlightenment, often referred to as *nirvana* (*nibanna* in Pali.)—a state of liberation and freedom from suffering.

Karma is the law according to which every cause has an effect (i.e., our actions have results). *Karma* underlines the importance of all individuals being responsible for their past and present actions. What one does in life affects one's *karma*.

Dying is seen as a transition process to the next life. It is of great importance to provide a suitable atmosphere in which a person can die in peace, to say appropriate prayers, and to seek and provide qualified religious help from Buddhist monks or nuns. The handling of the body of a deceased is also extremely significant in some Buddhist traditions. In the Mahayana tradition, for example, a period, varying from eight hours to three days during which the body of a deceased person is not to be handled is required so that the mind can leave the body.

Three Marks (Truths) of Existence

The three marks of existence are essentially Buddhism's basic description of reality. Although all beings have these three characteristics, one's ignorance and delusion about them leads to *duhkha/dukkha* (suffering). The three marks are as follows:

1. **Impermanence:** This truth is the foundation of Buddhism. Everything from micro organisms to the universe itself will end or die. All things are made of parts, and all things will fall apart. All things will die. The problem is that while we know everything is impermanent, we cling to things as though they are permanent because we want them to last, at least during our lifetime. All of *samsara* (cycle of birth, death, and rebirth) is an attempt to deny this reality.
2. **Non-Self (*annata*):** Nothing that exists, including an individual, exists in and of itself without dependencies and as a single, permanent thing. Everything that we are is actually a collection that we have labeled as a certain thing, and people may tend to think of themselves in terms of "this is who I am." However, we are simply the product of multiple causes and conditions. Impermanence describes how things are; non-self describes what they are not. Non-self is emptiness in terms of space.
3. **Suffering (*dukkha*):** Every experience is marked by some quality of suffering, whether it's extreme pain or a background sense of unease. As long as we struggle to maintain a sense of solid self, our lives will be marked by stress and fear. Humans spend a lot of time trying to avoid suffering, trying to push it away and not experience it. We don't want to suffer and we don't want others to suffer. So, instead of studying suffering closely, understanding that it is a part of life, we try to avoid it and push it away. In doing that, we actually create more suffering for ourselves.

Six Sense Doors

According to traditional Buddhist teachings, humans experience the world through the following six sense doors, or perceptual gateways:

- seeing
- hearing
- smelling
- tasting
- touching
- mind

The door of mind refers to our thoughts, emotions, and mental images. Gautama Buddha taught that these six modes of perception define the totality of human experience. In other words, every moment of our lives involves experiences that we come to know through one or more of these sense doors. In addition, each experience received in this way is coloured by different tones of feelings, which may be pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral.

Understanding our experience in these terms reveals the importance of bringing mindfulness to every moment of our existence. Without it, we become mere creatures of mental conditioning, constantly trying to manipulate our experience so as to increase our pleasure and minimize our pain.

Four Attachments (*Upadna*)

Humans are constantly clinging to, craving, or grasping things which are related to *samsara* or suffering. They crave pleasant experiences, material things, and eternal life. Human lives are marked by attachment or clinging to such things as sensual pleasure, social status, wealth, and power, as well as to ideas, views, opinions, and beliefs. Attachments can be dangerous and toxic and lead to suffering.

Taken together, there are four types of attachment that constitute the main problems for most human beings. The four types of attachment are

- sense-pleasure: repeated craving of worldly pleasures and things
- opinions and views: clinging to ideas of externalism or nihilism
- rites and rituals: believing that rites and rituals alone can lead to liberation
- self-hood: ideas of a permanent self

The four forms of attachments are interdependent and interconnected. Buddha taught that craving and clinging are related to the first two of the Noble Truths. They should be viewed as being dangerous. Therefore, if one wants to improve oneself, one must commit to a serious, sustained effort to reduce or eliminate all forms of attachment, craving, or clinging.

A critical goal for a Buddhist is to cultivate a mind that is free from attachment. If one can release oneself from the four kinds of attachment, then one will possess Buddhist insight. When one's mind is freed from attachment, then there is nothing to bind it and make it a slave to the world.

Five Hindrances or Poisons

In the Buddhist tradition, there are five hindrances or mental factors that are believed to hinder progress in meditation and in one's daily life. The five hindrances are recognized by all the major Buddhist traditions of Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, as well as in the contemporary Insight Meditation tradition. Nonetheless, the hindrances are presented differently within these various traditions, depending on the way each tradition teaches the practice of meditation. In the Theravada tradition, these factors are identified as obstacles to the achievement of *jhanas* (stages of concentration) within meditation practice. In the Mahayana tradition, the five hindrances are identified as obstacles to *samatha* (tranquility) meditation. Contemporary Insight Meditation teachers think of the five hindrances as obstacles to mindfulness meditation.

The five hindrances are

1. **Sensory (sensual) desire (*kamacchanda*):** Sensory desire refers to that particular type of wanting or craving that seeks happiness through the five senses of sight, sound, smell, taste, and physical feeling. There are different

kinds of desire and often they are common during meditation. Sensory can take many forms, from sexual relations to craving sweets or deserts.

2. **Ill-will or aversion (*byapada*):** This refers to anger and ill-will towards others, or the desire to punish, hurt, or destroy something. Ill-will and anger is often caused because our ego or pride has been bruised or hurt.
3. **Slot, torpor, and drowsiness (*thina-middha*):** Sloth and torpor refers to drowsiness as well as heaviness of body and dullness of mind which can drag one down into disabling inertia and depression.
4. **Restlessness, worry, anxiety, and remorse (*uddhacca-kukkucca*):** This hindrance may take many forms such as anxiety, remorse, or feeling unsettled. Attempting to meditate with a restless or anxious state of mind can be very uncomfortable and may make one unable to achieve calmness.
5. **Scepticism or doubt (*vicikiccha*):** Doubt refers to lack of conviction or trust in oneself, in one's abilities, or in other's abilities. We may be uncertain about Buddhist practices, other persons, or ourselves. Scepticism and doubt are obstacles to meditation because they become an intrusion, obscuring one's clarity of thought.

These mental states are called hindrances because they bind humans to ignorance and to suffering (*dukkha*). Realizing the liberation of enlightenment requires unbinding ourselves from the hindrances. Much of the Buddha's advice about the hindrances relates to meditation. But the hindrances are not limited to the practice of meditation, they affect all aspects of our lives.

Five Aggregates

The Buddha taught that an individual is a combination of Five Aggregates or the Five *Skandhas*/*Khanddhas* of existence. In Buddhism, the five aggregates concept asserts that there are five factors that constitute and completely explain a sentient being's mental and physical existence.

The following are the Five Aggregates (*Skandhas*/*Khandhas*):

- **Form (*rupa*):** It includes the five physical organs (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body), and the corresponding physical objects of the sense organs (sight, sound, smell, taste, and tangible objects).
- **Sensation/feeling (*vedana*):** It may be one of three kinds: pleasant, unpleasant, and indifferent. When one experiences something, the experience may take on one of three emotional tones; pleasure, displeasure, or indifference.
- **Perception or thinking (*samjna*):** It is the turning of an indefinite experience into a definite, recognized, and identified experience. It is the creation of the concept of an idea about a particular object of experience.
- **Mental activity or formation (*sankhara*):** It may be described as a conditioned response to the object of experience. It includes habits, prejudices, and predispositions. Volition or willfulness, is also part of the

fourth *skandha*, as are attention, faith, conscientiousness, pride, desire, vindictiveness, and many other mental states both virtuous and not virtuous.

- **Consciousness (*vijnana*):** It is awareness of physical and mental processes, including the other *skandhas*. It is also awareness of or sensitivity to an object, without conceptualization. The way that our personal experience is produced is through the functioning of the three major mental factors of experience, in other words, through the aggregates of consciousness, perception, and mental formation.

They are called aggregates as they work together to produce a mental being. Through the five aggregates each person experiences the world. Together, they create the conditions for the development of one's sense of "I" or our individualism collectively, they make up a conscious experience.

Every person is composed of mind and matter and, apart from mind and matter, there is no such thing as an immortal soul, an unchanging "thing" separate from these five aggregates. This doctrine of non-self is called *anatman* or *anatta*. Basically, The Buddha taught that a person is not an integral, autonomous entity. The individual self, or what we might call the ego, is more correctly thought of as a by-product of the five aggregates.

Buddhism teaches that the five aggregates can cause suffering. When one thinks of the aggregates as a collective whole and as intrinsic parts of who an individual is, it causes suffering for that person. But when the person learns to separate the aggregates from themselves and view them with non-attachment, they can break their power over them and live healthier, more balanced lives. This may be achieved through meditation.

Four Noble Truths

All forms of Buddhism agree with the foundational teachings of Lord Buddha with respect to the Four Noble Truths, which are as follows:

1. **Dukkha (Suffering):** Ordinary existence is a state of suffering. Suffering is an integral part of life and includes birth, ageing, sickness, and death. It includes the suffering of past, present, and future lives.

   The problem of suffering, however, goes much deeper than physical aspects of suffering. Life often is far from ideal. It often fails to live to up to one's expectations.

   Humans experience desires and cravings, but even when one is able to satisfy these desires and cravings, satisfaction is fleeting and temporary. The pleasure experienced becomes monotonous if it lasts or it simply does not last (it ends).

   Therefore, when humans are not suffering from illness or bereavement, they are unfulfilled and unsatisfied. This is the reality of suffering.

2. **The Three Poisons—Samudaya or Tanha (Origins of Suffering):** The Buddha taught that the cause of all suffering lies in three root delusions, *samudaya* or *tanha*. These delusions have three dimensions, which Buddha described as being the Three Roots of Evil, the Three Fires, or the Three Poisons as follows:

   - Greed and desire, often represented by an image of a rooster
   - Ignorance or delusion, often represented by an image of a pig
   - Hatred and destructive urges, often represented by an image of a snake

3. **Nirodha (Cessation of Dukkha):** This is the end of suffering. The Buddha taught that the way to extinguish desire, which causes suffering, is to liberate oneself from attachment. The way to end suffering is to overcome desire and to experience enlightenment (*nirvana*). It is a state of deep and powerful spiritual joy, free from negative emotions and fears. Attaining *nirvana* or reaching enlightenment requires that one successfully extinguish the three fires of greed, delusion, and hatred. Those who reach *nirvana* do not immediately disappear to a higher realm. *Nirvana* is seen to be a state of mind. Someone who has attained enlightenment is filled with compassion for all and all things. When *nirvana* is attained, no more *karma* is being produced, and rebirth and dissatisfaction will no longer arise in the individual again.

4. **Magga (Path to Ending Suffering):** The final Noble Truth is the Buddha's guidance as to how to bring an end to unhappiness and suffering, and the release from the cycle of birth and death (*samsara*). This is a set of principles called the Eightfold Path. Buddha described the Path as being like a raft or boat for crossing a river. Once an individual reaches the opposite bank or shore, they no longer need the raft or boat so they can leave it behind.

   Buddha disclosed that the four Noble Truths have to be considered in two ways, namely *laukka* and *lokottara*.

   - *Laukka* refers to any activity or practice associated with the profane world of unenlightened beings (*prthagjana*) and which is regarded as not conducive to liberation.
   - *Lokottara* refers to things related to salvation and the struggle for *nirvana* (*nibbana*) in contrast to the mundane world or *laukka*. The term is especially used with regard to the 'four paths and four fruits' associated with the Noble Path (*arya-marga*).

   The Noble Eightfold Path offers a comprehensive practical guide to the development of those wholesome qualities and skills in the human heart that must be cultivated in order to bring the practitioner to the final goal, the supreme freedom and happiness of *nirvanna* (*nibbana*). The eight qualities to be developed are the following: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

In practice, The Buddha taught the Noble Eightfold Path to his followers according to a gradual system of training, beginning with the development of *sila*, or virtue (right speech, right action, and right livelihood, which are summarized in practical form by the five precepts), followed by the development of *samadhi*, or concentration and mental cultivation (right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration), culminating in the development of *panna*, or wisdom (right view and right resolve). The practice of *dana* (generosity) serves as a support at every step along the path, as it helps foster the development of a compassionate heart and counters the heart's habitual tendencies towards craving.

Progress along the path does not follow a simple linear trajectory. Rather, development of each aspect of the Noble Eightfold Path encourages the refinement and strengthening of the others, leading the practitioner ever forward in an upward spiral of spiritual maturity that culminates in Awakening.

Middle Way

The Middle Way is Buddha's view of how life should be lived, and is a reflection of his own life experience and pathway. It refers to the thoughts, conduct, or actions that are most likely to create happiness. The Buddha taught this concept as the Eightfold Path. The Eightfold Path consists of eight guiding principles that his followers follow to control their behaviour and come to self-understanding. Five abilities or characteristics are essential to traversing the path: confidence, mindfulness, effort, concentration, and wisdom. Each of these must be kept in balance with all the others in order to maintain the path.

The relationship between the physical and spiritual is an important part of the balance that is essential to the Middle Way. For example, while materialism has negative effects in our world, such as environmental damage and spiritual barrenness, rejecting materialism entirely is not realistic and may lead us to be overly idealistic and incapable of dealing with the challenges of every day living. The Middle Way represents a moral code that is based on rejection of all extremes of thought, emotion, action, and lifestyle for lay people.

The Eightfold Path is usually represented by an eight-spoked wheel (the Wheel of *Dharma*).

Five Precepts

The Eightfold Noble Path includes a moral code of five precepts which are intended to guide the actions of all adherents and to which Buddhists commit to follow. Buddhist monks and nuns, depending on the school or sect, often have many more precepts that they commit to follow. These five precepts have common elements with most moral codes of the other major religious traditions. The Five Precepts are as follows:

1. To abstain from killing or taking life (of anything that lives)
2. To abstain from stealing or taking what is not given
3. To abstain from sensuous/sexual misconduct or exploitation
4. To abstain from lying or false speech
5. To abstain from all drugs and intoxicants which may cloud the mind

Ten Wholesome Actions (Conduct)

Adherence to the Five Precepts implies that adherents act or conduct themselves in ways that are consistent with the Five Precepts. The Ten Wholesome Actions (or conducts) may be grouped into three sets: three are bodily, four are verbal, and three are mental. The following are the Ten Wholesome Actions:

1. Abstaining from killing living beings
2. Abstaining from stealing
3. Abstaining from sexual misconduct
4. Abstaining from false speech
5. Abstaining from malicious speech
6. Abstaining from harsh speech
7. Abstaining from gossip
8. Abstaining from coveting
9. Abstaining from ill will
10. Possessing right understanding of the Dharma

Noble Eightfold Path (*Magga* in Sanskrit or *Ariya* in Pali)

Note: The terms describing the Eightfold Path may vary depending on translations and texts.

The Eightfold Path consists of eight practices, which may be grouped into the following three categories:

Wisdom

1. **Right View (***Samyak-Drti***/** *Samma-Ditthi***):** Complete or perfect vision, also translated as right view or understanding. Vision of the nature of reality and the path of transformation.
2. **Right Resolve (***Samyak-Samkalpa***/***Samma-Sankappa***):** Perfected emotion or aspiration, also translated as right thought or attitude.

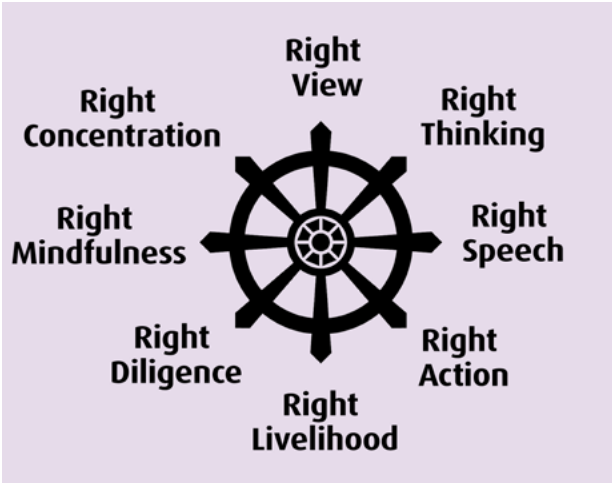

Figure 3: The Eightfold Path—A depiction of a wooden wheel with eight spokes. Each spoke is labelled. Going clockwise from the top: Right view, Right Thinking, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Dilligence, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration.

Liberating emotional intelligence in your life and acting from love and compassion. An informed heart and feeling mind that are free to practice letting go.

Morality

3. **Right Speech (*Samyag-Va/Samma-Vaca*):** Perfected or whole speech; also called right speech. Clear, truthful, uplifting, and non-harmful communication.
4. **Right Action (*Samyak-Karmanta/Samma-Kammanta*):** Also called Integral Action. An ethical foundation for life based on the principle of non-exploitation of oneself and others: the Five Precepts.
5. **Right Livelihood (*Samyag-Ajiva /Samma-Ajiva*):** Also called Proper Livelihood, which is a livelihood based on correct action and the ethical principal of non-exploitation. The basis of an ideal society.

Meditation

6. **Right Effort (*Samyag-Vyayama/Samma-Vayama*):** Complete or full effort, energy, or vitality. Also called right diligence. Consciously directing our life energy to the transformative path of creative and healing action that fosters wholeness, and conscious evolution.
7. **Right Mindfulness (*Samyak-Smrti/Samma-Sati*):** Complete or thorough awareness. Developing high levels of awareness and mindfulness—of things, oneself, feelings, thought, people, and reality.
8. **Right Concentration (*Samyak-Samadhi/Samma-Samadh*):** Full or holistic *Samadhi*. This is often translated as concentration, meditation, absorption, or one-pointedness of mind. None of these translations are adequate. *Samadhi* literally means to be fixed, absorbed in, or established at one point. As such, the first level of meaning is concentration when the mind is fixed on a single object. The second level of meaning goes further and represents the establishment, not just of the mind but also of the whole being, in various levels or modes of consciousness and awareness. This is *Samadhi* in the sense of enlightenment or Buddhahood.

A central Buddhist belief is that the only way by which one can attain liberation from suffering is to follow the path of Buddhism. This requires both mental discipline and the actual practice of Buddha's teachings, which may involve many lifetimes of devoted effort and commitment.

Buddhism teaches that wisdom should be developed with compassion. Buddhism uses the middle path to develop both. The highest wisdom is seeing that, in reality, all phenomena are incomplete, impermanent, and do not constitute a fixed entity. From a Buddhist perspective, true wisdom is not simply believing what we are told but instead experiencing and understanding truth and reality. Wisdom requires an open, objective, unbigoted, mind. Compassion includes qualities of sharing, readiness to give comfort, sympathy, concern, and caring.

Meditation and Prayer

Importance of Concentration and Meditation

Meditation is a fundamental aspect of Buddhist practice. All forms of Buddhism and all Buddhist meditation techniques derive from the Buddha's insights about the nature of existence, the causes of suffering, the causes of happiness, and the directions for living a wholesome and meaningful life.

Buddhists meditate as part of the Eightfold Path toward liberation, awakening, and *nirvana*. Meditation is a mental and physical activity that allows a person to separate themselves from their thoughts and feelings; it is a way of taking control of the mind so that it becomes peaceful and focused, and the person becomes fully aware. Buddhists often say that the objective of meditation is to still the mind.

Buddhists use a number of methods for meditating, often methods which have been used for centuries and have been shown to work. There are hundreds of different Buddhist meditation techniques, most of which are specific to a particular branch of Buddhism, or even a specific teacher. Some of the meditation techniques commonly used include the following:

- Tranquility or concentration meditation (*Samatha Bhavana*), including breathing meditation
- *Shamatha* or mindfulness method
- Loving kindness meditation (*Metta Bhavana*)
- Insight meditation (*Vipassanā Bhavana*)
- Mindfulness meditation
- *Mantra* meditation
- *Mandala* or *Yantra* meditation
- *Guru* or *deity* meditation, most frequently found in Vajrayana Buddhism
- *Zazen* meditation
- *Chakra* meditation, mostly found in Vajrayana Buddhism

These meditative techniques seek to develop self-control and *sati* (mindfulness), *samadhi* (concentration), *samatha* (tranquility), and *vipassanā* (insight). Meditation is preceded by and combined with practices which aid this development, such as moral restraint and right effort to develop healthy states of mind.

While these techniques may be used by all Buddhist schools, there is also significant diversity in practice. In the Theravada tradition, meditation techniques are classified as either *samatha* (calming the mind) or *vipassanā* (gaining insight). In Tibetan Buddhism, deity yoga includes visualizations, which precede the realization of *sunyata* (emptiness).

Meditating in a group, whether at a temple, a retreat, or in a meditation room centre has the benefit of reminding participants that they are both part of a larger Buddhist community and the larger community of beings of every species.

Prayer and Chanting

Prayer in the dictionary sense of a request for help or an expression of gratitude directed to God, saints, or other godlike beings is not a formal part of Buddhism, since there is no powerful "other" or others to whom prayers are directed. There are, however, a great many Buddhist activities, such as vows and invocations that have prayer-like qualities. As well, some Buddhists also request help and express gratitude frequently.

Buddhist views on prayer vary between schools. Theravada Buddhists tend to pray, but not with the expectation that a god or gods is/are listening. Mahayana and Tantric Buddhists pray to Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, but not necessarily to have them answer or intervene because, in some views, these figures are literal beings.

Buddhists chant several different types of texts that are chanted as part of Buddhist practice. In Mahayana Buddhism especially, the chants often are directed to transcendent Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. For example, Pure Land Buddhists chant the *Nianfo* (Chinese) or *Nembutsu* (Japanese) which invoke the name of Amitabha Buddha. The belief is that having faith in Amitabha will lead one to be reborn in a Pure Land, a state or place in which enlightenment is easily realized.

Mantras and *dharanis* (sacred Sanskrit phrase efficacy) are often chants, which are valued for their sounds as much as for what they mean. These usually brief texts are chanted repeatedly and could be thought of as a kind of meditation with the voice. Often the chants are directed or dedicated to a transcendent Buddha or Bodhisattva. For example, the Medicine Buddha *mantra* or longer *dharani* may be chanted on behalf of someone who is ill.

Names and Titles

There is considerable variation in the names and titles used to address monks (*bhikkhus*—Pali, *bhikshu*—Sanskrit) and nuns (*bhikkhunis*—Pali and *bhikshunis*—Sanskrit). These often reflect the linguistics diversity of Buddhism, cultural traditions, and the practices of different sects. Often monks and nuns, regardless of school or sect, may be addressed as Venerable (Ven.) but other titles are common, some apply to both monks and lay teachers or scholars.

A few examples are Guru-ju or Gu-bhaju (Nepal), Roshi (Zen), Lama (Tibet), Ajhan (Thai), Sensei (Japan), Bhante (Sri Lanka), Ashin and Sayadaw (Burma), Gen (New Kadampa Tradition) and Master. Nuns in Tibet will have the prefix Ani added to their name.

Honorifics are often used as well in the titles. For example, in Tibet, the honorific title of Rinpoche (Precious One) is often used for reincarnate or esteemed monks and teachers. Thero (Thera/theri in feminine form) is an honorific term in Pali for senior *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunis*.

While some schools of Buddhism refer to devotional chanting as a form of prayer, it's understood that the purpose of praying is not to ask a being somewhere for intervention but to awaken the spiritual strength that is within each person.

Buddhists will often use prayer beads, called *malas*, as well as prayer flags and prayer wheels in temples and monasteries. Prayer beads are used to count the number of repetitions of a *mantra*. It is a common practice in Tibetan Buddhism

prayer to hang prayer flags outside of temples. The flags, usually covered with auspicious symbols and mantras, are not intended to carry petitions to gods but to spread blessings and good fortune to all beings. Prayer wheels, also associated primarily with Tibetan Buddhism, come in many shapes and forms. Wheels are usually covered in written mantras. Buddhists spin the wheels as they focus on a *mantra* and dedicate the merit of the act to all beings. In this way, the turning of a prayer wheel is also a form of meditation.

Buddhist religious practice styles vary according to cultural origins and may include chanting of *mantras*, prostration, and meditation. Buddhist practitioners often rise early in the morning to begin their devotions in the belief that this time of day is highly conducive to practice. Mid-morning is also a significant time of ritual in Buddhist temples as this is the main ceremony of the day, when the daily food offering is made to the Buddha, and is followed by the midday meal. Early evening is the time of the third main practice period when devotees gather again to chant and pray and practice meditation together.

Often, Buddhists will prostrate themselves three times (to the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha) when they enter the temple or meditation halls, as an expression of reverence, gratitude, and humility. (Migrant Information Centre, Eastern Melbourne)

Temples and Shrines

Buddhists gather in temples and shrines for individual or group devotions. In general, shoes and head coverings should be removed prior to entering a shrine room or rooms used by a family. The family rooms are considered to be less sacred than the shrine room. Shoes are considered to bring negativity, dirt, and uncleanliness into the rooms from the outside world. Quiet or refrained speech should be observed in a temple/shrine room.

Buddhists make offerings on the shrines in the temple halls. The main offerings are of light (candles), water bowls (that represent water to drink, water to wash), flowers, incense, perfume, food (fruit), and music. The lotus flower has a particular significance in Buddhism as it represents the purified mind which rises out of the mud of ignorance. All of the above objects may be seen on a Buddhist shrine. These offerings are symbols of Buddha's teachings.

Many different images of Buddha may be displayed in shrines and these various images represent different Buddha aspects and qualities such as, perfect wisdom and perfect compassion of the Buddha. The images serve to inspire Buddhists to develop these qualities in themselves. Other objects which are displayed, in addition to the statues or paintings of Buddha Shakyamuni to represent Buddha's body, are a *Dharma* book (speech) and a *Stupa* (mind).

The shrine, including its statues or deities, should be treated with respect and reverence. Buddhist statues should be lifted or held by the base and never by the head or top of the object. In fact the head is a "no-go" zone for Buddhists generally. (Migrant Information Centre, Eastern Melbourne)

Monks and Nuns

Following The Buddha and the Dharma (teachings), the community of Buddhist monks and nuns, or *sangha*, constitute the third of the Threefold Refuge, a basic creed of Buddhism. Monks and nuns usually adopt distinctive styles of appearance and behaviour. Traditionally both monks and nuns shaved their heads upon taking their vows. As well they committed to being celibate.

Usually only ordained monks and nuns wear special robes; but, in some Buddhist schools, qualified lay spiritual teachers may also wear a variation of the robes or some other distinct clothing which indicates their teacher status.

Theravada monks and nuns should not be touched physically by someone of the opposite gender. Mahayana monks and nuns are also conservative in physical contact but the restrictions are not as strongly prescribed as they are for ordained Theravadas. Handshaking with lay people is generally permitted apart from the exceptions previously mentioned. (Migrant Information Centre, Eastern Melbourne)

Food

Some Buddhists are strict vegetarians. The consumption of meat is left to the discretion of the individual. Eating meat in of itself does not incur negative karma. If one personally kills an animal for food or if someone kills an animal specifically for a person, then negative karma is accrued. On holy days lay people may attend the temple and fast for the day, such as not eating after midday in the manner of Theravada monks; however consideration is allowed for those whom fasting could create medical problems.

Greetings

The more common greeting gesture for Buddhists to greet others is to place both hands in a prayer position; palms together at chest height, then bow gently. However, some sects have their hands folded over their heart in greeting. In some sects lay persons may prostrate themselves in front of the monks or respected teachers to show their respect and veneration or if receiving a formal teaching. Often in the West and Modern Buddhist sects, greetings follow western cultural practices.

Naming Conventions

This is more dependent on the cultural background of the individual. However, monks and nuns take on spiritual names given to them at the time of their formal commitment to Buddhism. (Migrant Information Centre, Eastern Melbourne)

Role of Women

Men and women have equal status as it is generally believed that both may achieve enlightenment and enter *nirvana* in Buddhism. Historically, this was, however, beginning with Gautama Buddha's *sangha* (community of followers or monastics) overridden by cultural norms and practices which privileged men over women. Thus the roles and place of women and men in most schools and sects, were historically unequal.

In contemporary times as well as in some sects, this is changing significantly and there is greater gender equity and similarity in leadership roles and in the community.

Buddhism: Quick Reference Chart

*Used with permission by Alan Peto, www.alanpeto.com/graphics/.

The chart below provides an overview of the foundational beliefs and aspects of Buddhism.

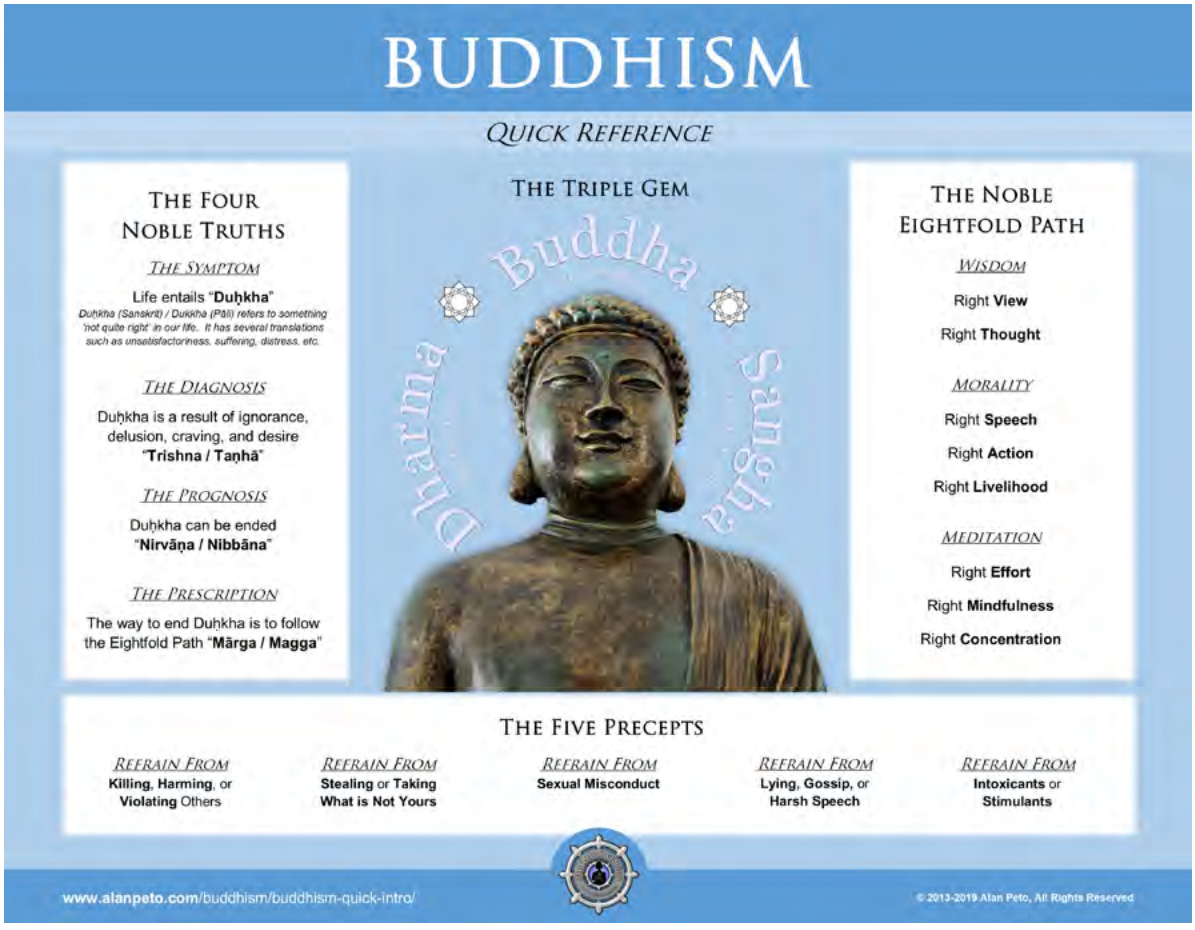

Figure 4: Chart showing the Four Noble Truths on the left, The Noble Eightfold Path on the right, and the Five Precepts on the bottom

Buddhism: "Cheat Sheet"

Used with permission by Alan Peto, www.alanpeto.com/graphics/. The "Cheat Sheet" provides a summary of Buddhist beliefs and perspectives about life and achieving enlightenment or freedom from *samsara*.

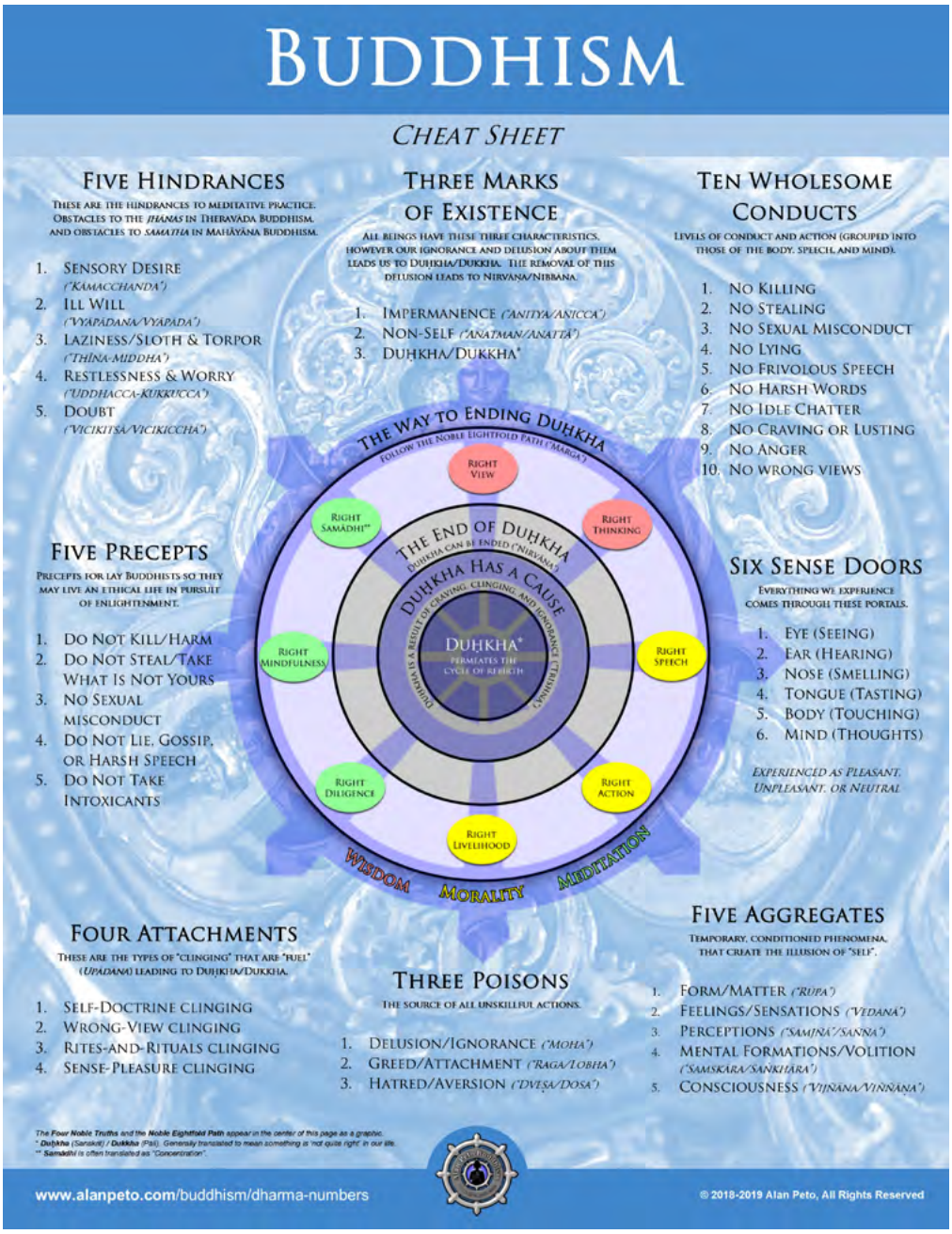

Figure 5: Chart showing a circle in the middle titled The Way to Ending Duhkha. Surrounding that circle going clockwise from the top left are several lists: Five Hindrances, Three Marks of Existence, Ten Wholesome Conducts, Six Sense Doors, Five Aggregates, Three Poisons, Four Attachments, and Five Precepts

Buddhism in the World and Canada

Buddhism is the fourth largest religion in the world, following Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism. According to the World Almanac, there are about 320 million Buddhists in the world today. Other estimates suggest that there are about 500 million Buddhists worldwide (Pew Research Center). It is expected that Buddhists will remain heavily concentrated in the Asia-Pacific region, where 99% of Buddhists lived in 2010. China is estimated to account for 50% of the world's Buddhists. By contrast, there are about 2 billion Christians and 1 billion Muslims in the world (Hays). The share of the world's Buddhist population living in North America is expected to grow from about 0.8% in 2010 to over 2% in 2050. (Pew Research Center)

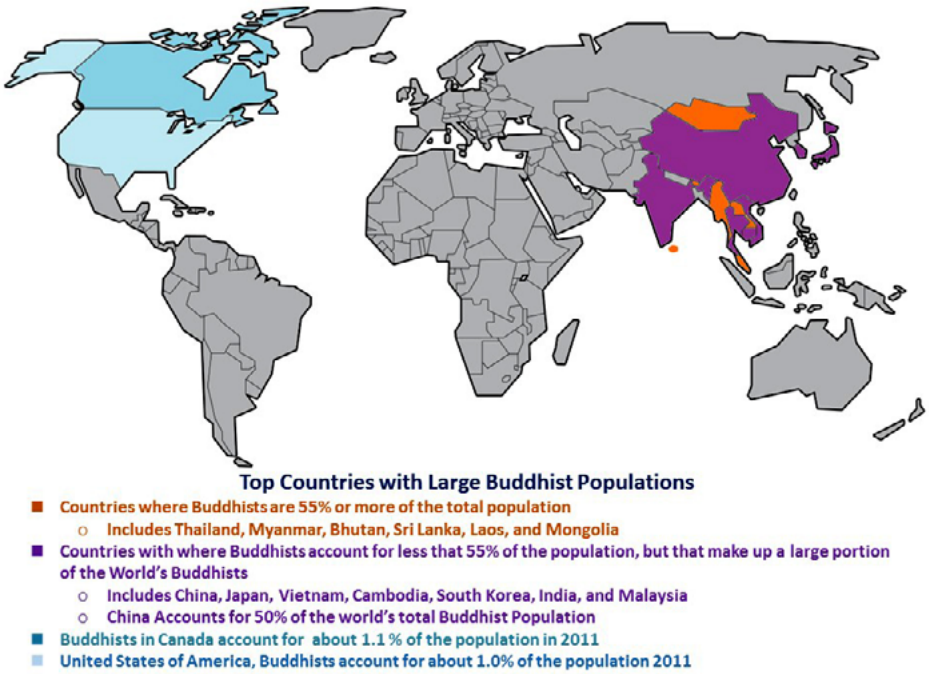

Figure 6: World map with three main colours representing different percentages of Buddhist populations

Buddhism in Canada

More Canadians are self-identifying as Buddhist. According to the 2001 census, the number of people in Canada who self-identified as Buddhists increased by 84% from 1991, to approximately 300,340, or about 1% of the Canadian population. By 2011, according to the 2011 National Household Survey, the estimated Buddhist population in Canada was 366,830 or about 1.1% of the population, of which 252,585 were of immigrant backgrounds.

Buddhists in Canada come from two basic sources. The first is those with Buddhist roots. Those Canadians born into Buddhist families and individuals, groups, and institutions established by immigrants and their descendants from Asian countries with strong or majority Buddhist populations. The second is through those who have learned about Buddhism through travel, study, or personal contact with Buddhists and who have adopted Buddhist practice or converted to Buddhism.

Japanese and Chinese immigrants were the first Buddhists to arrive in Canada. It is believed that the first Buddhists to arrive in Canada probably came from Macao. They were Chinese artisans, part of the expedition of Captain John Meares, who arrived on Vancouver Island in 1788. In 1858, exactly seventy years later, the first Chinese arrived in substantial numbers from the goldfields of California. They came north along with an influx of American miners who were following rumours of a great gold find along the banks of the Fraser River. When the gold ran out and most of the Americans headed back south, the Chinese workers stayed behind finding work in the forests and in the towns as day labourers. (Pew Research Center).

Figure 7: Okinawan and Japanese immigrant families, Vancouver, British Columbia, 1924

These settlers were followed by Japanese immigrants who arrived during the late 19th century. The first Japanese Buddhist temple in Canada was built at the Ishikawa Hotel in Vancouver in 1905. Over time, the Japanese Jodo Shinshu branch of Buddhism became the most prevalent form of Buddhism in Canada and established the largest Buddhist organization in Canada (Barber).

During the late 1800s, Japanese Canadians usually gathered at members' homes and some time later more formal gathering places began to be established. Historical records reveal a "shrine" on the top floor of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association of Victoria, built in 1844, with an "ornately carved alter, alter table, screens and images." One can assume that Buddhist and Confucian images were included. (Pew Research Center) According to Prof. David Lai of the University of Victoria, the first Buddhist house of worship in Canada was the Tam Kung Temple, located in a rented small wooden structure in 1876 located at 1713 Government Street in Victoria, British Columbia.

Nonetheless, the first recorded gathering of Japanese Buddhists in Canada took place in Vancouver, in 1904, when 14 Buddhists met to request a minister from the Honpa Hongwanji Temple in Kyoto, Japan (mother temple of this Jodo Shinshu sect). This was followed in October of 1905 by the arrival of the first resident minister, Reverend Senju Sasaki. In December of 1905, the first Buddhist temple in Canada was established in a rented room at the Ishikawa Ryokan (hotel) in Vancouver. In the following year, the temple was moved to a house in Vancouver. (Canadian Encyclopedia)

Figure 8: 1932 Raymond, BC Dedication of Buddhist Church—Rev. Nakatomi is seated in the middle with a rectangular cloth.

By 1926, the mother temple in Kyoto sent seven ministers to the Vancouver area and by 1941, 11 ministers were serving 16 temples in British Columbia.

The first temple outside of British Columbia was established in Alberta in 1929. From that point on, southern Alberta would play a major role in the development of Canadian Buddhism from the 1940s onward.

WWII had a deep and profoundly negative impact on Buddhism and Japanese Canadians: the declaration of Japanese Canadians to be 'Enemy Aliens' under the War Measures Act, the internment of Canadians of Japanese ancestry, the seizure of these individuals' property, and these individuals' dispersal to remote internment and labour camps in other provinces. On 14 January, 1942,

Prime Minister King ordered the removal of all adult males of Japanese ancestry from the coast. The government ordered that the men be sent for work in road labour camps. Many of the Japanese Canadians were sent to internment and work camps in Alberta. These actions nearly eradicated Japanese Canadian Buddhism and institutional Buddhism from Canada.

As a result, Alberta would also become an important hub for Buddhism in Canada and the birthplace of the academic study of Buddhism for the whole of North America. With the lifting of the War Measures Act in 1949, Japanese Canadians were again free to move throughout Canada. Some Japanese Buddhists returned to British Columbia, many stayed in Alberta, and others settled elsewhere, including Manitoba.

Figure 9: First Nations Longhouse, UBC, Vancouver, British Columbia, Lotus Speech Canada Author Matthieu Ricard and Changling Rinpoche, Buddhist monks, listening to song, with honour guard, at the Centennial of Blessings

Buddhist Temples of Canada (formerly Buddhist Churches of Canada [BCC]) emerged from a national conference of Japanese Buddhists held in 1955 in Toronto. The Buddhist Temples of Canada, like the temple that opened in 1905 in Vancouver, are Jodo Shinshu Buddhist temples based on the teachings of Shinran (1173–1262).

From these beginnings Buddhism in Canada experienced a significant period of growth, beginning in the second half of the 20th century. Changes in Canadian immigration policies and practices resulted in more immigrants from Asian and Southeast Asian nations, countries such as Sri Lanka, Tibet, Nepal, Thailand, and Japan, all of which have strong Buddhist histories and populations. In addition, the immense popularity and goodwill ushered in by Tibet's Dalai Lama (who has been made an honourary Canadian citizen) put Buddhism in a favourable light. Many non-Asian Canadians (Namgyal Rinpoche, Glenn H. Mullin, and Richard Barron, for example) have embraced Buddhism and some have become leaders in their respective schools/sects (Barber).

In the latter part of the 20th century, growth in immigration to Canada from China and Korea has led to the founding of more Chinese and Korean temples in a number of provinces. Chan/Zen Buddhism, which was historically associated with the Japanese in North America, is now a much more diverse community.

As noted earlier, following the reduction of exclusionary immigration policies and an increase in immigration prospects for Asians, during the 1970s and

1980s, Chinese and Vietnamese arrived in Canada in increasing numbers and established temples in most provinces. Although groups such as the Koreans, Thai, Sri Lankans, and Burmese arrived in smaller numbers, they also established temples. Many temples have dual functions as Buddhist institutions and as community centres. Although some of these temples have attracted members of other cultural backgrounds, the cultural and linguistic focus of such temples often act as an impediment to the participation of Canadians of other origins and limit opportunities for expansion of membership.

Tibetan Buddhism developed out of later Indian Buddhism. Buddhism was brought to Tibet around 650 CE and flourished there. In 1959, the 14th Dalai Lama, the temporal head of the country, fled to India from the invading Communist Chinese army. With him came about 100 000 monks, nuns, lamas, and lay people. Canada was one of the first western countries to offer new homes to the people fleeing the oppression of their countries.

Before Tibet became an "autonomous region" of the People's Republic of China, there were four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism (Gelugpa, Sakyapa, Nyingmapa, and Kargyupa). Of the four schools, the Kargyupa and Gelugpa are best represented in Canada. (See the section in this document on the diversity of Buddhism for more information on these schools of Tibetan Buddhism.)

Figure 10: Ryokan Nishimura (3rd from left) and wife, Setsuko (first on left)

The first lama to come to Canada was the Venerable Gyaltrul Rinpoche. He was a lama in the Palyul tradition of the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism and was assigned to accompany the first group of Tibetans to be resettled in Winnipeg. The Dalai Lama requested the Venerable Gyaltrul Rinpoche to aid the resettlement process in 1972. After working for many years in Canada, he was asked by H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche, the head of the Nyingma School, to be the abbot of several temples on the west coast of the USA, to where he was relocated.

One of the largest centres in Canada, Shambhala International (Kargyupa), is headquartered in Halifax, and the Gelugpa founded the Gaden Choling in Toronto in 1980. Venerable Kalu Rinpoche, after founding many centres across Canada, established the first retreat centre on Salt Spring Island, British Columbia. One of the centres that studies, practises, and promotes the teachings of the Kargyu order of Tibetan Buddhism is the Marpa Gompa Meditation Society, founded in 1979 in Calgary. Other Kargyu centres are

located in St. Catharines, Toronto, Montreal, and Burnaby. Many meditation centres were organized under the late Venerable Chogyam Trungpa (died 1987). His centres, located across the country, are easily identified by the name Dharmadhatu and members are predominantly Kargyupa (followers of Kargyu) in meditative practices.

At the Gaden Choling Mahayana Buddhist Meditation Centre in Toronto, founded in 1980, members practise the Tibetan Gelug school of Lama Tsongkapa meditation practices and philosophy. Other centres affiliated with the Gaden Choling are located in Vancouver and Nelson, British Columbia, as well as Thunder Bay, Ontario. The Temple Bouddhiste Tibétain (Chang Chub Cho Ling) was established in 1980 in Longueuil, Quebec, to preserve the Gelugpa tradition. This temple has now relocated to Montreal.

The Victoria Buddhist Dharma Society and the Sakya Thubten Kunga Choling, follow the Sakya school of Tibetan Buddhism.

Two of the "new" Japanese Buddhist schools are found in Canada. The first, Reiyukai (Spiritual Friendship Society), with head offices in Vancouver, is based on Buddhism but considers itself a humanitarian organization. The second, Soka Gakkai, which developed out of the Nichiren order, has centres in most major cities across Canada.

Other Buddhist groups include the International Buddhist Foundation, formed in 1982 to encourage scholarly research in studies related to Buddhism; the Toronto Buddhist federation, founded in 1982, resulted from an earlier gathering of Buddhists in Toronto who were preparing to attend a peace conference. Membership to the latter is limited to registered Buddhist charitable organizations and includes Buddhists from Burma, Cambodia, Canada, China, India, Japan, Korea, Laos, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tibet, the United States of America, and Vietnam. Other major metropolitan areas, such as Toronto, already have or are creating umbrella organizations.

One of the notable features of North American Buddhism is that there is a strong anti-establishment orientation. When coupled with the decentralized temple organizational feature traditional in Buddhism, it creates an interesting situation for Canadian Buddhism. Throughout Canada there are many uncounted groups, small in composition, who form informal organizational structures, although they meet on a regular basis at the home of a teacher or mentor, or at a local community place.

There are also large numbers of unaffiliated individuals who intentionally refuse to join any particular temple or group, but visit various temples and join group activities for only a short time.

There are now more than 500 Buddhist organizations in Canada, including temples, centres, associations, retreats, charities, businesses, and so forth (Sumeru Guide to Canadian Buddhism). All lineages (Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana, and newer schools) are represented. Several universities offer extensive programs in Buddhist Studies.

As immigrant communities construct temples in Canada's urban centres, and Buddhist ideas and practices such as meditation, vegetarianism, and non-violence are increasingly popular, Buddhism has influenced new religious movements in Canada as well as other aspects of our national culture. Today, Chinese, Tibetan, Lao, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese Buddhists flourish and, through intermarriage and the attraction of Buddhist philosophy and practice, increasingly Canadians of Christian and other faiths are turning to Buddhism (Barber).

Buddhism in Manitoba

The Buddhist community is growing in Manitoba. In 2001, 5,745 Manitobans identified themselves as being Buddhists (Statistics Canada); however, by 2011, about 7,000 Manitobans identified as being Buddhist (Statistics Canada, NHS 2011). The community is expected to exceed 9,000 persons by 2031 (Statistics Canada).

Figure 11: The Manitoba Buddhist Church in Winnipeg Celebrating its 72nd Anniversary. It is a Mahayana Temple in the Jodo Shinshu Tradition.

The development and growth of the community is summarized in the quote that follows. "Buddhism came to the Prairies in the late 1800s with Chinese immigrants who moved from Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario, and some who also arrived from the United States. Chinese communities observing Buddhist rites and practices formed in Saskatoon, Regina, and Winnipeg by the early 1900s (Li 1990). A small number of Japanese also migrated to the Prairies during this period, but there was little growth or expansion of Buddhist communities until after World War II. Increased Asian immigration from the early 1970s onward saw the arrival of new Canadians from many Buddhist lands, including Burma, Cambodia, Korea, Laos, Sri Lanka, Tibet, and Vietnam." (Mullens 2014)

There is evidence of a Buddhist presence in Manitoba dating back to the early 1900s (Conrad). At this point, Buddhists were of primarily Chinese and

Japanese origins who immigrated to British Columbia and then migrated across Western Canada.

Chinese workers and entrepreneurs began to immigrate to Manitoba in the late 1870s, leading to the foundation of the first Chinese community association in the 1880s (Mullens). There is an enduring and growing Chinese presence in Winnipeg and Chinese-Canadians are one of the largest Asian groups in the city. The Chinese community has a number of cultural and business institutions, as well as a Buddhist temple.

The Japanese Buddhist community in Manitoba grew during the Second World War as a result of the displacement from the East Coast of the Japanese Canadians who were classified as enemy aliens. Japanese Canadians in British Columbia had their property seized, were detained, and were sent to remote labour camps in British Columbia and Alberta. Later, many of these Japanese Canadian families were sent to work on farms in Manitoba (Gopin) and stayed after the war. The Manitoba Buddhist Temple has its origins in this dispersal. Over 1000 Japanese-Canadians arrived in Manitoba seeking to keep their families together. They faced and survived many hardships including racial, religious, and cultural persecution.

The Buddhist presence in Manitoba and Winnipeg, especially, grew with the expansion of immigration from Asia that began in the 1970s and has continued to this day.

Buddhism in Manitoba

Winnipeg Area

Buddhists in Manitoba primarily reside in or around Winnipeg. The Japanese-Canadian Buddhist community was established in the late 1940s and early 1950s (Mullens 2005) and resulted from the dispersal of the East Coast Japanese Canadian community at a time when they were being treated as enemy aliens. In 1984 the Mennonite Central Committee offered an apology on behalf of Canadian Mennonites to Japanese Canadians in recognition of the abuse they faced and benefits that the Mennonite community received as a result of the assignment of interned Japanese Canadians to farms throughout Manitoba and in other Western provinces.

The Manitoba Buddhist Temple was first known as the Manitoba Buddhist Church and was established in 1946. It was the religious and cultural centre for first and second generation Japanese-Canadians who were resettled in Manitoba from Western Canada during WWII and welcomed to remain in Winnipeg at war's end. Buddhist Japanese Canadians in Winnipeg believed that a church was essential for their moral, spiritual, social, and cultural development.

Figure 12: Wat Lao Xayarm Buddhist Temple in Winnipeg's North End

Hideo Nishimura, who was then a farm worker living in Emerson, Manitoba, became the first lay minister. Later, after studying in Japan, he became the full minister (Sensei) of the new church. An altar arrived in 1951 and by 1952 the church building was completed. The church offered a language school, a Dharma school, and regular Sunday services. (Mullens 2005) It continues to survive through the efforts of a dedicated group of volunteers. (Manitoba Buddhist Temple)

Since its inception, the Manitoba Buddhist Church has been affiliated with the Buddhist Churches of Canada. At first, the Buddhist Churches of Canada chose to adopt an organizational model, building design, and style of services that builds on a Protestant church model; however, over time it has sought to return to an organizational culture that is more in keeping with its Japanese roots.

This began in 1955 when a national conference of Japanese Buddhists was held in Toronto. One of the outcomes of the meeting was a name change to Buddhist Temples of Canada and the Manitoba Buddhist Temple. The Manitoba Buddhist Temple and those temples and churches associated with the Buddhist Temples of Canada follow Jodo Shinshu Buddhism founded in Japan by Shinran (1173–1262). In 2008, a further change occurred: the Buddhist Temples of Canada changed its name to Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada (JSBTC). The Manitoba Buddhist Temple is a member of the national Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada. The JSBTC is affiliated with the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha in Kyoto, Japan. The JSBTC celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2005 with 16 affiliated temples or churches in Canada.

Beginning in the 1970s, the Buddhist presence grew in Winnipeg and began to reflect greater diversity of linguistic and cultural origins that mirrored the changing national and provincial immigration patterns. First, several Tibetan families arrived in the early 1970s and were followed by Vietnamese refugees/immigrants fleeing the civil war in Vietnam and subsequently as immigrants through family reunification arrivals during the 1980s. The Vietnamese Buddhist community established the Chanh Dao Vietnamese Buddhist Association of Manitoba Inc. in 1988. The organization opened the Hai Hoi Temple in Winnipeg which is still functioning.

Figure 13: Buddhism lesson and shrine

Sinhalese speaking Buddhist Sri Lankans began to settle in Winnipeg from the 1970s through the 1990s onwards. This soon led to the founding of the Theravada Buddhist Centre. Mrs. Radhika Abeysekera, a lay Buddhist who came to Canada from Sri Lanka with her husband and two children in the 1980s, was instrumental in these efforts. She and other Sri Lankans worked to establish the Buddhist Vihara Association. Upon arrival in Winnipeg, Radhika Abeysekera recognized the need for a Sri Lankan Buddhist sangha to provide religious instruction for her own family and other Sri Lankan Buddhists in Winnipeg. In the mid to late 1980s, the Manitoba Buddhist and Cultural Association (MBVCA) was established in Winnipeg, a first without a resident monk.

Membership is predominantly comprised of individuals of Sri Lankan origins, but include Canadian members of other origins. (Mullens 2005).

Figure 14: Shrine at the Manitoba Buddhist Vihara and Cultural Association

Another Sri Lankan centre, the Mahamevanawa Buddhist Monastery, was founded in 1999 by the Ven. Kiribathgoda Gnanananda Thero. The Monastery and its Buddha Meditation Centre Winnipeg (BMCW) is dedicated to spreading Buddhist teachings and meditation in Manitoba. The Monastery is affiliated with other Mahamevnawa temples located in Sri Lanka and other places. The main temple or mother temple for Buddhists is Mahamevanawa Buddhist monastery located on the outskirts of the town of Polgahawela in Sri Lanka.

There are three Buddhist temples serving the Chinese community and other Manitobans of various origins. Huasing Buddhist Temple on Cumberland Avenue is the largest. It is home to the Chinese Buddhist Association of Manitoba. Members come from Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Thailand, and mainland China.

More recent additions to the Buddhist organizations are Chùa Hai Hoi Buddhist Temple, which serves the Vietnamese and Indo-Chinese community in Winnipeg, and the Wat Lao Xayarm Buddhist Temple in Winnipeg's North End, a Theravada Temple with Laotian cultural roots.

Figure 15: Huasing Temple Winnipeg

There are also small communities of Korean and non-culturally based Buddhist groups in Winnipeg that hold gatherings in family homes or community centres, but do not have sufficient numbers to establish centres that give them a public presence.

Thus, the history of Buddhist community development in Manitoba spans a little over a century with much of the growth experienced in the last few decades. In some ways, it is remarkable that, in this relatively short period of time, all the major forms of Buddha dharma have become rooted in this region of Canada and are being authentically practiced by Manitobans of various cultural origins and places of birth.

As well, Western Buddhist and Modern Buddhist sects such as the New Kadampa Tradition, Vipassanā (Insight), and Shambhala have developed a strong presence in Manitoba and Canada.

Beyond Winnipeg

Manitobans of Buddhist faith may be found throughout Manitoba, although the majority live in or near Winnipeg. One of the communities with a significant Hindu population beyond Winnipeg is Brandon.

Buddhism in Brandon

Buddhists, especially with Chinese origins, are known to have deep roots in the Brandon area. There is evidence that Buddhists began worshipping together as early as 1905 in Brandon. Buddhists came to Southwest Manitoba between 1896 and 1911. The 1901 census lists seven Buddhist families in Brandon with Chinese origins, who were identified as laundrymen. The data suggests that these seven families shared one or two laundromats in the downtown Brandon area. They also may have shared a home as was common for many Asian families at that time.

It is possible that the 1901 census did not include Buddhist men who worked for the railroad companies in the area. Such men had itinerant lifestyles and lacked a permanent home. It is likely that Buddhist railroad workers who lived in Brandon for brief periods of time could have been counted in other districts as they moved across Canada. Thus, there may have been significantly more Buddhists residing in the area once the railway was completed.

Buddhism in Manitoba: A Mixture of Traditional Asian Sects and Western/Modern Buddhist Schools

In Winnipeg, one can find several examples of traditional Buddhist temples or organizations representative of the main branches of Buddhism. These are often connected to specific ethnic or cultural groups. There are, however, also several examples of Western or Modern Buddhist centres and organizations. These include

- Soka Gakkai
- Shambhala
- Insight (Vipassanā)
- New Kadampa Tradition

Today, Buddhists in Brandon practise meditation in their own homes, on a private level and, increasingly, as a group. Buddhists in Brandon, such as those that are part of the Westman Dharma Group, are connected to Winnipeg-based Buddhist organizations and temples, including the Manitoba Buddhist Temple. As well, there is a meditation group in Brandon that hosts meditation and modern Buddhism sessions in Brandon taught by the Kadampa Meditation Centre located in Winnipeg.

Origins of Buddhism

Buddhism originated in the Indian sub-continent around the fifth century BCE. Buddhism was founded in the north-eastern region of India in what is now Nepal and is based on the teachings of Siddharatha Gautama, The Buddha, or the Enlightened/Awakened One (British Broadcasting Corporation). It shares a history and relationship with Hinduism and other religions that have their roots in the Indian subcontinent.

Siddhartha Gautama (Sanskrit) or Siddhartha Gautama (Pali) is also known as the Shakyamuni Buddha or The Buddha. He is the historical founder of Buddhism and the primary figure in Buddhism. He was born in Lumbini, which is located in present-day Nepal. Siddhartha Gautama was a leader, teacher, and mentor of a sect of wandering ascetics (*Sramanas*). Such sects were common and existed all over India at that time. Over time, his sect came to be known as *Sangha* so as to distinguish it from other similar sects.

The *Sramanas* movement was rooted in the culture of world renunciation that emerged in India from about the seventh century BCE onwards. The Sramanas renounced or rejected the Vedic teachings, which was the dominant and traditional religious order in India at the time. They also renounced conventional society. This culture of renunciation was the basis for several religious and philosophical traditions, which emerged from India, including the Charvaka (also known as Lokayata) school, Buddhism, and Jainism.

Gautama Buddha, the seventh Buddha

According to Buddhism, there were many Buddhas before Gautama Buddha and there were and will be many Buddhas after him. In early Pali texts Gautama was listed as being the seventh Buddha of antiquity. According to Buddhist scriptures, Maitreya is believed to be the last Buddha of this eon and the successor of Gautama. Maitreya will appear on Earth, achieve complete enlightenment, and teach the pure Dharma. The prophecy of the arrival of Maitreya is found in the canonical literature of all Buddhist sects (Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana).

The exact number of Buddhas that have or will appear is debated. In the Theravada tradition the names of 21 Buddhas are added to the initial list of seven Buddhas, In the Mahayana Buddhist tradition even more names of Buddhas are added, and some claim that there has been, is, and/or will be an infinite number of Buddhas.

Siddharatha Gautama/Siddhattha Gautama: The Buddha

Though some accounts of his life are more elaborate than others, the Buddhist texts preserved in Sanskrit, Pali, Chinese, Tibetan, and other languages agree that Siddhartha was born in Lumbini Garden (present-day Nepal), attained awakening in Bodhgaya (India), began teaching just outside of Benares (Varanasi), and entered complete *nirvana* (passed away) at Kusinara (Kasia, India).

Siddhartha Gautama was born into a royal family in Lumbini around 563 BCE. (While scholars generally agree that Gautama Buddha did in fact exist, the specific dates and events of his life are still debated and vary greatly. In the present document, the most commonly quoted dates are used.) He lived a privileged and sheltered life. At the age of 29, he came to realize that wealth and privilege did not guarantee happiness. So he set out to find the key to human happiness by exploring the teachings of diverse religions and philosophies of his time. After six years of study and meditation he discovered 'The Middle Path' and achieved enlightenment. After his enlightenment, The Buddha spent the rest of his life teaching the principles of Buddhism, the Dhamma, or Truth, until his death at the age of 80. The word Buddha comes from the root word *budh* meaning "to know or to awaken.

Figure 16: Image of a statue of Siddhartha Gautama, the future Buddha while practising austerities before he found the Middle Way to Awakening. Wat Umong, Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Gautama Buddha is venerated in Buddhism, but he is not a god or a deity, nor did he ever claim to be one. He was one who achieved enlightenment and displayed aspects of Buddhahood, but who stayed to teach and guide others towards the path of enlightenment.

Buddhists temples and homes will often feature images of the Buddha; however, they do not worship Buddha nor do they pray or ask for favours. A statue of The Buddha will help followers concentrate and meditate as they strive to develop peace and love within themselves. Buddhists bow to the statue in an expression of gratitude for the teachings he provided.

Buddhists believe that there were in the past, there are currently, and there will be in the future many Buddhas on Earth. To be a Buddha is to be one who has awakened to a realistic view of the world and one's position in it. Buddhists also believe that other planets and other places of existence will have their own people and those people will have their own Buddhas, as the truth of Buddhism is universal. A Buddha is one who realizes that nothing, including the soul, has an unchanging essence.

Siddhartha Gautama lived during a time of profound social changes in India. The authority of the Vedic religion was being challenged by a number of new religious and philosophical views. The Vedic religion was developed by a nomadic society roughly a millennium before Siddhartha's time, and it gradually gained dominance over most of northern India, especially in the plain of the Ganges (Ganga) river. In the fifth century BCE, as society changed and was no longer nomadic, agrarian settlements replaced the old nomad caravans and evolved into villages, then into towns, and finally into cities. In this new urban and social context, many in the Indian society were no longer satisfied with the Vedic faith. Siddhartha Gautama was one among many critics of the Vedic religious establishment.

After Siddhartha Gautama passed away, the community he founded slowly evolved into a religion-like movement and the teachings of Siddhartha became the basis of Buddhism. The historical evidence suggests that Buddhism had a humble beginning. Apparently, it was a relatively minor tradition in India, and

some scholars have proposed that the impact of The Buddha in his own day was relatively limited due to the scarcity of written documents, inscriptions, and archaeological evidence from that time.

Development of Buddhism: Mahayana and Theravada Traditions

By the third century BCE, however, the picture we have of Buddhism is very different. The Mauryan Indian emperor Ashoka the Great (304–232 BCE), who ruled from 268 to 232 BCE, turned Buddhism into the state religion of India. He provided a favourable social and political climate for the acceptance of Buddhist ideas, encouraged Buddhist missionary activity, and even generated among Buddhist monks certain expectations of patronage and influence on the machinery of political decision making. Between the death of The Buddha and the time of Ashoka, archaeological evidence for Buddhism is scarce; after the time of Ashoka, it is abundant.

As Buddhism grew and expanded, many monastic schools emerged among Buddha's followers. This is partly because his practical teachings were indecisive on several points. For example, he refused to give a definitive answer about whether humans have a soul or not. Another reason for the emergence of different schools was that he did not appoint a successor to follow him as leader of the *Sangha* (monastic order). He told the monks to be lamps unto themselves and make the *Dharma* their guide.

By about the first century CE, a major split occurred within the Buddhist schools that emerged from The Buddha's Sangha resulting in the Mahayana and Nikaya Buddhism branches. (Note: The term Hinayana is commonly used to refer to Nikaya, an early school of Buddhism; however, this term is considered to be

Pure Land Buddhism in Manitoba

The Manitoba Buddhist Temple in Winnipeg is a Shin or Pure Land Buddhist temple. *Shin* is an abbreviation of Jodo Shinshu, which literally means "The True Pure Land Religion" (Manitoba Buddhist Temple). Jodo Shinshu was founded by Shinran Shonin (1173–1262). Shinran lived and taught in Japan in the 13th century.

Figure 17: Statue of Shinran Shonin, the founder of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, situated on the side of Saidaimon Gate at Shitennoji Temple, Osaka, Japan.

The history of Bodhisattva Dharmacakra (Amitabha) is told in the Sukhavativyuha-sutra (Pure Land Sutra).
Amitabha Buddha, is a celestial Buddha that represents pure perception and a deep awareness of emptiness. Through their devotion to Amitabha, followers hope to be reborn in his Pure Land that Amitabha inhabits and from there to achieve *nirvana*. The key practice common in all schools of Pure Land Buddhism is the recitation of the name of Amitabha Buddha. There are regional variations in how his name is pronounced. In Japanese, he is Amida and the chant in Japanese, called the Nembutsu, is *Namu Amida Butsu*.

derogatory by some Buddhists although scholars today often use the term Hinayana without pejorative intent.)

With respect to Nikaya Buddhism (aka "the Lesser Vehicle"), today the only surviving school is Theravada Buddhism, which was founded in the fourth century BCE. The name Theravada is derived from the Pali words: *thera* (elders) and *vada* (word, doctrine), and means the Doctrine of the Elders. Theravada Buddhism draws its scriptural inspiration from the Pali Canon, or Tipitaka. Theravada Buddhism has been the main tradition of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, and Southeast Asia. At the time this document was written, it was estimated that there were over 100 million Theravada Buddhists worldwide. In recent decades, Theravada Buddhism has begun to take root in the West, especially in Europe, North America, and Australia.

Figure 18: Gautama Buddha in Greco-Buddhist style, first–second century BCE, Gandhra (modern eastern Afghanistan).
Greco-Buddhism, or Greco-Buddhism, is the cultural fusion between Hellenistic culture and Buddhism, which developed between the fourth century BCE and the fifth century CE in Bactria and the Indian subcontinent. It resulted from a long history of interactions begun by Greek forays into India from the time of Alexander the Great.

The Theravada school compiled a sacred canon of early Buddhist teachings and regulations that is called the Tripitaka, which scholars generally accept as the oldest record of the Buddha's teachings. Owing to its historical dominance in southern Asia, Theravada is also identified as "Southern Buddhism," in contrast to "Northern Buddhism," which migrated northwards from India into Tibet, China, Japan, and Korea.

Generally, those who venerate the *Bodhisattvas* and are guided by Mahayana *sutras* are considered to be Mahayanas. Nikaya and contemporary Theravada Buddhists do not accept the teachings of the Mahayana *sutras* as being authentic teachings of The Buddha and they emphasize a monastic lifestyle and practice (meditation). Theravada monks hold that The Buddha taught a doctrine of *anatta* (no soul) when he spoke of the impermanence of the human body/form, perception, sensations/feelings, consciousness, and volition. They believe, however, that human beings continue to be "reformed" and reborn, and to collect *karma* until they reach *nirvana*.

The Mahayana ("Greater Vehicle") branch of schools emerged around 200 CE from within Indian Buddhism. Mahayana Buddhism is prevalent in Korea,

China, Japan, and Tibet. In present times, the major schools of Mahayana Buddhism include Chan Buddhism, Korean Seon, Japanese Zen, Pure Land Buddhism, Nichiren Buddhism, and Vietnamese Buddhism. For some, they may also include the Vajrayana traditions of Tiantai, Tendai, Shingon Buddhism, and Tibetan Buddhism, all of which add esoteric teachings to the Mahayana tradition. This movement may be characterized as follows:

1. As implied in the name, the Mahayana movement came to think of itself as "great" with respect to its interpretations of the Buddha's teachings and because of it being open to a broader range of followers, especially lay people. *Yana* means "vehicle or raft" which is symbolic of Buddhist teachings as a boat or vehicle that can help one cross over the river of suffering to the "other shore"/*nirvana*. The Mahayana is, thus, the "Great Vehicle."
2. The Mahayana tradition draws on a more expansive set of scriptures including many new scriptures composed in the early centuries CE as authentic teachings. A number of new scriptures or *sutras*, such as the Lotus Sutra, the Avatamsaka Sutra, the Mahaparinirvana Sutra, and the Pure Land sutras, focus on specific teachings such as the emptiness of all phenomena (*shunyata*), the importance of compassion (*karuna*), and the universality of Buddha Nature.
3. The Mahayana tradition stresses that lay people can also be exemplary Buddhists, and that a monastic lifestyle and meditation are not the sole paths to *nirvana*. Mahayana schools believe that Gautama Buddha and all human beings have a common origin called Buddha Nature, Buddha Mind, or Emptiness depending on the school. This "nothing" is not literally an empty space or condition; it is a completely indescribable "source of all existence" and at the same time "Enlightenment" potential. In this branch, the historical Buddha characteristic was only one manifestation of Buddha Nature. Mahayana followers therefore believe in many past and also future Buddhas, some of whom are god-like and preside over Buddha-worlds or heavenly paradises. The ideal religious figure in the Mahayana tradition is the *bodhisattva*. A *bodhisattva* is a being who is on the path towards Buddhahood. In Mahayana Buddhism, a *bodhisattva* refers to anyone who has generated *bodhicitta*, a spontaneous wish and compassionate mind to attain Buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings. *Bodhisattvas* are driven entirely by compassion (*karuna*) and are informed by deep wisdom (*prajna*). For the Mahayana, the monastic *arahant* (*arhat*) ideal is too focused on self-liberation and not on the liberation of all.

Buddhism's popularity began to diminish in India around the sixth and seventh centuries CE with Hinduism replacing it in the south and invaders destroying monasteries and communities in the north. By the 12th century CE, it was virtually extinct in India due to several factors including the dominance of Hinduism, Muslim invasions, and the great stress of living a monastic life. Nonetheless, Buddhism developed deep roots and thrived in many other countries in Asia to which it was transmitted. The diversity of interpretations, adaptability of Buddhism, and the evolution of practices that have emerged in various countries have allowed people of many lands and cultures to meet their spiritual needs through this religion.

Expansion of Buddhism into Asia

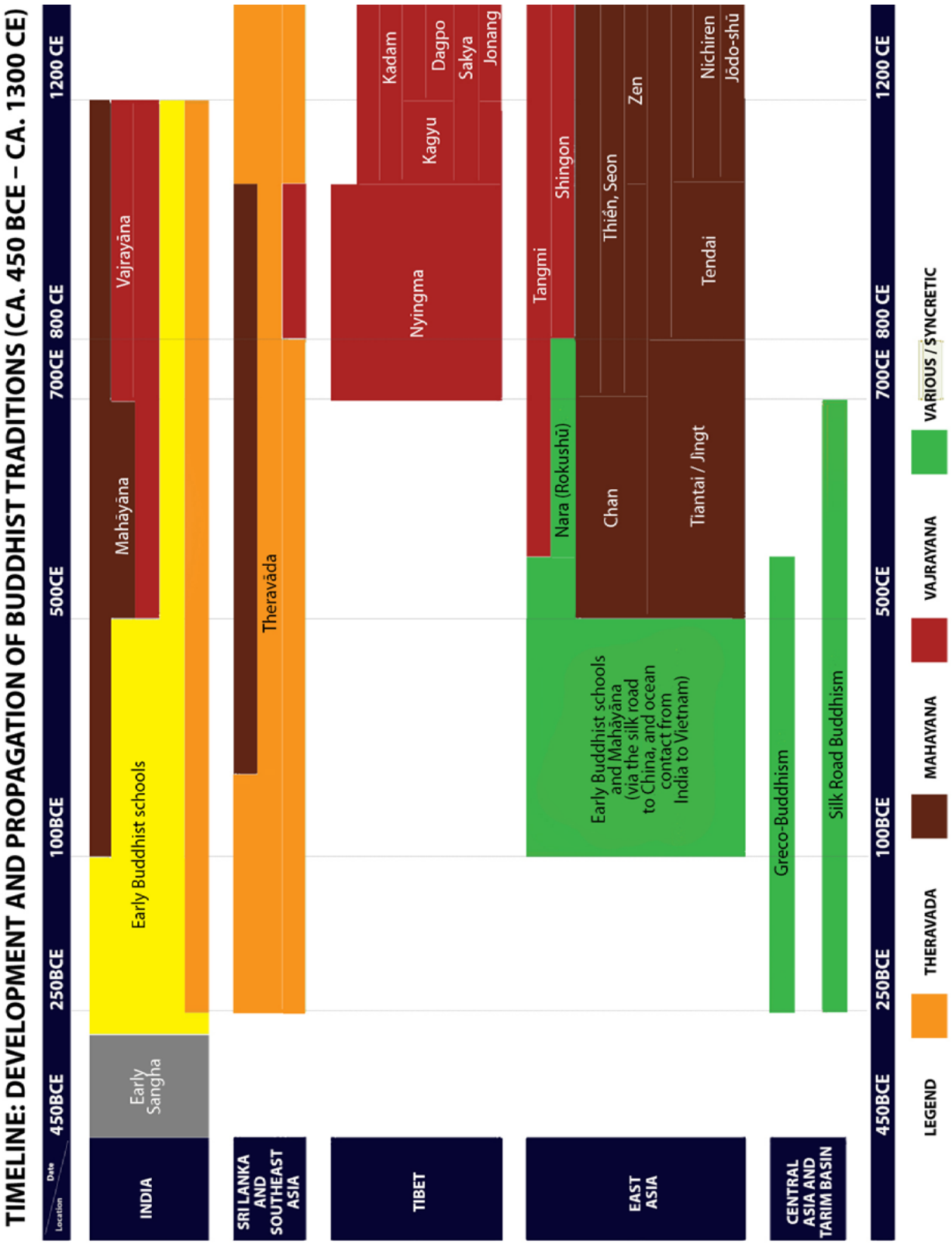

Figure 19: Expansion of Buddhism into Asia

The spread of Buddhism to other lands and peoples from its original base in India began as early as the first century CE. The map that follows depicts the dispersal of Buddhism throughout Asia. Buddhist monks traveled via the Silk Road to communities through Central Asia to China. By the seventh century CE, Buddhism was a significant force in China, where it interacted with Confucian and Daoist cultures and ideas. At about the same time, Buddhism became firmly rooted in Korea. By the sixth century CE, it had also spread to Japan, where it developed in a context shaped by both Shinto and other Japanese indigenous traditions.

Figure 20: Spread of Buddhism throughout Asia

In the seventh century CE, Mahayana Buddhism, in the shape of the Tantric traditions of northeast India, spread to the high mountain plateau of Tibet. In Tibet, Buddhism interacted with and was influenced by the indigenous Bon religion, and with other sects of Buddhism that had traveled to Tibet from East Asia. A distinctive and vibrant form of Mahayana Buddhism emerged known as Vajrayana, the "Diamond Vehicle" or the "Thunderbolt Vehicle." This stream of Buddhism, while most prominent in Tibet and its surrounding regions, may also be found in China and Japan.

Most Buddhists and schools that emerged from the Tibetan highlands (i.e., Tibet, Ladakh, and Bhutan) think of themselves as being Vajrayana Buddhists, and consider Vajrayana Buddhism to be a separate, third path, distinct from both Mahayana and Theravada Buddhist traditions; however, a minority of Buddhists from this region and school believe that Tibetan Buddhism is in keeping with the Mahayana tradition of Buddhism.

Colonization and the Modern Era (1600s to Now)

During this era, Buddhism throughout the Asian world was affected by contact with Europeans and Christianity. The colonization of many traditionally Buddhist Asian countries by various European and Christian nations had a significant impact on Buddhism. As European nations began to dominate the political and social structures in countries which had, till then, supported Buddhism, Christianity began to compete with Buddhism. Its status and dominance began to weaken. Other factors also had a negative effect on Buddhism, including war, communism, the spread of capitalism, scientific development, and regional and national instability.

Buddhism in the Western World

In the late 18th and 19th centuries, knowledge of Buddhism grew and small Buddhist communities emerged in the Western world. Since then, their numbers have been growing with respect to practitioners and status. During the 1800s, Western intellectuals were introduced to Buddhism and were interested in learning more about it. This was largely the result of returning European colonists, colonial government officials, Christian missionaries, and others returning or coming from the East where they had learned of and came into contact with Buddhist populations and religious authorities. During this period several books were published on Buddha and Buddhism which helped introduce the Western public to Buddhism. These included Sir Edwin Arnold's book-length poem, The Light of Asia (1879), and the work of early Western Buddhist scholars such as Hermann Oldenberg, T. W. Rhys Davids and F. Max Müller.

By the late 19th century, Westerners who had learned about Buddhism and were attracted by its teachings and practices began to seek deeper studies and convert. The first-known modern Western converts to Buddhism included two founding members of the Theosophical Society, Henry Steel Olcott and Helena Blavatsky. They did so in 1880 in Sri Lanka. The Theosophical Society, formed in 1875, had as one of its objectives to encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy, and science. It played an important role in popularizing

Figure 21: St. Petersburg Buddhist Temple "Datsan Gunzehoyney," Saint Petersburg, Russia.

Indian and Eastern religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism in the West. As well, during the late 1800s, the first Westerners began to enter Buddhist monasteries and become monks. These included U Dhammaloka, Ananda Metteyya, and the German Nyanatiloka Thera.

Asian emigration to the West also played an important role in the dissemination and spread of Buddhism. The large scale immigration of Chinese and Japanese immigrants to the Americas (the United States of America and Canada) began in the late 19th century and continued into the early 20th century. However, early in the 20th century, rising xenophobia resulted in anti-Asian immigration laws and other barriers that severely limited the flow of Asians to both Canada and the United States of America. It was not until the early 1970s that changes in immigration laws and other factors began to again allow for significant numbers of immigrants from Asian and Buddhist majority nations. Beginning in 1975, these included refugees from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia and, more recently, from Tibet, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Burma, and other Buddhist dominant countries. In addition to refugees, general immigrants and students from China, Korea, and other Asian countries with significant Buddhist populations have contributed to the growing Buddhist populations in Canada and many Western countries.

The annexation of Tibet by China in 1950 after 37 years of Tibetan independence and the resulting dispersal of Tibetan religious and political leaders and their followers had a major impact on the spread of Tibetan Buddhism in the West and its growing popularity. All of the four major Tibetan Buddhist schools have a presence in North America and other parts of the world and have attracted many converts. The Dalai Lama (Tenzin Gyatso), until 2011 the spiritual and political the leader of Tibetan government in exile, is well-known in Canada and throughout the world. Today, the global number of Tibetan Buddhists is estimated to be between ten and twenty million persons.

As a result, the Theravada tradition has established strong roots in the West and opened many temples, especially among immigrant communities in Canada, the United States of America, and Europe. Theravada Vipassanā meditation was also established in the West, through the founding of institutions such as the Insight Meditation Society in 1975. The Thai forest tradition has also established communities in Canada, the United States of America, and Europe. In the United Kingdom, the Triratna Buddhist Community arose as a new modern Buddhist movement.

American servicemen returning to the United States of America from East Asia after the Second World War and the Korean War, brought with them an interest in Asian culture which included Nichiren Shoshu and Zen Buddhism. Zen Buddhism especially gained considerable popularity in the nineteen-sixties among literary and artistic groups in America and this helped to popularize Buddhism. As well, during the postwar period, academic interest grew with many universities establishing departments of Buddhist studies.

During the late 20th century, interest in Buddhism in Continental Europe also increased significantly. For example, there was an exponential increase

in Buddhist groups and followers in Germany. In France and Spain, Tibetan Buddhism has large numbers of followers. Tibetan, East Asian, and Theravada traditions are now also active and growing in popularity in Australia and New Zealand. In South America, Tibetan and Zen Buddhists have established a smaller but significant presence in countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Venezuela.

Buddhist organizations and sects began to focus their attention not only on serving the needs of the Buddhist Diaspora in the West, but also on teaching more Westerners about Buddhism and responding to the growing popularity of Buddhism and Buddhist meditation practices especially. For example, in the 20th century, Asian Zen Buddhist leaders and teachers such as DT Suzuki, Hsüan Hua, Hakuun Yasutani, and Thích Nhat Hanh were influential in creating greater awareness of and interest in Zen Buddhism in the West.

Lastly, in recent decades, mediation and mindfulness practices have become popular in the Western world as people deal with the challenges of living in complex, stressful, and challenging urban and contemporary environments. In addition, as a result of research into the benefits of meditation, public interest in Buddhist practices, meditation, and mindfulness has soared in the Western world. Many studies have shown that meditation has numerous physical and mental health benefits for practitioners. There is evidence that meditation and mindfulness practices help practitioners deal with depression, chronic pain, and anxiety. The result has been a significant growth in meditation centres across Canada and the Western world that draw on, are informed by, or are operated by various Buddhist schools and sects.

It is fair to say that the expansion of Buddhism from its Asian base in the 20th century has made Buddhism a worldwide phenomenon. Today, numerous Buddhist centres have been established across Canada, the United States of America, Australia, New Zealand, Europe, and South America. Virtually all the major Buddhist traditions are represented and continue to attract the interest of Westerners of all walks of life.

Development of Buddhism Timeline Chart

The chart that follows provides an overview of the development of Buddhism from its origins to contemporary times. References and resources used to create this timeline chart include the following:

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Date	Significant Development
Life of The Buddha	
6th Century BCE	Birth and life of the Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama Scholars debate the exact dates of the birth and death of Siddhartha Gautama. The conventional dates set them as being 566–486 BCE but according to more recent research, revised dates are 490–410 BCE.
461 BCE	Gautama leaves home to search for a solution to suffering. Around age 29, Gautama has a personal crisis as he realizes he is not immune from the suffering of old age, disease, and death. He leaves home to search for a solution to human suffering. For about six years he practices a variety of yogic disciplines and experiments with extreme asceticism as he tries to find answers.

Date	Significant Development
455 BCE	Gautama becomes The Buddha. After realizing that extreme asceticism will not help him solve the problem of human suffering, Gautama sits under a Bodhi tree and becomes enlightened. He is known as "The Buddha," or "The Enlightened One." Gautama gains his first followers: After becoming The Buddha, Gautama gives his first sermon in a deer park called Sarnath, near the city of Varanasi. Known as the time when The Buddha "set in motion the wheel of the law," this sermon is the first time he explains the four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path towards ending suffering, and the Middle Way between asceticism and luxury. Shortly afterwards, Gautama gains his first disciples, Sariputra and Mahamaudgalyayana, and the monastic community of Sangha is established.
410 BCE	Gautama dies. Sometime between 410 and 370 BCE, Gautama dies, after about 45 years of preaching around northern India. Before he dies, he asks that his disciples continue spreading his teachings.

Early Buddhism

400 BCE	The First Buddhist Council is believed to have been held after Buddha's death. The Buddhist Canon that exists today was determined at this Council and preserved as an oral tradition.
366 BCE	The Mahasanghika school emerges: Around 386 BCE, the Second Buddhist council is held at Vaishali. A dispute develops over monastic discipline, and some followers argue that The Buddha had the attributes of a god. As a result, Buddhism splinters into two schools, the traditional Sthaviravada line and the more controversial Mahasanghika school. This schism marks the first beginnings of what would later evolve into Mahayana Buddhism.
269–231 BCE	Emperor Ashoka, who rules India between 268 and 232 BCE, adopts Buddhism as India's state religion. With his support, Buddhist missionaries travel around Asia, monks are given political influence, and Buddhist ideas are generally accepted. Ashoka's rule plays a crucial role in the spread of Buddhism. Third Buddhist Council held at Pataliputra (250 BCE) with the support of Emperor Asoka. The modern Pali Tipitaka is now largely completed.

Date	Significant Development
220 BCE	Theravada is officially introduced to Sri Lanka by Mahinda, son of Ashoka, during the reign of Devanampiya Tissa of Anuradhapura.
100 BCE	Famine and schisms in Sri Lanka point to a need for a written record of the Tipitaka to preserve the Buddhist religion. A Fourth Council is called, in which 500 reciters and scribes from the Mahavihara write down the Pali Tipitaka for the first time. They write it on palm leaves at the Aloka Cave, near Matale, Sri Lanka. Theravada Buddhism first appears in what is today Burma and Central Thailand. In 68 BCE, two Buddhist missionaries from India arrive at the court of Emperor Ming (58–75) of the Han Dynasty. They translate various Buddhist Texts, including The Sutra of Forty-two Sections. The Mahayana school emerges.
1st Century CE	The Fourth Buddhist Council is held at Jalandhar or in Kashmir around 100 CE (not recognized by Theravadas). Buddhism is established in Cambodia 100 CE and in Vietnam150 CE. The composition of Lotus Sutra and other Mahayana Buddhist texts occurs. Mahayana Buddhism is introduced in China and Central Asia.
148 CE	A translation centre is established in China. An Shigao, a Buddhist translator, establishes a translation centre in Luoyang, the imperial capital of China.
3rd Century CE	Expansion of Buddhism to Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, and Indonesia. Buddhism is most likely introduced to China thanks to the Silk Road during the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), as Mahayana Buddhist missionaries accompany merchant caravans along the network of trade routes. The Yogacara (meditation) school was founded by Maitreyanatha. Buddhist influence in Persia spreads through trade.

Date	Significant Development
4th Century CE	Development of Vajrayana Buddhism in India. The Translation of Buddhist texts into Chinese by Kumarajiva (344–413) and Hui-yüan (334–416). In 372 CE Buddhism is introduced in Korea, under the reign of King Sosurim of the Kingdom of Koguryo. Archaeological evidence suggests that Buddhism entered Korea earlier.

Expansion into Asia

5th Century CE	A Buddhist monastic university is founded at Nalanda, India. Buddhaghosa composes the Visuddhimagga and major commentaries in Sri Lanka. Buddhism is established in Burma and Korea. The Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hsien visits India. The Amitabha (Amida) Pure Land sect emerges in China. In 433 CE, Sri Lankan Theravadin nuns introduce full ordination lineage into China. Mahayana Buddhism was introduced into Java, Sumatra, Borneo, mainly by Indian immigrants.
6th Century CE	Around 520 CE, Bodhidharma travels to China from India and founds Chan (Zen) Buddhism. In 538 CE, Buddhism enters Japan from Korea. Between 589–617 CE, the Sui Dynasty of China and the beginning of Golden Age of Chinese Buddhism, including the emergence of T'ien-tai, Hua-yen, Pure Land, and Ch'an schools of Chinese Buddhism occur. Buddhism flourishes in Indonesia. Jataka Tales are translated into Persian by King Khusru (531–579 CE).

Date	Significant Development
7th Century CE	Buddhism is introduced in Tibet during the reign of the Tibetan emperor Songtsen Gampo (617–649). Buddhism adapts aspects of Tibetan indigenous religions and becomes a powerful belief system in the region. Both Chinese and Indian Buddhist schools attempt to influence Tibetan Buddhism Shotoku Taishi adopts Buddhism and Confucianism as state religions of Japan.
8th Century CE	Academic schools (Jöjitsu, Kusha, Sanron, Hossö, Ritsu, and Kegon) proliferate in Japan. Guru Rinpoche/ Padmasambhava converts Tibet to Buddhism. Between 792–794 CE, there is great debate between Tibetan, Indian, and Chinese Buddhist schools. The Tibetan Bsam Yas monastery holds a series of debates between Chinese and Indian Buddhists. Each group competes for influence in the region. In 794 CE, the debates are decided in favour of Indian Buddhism, and translations from Chinese sources are abandoned. Vajrayana Buddhism (Tantrism) emerges. The Nyingma School of Tibet Buddhism is established. Jataka Tales are translated into Syrian and Arabic under the title: Kalilag and Damnag.
9th Century CE	Khmer kings build Angkor Wat, the world's largest religious monument. Tendai School (founded by Saichö (767–822 CE) and Shingon School (founded by Kukai (774–835 CE) appear in Japan. In 845 CE, the great persecution of Buddhists in China is launched. The biography of Buddha is translated into Greek by Saint John of Damascus and distributed in Christianity as *Balaam* and *Josaphat*.

Date	Significant Development
	Between 900–1000 CE, the first complete printing of Chinese Buddhist Canon, known as the Szechuan edition is produced. Buddhism is introduced to Thailand. 900–1000 CE, Islam replaces Buddhism in Central Asia.
	The revival of Theravada Buddhism in Sri Lanka and Burma and the decline of Buddhism in India occur. Marpa (1012–1097 CE) begins the Kargyu School of Tibetan Buddhism. The Sakya School of Tibetan Buddhism is established. Milarepa (1040–1123 CE) becomes the greatest poet and most popular saint in Tibetan Buddhism. The *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunis* (monk and nun) communities at Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka, die out following invasions from South India.
	Theravada Buddhism is established in Burma. Honen (1133–1212 CE) founds the Pure Land School of Japanese Buddhism. Eisai (1141–1215 CE) founds the Rinzai Zen School of Japanese Buddhism. In 1193 CE, Muslims attack and take control of Magadha, the heartland of Buddhism in India. They destroy Buddhist monasteries and universities (Valabhiand Nalanda) wiping out Buddhism in India. Between 1140–1390 CE, in Korea, Buddhism thrives during the Koryo dynasty.

Date	Significant Development
13th Century CE	Theravada Buddhism becomes established in South East Asia. Theravada Buddhism spreads to Laos. Zen Buddhism is introduced to Japan from China by the monk Eisai. Between 1173–1263 CE, Shinran founds the True Pure Land School of Japanese Buddhism. Between 1200–1253 CE, Dogen founds the Soto Zen School of Japanese Buddhism. Between 1222–1282 CE, Nichiren founds the school of Japanese Buddhism named after him. Mongols convert to Vajrayana Buddhism. The tradition of seeking the reincarnations of Tibetan leaders begins among Tibetan Black Hat Buddhists. Buddhism is introduced to the West: ■ In 1253 CE, the Flemish Franciscan monk William of Rubruck sets out on a three-year journey to the East, hoping to learn more about the Mongols. His accounts of his travel and findings reintroduces westerners to Buddhism for the first time since classical scholars wrote about Buddhism. ■ During the colonial era, western interest in Buddhism increases.
14th Century CE	Buston collects and edits Tibetan Buddhist Canon In 1360 CE, Rulers of north (Chieng-mai) and northeast (Sukhothai) Thailand adopt Theravada Buddhism. It becomes state religion. Theravada Buddhism is adopted in Cambodia and Laos. Tsongkhapa, a Tibetan Buddhist reformer and the founder of Dgelugspa or Gelugpa, or 'Yellow Hat' order lives from 1357–1419 CE.
15th Century CE	Tsongkhapa founds the first of three major Buddhist monasteries in Tibet. This marks the beginning of the Dalai Lama lineage in Tibetan Buddhism; Gendun Drub (1391–1474 CE), a disciple of Je Tsongkapa, is considered the 'First Dalai Lama' 104 years after he died.
16th Century CE	In 1578 CE Tibet's Gelugpa leader Sonam Gyatso is given the title of "Dalai" by Altan Khan and becomes known as Dalai Lama. Dalai Lama becomes a title after that point and is given retrospectively to his two predecessors. Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso, the Great Fifth" Dalai Lama meets Qing Emperor Shunzhi near Beijing and establishes relations.

Date	Significant Development
17th Century CE	Translation of Buddhist texts into Mongolian From 1603–1867 CE, control of Japanese Buddhism is taken by Tokugawa Shögunate, the ruling feudal government. From 1686–1769 CE, Hakuin, a monk, writer, and artist helps revive the Rinzai Zen Sect of Japanese Buddhism.
18th Century CE	Isida Baigan founds the Shingaku religion, based on Shinto, Buddhist and Confucian elements. Colonial occupation of Sri Lanka, Burma, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam occurs. King Kirti Sri Rajasinha obtains bhikkhus from the Thai court to reinstate the bhikkhu ordination line which had died out in Sri Lanka. China: The White Lotus Rebellion occurs, inspired by the imminent return of the Buddha, against Qing Dynasty.

Spread of Buddhism to the West / Modern Era

19th Century CE	New Buddhist sects begin to emerge in Japan. In 1852 CE, the German translation of the Lotus Sutra is done. In 1853 CE, the first Chinese Temple is built in San Francisco, USA. In 1862 CE, there is revival of Buddhism along with growing nationalism in Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan Forest Tradition monks go to Burma for re-ordination. In 1862 CE, the first Western translation of the Dhammapada into German is done. In 1868–1871 CE, the 5th Buddhist Council is held in Mandalay, Burma where the Pali Canon was revised and inscribed on 729 marble slabs. In 1899 CE, Gordon Douglas becomes the first westerner to be ordained in Theravada Buddhism.
1900 CE	Shintoism is reinstated in Japan as part of an effort to limit Buddhist influence.
1903 CE	The Buddhist Mission Society in Germany, is founded.

Date	Significant Development
1904 CE	In Burma, German Anton Walther Florus Gueth becomes one of the earliest Westerners to become a fully ordained *Bihikkhu* (monk) and takes the name Nyanatiloka Mahathera.
1905 CE	The first Japanese Buddhist temple is built in Vancouver.
1907 CE	The Buddhist Society of Great Britain is founded.
1924–29 CE	The Taishö Shinshü Daizokyö edition of Chinese Buddhist Canon is printed in Tokyo.
1930 CE	Soka Gakkai, based in Nichiren Buddhism, is founded in Japan.
1933 CE	Buddhist Churches of Canada is founded in British Columbia. It is the oldest Buddhist organization in Canada. Now known as the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada, the member temples are affiliated with the Nishi Hongan-ji of Kyoto, Japan, the mother temple of the Jodo Shinshu (True Pure Land) sect of Buddhism.
1946 CE	The Manitoba Buddhist Church (Temple) opens.
1949 CE	Buddhists regain some control of the site of The Buddha's Enlightenment at Mahabodhi Temple in India.
1950 CE	The Chinese take control of Tibetan Buddhism.
1952 CE	The Founding of World Fellowship of Buddhists occurs.
1954–56 CE	The sixth Buddhist Council is held at Rangoon, Myanmar/Burma.
1956 CE	Hindu leader B.R. Ambedkar converts to Buddhism along with 350,000 followers, creating the Neo-Buddhist movement.
1959 CE	On March 10, 1959, Tibet rebels against control by China's Communist Party, thus launching the Tibetan Uprising. The Dalai Lama flees Tibet, which claims independence from China, and Western interest in Tibetan Buddhism greatly increases.

Date	Significant Development
1959 CE	The Zen Studies Society is founded in New York City.
1963 CE	Buddhist monk Thich Quang Durc burns himself to death to protest government oppression of Buddhism.
1966 CE	The World Buddhist Sangha Council is convened by Theravadas in Sri Lanka with the objective of bridging differences between schools and promoting collaboration. The convention is attended by leading monks from many countries and sects, both Mahayana and Theravada. A British woman, Freda Bedi, is the first Western woman to be ordained in Tibetan Buddhism.
1968 CE	The first five American *Bhikkhus* and *Bhikshunis* are ordained in the Chinese tradition. The Western Buddhist Order, founded by Urgyen Sangharakshit, ordains five members.
1970 CE	One of the earliest Tibetan Centres was the Toronto Dharmadhatu, established by the Ven. Chogyam Trungpa. He later moved his Headquarters from the USA to Halifax, Nova Scotia.
1974 CE	Wat Pah Nanachat (Thai Forest Tradition) becomes the first monastery dedicated to providing instruction and support for western Buddhist monks. It is founded by Venerable Ajahn Chah in Thailand. Later, the monks trained there established branch monasteries throughout the world.
1975 CE	The Insight Meditation Society is established in Barre, Massachusetts.
1975–79 CE	Devastation of Buddhism in Cambodia: Pol Pot's Communist regime declares war on Buddhism in an effort to completely destroy Buddhism in that country, and nearly succeeds. During the next four years, most of Cambodia's 3,600 Buddhist temples are destroyed and only an estimated 3,000 of its 50,000 monks survive the persecution.
1978 CE	The Toronto Mahavihara (Buddhist Centre) is the first Theravada temple in Canada.
1979 CE	The Marpa Gompa Meditation Society is founded in Calgary. It is one of the centres that studies, practises, and promotes the teachings of the Kargyu order of Tibetan Buddhism headed by Karma Thinley Rinpoche.

Date	Significant Development
1980 CE	Burmese military government forces its authority over the Sangha, and violence against Buddhist monks continues through the decade.
1983 CE	China: The Shanghai Institute of Buddhism is established at Jade Buddha Temple, by the Shanghai Buddhist Association.
1989 CE	Dalai Lama Receives Nobel Peace Prize: Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his tireless work spreading a message of non-violence. He has said on many occasions about Buddhism, "My religion is very simple–my religion is kindness."
1990 CE	More than 7000 Burmese monks gather in Mandalay, Burma and call for a boycott of the military government. The military take over monasteries and arrest hundreds of monks, including senior monks U Sumangala and U Yewata. The monks face long-term imprisonment, violence, and disrobement.
1992 CE	A giant statue of The Buddha is constructed on an island in Hyderabad, India. Wat Yanviriya in Vancouver becomes the first Thai Buddhist temple in Canada.
1998 CE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) undertake a deadly suicide attack on Sri Lanka's most sacred Buddhist site and a UNESCO World Heritage centre: the Temple of the Tooth (built in 1592), where Buddha's tooth relic is enshrined.
1996 CE	Subhana Barzagi Roshi becomes the Diamond Sangha's first female roshi (Zen teacher) on March 9, 1996, in Australia. *Bhikkhuni* (Buddhist nuns) Order and lineage is revived in Sarnath, India through the efforts of Sakyadhita, an International Buddhist Women Association. The revival faces some resistance from some of the more traditional interpreters of the Buddhist *Vinaya* (monastic code), but is lauded by others in the community.
2001 CE	Bamiyan, Afghanistan: The world's tallest ancient Buddha statues dating back to the sixth century are destroyed by the Taliban regime.
2003 CE	Ayya Sudhamma Bhikkhuni is the first American-born woman to be ordained a *bhikkhuni* in the Theravada school in Sri Lanka.
2006 CE	The first World Buddhist Forum is held.

Date	Significant Development
2007 CE	Myanmar/Burma: Buddhist monks and nuns lead protests against military rule in Burma. Myokei Caine-Barrett, born and ordained in Japan, becomes the first female Nichiren priest in the Nichiren Order of North America.
2008 CE	Zen Buddhism: Sherry Chayat (Shinge-shitsu Roko Sherry Chayat) receives the title of roshi and the name Shinge (Heart/Mind Flowering) from Eido Roshi. It is the first time that this Zen ceremony is held in the United States of America. She is currently the abbot of the Zen Studies Society in New York State.
2010 CE	Prominent Buddhist teachers in the USA sign a letter to President Barack Obama pushing for the USA to press Burma on crimes against humanity on ethnic nationalities, in light of the upcoming Burmese election. The Western Buddhist Order is founded by Urgyen Sangharakshita and becomes the Triratna Buddhist Order and Friends of the Western Buddhist Order to Triratna Buddhist Community. *(continued)*
2010 CE	The Vajra Dakini Nunnery in Vermont is officially consecrated, becoming the first Tibetan Buddhist nunnery operating in North America. The nunnery follows the Drikung Kagyu lineage of Buddhism. Khenmo Drolma, ordained in Taiwan in 2002, is appointed abbot of the Vajra Dakini nunnery. She is of American origins and is the first *bhikkhuni* in the Drikung Kagyu lineage of Buddhism. Four novice nuns are given the full *bhikkhuni* ordination in the Thai Theravada tradition, which includes the double ordination ceremony. It is the first such ordination in the Western hemisphere. They are Ordained in Northern California with Ayya Tathaaloka, the abbess of Aranya Bodhi, as the preceptor for the ceremony and Bhante Henepola Gunaratana, a Sri Lankan Theravada Buddhist monk, and the abbot of Bhavana Society, as the presiding elder. The Soto Zen Buddhist Association (SZBA) publishes a document honouring Zen women ancestors on October 8, 2010. Zen female ancestors, dating back more than 2,500 years from India, China, and Japan are from this point on included in the teachings, rituals, and training of Western Zen students.

Date	Significant Development
2011 CE	World's first female geshe: The Institute for Buddhist Dialectical Studies (IBD) in Dharamsala, India, confers the degree of geshe on a German nun, the Venerable Kelsang Wangmo.
2012 CE	There are just under 500 Buddhist organizations listed in Canada serving a population of 366,830 Buddhists (2011 Census).
2013 CE	Tibetan Buddhist nuns and women are allowed to take the geshe exams for the first time.
2014 CE	Revival in India: Nalanda University (aka Nalanda International University) becomes a newly established university located in Rajgir, near Nalanda, Bihar, India in an attempt to revive what was once the ancient seat of Buddhist learning. It is being funded by the governments of India, China, Singapore, Australia, Thailand, and others.
2016 CE	Twenty Tibetan Buddhist nuns become the first Tibetan women to earn *geshe* degrees (Buddhist academic degrees, similar to a Ph.D.).

Note: The above chart provides an overview of the development of Buddhism from its origins to contemporary times. References and resources used to compile this timeline chart include the following:

- Buddhism: SoftSchools.com, www.softschools.com/timelines/buddhism_timeline/379/
- Buddhism in Canada, The Canadian Encyclopedia, www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/buddhism
- Buddhism in the World, Harvard Pluralism Project, http://pluralism.org/timeline/buddhism-in-the-world/
- Life of the Buddha: A Spiritual Journey, BBC, www.bbc.co.uk/teach/life-of-the-buddha-a-spiritual-journey/zjf4y9q
- Timelines of Buddhist History, Buddha Net, www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/history/b_chron-txt.htm
- Timeline of Buddhism: The History and Major Events of the Buddhist Religion, www.tiki-toki.com/timeline/entry/268081/Timeline-of-Buddhism/#vars!date=0563_BC-07-15_00:55:08
- Timeline of Buddhism, Religion Facts, www.religionfacts.com/buddhism/timeline
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Significant Texts and Writings

From ancient times to the present, there have been diverse Schools of Buddhism that reflect the various institutional and doctrinal divisions. The classification and descriptions of these divisions or schools, their doctrines, and their philosophical or cultural aspects have often been vague and interpreted in many ways, due to (perhaps) the existence of thousands of different sects, sub sects, movements, and so on that have made up or currently make up the whole of what we call Buddhist traditions.

This diversity extends to the scriptures and sacred texts that are used or recognized by various Buddhist sects and schools. Buddhists do not have a universally agreed-upon collection or version of scriptures. However, there are three separate canons or collections of Buddhist scriptures that are generally recognized and used by the three main branches of Buddhism today. These are the Pali Canon, the Chinese Canon, and the Tibetan Canon.

The Theravada traditions generally are guided by texts that are part of the Pali Canon. Mahayana traditions generally are guided by texts of one of the versions of the Chinese Canon. Tibetan or Vajrayana Buddhists generally are guided by texts that are from one of the various versions of the Tibetan Canon.

The following is a short overview of the sacred texts or canons used by the three major traditions of Buddhism.

Language of the Sacred Texts

Buddhist scriptures were originally recorded in Sanskrit and Pali, both of which are ancient languages of India. Pali is a relative of Magadhi, the language probably spoken in central India during The Buddha's time. Pali is still today the principle language of the Pali Canon.

Buddhist sacred texts originally written in Pali and Sanskrit were translated from early times into Chinese and other Asian languages as Buddhism spread throughout Asia. The Chinese version is known as the Chinese Canon.

The Tibetan Canon is a collection of sacred texts recognized by various sects of Tibetan Buddhism. It includes Tibetan translations of some of the same elements that are in the Pali and Chinese canon.

The Chinese and Tibetan canons include early teachings from Pali and Sanskrit sources and are translated into the respective languages. Some of the earliest Indic texts from the early schools of Buddhism now exist only in their translated versions in the Chinese and Tibetan canons, as the original Indic texts were lost over time.

Beginning around the 19th century, the various canons have at least in part been translated into European and other languages, including English.

Buddhist Canons and their Organization

While each branch of Buddhism has its own collection of sacred texts or canons, there are some common elements or parts. They all include the core teachings of Gautama Buddha.

Most of the sermons The Buddha delivered were memorized by his followers. The Ven. Ananda, the Buddha's cousin and close personal attendant, is reputed to have had the best memory of his followers and memorized most of his teachings and sermons. After Gautama Buddha's death, his monastic followers sought to ensure that his teachings would not be forgotten and organized to assist in their transmission. To do so, they held a series of councils or general meetings where the monastic participants, including Ananda, collectively tried to remember, recite, and organize his teachings and rules for Buddhist monastic life. Each recorded sermon (*sutta*) therefore begins with the disclaimer, *Evam me sutam* (Thus have I heard). The teachings were passed down within the monastic community following a well-established oral tradition. These councils assisted in creating a common understanding and structure of the Buddhist scriptures known as the *Tripitaka* in Sanskrit or *Tipitaka* in Pali.

Tripitaka (*Tipitaka*) is the traditional term for the collection of Buddhist scriptures that represent the core teachings of Gautama Buddha. The *Tripitaka* is believed to have been composed between about 550 BCE and the start of the Common Era. Scholars believe that current form and contents of *Tripitaka* were defined in the third century BCE after which it continued to be transmitted orally from one generation of monks to the next. However, a decision was made to create a written form of Buddhist teachings because monks feared that famine and war might lead to the destruction of monasteries and the loss of Buddhist knowledge. By about 100 BCE, the *Tipitaka* was first fixed in writing in Sri Lanka by Sinhala scribe-monks. As such, the Pali texts constitute the entire surviving body of literature in that language.

Each of the early Buddhist schools had its own *Tripitaka* for use in their monasteries and defined by its *sangha*. For example, canon also appeared in Sanskrit among early Buddhist communities such as the *Sarvastivada* (Doctrine that All Is Real), *Mahasanghika* (Great Community), and other schools. It is estimated by some that, at that time, there were anywhere from 18 to 33 schools of Buddhism, each with their own *Tripitaka*. However, only one version of the *Tripitaka* of these early schools has survived in its entirety, the Pali Canon along with parts of a few others. The Chinese and Tibetan canons include some parts of the sacred texts of the early Buddhist schools which were not included in the Pali canon.

Pali Canon: Tipitaka

The Pali Canon (*Tipitaka*) as indicated earlier contains the early teachings of The Buddha which were written down after being passed down orally for

centuries. The Pali Canon was first written in Sri Lanka on palm leaves. *Tipitaka* means three baskets and consist of up to 50 volumes of teachings. It is believed that monks actually used three baskets to collect and categorize Buddhist teachings. The three categories of teachings or 'three Baskets of Wisdom' are

- ***Vinaya Pitaka* or the Discipline Basket:** Is essentially a guide or rule book for the *sangha*, the monastic community of monks and nuns. Most of the different versions of the *Vinaya Pitaka* are quite similar. The *Vinaya Pitaka* not only details the rules that govern the life of every monk or nun, but also a number of procedures and social conventions that are intended to promote harmonious relations, within the monastic community, and as well between the monastics and their lay community. The Pali (Theravada) version contains 227 rules for monks (*bhikkhus*) and 311 rules for nuns (*bhikkhunis*).
- ***Sutra* (*Sutta*) *Pitaka* or the Teaching Basket:** Also known as the *Nikayas*, this basket includes the collected instructive discourses delivered by Buddha to both the *sangha* (community of monks and nuns) and the laity during his life. The *Sutra Pitaka* contains more than 10,000 *sutras* (teachings) attributed to The Buddha or venerated disciples and are of equal importance. The *Dhammapada* or *Dharmapada* is the most well-known part of the *Nikayas*.
- ***Abhidharma* (*Abhidhamma*) *Pitaka* or the Higher Doctrine Basket:** Provides an explanation or elaboration of the teachings of Buddha. They are detailed analyses, commentaries, and summaries of the *Sutra Pitaka* and are intended to help monastics and lay Buddhists understand and apply the *sutras* in their daily practice. Some scholars believe that *Abhidharma* does not reflect the direct teachings of Gautama Buddha, but a later elaboration written by monk scholars. According to tradition, however, the core of the *Abhidharma* is attributed to Gautama Buddha himself.

The Pali Canon is the collected works of only one of the early schools of Buddhism, the Theravada, although some elements of the texts of other early schools were incorporated and preserved in the Chinese and Tibetan canons.

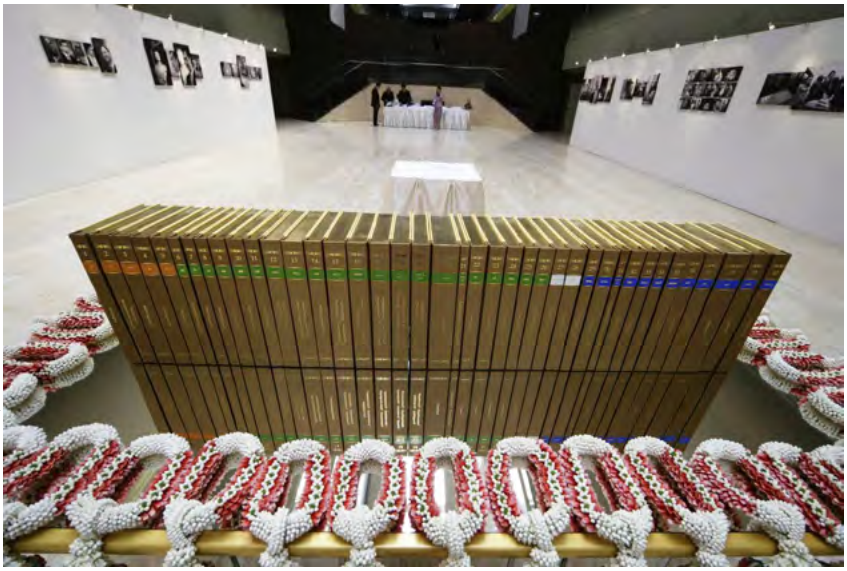


Figure 22: 2005: The newly published Pali Canon (Tipitaka) in roman script consisting of 40 volumes on display

The term *Tripitaka* is often used to refer to all Buddhist

scriptures, and thus used to refer to the Chinese and Tibetan collections of Buddhist scriptures, although their general organization do not strictly fall into three *Pitakas* or baskets.

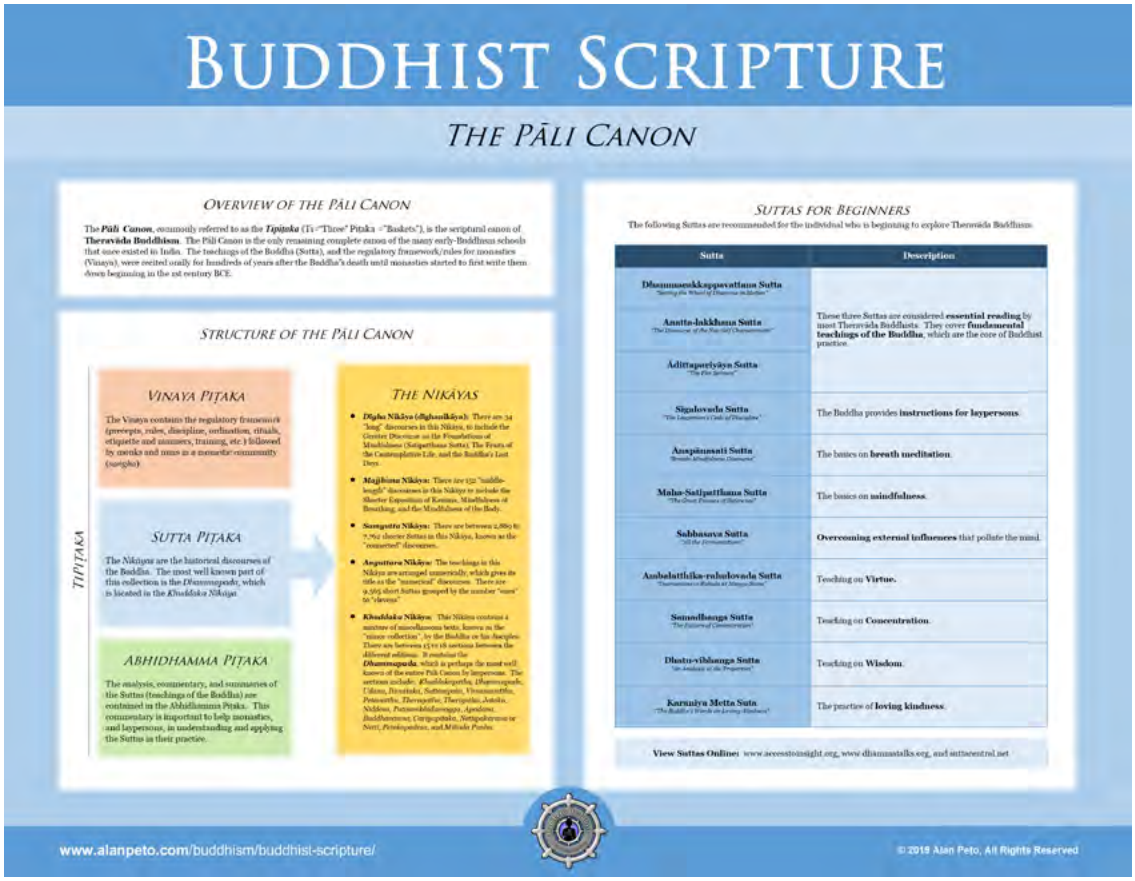


Figure 23: Buddhist Scripture—The Pāli Canon

Chinese Canon (Mahayana Buddhism)

The Chinese Canon is primarily used by Mahayana Buddhist schools and sects that originated in the East-Asian countries of China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. (The entire Chinese Canon, in any of its versions, has not been completely translated into English, but there are efforts to do so.)

The Chinese Canon which is used by Mahayana Buddhist schools, derived most of its early scripture from the many early Buddhist schools that existed in India, all of which had their own scriptural canons which were written in Sanskrit and were called *Tripitakas*.

The Chinese Canon shares many similarities with the Pali Canon and the *Sutra Pitaka*, and includes much of the discourses or sermons of The Buddha that are virtually identical in doctrine and/or story telling, with some differences

in translation and organization within the Canon. Core Buddhist concepts are common to both Canons.

The Chinese Canon is also known as *Dazangjing* (Great Scripture Store). Different versions derived from the Chinese Canon are used in other nations. For example, the Japanese *Taisho Tripitaka* and the *Tripitaka Koreana*.

In comparison to the Pali Canon, Mahayana Buddhist schools do not draw and adhere to The Chinese Canon as much. Different schools will typically focus on certain aspects of the Canon, including being selective in using or emphasizing specific *sutras* or commentaries.

The Chinese Canon, while it consists of the three traditional baskets (*Tripitaka*) of scripture, similar to the Pali Canon, also includes a number of other texts which include

- Tantras (Tantric School of Buddhism)
- Translations and commentaries on the Agamas and Mahayana scriptures
- Translations of commentaries on Yogacara and Madhyamaka
- Chinese commentaries on various parts of the canon
- Chinese sectarian writings, histories, and biographies
- Many more miscellaneous pieces such as encyclopedia, dictionaries, catalogs of Chinese Canons, and more

The *Sutra Pitaka* of the Chinese Canons include both *Agamas* (the *sutras* that are the original discourses and sermons of Gautama Buddha like the *Nikaya* of the Pali Canon) and an additional collection of sutras known as the *Mahayana Sutras*.

Around the first and second century CE, later *sutras* (the Mahayana *sutras*) began to appear in Northern India. Some 600 Mahayana *sutras* have survived in Sanskrit, or in Chinese and/or Tibetan translation. Mahayana *sutras* were often believed to be secret texts not to be written down. Some are said to have been written by *Bodhisattvas* or other Buddhas. In Mahayana Buddhism, *Bodhisattvas* are persons who are able to reach *nirvana* but delay doing so out of compassion for others and in order to save other sentient beings.

The Mahayana *sutras* differ from the early *sutras* which were attributed to Gautama Buddha as follows:

- They emphasize training in *bodhicitta* (limitless wisdom and compassion)
- While they are based on the earlier sutras included in the Pali Canon, they did not emerge until hundreds of years after the earlier *sutras* were recorded.
- The early *sutras* are considered to be valid, but they are believed to present a limited point of view, while the Mahayana *sutras* present the higher or better point of view for beings of superior capacity.

Originally, the Mahayana *sutras* were written in Sanskrit and then translated into the Chinese and Tibetan languages. They Mahayana *sutras* are accepted as the word of The Buddha by

- the East Asian Buddhist tradition which follows the Chinese Canon
- the Tibetan Buddhist tradition which follows the Tibetan Canon

However, in the Theravada tradition, these texts are not included in the Pali Canon, and, therefore, are not considered as the authentic teachings or words of the Gautama Buddha.

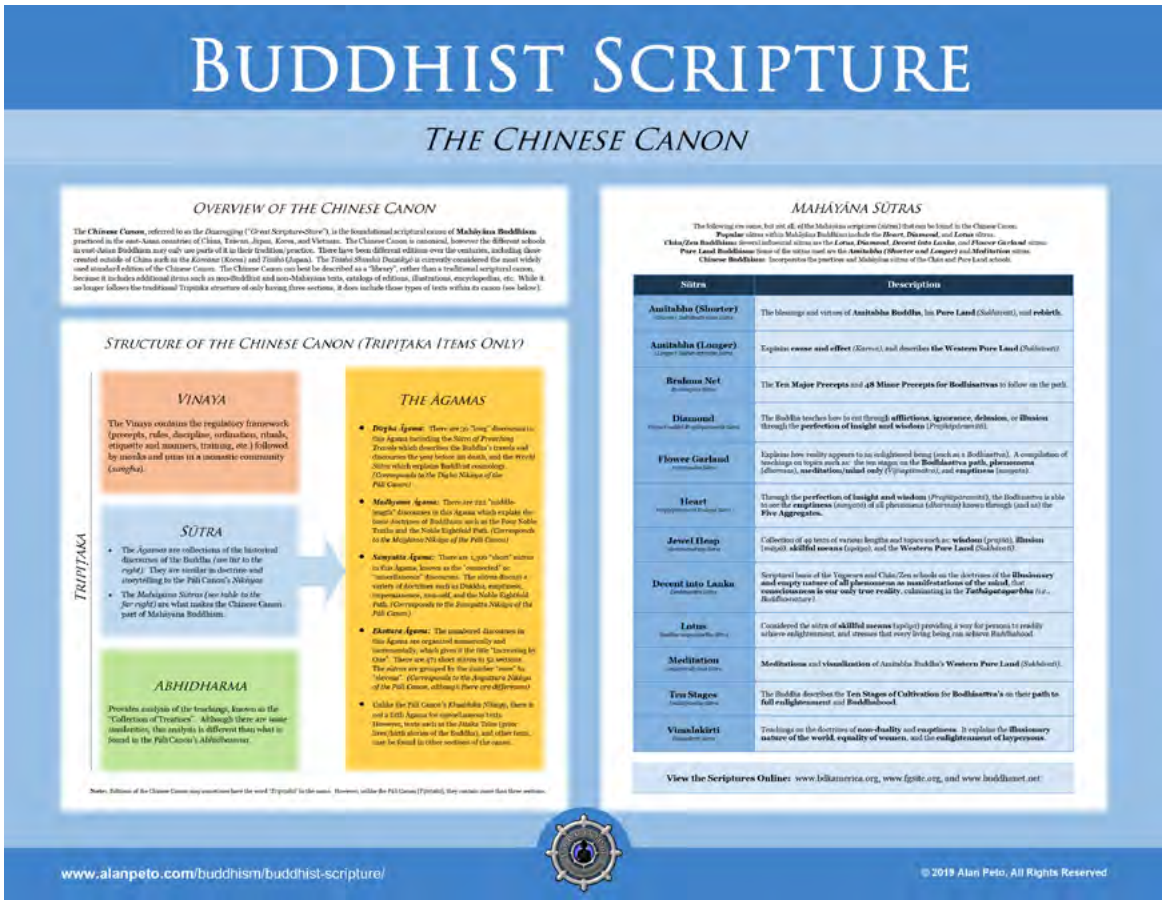


Figure 24: Buddhist Scripture—The Chinese Canon

Tibetan Canon: Vajrayana (Tantric) Buddhism

The Tibetan Canon is the one used in the schools originating from the central-Asian countries of Tibet, Bhutan, the Himalayas, and Mongolia. The Tibetan Buddhist Canon is a loosely defined collection of sacred texts recognized by various sects of Tibetan Buddhism.

Although Tibetan Buddhism is considered a form of Mahayana Buddhism, it developed its own Canon. The Tibetan Canon is not simply a translation or Tibetan edition of the Chinese Canon, although it does include some elements taken from the Chinese Canon. It was written in Tibet mostly based on translations of scriptures that originated in India, including Mahayana texts, but not the exact same set included in the Chinese Canon.

It also includes **Tantric texts**, a collection of Indian and Tibetan texts which outline the unique views and practices of the Buddhist tantric religious systems, intended for private translation from master (*guru*) to student. This secret aspect of tantric texts led Tibetan Buddhism to put greater emphasis on monastic life than in the Mahayana tradition. To fully understand the tantras one needs to dedicate themselves to serious study with a master who can transmit to students the deep meanings of the *tantras*.

The Tibetan Canon was fully compiled in the 14th century by Buton Rinchen Drub (1290–1364) and includes all the scriptures sacred to Tibet.

Figure 25: Vajra Pestle and Buddhist Scripture, at Derge Dgon Chen Monastery, Derge, Garze, SiChuan, China

The Tibetan Canon has its own organizational structure and is divided into two major categories, as follows:

The *Kangyur* (Translated Words or *Vacana*) is a collection of texts belonging to the various schools of Tibetan Buddhism. In addition to containing *sutras* and *vinaya*, it also contains *tantras*. In Tibet, Buddhist Tantra is called *Vajrayana*. Approximately 25% of the texts are Tibetan translations of early Buddhist texts, and the balance of the texts are translations of Mahayana texts. Note: There are at least six slightly different versions of the *Kangyur*.

The *Tengyur* (Translated Treatises or *Shastras*) is a compilation of commentaries, treatises, and *Abhidharma* works (both Mahayana and non-Mahayana). The Peking edition of the *Tengyur* consists of 3626 texts in 224 volumes.

The Tibetan Canon also includes Vajrayana texts that draw on the ideas of the Mahayana but presents them through different meditation and art forms. Vajrayana practices make use of *mantras*, *dharanis*, *mudras*, *mandalas*, and the

visualization of deities and Buddhas. To understand the true meaning of their scripture (*tantra*), the guidance of a *guru* is key.

According to Vajrayana scriptures, the term *Vajrayana* or the *tantric path* refers to one of three *yanas*, modes, or routes to enlightenment. The second path is the *Sravakayana*, a path that the individual takes to becoming an *Arhat*. The third path is *Mahayana*, or the path of the *Bodhisattva* seeking complete enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings, also called *Bodhisattva Yana*, or the *Bodhisattva Vehicle*.

While not officially a part of the Tibetan Canon, the Tibetan Book of the Dead (*Bardo Thodol*), is one of the most well-known Buddhist texts. The book was written in the medieval period in Tibet and explains death from a Tibetan Buddhist perspective.

Other Texts

Buddhists also draw on other texts that are not part of the three canons. Important examples are

- The *Visuddhimagga*, or Path of Purification, by Buddhaghosa, which is a compendium of Theravada teachings that includes quotes from the Pali Canon.
- The Zen and Chan schools draw on non-canonical accounts of the lives and teachings of Zen masters.
- Mahayana *shastras* or commentaries written at a later date to explain an earlier scripture or *sutra*. The commentaries are not the words of Buddha, but play a key role in Mahayana Buddhism.

Charting the Differences: Pali, Chinese, and Tibetan Canons

The chart that follows compares the structure and components of the three major Buddhist Canons.

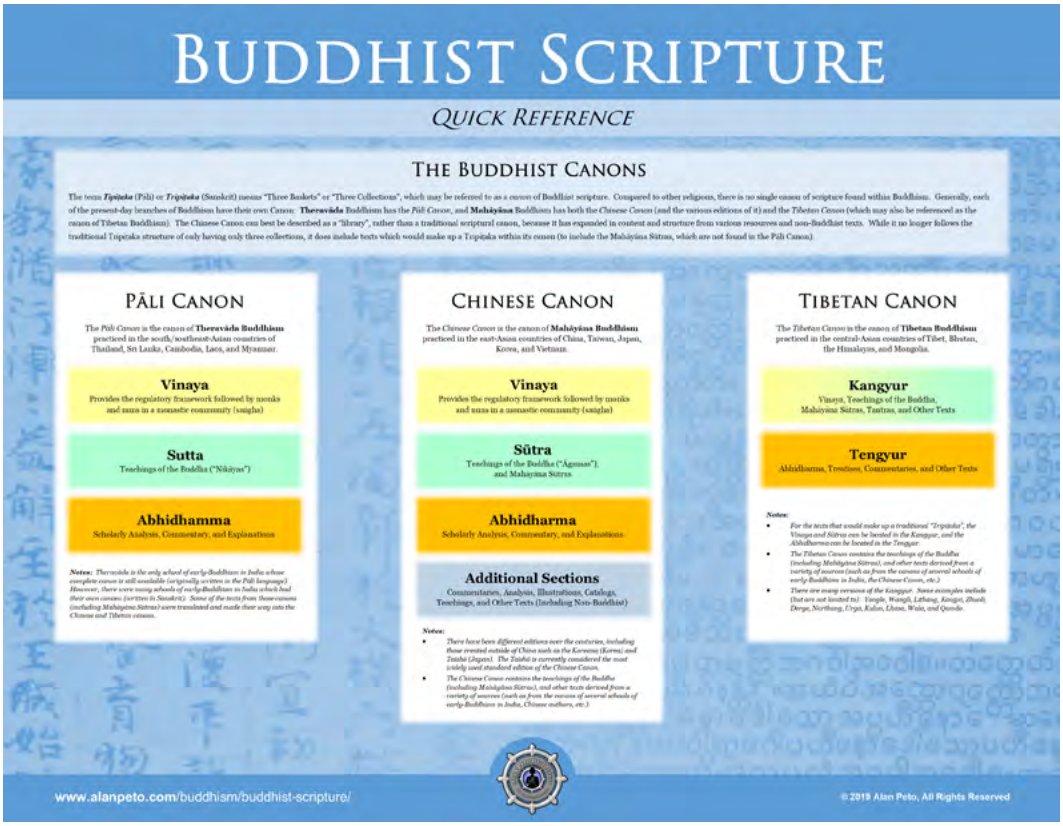


Figure 26: Buddhist Scripture—Quick Reference

Foundational Beliefs, Concepts, and Ideas

Three Jewels or Treasures

The following three aspects of Buddhism are considered to be core components of Buddhism.

Figure 27: Nuns in mandala offering mudra (symbolic or ritual gesture), Tharlam Tibetan Buddhist Monastery porch, Boudha, Kathmandu, Nepal

Buddha: This can mean the historical (Gautama) Buddha; or the state of Buddha-hood, as it has occurred again and again in individuals over countless millennia; or Buddha-nature, the pure, conceptually ineffable wholeness of reality and our experience of it as our ultimate true nature.

Dharma: As well as the words and teachings of Gautama Buddha as passed on in *sutras*, it can also mean the wisdom of Buddhism from the Buddha's teachings more generally.

Sangha: Originally meaning just the male ordained followers of the Buddha, this term is now understood more widely to include all members of a Buddhist order, all followers of a particular school whether ordained or lay practitioners, or indeed all Buddhists and enlightened beings. All Buddhists go for refuge to the *Buddha*, *Dharma,* and *Sangha*, and many schools use this as the formal entry point into Buddhism in a ceremony.

Origins of the Universe

Buddhism does not attribute the existence of the world or universe to a powerful creator, god, or gods. The explanation offered is that everything depends on everything else. What is the present was caused by the past and it will become the cause of the future.

From a Buddhist perspective, the beginning of this universe and of life in it is inconceivable as it has no beginning and no end. The Buddhists beliefs and understanding of the universe are similar to and draw on the traditions of its Indian roots. Indian religions, such as Hinduism, generally conceive of space and time as cyclical, so that world-systems come into being, exist for a time, eventually are destroyed, and then are reborn or remade. According to Buddhism, world systems always appear and disappear in the universe. From a Buddhist perspective, this cycle of birth, existence, destruction, and rebirth of worlds occurs naturally and not because of the intervention of a god or gods.

Thus, the universe is infinite in time and space, and filled with an infinite number of worlds.

Buddha did not speculate about the origin of the universe and living things. He was largely silent on this issue. The reason for his position was that the issue has no religious value as it does not lead to gaining spiritual wisdom. From a Buddhist perspective, it is not necessary to theorize about the origins of the universe and living things to live a righteous way of life and to shape one's future life.

Buddhist Cosmology

This sections provide a summary of some of the Buddhist concepts and ideas with respect to the nature of the universe and world. For most Buddhists, they may be understood to be metaphorical and for some, even mythological. However, these concepts and ideas are often reflected in many Buddhist texts and practices, and so it is important for those studying Buddhism to be familiar with them.

There is no one system of Buddhist cosmology. Generally, every school or sect within the Buddhist tradition addresses cosmological issues from its particular perspective. But all see the universe as the stage for a drama of escaping *samsara* and realizing enlightenment but from the view of its own particular philosophical and theological beliefs. Buddhist systems are related not only to other Indian systems, for example, Hindu and Jain, but also to Western beliefs as well.

Nature of the Universe

As indicated earlier, Buddhists follow the traditions of their Indian origins, and see the universe as infinite in time and space, and filled with an infinite number of worlds similar to our own.

Buddhist cosmology is discussed in commentaries and works of *Abhidharma* in both Theravada and Mahayana traditions, and is the result of an analysis and reconciliation of cosmological comments found in the Buddhist *sutra* and *vinaya* traditions. The nature and entire structure of the universe is described in a collection of several *sutras* in which The Buddha describes other worlds and states of being, and other *sutras* describe the origin and destruction of the universe.

The image of the world presented in Buddhist cosmological descriptions should not be taken literally. That image is one that contradicts or is not in accord with astronomical data that were already known in ancient India. As well, it is not meant to be a description of how ordinary humans see their world. Buddhist cosmology describes the universe as seen by the "divine eye" (*divyacaksus*/*dibbacakkhu*) by which a Buddha or an *arhat* has cultivated this ability or faculty. Through their divine eye they can "see" all of the other worlds and the beings experiencing *samsara* within them, and can tell their prior state before being reborn and their future state into which they will be reborn. Buddhist cosmology has also been considered symbolical or metaphorical.

Buddhist cosmology can be divided into the two following elements:

- temporal cosmology, which describes how worlds come into existence and how they pass away
- spatial cosmology, which describes the structure or position of the various worlds within the universe

Temporal Cosmology

The notion of a single-world system that is particularly prominent in the oldest Buddhist texts pictures the cosmos as a flat disk with heavens and meditation realms above and hells below. Although the oldest tradition apparently limited its interest to a single-world system, a grandiose cosmic structure developed on the perimeter of this single universe.

Traces of themes associated with multiple-world systems appear in texts of the Pali canon. A ten-thousand-world system is mentioned in the *Jatakas*, though with little elaboration, and in a more systematic way in Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga*. These, and other similar cosmologies, are variants of the *sahasra* cosmology, or "cosmology of thousands." They focus on themes of cosmic time and belong to the Theravada schools of Buddhism.

The cosmology of the *Mahayana*, characterized by innumerable world systems distributed throughout the ten regions of space, can be characterized as an *asamkhyeya* cosmology (cosmology of innumerables).

Time in Buddhist cosmology is measured in *kalpas*. A *kalpa* is an extensive period of time. Traditionally a *kalpa* was estimated to last 4,320,000 years. During a *kalpa*, the world comes into being, exists, is destroyed, and a period of emptiness ensues. Then it is reborn or remade and the cycle starts again.

Spatial Cosmology

Spatial cosmology describes the various and numerous worlds embedded in the universe. Spatial cosmology may also be conceived as describing this universe in two different ways. The vertical (*cakravada/devanagari*) cosmology describes the structure of worlds as arranged in a vertical pattern, with some being higher and some lower. While the horizontal (*sahasra*) cosmology describes the grouping of these vertical worlds into sets of thousands, millions, or billions.

Mount Meru and Vertical Cosmology

Buddhist texts and teachers sometimes refer to Mount Meru (*Sumeru* in Sanskrit or *Sineru* in Pali). Mount Meru appears in Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain belief systems. It is a sacred mountain considered to be the centre of the physical and spiritual universe. Many famous Buddhist (and also Hindu and Jain) temples have been built as symbolic representations of Mount Meru.

In the Buddhist tradition, Mount Meru exists simultaneously in time in both the physical and spiritual planes. Mount Meru is described in the Buddhist Abhidharma literature of the 4th–5th century composed by the Buddhist scholar Vasubandhu. It is described as being at the centre of the Buddhist world system.

From a Buddhist perspective, our world extends around Mount Meru. Above the peak of Meru is the realm of The Buddha fields (or heavens). On the upper slopes you find the gods. The titans live on the lower slopes. Animals and humans live on the plains around the mountain. Hungry ghosts live on or just below the surface while hell is located deep under the earth. All this is surrounded by a great ocean.

Vertical Cosmology

According to Buddhist beliefs as set out in the *Abhidharma*, *samsara* functions on thirty-one planes, levels, or realms (*loka*) of existence that are stacked one upon the next in layers. Each world corresponds to a mental state or a state of being; however, a world is not defined as a specific physical location but by the beings which compose or comprise it. Each world is sustained by the *karma* of the beings that inhabit it and, if the beings in that world all die or disappear, that world will also disappear. Similarly, a world comes into existence when a being is first put into it. Different beings may live in different worlds located in the same physical space or location because they live in different mental states. Therefore, even though humans and animals to some degree share the same physical environments, they still belong to different worlds because their minds perceive and react differently to those environments.

For Buddhists, there are at least thirty-one basic classes or types of beings that experience the cycle of rebirth, and any being may be born at any one of these levels or realms. (Depending on the school, there may be more than 31 realms). It is conceivable that many beings have, during the course of their wandering through samsara, at some point in time or another possibly been born into all of these realms, with the exception of the five realms known as The Pure Abodes. Beings born in one of the five Pure Abodes, such as the Great Brahmas of the realm of the Supreme Gods, have reached a condition in which they will inevitably attain *nirvana* and thus escape *samsara*.

The thirty-one realms are divided into several categories of realms as follows:

1. First there is the world of the five senses, or realm of desire (*Kamadhatu-loka*). The common characteristic of all beings in these realms is that they are all endowed with consciousness and the five physical senses. This category consists of sixteen (for some schools up to twenty-seven) realms, ranging from the realms of hell and 'The hungry ghosts', through the realms of animals, jealous gods, and human beings, to the realms of the lower gods.
2. Above this there is 'The world of pure form' (*Rupadhatu-loka*) which is occupied by various higher gods collectively known as *Brahmas*. These are

refined beings, who have consciousness but only two senses—sight and hearing. This category consists of sixteen (or seventeen) realms, the highest of which are the five realms of Pure Abodes that were mentioned earlier.

3. Lastly, there is 'The formless world' (*Arupadatu-loka*) occupied by a further class of *Brahmas* who have only consciousness. There are four realms in this category.

Sometimes all of the beings born in the *Arupyadatu* and the *Rupadatu* may be classified as "gods" or "deities" (*devas*), along with the gods of the *Kamadhatu*, even though the deities of the *Kamadhatu* differ more from those of the *Arupyadhatu* than they do from humans. In Buddhism, the term gods, deities, or devas should be understood as being imprecise terms referring to any being living a more blissful state than humans and generally living longer than humans. The majority are not "gods" as per the common understanding of the term, as they have limited or no concern with the human world and rarely or even never interact with it. Only the lowest deities of the *Kamadhatu* should be understood as corresponding to the concept of the gods as described in many polytheistic religions.

The term *brahma* may be used both as a name for a specific *deva* and as a generic term for one of the higher *devas*. Used broadly, it may refer to any of the inhabitants of the *Arupyadhatu* and the *Rupadhatu* realms. Used in a narrower sense, it may be used to refer to an inhabitant of any one of the eleven lower planes of the *Rupadhatu* or, in the most restricted sense, to the three lowest worlds of the *Rupadhatu*.

A significant number of devas use the name *Brahma*, such as Brahma Sahampati, Brahma Sanatkumara, and Baka Brahma. It may not always be clear which world they belong to; however, it must always be one of the worlds of the Rupadhatu.

What determines in which realm a being is born? The short answer is *karma* (*Pali kamma*): a being's intentional 'actions' of body, speech, and mind—whatever is done, said, or even just thought with definite intention or volition. In general, though, with some qualification, rebirth in the lower realms is considered to be the result of relatively unwholesome (*akusala*), or bad (*papa*) *karma*, while rebirth in the higher realms is the result of relatively wholesome (*kusala*), or good (*punya/puñña*) *karma*. Correspondingly, the lower the realm, the more unpleasant and unhappy one's condition; the higher the realm the more pleasant, happy, and refined one's condition.

One should note, however, that this hierarchy does not constitute a simple ladder which one, as it were, climbs, passing out at the top into *nirvana*. In fact, *nirvana* may be obtained from any of the realms from the human to the highest of the Pure Abodes and the four formless realms, but not from the four lowest realms. Yet, rather than attaining *nirvana*, beings generally rise and fall, and fall and rise through the various realms, now experiencing unhappiness, now experiencing happiness. This precisely is the nature of *samsara*: wandering from life to life with no particular direction or purpose.

The diagram below depicts the various categories of realms and their order vertically.

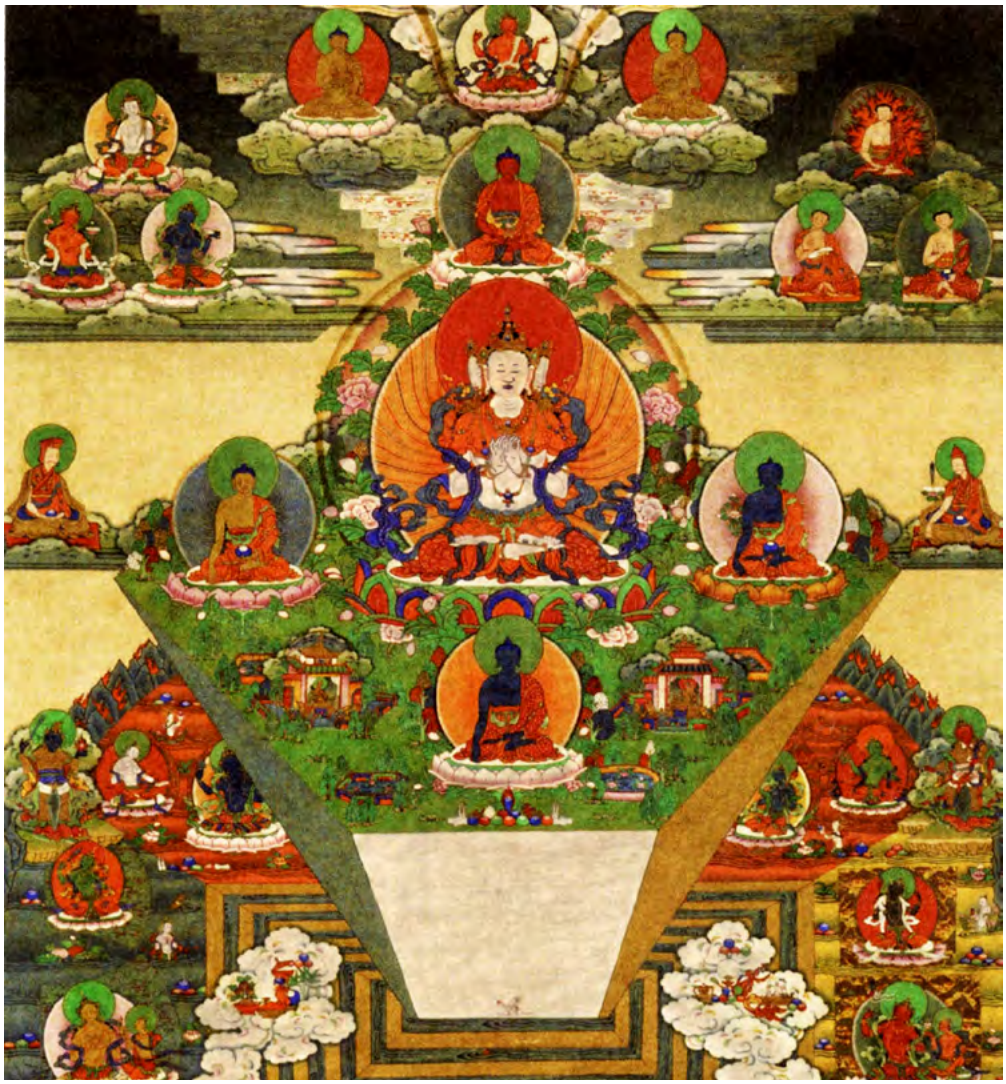


Figure 28: Depiction of Mount Meru and the Buddhist universe.

Buddha and Buddhist Deities

Buddhists venerate a number of divine beings, gods, or *devas* in various ritual and popular contexts. Initially, these include primarily Indian and Hindu deities, but later they also come to include other Asian spirits and local gods. Buddhist deities range from enlightened Buddhas to regional spirits adopted by Buddhists.

As Buddhism spread to various countries, it began to incorporate aspects from countries such as China and Japan into its collection of deities. Buddhism

now includes many devas that reflect aspects taken from those cultures. For example, Saraswati is a Hindu Deva from Gandhara and the *kami* are considered, by many Japanese Buddhists, to be local, Japanese *bodhisattvas*.

Some of the actors in the Buddhist texts, stories, and mythology include

- Brahma Sahampati: The leading god or supreme deva, who appeared before Buddha and was instrumental in convincing Gautama Buddha to teach once The Buddha attained enlightenment but was unsure if he should share his insights with anyone.
- Sakra (Indra): Sits on top of Mount Meru and is a major *deva* and defender.
- Mara: Another *deva* who is associated with death and blockages to enlightenment. Buddha recounts being tempted by Mara under the Bodhi tree.
- Yama: The king who rules over the 21 hells.
- Nagas: A great serpent, dragon, or water creature; the king of the Nagas protected Buddha from a fierce storm.
- Gandharvas: Angelic beings who entertain and provide the gods with music.

Mahayana and Vajrayana Concepts of Buddhahood

A Buddha is a being who is fully awakened, and has fully comprehended the Four Noble Truths. Different schools of Buddhism recognize and venerate different Buddhas in addition to Gautama Buddha/Buddha Shakyamuni.

In the Theravada tradition, there is a list of past Buddhas of which the historical Buddha Shakyamuni is the only Buddha of our current era and he is generally not seen as accessible or as existing in some higher plane of existence.

Mahayana Buddhists venerate several Buddhas, including Maitreya and Amitabha. These Buddhas are seen conceptualized as beings of great wisdom and power who preside over pure lands that one can travel to after death.

In Tantric Buddhism (Vajrayana), there are five primary Buddhas: Vairocana, Aksobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha, and Amoghasiddhi. Each Buddha is associated with a different consort, direction, aggregate (or, aspect of the personality), emotion, element, colour, symbol, and mount. Other Buddhas besides these five include Bhaisajyaguru, The Buddha of medicine, and Nageshvara Raja, the king of the Nagas.

Buddhist tradition also includes the idea of the first Buddha, the Adi-Buddha. This is the first being deemed to have attained Buddhahood. Variously named as Vajradhara, Samantabhadra, and Vairocana, the first Buddha is also associated with the concept of Dharmakaya.

There are several female Buddhas within Buddhist Tantra traditions such as Tara, who is the most popular female Buddha in Tibetan Buddhism. There

are different and many forms and colours of Tara, each representing different characteristics or attributes. Other female Buddha figures include Vajra Yogini, Nairatmya, and Kurukulla.

In Mahayana and especially in Vajrayana or Tibetan Buddhism, the idea and nature of Buddhahood evolved into a more elaborate system called the *Trikaya*. The doctrine of *Trikaya* states that a Buddha has three *kayas* or bodies.

1. *Dharmakaya*: The Truth Body. The teachings of Gautama Buddha and the true nature, law, and order of the Buddha. The embodiment of the principle of enlightenment has no limits or boundaries.
2. *Sambhogakaya*: Body of Bliss: Buddhas in their heavens, that resulted from their accumulated merit. Buddhas exist in a state of bliss and or clear light.
3. *Nirmanakaya*: Buddha incarnation or emanation. The earthly Buddhas (and Bodhisattvas), especially as personified by Gautama Buddha. In Tibet, these include intentional human embodiment of a reborn master.

In Tibet, they also refer to the body, speech, and mind of a master and they are represented by the *mudra*, the *mantra*, and the *mandala*, respectively.

Transcendent (or Dhyani) Buddhas

Vajrayana Buddhism developed the idea that the world is composed of five cosmic elements and they are symbolized by five Dhyani Buddhas. Unlike historical Buddhas such as Gautama Buddha, they are transcendent beings who represent intangible forces and divine principles.

They are important because they are seen as being able to act as spiritual guides to help people face the negative forces they will encounter on their path to enlightenment. It is believed that meditating on the Five Dhyani Buddhas and what they represent can be an effective way to learn self-restraint, and avoid self-indulgence and self-denial.

Although the concept of the five elements is metaphysical, there was a desire to represent them in art and architecture. Traditionally, in a temple, four of the Dhyani Buddhas would have been placed facing the four cardinal directions and one would have been in the centre of the shrine. Each of the Dhyani Buddhas were represented sitting on a lotus, each had one face and two hands, and all were wearing an image of their clan on their crown.

The five Dhyani Buddhas have been given diverse attributes and have been used in various ways by different people over the centuries. Brief descriptions follow that describe their foundational aspects.

Vairochana symbolizes *rupa* (shape or form). He is represented with white skin colour and sitting in the centre. He is usually found meditating on a lotus seat, teaching the *Dharma* (law) so as to combat ignorance in the world.

Akshobhya is represented with blue skin colour and sitting in an earth-touching pose facing in the east direction. His symbol is a thunderbolt (*vajra*)

and his domain is water. His role is to provide wisdom and knowledge to the mortal, create humility, and reduce aggression. He also symbolizes winter.

Ratnasambhava is represented with gold or yellow skin colour and sitting on earth sitting in a south direction. He is bestowing blessings (*Varada mudra*) in one hand, providing enrichment, pride, joy, and calmness to the mortal. He also symbolizes autumn.

Amitabha is represented with red skin colour and sitting in a meditation pose with both hands laid upon his lap. He is facing in the west direction. His role is to help one define one's self, and to provide the gift of wisdom of observation. With the ability to overpower and conquer mortals, he can be found in fire. His symbol is a lotus.

Amoghasiddhi is represented with green skin colour and sitting in a meditation pose, depicting a gesture of fearlessness in the north direction. He holds a double thunderbolt (*vajra*) to eradicate fear, envy, and jealousy. His role is to further protect the world and its creation, as well as provide mortals with courage and wisdom. He also symbolizes summer.

Bodhisattvas and Earthly Buddhas

A *Bodhisattva* is a being that has aroused *bodhicitta* (awakening mind) and is working towards full *Buddhahood*. *Bodhisattvas* are seen as powerful and highly advanced and are venerated in both Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism. One of the most popular *Bodhisattva* is Avalokiteshvara who is the *bodhisattva* of compassion.

There are also female *Bodhisattvas*. One of the earliest is Prajnaparamita, who is venerated as the personification of the perfection (*paramita*) or wisdom (*prajna*). Other female *Bodhisattvas* include Vasudhara and Cundi.

In Buddhism there are five "earthly" Buddhas, each associated with one of the five ages (*Kala*) of the world.

Below, is a list of five *Bodhisattvas* and five earthly *Buddhas*.

Bodhisattvas	Earthly Buddhas
Samantabhadra	Krakucchanda
Vajrapani	Kanakamuni
Ratnapani	Kashyapa
Avalokiteshvara (Kuan Yin)	Shakyamuni (Siddhartha Gautama)
Vishvapani	Maitreya (the future Buddha)

Dependent Origination or Chain of Causation

One of the stories told by The Buddha in the *Agganna Sutta* describes the process of recreation described earlier. The story begins at the point where an old world has just been destroyed, and a new world has been created. The

inhabitants of the prior world are reborn in the new world. At first, they are simply spirits who float above Earth, luminescent and without a body/form, name, or gender.

The new world in the early stages is without light or land, covered only by water. At some point, however, Earth appears and the spirits come to know, taste, and enjoy it. Their greed causes their spirit bodies to solidify and differentiate into male and female, attractive and not. The sun and moon come into being as the spirits take human form and they lose their luminescence. Gradually, the inhabitants develop additional bad or wicked habits and, in so doing, cause them and Earth itself to become less pleasant.

Through this story, The Buddha appears to be saying that desire, greed, and attachment not only cause suffering for humans but also shapes the world we know and experience. Thus, the imperfect physical world and suffering we experience in it are the result of what Buddhists called dependent origination, chain of causation, or *pratitya-samutpada* in Sanskrit and *paticca-samuppda* in Pali. The Buddha taught that dependent origination is a 12-stage cyclical process, a circular chain of stages. Each stage in the cycle gives rise to the one directly after it. The 12 stages are as follows:

1. Ignorance: the inability to see the truth, usually depicted as an image of a blind man or person
2. Willed action: the actions that shape our emerging consciousness, usually depicted as an image of a potter moulding clay
3. Conditioned consciousness: the development of habits, blindly responding to the impulses of karmic conditioning, usually depicted as an image of a monkey swinging about aimlessly
4. Form and existence: the body comes into being to carry our karmic inheritance, usually depicted as an image of a boat carrying men
5. The six sense-organs: the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body (touch)—and mind, the way sensory information passes into us, usually depicted as the doors and windows of a house
6. Sense-impressions: the combination of sense-organ and sensory information, usually depicted as an image of two lovers
7. Sensation: the feelings we get from sense-impressions, which are so vivid that they blind us, usually depicted as an image of a man shot in the eye with an arrow
8. Craving (*tanhā*): the negative desires that can never be satisfied, usually depicted as an image of a man drinking
9. Attachment: grasping at things we think will satisfy our craving, usually depicted as an image of someone reaching out for fruit from a tree
10. Becoming: worldly existence, being trapped in the cycle of life, usually depicted as an image of a pregnant woman
11. Birth: usually depicted as an image of a woman giving birth
12. Old age and death: the grief, suffering and despair, which are the direct consequences of birth, usually depicted as an image of an old man

Samsara, Rebirth, and Reincarnation

From a Buddhist perspective, the purpose of a religion is to guide one in this life and future lives until liberation is gained. For The Buddha and his followers, the world is nothing but *Samsara*—the cycle of repeated births and deaths. For Buddhists, the beginning of the world and the end of the world all occur within this *Samsara*. Since elements and energies are relative and inter-dependent, it is meaningless to single out anything as the beginning. While we can speculate about the origin of the world, there is no absolute truth revealed by such speculation.

Thus reincarnation is a fundamental belief of Buddhism, which is the concept that people are reborn after dying. In fact, most individuals go through many cycles of birth, living, death, and rebirth. A practicing Buddhist differentiates between the concepts of rebirth and reincarnation. In reincarnation, the individual may recur repeatedly. In rebirth, a person does not necessarily return to Earth as the same entity ever again. This is like a leaf growing on a tree. When the leaf dies, withers, and falls off, a new leaf eventually replaces it. This new leaf is similar to the old leaf, but not identical to the one it replaced.

As indicated earlier, Buddhism has six sub-realms into which a soul may be reborn within *Kamadhatu*, the realm of desire. The six realms to which one may be reborn are the gods (heaven), human, demigods/titans/angry gods (*asuras*), hungry ghosts (*preta*), animal, and hell realms. Earlier texts referenced five realms instead of six realms as in such cases the god realm and demigod realm were considered to be a single god's realm.

These six realms are usually further categorized into two or three higher (good or fortunate) realms and three or four lower (evil or unfortunate) realms. The three higher realms are the realms of the gods, humans, and demigods. The three lower realms are the realms of the animals, hungry ghosts, and hell beings. In East Asian literature, six realms are further subdivided into thirty one levels.

Buddhist texts describe the six realms in the following way:

1. *Deva* or Gods realm (heaven): The home of the gods (*devas*) is the most pleasant of the six realms. In this realm the inhabitants enjoy blissful long lives. One later text subdivided this realm into another twenty-six sub-realms of increasing happiness. A rebirth in this heaven-like realm is believed to result from the great accumulation of good *karma*. Unfortunately, the pleasures of this realm lead to attachment (*Upadana*) and result in a lack of spiritual pursuits which impedes the achievement of *nirvana*. This realm in Southeast and East Asian Buddhism include gods found in the Hindu traditions such as Indra and Brahma, and concepts in Hindu cosmology such as Mount Meru.
2. *Manusya/Manussa* (human) realm: According to Buddhist beliefs, a person reborn in this realm will have superior physical endowments and moral nature because of their past *karma*. Although humans suffer, this is considered a very fortunate state because humans have the greatest chance of enlightenment and reaching the end of the cycle of *Samsara*.

3. Asura (demigods, titans, and angry gods) realm: The demigods or asuras realm is the last of the good or fortunate realms of Buddhist existence. Asura are believed to be angry and may possess some supernormal powers. They wage war with the *devas* (gods), and make life for the *manusya* (humans) difficult by causing illnesses and natural disasters. The demigod realm is in some cases categorized as one of the evil realms due to the stories of the Asura wars against the Gods. They accumulate *karma* and are reborn.
4. *Preta/Petta* (hungry ghosts) realm: These beings, hungry ghosts and other restless spirits or preta, live in a state of unhappiness because they are unable to satisfy their craving, as often symbolized by images which show them with huge bellies and tiny mouths. They are reborn in this realm because of excessive cravings and attachments. They do not have a physical body, are invisible, and constitute only "subtle matter" of a being. Buddhists in Asia traditionally care for the hungry ghosts on annual ritual days by leaving food and refreshments in the open to feed any hungry ghosts that may be nearby. When the angry ghosts' bad *karma* runs out, they are reborn into another realm. Views on the nature of this realm vary among Buddhist schools. Some see this realm to be the mildest of the bad or unfortunate realms others believe it to be more intense than the animal realm.
5. *Tiryagyon Ttiracchanayoni* (animal) realm: This realm is state of existence of a being as an animal or tiryag. To be reborn into this realm is undesirable because animals are exploited by humans, and do not possess the required self-awareness to achieve liberation. This realm is traditionally believed to be similar to a hellish realm, because animals are believed to be driven by impulse and instinct, they prey on each other and suffer. Some Buddhist texts place plants in this realm and believe them to have primitive consciousness.
6. *Naraka/Niraya* (hell) realm: Beings are reborn in this realm because of the accumulation of bad and evil karma from stealing, lying, and committing adultery and others failures. Buddhist texts differ in their description of this realm. People in this realm are horribly tortured in many ways, but only until their bad *karma* expires. Buddhists beliefs about this realm include the existence of numerous hellish regions, each with their own form of intense suffering, all in proportion to the evil *karma* accumulated by the individual. These include the following:

- eight extremely hot and eight extremely cold regions
- regions where one may be partially eaten alive, be severely beaten, and experience other forms of physical torture and violence

The beings in this realm may be reborn in another realm after their evil karma has expired, they die, and they get another chance. Some compare this realm to the concept of afterlife hell in Christianity, but since in Buddhism there is no realm of final damnation and eternal existence, a being's presence in this realm is also a temporary one.

These six realms are not separate realms. They are all interlinked as is consistent with Buddhist philosophy that mind and reality are both linked. For example, humans and animals live in the same world, but the implications of being born as a human or as an animal are very different and, therefore, they are represented as two separate realms. Similarly, human beings may experience elements of heaven when happy, or the lower states when hateful, greedy, and ignorant or in pain. Humans who are masters of meditation may experience progressively higher heaven realms.

Buddhist Devas or Gods/Deities

In some instances all of the beings born in the *Arupyadhatu* and the *Rupadhatu* are informally classified as gods or deities (*devas*), along with the gods of the *Kamadhatu*; however, they differ in some ways. For example, the *deva* of the *Kamadhatu* realm have more in common with human beings that they do with the *devas* of the *Arupyadhatu*.

The term *deva* is an imprecise one, which may be used when referring to any being living in a longer-lived and usually more blissful state than humans. In Buddhism, deva are not immortal and they do not play a role in the creation of the universe or world. Most of them are not gods in the common sense of the term, having little or no concern with the human world and rarely if ever interacting with it. Only the lowest deities of the *Kamadhatu* correspond to the gods described in many polytheistic religions.

Devas are elevated beings who were reborn in the celestial planes because of their good words, thoughts, and deeds. Generally, they too are subject to delusion and desire as are human beings, and they too need guidance from the Enlightened.

In Buddhism, the term *Brahma* is used both as a name and as a generic term for one of the higher devas. When used in a generic sense, it can refer to any of the inhabitants of the *Arupyadhatu* and the *Rupadhatu*. In more restricted senses, it may refer to a being in one of the eleven lower worlds of the *Rupadhatu* or, even more narrowly, to beings in the three lowest worlds of the *Rupadhatu* (Plane of Brahma's retinue).

There are a number of *devas* that use the name *Brahma* (e.g., Brahma Sahampati, Brahma Sanatkumara Baka Brahma, etc.); therefore, it may not always be clear which world they belong to, although it will always be one of the worlds of the *Rupadhatu*. According to the Ayacana Sutta, Brahma Sahampati, who begged The Buddha to teach Dhamma/Dharma to the world, resides in the *Suddhavasa* worlds.

Wheel of Life

The realms, or states of reincarnation, of the Buddhist universe are often represented in a diagram known as the *Bhavacakra*, the Wheel of Life, or the Wheel of Becoming, as shown on the following page. A description of the diagram and the significance of each part follows.

- The wheel itself is a circle, symbolizing *Samsara*, the endless cycle of existence and suffering.

- The centremost circle in middle of the Wheel depicts the Three Fires of greed, ignorance, and hatred, represented by a rooster, a pig, and a snake. These cause all suffering and are shown together, each biting the other's tails, and reinforcing each other.
- Moving outward from the centre, souls are shown ascending and descending as dictated by their *karma*.
- The next ring moving outwards consists of six segments showing the six realms: gods, humans, and Titans in the top half, and hungry ghosts, animals, and those tortured in hell in the bottom half.
- The last or outer ring depicts the twelve segments called nidanas (illustrations of Buddhist conception of dependent origination or chain of causation which was described earlier).
- Lastly, the *bavacakra* is held by Yama, the Lord of Death, who symbolizes the impermanence of everything. The beings he holds are trapped in eternal suffering by their ignorance of the nature of the universe.

Figure 29: Yama holding the Bhavacakra or Wheel of Life, from a temple in China

Karma

The concept of *karma* is not unique to Buddhism and it is a foundational belief in several Eastern religions, although with different meanings and nuances.

This important Buddhist doctrine teaches that all things are interconnected and guided by the law of *karma*, the means by which we create a world of suffering for ourselves and others, or conversely, the way to live our lives that reduces suffering for all, and leads to liberation.

Buddhist teachings about karma indicate that our past actions have affected us, either positively or negatively, and that our present actions will affect us in the future. Buddhists often use the agricultural metaphor of sowing seeds to explain *karma*. If we sow good seeds (act in a good or moral way) we will reap

good food or fruit. If we sow bad seeds (act in a bad or immoral way) we will reap bad food or bad fruit.

Early Buddhist writings suggest that not everything we experience is solely the result of past actions, and may be the result of natural events of some kind. However, later Tibetan teachings, suggest that all the good and bad things that happen to us are the result of past actions.

While there might be doubt, or differing opinions, about why we experience some form of suffering or misfortune, there is shared belief that the only way we can resolve any suffering in the present moment is through mindfulness and action based upon good motives.

Beyond this Life

Buddhists believe that *karma* has implications beyond this life. Bad actions in a previous life can follow a person into their next life and cause bad effects or misfortune. Even Buddha was not free from the effects of past *karma*. In one story, Buddha's cousin tried to kill him by dropping a boulder on him. While the cousin was not successful and Buddha lived, one of his feet was injured. Buddha explained that this injury was karmic retribution for once trying to kill his step-brother in a previous life.

Figure 30: Each prayer wheel contains a Buddhist scripture. Spinning a wheel gives you good karma.

On a larger scale, *karma* also determines one's rebirth and status or position in their next life. Good *karma* can result in one's birth in one of the heavenly realms. While bad *karma* can cause one to be reborn as an animal or insect, or to be reborn and tormented in one of the hell realms.

Consequently, Buddhists try to accrue good *karma* and avoid bad *karma*. Ultimately, however, the goal of Buddhism is to escape the cycle of death and rebirth altogether, not simply to acquire good *karma* and be born into a better or more pleasant state. These pleasant states, while preferable to human life, are impermanent, as even gods eventually die.

Self-Determined

The word *karma* means action. *Karma* is determined by one's own actions and, in particular, by the motives behind intentional actions.

Actions that lead to good karmic outcomes flow from actions that are motivated by generosity, compassion, kindness and sympathy, and clear mindfulness or wisdom. Conversely, bad *karma* is the result of actions motivated by greed, aversion (hatred), and delusion.

For Buddhists, *karma* is not an external force. It is not a system of punishment or reward adjudicated and meted out by a god. The concept is understood as a natural law similar to gravity. Buddhists believe that our ultimate fate is in our control. Unfortunately, most of us are ignorant of this fact, which causes suffering. The purpose of Buddhism is to take conscious control of our behaviour.

Moral Habits

The Buddha taught that one's life can be determined by our karmic conditioning, that is a process by which a person's nature is shaped by their moral actions. From this perspective, every action we take now contributes to our characters in the future. Thus, positive and negative aspects can become magnified over time as we fall into habits. All of these cause us to acquire *karma*. This is why Buddhists place high importance on being mindful of every action they take.

Getting Rid of Karmic Conditioning

As acting on karmic habits increases their potency, Buddhists seek to gradually weaken or counteract any negative thoughts and impulses that they experience by allowing them to arise and depart naturally without acting on them. By doing so, one's bad karmic habits can be broken and replaced with good habits

Buddhist Path

Nirvana (Nibbana)

Nirvana (*Nibbana* in Pali), the escape from *Samsara*, the achievement of enlightenment and liberation is a central concept in Buddhism, and it is the ultimate goal of Buddhist practice. There are many different explanations of what *nirvana* and enlightenment mean among the three Buddhist traditions.

The moment of one's awakening or enlightenment is a single moment of profound spiritual insight which one may experience. To be enlightened is to be awake to a reality that is already present, but which most persons do not perceive. Enlightenment is a precondition necessary for the achievement of *nirvana*.

Figure 31: A symbol of the Eightfold Path "Arya Magga" (the noble path of the dhamma) in early Buddhism

Nirvana, or *nibanna* in Pali, comes from the Pali word meaning "to be extinguished," as one may do with a fire. The 'fire' that Buddhists seek to extinguish is the fire of suffering and *samsara*. *Nirvana* is not a place. Like freedom, it is a state of being.

The Buddha believed that *nirvana* is impossible to describe to somebody who has not achieved awakening themselves, but spoke of *nirvana* as freedom from suffering and attaining a true and lasting sense of happiness and bliss. For Buddhists, the nature of *nirvana* is not as important as the path one takes to achieve it. Freedom from suffering is the purpose of the Buddhist path.

Reaching *nirvana* or being liberated does not mean one does not experience unpleasant phenomena. Instead, one ceases to create suffering in our lives and the lives of others. The Buddha himself is known to have experienced unpleasant things after his awakening, but did not suffer. As such, *nirvana* is a state of ceasing to cling to life as it is known, relinquishing aversion, and finding clarity into the nature of reality.

It is important to keep in mind that The Buddha never denied that life, even an unenlightened life, offers the possibility of many aspects and experiences of great beauty and happiness. Nonetheless, he also recognized that the kinds of happiness to which most of humans are accustomed cannot, by their very nature, give truly lasting satisfaction. If one is genuinely interested in one's

own and others' welfare, one must sometimes be willing to give up one kind of happiness for the sake of something much better. This understanding lies at the very heart of the Buddha's method. Whether instructing a lay person on the blessings of treating one's parents and relatives with respect, or instructing a monk or nun on the finer points of meditation, the Buddha's system of gradual training consistently encourages the disciple to move on to a deeper level of happiness: one that is greater, nobler, and more fulfilling than what they had previously known. Each level of happiness has its rewards, but each also has its drawbacks—the most conspicuous of which is that it cannot, by its very nature, endure.

The highest happiness of all, and the one to which all the Buddha's teachings ultimately point, is the lasting happiness and peace of the transcendent, the deathless, *nirvana* (*nibbana*). Thus, the Buddha's teachings are concerned solely with guiding people towards the highest and most expansive happiness possible. In the words of one teacher, "Buddhism is the serious pursuit of happiness."

Figure 32: Arhat statues at Bai Dinh, representing Buddhists who have reached Nirvana. There are hundreds.

The Buddha claimed that the Awakening he rediscovered is accessible to anyone willing to put forth the effort and commitment required to pursue the Noble Eightfold Path to its end. It is up to each of us individually to put that claim to the test.

Nirvana is not a place one goes to: it is a state of being that is beyond existence and non-existence. The early sutras speak of nirvana as being the "liberation" and "unbinding" of a person from the cycle of birth and death. *Nirvana* is freedom from needless suffering and being fully alive and present in one's life.

Theravada Buddhism conceptualizes two kinds of *nirvana* (or *nibanna* in Pali). An enlightened being first experiences a kind of provisional *nirvana*, or "*nirvana* with remainders." The person is still aware of pleasure and pain but is not bound to them. The enlightened individual enters into parinirvana, or complete nirvana, at death. In Theravada, then, enlightenment is spoken of as the door to *nirvana*, but not *nirvana* itself.

Mahayana emphasizes the ideal of the *bodhisattva*, the enlightened being who vows to not enter *nirvana* until all beings are enlightened. This suggests enlightenment and *nirvana* are separate; however, Mahayana also teaches that

nirvana is not separate from *samsara*, the wheel of birth and death. When we cease to create *samsara* with our minds, *nirvana* naturally appears. *Nirvana* is the purified true nature of *samsara*.

Achieving Nirvana in Buddhism

Buddhism, like most world religions, comprises many different traditions and schools of thought and practice. Nonetheless, most Buddhist traditions share a common set of fundamental beliefs about the path of liberation and the eventual achievement of *nirvana*.

For many Buddhists and non-Buddhists, Buddhism goes beyond a traditional religion and may be more accurately described as a philosophy or 'way of life'. Philosophy 'means love of wisdom' and the Buddhist path is founded on wisdom and a way of living. This includes the following:

THREE UNIVERSAL TRUTHS

1. Everything in life is impermanent and always changing.
2. Because nothing is permanent, a life based on material possessions or possessing persons does not make you happy.
3. There is no eternal, unchanging soul and "self" is just a collection of changing characteristics or attributes.

FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

1. Human life is characterized by a lot of suffering.
2. The cause of suffering is greed and other vices.
3. There is an end to suffering.
4. The way to end suffering is to follow the Middle Path.

Buddha taught his followers to not to worship him as a god. Instead they should take responsibility for their own lives and actions. Their liberation and freedom from *samsara* was to be the Middle Way. This was the true path to liberation or *nirvana*. The Middle Way is not simply escaping a life of luxury and indulgence but also limiting too much fasting and hardship. There are eight guides for following the Middle path.

Eightfold Path

1. Right understanding and viewpoint (based on the Four Noble Truths)
2. Right values and attitude (compassion rather than selfishness)
3. Right speech (don't tell lies, avoid harsh, abusive speech, and avoid gossip)
4. Right action (help others, live honestly, don't harm living things, and take care of the environment)
5. Right work (do something useful, avoid jobs which harm others)
6. Right effort (encourage good and helpful thoughts, discourage unwholesome and destructive thoughts)
7. Right mindfulness (be aware of what you feel, think, and do)
8. Right meditation (calm your mind, practice meditation which leads to nirvana)

The Noble Eightfold Path is commonly broken up into three sections to better understand the path, although each factor is intimately interwoven with others.

1. *Sila*—virtue, good conduct, and leading a moral life, morality or right conduct. Siīla comprises three stages along the Eightfold Path—right speech, right action, and right livelihood—and is based on the following two fundamental principles:
    a. The principle of equality by which that all living entities are equal.
    b. The principle of reciprocity: This is similar to the "Golden Rule" in Christianity to do onto others as you would wish them to do onto you. It is found in many religions.
2. *Samadhi*—to be mindful and aware of all our thoughts and actions, concentration, meditation, and mental development. Developing one's mind is essential to forging a path to wisdom, which in turn will lead to personal freedom and liberation. Mental development serves to strengthen and control our mind and thereby helps one to maintain good conduct.
3. *Prajna*—to develop wisdom and understanding, discernment, insight, wisdom, and enlightenment. This is the core of Buddhism. Wisdom will emerge if one's mind is pure and calm.

Meditation: an Essential Pathway to Enlightenment and Nirvana

For Buddhists, meditation is the means to transform the mind. Buddhist meditation practices vary, but all are techniques that encourage and develop concentration, clarity, emotional positivity, and a calm that allows one to see the true nature of things and life. For Buddhists, meditation is part of the path toward enlightenment (liberation/awakening) and eventually *nirvana*.

The closest words for meditation in the classical languages of Buddhism are *bhavana* (mental development) and *jhana/dhyana* (mental training resulting in a calm and luminous mind).

There are different Buddhist meditation forms and techniques. Some examples include the following:

- *Asubha bhavana*—reflections on repulsiveness or the foul/unattractive—it includes two practices: cemetery contemplations and *Patikkūlamanasikāra*, reflections on repulsiveness.
- *Anussati* (recollections)—reflection on recollection, contemplation, remembrance, and mindfulness: it refers to specific meditative or devotional practices, such as recollecting the sublime qualities of The Buddha or *anapanasati* (mindfulness of breathing), which lead to mental tranquility and abiding joy.
    - *Sati* (mindfulness) and *satipatthana* (establishment of mindfulness) is an important quality to be cultivated by a Buddhist meditator is mindfulness (*sati*). Mindfulness is a polyvalent term which refers to remembering, recollecting, and "bearing in mind". It also relates to remembering the teachings of The Buddha and knowing how these teachings relate to one's experiences. The Buddhist texts mention different kinds of mindfulness practice; "observations of the positions of the body" and the four *satipatthānas*, the "establishment of mindfulness," which constituted formal meditation.
    - *Anapanasati*, mindfulness of breathing is a core meditation practice in Theravada, Tiantai, and Chan traditions of Buddhism as well as a part of many mindfulness programs.
- *Dhyana/Jhana* (developing an alert and luminous mind) is central to the meditation of Early Buddhism. The oldest Buddhist meditation practices are the four *dhyanas*, which lead to the destruction of the *asavas* as well as the practice of mindfulness (*sati*). The practice of *dhyana* may have constituted the core liberating practice of early Buddhism, because in this state all "pleasure and pain" had waned.
- *Brahma-viharas* (loving-kindness and compassion). Another important meditation in the early sources are the four *Brahmavihāra* (divine abodes) which are said to lead to *cetovimutti* (liberation of the mind). The four *Brahmavihāra* are
    - Loving-kindness is active good will towards all.
    - Compassion, which results from *metta*, is the identification of the suffering of others as one's own.
    - Empathetic joy is the feeling of joy because others are happy, even if one did not contribute to it. It is a form of sympathetic joy.
    - Equanimity is even-mindedness and serenity, treating everyone impartially.

These techniques aim to develop equanimity and *sati* (mindfulness); *samadhi* (concentration), *samatha* (tranquility), and *vipassana* (insight); and are also said to

lead to *abhijna* (supramundane powers). These meditation techniques are preceded by and combined with practices which aid this development, such as moral restraint and right effort to develop wholesome states of mind.

While these techniques are used across Buddhist schools, there is also significant diversity. In the Theravada tradition, reflecting developments in early Buddhism, meditation techniques are classified as either *samatha* (calming the mind) or *vipassana* (gaining insight). Chinese and Japanese Buddhism preserved a wide range of meditation techniques, which go back to early Buddhism, most notably *sarvastivada*. In Tibetan Buddhism, deity yoga includes visualizations, which precede the realization of *sunyata* (emptiness). In Kampada meditation, the mind is pointedly focused on a virtuous object, whose function is to make the mind peaceful and calm. There are two types of meditation: analytical meditation and placement meditation.

Meditation takes many forms.

- It can be sitting quietly beside a beautiful arrangement of rocks, contemplating beauty.
- It can be practicing a martial art such as karate or aikido since they require mental and physical control, and strong concentration.
- It can mean focusing on a riddle such as "What is the sound of one hand clapping?"
- It can be contemplating a haiku or short poem that captures a moment in time.
- It can be in a meditation room of a monastery.
- It can involve chanting.
- It can involve the use of a mandala to focus attention to the invisible point at the centre of interlocking triangles.
- It can involve quietly noticing one's breath as it goes in and out.
- It can happen anywhere at any time.

Five Precepts

Even though each form of Buddhism took on its own identity, all Buddhists make a commitment to follow a set of moral guidelines for daily life involving body, speech, and mind called the Five Precepts. These are as follows:

- Body
  - to abstain from killing or taking life
  - to abstain from stealing or taking what is not given
  - to abstain from sexual misconduct or exploitation
- Speech
  - to abstain from lying or from false speech
- Mind
  - to abstain from all drugs and intoxicants which may cloud the mind

Change and Evolution

Early Schools of Buddhism

There are many different schools or sects of Buddhism. The two largest are Theravada Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism. Tibetan Buddhism is often viewed as a form of Mahayana Buddhism and is strong in Tibet, the Himalayan region, and Mongolia. All schools of Buddhism seek to aid followers on a path of enlightenment.

Many different schools of Buddhism proliferated in its early years, and subsequently continued to evolve, split, and, in some cases, die out completely. Some of these schools were ancestral forms of Buddhist schools that still exist today. It is, however, difficult in a guide such as this to accurately reflect the richness of early Buddhist thought, practice, and development.

Figure 33: The great Amida Buddha statue of Kotoku-in is one of the largest in Japan.
Amitabha Buddha is a semi-legendary Buddha who presides over the Western Pure Land according to some schools of Mahayana Buddhism. Statues of Amitabha appear very similar to statues of Buddha, with the main difference being that the hands form two circles in the lap of Amitabha.

Shortly after Buddha's death, a number of factions began to emerge, although all fell loosely within the category of what was pejoratively called Hinayana Buddhism. The term *Hinayana* was used by Mahayanists to criticize and put down earlier expressions of Buddhism. It means small, narrow vehicle, or "Lesser Vehicle" referring to the fact that followers practiced for their own, personal enlightenment, in keeping with The Buddha's example of pursuing enlightenment and freedom from the stream of births and deaths.

Hinayana further splintered into other factions within just one hundred years. From the first century BCE a major division began to arise between a more traditional, conservative, and analytical approach to Buddhism that stressed the study of sutras, drawing on the Pali Canon, and a second more open approach that placed more emphasis on the role of the individual's experience of *nirvana* as a means to support enlightenment for other beings, and drawing on other *sutras*.

Hinayana Buddhism developed into Theravada Buddhism, the "Way of the Elders," and became the major religious tradition in South and Southeast Asia. The "Elders" refers to the teachers who received the teachings directly from The Buddha,

transmitting them to later disciples. In the period prior to the famous Buddhist King Asoka (third century BCE) there were as many as eighteen to twenty groups located in various regions of India, from which the Theravada stream is a major survivor.

Today, Theravada Buddhism is mostly associated with the areas of southern Asia (Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Laos, Burma/Myanmar, and Thailand). In the countries where Theravada Buddhism is dominant, the style and meaning of Buddhism has changed little over the centuries. Although there are differences resulting from history and culture in each region, the practice and doctrine remain the same.

Figure 34: Theravada Buddhist Monks in Thailand

Mahayana, which means a large, greater, spacious vehicle, or "Greater Vehicle", seeks to bring all beings to enlightenment. It may be seen as having a more inclusive perspective whereby the Bodhisattva, Buddha-to-be, works to save all beings deferring their own enlightenment. The contrast is between the Arhat, the worthy one who has done all to save one's self, and the *Bodhisattva*, one destined for *Buddhahood* who pledges to saves all others, including them.

Another important group was the Mahasanghikas or Great Sangha (Congregation). This group's beliefs are considered the basis for the later development of the *Mahayana* (Great Vehicle) Buddhist tradition that emerged around 100 CE. It is now largely found in North and East Asia, as well as Tibet. With Mahayana Buddhism, differences in style and teachings brought about great diversity. As Buddhism adapted to various cultures and changing environments from about the second century BCE onwards, new insights and interpretations emerged, influenced by a resurgent Hinduism and Indian philosophy.

Figure 35: Young Tibetan Buddhist monks bearing presents for the Lamdre Lama, HH Jigdal Dagchen Sakya

These two traditions have significant differences not only in terms of the cultural areas to which they belong but also in their fundamental beliefs and practices.

Third Category of Buddhism: Tantric or Vajrayana Buddhism

There are different categories and classification systems used to differentiate between different Buddhist traditions and sects. In some classification systems, a third form or line of Buddhist tradition is identified that further divides the Mahayana Tradition into a third distinct tradition, the Vajrayana Tibetan tradition. In other classification systems, Vajrayana is a subset of the Mahayana tradition.

Thus Mahayana Buddhism may be seen as umbrella category for a great variety of schools. On one side there are the Tantra schools (the secret teaching of Yoga) which is well represented in countries such as Tibet and Nepal. On the other side of the continuum are the Pure Land sect whose core teaching is that salvation can be attained only through absolute trust in the saving power of *Amitabha*, and the longing to be reborn in his paradise through his grace, as found in China, Korea, and Japan.

Mahayana Buddhist tradition includes a major offshoot, Mantrayana Buddhism. This branch gives primacy to ritual and the transformation of consciousness through *mantra*, or sacred sound formulas. From an intellectual and spiritual point of view, Mantrayana Buddhism is represented by an epistemologically oriented approach to the human situation, codified in the *Sutras*, and an experiential approach, codified in the *Tantras*. The Indian word *tantra* literally means "loom." In its expanded sense, the term may also refer to "living one's possibilities." Mantrayana Buddhists pay special attention to ritual practices and intellectual discipline, and the emphasis on symbolic gesture, practice, and movement is crucial to proper performance of the rituals.

Another major development in the Mahayana tradition was the emergence of Zen Buddhism in China (where it is called Chan), Japan, and Korea, as well as Pure Land Buddhism and Nichiren Buddhism—amongst many other schools.

Mahayana Buddhism has two kinds of practice, the Way of the Perfections and the Vajrayana. Tibetan Buddhism follows the latter method of practice. Vajrayana Buddhism (Diamond Vehicle), is also known as Tantric Buddhism, or Esoteric Buddhism. Within this line of Buddhism, there is a belief that one can accomplish enlightenment much more quickly than by expending effort stretched over the course of many lifetimes, even though one may even become enlightened in a single lifetime.

In the Vajrayana (Tibetan) tradition, monks wear the characteristic maroon robe and, in the Far Eastern Zen tradition, monks wear black or grey robes.

One of the unique features of Tibetan Buddhism is the institution of the *tulku*. A *tulku* is a Tibetan Buddhist Lama (spiritual teacher) who has taken the *Bodhisattva* vow of helping all other sentient beings to escape *samsara* (the cycle of suffering) and has consciously chosen to be reborn to continue his particular lineage. Many *tulkus* were involved in running the Tibetan government and as abbots of monasteries. They are usually distinguished by the title *Rinpoche*, which means "precious teacher."

There is no real conflict between these overarching schools or approaches to Buddhism. Because of its monastic history, Buddhism has developed sophisticated and subtle philosophical accounts of cosmology, metaphysics, logic, psychology, and ethics. Both Theravadin and Mahayana forms of Buddhism contain numerous schools that continued to explore different and appropriate ways to understand the Dharma.

Buddhism in China

Early on it was said that Buddha taught 84,000 teachings, reflecting the emerging wide diversity. The numerous teachings were gradually transmitted and translated into Chinese in various *sutras*, purported to be the words of Buddha. Presently the complete, modern collection of texts comprises eighty-five volumes with 5320 writings of various types, *sutras*, commentaries, and indexes from China and Japan. It is a massive body of literature.

Chinese Buddhists attempted to unify the Buddhist teachings found in the *sutras* which, as far as they knew at the time, were the true words of The Buddha and compiled by his disciples. Therefore, they all must have a place and meaning within the totality of his teaching. Their understanding was also supported by the Mahayana educational concept of *upaya* or tactful device.

Spread of Buddhism to the West

Buddhism, is not just an Asian phenomena. All of the contemporary schools and sects of Buddhism have been transplanted to the West through the following three main channels:

- Western scholars traveled, studied, wrote, and taught about Buddhism.
- Philosophers, writers, and artists provided insights into Buddhism through their works.
- Asian immigrants brought various forms of Buddhism to Europe, North America, and the world.

In the late nineteenth and throughout the twentieth century, adherents began practicing the religion more consistently in the West. There was an increasing traffic of ideas and teachers, first of leading Buddhists from Asia and later of westerners ordained in the East returning to Europe and the Americas.

More recently, Buddhist people have moved to the West. Many of them have been refugees from conflict. Many Tibetans, for example, fled from their country after the Chinese takeover in 1959. The wars in Indochina in the 1950s and 1960s led many Vietnamese people to move to and settle in Europe, Australia, and America. Other Buddhists from countries such as Thailand have established businesses in the larger Western cities. They have all brought their Buddhist beliefs to their new homes, and helped to set up Buddhist centres.

Introduction of Buddhism to Europe

Beginning in the 18th century, a number of Buddhist texts were brought to Europe by returning colonialists and visitors who had visited European colonies in the East. These texts spurred the interest of some European scholars who then began to study them.

Around the 1850s, several Buddhist texts were translated into a number of European languages making them accessible and consequently attracting more European scholars. Some were influenced by Buddhism and began to introduce Buddhist ideas and concepts into their own writings. Eventually, more and better translations of Buddhists texts became available in the early part of the 20th century. By then, a large number of Buddhist texts had been translated into English, French, and German. This included almost the entire collection of Theravada scriptures as well as a number of important Mahayana texts.

Growth of Buddhism in Europe

Before the beginning of the 20th century, the study of Buddhism was confined mainly to scholars rather than practitioners. However, this began to change when a number of Europeans were dissatisfied with only reading about Buddhism, and so they began to travel to the East to acquire knowledge of the Buddhist practices directly and to experience Buddhist monastic life.

Important developments include the establishment of the Buddhist Society of Great Britain and Ireland in 1907, and later the Buddhist Society in London (1924), which remains one of the oldest Buddhist organisations in Europe. Although secular in nature, many of the currently practising groups in the United Kingdom owe their origins to the pioneering work that the Society carried out in translating and disseminating Buddhist ideas to those who would later seek more direct teaching from masters and practitioners elsewhere.

By the early part of the twentieth century, a number of the Europeans, who had travelled to the East to study Buddhism, had returned. Some of them had converted and become monks. These converts and monks promoted and strengthened the Buddhist circles in Europe. They were soon joined by Buddhist monks from Sri Lanka and other Buddhist countries in Asia. Today, there has been a significant growth in interest in Buddhism in Europe.

The membership of existing Buddhist societies has increased and many new Buddhist centres have been established. At present, the major Buddhist traditions of Asia, such as Theravada, Pure Land, Ch'an (or Zen), Vajrayana, and Nichiren Shoshu, have a significant number of followers in Europe.

Introduction of Buddhism to North America

As in Europe, scholars in North America became acquainted with a number of Buddhist ideas in the nineteenth century. Some of the oldest universities in America had departments of oriental studies where scholars studied Buddhist texts.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, Chinese immigrants settled in Hawaii and California. These immigrants brought a number of Mahayana Buddhist practices with them and built numerous temples. The Japanese Buddhist immigrants who arrived later not only built temples but also invited over to America, the Japanese monks who belonged to the various Mahayana Buddhist sects. Nonetheless, Buddhist activities remained largely confined to these immigrant communities.

At the end of the nineteenth century, two outstanding Buddhist spokesmen, Dharmapala from Sri Lanka and Soyen Shaku, a Zen master from Japan, attended the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago. Their inspiring speeches on Buddhism impressed their audience and helped to establish a foothold for the Theravada and Zen Buddhist traditions in America. During this period, the Theosophical Society, which teaches the unity of all religions, also helped to spread some elements of Buddhist teachings in America

Growth of Buddhism in North America

It was not until the second half of the twentieth century that Buddhist ideas reached a wider section of the American society. American servicemen returning from East Asia after the Second World War and the Korean War, brought with them an interest in Asian culture which included Nichiren Shoshu and Zen Buddhism. The latter gained considerable popularity in the nineteen-sixties among literary and artistic groups in America and this helped to popularize Buddhism.

When Tibetan refugees began arriving in America after 1959, they brought with them Vajrayana Buddhism. It soon gained a substantial following. During the postwar period, academic interest grew. Many new departments of Buddhist studies were established in American and other Western universities.

Theravada Buddhism's presence in North America began in the early 1960s. The Most Ven. Madihe Pannaseeha Maha Nayaka Thera visited America on March 27th, 1964, on an invitation from the Asia Foundation, to propagate Theravada Buddhism. He made arrangements to establish a Vihara in

Washington in 1964. The Washington D.C. Buddhist Vihara was the first Theravada Buddhist monastic community in the United States.

Other places he visited included England, the West Indies, Scotland, Denmark, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, Vietnam, Hong Kong, and Singapore. On his return to the United States of America, he established the Buddhist Information Centre at Greenpath, Colombo. This was the first of its kind to provide information in Theravada Buddhism. The World Buddhist Directory is published by this information centre.

Until the late 19th century, the teachings of Theravada were little known outside of Southern and Southeast Asia, where they had flourished for some two and a half millennia. In the last century, however, the West has begun to take notice of Theravada's unique spiritual legacy and teachings of Awakening. In recent decades, this interest has swelled, with the monastic Sangha from the various schools within Theravada establishing dozens of monasteries across Europe and North America. In addition, a growing number of lay meditation centres in the West, operating independently of the Sangha, currently strain to meet the demands of lay men and women—Buddhist and otherwise—seeking to learn selected aspects of the Buddha's teachings.

The turn of the 21st century presents both opportunities and dangers for Theravada in the West: Will the Buddha's classical teachings be patiently studied and put into practice, so that they may be allowed to establish deep roots in Western soil for the benefit of many generations to come? Will the current popular climate of "openness" and cross-fertilization between the many different schools of Buddhism lead to the emergence of a strong new form of Buddhism unique to the West, or will it simply lead to the dilution and confusion of all these priceless teachings? These are open questions; only time will tell.

Western Buddhist Centres

Meditation is a central focus of practice in most modern Western Buddhist groups. There are a few exceptions where the focus is on chanting such as *Soka Gakkai*. Contemporary western Buddhism has been significantly influenced by the spread of lay practice centres, where lay persons meet for meditation practice and also may stay for meditation retreats.

The activities at Western Buddhist centres allow people to find ways of understanding Buddhism. Today, there exist numerous Buddhist centres throughout the western world. Virtually all the major Buddhist traditions are represented and continue to attract the interest of Westerners from all walks of life.

Rituals in contemporary western traditions are less likely to be seen as providing supernatural benefits. The Vipassanā or insight meditation movement is one such example. Vipassanā centres are led by lay teachers, feature a democratic form of organization, and primarily promote meditation and only minimal doctrinal content and rituals.

Another feature of Buddhism today in the West (especially among converts to Buddhism) is the emergence of newer groups which, while drawing on traditional Buddhism, endeavour to create new styles of Buddhist practice. An example is Shambhala, founded by Lama Chögyam Trungpa, who taught that his intention was to eliminate the cultural aspects of traditional methods of Buddhist meditative practice to reach the essence of those teachings for his Western students. The Shambhala Training system, which he developed, is intended to be a secular path for the cultivation of the contemplative life. Chögyam Trungpa also founded Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado, in 1974. Trungpa's movement has been particularly successful in Canada. Halifax, Nova Scotia is the headquarters of Shambhala International.

Lastly, the New Kadampa Tradition—International Kadampa Buddhist Union (NKT—IKBU)—is a global Buddhist movement founded by Kelsang Gyatso in England in 1991. It currently has over 1300 centres (including one in Winnipeg), in over forty countries. The NKT-IKBU describes itself as "an entirely independent Buddhist tradition" but one that is inspired and guided by the ancient Tibetan Kadampa Buddhist Masters and their teachings, as interpreted by Kelsang Gyatso. The objective is to make Buddhist meditation and teaching more easily accessible for 21st-century living.

Other groups that have taken modernist approaches and are represented in Canada, but not in Winnipeg or Manitoba, include

- Triratna Buddhist Order and Community (formerly the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order) founded by Sangharakshita in 1967
- Diamond Way Organization founded by Lama Ole Nydahl in 1972

Diversity of Buddhism

Differences Between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism

Figure 36: Genpo Merzel Roshi, Aen, Hakuyu Taizan Maezumi Roshi Zen Buddhists

One of the most significant differences between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism is that Theravada Buddhism focuses on or looks to the earliest Buddhist scriptures only, the Pali canon. New compositions or later additions to the early *sutras* are not allowed or generally recognized.

In contrast, Mahayana Buddhism uses additional new texts, revelations, and teachings and does not rely exclusively on the oldest *sutras* or scriptures. For example, the teachings of The Buddha's own disciples by later writers were developed into new *sutras* and were and are viewed within the Mahayana tradition as equal value as they are seen as having been delivered through the living memory or mind of The Buddha. In addition, as Mahayana Buddhism spread north through Northern Asia (Tibet, China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and Mongolia) it incorporated more of the local cultures and customs.

Theravada Buddhism differs from Mahayana Buddhism in more than its exclusive focus on original sutras. There are other significant differences in belief and practice.

- Scriptures are in Pali (Pali Canon) and Pali is used in worship.
- The main *Bodhisattva* is Maitreya.
- *Bodhisattvas* seek enlightenment first before they can help others stuck in *samsara*.
- Greater emphasis is placed on *arhat*—liberation or *nirvana*. Individual effort is seen as more important than the support of the divine.
- Wisdom is a more important virtue than compassion; the individual

Figure 37: Zen Buddhist Monk.

Venerable Hsuan Hua meditating in the lotus position, Hong Kong, 1953.

should gain insights from his own experience, application of knowledge, and critical reasoning, which is weighed against scripture and teachings of wise monks.

- A strong emphasis is placed on monastic practice; monks and nuns have a strong relationship with lay people.
- The Buddha is considered to be human and a supreme teacher rather than a saviour.
- Metaphysics and ritual are not emphasized.
- A meditative approach to the transformation of consciousness is emphasized; meditation is mostly silent-mind and mindfulness meditation, which are of two types, *Samatha*: calming meditation and *Vipassanā*: insight meditation.

Figure 38: Zen Buddhism
Zen is a school of Mahayana Buddhism that emerged when Buddhism spread to China and is about 15 centuries old. "Zen Buddhism" may be translated as Meditation Buddhism.
Zen Buddhism has several different names depending on cultural and geographic differences. In China it is called Ch'an Buddhism. Zen is the Japanese version of Ch'an. In Vietnam, Zen is called Thien and in Korea it is Seon.

- Examples of contemporary expression include
  - Thai Forest Tradition
  - Vipassanā

Characteristics of Mahayana Buddhism include

- Scriptures (*sutras*) are in Sanskrit.
- The Bodhisattva Maitreya and non-historical figures are revered.
- *Bodhisattvas* may delay their realization to stay in *samsara* and help other struggling humans.
- *Bodhisattvas* have greater prominence in the development of one's consciousness.
- It advocates the notion that individuals should not just seek personal enlightenment but the enlightenment of all beings.
- A broader range of approaches to enlightenment are accepted and a wide range of approaches exist that go beyond meditation and personal disciplines but also include selfless service and working for the benefit of others.

- There is greater emphasis on mantras and chanting, especially in Tibetan Buddhism.
- Monastic tradition exists but lay practice is also valued.
- Examples of contemporary expression of Mahayana Buddhism include
  - Pure Land
  - Zen

In Theravada (Southern) Buddhist countries, the monks (*bhikkhus*) are easily recognized because they wear the characteristic orange robe, have their heads shaven, and go about barefoot. They are given a new name and the robe, and will live according to a code of 227 rules (the *Vinaya*). A monk may decide to disrobe (cease being a monk) at any time.

Bhikkhus live a strict, simple life of meditation, study, and work, with very short hours of sleep and only one main meal a day. They do not own money or any possessions. They help with the important task of teaching and assisting lay people, and conducting ceremonies.

The chart that appears below summarizes some of the most important differences between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism.

Differences Between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism

	Topic	Theravada Buddhism	Mahayana Buddhism
1	The Buddha	Only the historical Gautama (Sakyamuni) Buddha and past Buddhas are accepted.	Besides Sakyamuni Buddha, other contemporary Buddhas like Amitabha and Medicine Buddha are also very popular.
2	Bodhisattvas	Only Maitreya bodhisattva is accepted.	Avalokitesvara, Mansjuri, Ksitigarbha, and Samanthabadra are four very well-known *bodhisattvas* besides Maitreya.
3	Objective of training	Arahant or pacceka-Buddha	*Buddhahood* (via *bodhisattva* path)
4	Organization of Buddhist scriptures	The Pali Canon is divided into three baskets (Tipitaka): *Vinaya Pitaka* of five books, *Sutta Pitaka* of five collections (many *suttas*), and *Abhidhamma Pitaka* of seven books.	The Mahayana Buddhist Canon also consists of *Tripitaka* of disciplines, discourses (*sutras*) and *dharma* analysis. It is usually organized in 12 divisions of topics like cause and conditions and verses. It contains virtually all the *Theravada Tipikata* and many *sutras* that the latter does not have.
5	Concept of *Bodhicitta*	Main emphasis is self liberation. There is total reliance on one-self to eradicate all defilements.	Besides self liberation, it is important for Mahayana followers to help other sentient beings.

Differences Between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism

6	*Trikaya* concept	Very limited emphasis on the three bodies of a Buddha. References are mainly on *nirmana-kaya* and *dharma-kaya*.	Very well-mentioned in Mahayana Buddhism. *Samboga-kaya* or reward/enjoyment body completes the *Trikaya* concept.
7	Transmission route	Southern transmission: Sri Lanka, Thailand, Burma, Laos and Cambodia, and parts of Southeast Asia	Northern transmission: Tibet, China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, and parts of Southeast Asia.
8	Language of *dharma* teaching	*Tipitaka* is strictly in Pali. *Dharma* teaching in Pali is supplemented by local language.	Buddhist canon is translated into the local language (except for the five untranslatables), e.g. Tibetan, Chinese, and Japanese. Original language of transmission is Sanskrit.
9	*Nirvana* (*Nibanna* in Pali)	No distinction is made between *nirvana* attained by a Buddha and that of an *arahat* or *pacceka* Buddha.	Also known as 'liberation from *samsara*,' there are subtle distinctions in the level of attainment for the three situations.
10	Sakyamuni Buddha's disciples	Basically historical disciples, whether *arahats* or commoners.	A lot of *bodhisattvas* are introduced by Sakyamuni Buddha. Most of these are not historical figures.
11	Rituals and liturgy	There are some rituals but not heavily emphasized as in Mahayana schools.	Owing to local cultural influences, there is much more emphasis on the use of rituals; e.g. Rituals for the deceased, feeding of *Petas*, tantric formalities (in Vajrayana).
12	Use of *mantras* and *mudras*	Some equivalent in the use of *Parittas*.	It is heavily practised in the Vajrayana school of Mahayana Buddhism. Other schools also have included some mantras in their daily liturgy.
13	Dying and death aspects	Very little research and knowledge on the process of dying and death. Usually, the dying persons are advised to meditate on impermanence, suffering, and emptiness.	The Vajrayana school is particularly meticulous in these areas. There are many inner and external signs manifested by people before they die. There is heavy stress in doing transference of merit practices in the immediate few weeks following death to assist in the deceased's next rebirth.
14	Bardo	This in-between stage after death and before rebirth is ignored in Theravada school.	All Mahayana schools teach this after death aspect.
15	One meal a day practice	This the norm among Theravada sanghas.	This is a highly respected practice but it is left to the disposition of each individual in the various sanghas.

Differences Between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism

16	Vegetarianism	This aspect is not necessary. In places like Thailand where daily morning rounds are still practised, it is very difficult to insist on the type of food to be donated	Very well observed in all Mahayana schools (except the Tibetans due to the geographical circumstances); however, this aspect is not compulsory.
17	Focus of worship in the temple	There is a simple layout with the image of Sakyamuni Buddha as the focus of worship.	It can be quite elaborate; with a chamber/hall for Sakyamuni Buddha and two disciples, one hall for the three Buddhas (including Amitabha and Medicine Buddha) and one hall for the three key *bodhisattvas*; besides the protectors, etc.
18	Schools/ sects of the tradition	Following years of attrition, there is one surviving major school reducing the number from as high as 18.	There are eight major (Chinese) schools based on the partial doctrines (*sutras*, *sastras*, or *vinaya*) of the teachings. The four schools inclined towards the practices such as Pure Land/Amitabha, Ch'an, Vajrayana, and Vinaya (not for lay people) are more popular than the philosophy-based schools like Tien Tai, Avamtasaka, Yogacara, and Madhyamika.
19	Non Buddhist influences	Mainly pre-Buddhism Indian/Brahmin influences. Many terms like *karma*, *sangha*, etc. were prevailing terms during Sakyamuni Buddha's lifetime. References were made from the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*.	In the course of integration and adoption by the people in other civilizations, there were heavy mutual influences. In China, both Confucianism and Taoism exerted some influence on Buddhism which in turn had an impact on the indigenous beliefs. This scenario was repeated in Japan and Tibet.
20	Buddha nature	Absent from the teachings of Theravada tradition.	Heavily stressed, particularly by schools inclined practices.

Source: Differences Between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, Snapshots of Buddhism: Summaries of Teachings and Topics (www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/snapshot02.htm) by Buddhanet, compiled by Tan Swee Eng, Used with permission.

Schools and Branches of Buddhism

The chart that follows provides an overview of the three main branches of Buddhism and the sects or schools associated with each.

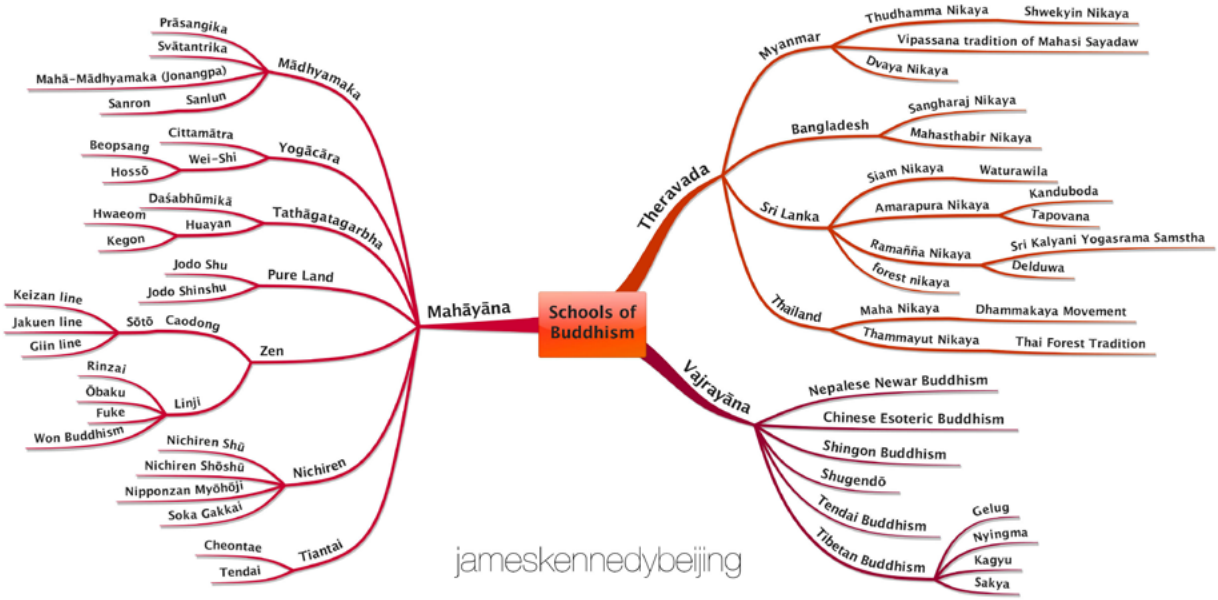


Figure 39: Evolutionary chart showing how Buddhism branched out from three original branches

Significant Persons/Founders

Beyond Gautama (the given name of the historical Buddha), there are a number of important historical and contemporary figures.

Historical Figures

- **Maya Devi** is the mother of Siddhartha Gautama. She is believed to have died seven days after giving birth to him. She was reborn to a heavenly realm that The Buddha went to after enlightenment to teach her higher psychological-scientific teachings (*Abhidhamma*).
- **Tara** (aka. Arya Tara, White Tara, or Jetsun Dolma in Tibetan Buddhism) is an important Buddhist figure. She is a female *bodhisattva* in Mahayana Buddhism, and a female Buddha in Vajrayana Buddhism. She is the mother of liberation, and represents the virtues of success in work and achievements.
- **Sariputta (Sariputra)** was the first chief male disciple of the Buddha. He was known for his caring, humility, patience, and especially his wisdom. He

learned the higher teachings from The Buddha and was foremost in explaining it.

- **Maha Pajapati Gotami** was the aunt and step-mother of the Buddha. She became the first nun in Buddhism and became fully enlightened (*arahant*).
- **Khema** was one of the wives of King Bimbisara and was very beautiful. One day, The Buddha explained impermanence to her in such a way to show her that the beauty would not last. Khema practiced and became enlightened and then decided to become a nun. She penetrated to the truth very quickly and was the chief nun during the time of Buddha.
- **Ananda** was The Buddha's cousin and one of his primary disciples. He memorized and recited the Buddha's teachings, and so was known as the *Dhammabhandagarika* (treasurer of the teachings).

Figure 40: A happy Buddha and little ones. Budai; Hotei or Pu-Ta; Images and statues of Budai are often mistaken for Gautama Buddha himself; and thus often nicknamed the "Fat Buddha".; The Budai is a semi-historical Chinese monk who is venerated as deity in Chinese and Japanese Buddhist traditions. He is supposed to have lived around the 10th century in the Wuyue kingdom. Hotei is one of Japan's Seven Lucky Gods. Commonly depicted bald; smiling; with a big belly; bulging ears; and a large sack and fan in his hands. His nickname in Chinese is the "Laughing Buddha".

- **Aśoka,** the Mauryan Emperor Aśoka (273–232 BCE), was perhaps the most significant historical figure in the spread of Buddhism from India throughout Asia. He converted to Buddhism after his bloody conquest of the territory of Kalinga (modern Orissa) in eastern India during the Kalinga War. Encountering Buddhist monks and regretting the horrors and misery brought about by the war, Aśoka renounced violence to replace the misery caused by war with respect and dignity for all humanity. He promoted the faith by building stupas and pillars urging, among other things, respect of all animal life and encouraging people to follow the *Dharma*. Aśoka was also responsible for the development of his empire and built roads, hospitals, rest houses, universities, and irrigation systems around the country. He treated his subjects as equals regardless of their religion, politics, or caste. (Pew Research Center)
- **Sanghamitta** was the daughter of King Ashoka. She was a nun who spread the Order to Sri Lanka and brought with her a sapling from the original

Bodhi tree at Bodh Gaya. This marked one of the key moments in the spread of Buddhism outside of India.

- **Shinran** (1173–1263) is known as the founder of the True Pure Land School of Japanese Buddhism. He was a disciple of Honen (Jodo School), he believed in the doctrine of salvation by faith in Amitabha Buddha and that the recitation of Amitabha's name could be sufficient to achieve the Pure Land if done with a pure heart. He was an advocate for the marriage of priests and popularized congregational worship. His teachings had significant impact in Japan and to a certain extent Korea.
- **Dogen** (1200–1253) is the Japanese Founder of Soto Zen, the largest Zen school of Buddhism in Japan. Dogen studied in China with the Ts'ao Tung (Ch'an) school for four years before returning in 1227 to Japan. He is recognized as the sole founder of the Japanese school of Soto Zen. Dogen avoided dealing with the Royal Court and retired to the mountains where he established Eiheiji temple, near Fukui.
- **Rev. Senju Sasaki** was the first resident minister of the mother temple of the Jodo Shinshu temple established in Vancouver in 1905. He was sent by the Nishi Hongwanji Temple of Kyoto, Japan, the mother temple of the Jodo Shinshu (True Pure Land) sect of Buddhism.

The diversity of Buddhism and the various approaches and schools means that there are many significant contemporary figures within Buddhism. A few of the more notable international and Canadian Buddhist leaders and masters follow.

- **Mahasi Sayadaw** (Ven. U Sobhana) is best known for reviving Theravada Vipassanā meditation. In 1949, on the invitation of the Prime Minister, U Nu, of Burma, Mahasi Sayadaw taught at the Sasana Yeiktha (Meditation Centre) in Rangoon. Shortly thereafter, similar meditation centres were established in many parts of the country with Mahasi-trained members of the Sangha as meditation teachers. Such centres were opened not only in Burma but also in neighbouring Theravada countries like Thailand and Sri Lanka.
- **Rahula, Ven. Walpola** is a Sri Lankan scholar monk who criticized some popular Buddhist practices and took a special interest in social and economic matters. He supported the struggle for political freedom, worked with Miss I.B. Horner of the Pali Text Society, and lectured widely in the USA and Japan.
- **Suzuki, D.T.** is a Japanese Buddhist scholar and one of the most well-known modern interpreters of Zen in the West. He was a lay student of Master Shaku Soen (Soyen) of the Engaju Temple in Kamakura (Japan) and underwent Zen training there. He focused primarily on the intellectual interpretation of Zen teachings. His work had significant impact on the dissemination of Zen Buddhism in the West.
- **Thich Nhat Hanh** was born Nguyen Xuan Bao in 1926 in Vietnam but was exiled in 1975. He resided in Plum Village in Southwest France. Thich Nhat Hanh was a spiritual leader, poet, author, and peace activist. He played a major role in bringing Buddhism to the West and founded six monasteries,

dozens of practice centres, and over 1,000 sanghas—local mindfulness practice communities. Thich Nhat Hanh lobbied against the Vietnam War and led the Buddhist delegation at the Paris Peace Talks in 1969.

- **Dalai Lama** is currently Tenzin Gyatso. He is likely one of most well-known Buddhists alive. At age two he was identified as being the reincarnation of the 13th Dalai Lama, Thubten Gyatso. He was renamed Tenzin Gyatso and proclaimed the 14th Dalai Lama in 1937. Dalai Lamas are believed to be the reincarnation of Avalokitesvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion and the patron saint of Tibet. The Dali Lama was educated in the Nalanda Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

  The Dalai Lama was the political leader of the Tibetan Government that was exiled to India in 1954 following the 1950 invasion of Tibet by China. Until 2011, the Dalai Lama, following a centuries-old Tibetan tradition, was both the spiritual and political leader of Tibet. Since then, the Dalai Lama remains the spiritual leader but the political leader is now a democratically elected person.

Figure 41: Dali Lama at the University of Maryland May 7, 2013

  In 1989, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his non-violent struggle for the liberation of Tibet. He has consistently advocated policies of non-violence, even in the face of extreme aggression. He also became the first Nobel Laureate to be recognized for his concern for global environmental problems.

- **Matthieu Ricard** is a Buddhist monk of Quebecois origins who went from a scientific career as a molecular biologist in France to the study of Buddhism in the Himalayas over 40 years ago. He has been the French interpreter for the Dalai Lama since 1989. Ricard is an international bestselling author and photographer

Religious / Community Leaders

- The main task of the Buddhist monastic community is to be exemplars of the *Vinaya*, preserving and practicing the teachings of The Buddha and offering these teachings to the lay community.
- Fully ordained monks, nuns, and significant lay spiritual leaders are highly regarded by their communities and are called upon to teach the *Dharma* as well as to conduct funeral rites and memorial ceremonies, and to offer spiritual support to the sick and bereaved.

Monastic Life and Social Structures

In the beginning, Buddhism was not hierarchical or rigidly structured. At its root was a self-governing body of individuals, each of whom was theoretically equal and focused on his or her own salvation while compassionately mindful of human beings. The *sangha* has its origins in a group of followers/disciples who renounced their previous worldly life to wander with The Buddha and learn by listening to his teachings. After the Buddha's death, his disciples continued to live together, wandering from place to place, and living off the alms and food offered by the local community. Periodically, when there was a full and new moon (the *uposatha* days), the disciples gathered to reaffirm their sense of community and goals by reciting their foundational beliefs, such as the Threefold Refuge and the codes of conduct. The custom of spending the rainy season in one specific place in a study retreat (*vassa*) gradually led to the settling of the community.

As soon as Buddhist monks began to form into groups, there was a need for rules to be developed (as set out in the *Vinaya Pitaka*) and also for some form of hierarchy to keep order, to enforce the rules, and to maintain religious continuity within the community. This hierarchy was, and continues to be, largely based on seniority.

There is thus no single superior authority or leader in the Buddhist world. Each school has a leader or group of leaders who provide guidance to that specific community as a whole. The degree and nature of internal hierarchy varies significantly between schools and from country to country.

The community (*sangha*) is considered one of the "three jewels" of Buddhism. (The other two are Buddha's teachings [*dharma*] and Buddha himself.) Originally the sangha was a term describing the Buddhist monastic community, which traditionally was composed of monks, nuns, lay men, and lay women. Today, the term *sangha* now refers to the Buddhist community as a whole.

While there are significant differences between schools and countries—especially with respect to more recent sects and western Buddhist organizations—in more traditional or conservative schools of Buddhism,

and especially in Asia, there is generally a very distinct hierarchy in the Buddhist communities throughout world. At the top of this social hierarchy are Buddhist monks and ordained leaders and teachers. Usually, monks are the most respected, valued, and often venerated in the community. Monks tend to live together in Buddhist monasteries where they teach the students. At times they will travel to establish new communities and teach beyond the boundaries of their monasteries and countries. They are dedicated to teaching, meditation, and chanting prayers in the monastery and beyond at times.

The next strata in the traditional Buddhist social hierarchy, with a few exceptions, are the nuns who usually play secondary roles or are assistants to the monks. Traditionally, in most Buddhist sects, they tended to handle the less responsible jobs in the monastery or in their own nunneries; however, they too were dedicated to living a life of meditation and prayers. It is important to note that, as discussed in the previous section on women in Buddhism and the section later on in this resource on the ordination of monks and nuns, the role of women, especially in Western and modern Buddhist communities, is changing significantly. In some sects, there is little or no distinction between males and females in their roles as leaders and teachers within their organizations, congregations, and centres. As well, in Vajrayana and Theravada Buddhist sects where full ordination of nuns had disappeared, there is a trend towards revival of *bhikshunis* or fully ordained nuns.

The third layer in the hierarchy of traditional Buddhist sects and communities is the lay community. As lay, Buddhists hold jobs and seek ways of making a living in a variety of professions or vocations like any other community. While they learn about Buddhist principles and practices, they spend significantly less time in meditation and prayers. Also, while *nirvana* is possible for any person, in most, but not all, Buddhist sects, only monks are seen as being able to attempt to achieve *nirvana*. (Pure Land Buddhists schools are an example of a sect for which monasticism is not required to achieve *nirvana*.) Lay Buddhists are to strive instead for a higher existence in their next life. They still follow the Noble Eightfold Path and help others, in their efforts to accumulate good *karma*. In this sense, lay Buddhists are seen as working toward nirvana because they are on a path toward a future life in which they may be able to achieve *nirvana*.

Traditionally, Buddhist pilgrims are at the bottom of the social hierarchy. They are Buddhist believers from diverse places who travel to various places in search of knowledge. Their destinations include significant religious places such a Buddha's birthplace or the sites of famous stupas. The pilgrims who are travelling usually go to Buddhist monasteries where they may stay and learn about the Buddhist principles and the religion in greater depth.

There has always been a form of interdependence between monks and nuns, and the lay members of the community. The monastics depend on the lay community for material support, while the laity depends on monastics for religious instruction and guidance. In these roles, they are mutually interdependent and supportive and keep each other in check. The laity provide

the conditions that allow monks and nuns to stay pure because unless the monastics are regulated and pure, the laity's gifts will not provide good *karma*. In turn, monastics serve as mentors, teachers, and models for the lay community of what a religious life is and what is good and beneficial for the achievement of liberation from *samsara*.

As Buddhism developed and grew from groups of wandering ascetics to stable organizations and established physical structures, it was always integrally connected and shaped by the cultures and communities within which these organizations and structures were built. One of the earliest documented Buddhist activities that included lay participants were those that occurred at *stupas*. *Stupas* became sites for pilgrims to visit, and for celebratory events and festivals involving locals and visitors in multifaceted events that served to entertain, inform, and generate merit. Gradually, more and more monasteries were built, near the location of *stupa* but also in many other locations in South Asia. As Buddhism became established throughout Asia, the monastery became the fundamental institutional structure.

A Buddhist monastery provided many things to the local lay community. It provided the lay community with spiritual guidance, a place to worship, religious rituals, and a means of earning merit. Lay community members could also be active forming social clubs that planned and arranged pilgrimages, met to chant or copy *sutras*, or carried out projects for the benefit of the collective.

Buddhist monasteries also became a place to seek help and good fortune. People visited monasteries to ask for healing for family members, for help finding a marriage partner or a job, to ensure the birth of a healthy child or grandchild, or to ask for success in meeting life challenges or a range of other things that would benefit one's life.

Monasteries also served other social needs. They helped determine good dates for weddings, foretold fortunes, and, in some cases, provided political clout or mediation between locals and the government. In addition to sponsoring festivals, they also sometimes held large feasts to which all the locals were invited to participate, paying a donation only if they were able.

Monasteries became multifaceted providers of services and social and community centres. They sometimes served as hostels and inns, offering beds and meals for travelers and pilgrims. Others provided essential social services such as schools, orphanages, health care facilities, food and shelter for the homeless, facilities for the elderly, and even animal rescue. Some helped plan and undertake public works projects that improved the local community and infrastructure. These ranged from building roads and bridges, digging wells or creating reservoirs to provide communities with fresh water, deepening river channels, and planting trees in the community and along travel routes.

As Buddhism spread to other places and countries, it encountered other cultures and peoples affecting those cultures and in turn was affected and shaped by them. In general, there was limited conflict between Buddhism

and the local or indigenous religions or spiritual beliefs it encountered. This could be in part because of how Buddhism was transmitted or spread to new cultures and places by travellers and word of mouth instead of by military force or domination. Also, Buddhism was, and is generally, open to and accepting of other religions and spiritual traditions. This adaptation and merging of cultures and religious and spiritual practices by Buddhism was so successful that in China, for example, that Daoist and Confucian groups copied Buddhist institutional structures.

As Buddhism grew and spread, in some countries and in certain eras, Buddhism became the official state religion. In such situations, Buddhist leaders and monasteries conducted rituals on behalf of the state, such as seeking the powers of protective deities, and offering prayers to overcome invaders and hostile states during times of war. In China, monasteries were at times retreats for scholars and government officials. Also in China, at points when Buddhist monasteries were well supported and often quite wealthy, they sometimes became lending institutions, charging interest at market rates. In other cases, Buddhist monasteries became centres of opposition and the voice of the community, leading those who revolted against oppressive rulers or poor social and economic conditions.

In contemporary times, Buddhist monasteries take many forms and come in many sizes. Monasteries may be linked to specific families, neighbourhoods, villages, cities, or even nations. They continue to offer many of the range of sacred and secular services and opportunities that historically monasteries have offered in the past. These include Buddhist architecture and design of monastic complexes, which include buildings, statues, natural landscapes, and ritual spaces. They continue to be places where people gather in collective celebration with others, and are often the social centre of the Buddhist community.

Visitors to monasteries are expected to be respectful and follow some basic codes of conduct.

- Upon entering a temple or monastic building (and in most cases Buddhist homes) remove shoes and any head coverings.
- At monasteries, temples, and home shrines, Buddhists will usually bow three times before a statue of Buddha as a means of paying respect to the example of Buddha, to his teachings, and to the enlightened monks and nuns. **Non-Buddhists are not expected to bow.**
- Lay Buddhists will often bow to monks, nuns, and, in some cultures, to elders as a sign of their respect.
- In general, with some differences between schools and countries, Buddhist monks and nuns are not allowed to come into direct physical contact with members of the opposite gender.
- For some Theravada Buddhist monks and nuns, the shaking of hands is to be avoided. A common Buddhist way of greeting others is to put one's palms of the hands together and raise them to one's chin.

- Police and soldiers (or any other person) should not carry weapons into a Buddhist temple or monastery.
- In some traditions, pointing one's soles of their feet towards a statue of the Buddha, a shrine, monks, nuns, or any person in general, is considered to be extremely rude.
- Touching the head of another person is considered to be rude. The only exceptions relate to exceptional situations, such as to receive medical treatment.
- Buddhist monks and nuns may be addressed as Venerable, Roshi, Ajahn, Master, Bhante, or Sister, depending on their school and country.

Women in Buddhism

Contemporary concerns and perspectives with respect to human rights and gender equality, along with feminist scholars and movements, have drawn attention to the role and place of women in different world religions and faith groups, including Buddhism.

The question of gender equity and women's role in Buddhism has led to a great deal of reflection, study, and debate within Buddhist circles and across society in general. Some Buddhists downplay gender issues within Buddhism and others believe that there is a need to address inequities between the sexes historically and in the present.

The topic of the role and place of women in Buddhism is one that may be approached from diverse perspectives and viewpoints, including theological, historical, anthropological, and feminist perspectives. These lead to questions about the theological status of women, the treatment of women in Buddhist societies at home and in public, the history of women in Buddhism, and a comparison of the experiences of women across different forms of Buddhism. As may be expected, and similar to other religions, the roles and experiences of Buddhist women have varied considerably within different Buddhist societies, sects, and cultural contexts, as well as over time. Furthermore, teachings and texts may at times conflict or contradict one another.

Gautama Buddha and Women's Roles in the Sangha

At the time of Gautama Buddha's life, women were generally considered to be inferior to men and expected to be subservient to the men in their life: their fathers, husbands, and sons.

Some Buddhists argue that Buddhism does not consider women to be inferior to men, but they may have different roles. Buddhism, does recognize biological and physical differences between the two sexes, but considers both sexes to be equally useful to society.

Many Buddhists argue that Buddhism has long recognized women's need for educational opportunities and religious freedom. The Buddha accepted that both women and men were capable of realizing enlightenment and achieving *nirvana*. Gautama Buddha is believed to have not been in favour of allowing women into the monastic community he formed at first. But later he allowed the admission of women into the community and their full participation in it. Many Buddhists point to the radical nature of this development for that point in history and Indian society.

Others point to the inequity that existed from the beginning. As the *Vinaya-Pitaka* (Theravada) records, the original rules of discipline for monks and nuns were not the same. *Bhikkhunis* (nuns) are required to abide by several additional rules than those required of *bhikkhus* (monks). The most significant of these additional rules are called the *Eight Garudhammas* (heavy rules). These rules include first and foremost the total subordination of nuns to monks, including monks who had been ordained just one day.

Some scholars suggest that some of these rules were added much later. They point out discrepancies between the Pali *Bhikkuni Vinaya* (the section of the Pali Canon dealing with the rules for nuns) and other versions of the texts. This suggests that the more discriminatory rules were added after The Buddha's death. Regardless of their origins and when they were written, over the centuries, the application of these rules in many parts of Asia tended to discourage or prevent women from being ordained.

This led to most orders of nuns dying out centuries ago. For example, the rules that called for at least five ordained monks and five ordained nuns to be present at the ordination of new nuns made it difficult or impossible for women to be fully ordained. According to these rules, if there are no living ordained nuns, there can be no ordination of new nuns. Such rules essentially ended the full ordination of nuns in the Theravada orders of Southeast Asia. Women there could be only be novices until recently.

The *Vinaya* is the division of the Buddhist canon (*Tripitaka*) that sets the rules and procedures that govern the Buddhist monastic community, or sangha. There are three parallel *Vinaya* traditions that remain in use by modern monastic communities: the Theravada (Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia), Mulasarvastivada (Tibetan Buddhism and the Himalayan region) and Dharmaguptaka (East Asian Buddhism). Each *Vinaya* Tradition has different requirements for the ordination of monks and nuns.

In Tibetan Buddhism, while there have been female *tulkus* (reborn *lamas*), the ordination of monks and nuns follows *Mulasarvastivada Vinaya*, which has 253 rules for the *bhikkhus* and 364 rules for *bhikshunis*. However, in Tibet the full nun's lineage of the *Mulasarvastivada Vinaya* was never transmitted to Tibet and, therefore, traditionally Tibetan nuns were not fully ordained: they were novices or simply took eight or ten Precepts. According to Tibetan tradition, the ordination of a *bhikshunis* (nun) must be carried out by a *bhikshunis* preceptor, and since a *Mulasarvastivada bhikshunis* preceptor is not available, according to Tibetan tradition the full ordination of nuns stopped. While

nunneries existed throughout Tibet, they did not have the same respect and education as monks.

In the late 1980s, His Holiness the Dalai Lama stated that while full ordination of nuns was difficult to envisage in the Mulasarvastivada tradition, more could be done about their training and schools could start by granting nuns access to higher philosophical studies, training them as *geshema* (*geshe* is a Tibetan Buddhist academic degree previously reserved for monks). It was only on December 22, 2016, that 20 nuns, from six nunneries in India and Nepal, were finally awarded their *geshema* degree from the hands of the Dalai Lama. This event marks a new and historic chapter in Tibetan Buddhism.

Figure 42: Bikaner IND—Ganga State Museum—Buddhist Goddess Tara 15–16th century
Tara or Arya Tara, also known as Jetsun Dolma in Tibetan Buddhism, is a female Bodhisattva in Mahayana Buddhism and is a female Buddha in Vajrayana Buddhism. She is known as the "mother of liberation," and represents the virtues of success in work and achievements. In Japan she is known as Tara Bosatsu, and little-known as Duōluó Púsà in Chinese Buddhism.

Full ordination for nuns survived in only one of the Buddhist Vinaya traditions, that of the *Dharmaguptakas* in the Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese lineages.

In China and Taiwan, an order of Mahayana nuns can trace its lineage back to the first ordination of nuns. Some women have been ordained as Theravada nuns in the presence of these Mahayana nuns, although this is hugely controversial in some more traditional or conservative Theravada monastic orders.

Western nuns such as Freda Bedi and Tenzin Palm challenged the practice by being ordained in Hong Kong in 1973. In 1971, Voramai Kabilsingh, a Thai woman and Theravada Buddhist, was ordained in Taiwan. She was the first woman in modern Buddhist history to take full ordination, and faced some stigma and rejection as a result.

There is disagreement between Buddhist scholars as to whether early Buddhism (Indian Buddhism) was misogynist at its core. On one side there is a belief that in early Buddhism women were considered to be inferior to men. On the other side, it is argued while there were a few misogynist aspects to ancient Indian Buddhism, this did not apply to Buddhism as a whole.

While there are statements in Buddhist scripture that depict women as obstructors of men's spiritual progress and ideas, and that suggest that being born female leaves one with less opportunity for spiritual progress and attainment, Buddhist texts record several eminent saintly and learned

Bhikkhunis. These women were leaders and experts in preaching the *Dhamma* and included *Dhammadinna*, *Khema*, and *Uppalavanna*.

Although, women have had a significant impact on Buddhism, the mix of positive attitudes to femininity with overtly negative statements has led many writers to characterize early Buddhism's attitude to women as deeply ambivalent.

Buddhahood and Women's Spiritual Attainment

Buddhist doctrines on the enlightenment of women are contradictory. As there is no one institutional authority that represents all Buddhism, the diverse schools and sects do not follow the same scriptures. Consequently, texts that are central to some schools are not recognized as authentic by others, and so the scriptures disagree.

For example, in Mahayana Buddhism, the *Sukhavati-vyuha Sutra* (or *Aparimitayur Sutra*) is one of three sutras that provide the doctrinal basis of the Pure Land School. This sutra contains a passage that is usually interpreted as meaning that women must be reborn as men before they can enter *nirvana*. This opinion shows up in other scriptures but not in the Pali Canon.

In contrast, the *Vimalakirti Sutra* teaches that maleness and femaleness, like other phenomenal distinctions, are essentially unreal. Therefore gender distinctions are not important. The *Vimilakirti* is an essential text in several Mahayana schools, including Tibetan and Zen Buddhism.

Early Buddhist texts, such as the *Cullavagga* section of the *Vinaya Pitaka* of the Pali Canon, contain statements from Gautama Buddha speaking to the fact that a woman can attain enlightenment. It is also clearly stated in the *Bahudhatuka-sutta* that there could never be a female Buddha. Buddhist perspectives on women and Buddhahood vary between the three major schools.

In Theravada Buddhism, achieving *buddhahood* is a rare event. The focus of Theravada practice is primarily on attaining *arhatship* and the Pali Canon has examples of both male and female *arhats* who attained *nirvana*. For example Yasodhara, the former wife of Buddha Shakyamuni and mother of Rahula, is said to have become an *arhat* after joining the *Bhikkhuni* order of Buddhist nuns.

In contrast, in Mahayana schools, *Buddhahood* is the universal goal for Mahayana practitioners. The Mahayana *sutras* maintain that a woman can become enlightened, but not in a female form. For example, the *Bodhisattvabhumi*, which dates to the fourth century, states that a woman about to attain enlightenment will be reborn as a male. Later Mahayana texts allow for the possibility of female Bodhisattvas.

Some Theravada *sutras* state that it is impossible for a woman to be a *Bodhisattva* (a person who is on their way to *Buddhahood* but has not yet attained it). Thus women should aspire to be reborn as male. They may do so

by moral actions and sincere aspiration to maleness. From this perspective, being born a female is a result of bad *karma*.

However, in the *Jataka* tales (stories of the Buddha's past lives as a *bodhisattva* within the Theravada canon) it states that The Buddha was a woman, a princess in one of his past lives. This directly contradicts the assertion that a *bodhisattva* cannot be born a female.

Female Buddhas and Bodhisattvas

In Vajrayana tradition, female Buddhas are commonly depicted in iconography. Sometimes they are the consorts of the main *yidam* (*deity*) of a meditation *mandala* but female Buddhas such as Vajrayogni, Tara, and Simhamukha appear as the central figures of tantric meditation on their own.

Buddhism also recognizes many female *yogini* practitioners as achieving the full enlightenment of a Buddha. Yeshe Tsogyal, one of the five tantric consorts of Padmasambhava is an example of a woman (*yogini*) recognized as a female Buddha in the Vajrayana tradition. According to Karmapa lineage, however, Tsogyel has attained *buddhahood* in that very life.

Important Women in Buddhist History

In spite of the barriers women faced in various Buddhist schools and sects throughout Buddhist history, many were able to achieve a high level of respect for their understanding of Buddhism and *dharma*.

In the early or pre-sectarian stages of Buddhism there were several women who had important roles in its development.

- Gautama Buddha's step-mother, Mahapajapati Gotami, was the first woman to seek ordination.
- Buddha's wife, Yasodharā, became a nun and an *arhat*.
- Sanghamitta, the daughter of emperor Ashoka, is believed to have brought Buddhism to Sri Lanka.
- The Buddhist nun, Buddhamitrā, lived in India during the first century and is known for having erected images of Buddha in three cities near the Ganges River.

These women also include several Zen Masters. During Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism's golden age (China, ca. 7th–9th centuries) women studied with male masters and teachers. A few eventually became *dharma* heirs and Ch'an masters. These include Liu Tiemo, called the "Iron Grindstone", Moshan, and Miaoxin. Moshan was a teacher to both monks and nuns.

Another well-known female Buddhist teacher, is Eihei Dogen (1200–1253) who introduced Soto Zen from China to Japan and, in the history of Zen, is one of the most revered masters. In a commentary called the *Raihai Tokuzui*, Dogen

said, "In acquiring the *dharma*, all acquire the *dharma* equally. All should pay homage to and hold in esteem one who has acquired the *dharma*. Do not make an issue of whether it is a man or a woman. This is the most wondrous law of the *Buddha-dharma*."

Influential Buddhist Women

In this section, a selected list of women throughout history who have been influential in the development of Buddhism is provided.

Theravada

- **Dhammananda Bhikkhuni** is the first contemporary Thai woman to be fully ordained as a Theravada bhikkhuni and Abbess of Songdhammakalyani Monastery, the only temple in Thailand where there are nuns.
- **Ayya Khema,** a German American Buddhist teacher, is the first Western woman to become a Theravadin Buddhist nun. Ayya actively promoted the participation of women in Buddhist practice and founded several Buddhist centres around the world. She coordinated the first ever Sakyadhita International Association of Buddhist Women.
- **Dipa Ma** is a prominent Indian meditation master of Theravada Buddhism in Asia and in the United States where she had significant influence on the American branch of the Vipassanā movement.
- **Upasika Kee Nanayon** (or Kor Khao-suan-luang) was a Thai Buddhist *upāsikā* (devout laywoman) from Thailand. In 1945, she turned her home into a meditation centre in collaboration with her aunt and uncle. Although, mostly self-taught, she read the Pali canon and other Buddhist literature. Her *dhamma* talks and poetry were widely circulated, and she became one of the most popular female meditation teachers in Thailand. Many of her talks have been translated into English by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.
- **Sharon Salzberg** is a New York Times bestselling author and teacher of Buddhist meditation practices in the West. In 1974, she co-founded the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts. In her teachings she emphasizes *vipassanā* (insight) and *mettā* (loving-kindness) methods. Her books include Lovingkindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness (1995), A Heart as Wide as the World (1999), Real Happiness—The Power of Meditation: A 28-Day Program (2010), and the follow-up Real Happiness at Work (2013).
- **Mya Thwin**, known as Mother Sayamagyi, was a Theravada Buddhist teacher who established centres for *vipassana* meditation around the world. She was a senior disciple of Ba Khin, a *vipassana* master, and fulfilled his aspiration to teach Buddhist meditation in the West.
- **Ajahn Sundara and Ajahn Candasiri** are two western converts to Buddhism and are ordained as a ten-precept *sīladhārā*, (Theravada Buddhist female monastic in the tradition established by Ajahn Sumedho). Ten-precept

sīladhārā is the highest level that is allowed for women in the Thai Forest Tradition. Sīladhārā Ajan Canaisri is one of the senior monastics in western Theravada Buddhism. She trained alongside women who later became fully ordained *bhikkhunis* and abbesses of monasteries.

- **Sylvia Boorstein** is of Jewish-American origins and an author, psychotherapist, and Buddhist teacher. Boorstein studied with Dipa Ma and is a co-founding teacher at Spirit Rock Meditation Center in Woodacre, California and a senior teacher at the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts. She has written numerous books on Buddhism such as
  - It's Easier Than You Think: The Buddhist Way to Happiness (1995)
  - That's Funny, You Don't Look Buddhist (1996)
  - Don't Just Do Something, Sit There: A Mindfulness Retreat with Sylvia Boorstein (1996)
  - Pay Attention, for Goodness' Sake: Practicing the Perfections of the Heart—The Buddhist Path of Kindness (2002)
  - Happiness Is an Inside Job: Practicing for a Joyful Life (2007)
  - The Courage to Be Happy (2007)
  - Solid Ground: Buddhist Wisdom for Difficult Times (2011) with Norman Fischer and Tsoknyi Rinpoche

Women in East Asian Traditions

- **Wu Zetian** was a Chinese empress from the seventh and eighth centuries who supported Buddhism in China.
- **Prajnatara** (aka Keyur) was the twenty-seventh *Brahmin* leader of Indian Buddhism according to Chan Buddhism and the head of the Sarvastivada sect of early Buddhist schools. She helped spread Buddhism by her travels through East India preaching and is believed to have been Bodhidharma's teacher. (Bodhidharma is considered to be the founder of Chan Buddhism in China.)
- **Master Cheng Yen** is a Taiwanese Buddhist nun (*bhikkhuni*), teacher, and philanthropist. She was a student and follower of Master Ying Shun, a major figure in the development of Humanistic Buddhism in Taiwan. In 1966, Cheng Yen founded the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation with a group of 30 housewives. Tzu Chi later became one of the largest humanitarian organizations in the world and eventually became the largest Buddhist organization in Taiwan. She is considered to be one of the most influential figures in the development of modern Taiwanese Buddhism and she is popularly referred to as being one of the "Four Heavenly Kings" of Taiwanese Buddhism.
- **Chan Khong** was a Vietnamese born Buddhist nun and peace activist. She was ordained in 1966 as one of the first six members of the Order of Interbeing, sometimes called the Six Cedars. Following her ordination, she

was given the name Sister Chân Không, True Emptiness. She worked closely with Thích Nhat Hanh in starting the Plum Village Tradition.

- **Daehaeng Kun Sunim** was a Korean Buddhist nun and Seon (Zen) master. She is known for having taught monks as well as nuns, and having helped to increase the participation of young people and men in Korean Buddhism. As well, she was also a major force for the advancement of *Bhikkunis* (nuns), heavily supporting traditional nuns' colleges as well as the modern Bhikkuni Council of Korea. She founded, Hanmaum Seon Center, which grew to have fifteen branches in Korea and a number of branches in other countries.

Tertön

Is a Tibetan term used with respect to individuals who are believed to have advanced knowledge and insight. In Tibetan Buddhism, many believed, especially within the Nyingma school, that only a few chosen persons can receive *dharma* teachings mystically, non-physically, and be "dharma treasure revealers", or *tertons*.
The number of *tertons* that are thought to have lived throughout Buddhist history is not known. There are lists and it is believed that there were about 275 tertons from the 11th to the 20th centuries.
Jetsun (aka *Jetsün* or *Jetsunma*) is a Tibetan title which means "venerable" or "reverend." It is a special term applied to especially revered teachers and practitioners of Vajrayana Buddhism.

- **Houn Jiyu-Kennett** was a British *roshi* (a title given to senior Buddhist figures). She is best known for having been the first female to be sanctioned by the Soto School of Japan to teach in the West. She founded Shasta Abbey in Mt. Shasta, California.
- **Enkyo Pat O'Hara** is a Soto priest and teacher in the Harada-Yasutani lineage of Zen Buddhism. She is the abbot and founder of the Village Zendo in New York City.
- **Ruth Fuller Sasaki** was an important figure in the development of Buddhism in the United States of America. After moving to Koyoto, Japan she became the first foreigner to be a priest of a Rinzai Zen temple in 1958 and the only westerner and woman to be a priest of a Daitoku-ji.
- **Gesshin Myoko Prabhasa Dharma Zenji** is a Zen master and lineage teacher of Japanese Rinzai and Vietnamese Lam Te (Linji) schools, and the founder of the International Zen Institute (IZI). She developed a form of Zen practice that draws on both Japanese and Vietnamese Zen traditions, but it's not bound by any specific culture or country.
- **Joko Beck**, or Charlotte Joko Beck, was an American Zen teacher, the founder of the Ordinary Mind Zen School, and the author of the books *Everyday Zen: Love and Work* and *Nothing Special: Living Zen*.
- **Merle Kodo Boyd** is the first African-American woman to have received Dharma transmission in Zen. She leads the Lincroft Zen Sangha in New Jersey.

Tibetan Traditions

- **Samding Dorje Phagmo**, the present (12th) Samding Dorje Pakmo Trülku, is Dechen Chökyi Drönma, who was born in 1938 or 1942. She was the highest female incarnation in Tibet and the third highest-ranking person in the hierarchy after the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama. Dechen Chökyi Drönma has been trained in the Bodongpa tradition and remains the head of the Samding Monastery. She also holds a post of a high government cadre in the Tibet Autonomous Region. As a result, she has been seen by many as "collaborating" with the Chinese.
- **Sera Khandro Kunzang Dekyong Wangmo** was a 19th Tibetan Buddhist teacher. She taught, among others, the First Adzom Drukpa Drodul Pawo Dorje (Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, b.1938, is considered to be his immediate reincarnation). She was a teacher to many leading Nyingma lamas (Nyingma is the oldest of the four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism.), including Dudjom Jigdral Yeshe Dorje and Chatral Sangye Dorje.
- **Ayu Khandro or Ayu Khandro Dorje Paldrön** (1838–1953) was a renowned teacher of Dzogchen and Tantric Buddhism in East Tibet and a *tertön*. Many believed that Ayu Khandro was a reincarnation of Vajrayogini, a Tantric Buddhist female Buddha and a *dakini* (sacred female spirit). She spent years in dark retreat. She is also renowned for her extensive pilgrimages throughout Tibet.
- **Tāre Lhamo** (1938–2002) was a Tibetan Buddhist tantric master, *tertön*, and religious author. She was recognized by Dudjom Rinpoche as the reincarnation of Sera Khandro and an emanation of Yeshe Tsogyal (Tibet's best-known *dakini* and female master). She was wife of Namtrul Rinpoche (1944–2011). The couple were key figures in Tibetan Buddhism during the takeover of Tibet by China and the Cultural Revolution, and was instrumental in the revival of Tibetan Buddhism after the revolution. She and Namtrul Rinpoche led the rebuilding of Nyenlung monastery in Serta County and contributed to the rebuilding of other monasteries and religious buildings.
- **Jetsun Kushok Chimey Luding/Jetsun Trichen Rinpoche** (b. 1938) is one of the most respected female teachers of Tibetan Buddhism. She is the elder sister of the current head of the Sakya lineage. Following in her family's tradition, she was ordained as a novice at seven years of age. In 1959, she left Tibet for India and eventually settled in Vancouver, Canada, in 1971, where she still lives. Sakya Trichen (Trizin) asked that she begin teaching, which she did in the early 1980s. Now she is a full-time *dharma* teacher and the founder of Sakya Tsechen Thubten Ling, a *dharma* centre in Vancouver, and Sakya Dechen Ling in Oakland, California. She is one of fewer than a dozen masters (and one of the three women in the history of Sakya) who are qualified to transmit the *Lam dré* or "The path and its results." She is believed to be an emanation of Vajrayogini, the Tantric Buddhist female Buddha, and a *dakini*.

- **Mindrolling Jetsün Khandro Rinpoche** (b. 1967) is the daughter of Tibetan meditation master His Holiness Mindrolling Trichen. The Mindrolling lineage throughout its history has had many accomplished female masters. She was recognized at the age of two by His Holiness the 16th Karmapa as the reincarnation of the Great Dakini of Tsurphu, Khandro Ugyen Tsomo (one of the most renowned female masters of her time). Thus, Khandro Rinpoche holds the two lineages of Nyingma and Kagyu schools. She founded the Samten Tse Retreat Center in Mussoori, India, serves as the resident teacher of the Lotus Garden Center in rural Virginia, and is active with the Mindrolling Monastery in Dehra Dun, India. At present, she is one of the most renowned Tibetan teachers teaching in the West.
- **Karma Lekshe Tsomo** (b. 1944) is an American Buddhist nun, scholar, and social activist. She is a Professor of Buddhist Studies at the University of San Diego and the author of many books on women in Buddhism. She is also the founder of Jamyang Foundation and a founding member of Sakyadhita International Association of Buddhist Women. The organization is dedicated to supporting the education of women and girls in the Himalayan region and the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh.
- **Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo** (b. 1943) was born in England but is now a Tibetan Buddhist nun, author, and teacher. She moved to India in 1964 to pursue Buddhist studies and, at 21 years of age, became one of the first Westerners to be ordained as a Tibetan Buddhist monastic. She spent twelve years living in a remote cave in the Himalayas, three of those years in a strict meditation retreat. She is the founder of the Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery in Himachal Pradesh, India.
- **Pema Chodron** (b. 1936) is an ordained American Tibetan Buddhist nun, author, and teacher. She is an ordained nun, *acharya* (senior teacher) and disciple of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche. She is the principal teacher at the Gampo Abbey, a Buddhist monastery in the Shambhala tradition located in Nova Scotia, Canada.
- **Thubten Chodron** (b. 1950) is an American Tibetan Buddhist nun and a central figure in reinstating the Tibetan *Bhikshuni* (*Gelongma*) ordination of women. Abbess of Sravasti Abbey, the only Tibetan Buddhist training monastery for Western nuns and monks in the United States. She is a student of H. H. XIVth Dalai Lama, Tsenzhap Serkong Rinpoche, Thubten Zopa Rinpoche, and other Tibetan masters. She has authored several books on Buddhist philosophy and meditation, but is the only nun who has co-authored a book with the Dalai Lama, *Buddhism: One Teacher, Many Traditions*.
- **Robina Courtin** (b. 1944) is an Australian Buddhist nun in the Tibetan Buddhist Gelugpa tradition and lineage of Lama Thubten Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche and their organization, Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT). In 1996, she founded Liberation Prison Project, which she ran until 2009. She has taught at Buddhist temples and centres around the world.
- **Ani Choying Drolma** (b. 1971) is a Nepalese Buddhist nun and musician from the Nagi Gompa nunnery in Nepal. She has become famous in Nepal

and throughout the world for her musical talents and for bringing Tibetan Buddhist chants and feast songs to non-Buddhist audiences. She is also known for her dedication to philanthropic work and her appointment as Nepal's first UNICEF national ambassador.

- **Yeshe Kadro** was ordained as a Buddhist nun by the Dalai Lama at the age of 23. She has held various management and teaching roles for the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT) centres around the world, including manager of Chenrezig Nuns' Community in Queensland, Australia. For many years she has been the director of Karuna Hospice in Brisbane, Australia.
- **Lama Tsultrim Allione (**b. 1947) is an author and teacher who has studied in Tibetan Buddhism's Karma Kagyu lineage. Tsultrim Allione has been recognized and enthroned as an emanation of the female Tibetan saint, the 11th century *dakini* Machik Labdrön. She traveled to India and Nepal to study Buddhism. In 1970, she became one of the first American nuns to be ordained in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. She later gave back her vows to raise a family and became a respected Buddhist teacher in the West. She is the founder and spiritual director of Tara Mandala retreat centre in Colorado, and author of the books *Women of Wisdom* and *Feeding Your Demons*. In 2009, she received the international Outstanding Woman in Buddhism Award.
- **Jetsunma Ahkon Lhamo**, born Alyce Louise Zeoli, is an enthroned *tulku* (reincarnated custodian of a specific lineage of teachings in Tibetan Buddhism) within the Palyul lineage of the Nyingma tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. She was the first Western woman to be named a reincarnated *lama*.
- **Sarah Harding** is a qualified *lama* (chief or high priest) and teacher in the Shangpa Kagyu tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. She is a former student and translator of Kalu Rinpoche (1905–1989).
- **Judith Simmer-Brown** is a professor of contemplative and religious studies at Naropa University. Judith is an expert in Tibetan Buddhism, women and Buddhism, Buddhist-Christian dialogue, Western Buddhism and contemplative education. She is a Shambhala Buddhist, an *acharya* (a senior Buddhist teacher), and was a former senior student of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche.
- **Jan Willis**, or Janice Dean Willis, is an Afro-American professor of religion at Wesleyan University and the author of books on Tibetan Buddhism, including the following:
  - The Diamond Light: An Introduction to Tibetan Buddhist Meditation (1972)
  - On Knowing Reality: The Tattvartha Chapter of Asanga's Bodhisattvabhumi (1979)
  - Feminine Ground: Essays on Women and Tibet, Editor, and contributor of two of six, essays (1989)

- Enlightened Beings: Life Stories from the Ganden Oral Tradition (1995)
- Dreaming Me: An African American Woman's Spiritual Journey (2001)

- **Vicki Mackenzie** is an English-born author and journalist who has written numerous books on Buddhism including the following:
  - Reincarnation: the Boy Lama (1988)
  - Reborn in the West: the Reincarnation Masters (1996)
  - Cave in the Snow: a Western Woman's Quest for Enlightenment (1999), a biography of Tenzin Palmo (also about Freda Bedi)
  - Why Buddhism?: Westerners in Search of Wisdom (2001)
  - Child of Tibet, co-authored with Soname Yangchen (2006)
  - The Revolutionary Life of Freda Bedi: British Feminist, Indian Nationalist, Buddhist Nun (2017)

Notes:

Further information on many of the Buddhist women that are discussed may be found on the web site of The Yogini project (https://theyoginiproject.org/). The Yogini Project is dedicated to sharing the inspirational stories of female Buddhist meditators and spiritual practitioners with people around the world. The intent is to inspire others and to raise awareness of the value and importance of women in Buddhist practice. They do this by making influential and gifted Buddhist women accessible to all through films, interviews, feature stories, and digital media.

For information on Buddhist women in Canada, Sakyadhita Canada (*Sakyadhita* means "Daughters of the Buddha") is a good resource. It is an official branch of Sakyadhita International (SI). SI was formed in 1987 with the primary purpose of promoting world peace through the practice of the Buddha's teachings. SI is an alliance whose goal it is to support the world's 300 million Buddhist women in working for peace and social justice and to advance their spiritual and secular lives. Sakyadhita Canada is an alliance of ordained and lay Buddhist women, whose website has information on events and various publications with a focus on women in Buddhism (see www.sakyadhitacanada.org/aboutus)

Contemporary Roles of Women

Today, Buddhist women in the West generally consider institutional sexism to be aspects of Asian culture that can be eliminated from dharma. In some

western monastic orders, men and women follow the same rules and are not separated.

In Asia, however, traditional views of women's roles in Buddhism are more entrenched. While Buddhists in many orders seek better conditions and education, in many countries, women continue to face considerable inequities.

As well, a Buddhist feminist movement has emerged that seeks to improve the religious, legal, and social status of women within Buddhism. It is a form of feminist theology which seeks to advance and understand the equality of men and women from a Buddhist perspective in various dimensions morally, socially, spiritually, and in leadership.

Centuries of male privilege and discrimination will take time to overcome, although it is important to recognize that equity will be more of a challenge in some schools and cultures than in others. Nevertheless, there has been a significant and promising shift toward equality.

Practices, Rituals, and Symbols

Within Buddhist devotion there are many practices and rituals, including everyday rites. There are, however, also rites to mark particularly important life events and passages, such as births, deaths, weddings, and so forth.

Prayer, Meditation, and Worship

Meditation

Meditation is an essential aspect of all Buddhist sects and schools. As with other aspects of Buddhism, there is great variety in the practice of meditation. Nonetheless, all meditation involves mental focus and the utilization of various techniques and tools for achieving the necessary mental focus and control. These tools and techniques may include the reciting of *mantras*, chanting, visualization, following one's breathing, or simply watching the mind.

How and where meditation occurs is often a very individual choice for Western and other lay Buddhists. Some use special mats and cushions on the floor, but it can be done while sitting on a chair, walking, or even lying down. It is also incorporated into everyday activities. Meditation is practiced at home and in places of ceremonial significance, such as temples and shrines. Meditation is also part of Buddhist ceremonies and pujas that can include chanting, reciting sutras, and making symbolic offerings of food, incense, and other items to the Buddha, often represented in statue or picture form on a shrine.

Following the Buddha's example, meditation is a major aspect of Buddhist practice. Meditation serves various purposes, such as clearing the mind so that negative thoughts of anger or hatred can be replaced with positive ones of loving-kindness and peace, or to help free oneself from desire.

Through frequent meditation, Buddhists hope to develop insight and wisdom so that they can see the true nature of things. There are different forms and purposes of Buddhist meditation, each with its own techniques and tools. Two major types of meditation are *samatha* and *vipassana* or developing tranquility and insight respectively.

- *Samatha* (calming/tranquility meditation) is intended to help the individual to calm the mind by focusing on one object, feeling, or idea.
- *Vipassanā* (insight meditation) is intended to help the individual to see the truth about reality and develop the wisdom that leads to enlightenment.

The two detailed discourses in the Pali Canon, which describe meditative practice, are the *Anapanasati Sutta* (The Discourse on Mindfulness of Breathing) and the *Satipatthana Sutta* (The Discourse on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness).

Generally, Buddhists believe that they need to become proficient at *samatha* meditation prior to attempting *vipassana* meditation.

Common tools and techniques to aid meditation include the following:

- Concentrating on breathing helps the person become alert, focused, and calm.
- Meditating on *metta* (loving kindness) helps to develop good will towards others and all creatures.
- Reciting or chanting a *mantra* (a sacred syllable, word, or verse) helps one meditate.
- Using an image, sculpture, or picture of a *Buddha* or *bodhisattva* helps one visualize the image in their mind.
- Walking meditation involves walking barefoot, focusing on the way the foot touches the ground, coordinating one's breathing and walking, and keeping one's eyes focused a short way in front without distraction can bring about mindfulness and calm.
- Mindfulness meditation involves becoming aware of one's body and mind and developing a lucid awareness.

One of the goals of meditation may be to achieve Right Mindfulness, one of the steps of the Noble Eightfold Path. It is a way of developing calmness, insight, and compassion. Such meditation is ultimately intended to achieve the wisdom that leads one to enlightenment.

The Buddha, as the image of *Buddha-nature*, has many forms. In Mahayana traditions there are also representations of *bodhisattvas*—beings who have achieved an enlightened state, but have chosen not to leave the world of samsara in order to help all other beings do so. Some Buddhists construct small shrines at home to help their practice of meditation and to remind them of the buddhist ideals and precepts used in their daily lives.

Buddhists do not worship The Buddha as a god, but they do show deep reverence for him and his teachings through study, meditation, and prayer. Buddhists don't believe it necessary to go to a special place to worship or to congregate with others to do so. A Buddhist may choose to worship at home or at a temple.

Buddhists will designate a specific room or place within the home just for worship. Usually a statue of Buddha, candles, and incense burners will be found somewhere in the room or space reserved for worship.

Buddhist temples are quite diverse in shape, size, and settings. They symbolize the five elements: air, earth, fire, water, and wisdom. Each temple will, however, feature at least one image or icon of Buddha within the temple and the grounds.

Worship takes many forms and is reflective of the diversity of Buddhist schools and traditions. Generally, worshippers in temples in Buddhist

countries sit barefoot on the floor and face the shrine or Buddha icon and chant, while, in Canada and other western countries, they may sit in chairs or pews in some temples. Monks and nuns will also chant religious texts and the worshippers will listen and join in on prayers. Sometimes the chants will be accompanied by musical instruments.

Mantras

The word *mantra* is a Sanskrit term that means a thought behind a speech or action. Mantras are common to Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism. A *mantra* is a word, a syllable, a phrase, or a set of phrases used in meditation and rituals that is spoken once or repeated over and over again (either aloud or silently in a person's mind). Most Buddhist *mantras* are based on significant teachings of The Buddha and *bodhisattvas*. There are many different types of *mantras* used by different cultures and schools of Buddhism around the world.

Many mantras exist, but some of the most common ones or those thought to be the most powerful include the following:

- **The Shakyamuni Mantra**—*Om Muni Muni Mahamuni Shakyamuniye Svaha*—may be translated as "I invoke the Universal sound, Buddha nature and the wise one, wise one of the Shakyans, hail to thee!" This *mantra* pays respect to Siddhartha Gautama. By using the *Shakyamuni Mantra*, Buddhists seek to encourage the development of their own Buddha nature.
- **The Avalokiteshvara Mantra**—*Om Mani Padme Hum*—may be translated as "I now invoke the Universal sound, the jewel, the goal of Enlightenment, love, and compassion, lotus wisdom, and a pure indivisible unity of wisdom with practice." This *mantra* is often used in Tibetan Buddhism and is chanted to ask for the blessings of Chenrezig. Chenrezig is a famous Buddhist bodhisattva revered for his compassionate nature. By using this *mantra*, the person seeks to cultivate and spread compassion in themselves and others.
- **The Heart Mantra**—*Gate Gate Para Gate Parasam Gate Bodhi Svaha*—is the final verse from "The Heart of the Prajna Paramita Sutra," often called "The Heart Sutra" or "The Great Heart of Wisdom Sutra." This *mantra* may be translated as "Going, going, going on beyond, always going on beyond, always becoming Buddha." By reciting this *mantra*, Buddhists aspire to understand the essence of the *Heart Sutra* and awaken the aspiration of attaining *Buddhahood*.
- **The Green Tara Mantra**—*Om Tare Tuttare Ture Soha*—may be translated as "I invoke the Universal sound and the Green Tara to bring deliverance from suffering and delusion, paving the way for compassion and Enlightenment. I offer this prayer to Green Tara." The *bodhisattva* Green Tara (the mother of liberation) is called on to help and offer assistance in times of need. Buddhists often use this mantra to overcome challenges and difficulties in relationships.
- **White Tara Mantra**—*Om Tare Tuttare Ture Mama Ayuh Punya Jnana Pustim Kuru Soha Om*—is associated with longevity, good health, and compassion. It

is often chanted with positive intentions for the good of someone else in mind—*Om Tare Tuttare Ture Mama Ayuh Punya Jnana Pustim Kuru Soha Om*—and can be translated as, "I invoke the Universal sound Tare: And the White Tara Tuttare: to bring deliverance from suffering and delusion Ture: And bring instead compassion and Enlightenment Mama: To myself and to… Ayuh: Long life and longevity Punya: Merit from living life ethically and with good intention Jnana: Wisdom Pustim: Abundance, wealth, and good things Kuru: Like the auspicious land North of the Himalayas Soha: I offer this prayer to White Tara."

Figure 43: Buddhists worshipping at temple in Thailand

- **The Medicine Buddha Mantra—***Tayata Om Bekanze Maha Bekanze Radza Samudgate Soha*—may be translated as "I now invoke the Universal sound to release the pain of illness, release the pain and darkness of delusion, and achieve supreme spiritual heights. I offer this prayer to the Medicine Buddha." This Buddhist *mantra* is believed to help alleviate physical pain, encourage personal growth, and facilitate Enlightenment.
- **The Amitabha (Amida) Buddha Mantra—***Namu Amida Butsu or Namo Amituofo*—is used by Pure Land Buddhists such as the Jodo Shinshu school to chant their homage to Amitabha (Amida) Buddha who is known as the Budddha of infinite light or of infinite life. By chanting the Amitabha Buddha *mantra*, they call on his help to be reborn in the blissful Pure Land where they can reside until they have attained enlightenment.

Physical Prayer Aids

Buddhist prayer beads or *malas* are traditionally used to count the number of times a *mantra* is recited, the breaths while meditating, the prostrations, or the repetitions of a Buddha's name. They are similar to other forms of prayer beads used in various other religions.

Traditionally, there would be 108 beads, each signifying one of the mortal desires of humankind. This number is attributed to the *Mokugenji* (soapberry seed) *Sutra*, which recounts how Shakyamuni Buddha instructed King Virudhaka to make such beads and recite the Three Jewels of Buddhism. *Malas* are typically made with 18, 27, 54, or 108 beads. A decorative tassel is sometimes attached to the beads, flanked by talismans or amulets depending local traditions and customs.

Mantras may also be printed or etched on a prayer wheel and repeated by spinning the wheel. Tibetan Buddhists, in particular, use prayer wheels containing prayers and *mantras*. These are turned while chanting and it is believed that the prayer or *mantra* is repeated each time the wheel turns. Prayer wheels can be small ones that may be carried with a person or large ones, some up to nine-feet high found in monasteries.

Prayers are also written on flags and hung up on a line. Buddhists believe the prayer is repeated every time the wind blows.

These physical prayer devices are very common in Tibetan Buddhism and other communities.

Worship in Temples

On full-moon days and special days, Buddhists may choose to visit a temple, a monastery, or other Buddhist gathering places and join others in meditation, prayers, *dharma* teachings, or other events.

Temples are centres for meditation, study, and worship for the whole community. There are as many forms of Buddhist worship and rituals as there are schools of Buddhism.

Worship in Mahayana tradition takes the form of devotion to Buddha and to Bodhisattvas. Worshippers may sit on the floor barefoot facing an image of Buddha and chanting. They will listen to monks chanting from religious texts, perhaps accompanied by instruments, and take part in prayers.

Worship in the temple includes chanting the Three Refuges and Precepts and the scriptures, giving offerings in front of an image of The Buddha, lighting candles, burning incense, meditating, and listening to sermons.

The most important part of a Buddhist temple is the shrine room, which contains one or more *Buddharupas* (Sanskrit/Pali term for statues or models of beings who have obtained *Buddhahood*, including the historical Buddha). A shrine refers to any place where an image of The Buddha is used in worship. Many Buddhists also have shrines at home.

Before entering a temple or shrine, Buddhists may participate in purification rituals. In Japan, the ritual of *temizu*, the cleansing of one's hands and mouth with flowing water is common. It is the first thing to be done upon entering a temple or a shrine prior to praying and meditating. Based on the teachings of Buddhism, the purification process is to help the person have "pure body, pure speech, and pure mind" as The Buddha did.

Buddhist temples also generally use incense/smoke for purification. In addition, before entering the temple or shrine room, people take off their shoes as a sign of respect and also to keep the floors clean. Visitors to the temple are expected to dress modestly, often in white, in Theravada countries. They bow in front of the *Buddharupa* and sit with their feet tucked under (it is considered rude to point the soles of one's feet towards someone else). Worship usually begins with reciting the Three Refuges.

Bhikkhus or *Bhikshunis* may read or recite *sutras*, or give a sermon that explains their relevance to daily life.

Buddhist practice and rituals often require offerings at temples, shrines, or monasteries. It is common to place bowls of water and other food offerings before the *Buddharupa* on a raised platform or altar. The offering bowl has a symbolic meaning in Buddhism. It is there to hold gifts to Buddhist deities offered by the practitioner and community. In Tibetan Buddhism, seven offering bowls are typically placed on the altar and contain seven offerings, including drinking and cleansing water, flowers, light, perfume, and food. Theravada Buddhists often give offerings of candles, flowers, prayer beads, and incense. Mahayana Buddhists also bring gifts but their primary purpose is to demonstrate devotion to Buddha and bodhisattvas.

In Theravada Buddhism, lay persons traditionally were not expected to meditate or know the Buddhist scriptures. This was the responsibility of the monks and nuns in the Sangha. The laity gained merit by supporting the *Sangha* and living their lives in reverence and devotion which they expressed through worship and ethical living.

Another common feature of Buddhist worship and practices is to visit *stupas* which may be located near a temple or at auspicious or special places. When visiting a stupa they will walk clockwise around it while reciting a mantra or a prayer, and concentrating on the importance of The Buddha for their lives.

Importance of Symbolism in Public Worship

There is much symbolism in Buddhist worship, from the place of worship itself to the artifacts used in worship. The table below shows the symbolic meaning of various elements.

Symbol	Meaning
Shape of *stupa* or temple	*Stupas* represent The Buddha's enlightened mind. A *stupa* incorporates five basic geometric shapes corresponding to the five elements—earth, water, fire, air, and wisdom.
***Buddharupa* placed higher than worshippers**	Shows honour that is due to The Buddha
Different images of The Buddha	Reflects different meanings (e.g. a raised hand, palm outwards, means fearlessness, while hands laying one on the other in the lap means meditation)
Tray of flowers	Shows impermanence—that all things fade and die
Number of flowers	One flower, for example, shows the unity of all things; three flowers, the three jewels
Lighted candles	Represents the light of The Buddha's teaching, or the enlightenment which worshippers are seeking
Burning incense	Represents devotion and fills the room with sweet fragrance, as The Buddha's teaching has spread throughout the world
Bowls of water/offering bowls for food and gifts	Shows that The Buddha is treated as an honoured guest and express reverence and respect
Taking off shoes/bowing	Shows respect to The Buddha

Attitudes Regarding Public Worship

Although most Buddhists think that private worship can be as important as formal public worship, most do participate in forms of public worship, usually at a temple. Public worship brings Buddhists together as a community, provides them opportunities to learn more about the scriptures, and helps develop their practice of meditation. As well, the social aspect of being in the company of other happy devoted people will be uplifting and beneficial to the individual.

There will also be special occasions such as full-moon days and festivals that draw Buddhists to temples. In addition, many Buddhists visit a temple when important personal and family milestones occur or when something important happens in their lives for which they are grateful.

Private Worship

Private worship involves showing reverence and devotion to The Buddha and to *bodhisattvas*, but does not involve worshipping them. Buddhists do not consider The Buddha to be a god.

Private worship helps a person to develop good mental states, so that they can escape the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth and gain enlightenment.

Worship in the Home

Lay people often have a shrine room in their home that contains an image of The Buddha or other deities, candles, flowers, an incense burner, and food offerings. Forms of worship vary, but many Buddhists begin and end each day reciting the Three Refuges and the Five Precepts.

Lay people also pray and meditate before the *Buddharupa* or *bodhisattvas*. Prayers may include requests for a good rebirth.

As in public worship, the home shrine contains many symbolic objects. Buddhists may also use *mala* beads in private worship to help count the repetitions of *mantras* when meditating or praying.

All Buddhists consider worship in the home important for 'merit-making' and for developing the qualities of compassion and wisdom needed to achieve *nirvana*.

Rites of Passage

In Buddhism there are four milestones in one's life that are usually celebrated: one's birth, becoming a monk or nun, marriage, and death. However, the celebration of these may vary according to the different schools, nations, and cultures.

Birth

Generally there are no specific birth rites or rituals that are performed across the Buddhist world. Although birth rites and practices vary from one country and culture to another, Buddhist celebration of a birth may involve three primary rituals, which include Blessing, Naming Ceremony, and Dedication Ceremony.

During the Dedication Ceremony, the parents promise to commit themselves to ensure the well-being of the child.

The significance of the naming ceremony is to help the child grow up in good health and live a long and full life. In naming ceremonies, the *Bhikkhus* (monk) give the child their name. In Sri Lanka and other Theravada countries,

when a baby is born, monks may be invited to the house where they prepare a horoscope for the baby based on the time of birth. From the details of the horoscope, they decide the first name of the baby. In Tibet, a monk will visit the home and a naming ceremony will take place after about ten days. The baby does not leave the home for the first month, after which it may be taken to the local monastery. In Japan, as in Tibet, there is a naming ceremony at home about one week after the birth, and on the child's first visit to the temple the parents are presented with a scroll for recording the child's life events.

The birth of a child is generally celebrated at the local temple.

- In Tibet, when a baby is born, the parents put flags on the roof of their house and, after a few days, friends and relatives gather at the house bringing gifts of food and clothes. The baby does not leave the home for the first month, after which it may be taken to the local monastery.
- In Sri Lanka and other Theravada countries, within one month of the birth, the parents take the baby to the local temple and put him or her in front of the statue of The Buddha. They ask for the blessings of the Three Refuges—the Buddha, the *Dharma*, and the *Sangha*. The parents make an offering to the temple in thanksgiving for the child.

When the parents present the child in the temple, they are introducing the new child to Buddha, and showing that they want their child to grow up understanding the Buddhist tradition and the Four Noble Truths—and to be able to put the Noble Eightfold Path into practice.

Other practices related to the birth of a child include

- Some Buddhists, such as those in Thailand, tie sacred threads around the baby's wrists to greet the spirit Khwan who is believed to look after babies. When the baby is one month old, a monk may shave the baby's hair.
- In Japan, a few days after a birth, the newborn's room is purified.

Death

Death and the grieving process associated with death are especially significant and important for all religious traditions and faiths.

Buddhists do not believe in the reincarnation of individual identities. Rather, it is not one's soul but the person's *dharma*, which is cast into a new life. Buddhists believe that death is simply a transition stage, albeit an important one, between one's present life and the next life. A Buddhist would normally do their best to help a dying person attain a good rebirth by ensuring that the quality of their final moments of consciousness are peaceful and as free of fear as possible. This is best achieved if the family members or visitors stay serene and calm, and help the dying person recollect their good actions. Often, a dying Buddhist will ask to see a Buddhist monk or nun of their own tradition to give them encouragement, spiritual support, and chant Buddhist scriptures

or blessings. Dying Buddhists may request that all pain killers or other drugs, which could impair clarity of mind, be stopped shortly before death.

Because of this and because of the restriction on their participating in parties and the like, funerals are the only major life rite in which Buddhist monks and nuns are actively involved.

Buddhist funerals are not completely sad occasions, as Buddhists believe that the dead person has passed into the next rebirth and, hopefully, will experience a happier and more fulfilled life. After a Buddhist has died, his or her relatives will often perform acts of generosity or religious observance in their name and dedicate the power of that goodness to the well-being of the deceased. For example, the family hopes to improve the future birth of the deceased person through prayer and offering food to the monks.

Ceremonies are held for the benefit of the deceased person but also for the benefit of friends and family left behind. There may be a sermon which will emphasize the Buddhist teachings of impermanence (*anicca*) and non-self (*anatta*) and of the inevitability of death. The ceremony will also be concerned with developing merit which will then be transferred to the deceased person so that it can benefit them in their new circumstances.

Buddhist funeral observances are, to a large degree, based on Indian customs. For example, the cremation of The Buddha's body and the subsequent spreading of the ashes are told in the *Mahaparinibbana-sutta* (*Sutta* on the Great Final Deliverance). Early Chinese travelers to India described the cremations of especially venerated monks. After the cremation of such monks, the ashes and bones were collected and a *stupa* was built over them. The large number of *stupas* which may be found near many monasteries attest to the fact that such practices were widely followed. Cremation was also common for other monks and lay persons.

Buddhism does not, however, prescribe any specific preparation of the corpse or type of funeral so these will vary depending on the school and cultural traditions. The bodies of great Tibetan lamas, such as the Dalai and Panchen lamas, are placed in stupas in poses of meditation. Cremation is common in many countries, but Chinese Buddhists generally prefer the burial of the corpse. Burial is also common in Sri Lanka.

In Tibet, and other parts of China and Mongolia, because of the rocky mountainous landscape and the scarcity of wood, it is not easy to bury a corpse. As such, the preference is for the body to be cremated or for a "Sky burial" to occur. In a "sky burial" the corpse is placed on a mountain to decompose while exposed to the elements or to be eaten by scavenging animals, especially carrion birds such as vultures. This is regarded as a lesson in impermanence for the deceased person in the bardo state and for the

relatives, and it is also considered to be a final act of generosity whereby the dead person helps feed the vultures.

The ashes of the deceased are sometimes kept or enshrined in a Buddhist temple or monastery. Buddhist funeral services are usually performed by Buddhist monks or nuns.

Life in Buddhism never ends: although one's body may no longer live, the soul lives on forever and ever, reincarnating in an endless cycle of rebirths, unless one achieves *nirvana* or enlightenment.

Death in Theravada Buddhism

Buddhists in Theravada countries believe that rebirth takes place immediately after one's death.

Figure 44: Coffin being readied for Cremation—In Buddhism the deceased may be cremated but they may also be buried. There is great diversity in the funeral practices of different Buddhist cultures, there are also many similarities. This image is from a series of photos taken at cremations in Laos and Thailand as part of the 'Bristol Buddhist Death Project', University of Bristol.

In Sri Lanka, a Theravada country, at the funeral the family will give the monks cloth for making new robes. The funeral ceremony will include chanting of verses about impermanence. About a week after the person has died, monks will come to the family home to deliver a sermon. Thereafter, at

three months and at one year, there will be special merit-making ceremonies for the benefit of the deceased person.

When Buddhists in Mahayana countries are dying, someone whispers the name of The Buddha into their ear so that this is the last thing the person hears before they die. After death, relatives wash the body. They then place the body in a coffin surrounded by wreaths and candles. The funeral often takes place a few days after the death to allow the first *bardo* state to happen. This is the time when the dead person becomes conscious of being dead and the next form of rebirth is decided. Buddhists in Mahayana countries think that rebirth takes up to 49 days (7 weeks) after death.

In Tibet, a Mahayana country, as a person dies and for 49 days afterwards, they will have detailed guidance read to them from an appropriate text. In Tibetan, Mongolian, and Chinese lamaseries, a *lama* sometimes recites the famous Bardo Thodol (commonly referred to in English as *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*). During this period, the dead person is understood to be going through a series of confused intermediate *bardo* states, and is capable of being influenced.

In other schools, prayers are offered for the deceased at different stages after death, sometimes 30 days or a year later. For example, in the New Kadampa Tradition Buddhist centres, they hold monthly 'Powa Ceremonies' for those that recently died. The Powa Ceremony (see www.southwestfolklife.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/gen_kelsang_lingpur.pdf for a description) is a ritual practice drawn from the Buddhist Tantras and brings together members of the community to offer prayers and other offerings on the behalf of the deceased. It is believed that the Powa Ceremony helps the deceased person attain a higher rebirth.

Ordination of a Monk or Nun

Early in Buddhism, as was noted earlier, the *Sangha* include both *bhikkhus*/monks and *bhikkhunis*/nuns and both live by the Vinaya, a set of rules. To be ordained as a monk, or nun, the teachings of Buddha must be followed and practiced.

Until recently, however, it was only within Mahayana Buddhism that the lineages of female monastics survived and were prevalent in countries such as China, Hong Kong, Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam.

In the Theravada tradition, some scholars believe that the *bhikkhuni* lineage became extinct in the 11th to 13th centuries and that no new *bhikkhunis* could be ordained since there were no *bhikkhunis* left to give ordination. For example, the leadership of the Theravada bhikkhu Sangha in Burma and Thailand do not believe that the full ordination of *bhikkhunis* is possible. One may not be ordained as a Theravada Buddhist nun or *bhikkhuni* in Thailand and the Council has issued a national warning that any monk who ordains female monks will be punished. However, based on the spread of the *bhikkhuni* lineage

to countries like China, Taiwan, Korea, Vietnam, Japan, and Sri Lanka, other scholars support the ordination of Theravada *bhikkhunis*.

Consequently, it has only been in the last decade or two that a few women have taken the full monastic vows in the Theravada and Vajrayana schools.

As indicated earlier, women are seen as being as equally capable of realizing nirvana as men. According to Buddhist scriptures, Buddha created the first order of *bhikkhunis* at the request of his aunt and foster-mother Mahapajapati Gotami, who became the first ordained *bhikkhuni*.

Nevertheless, due to historical practices, teachings, and interpretations, there are differences between *bhikkhus*/monks and *bhikkhunis*/nuns in terms of roles and standing. *Bhikkhunis* are required to take extra vows, the *Eight Garudhammas*, and are subordinate to and reliant upon the *bhikkhu* order. In places where the *bhikkhuni* lineage was historically missing or has died out, due to hardship, alternative forms of renunciation developed.

Attitudes and practices with respect to the ordination of nuns is changing. In 1996, through the efforts of Sakyadhita International Association of Buddhist Women, the Theravada *bhikkhuni* order was revived when eleven Sri Lankan women received full ordination in Sarnath, India. The ordination was done by Dodangoda Revata Mahathera and the late Mapalagama Vipulasara Mahathera of the Maha Bodhi Society in India with assistance of monks and nuns of the Jogye Order of Korean Seon.

In July of 2007, at the International Congress on Buddhist Women's Role in the Sangha, Buddhist leaders and scholars of all traditions met in Hamburg, Germany to work toward a worldwide consensus on the re-establishment of *bhikshuni* ordination. Delegates, *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunis*, Vinaya masters and elders from traditional Buddhist countries, and Western-trained Buddhist scholars attended. The Congress Summary Report states that all delegates "were in unanimous agreement that *Mulasarvastivada bhikshuni* ordination should be re-established," and cites the Dalai Lama's full support of *bhikkhuni* ordination.

The Congress was seen by the organizers as a major step towards the equality and liberation of Buddhist women (nuns). To help establish the *Bhikshuni Sangha* (community of fully ordained nuns) where it does not currently exist has also been declared one of the objectives of *Sakyadhita*, as expressed at its founding meeting in 1987 in Bodhgaya, India.

Ordination Ceremonies and Practices

The significance of becoming a monk is to escape the cycle of rebirth and death. The teachings of Buddha teach monks to live the ways that lead to a happier world and overcome the world's imperfections and sufferings. Admission to the *sangha* involves two distinct phases or acts as follows:

- *pabbajja* (lower ordination), which consists of renunciation of secular life and acceptance of monastic life as a novice
- *upasampada* (higher ordination), official consecration as a monk

The evolution of ordination practices is not entirely clear. It is believed that in early times the two acts likely took place at the same time. Later, the *Vinaya* ruled that *upasampada*, or full acceptance into the monastic community, should not occur before the age of 20. Thus, if the *pabbajja* ceremony took place as early as age 8, it would mean that a monk could only be fully ordained after 12 years of training. As well, ordination cannot occur without the permission of the candidate's parents.

Many rituals are practiced during ordination. In the Theravada Tradition, the rite established in ancient Buddhism remains essentially unchanged. To be accepted the candidate shaves his hair and beard and dons the yellow robes of the monk. He then bows to the abbot or senior monk, to whom he makes his request for admission to the monastery. He then seats himself with legs crossed and hands folded, pronouncing three times the formula of the Triple Refuge—"I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the *dhamma*, I take refuge in the *sangha*."

He repeats after the officiating monk the Ten Precepts and vows to observe them. Thereafter, in the presence of at least ten monks (fewer in some cases), the candidate is questioned in detail by the abbot—as to the name of the master under whom he studied, whether he is free of faults and defects that would prevent his admission, and whether he has committed any infamous sins, is diseased, is mutilated, or is in debt. The abbot, when satisfied, thrice proposes acceptance of the petition; the chapter's silence signifies consent. Theravada nuns ordination is essentially the same, although their ordination required the presence of monks in order to be recognized as valid.

Mahayana Buddhism added new rituals to the ceremony of ordination prescribed by the Pali Vinaya. The declaration of the Triple Refuge is still a central assertion, but special emphasis is placed on the candidate's intention to achieve enlightenment and his undertaking of the vow to follow the *bodhisattva* path. As well, the presence of five monks is required for the ordination. These usually are the head monk of the monastery, a monk who guards the ceremony, a master of secrets (the esoteric teachings, such as *mantras*), and two assisting officiants.

In the Vajrayana tradition, the esoteric content requires a more complex consecration ceremony. In addition to other ordination rites, preparatory study, and training in yoga, the Tantric neophyte receives *abhiseka* (Sanskrit: "sprinkling" of water). This initiation takes several forms, each of which has its own corresponding *vidya* (wisdom) rituals and esoteric formulas and is associated with one of the five Celestial Buddhas or Dhyani-Buddhas. The initiate meditates on the *vajra* (thunderbolt) as a symbol of Vajrasattva Buddha (the Adamantine Being), on the bell as a symbol of the void, and on the *mudra*

(ritual gesture) as "seal." The intent of the initiation ceremony is to produce an experience that anticipates the moment of death. The candidate emerges reborn as a new being, a state marked by his receipt of a new name.

Many persons stay as monks or nuns for several years, becoming more mature in their attitude to life. They may leave the monastery and monastic life to get married and have a family. Many Buddhists value the monastic tradition as it shapes their character and stops them from becoming too easily distracted by the passing things of life.

Some Buddhists will stay in the monastery for their whole life in the hope that their dedication will result in them reaching *nirvana*.

Ordination of Nuns or Bhikkhuni

(For detailed ordination requirements for women, see the online book, *Women in Buddhism* by Chatsumarn Kabilsingh (Ordained as Dhammananda Bhikkhuni in Sri Lanka) www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/qanda-women.pdf)

In Buddhism, a *bhikkhuni* (Pali) or *bhiksuni* (Sanskrit) is a fully ordained female monastic. Both *bhikkhunis* and *bhikkhus* live by the *Vinaya*, a set of rules laid out by the Buddha. Until fairly recently, the lineages of female monastics survived only in Mahayana Buddhism and therefore nuns were only prevalent in countries such as China, Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam. Increasingly, over the last few decades, there has been a trend towards more women taking the full monastic vows in the Theravada and Vajrayana schools of Buddhism. This has caused some debate in the community, and more conservative Theravada and Vajrayana members may not recognize contemporary *bhikkuni* ordinations as being valid.

Figure 45: Nuns with Bodhisattva Day Offerings of flowers and incense, Tharlam Monastery of Tibetan Buddhism, Boudha, Nepal

In Mahayana Buddhism, the basic requirements for ordination as a *bhikkhuni* are similar to that of monks and the ordination has four steps. First the person must make a commitment to follow the Five Precepts. The next step is to enter the *pabbajja* (*pravrajya*) or monastic way of life, which includes wearing the monastic's robes. Following, the adoption of a monastic way of life, one can become a sramaneri or novitiate. The last and final step is to take the full vows of a *bhikkhuni*.

Female monastics are required to follow special rules that male monastics do not, the *Eight Garudhammas*. The origin of the *Eight Garudhammas* is not clear and is subject to much debate as discussed earlier in the section on the role of women in Buddhism. As well, there is some diversity with respect to the specific vows and rules that nuns must follow among different schools.

The traditional appearance of ordained nuns is nearly identical to that of male monks, including a shaved head, shaved eyebrows, and the wearing of saffron coloured robes. In a few countries, nuns wear dark chocolate coloured robes or sometimes the same colour as monks.

In some schools of Buddhism, such as the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha of Japan, the ordination requirements and rituals are the same for men and women and are performed at the *Honzan* or mother temple. To become an ordained priest, one has to complete the requirements for a *Tokudo* ordination. *Tokudo-Shiki* is the formal ordination ceremony that a follower takes in becoming a priest or nun. To be ordained, several years of intensive study by the candidate are required. During the ceremony, the follower receives *tonsure* (*teido*), the ceremonial shaving of his/her hair. The follower also receives a *dharma* name (*kaimyo*). After ordination and further study, a minister needs to receive their *kyoshi* certification.

Some Buddhist schools, particularly in the West, have simplified or changed their ordination rituals and requirements for women. For example, in the New Kadampa Buddhist Tradition, ordained women have to change three things; their appearance (cut their hair and don special robes), their names, and their minds. Renunciation monks and nuns have the same vows and tradition, which include the five precepts mentioned earlier plus five more: to practice contentment, to reduce their desire for worldly pleasure, to abandon meaningless activities, to practice the three higher trainings of moral discipline, and to practice concentration and wisdom.

In countries where full ordination is not available to them, women have traditionally volunteered to take limited vows to live as renunciants. These women attempt to lead a life following the teachings of the Buddha. They observe eight to ten of the precepts, but do not follow exactly the same codes as *bhikkhunis*. They do not receive official endorsement or the educational support offered to monks. Some cook while others practise and teach meditation. Theravada women renunciants who are not fully ordained wear white or pink robes. These women are known by various names, including *dasa sil mata* in Sri Lanka, *thilashin* in Burma, *maechi* in Thailand, *guruma* in Nepal and Laos, and *siladharas* at the Amaravati Buddhist Monastery in England.

Marriage

For Buddhists, marriage is not a religious institution, it is a social one. Marriage is not required of individuals for religious reasons, but it is accepted as an important element of life. It is viewed as helping the couple uphold one of the Five Precepts that tells Buddhists to avoid sexual misconduct by being content.

Marriages are celebrated differently due to the diversity of beliefs among Buddhists in different countries and cultures. For example, in some countries, monks do not participate in wedding ceremonies due to the belief that they will bring bad luck to the wedded couple. However, in most countries, monks attend marriage ceremonies and are welcomed. Details of marriage ceremonies usually reflect the cultures of the country in which they take place.

In general, monks are forbidden to attend celebrations, especially where there might be alcohol.

Buddhist Marriage Ceremonies

In Buddhist countries, the marriage ceremony is likely to be held in the home, a hall, or in a specially built pavilion. There is no marriage ceremony held at a temple; although, a monk or a lay teacher may be invited after the marriage ceremony to offer a blessing on the marriage. This will include specific blessings chanted by the monk and maybe a short sermon, probably on marriage.

In some sects, during the marriage ceremony, a Sacred Thread Ritual is done where both the groom and bride attach a thread from their heads and when the speech passage completes, the thread is cut. After the thread is cut, the string is kept by many relatives for three days to ensure the couple will receive good luck.

Symbols, Art, and Aesthetics

Buddhist symbolism is intended to represent, through art, certain key elements of the *dharma*, or Buddhist beliefs. Many of the symbols are also common to Hinduism, but their meaning may be different.

Early Symbols

Some of the earliest and most common symbols include the

- *Stupa* and the relics which could be found inside them
- *Dharmachakra* or *Dharma Wheel*
- Bodhi Tree
- Lotus Flower
- Swastika

Diversity of Buddhist Symbolism

While some Buddhist symbols are found or used in each of the three major Buddhist schools, others are unique to each and reflect the differences between schools. As well, there are variations in the interpretation of the meaning and significance of the symbols.

Theravada Symbolism

In the Theravada schools, Buddhist art and symbolism focuses solely on representational art and historical meaning. Reminders or memorials of The Buddha, called *cetiya*, fall into one of three categories relic, spatial, and representational.

While The Buddha was not represented in human form until about the first century, his physical characteristics are described in one of the main texts of the traditional Pali Canon, the *Dīgha Nikāya*, in the discourse titled "Sutra of the Marks."

Buddha's primary physical characteristics are described by 32 signs, "The 32 signs of a Great Man," and another eighty secondary characteristics.

Mahayana Symbolism

In the Mahayana schools, Buddhist figures and sacred objects tend towards esoteric (secret and mystical, not shared with everyone) and symbolic meanings. *Mudras*—symbolic hand gestures—describe the actions of the characters represented in Buddhist art. Many images also function as *mandalas* (literally "circle"—a spiritual and ritual symbol representing the universe).

Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhist art frequently makes use of a specific set of eight auspicious symbols (*Astamangala*) in domestic and public art. These symbols have spread with Buddhism and have been incorporated into the art of many cultures, including Indian, Tibetan, Nepalese, and Chinese art.

The eight auspicious symbols are

- Lotus Flower
- Endless Knot
- Golden Fish
- Victory Banner
- Wheel of the Dharma
- Treasure Vase
- Parasol (Umbrella)
- Conch Shell

In East Asian Buddhism, the swastika is a widely used symbol of eternity. It is used to mark Buddhist temples on maps and in the beginning of Buddhist texts. It is known in classical Tibetan as *yungdrung*. In ancient Tibet, it was a graphical representation of eternity.

In Zen, a widely used symbol is the *enso*, a hand-drawn circle.

Vajrayana Symbolism

A central Vajrayana symbol is the *vajra*, a sacred indestructible weapon of the god Indra, associated with lightning and the hardness of diamonds. It symbolizes emptiness (*sunyata*) and, therefore, the indestructible nature of reality.

Other Vajrayana symbols include the *ghanta* (ritual bell), the *bhavacakra*, the *mandalas*, the number 108, and The Buddha eyes commonly seen on Nepalese stupas such as at Boudhanath. There are various mythical creatures used in Vajrayana as well: Snow Lion, Wind Horse, dragon, *garuda*, and tiger.

The popular mantra "*Om mani padme hum*" is widely used to symbolize compassion and is commonly seen inscribed on rocks, prayer wheels, *stupas*, and art.

Tibetan Buddhist architecture is centred on the *stupa*, called in Tibetan *chorten*. The chorten consists of five parts that represent the *Mahabhuta* (five elements). The base is square which represents the earth element, above that sits a dome representing water, on that is a cone representing fire, on the tip of the cone is a crescent representing air, inside the crescent is a flame representing ether. The tapering of the flame to a point can also be said to represent consciousness as a sixth element. The *chorten* presents these elements of the body in the order of the process of dissolution at death.

Tibetan temples are often three-storied. The three can represent many aspects such as the *trikaya* (three aspects) of a Buddha. The ground story may have a statue of the historical Buddha Gautama and depictions of Earth and so represent the *nirmanakaya*. The first story may have Buddha and elaborate

ornamentation representing rising above the human condition and the *sambhogakaya*. The second story may have a primordial Adi-Buddha in Yab-Yum (sexual union with his female counterpart) and be otherwise unadorned representing a return to the absolute reality and the *dharmakaya (*truth body).

Common Buddhist Symbols

The chart on the following pages provides a summary of the most common symbols associated with Buddhism and their meaning or significance.

Image	Name and Meaning
	The **Eight Auspicious Symbols (*Astamangala*)** derive from Mahayana traditions. The exact origins of the eight symbols are not known, but it is generally believed that they are based on Indian traditions that predate The Buddha's life. Some Buddhist scholars believe the eight auspicious symbols reflect the eight items the Indian *Brahmin* offered The Buddha following his death. There are various teachings and interpretations with respect to each, but there are also some general beliefs about the eight symbols. The wheel to the left depicts the eight auspicious symbols. Starting from the top and moving clockwise, the eight symbols are the parasol or umbrella, the infinity knot, the treasure vase or *pumpa*, the lotus flower, the conch shell, the two golden fish, the victory banner, and the *Dharma wheel* (*Dharmachakra*).
	The **parasol** or **umbrella** is traditionally a symbol of royalty and protection from the elements. In Buddhism, the Parasol symbolizes the protection the *Dharma* gives one from the distress and confusion caused by our *samsaric* lives and the burning heat of our emotions. Even though we may not be fully awakened, when we seek refuge in The Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, we begin to find ease beneath the shelter of the parasol. It is usually depicted with a dome, representing wisdom, and a 'skirt' around the dome, representing compassion. Sometimes the dome is octagonal, representing the Eightfold Path. In other uses, it is square, representing the four directional quarters.

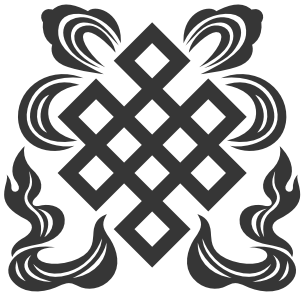
Image	Name and Meaning
	The **infinity knot** (aka **endless knot** or **eternal knot**) is a symbol of The Buddha's mind. It represents The Buddha's endless wisdom and compassion and can also represent the continuity of the 12 Links of Dependent Origination. The intertwining lines symbolize how everything is connected.
	The **treasure vase** or ***pumpa*** traditionally is a symbol of wealth, abundance, affluence, and prosperity. In Buddhism, each person is a scared receptacle, a vessel that can be filled with riches of wisdom and compassion. It may also symbolize the treasures of health, wealth, prosperity, and all the good things that come with enlightenment. It is also a reminder of the potential of following The Buddha's teachings. From mindfulness and concentration to compassion and loving-kindness, these are some of the many gifts and treasures that come from practicing the *dharma*.
	The **lotus flower** is an important symbol in Buddhism as well as Hinduism. It symbolizes purity and encourages us to enjoy the purity of our mind and actions. In Buddhism, the lotus has been used in many teachings to impart the true nature of all mankind. While the roots of the lotus flower are found deep in the mud, below the murky water of a pond or lake, it still grows above the water and blossoms into a beautiful, sweet-smelling flower. The lotus is representative of how one may rise from suffering to reach enlightenment, beauty, and clarity. The lotus can appear in several colours, each with its own meaning: white symbolizes spiritual and mental purity, pink symbolizes the traditional Buddha, purple is for mysticism, red symbolizes love and compassion, while blue symbolizes wisdom.
	The **conch shell** (the right-turning white conch shell) represents the deep, melodious, and sonorous sound of The Buddha's teachings, the *Dharma*, reaching far and wide, awakening beings from ignorance.

Image	Name and Meaning
	**Two golden fish** historically symbolized the Ganges and the Yamuna rivers. Overtime they have become symbolic of good fortune or luck. They are also a symbol of how one with courage and fearlessness may face the ocean of suffering and may choose their rebirth just as fish swim freely through water.
	The **victory banner** was originally a military standard of ancient India. The Victory Banner represents The Buddha's victory over Mara, the Lord of Illusion, preceding his Enlightenment. In Tibetan Buddhism, victory banners symbolize enlightenment. They symbolize the victory of humans when they defeat the enemy of elusion.
	The **Dharma wheel (*Dharmachakra*)** is a symbol common to several religions with origins in India including Jainism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Historically, the *Dharmachakra* was often used to adorn Buddhist temples, statues, and inscriptions, from the earliest period of Indian Buddhism to today. In Buddhism, the *Dharmachakra* represents The Buddha's Dharma (His teachings and beliefs), Gautama Buddha himself, and the path taken to enlightenment. It is also a symbol related to the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path, with each spoke representing one of the eight paths. It is a reminder for Buddhists to help others by 'turning the Wheel of *Dharma*; that is, by giving *Dharma* teachings.

Image	Name and Meaning
	The ***vajra* (thunderbolt)** and ***tribu*/*drilbu* (bell)** are ceremonial or ritual objects, used in many rites by Tibetan Buddhist lamas or any Vajrayana practitioner of *sadhana* (spiritual exercises). The **vajra** (aka *dorje*) symbolizes great spiritual power, and the properties of a diamond (indestructible) and a thunderbolt (irresistible force). It is shaped like a small wand resembling a scepter, with a ball or round finial on both ends. It is usually made of copper or silver. It is always held in the right hand of the person. It is used in cleansing or purification rituals intended to bring forth enlightenment. It is also used in a ritual known as *Dorje*, with the *tribu* (bell), by *lamas* and other practitioners in various rituals. The ***tribu*** symbolizes compassion and wisdom. Traditionally, the Tribu has a handle corresponding in shape to the *dorje's* finial, as in the image to the left. It is made from the same metal as the *vajra*. It is believed that the sound of the *tribu* purifies one's spirit, draws good energy, and banishes evil.
	The ***swastika*** symbolizes the feet or footprints of The Buddha and is often used to mark the beginning of texts. In contemporary Tibetan Buddhism, it often used to decorate clothing and other objects. With the spread of Buddhism, it has become part of the iconography of China and Japan. There, it symbolizes plurality, abundance, prosperity, and long life. In the image on the left, the swastika is prominently displayed on the chest of the statue of Buddha in Kek Lok Si temple in Malaysia.
	The **kapala** or **skull cup** is a ritual object (a bowl or cup) made from the top half of a human skull. The *kapala* is used by both Hindu and Buddhist (Vajrayana) *tantra* rituals. In Tibet, they are commonly carved or elaborately mounted and adorned with precious metals and jewels. The *kapala* is most often used to make offerings to Buddhist deities.

Image	Name and Meaning
	**Prayer wheels** are used to take the place of physically chanting *mantras*. By spinning a wheel on which prayers and *mantras* have been inscribed, the sacred words are sent out into the universe. The prayer wheels are constructed by rolling the inscribed paper and then placing the roll inside a copper or wood container. The container is then attached to a spindle, which is spun around as shown in the image on the left.
	A ***phurpa*** (aka ***kila***, ***purbha***) is a three-sided dagger, similar to a tent stake. Commonly called a magic dagger, the *phurpa's* blade is not sharp and not intended to be used as an actual weapon. The *phurpa* is used to intimidate evil spirits and overcome challenges. During Buddhist rituals, the adherents chant *mantras* while they meditate on frightening away evil forces with the *phurpa*.
	A ***mandala***, which literally means a circle, is a spiritual and ritual symbol common to several Indian religions including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. A *mandala* is essentially a symbolic geometric object that represents the universe. Most *mandalas* include a square with four gates containing a circle with a centre point. Each gate is in the general shape of a T, as may be seen in the image of the Tibetan *mandala* on the left. In the spiritual traditions where *mandalas* are used, they may have several purposes, including ■ to help focus the attention of practitioners ■ to be a tool for spiritual guidance ■ to establish a sacred space ■ to be an aid to meditation In Buddhism, the *mandala* functions as a sacred space open to Buddhist deities and spiritual forces, and is also used as a focal point during meditation.

Image	Name and Meaning
	The **lion** is a symbol of royalty that refers to Buddha's life and position in society before seeking and attaining enlightenment. It is also symbolic of the power of his teachings and will often be compared to the roar of a lion. The lion is one of Buddhism's most important symbols and may often be found at the entrance to and within Buddhist temples and monasteries.
	An **empty throne** in early Buddhist art represented The Buddha. In the earliest phase of Buddhist art, which lasted until the first century CE, The Buddha was only represented through symbols such as an empty throne, the Bodhi tree, a riderless horse with a parasol floating above an empty space, Buddha's footprints, and the dharma wheel. The throne also symbolized the royal heritage of Siddhartha Gautama.
	The **Four Guardian Kings** are four heavenly kings or guardian gods, each of whom watches over one of the four directions of the world.

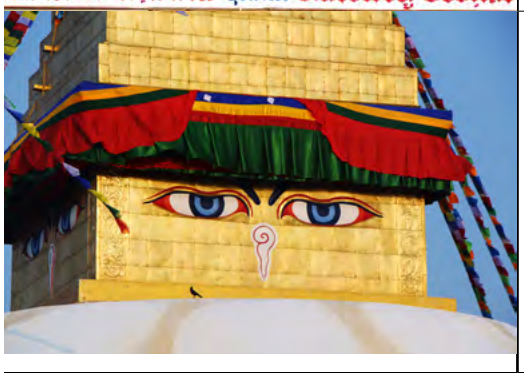
Image	Name and Meaning
	The **footprint** of The Buddha is an imprint of Gautama Buddha's one or both feet. There are two forms: natural, as found in stone or rock, and those made artificially. Many of the "natural" ones, of course, are acknowledged not to be actual footprints of The Buddha, but replicas or representations of them, which can be considered Cetiya (Buddhist relics) and also an early aniconic and symbolic representation of the Buddha. The footprints of The Buddha abound throughout Asia, dating from various periods. They often bear distinguishing marks, such as a *Dharmachakra* at the centre of the sole, or the 32, 108, or 132 auspicious signs of the Buddha, engraved or painted.
	The **Bodhi tree** Refers to a large and very old sacred fig tree that was located in Bodh Gaya, Bihar, India, under which Siddhartha Gautama (Gautama Buddha) the spiritual teacher and founder of Buddhism achieved enlightenment or Bodhi. In Buddhist religious art, the Bodhi tree is recognizable by its heart-shaped leaves, which are often prominent in the painting or sculpture. The Sacred Fig growing at the Mahabodhi Temple is believed to be a direct descendant of the original Bodhi Tree. This temple and the tree is a popular destination for pilgrims, and it is considered to be the most important of the four main Buddhist pilgrimage sites. Other Bodhi trees which have special significance in the history of Buddhism are the Anandabodhi tree in Sravasti and the Bodhi tree in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka. Both of these are believed to be descended from the original Bodhi tree The nun Sanghamitta, daughter of Asoka, was said to have brought a branch of the original Bodhi tree, where it was planted at Anuradhapura.
	**The Buddha eyes** or **wisdom eyes** can commonly be found on all four sides of Buddhist stupas or shrines. It symbolizes the all-seeing and omniscient eyes of Buddha and is representative of Buddha's presence all around. The curly line below the eyes in the middle (where the nose is on a face) is the Sanskrit numeral one that symbolizes the unity of everything and also signifies that the only way to attain enlightenment is through Buddha's teachings. The dot between the eyes is indicative of the third eye, which represents spiritual awakening.

Image	Name and Meaning
	The **statues** and **representations of Buddha**, in Buddhism as in Hinduism, have a number of stylized, ritualistic hand gestures known as *mudras*. Each *mudra* has a specific meaning and significance. Often, statues or paintings of The Buddha depict a specific *mudra*. Therefore, if you know what to look for, you can 'read' the meaning of a Buddha statue or other depiction by looking at the pose, posture, and the hand gestures displayed. Each traditional pose is specifically related to an important event in the life or past lives of the Historical Buddha. Such representations of The Buddha may also be known as an Attitude and there are over 100 poses illustrating the life of the Buddha. The first image on the left is of a statue of Buddha in the *abhaya* or "no fear" *mudra* pose. The second image is of a statue depicting the *dhyana* or *samadhi* pose symbolic of meditation and deep contemplation. The third image depicts The Buddha in the *vitarka mudra* pose, symbolic of transmission, learning, and intellectual discussion. For more information on Buddhist *mudras,* see ■ https://tricycle.org/magazine/mudra/ ■ www.buddhas-online.com/mudras.html ■ www.buddhanet.net/mudras.htm
	Frequently, The Buddha is depicted with curly, short hair, apparently symbolic of Siddhartha after he had cut off his topknot to renounce his privileged past. However, more often, his hair is neither shown as being shaved nor long, In such cases the hair is believed to be symbolic of moderation, somewhere between the extremes of indulgence and mortification. Other distinguishing features and their significance include ■ Half-closed or veiled eyes symbolize a state of meditation or looking outward and inward. ■ Elongated earlobes to hear what is needed in the world. ■ A dot on the forehead symbolizes wisdom and a third eye to see unity. ■ A full mouth refers to eloquence in speech. ■ Long arms signify generosity. ■ Slender fingers symbolize mindfulness, precision, and purity in every act. ■ Round heels represent an even temperament. ■ Fine webs between toes and fingers signal interconnectedness.
	

Image	Name and Meaning
	A **butter lamp** consists of a base and a basin on top for burning vegetable oil (*ghee*) or the traditional yak butter. Frequently, butter lamps are decorated with Buddhist designs and symbols. The lamps vary in size and shape: they may be small basins made from simple materials or large basins that may be gilded and well decorated with Buddhist symbols, such as the lotus. Buddhist monks and nuns will tend to the butter lamps that are theirs and those which are brought by local community and pilgrims as offerings Buddhists believe that they do more than provide light, the lamps also enlighten and purify the mind. They are central to Tibetan Buddhist religious practices and ceremonies, such as the Monlam Prayer Festival. Butter lamps may be used for meditation to help focus the mind. The butter lamp's flame and glow represents the pursuit of enlightenment. The flickering of the lamp may also be symbolic of the impermanence of things and life. The darkness that comes with the extinguishing of the flame may be symbolic of the challenges which all living things may face and with which all may struggle.
	The **begging bowl** or **alms bowl (in Pali, *patta;* in Sanskrit *patra*)** is one of the most important objects in the daily lives of Buddhist monks and nuns. As a practical vessel, it is used to collect alms or offerings of food or money from lay supporters and pilgrims. On a symbolic level, the begging bowl is associated with the historical Buddha. Therefore, the begging bowl is the primary symbol of the life that Buddhist monks and nuns have chosen and of The Buddha's teachings on non attachment. According to the *Vinaya*, monks may use bowls made of either iron or clay, and of various sizes.

Buddhist Dress

Buddhist monks generally shave their heads and wear a robe whose colour and components vary dependent on the specific school, nation, or region; however, all trace their origins to the Buddhist robes that Buddha and his disciples wore. Originally the robes of Buddhist monks were constructed of discarded fabric. The pieces of fabric were then stitched together to form three rectangular pieces of cloth. These three pieces of rectangular cloth were then fitted over the monk's body in a specific way. The three main pieces of cloth that constituted the traditional Buddhist robe were called the *antarvasa*, the *uttarasanga*, and the *samghati*. Together they form the "triple robe," or *ticivara*. The *ticivara* is described in some detail in the *Theravada Vinaya*. (The Learn Religions website offers an article with colourful images and descriptions of Buddhist monks' robes in various countries and schools, see www.learnreligions.com/the-buddhas-robe-p2-4123187.)

The name for the robes vary by school and by region, reflecting the languages spoken by Buddhists in Asia. In the beginning, they were known as *kasaya* in Sanskrit and *kasva* in Pali; however, with the spread of Buddhism to other countries they became known by many other names, such as *jiasha* (Chinese), *kesa* (Japan), *gasa* (Korean), *ca-sa* (Vietnamese), and *chogo* (Tibetan). *Kasaya* is a general term that refers to all robes, including those depicted on Buddhist statues and those worn by monks or nuns.

As stated earlier, the *kasaya* is traditionally made by the aspiring novice, nun, or monk by stitching together fabric and discarded clothing offered by lay people. In India, where the climate is warm and temperatures are generally high, monks needed only one outer garment. However, in countries such as Japan and China, where the climates are harsher and temperatures can be much colder, other garments were needed and worn underneath the *kesa*. Therefore, in Japan and China, *kesa* usually refers to the outermost robe, which became a symbol of faith, an ornament, and not really to serve as protection against the elements. Today, Buddhist robes may be brown/tan, orange, red, maroon, grey, or black and comprised of more than three pieces of clothing.

Buddhist nuns also shave their heads and wear a robe which is usually brown, maroon, white, grey, or pink.

Most lay Buddhists dress according to the customs and traditions of the nations they live in and are indistinguishable from the majority. Nonetheless, within some countries and traditions, lay people will dress in white as was the custom in Buddha's time. Visitors to Buddhist temples or monasteries should dress and behave modestly, as is customary in any religious place or building.

Hats and Head Coverings

In addition to robes, especially in Tibet, some schools of Buddhism have elaborate ceremonial hats or head coverings that monks, especially senior monks or masters, will wear for special ceremonies and rituals. In Tibet, some

of the sects are known or distinguished by the colour of their hats or head coverings. These include

- Yellow hat: the Gelugpa sect
- Red hat: the Nyingma, Sakya, and Kagyupa sects
- Black hat: the Karma Kagyupa sect

In Japan, *gasa*—or traditional hats—were used by Zen monks. These vary in shape and size.

Food, Drink, and Fasting

Within Buddhism there are differences of opinion on whether vegetarianism is a requirement of Buddhist practice and, as such, practices vary between schools and countries. Traditions vary over whether or not The Buddha prohibited the eating of meat.

It is believed by most Buddhists that vegetarianism was not a part of the early Buddhist tradition and The Buddha himself was not a vegetarian. The food Buddha ate was offered as alms by the community or from being invited to the houses of his followers and admirers. In either case, he ate what he was given. Before his enlightenment he did experiment with various diets including a meatless one; however, it is believed that he eventually abandoned them as he did not find that they contributed to his spiritual development.

Over time, Buddhists began to feel uncomfortable about meat eating. By the beginning of the common era, eating meat had become regally unacceptable, particularly amongst the followers of Mahayana Buddhism, although it remained a point of some controversy.

In contrast, Tantric (Vajrayana) text, dating from the seventh and eighth centuries onward, frequently approved of both drinking alcohol and eating meat and both were considered appropriate to offer to gods.

In contemporary times, many Mahayanists are vegetarian and many Theravadins are not, although the situation is complex. Generally, Theravadins have no dietary restrictions, but frequently monks and lay people in Sri Lanka are strict vegetarians. Others avoid eating meat but will eat fish. Chinese and Vietnamese monks and nuns are strict vegetarians and the lay community is expected to follow their example but many do not. Tibetan and Japanese Buddhists are rarely vegetarians.

Buddhists who insist on vegetarianism do so because the Buddhist code of virtue includes compassion to animals. Thus, eating meat supports an industry that causes cruelty and death to millions of animals. Such Buddhists would argue that a truly compassionate person would wish to reduce all this suffering by refusing to eat meat.

The argument that vegetarianism is not necessary is based on several points as follows:

- If The Buddha had believed that vegetarianism was a requirement of Buddhist practice he would have said so explicitly, but he did not (at least in the *Pali Tipitaka*).
- Unless the individual is directly involved in killing the animal by eating meat, they are not responsible for the animal's death. They may point out that in this sense the non-vegetarian is no different from the vegetarian. A vegetarian is able to eat vegetables or fruit because the farmer has planted and harvested the crops and in so doing may kill many creatures.
- Although vegetarians may not eat meat, they may use numerous other products that lead to or are the result of animals being killed (soap, leather, serum, silk, etc.).
- Cultivating virtuous qualities such as understanding, empathy, patience, generosity, and honesty and bad qualities like ignorance, vanity, pride, hypocrisy, jealousy, and indifference are not dependent on what one eats and therefore diet is not a significant factor in the spiritual development of the person.

Each person has to make up his or her own mind as to their position on vegetarianism.

Monks and nuns in most schools of Buddhism, with the exception of Mahayana Buddhism, will usually eat meat. A large part of this has to do with the Buddha's requirement that the *Sangha*, or monastic community, live off the generosity of the lay people. For a member of the *Sangha* to refuse offerings of meat, would be making it difficult for lay people to support them. With few exceptions, monastics are not likely to refuse certain foods unless there are good reasons for doing so. With respect to meat, they may refuse an offering if they see, hear, or suspect the animal was killed specifically for them or if it is a type of meat The Buddha forbade monks to accept, such as human or tiger meat. As well, it would be considered rude to reject an offering of meat from a faithful but poor family who had used their meagre resources to buy meat to offer to a monk or nun, only to have their offering rejected.

In summary, many Buddhists are vegetarian, however, they generally do not take offence at others eating meat.

Significant Times and Dates

Festivals

There are many special or holy days celebrated throughout the year by the Buddhist communities. Some holy days are specific to a particular Buddhist tradition or ethnic group. There are two aspects to take into consideration regarding Buddhist festivals: most Buddhists (with the exception of the Japanese) use the Lunar Calendar, and the dates of Buddhist festivals vary between Buddhist traditions.

- All full moons and new moons are significant days for Buddhists and special ceremonies are held in the temples on these days. Full moon and new moon days are also especially significant for the ordained *Sangha* who gather together on these days to recite the *Vinaya* texts.
- **Buddhist New Year** while not a particularly spiritual holiday, is celebrated in all Buddhist countries, though at very different times. The New Year is celebrated from the first full moon in January in many Mahayana countries and from the first full moon in April for three days in Theravadin countries (Cambodia, Laos, Sri Lanka, and Thailand). Tibetan Buddhists generally celebrate it in March.

  Regardless of the date of the New Year, it is a time when people visit their local temples and monasteries to offer gifts to monks, to pay homage to The Buddha and, for some, to rededicate them to deeper Buddhist practice. In Japan, the New Year is celebrated by ringing bells 108 times in order to rid all beings of the 108 troublesome desires, according to their beliefs.
- **Vesak, Wesak, or "Buddha Day"** is the most important festival and spiritual celebration in Buddhism. In Japan it's called *Hanamatsuri*. It is usually celebrated on the first full moon in May. The term *Vesak* derives from the Indian month of that name in which the festival is held. The festival commemorates the birth of The Buddha to be, Siddhartha Gautama, and his life. Siddhartha Gautama attained his Enlightenment at the age of 35 when he became The Buddha and his final "passing" into *nirvana* occurred at the age of 80. In some countries, *Vesak* covers all the major milestones of Buddha's life: his birth, enlightenment, and death.

  While there are some variations in how the day is celebrated, generally devout Buddhists will try to visit their local temple for at least part of the day, if not for the full day and night of the full moon. Celebrants will attend to the practices of giving, virtue, and cultivation. They will observe giving by bringing and giving food as an offering and to share, as well as offer supplies for the temple and other symbolic offerings for the shrine. They will observe virtue by reaffirming their commitment to the moral precepts. Cultivation may include meditating, chanting, and attending sermons.
- **Bodhi Day** is mostly observed in Mahayana countries. The day celebrates the awakening or enlightenment (*Bodhi*) of the historical Buddha at the age

of 29. It is a time for reflection. Theravada and Tibetan Buddhists celebrate this event together with Buddha's birth and death on Wesak Day. Customs vary but may include special meditation, chanting *sutras* (Buddhist texts) and doing acts of kindness.

- **Dharma Day** (also known as Asalha Puja Day) in some Buddhist communities commemorates the "turning of the wheel of the *Dharma*"—the Buddha's first sermon delivered at the Sarnath Deer Park to a group of former fellow spiritual seekers after he attained enlightenment. It was, in a sense, the beginning of his teaching career and thus marks the beginning of Buddhism, the religion. It is usually celebrated on the first full moon in July.
- **Magha Puja Day** (also called Sangha Day and Four Fold Assembly Day) is the second most important Buddhist festival. It is a major uposatha or holy day. The festival is celebrated by most Theravada Buddhists on the first full moon day of the third lunar month. This usually falls some time in February or March. Sangha Day commemorates The Buddha's visit to Veruvana Monastery in the city of Rajagaha, when 1,250 *arhats* are said to have spontaneously returned from their wanderings to pay their respects to him. It is believed, that it was at this gathering that The Buddha first revealed the rules and regulations for the monastic order.

  The day is dedicated to celebrating the *Sangha*, or the Buddhist community. It is a traditional time for exchange of gifts among Buddhists and it has become an especially important festival in Buddhist communities in the West, but less significant in the East. As well, it has come to be an opportunity for the entire community to meet and offer gifts to monks, pay homage to The Buddha, and perform a variety of meritorious deeds. Celebrations vary, but generally include chanting, meditating, lighting oil lamps, and reaffirming one's commitment to Buddhist practice.
- **Uposatha** (Observance Day) are the four monthly holy days which continue to be observed in Theravadin countries—the new moon, full moon, and quarter moon days, known in Sri Lanka as Poya Day.
- **Parinirvana or Nirvana Day** is a Mahayana festival that commemorates the death (*Parinirvana*) of the Buddha. The death of The Buddha is celebrated because Buddhists believe that he attained Enlightenment and he achieved freedom from physical existence and its sufferings. The Buddha died in a state of meditation, attained *nirvana*, and was released from the cycle of death and rebirth. Parinirvana Day is celebrated by meditating or by going to Buddhist temples or monasteries. As Buddhist festivals in general, celebrations vary with different schools, cultures, and nations. Parinirvana Day is a festive and social occasion in monasteries.
- **Anapanasati Day** is celebrated by Theravada Buddhists at the end of the one rains retreat Vassa. It is traditionally celebrated on the full moon of the tenth month in the lunar calendar and it follows almost immediately after the final holiday celebrations of Pavarana. This special day derives from the story that dates back to Buddhas' time. It is recounted that, at the end of the rainy season, The Buddha was so pleased with the achievements of his students that he was inspired to extend their retreat for another month. When the

end of the extra month of the rains retreat ended, the night of the full moon, The Buddha gave his famous teaching about meditation and the regulation of breathing, which may be found in *Anapanasati Sutta*. *Anapanasati* means "mindfulness of breathing" and is a form of Buddhist meditation now common to Tibetan, Zen, Tiantai, and Theravada Buddhism as well as Western-based mindfulness programs. The day is celebrated in monasteries by reading excerpts from the scriptures, which tell about the life of Buddha. Many adherents at this time move to a monastery for a day, where they sleep and eat a meal.

- **Pavarana Day** is the day that marks the end of the three lunar months of *Vassa* (or lent). The day is mostly celebrated in Asian countries where Theravada Buddhism is practiced. Generally, Mahayana Buddhists do not observe Vassa, with some exceptions such as Son/Thien monks in Korea. Traditionally, it is on this day where each monk (*bhikkhu*) is expected to present themselves before the monastic community (*Sangha*) and atone for any offense he may have committed during the *Vassa*.
- **Kathina Ceremony** (robe offering ceremony) is held on any convenient date within one month of the conclusion of the Vassa Retreat, which is the three-month rains retreat season (Vassa) for the monastic order. It is the time of the year when the laity may offer new robes and other necessities to the monks and nuns.
- **Padmasambhava Day** (commonly known as Guru Rinpoche) is celebrated by Tibetan Buddhists. Padmasambhava, who is sometimes called the Second Buddha, is a historical and also mythical figure of Tibetan Buddhism. While Buddhist scriptures were known in Southern Tibet from about 173 CE onwards, they had little impact on the region. Six hundred years later, it was Padmasambhava who was able to merge tantric Buddhism with the local Tibetan religion to form what we now recognize as Tibetan Buddhism.
- **Abhidharma Day** is a Burmese tradition. It is a day that celebrates the time when The Buddha is said to have gone to the Tushita Heaven to teach his mother the Abhidharma. It is held on the full moon of the seventh month of the Burmese lunar year starting in April, which corresponds to the full moon day in October.
- **Ulambana** (Oban in Japan; Ancestor Day), although typically a Mahayana celebration of the dead, has spread to Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand, which are Theravadin countries. In Mahayana tradition, it is believed that the gates of hell are opened on the first day of the eighth lunar month and ghosts may visit the world for 15 days. Families offer food to the ghosts during this time to relieve their suffering. On the fifteenth day, Ulambana or Ancestor Day, people visit cemeteries to make offerings to the departed ancestors.

  The Japanese Buddhist festival known as Obon, begins on the thirteenth of July and lasts for three days. It celebrates the reunion of a family's ancestors with the living.
- Avalokitesvara's (Kuan Yin) birthday is a festival which celebrates the *Bodhisattva* ideal represented by Avalokitesvara, who represents the perfection of compassion. (Pew Research Center)

Buddhist Calendar

Calendar of Buddhist Holy Days

There are many special or holy days throughout the year in the various Buddhist communities. The specific dates of Buddhist events and celebrations differ across schools and traditions but almost all traditions follow a lunar calendar. The most significant celebration happens every spring around May on the night of the full moon, when Buddhists all over the world celebrate the birth, enlightenment, and death of The Buddha. This holy day is commonly known as Buddha Day. The calendar that follows below provides information regarding some important Buddhist holy days.

Buddhist Holy Days

Holiday	2021	2022	2023	2024
Mahayana New Year***	January 28	January 18	January 7	January 25
Nirvana Day (Parinirvana)	February 8 or 15 depending on the school	February 8 or 15 depending on the school	February 8 or 15 depending on the school	February 8 or 15 depending on the school
Magha Puja (Sangha) Day **	February 26	February 16	February 5	February 24
Theravada New Year (3 Days)	April 27	April 16 (3 days)	April 6	April 24
Dhamma (Dharma, Asalha Puja) Day	July 24	July 13	July 3	July 21
Visakha (Vesakha) Puja* (Buddha Day)	May 26	May 16	May 19	May 22
Bodhi Day (Japan)	December 8	December 8	December 8	December 8

*** The Mahayana New Year falls on a different day depending on culture and nation. For example, China, Korea, and Vietnam hold their celebrations in accord with the lunar calendar, in either late January or early February, but Tibetans traditionally celebrate one month later.

** Māgha Puja is celebrated on the full moon day of the third lunar month in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Sri Lanka and on the full moon day of Tabaung in Myanmar.

*The exact date of Vesak varies according to the various lunar calendars used in different traditions and countries. In Theravada countries following the Buddhist calendar, it falls on a full moon, Uposatha day, typically in the fifth or sixth lunar month. In South-East Asia, most countries celebrate Vesak on the same date as in Thailand, or one day later. In China, dates are about a week earlier.

Places

Sacred Places and Pilgrimages

There are four main Buddhist pilgrimage destinations or scared places. The four places are associated with Lord Buddha's birth, enlightenment, teaching of the *Dharma*, and death.

Figure 46: Myanmar Golden Temple in Lumbini, Nepal—In Lumbini, Nepal there is a Buddhist Monastic Zone where there are many ornate temples, stupas, and monasteries built by diverse Buddhist groups from many different countries.

Lumbini is situated at the foothills of the Himalayas in modern Nepal. In The Buddha's time, it was believed to be a beautiful garden full of green and shady trees). As the birthplace of the Lord Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, who was born in 623 BC, it is a sacred area and is considered to be one of the holiest places in the Buddhist world. The remains of Lumbini contain important evidence about the nature of Buddhist pilgrimage centres from a very early period. Among the pilgrims to Lumbini was the Indian emperor Aśoka, who erected one of his commemorative pillars there. The site is now being developed as a Buddhist pilgrimage centre, where the archaeological remains associated with the birth of the Lord Buddha form a central feature. (UNESCO)

Bodhgaya (also written Bodh Gaya) in north-eastern India is the site of the Buddha's enlightenment and the most important pilgrimage destination for Buddhists. Known as Uruvela in the Buddha's time, the city of Bodhgaya is now a town of about 30,000 permanent residents. The two major sacred sites in Bodhgaya are the Mahabodhi Temple and the Bodhi Tree, around which many other temples and monasteries of various Buddhist traditions (Japanese, Tibetan, Bhutanese, and others) have been built. (Sacred Destinations)

Sarnath, located just 12 km from the Hindu holy city of Varanasi, is the site of the deer park where Gautama Buddha first taught the *Dharma* after his enlightenment. Sarnath has previously been known as Mrigadava (deer park), and Isipatana (the place where holy men (Pali: isi) fell to earth). The latter name is based in the legend that when The Buddha was born, *devas* came down to announce it to 500 holy men. The holy men all rose into the air and disappeared and their relics fell to the ground. The current name Sarnath,

from Saranganath, means "Lord of the Deer" and relates to another old Buddhist story in which the *Bodhisattva* is a deer and offers his life to a king instead of the doe he is planning to kill. The king is so moved that he creates the park as a sanctuary for deer. (Sacred Destinations)

Kusinara (also spelled Kusinagar or Kushinagar) is the site of The Buddha Shakyamuni's death. It is located next to Kasia, a rural town in the state of Uttar Pradesh, 52 km from Gorakhpur, in northern India. Prior to its rediscovery in the 1800s, the site was virtually forgotten and lost its prominence. Excavations began in the late 1800s and many important remnants of the main site such as the Matha Kuar and Ramabhar *stupa* were unveiled. Today, Kusinara is a popular pilgrimage site, especially for Buddhists from Asian countries. Temples have been constructed on the site by Chinese, Sri Lankan, Thai, and Japanese Buddhists alongside the ruins of ancient monasteries and stupas. (Sacred Destinations)

Gathering Places Throughout the World

In Buddhism, a sacred place of practice is called a temple or shrine. It is not usually considered an actual place of worship since The Buddha is not considered to be a god and Buddhism does not hold a belief in a creator god or gods. Temples and shrines are often a focal point for community life, collective practices such as group meditation, and learning. Temples often contain a shrine within which meditation and ritual ceremonies may take place.

There are many sites that attract Buddhist pilgrims, however, the most important places in Buddhism are located in the plains of the Ganges River in Northern India and Southern Nepal, in the area between New Delhi and Rajgir. This is the area where Gautama Buddha was born, lived, and taught. The main sites which are connected to his life are now important places of pilgrimage for both Buddhists and Hindus, however, many countries that are or were predominantly Buddhist have shrines and places which are also popular destinations for Buddhist pilgrims.

Worldwide there are many Buddhist temples that are especially noteworthy for their architectural features, aesthetics, history, location, relics, or other factors. A description of some of these follows.

Taung Kalat Monastery, Myanmar (Burma)

Taung Kalat Monastery was built in the 19th-century on top of an extinct volcano (Mount Popa) 1518 metres (4981 feet) above sea level. It is located in central Myanmar (Burma). To reach the monastery, one needs to climb a staircase of 777 steps. It is a popular site for Buddhist pilgrims.

Figure 47: Monastery, Taung Kalat (Mount Popa), Myanmar (Burma)

The pilgrims visit the site for many reasons including to see the many *Nats* (Spirit) temples and other relic sites atop Mount Popa. Thirty-seven *Nats* that comprise the official list of Burmese *Nats* are depicted in the form of statues at the shrine. All 37 of the Burmese *Nats* are represented in the form of statues at the shrine on Mount Popa; however, only four of them—the two Mahagiri, Byatta, and Me Wunna Nats—are believed to reside there.

Shwedagon Pagoda (Shwedagon Zedi Daw), Yangon, Myanmar (Burma)

This pagoda is one of the most famous in the world. Locally it is known as Shwedagon Zedi Daw and also as the Great Dragon Pagoda. It is believed by some to have been built more than 2,500 years ago, but there are no historical records that document its construction.

Figure 48: Shwedagon Pagoda, Myanmar

The Shwedagon Pagoda is an impressive complex. The main gold-plated dome is crowned by a *stupa* that is decorated with over 7,000 diamonds, rubies, topaz, and sapphires. The rich decorations are offset by a massive emerald positioned just so that it reflects the last rays of the setting sun. The complex comprises hundreds of colourful temples, statues, and stupas and features revered relics such as strands of The Buddha's hair and others.

It is Myanmar's most revered shrine and is well-known across the world, making it a popular pilgrimage site for Buddhists and tourists.

Angkor Wat, Sien Reap, Cambodia

Figure 49: Angkor Wat, Cambodia

Angkor Wat is an enormous Buddhist temple complex in Cambodia that is one of the largest religious monuments in the world. Angkor Wat was originally built as a Hindu temple in the 12th century by the Khmer kings as a spiritual home for the Hindu god Vishnu. The complex was constructed so that it represents Mount Meru, the home of the gods, according to tenets of both the Hindu and Buddhist faiths Hindu cosmic world. The different features of the temple complex represent the mountains, oceans, and dwelling place of the gods

By the end of the 12th century CE, as the religious culture began to change, Buddhism began to dominate the region and it became a Buddhist Temple. The temple is an architectural wonder featuring many artistic treasures such as the bas-relief galleries that line many walls and tell enduring tales of Cambodian history and legend. It also features many examples of Buddhist art.

Angkor Wat suffered significant damage during the rule of the Khmer Rouge regime in the 1970s and during earlier regional conflicts. Since it became a UNESCO World Heritage site it has been largely restored and protected. It is one of the most important places of pilgrimage in Southeast Asia.

Seiganto-ji (Temple of Crossing the Blue Shore) Wakayama Prefecture, Japan

Figure 50: Seiganto-ji, Sanju-no-to (Three-storied Pagoda) -1 (June 2014) Seiganto-ji, Three Story Pagoda

The sacred place where this temple was constructed blends Shinto and Buddhist religions. Seiganto-ji is a Tendai Buddhist temple in Nachi-Katsuura that was built in the fourth century and sits next to the Shinto Kumano Nachi Taisha shrine. The temple is one of the few that

were connected to Shinto shrines after the forced separation of the two faith traditions during the Meiji period. A number of the original buildings were burned down in the 16th century and later rebuilt.

The temple was built near Nachi Falls, which had previously been a site of nature worship. The main deity of the temple is called Kanzeon Bosatsu (also known as Kannon Bosatsu or Bodhisattva Kannon). The temple also features a copper statue of Dainichi Nyorai (The Buddha) that is believed to date back to the 12th century.

It is the first of 33 temples on the famous pilgrimage Kumanodo Kodo route. Many pilgrims come to the temple for religious reasons as well as for the beauty of the Pagoda, the Nachi waterfall, and the surrounding forests. It was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2004.

Figure 51: Wat Huay Pla Kung, Thailand

Wat Huay Pla Kung, Chiang Rai, Thailand

Wat is the Thai term for temple. The beautiful Wat Huai Pla Kang complex was established in 2001. It is located on top of a hill in Chiang Rai city's Rim Kok subdistrict, and it is surrounded by other similar green hills. The complex comprises three sections, as follows:

- A large white statue that is a representation of Guan Yin, the goddess of Mercy, but often incorrectly called Chiang Rai's Big Buddha
- A 9-tier pagoda inspired by Chinese Lanna designs
- A beautiful white temple

A highlight of the temple complex is the 9-storey Phon Choke Tham Chedi pagoda, a unique structure that artistically blends Chinese and Thai architecture and art styles. The pagoda is located near the large statue and features a beautiful staircase adorned on each side by dragons.

Figure 52: Wat Huay Pla Kung, Chiang Rai, Thailand

The statue of Guan Yin is 23 stories high and features a number of statues of various depictions of Buddha surrounding its base.

This temple is an outstanding representation of art and culture with its unusual architecture while also being a place to worship. It draws many devout Buddhists each year, in part due to the Phra Ajarn Sobchoke, the much-revered abbot of the temple.

Byodo-In Temple, O'ahu, Hawaii, US

The Byodo-In Temple is a non-denominational Buddhist temple located on the island of O'ahu in Hawaii in Valley of the Temples Memorial Park. The temple was established in June 1968 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Japanese immigration to Hawaii. It is a replica of the Historic Byodo-In Temple in Uji, Japan that was established in 1052.

Figure 53: Byodo-In Temple O'ahu, Hawaii

It is a non-practicing temple as it does not host a resident monastic community nor does it have an active congregation. Inside the Temple is a 5.5 m statue of the Lotus Buddha, a wooden image depicting Amitabha. It is covered in gold and lacquer.

Outside is a three-ton, brass peace bell. It is surrounded by lush landscape and gardens, along with waterfalls and ponds.

The Byodo-In Temple is visited and used by thousands of worshipers from around the globe. The temple welcomes visitors of all faiths to participate in its traditions. The temple grounds are also a popular site for weddings and meetings.

Paro Taktsang (the Tiger's Nest), Bhutan

Paro Taktsang is the common name of Taktsang Palphug Monastery (also known as Tiger's Nest). It is a prominent Buddhist sacred site and temple complex, located in the Himalayas on a cliffside in the upper Paro valley, Bhutan.

The temple complex was first built in 1692 at a cave where Guru

Figure 54: Paro, Taktsang Goemba (Tiger's Nest)
Paro Taktsang, Bhutan

Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche) was to have meditated in the eighth century A.D. Guru Rinpoche is also known as Bhutan's "Second Buddha" as he is credited with introducing Buddhism to Bhutan and is the prime deity of the country. Today, Paro Taktsang is the best known of the thirteen taktsang or "tiger lair" caves in which he meditated.

To reach the monastery, visitors need to make a two-hour 914-metre climb from the valley, which is located 3,048 metres above sea level.

Kek Lok Si Temple, Malaysia

Built in 1891 atop a hill in the island of Penang, Malaysia, it is one of the largest Buddhist temple complexes in Southeast Asia. It is known for its collection of stunning sculptures, hundreds of carvings, murals and exotic pillars, as well as the seven-story pagoda, which features 10,000 statues of Buddha.

Figure 55: Kek Lok Si Temple, Malaysia

Comprising a series of monasteries, prayer halls, temples, and beautifully-landscaped gardens, this national icon was built by Beow Lean, a devout immigrant Chinese Buddhist. Two-decades of additional construction of this sprawling house of worship were largely funded by donations from the Penang Straits Chinese community. The complex is a cornerstone of the Malaysian Chinese community.

Standing on a hilltop at Air Itam, near Penang Hill, Kek Lok Si is the largest Buddhist temple in Malaysia.

Shaolin Monastery (aka Shaolin Temple), China

The Monastery/temple is of Chan (Zen) Buddhist lineage in Dengfeng County, Henan Province, China. It is believed to date back to the fifth century CE. The monks of Shoalin Monastery have practiced martial arts for many centuries, and developed a unique style called Shaolin kung fu. It is the main temple of the Shaolin school of Buddhism. The Shaolin Monastery and its Pagoda Forest were declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2010 along with other Historic Monuments of Dengfeng.

Figure 56: Shaolin Monastery (temple) China

The buildings of the monastery/temple complex have been rebuilt many times, with the most recent rebuild occurring after they were gutted during China's Cultural Revolution.

Bodhidarma, who was the 28th patriarch of Indian Buddhism, is believed to have lived in Shaolin Monastery. There he meditated for several years and, in so doing, eventually formulated the system of Zen tenets, which is why he is generally recognized as the first patriarch and founder of Zen Buddhism.

Ampara Peace Pagoda

Figure 57: Peace Pagoda, Unawatuna, Sri Lanka

Ampara Peace Pagoda (also known as Ampara Sama Ceitya) is located in Sri Lanka.

The pagoda in Unawatuna was built in 2005 by Japanese Nipponzan Buddhist monks of Mahayana sect. It is one of few Peace Pagodas built since World War II around the world. The intent is to promote non-violence in the community and unite people in their search for world peace.

The other Peace Pagodas in Sri Lanka are located at Adam's Peak, Ampara, Bandarawela, and Walapane.

Sri Dalada Maligawa: the Temple of the Sacred Tooth

Figure 58: Stupa House, Sri Dalada Maligawa

The Temple of the Sacred Tooth in Kandy, Sri Lanka was built in 1595 and is located within the royal palace complex of the former Kingdom of Kandy. The temple is the home of what many consider one of the most sacred relics in all of Sri Lanka: a tooth believed to have belonged to The Buddha. It is believed that the tooth was brought to Sri Lanka in the fourth century CE. This relic has had a long and complex history that resulted in it being moved several times. It was even stolen once but eventually returned.

The temple of the Sacred Tooth is a two-story building where, on the top floor, the relic of the tooth is preserved. The tooth is kept in the smallest of seven

nested golden caskets, which are shaped like a *stupa*, and sit in an inner shrine inside the temple. The tooth has not been allowed to leave the temple and has not often been displayed. However, every summer a festival is held in Kandy, where a replica of the tooth is placed in a golden casket and carried through the streets.

Key (Ki or Kye) Monastery, India

This monastery is believed to have been founded in the 11th century or perhaps earlier. It is famous in part for its unique Pasada architectural style. It is also famous for its collection of ancient murals, weapons, rare *thangkas*, along with images of Buddha in meditation.

Figure 59: Key Monastery

The monastery is in Spiti Valley, Himachal Pradesh, India. It is the biggest monastery in the region and an important training centre for Lamas. It is run by a Gelug sect of Tibetan Buddhist monks. It houses about 250 monks who live there and train, farm, and do what is required to keep the thousand-year-old monastery alive.

Borobudur Temple, Indonesia

The Borobudur Temple and surrounding compounds are considered one of the greatest Buddhist monuments in the world. It was built in the eighth and nineth centuries CE. The temple is in the Kedu Valley, in the southern part of Central Java, Indonesia. It is decorated with stone carvings that depict the life of The Buddha. It was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1991.

Figure 60: Borobudur, Yogyakarta

The temple has three tiers: a pyramidal base, the trunk of a cone, and a *stupa* at the top. The pyramidal base features five concentric square terraces. The trunk of a cone features three circular platforms. A monumental *stupa* crowns the structure. Around the circular platforms there are 72 openwork *stupas*, each containing a statue of the Buddha.

In addition to the Borobudur Temple, two smaller temples are located in the compound. The two temples are

- Mendut Temple, which features a representation of The Buddha in the form of a formidable monolith accompanied by two *Bodhisattvas*
- Pawon Temple, a smaller temple with an inner space which does not give an indication of the deity that may have been the object of worship

The Borobudur Temple functioned as a Buddhist temple from the time of its construction until sometime between the 10th and 15th centuries when it was abandoned for reasons unknown. It was rediscovered in the 19th century and restored in the 20th century.

Jokhang Temple, Lhasa, Tibet

Figure 61: Jokhang Temple, Lhasa, Tibet

According to legends, Jokhang Temple in Lhasa was built in the seventh century by a King of Tibet to please two of his wives who were Buddhists, one a princess of China and the other a princess of Nepal. Jokhang is a monument to the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet and is considered by some to be the holiest temple of Tibet. This is because the Chinese princess, Wenchen, is believed to have brought with her a statue that purportedly had been blessed by The Buddha. The statue, known as the *Jowo Shakyamuni* or *Jowo Rinpoche*, is considered to be the most sacred object in Tibet and it remains enshrined in Jokhang.

Sensoji Temple, Tokyo, Japan

Figure 62: Sensō-ji, an ancient Buddhist temple located in Asakusa, Tokyo, Japan

Sensoji was built in honour of Kanzeon, or Kannon, who is the *bodhisattva* of mercy. The original temple was completed in 645 CE and it is Tokyo's oldest, most famous, and popular temple.

During World War II, much of Tokyo was destroyed by American bombing of the area, including Sensoji. Sensoji was rebuilt after the war by the Japanese people. On the temple grounds one may visit a tree that survived being hit by a bomb. The tree is a deeply cherished as a symbol of perseverance and the undying spirit of Sensoji.

Zu Lai Temple, Cotia Brazil

The Zu Lai Temple is a Buddhist temple in Cotia, Brazil. It is believed to be the largest Buddhist temple in South America. It is a temple belonging to Fo Guang Shan (which means "Mountain of Buddha's Light", a Chinese school of Humanist Buddhism) which is part of the Mahayana branch of Buddhism. The Zu Lai Temple is dedicated to teaching about Buddhism and its cultural and religious traditions, in Brazil and beyond.

Figure 63: Zu Lai Temple

Hsi Lai Temple in Hacienda Heights, California

Hsi Lai Temple, is the North American Regional Headquarters of Fo Guang Shan. Fo Guang Shan (FGS) Buddhist Order is a Chinese Mahayana Buddhism monastic order and belongs to the Linji Chan School. *Hsi Lai* means "Coming to the West." The Temple is intended to serve as a spiritual and cultural centre for those who wish to learn more about Buddhism and Chinese culture.

Figure 64: Hsi Lai Temple in Hacienda Heights, California

It is located in Hacienda Heights in Los Angeles and is one of the largest Buddhist temples in North America. Spread over 15 acres, it has a floor area of over 100,000 square feet. The temple's architecture, gardens, and statuary are in keeping with the traditional style of Chinese monasteries from the Ming (1268—1644) and Qing (1644—1911) dynasties. The temple was completed in 1988.

Cham Shan Buddhist Temple: Ten Thousand Buddhas Sarira Stupa

The Buddhist Association of Canada was founded in 1968. In 1973, this group founded the Cham Shan Temple of Canada located in Toronto, Canada. The temple was named after the Cham Shan Temple in Qingdao, China.

Figure 65: Ten Thousand Buddhas Sarira Stupa, Niagara Falls

The construction of the temple's Ten Thousand Buddhas Sarira Stupa in Niagara Falls was completed in 2002. Its purpose is to raise awareness of Buddhism to a broader Canadian and international audience.

The site features a vast collection of statues and art work both inside and outside the structure. The name of the *stupa* reflects the fact that there are 10,000 miniature gold Buddhas located on shelves in the walls across all levels of the various buildings in the compound. One of the other chief attractions is the large and detailed bronze statue of The Buddha. There are also statues of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara as well as the Grand Bell of World Peace. The bell has only been rung once since the structure was built.

International Buddhist Temple

International Buddhist Temple is located in Richmond, British Columbia, Canada. It was opened in 1983 after completion of the main hall and operated by the International Buddhist Society. It is a Mahayana Buddhist temple but welcomes Theravada Buddhists and visitors of all religious and cultural backgrounds.

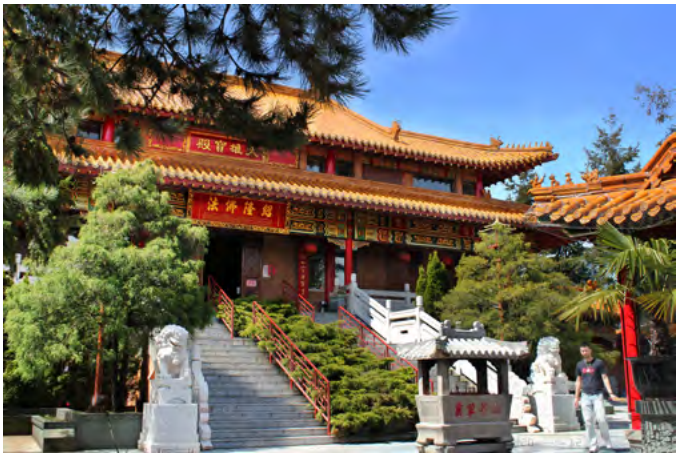


Figure 66: Exterior of the International Buddhist temple in Richmond, British Columbia

Gathering Places in Manitoba

There are several Buddhist monasteries, temples, and dharma centres in Manitoba.

Chua Hai Hoi Temple

Chan Dao Vietnamese Buddhist Association of Manitoba Inc.

Tradition: Mahayana, Vietnamese

Address: 383 Dufferin Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2W 2Y2

Phone: 204-586-8647

Website: www.facebook.com/Ch%C3%B9a-H%E1%BA%A3i-H%E1%BB%99i-Winnipeg-Manitoba-365032434088468/

Teacher: Phap Hoa

Dakshong Gonpa Retreat Centre

Tradition/Lineage: Nyingma (Vajrayana) tradition

Lineage: Dakshong Tulku Rinpoche independent Tibetan lama

Address: 150 Sunset Bay Rd, Lac du Bonnet

Mailing address: Box 18500, Lac du Bonnet, MB R0E 1A0

Phone: 204-345-9266

Website: www.directory.sumeru-books.com/2006/10/dakshong-gonpa-retreat-centre/

Dharma Centre of Winnipeg and Rural Dharma Centre

Tradition/Lineage: Roots in Karma Kagyu lineage of (Tibetan) Vajrayana Buddhism and Burmese Theravada

Address: 18 Einarson Avenue Winnipeg Manitoba R3G OL1

Phone: 204-772-3696

Email: info@dharmawpg.com/

Website: https://dharmawpg.com/

Teacher: Lama Gyurme Dorje/Gerry Kopelow

Huasing Buddhist Temple, Chinese Buddhist Association of Manitoba

Tradition/Lineage: Chinese Pure Land Tradition Lineage

Address: 585 Cumberland Ave, Winnipeg, MB R3B 3M8

Phone: 204-784-9641

Kadampa Meditation Centre Winnipeg, Member of the New Kadampa Tradition (NKT)—International Kadampa Buddhist Union

Tradition/Lineage: Modern Buddhism with roots in Tibetan Gelug, New Kadampa Tradition

Address: 839 Ellice Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3G 0C3

Phone: 204-691-3323

Email: info@meditateinwinnipeg.org

Website: https://meditateintoronto.org/.

Resident Teachers: Gen Kelsang Rigden

Founder: Venerable Geshe Kelsang Gyatso Rinpoche Mahmevanawa Buddhist Monastery, Buddha Meditation Centre
Please note that as of time of publication, the Winnipeg centre is temporarily closed.

Buddha Meditation Centre Winnipeg—Mahamevnawa Buddhist Monestary Winnipeg

Tradition/Lineage: Sri Lankan Theravada Buddhist tradition,
Lineage: Ven. Kiribathgoda

Gnanananda Thero, Ven. Dodampahala Chandasiri Maha Thero

Address: 2610 St Mary's Road, Winnipeg, MB R2N 4A2

Phone: 204-881-5094

Email: info@BuddhistWinnipeg.org

Website: www.mahamevnawawinnipeg.org/

Resident Monks: Bhante Anandasin, Amitha Samadhi, Sasana Sarana

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Manitoba Buddhist Temple, Manitoba Buddhist Association Inc.

Tradition/Lineage: Mahayana, Shin Buddhism (Japanese Jodo Shinshu). Manitoba Buddhist Temple is a member of The Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada (JSBTC). The JSBTC is affiliated with the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha in Kyoto, Japan.

Lineage: Founder Shinran Shonin

Address: 39 Tecumseh Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3E 0J8,

Phone: 204-774-9267

Email: manitobabuddhistchurch@gmail.com

Website: www.manitobabuddhistchurch.org/

Teacher: Sensei Tanis Moore

Manitoba Buddhist Vihara and Cultural Association

Tradition/Lineage: Theravada, Sri Lankan Tradition, Sinhalese Lineage:

Address: 88 Cadboro St., Winnipeg, MB, R3Y 1R7

Phone: 204-269-6026

Email: contact@mbvca.com

Website: http://mbvca.org/

Teacher: Bhante Gigummaduwe Buddhasara and Bhante Balangoda Sugathasiri

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Manitoba Vipassanā Foundation

Tradition/Lineage: Theravada, Vipassanā Meditation in the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin as taught by S.N. Goenka

Address: 74 Gleneagles Road, Winnipeg, MB R2J 2Y2

Phone: 204-254-1679

Email: info@mb.ca.dhamma.org

Website: www.dhamma.org

River and Bridge Dharma Group

Tradition/Lineage: Kama Kagyu Lineage of Tibetan/ Vajrayana Buddhism

Lineage: Venerable Kyabje Namgyal Rinpoche (ne Leslie George Dawson)

Address: 366 Kingston Crescent

Phone: 204-415-5973

Email: brian.mcleod@imaituk.ca

Website: www.facebook.com/riverandbridgedharma/

Teacher: Lama Brian McLeod.

Soka Gakkai International

Tradition/Lineage: Japanese Buddhist lay religious movement based on the teachings of the 13th-century Japanese priest Nichiren

Lineage: First three presidents Tsunesaburō Makiguchi, Jōsei Toda, and Daisaku Ikeda.

Address: 1185 Pembina Hwy, Winnipeg, MB R3T 2A5

Phone: 204-775-1757

Website: www.sgicanada.org/

Winnipeg Shambhala Meditation Group

Tradition/Lineage: Secular, based on Kagyu and Nyingma schools of Tibetan Buddhism

Lineage: Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche (Jampal Trinley Dradül), Founder Tibetan Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche

Address: 875 Corydon Ave

Phone: 204-284-5863

Email: director.wpgshambhala@gmail.com

Website: https://shambhala.org/

Winnipeg Insight Meditation Group

Tradition/Lineage: Non-Sectarian, Insight Meditation

Address: 83 Sherbrook Street (meeting location) 823 McMillan Avenue (mailing address) Winnipeg, Manitoba R3M 0T1 Canada Winnipeg Manitoba

Phone: 204-453-3637

Email: WIMG@mts.net

Website: www.winnipeginsightmeditation.org/

Teacher: Nelle Oosterom, Practice leader and Chair

Westman Dharma Group

Tradition/Lineage: Manitoba Buddhist Temple/No affiliation

Address: 1117 Assiniboine Ave, Brandon

Email: steadyinthestorm@gmail.com

Website or Social Media: www.facebook.com/WestmanDharma/ https://sites.google.com/view/westmandharma/about-us

Teachers: Robert and Tammy

Modern Buddhism: Issues and Challenges

Will Monastic Buddhism Survive?

Historically, monasticism has been a key aspect of Buddhist life and practice. Buddhist monasticism is one of the earliest still surviving forms of organized monasticism in religious history. It is also a fundamental institution within Buddhism. Monks and nuns play a very important role as they are believed to be responsible for preserving and disseminating The Buddha's teachings and guiding the Buddhist lay community. (Bhikkhu Bodhi)

Different schools of Buddhism have differing positions on the role of monks and nuns. Monasticism is most important in Theravada and Vajrayana (Tibetan) Buddhist traditions. Mahayana Buddhism does not place as much importance on the monk ideal as the two other branches. Therefore, in China and Japan and other places where Mahayana Buddhism dominates, the notion of a monk as an ideal is less important. Nonetheless, monks have traditionally been an important part of religious life in Theravada-dominated countries. For example, in Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Tibet, even today, teenage boys and young men are expected to serve as monks for a period of some months, if not years.

Traditionally, Buddhist monks and nuns are expected to fulfill a variety of roles in the communities in which they live. Most importantly, they are expected to preserve the foundational doctrines and discipline of Buddhism. The disciplinary rules for monks and nuns were intended to create a life that is simple and focused. Celibacy was and still is a key requirement of the monastic

Monastic Tradition in Buddhism

Traditionally, Buddhism placed central importance on the order, the *Sangha*, and the role of monks and nuns in the *Sangha*. In many ways, the heart of the Buddhist movement was and still is centred on the monastic tradition of *bhikshus* and *bhikshunis*. Most monks live in monastic communities. Some join when they are as young as seven, but one can join at any age. A novice is called a *samanera* and a full monk is called a *bikkhu*. Monks (and nuns) are trained for the monastic order and the *Vinaya* which consists of 227 rules (more for nuns). Monks and nuns are expected to be celibate and abstain from any kind of sexual behaviour. This includes suggestive speech or physical contact that has a lustful intent. To avoid misunderstandings, it is a general principle for monks and nuns to refrain from any physical contact with members of the opposite sex.

Figure 67: Meditating monk

discipline, and is a major factor in distinguishing the life of a monastic from that of a lay practitioner. Depending on the specific Buddhist tradition and the requirements of observation, monastics may eat only one meal a day, which must be provided either by direct donations of food from the lay community, or from a monastery kitchen that is supplied by and may be staffed by lay volunteers. (Bhikkhu Bodhi)

Monks and nuns are also expected to be role models or living examples of exemplary Buddhist practice for the lay community. They provide an opportunity for lay followers to earn "merit" by offering gifts to and supporting monks and nuns. In return for the support received from the lay members, monks and nuns are expected to live a simple and austere life: one that is focused on the study of Buddhism, meditation, and propagating a good moral character. (Bhikkhu Bodhi)

As Buddhism has spread throughout the contemporary world, however, there are many who question the need to continue to have monastic Sangha as an essential aspect of modern Buddhism. This is especially true in the West. There are many challenges and difficulties associated with Buddhism in the West, such as forming and sustaining monastic communities, keeping Buddhist precepts, and spreading the *Dharma* in places where most people have no sense of the traditions and requirements of monks and nuns. (Bodhi, Shi Jian Hu, Seager)

For some, monasticism is simply an outdated institution. These people highlight the significant contributions made by lay scholars and the important roles Buddhist teachers have played and continue to play in many temples, meditation centres, and Buddhist communities. Some question whether Buddhist teachings should or can flow solely through a "lay *Sangha*," through lay teachers and lay practitioners. Others wonder if monastics are still necessary, and argue that changes are required in their roles and lifestyles to align with current needs and contexts. This is particularly true in the West, where many see a need for changes in lifestyle and orientation to respond to the new conditions imposed by the Western culture in which Buddhism has taken root.

Some schools have attempted to modernize their ordination practices. For example, the New Kadampa Tradition has a simplified process for ordination. It requires ten vows to be taken that are intended to summarize the entire *Vinaya*, and there is a single ordination ceremony. As well, the ten vows in the New Kadampa Tradition ordination are the same for both nuns and monks. In other cases, monks in the West have other jobs to help sustain their roles, as the donating of alms to monks and nuns is new to Western lay Buddhists.

Thus, it is almost inevitable that in Canada, in the West, and to some degree in the East, Buddhist monasticism will evolve and change over time in different ways. Some of these changes will result from Buddhism adapting to the specific cultural and socio-political environment of Western nations, cultures, and modes of understanding, which differ so much from the cultures and world view of traditional Asian cultures and communities.

The push for change is not solely occurring in the West. In the East, in traditionally Buddhist nations, the role and place of Buddhist monks and nuns is increasingly being challenged. In many nations, there has been significant decline in the number of monks and nuns. In an age of consumerism, technology and social media, individual expression, globalization, and social freedom, youth are less motivated to take up a monastic life. In many Buddhist majority nations, the number of people making the choice to become a monk or a nun has declined dramatically. (Dipananda) For example,

- In Taiwan, many monasteries are underpopulated or closed. Due to concern for the future of Buddhism in Taiwan, many Vietnamese monks are being trained in Buddhist colleges in Vietnam and will move to Taiwan to assume a leadership role in its monasteries after completing their studies. (Williamson)
- In Korea, the Jogye Order that was first established in 1395 in Seoul and is the leading order of Zen Buddhism in Korea, has experienced a sharp decline in the number of young males becoming monks. It is estimated that, in the last few decades, the Order has seen a decline of 30% to 50% in the number of young people joining the Order. Generally, Korea's Buddhist monks make a long-term commitment, dedicating decades of their life to being a monk. In contrast, in Thailand, it is customary to become a monk for a much shorter period, even three to six months, and then return to lay society. For many Koreans, they simply do not wish to dedicate a decade or more to monastic life, meditating and learning in a temple, isolated in a mountain or a far away temple. As well, fewer are willing to take on the great responsibility of being a monk or nun. (Zhe)

As a result, the role monastics play in Western Buddhism will likely differ in important ways from the lifestyle and role they traditionally played in Asia. Historically, Buddhism has adapted to the cultures and social contexts of the places where it has taken root. As such, it can be expected that change is not only inevitable but also healthy and normal. As these adaptations and changes occur, they may be seen as evidence of Buddhism's ability to adapt to different cultural and social conditions, and a sign of enduring spiritual strength.

There are several ways that the role of monks and nuns are changing and will change in the West and possibly other parts of the world. Two of these are discussed under the following two sections of this document: Leveling of Roles and Practices and Social Engagement.

Leveling of Roles and Practices

From a traditional Buddhist point of view, the monastic *Sangha* is necessary for the successful dissemination, expansion, and continuity of Buddhism. This is because the monastic *Sangha* ensures the continuity of the Triple Gem or Triceps of Buddhism. (Bodhi, Loy)

Traditionally, one of the governing principles of Buddhist culture is that there are natural differences among people based on family background, social

class, wealth, race, education, and other factors. These differences confer privileges for some but not for others. From a traditionalist understanding, monastics and laity occupy different strata in terms of their positions and duties within Buddhism. Within the monastic community, it is expected that monastics will respect and defer to senior members of the *Sangha*. (Bodhi, Seager)

It is difficult to make generalizations about Buddhist leadership structures. Buddhist organizational structures vary from region to region and from sect to sect. Some are strictly hierarchical while others are not. Likewise, some have central governing bodies while others do not. In some countries, the leadership structures are aligned with the government but in others they are oriented toward the community. Consequently, making generalizations about Buddhist hierarchies is difficult.

A few generalizations can nevertheless be made. In almost all cases, there is some form of hierarchy that may be based on education, experience, or accomplishment. While individual relationships of teacher/student, senior/junior, and preceptor/trainee may be observed among groups of monastics, generally there are no formal positions, nor is there any authority to give orders or commands invested in senior monks.

Generally, monasteries are democratic and non-authoritarian institutions run for monks by monks, who keep the monastery going. In Theravada Buddhism, there has not been an overarching theocratic structure with a leader like the Pope or Dalai Lama. In fact, even the Dalai Lama is not really the leader of Tibetan Buddhism. In reality, he is the highest-ranking monk at Buddhism's main monastery in Tibet and traditionally has been responsible for the governing of Tibet.

The hierarchies tend to exist mostly on the monastery level with abbots or senior monks serving as leaders of the monastery. An abbess or abbot, typically a senior monastic still young enough to be active, is usually responsible for the day-to-day administration of the monastery, and may appoint others to assist with the work. In some traditions, the abbess/abbot is chosen by a vote of the monastics in a monastery. In other traditions (Thailand, for example), the abbot is chosen by the lay community.

Lay people are expected to provide monks and nuns with their material needs, undertake precepts, engage in devotional practices to acquire merit, and practice meditation, usually under the guidance of monks. Monks, in contrast, practice intensive meditation, study the sacred texts, conduct ceremonies, and provide the lay community with teachings and examples of a dedicated Buddhist life.

This stratification within Buddhist communities is typical in the majority of traditional Buddhist cultures and societies. The distinction and differences in roles and practices is based on the belief that the Buddhist person is not yet ready for deeper *Dharma* study and intensive meditative practice, and

will need to work further to gradually achieve a mature understanding of Buddhism through faith, devotion, and accomplishing good deeds.

In Western society and many other modern societies, however, the idea of a stratified society and corresponding privileges is often contested. In many contemporary societies, there are efforts to level such social distinctions. This is an important aspect of contemporary societies that value democracy and human rights principles. Thus, from a contemporary, egalitarian viewpoint, everyone has an equal claim to their fundamental human rights. Everyone is entitled to have the opportunity to participate in any worthwhile social endeavour or institution; everyone's opinions merit consideration; and no one has an intrinsic right to privilege and entitlement. (Bodhi, Seager)

In modern Western Buddhism, the traditional stratification in roles and practice between monastics and the laity has, to a large degree, been disregarded. This has resulted in the overturning of the classical monastic-laity distinction in two ways. First, most lay people do not to accept the traditional understanding of a lay person's limitations with respect to role and practice. They seek access to the *Dharma* fully in terms of full depth of understanding and range. Many contemporary lay Buddhists study Buddhist sacred texts, even the most challenging and complex philosophical works that traditional Buddhists regard as the domain of monastics. They undertake intensive meditation, and seek to achieve the higher stages of *samadhi* (stages of meditative absorption) and insight and even achieve the rank of the *ariyans* (Pali term meaning noble ones who have realized one of the four stages of holiness). (Bodhi, Seager)

A second challenge to the traditional monastic-lay distinction is in the growth in the number of lay Buddhists who occupy the position of *Dharma* teachers with authority that historically was usually reserved for monks. There has been a shift away from the traditional nucleus of the Buddhist community, which was a monastery or temple, towards a new institutional body, the Dharma centre. Traditionally, the monastery or temple was a sacred place where monks or nuns resided and where they were the administrators. The monastery or temple was a place removed from the everyday world where lay Buddhists would come to pay respects to the ordained, to make offerings, to hear them preach, to participate in rituals led by monks or to practice meditation guided by monks or nuns. (Bodhi, Murphy, Seager)

In contrast, the nucleus of contemporary Buddhism is often the Dharma centre. Dharma centres are often established, built, and managed by lay Buddhists and staffed with lay teachers. In some cases, resident teachers are monastics who live in the Dharma centre at the request of community leaders, and the programs and administration of the centre are most often managed by lay Buddhists. In the traditional monastery or temple, the locus of attention is a Buddha image or shrine containing sacred relics, which are the focus of worship. Traditionally, monks sit on a *dais* or elevated platform, near The Buddha image. However, in a modern Dharma centre, a statue of The Buddha may not even be present. If there is one, the statue will likely not be

worshipped but will rather serve as a constant reminder of the foundations and source of the teachings. Generally, lay teachers will not sit in an elevated setting from their students. Apart from their roles as teachers, they relate to their students as friends and community members of equal status.

In Winnipeg, one can find examples of both monasteries and temples, as well as a few Dharma or 'modern' Buddhist centres. An example of a more traditional monastery is the Mahamevanawa Buddhist Monastery, while an example of a Dharma or modern Buddhist centre is the Winnipeg Insight Meditation Group, which is a peer-led community organization dedicated to teaching Buddhist insight meditation and other practices as well as exploring Buddha's teachings.

Today, some of the most gifted Buddhist teachers, both with respect to theory and meditation, are lay people, and sometimes female. Thus lay people who wish to learn the *Dharma* are no longer dependent on monastic teachers. While some still prefer to seek a monastic to teach and guide them, others will seek a lay teacher. The choice between the two is largely a preference. Contemporary Buddhists are not obligated to study with a monk, unlike the situation in traditional Buddhism. In the West, one can find training programs lead by lay Buddhists, and lineages of teachers consisting entirely of lay Buddhists.

There will likely, however, always be lay persons who prefer the guidance of the monastic *Sangha*, and thus there is little chance that monasteries and monastic-led *Dharma* centres will disappear. If the size of the lay congregations attached to specific monasteries decline significantly, there is some risk that the donations that sustain the monastery will also decline, and that will jeopardize the monasteries survival. Thus, in the future, the diminution of support for monasteries and nunneries may become a serious challenge to the sustainability of institutional monasticism.

Social Engagement

Another characteristic of contemporary spirituality and religion that challenges traditional Buddhist views and practices concerning monasticism is a focus on social engagement and social justice. Theoretically, traditional Buddhism tends to promote a certain separation and distance from the many, everyday problems that confront humanity as a whole. These may be problems such as poverty, the prevalence of war, the denial of basic human rights, the environment, the widening gap between the rich and the rest, and economic and racial oppression.

In practice, however, Buddhist temples in Asia have not strictly adhered to the traditional views on monastics and social engagement. At times, Buddhist temples in Asia often functioned as community centres where the community gathered to deal with their social and economic problems. Buddhist monks in southern Asia often have been at the front of social action movements and served as the voice of the people in their confrontation with oppressive government regimes. For example in Myanmar (Burma), monks led the

protests against the military dictatorship and the limitations they imposed on society.

More recently and alarmingly, Buddhist monks in Myanmar have also been at the front of advocating for ethnic cleansing and violence against the Muslim minority peoples of the nation, including the Rohingya. When military rule ended in Myanmar in 2011, a wave of ethnic hatred was unleashed in Myanmar. Over the past decade or so, Buddhist monks have played a key role in anti-Muslim rallies and actions. Many monks advocate and support a rapidly growing Buddhist nationalist movement known as "969" that is in part creating much of the problem. (Szep)

Nevertheless, such social engagement activities (whether good or bad) are in conflict with classical Buddhist doctrine. Buddhism emphasizes withdrawal from the everyday concerns of the world, a focus on personal enlightenment, non-attachment, and a certain coolness towards or detachment from the events and developments in the world. In other words, a form of passive acceptance of the flaws of samsara. For many traditional monks, concern with social, political, and economic problems is believed to distract one from what really matters, the quest for personal liberation from the suffering and existence in this world.

Such attitudes of detachment and neutrality towards social injustice does not align well with the contemporary Western religious conscience. In the West, Christianity more recently underwent a profound change in response to the widespread social ills of the time. This response gave birth to a "social gospel" and other developments such as liberation theology that applied Christian ethics of love and responsibility to a host of social problems. These included resisting oppressive and corrupt regimes; eradicating poverty; challenging inequity, racism, and other forms of discrimination; and reducing the damage caused by war.

The social gospel and liberation theology movements propose a systematic and sustained attempt to reform the oppressive power structures that sustained economic inequality, social injustice, exploitation, and the marginalization of the poor and powerless. This activist dimension of social concern led to deep and significant changes among Christians in their understanding of their own religion. Virtually all the major denominations of Christianity have adopted some version of the social gospel. In current Western societies, the clergy have often been at the forefront of social justice causes, preaching for social change, leading demonstrations, and encouraging their congregations to work towards socially transformative action. Rev. Martin Luther King in the United States and Desmond Tutu in South Africa exemplify such religious leaders.

> "The advocates of engaged spirituality understand the test of our moral integrity to be our willingness to respond compassionately and effectively to the sufferings of humanity. True morality is not simply a matter of inward purification, a personal and private affair, but of decisive action inspired by compassion and motivated by a keen desire to deliver others from the oppressive conditions that stifle their humanity. Those of true religious faith

might look inward and upward for divine guidance; but the voice that speaks to them, the voice of conscience, says that the divine is to be found in loving one's fellow human beings, and in demonstrating this love by an unflinching commitment to ameliorate their misery and restore their hope and dignity." (Bodhi, Bhikkhu)

This emphasis on social engagement and advocating for social justice, has had an impact on Buddhism as well. It has led to a form of engaged Buddhism, which has become a defining characteristic of Western Buddhism; one that rejects the idea of Buddhism as a religion of withdrawal from and passivity towards the suffering of humanity. For engaged Buddhists, compassion is about engaging in transformative action. Since classical Buddhist monasticism begins with the act of withdrawal and aspires to detachment, the rise of engaged Buddhism constitutes a challenge to traditional Buddhist monasticism and has the potential to redefine the nature and the shape of monastic life. (Bodhi, Seager)

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Buddhism in an Era of Secularism

The world is becoming a much more secularized world. This is especially true in the Western world since the late eighteenth century. In the U.S., Canada, and Western Europe, this process of secularization has advanced rapidly and may be seen as being near completion. While religion remains important, a secularist perspective now shapes almost all aspects of people's lives, including their religious lives.

Almost every religion today has had to grapple with the challenge of agnosticism, atheism, humanism, as well as simple indifference to religion due to the accessibility and attraction of worldly pleasures.

"Traditional Buddhism" is any school or doctrinal system that operates within the salvationist world view of ancient India. This includes Theravada and Mahayana schools as both forms of Buddhism have as the ultimate goal of their practice the attainment of *nirvana*. *Nirvana* is the complete cessation of the craving that drives the vicious cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. (Batchelor 2018)

Secular Buddhism

Secular Buddhism is a general term for a new or emergent form of Buddhism or secular spirituality that is based on humanist, skeptical, and/or agnostic values, but draws on Buddhist practice. Secular Buddhists reject the religious beliefs associated with traditional forms of Buddhism. In other words, they specifically reject supernatural, paranormal, or mystical beliefs. This form of Buddhism encourages a naturalistic and pragmatic approach to the teaching, to provide a framework for personal and social development within the contemporary cultures and time.
It may also be referred to as agnostic Buddhism, pragmatic Buddhism, atheistic Buddhism, or other names.

Figure 68: Secular Buddhism composite image

Modern Buddhism has responded to the challenges posed by secularist forces and agnosticism, atheism, and humanism in various ways.

One response accepts the constructive criticisms of the agnostics, skeptics, and humanists, and admits that religion in the past has had some serious flaws. But rather than reject religion, it endeavours to arrive at a new perspective of what it means to be religious in the contemporary world. Progressive or liberal

adherents arrive at a new understanding of religion as primarily a way to find one's appropriate or correct orientation in life. It serves to guide one's daily struggles with the challenges, conflicts, and uncertainties that mark modern lives, including one's sense of inevitable mortality. Thus, the religious quest is not to pass from this world to a transcendent world beyond, but to discover a transcendent dimension of life here and now: to shed a new light and develop a new understanding of the ultimate meaning within the turmoil of everyday existence.

This has led to attempts at modernizing and reconfiguring traditional forms of Asian Buddhism. Some examples of such developments include the following:

- Reformed Theravada Buddhism such as the Vipassanā movement
- Reformed Tibetan tradition such as Shambhala Buddhism
- Reformed Nichiren school such as the Soka Gakkai
- Reformed Zen lineage such as the Order of Interbeing
- Dharmapala's Protestant Buddhism
- Sri Lanka's Sarvodaya Shramadana movement
- India's Ambedkar Buddhists
- Thailand's Young Buddhist Association
- A reformed hybrid or combination of some or all of the above such as the Triratna Order (formerly the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order)

(Batchelor 2012, Akincano Weber 2013)

Another way that religions have responded to the secularist challenge is by developing a synthesis of what may be called "spiritual secularity" or "secular spirituality." (Bhikkhu Bodhi) Secular Buddhism is a term for an emerging form of Buddhism and secular spirituality that is based on humanist, skeptical, and agnostic values. It rejects the supernatural aspects of traditional Buddhism that are prominent in the doctrines such as rebirth, *karma*, and beliefs in spirits or gods.

Stephen Batchelor, for example, describes his notion of secular Buddhism, as follows:

> I see the aim of Buddhist practice to be not the attainment of a final nirvana but rather the moment-to-moment flourishing of human life within the ethical framework of the Eightfold Path here on earth. Given what is known about the biological evolution of human beings, the emergence of self-awareness and language, the sublime complexity of the brain, and the embeddedness of such creatures in the fragile biosphere that envelops this planet, I cannot understand how after physical death there can be continuity of any personal consciousness or self, propelled by the unrelenting force of acts (*karma*) committed in this or previous lives. (Batchelor 2012)

Other aspects of traditional Buddhism often rejected by secular Buddhists include the strong emphasis on ritual, beliefs about the power of amulets

and relics, and ideas of extremely powerful teacher-student relationships. (Whitaker) As well, secular Buddhism often rejects other aspects of some forms of traditional Buddhism, including the marginalization of women, male monastic primacy, and the hierarchical organization and relationships. They seek a form of Buddhism that is rational, democratic, and more supportive of gender equality. (Higgins)

> Secular Buddhism may be seen to provide a guide for ethical living and morality in today's world and becoming more present without causing harm to others.

Secular Buddhism is concerned with the practice of Siddhattha Gotama's four noble truths in this world. It encourages a naturalistic and pragmatic approach to the teaching, seeking to provide a framework for personal and social development within the cultural context of our time.

Mindfulness meditation is a key aspect of secular Buddhism. Buddhists practice the *Dharma* to better understand their own minds, find greater happiness and peace in the moment, tap their creativity, be more efficient in their work, be more loving in their relationships, and be more compassionate in their dealings with others. Buddhist practice is not so much about leaving this world behind but fully participating in the world more joyfully and with greater spontaneity. Mindfulness meditation allows one to stand back from life temporarily so as to better delve into life and deal with the constantly shifting flow of events and the challenges of life.

The popularity of mindfulness and meditation programs in the West and beyond demonstrate the appeal of secular Buddhism. Such programs are quite diverse. Some have a firm foundation in The Buddha's teachings while others do not refer to Buddhism at all.

Mindfulness-based meditation programs are being offered in many different settings and locations, both in the East and West, as a secular tool to help practitioners shift from blind reaction to life to skillful response. Increasingly, there is evidence of the value of mindfulness meditation for individuals and groups. The research undertaken at the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, has contributed greatly to the promotion of Buddhist meditation and practice in mainstream science and medicine.

There are some secular Buddhists who are concerned with some of the trends and aspects of secular Buddhism and mindfulness programs. They fear that some forms of secular Buddhism may simply become a form of convenient or 'easy' Buddhism. They fear that secular Buddhism gets reduced to the level of a wellness-school. One that is attractive because it does not threaten Western values, existing beliefs, and cultural sensitivities. Its attraction lies in its inoffensive nature and the fact that it does not require from the follower significant effort, difficult changes, deep thinking, or anything challenging. It often takes an oversimplification of the *Dharma* approach. It does not stress

engagement with difficult texts nor strenuous, deep, and critical thinking. The focus is on just being kind, nice, and a little more mindful. (Batchelor 2012).

The secularization of Buddhism has had a significant impact in Western and other societies. Those that are drawn to this approach to Buddhism do so because it aligns well with the secularization of life that is pervasive in Western culture. Equally important, they believe that it addresses concerns that arise out of living in the contemporary world: how to find happiness, peace, and meaning in a complex, confused, conflictual, and congested world.

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Impact on Manitoba and Canada

Buddhist Canadians and Buddhism have contributed to the shaping of contemporary Canadian society and communities. Like many other groups, they have added to the diversity of perspectives and to our cultural and social mosaic.

The following are questions for exploration and discussion with respect to Buddhism and Buddhists in Manitoba and Canada.

1. In what ways has Buddhism positively contributed to the development of society in Manitoba and Canada? Provide some examples.
2. Do Canadians in general have a good understanding of Buddhism and Buddhist cultures or do they hold stereotypical and misinformed views and understandings about Buddhism?
3. How have you benefited from the opportunity to explore Buddhism?

Figure 69: The initiation by Dilgo Khyentse Yangsi Rinpoche holding a bell on the throne, Rabjam Rinpoche, Changling Rinpoche, and Mathieu Ricard sitting.
Lotus Speech Canada, First Nations Longhouse, UBC, Vancouver, British Columbia.

Teaching/Learning Resources

Books and Articles

Buddhist Sutras and Scriptures

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See also Resource Database to accompany "Exploring World Religions: The Canadian Perspective, Hinduism, www.arts.mun.ca/worldreligions/resources/hinduism/#.

Magazines and Journals

Buddhist Studies Review, Journal of the UK Association for Buddhist Studies: Is published by Equinox on behalf of the UK Association for Buddhist Studies. It is a peer-reviewed journal featuring articles with respect to a broad range of topics related to Buddhism globally. https://journals.equinoxpub.com/index.php/BSR.

Canadian Journal of Buddhist Studies: Is a scholarly peer-reviewed, online journal covering all aspects of Buddhist studies.

Contemporary Buddhism: An Interdisciplinary Journal: Is internationally published by Thomson Reuters, featuring articles on the current state and influence of Buddhism worldwide. The journal takes a cross-disciplinary approach that goes beyond Buddhist and religious studies approaches. www.tandfonline.com/loi/rcbh20

Dharma Today: Dharma Today is based in Canada and is an online Buddhist magazine, with a focus on exploring ways of applying Buddhist teachings to the problems of contemporary life.

Dharma the Cat: An online graphic magazine that blends humour and spirituality to teach about Buddhism through the character of a Buddhist cat.

Forest Sangha's Newsletter: Newsletter of the Forest Sangha, is a world-wide Buddhist community in the Thai Forest tradition of Ajahn Chah.

Journal of Global Buddhism: Is a scholarly academic journal dedicated to the study of Buddhism's globalization and its transcontinental interrelatedness.

Gateway Journal and Zen Karmics: Gateway Journal provides guidance to prisoners about meditative training. It features articles on practice for prisoners by teachers of various traditions and prisoners themselves.

Hundred Mountain: Is a journal of "the Spirit and the Arts" and both a serious and a lighthearted look at fitting spiritual practice and meditation into daily life. It features articles, interviews with Buddhist teachers, a resource list, book and movie reviews, humour columns, and a feature "The Buddhascope," which tracks popular culture references to Buddhism.

Journal of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives: Is a quarterly journal that publishes articles on meditation and Buddhist training, authored by Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, priests and lay ministers, and congregation members.

Kaihan E-Magazine: Is an on-line magazine of poetry, articles, and essays on Zen Buddhism.

Mandala Magazine: Is a bi-monthly journal published by the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition. It is produced by a Tibetan Buddhist organization present in 31 countries.

Nembutsu.info: Is a journal of Shin Buddhism: Provides a perspective on topics drawing on the Pure Land teachings.

Shambhala Sun Magazine: Is the online version of the print magazine. The Shambhala Sun magazine brings a Buddhist perspective to "the arts, politics, relationships, social issues, livelihood, and all aspects of life in the modern world."

Tashi Deleg!: Is Padma Samye Ling's (Tibetan Buddhism) monthly news bulletin.

The Middle Way: Is the quarterly journal of the Buddhist Society UK. It features articles by noted Buddhist teachers and scholars on diverse elements of Buddhist theory, practice, history, and other topics.

The Western Buddhist Review: Is an on-line Buddhist journal which explores Buddhism from a contemporary and Western perspective. It features articles and papers that explore the principles of Buddhism, especially as practised within the tradition known as the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order.

Tricycle: Is an eZine version of not-for-profit quarterly Tricycle: The Buddhist Review (magazine). It addresses topics related to The Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, and the three "great wheels of Buddhism," Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions.

Turning Wheel: Is a journal of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship with a focus on "engaged" Buddhism. It features articles on peace, social justice, environmental activism, and dharma practice.

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A Journalist's Guide to Buddhism published by Faith and the Media, accessed on May 9, 2012 from www.faithandmedia.org/cms/uploads/files/8_guide-buddhism.pdf.

Text and Audio Glossaries

Throughout this document we have used transliterated versions of Hindu and Sanskrit terms as suggested by the experts and resource people that assist in the development of this resource. Transliteration is not an exact science and there will be variations in the transliteration of the original terms used. As well, there are regional, sect, cultural, and other variants in the spelling and pronunciation of the original Hindu and Sanskrit terms. Lastly, as with any language there will be variations in the names and terms used for specific persons, items, concepts, gods and goddesses, and other elements of Hindu beliefs, rituals, icons, and practices.

Audio Glossaries

- Pure Dharma: A Quest to Recover Buddha's True Teachings website offers an audio and print glossary of Buddhist Pali terms. https://puredhamma.net/tables-and-summaries/pali-glossary-a-k/
- Annenberg Learner Audio Glossary. www.learner.org/courses/worldhistory/audio_glossary_all.html

The Shap Working party on World religions in Education Audio Glossary
www.shapworkingparty.org.uk/glossary/a.html

Text Glossaries

- Glossary of English, Sanskrit, and Tibetan Buddhist Terms, by Lama Yeshe Wisdom Archive, www.lamayeshe.com/glossary
- Printable Glossary of Buddhist Terms by Prison Mindfulness Institute, www.prisonmindfulness.org/
- Glossary of Buddhist Terms by the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives, provides definitions for Japanese, Chinese, Sanskrit, and Pali terms. https://obcon.org/dharma/glossary-of-buddhist-terms/
- Glossary of Buddhist Terms, © Geshe Kelsang Gyatso and Tharpa Publications, from Modern Kadampa Buddhism, http://kadampa.org/reference/glossary-of-buddhist-terms-a-e#a
- Glossary of Buddhist Terms, from the Works of Master Hsing Yun, http://hsingyun.org/glossary/
- Small Pali-English Glossary of Buddhist Terms by Buddha Sasana http://vietheravada.net/tudien/bud-dict/pali-gloss.htm

Local Resource People

- Manitoba Multifaith Council, www.manitobamultifaithcouncil.ca/
- Dr. Robert Menzies, Contract Instructor, University of Winnipeg: Teaching Areas-Asian Religions; Religions of India; Buddhist Traditions; Women in Asian Religions; Hindu Religious Textual Traditions; South Asians in the Diaspora. Email: r.menzies@uwinnipeg.ca

Videos

Buddhism in Canada

A Song for Tibet (56:50) by Anne Henderson (1991) National Film Board
www.nfb.ca/film/a_song_for_tibet/
A Song for Tibet is a documentary that tells the recounts the story of the efforts by Tibetans in exile, including the Dalai Lama, to save their homeland and preserve their heritage. It was filmed in the Indian Himalayas and in Canada.

Canadians of Tibetan Buddhist origins share their stories. Caution: This film contains scenes of violence. Viewer discretion is advised.

Buddhism—1962 by David Millar National Film Board (16:51)
www.nfb.ca/film/buddhism/
A short Canadian documentary that tells the story of The Buddha, the religion he founded, and how it is manifested in the early 1960s. The video travels through Southeast Asia to India, Burma, Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon), Thailand, Japan, China, and many other countries exploring the history and ideas behind Buddhism.

Buddhism in Canada: Where Are We? by Dr Victor Hori
www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWNvaUk6Bmo
A video of a presentation sponsored by Fo Guang Shan Temple of Toronto on Buddhism in Canada. Dr. Hori provides an overview of the history of Buddhism in Canada and North America, the present situation of Buddhists in Canada, and the future of Buddhism.

Canadian Police Practicing Mindfulness in Buddhist Temple (8:42) by Acharya Nyima Negi
www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrqTqjqkw30
Video shows police members learning to meditate at a Buddhist Temple in Canada.

Choosing Buddhism—Life Stories of Eight Canadians (3:17) by University of Ottawa Press
www.youtube.com/watch?v=284Hb1wCxxI
A video about a book on the stories of eight Canadians who converted to Buddhism.

International Buddhist Temple introduction video (5:36)
The video introduces the International Buddhist Temple in Richmond, British Columbia.

Lingyen Mountain Temple Canada (32:31)
http://lymtcanada.com/about-lymt-canada/?lang=en
Lingyen Mountain Temple is a Mahayana Buddhist monastery in the Greater Vancouver area. Lingyen Mountain Temple follows the Pure-Land Buddhist tradition that arose after the introduction of Buddhism to China from India. The video introduces the viewer to the Temple and its activities.

The Experience of Canadian Festivals (7:30) by Kadampa Meditation Centre
www.youtube.com/watch?v=ykossnFpLdE&feature=youtu.be
The Canadian national festival held at Kadampa Meditation Centre Canada in Toronto draws people from throughout the country. The festival features teachings and empowerments from some of the most senior teachers of the New Kadampa Tradition. In the video, participants discuss why they attend and their experiences.

The Rise of Buddhism in Canada (1:32 minutes) by Western News
www.youtube.com/watch?v=EIG-Jv_Zok4
A short video about the rising popularity of Buddhism among Canadians.

Toronto Buddhist Church—Introductory Video (2:56)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJHJ8CDO40s
A video that introduces viewers to the Toronto Buddhist Church, which is a Jodo Shinshu Temple.

VANCOUVER: Buddhist Temple, Richmond, BC, Canada (12:28) by Monika Petrikova
www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmWxeg9DOns
This video takes the viewer on a visual tour of the International Buddhist Temple in Vancouver.

Vesak 2016 Buddha's Birth Day Celebration in Mississauga (6:15) by Ram Kajee Moktan
www.youtube.com/watch?v=KIReeYzkP5w
Video of the celebration of Buddha's 2560th birthday in celebration square in Mississauga on 28 May 2016.

International

Buddhist Meditation for Beginners—5 minutes
www.youtube.com/watch?v=oLel1sMDpEM
A video guide to Diamond Way Buddhist meditation for beginners guided by Lama Ole Nydahl.

Buddhism (Chicago Police video)—8.5 minutes
www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5_tlJqnZoc
This training video was prepared for the Chicago Police Department introducing Buddhism in Chicago.

Buddhism for Beginners by Doug's secular Dharma—13.11 Minutes
www.youtube.com/watch?v=pbngKOUgCDY
The video looks at how Buddhism views the world and how Buddhist practice flows from that view.

Buddhism Origins
www.youtube.com/watch?v=YP8VKT2o-mY

Day in the Life of a Monk—5 minutes
www.youtube.com/watch?v=lRHkivEzCfw
This video provides a portrait of a day in the life of a young Buddhist monk. Bhikkhu Tapassi is a young Australian monk ordained in the Theravadan Forest tradition living in the picturesque Santi Monastery in the Southern highlands between Sydney and Canberra.

Discovering Buddhism Series by FPMT (Mahayana Buddhist Organization)
www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL70E7832E292DAAB4
A 13-part video series which features His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Ribur Rinpoche, Lama Zopa Rinpoche, other Tibetan Lamas, and Western teachers, including Richard Gere.

Every Man: Richard Gere's Buddhism (4 parts)
Part 1:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=_OASbnKFXUE&list=PLoULu9xCPMQnt_OeoZCM9_lZY25xvTKul

Part 2:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=vUas8BD1VNQ

Part 3:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-Lf7NyyOvE

Part 4:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=ngH1OFQKnB0

Khan Academy, Buddhism

The Khan Academy website offers a number of short videos on Buddhism including the following four:

- **Early Buddhism**
  www.khanacademy.org/humanities/world-history/ancient-medieval/buddhism-intro/v/buddhism
- **Core Spiritual Ideas of Buddhism**
  www.khanacademy.org/humanities/world-history/ancient-medieval/buddhism-intro/v/core-spiritual-ideas-of-buddhism
- **Buddhism: Context and Comparison**
  www.khanacademy.org/humanities/world-history/ancient-medieval/buddhism-intro/v/contextualization-buddhism
- **Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism**
  www.khanacademy.org/humanities/world-history/ancient-medieval/buddhism-intro/v/theravada-and-mahayana-buddhism

Introduction to Buddhism by Belief: Oprah Winfrey Network 3:18 Minutes
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lxq-RiLb-6M
Varun Soni of the University of Southern California introduces Buddhism. The video begins with the story of Prince Siddhartha who wished to alleviate human suffering and became enlightened in order to help others.

Is Buddhism a Religion? (Fred Ulrich)—4 minutes
www.youtube.com/watch?v=_eyohFK1D6E
By the Living Dharma Centre. In this episode Rev. Fredrich Ulrich of the Manitoba Buddhist Temple explains why he and others have claimed that Buddhism is not necessarily a religion.

Japan the Way of the Zen by Pierre Brouwers
www.youtube.com/watch?v=We2pP1yu960
Pierre explores contemporary Japan focusing on the Island of Honshu—the largest of the islands forming Japan. The documentary explores the continued impact of Zen Buddhism on the country and people.

Life of The Buddha (4 minute student project)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=jVRYnzZvTn4
A student-made video for a classroom assignment.

Life of The Buddha (50 minute BBC documentary)—Start at 6:41 to 32:00, then 37:56 to 49:00
www.dailymotion.com/video/x152cdb_the-life-of-the-buddha-bbc-documentary_people

NgalSo Ganden Nyengyu
A YouTube Channel dedicated to Buddhist teachings featuring three Lamas: Lama Healer T.Y.S. Gangchen Rinpoche, Lama Michel Rinpoche, and Lama Caroline. It offers an extensive list of videos on various topics of Buddhist beliefs and practices including the following four:

- Introduction to Buddhist Philosophy
  www.youtube.com/user/ngalsovideo/videos
- Is There a Main Book or Scripture in Buddhism?
  www.youtube.com/watch?v=WXz3CvKXKPU
- Why Is Death so Important in Vajrayana Buddhism?
  www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPbXH7lhvaE
- Can We Practice Buddhism if We Do Not Believe in Reincarnation?
  www.youtube.com/watch?v=SY2udTygMx4

Secret Life of Buddha by National Geographic (Length: 1:54:46)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=yAKAma8_OG0

The Buddha (1:54:08 Minutes)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDgd8LT9AL4
This almost two-hour long documentary tells the story of The Buddha's life. The video is narrated by a number of contemporary Buddhists, including Pulitzer Prize winning poet W.S. Merwin and His Holiness the Dalai Lama. It is a visually rich video that features the work of some of the world's greatest artists and sculptors.

The Buddha: The Spiritual Journey that Became a Religion by Biographics (Length 15:24)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=6L1CHVxJ0yY
A video providing a quick overview of Buddha's life and teachings.

The Buddhist Science of the Mind by Wade Davis (National Geographic)
https://vimeo.com/33936285

The Life of Buddha (BBC Documentary) (Length 49:57)
www.dailymotion.com/video/x152cdb

Tiger Woods Buddhism (1 minute)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPXAVsJBHYk
Tiger Woods explains his Buddhist background at a press conference before entering therapy.

Vesak Day (Buddha Day) (3 ½ minutes)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=s4EyNYcFa_0
The video describes some of the practices of Buddhists on Vesak Day.

What Is Buddhism? By Cogito (Length: 10:15)
An animated video that tells the origins and development of Buddhism in a simplified form.

Zen Buddhism, by Asian Art Museum (3:22 minutes)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=_WAi2fwUqN4
An introduction to Zen, a form of Buddhism common in Japan, which emphasizes one seeking their own Buddha nature through meditation.

Websites

Canadian

Birken Forest Buddhist Monastery
https://birken.ca/
This is the website of the Canadian Theravada Buddhist monastery, Birken Forest Buddhist Monastery located in the coast mountains of British Columbia, near the Birkenhead Lake Provincial Park. The monastery follows the Thai forest tradition of Ajahn Chah. It was formed in 1994 when the Canadian-born Abbot Ajahn Sona returned from monastic training in Thailand. The site offers a variety of Dhamma teachings including Ajahn Sona's videos and podcasts, as well as print resources. https://birken.ca/teachings/

Buddha Meditation Centre (Saskatoon)
www.mahamevnawasaskatoon.com/
This is the website of The Buddha Meditation Centre in Saskatoon, which follows the Theravada tradition. The Centre's activities are led by monks trained in the ancient Pali scriptures. The site provides an abundance of resources on Buddhism and Buddhist practice.

Buddha Meditation Centre (Winnipeg)
www.mahamevnawawinnipeg.org/
The Mahamevanawa Buddhist Monastery, like The Buddha Meditation Centre in Saskatoon, is part of the Theravada Buddhist tradition. The site provides an abundance of resources on Buddhism and Buddhist practice.

Buddhism: The Canadian Encyclopedia
www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/buddhism
An article that provides an overview of Buddhism in Canada.

Buddhism in Canada
www.buddhismcanada.com
This is the best guide to organizations in Canada. Produced by a handful of volunteers under the direction of George Klima, it is frequently updated and is the most authoritative guide available.

Buddhist.ca
www.buddhist.ca/
A Canadian website for those with an interest in Buddhism or meditation retreats. It includes a directory of Canadian Buddhist centres and meditation retreats.

Exploring World Religions: The Canadian Perspective
www.arts.mun.ca/worldreligions/resources/hinduism/#
This is a resource database created to support a text by the same title and that is listed in the book/text section of this profile.

Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada
www.bcc.ca/index.html
This is the website of the Canadian Jodo Shinshu (True Pure Land Tradition) Buddhist Temples which includes the Manitoba Buddhist Temple. The site offers information on Jodo Shinshu tradition and resources related to Buddhism, selected readings, and meditation.

The Hermitage: The Dharma Fellowship's Meditation Centre Practice Center
https://thehermitage.ca/dharma-fellowship%E2%80%99s-philosophy-and-mission
The Dharma Fellowship was originally founded in Canada in 1973. It is an organization comprised of Western Buddhist meditation and yoga practitioners who follow the spiritual direction of Ogyen Trinley Dorje, 17th Gyalwang Karmapa. The website offers a variety of articles in the library section.
www.dharmafellowship.org/library/

The International Buddhist Society (Canada)
https://buddhisttemple.ca/
This is the website of the International Buddhist Society that manages the International Buddhist Temple (also known as the Guan-Yin Temple) in Richmond British Columbia. It is a Chinese temple in which to study and practice Chinese Mahayana Buddhism. The website provides information on the temple and Buddhist teachings.

Tisarana Buddhist Monastery
https://tisarana.ca/
This is the website of the Tisarana Buddhist monastery located southwest of Ottawa. The monastery is in the Thai forest tradition of Theravada Buddhism. The website offers a number of books that may be downloaded free of charge in PDF format on a variety of themes.

The White Wind Zen Community
https://wwzc.org/
This is the website of White Wind Zen community founded in 1989 and now located in the Zen Centre of Ottawa. The community follows the teachings of the Ven. Anzan Hoshin roshi. The website provides information and resources related to Zen Buddhism, including Dharma texts, online

International

Tricycle Buddhist Review
https://tricycle.org/

Access to Insight
www.accesstoinsight.org
This is an online collection of resources related to Theravada Buddhism. The site includes translations of more than 1,000 suttas from the "Pali" canon.

An Introduction to Buddhism
https://webspace.ship.edu/cgboer/buddhaintro.html
This was produced by the students of C. George Boerre, Professor of a course on Buddhist Psychology.

Basics in Buddhism series by Alan Peto
www.alanpeto.com/collections/basics-in-buddhism/
This is a multidimensional web site with videos, graphics, and texts that provide an overview of Buddhism. Allan Peto is a Buddhist layperson, not a Buddhist monk or theologian. His articles are based on his personal experiences, opinions, research, thoughts, and insights. Alan follows Mahayana Buddhism, but previously practiced Theravada Buddhism for many years.

BBC has a number of resources on Religion in two sites. One is the archived web pages on Religions (www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism) and the second is from the new Religions and Ethics web-based resources (RELIGION AND ETHICS – Hinduism). The first set of resources are more traditional world religions information and backgrounders on Hinduism. The second set of resources is more issue- and topics-based.

Buddha Meditation Centre of Greater Toronto
www.mahamevnawa.ca/downloads.html
The site offers a number of downloadable resources such as chant books, articles, pamphlets, and recordings of talks.

Buddhanet
www.buddhanet.net
The Buddhist Information and Education Network website is provided by a Theravadin monastery in Australia. It includes content and a guide to worldwide Buddhist organizations.

Buddhist Resource File
http://pears2.lib.ohio-state.edu/BRF/index.html

Buddhist Studies: Virtual Religion Index
http://virtualreligion.net/vri/buddha.html
The Virtual Religion Index site is dedicated to research in aspects of religion. The Buddhist Studies section provides information and links to variety of resources on different schools of Buddhism and Buddhism in general.

Buddhist Studies WWW Virtual Library:
www.ciolek.com/WWWVL-Buddhism.html

Buddhist Peace Fellowship
www.bpf.org
This organization promotes Buddhist social action.

Buddhist Studies Virtual Library
www.ciolek.com/WWWVL-Buddhism.html
This is an extensive guide for those looking for academic information about Buddhism.

Center for Global Education by the Asia Society
https://asiasociety.org/education
The site offers an extensive array of educator resources related to Asian cultures and nations. This includes resources related to Buddhism. A few examples follow:

- The Origins of Buddhism
  https://asiasociety.org/education/origins-buddhism
- Buddhism in Japan
  https://asiasociety.org/education/buddhism-japan
- Diversity and Unity
  https://asiasociety.org/education/diversity-and-unity

Clearvision: Audio-Visual Resources Exploring Buddhism
www.clear-vision.org/Home/Home.aspx
The website of Clear Vision Trust is a Buddhist audio-visual media project developed and operated by members of the Triratna Buddhist Order (formerly the Western Buddhist Order) of the Manchester Buddhist Centre in the United Kingdom. It offers a variety of free online resources for teachers and students, as well as a catalogue of DVD and other resources for purchase. In addition, the site features an Image bank.

Dharma 101 By Tricycle, SPRING 1997
https://tricycle.org/magazine/dharma-101/
Tricycle was established in 1990 as a not-for-profit educational organization. The Tricycle Foundation is dedicated to making Buddhist teachings and practices broadly available. In 1991, the Foundation launched Tricycle: A magazine intended to present Buddhist perspectives to a Western readership.

DharmaNet
https://dharmanet.org/
This is a useful source of online resources to the major Buddhist "schools" and organizations. It provides a rich array of various types of resources.

Dhamma Wiki and Dharma Wiki
https://dhammawiki.com/index.php/Main_Page
This is the official encyclopedia of The Dhamma website. Created by Dr. David N. Snyder, the Dhamma Wiki is the main component of this wiki and includes Theravada, early Buddhism, and general Buddhism articles. The Dharma Wiki is a category within this encyclopedia with Mahayana and Vajrayana articles.

Diamond Way Buddhism
www.diamondway-buddhism.org/
This site opens the most skillful methods of The Buddha to the modern world. It helps us discover and develop our inner richness for the benefit of all beings as well as ourselves.

Digital International Buddhism Organization
www.buddhism.org/
A Buddhist group provides a comprehensive directory service providing all the resources of Buddhism and Buddhists from around the world. The purpose of their website is to provide basic information and practicing methods.

Digital Dictionary of Buddhism
www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb/
Translating the words of The Buddha.

Digital Library and Museum of Buddhist Studies
http://buddhism.lib.ntu.edu.tw/DLMBS/en/

Encyclopedia of Buddhism. New York: Macmillan Reference USA/Thomson/Gale, 2004. Vols. I and II
Available online in PDF format from
https://terebess.hu/zen/szoto/EncBuddh.pdf or www.academia.edu/5485657/Encyclopedia_of_Buddhism_Vol._I_and_II_Edited_by_Robert_E._Buswell.

Encyclopedia of Buddhism (wiki)
https://encyclopediaofbuddhism.org/wiki/Main_Page
This is an online encyclopedia created by two Dharma students that was created by importing about 1200 Buddhism related articles from Wikipedia.

Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO)
www.fwbo.org/
The forms in which Buddhist truths are expressed always adapt according to circumstances, but the essence of Buddhism transcends culture and conditions. Now that Buddhism has come to the West, westerners are faced with the task of creating new and viable Buddhist traditions for the modern world. Over the last thirty years the FWBO has grown to be one of the largest Buddhist movements in the West, with centres and activities in many cities around the world.

Journal of Global Buddhism
www.globalbuddhism.org
This is a scholarly online journal headed by one of the most prominent "buddhologists", Charles Prebish.

Internet Sacred Text Archive
www.sacred-texts.com/bud/index.htm
This website provides excerpts from the sacred texts of a variety of religions, including Buddhism.

Journal of Buddhist Ethics
http://jbe.la.psu.edu/
This site is devoted to theoretical and applied issues in Buddhist ethics.

Modern Kadampa Buddhism
https://kadampa.org/
This is the website of New Kadampa Tradition—International Kadampa Buddhist Union. The site features the teachings of Venerable Geshe Kelsang Gyatso Rinpoche, the founder of New Kadampa Tradition, and information about the organization and its centres throughout the world.

Karmapa
https://kagyuoffice.org/
The website of His Holiness the 17th Gyalwang Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje, who is the head of the 900-year-old Karma Kagyu Lineage. He is a teacher of the Tibetan Buddhist Dharma. The site includes an overview of Buddhism with a focus on Tibetan Buddhism (https://kagyuoffice.org/buddhism/). It also includes a section on Karmapa's teachings, mind training, and meditation (https://kagyuoffice.org/teachings/). In addition, there is a webcast library with downloadable videos of webcasts from 2009–2018 (https://kagyuoffice.org/karmapa-videos/).

Khan Academy, Buddhist Art, and Culture
www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-asia/beginners-guide-asian-culture#buddhist-art-culture
This student-friendly resource introduces students to Buddhism and some of the more important aspects of the faith.

Patheos
www.patheos.com/buddhist and www.patheos.com/library/buddhism:
is a web-based resource dedicated to global dialogue about religion and spirituality. Patheos' objective is to provide credible and balanced information about religion. The site features channels on specific faiths, articles about topics related to religious diversity, and a religion library.

PBS Learning Media
PBS Learning Media offers a variety of downloadable lesson plans and student learning resources for various grade levels on world religions. Resources available with respect to Buddhism include the following:

- The evolution of Buddhism in Japan from the Sacred Journeys with Bruce Feiler Collection: www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/sj14-soc-buddhism/the-evolution-of-buddhism-in-japan/
- Tibetan Buddhist Mandala from Religion and Ethics Newsweekly

Resources for the study of Buddhism
http://online.sfsu.edu/rone/Buddhism/Buddhism.htm
By Pro. Ron Epstein. This web site was developed primarily for the benefit of the students in Prof. Epstein's classes at San Francisco State University.

Resources for the Study of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism
www.human.toyogakuen-u.ac.jp/~acmuller/index.html

Shambhala International
www.shambhala.org
This is a large organization founded by a spiritual "genius" by the name of Chogyam Trungpa. A Tibetan lama, he arrived in Great Britain in the 50s and set about creating a form of Buddhism he thought would appeal to Westerners. Today, his legacy can be seen in the glossy magazine, "Shambhala Sun" (produced in Halifax, NS), a flourishing publishing house (Shambhala Publications), and an accredited US college (Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado).

Soka Gakkai International
www.sgi.org/
Soka Gakkai International (SGI) is a community-based Buddhist organization. SGI members follow the humanistic philosophy of Nichiren (Japanese) Buddhism and are present in 192 countries and territories around the world, including Canada (www.sgicanada.org/). The website provides a variety of resources including videos and text materials related to Nichiren Buddhism.

The Buddhist Society
www.thebuddhistsociety.org/

The Zen Universe
http://thezenuniverse.org
This website is dedicated to helping Zen Buddhists develop their understanding of Zen Buddhism and improve their practice. Zen topics are covered, ranging from knowledge about the practice to information on sutras, monasteries, and Zen masters.

ThoughtCo, Lifelong Learning
www.thoughtco.com/buddhism-4133165
This is a website that features articles on science, history, math, and religion. The website provides multiple articles and resources on Buddhism and other faiths.

Tibet Government in Exile
www.tibet.com
This site has everything you'll need to stay in touch with the organization behind the Dalai Lama.

Women Active in Buddhism
http://members.tripod.com/~Lhamo/
This site offers an inspiring look at many of the most prominent women teachers and nuns around the world.

Zen Buddhism Virtual Library
www.ciolek.com/WWWVL-Zen.html
This site provides information on the various schools of Zen Buddhism.

Infographics and Images

Behance is an Adobe Creative platform/website dedicated to showcasing and discovering Creative Work. See www.behance.net/. Student Show is a similar site dedicated to showcasing student projects. www.studentshow.com/

Flickr (www.flickr.com/) is an online photo management, and sharing website and application that may be of great use for teachers and students. Many of the users of the site have uploaded photos and images to Flickr and have provided Creative Commons licenses for their photos and images. In this document we have used images that have been provided by Flickr users.

You may search for photos, persons, or groups. In the persons category, several Hindu temples throughout the world have accounts with uploaded images of their temples and rituals (e.g., London Hindu Temple www.flickr.com/photos/133174028@N05). In the groups category, various users pool their images by posting images related to specific themes or common interest areas (e.g., Hindu gods and goddesses www.flickr.com/groups/64997469@N00/pool/with/35566510716/).

PBS Learning Media (www.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/buddhism-in-images/) offers a collection of downloadable images and photographs related to Buddhism and other world religions.

Photobucket
www.photobucket.com/?_ga=2.27648700.1842025722.1500653849-548214158.1500653849.
This is another potentially useful photo management and sharing site.

Infographical
http://paul-murray.org/infografical/infographic-digest-world-religions-edition/
Paul Murray's blog includes a posting related to world religions. Paul is a Canadian educator whose website is dedicated to the use of Web 2.0 in the classroom.

Pinterest features many infographics and images on Buddhism and other faiths. Search using the terms, Buddha, Buddhism, Asian Religions, Dharma, etc.
www.pinterest.ca/search/pins/?q=Buddhism&rs=typed

Infographics website has infographics developed by other users and also allows registered users to create their own.
https://infogram.com/buddhism-1gk92edd88ynp16

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