

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 Siddhartha 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.

Siddhartha 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 Sukhavativyuh-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.

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,



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.

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

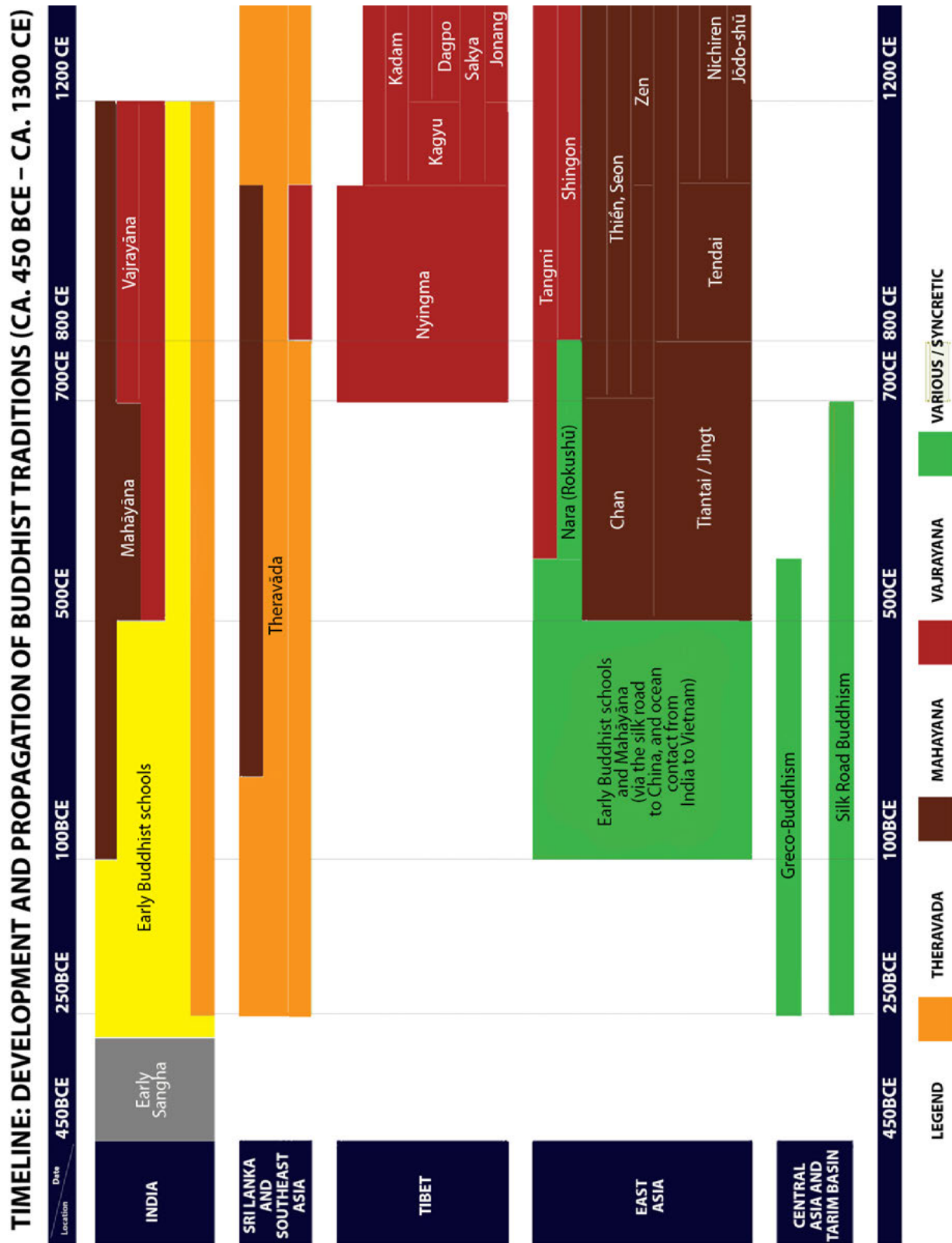


Figure 19: Expansion of Buddhism into Asia

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.

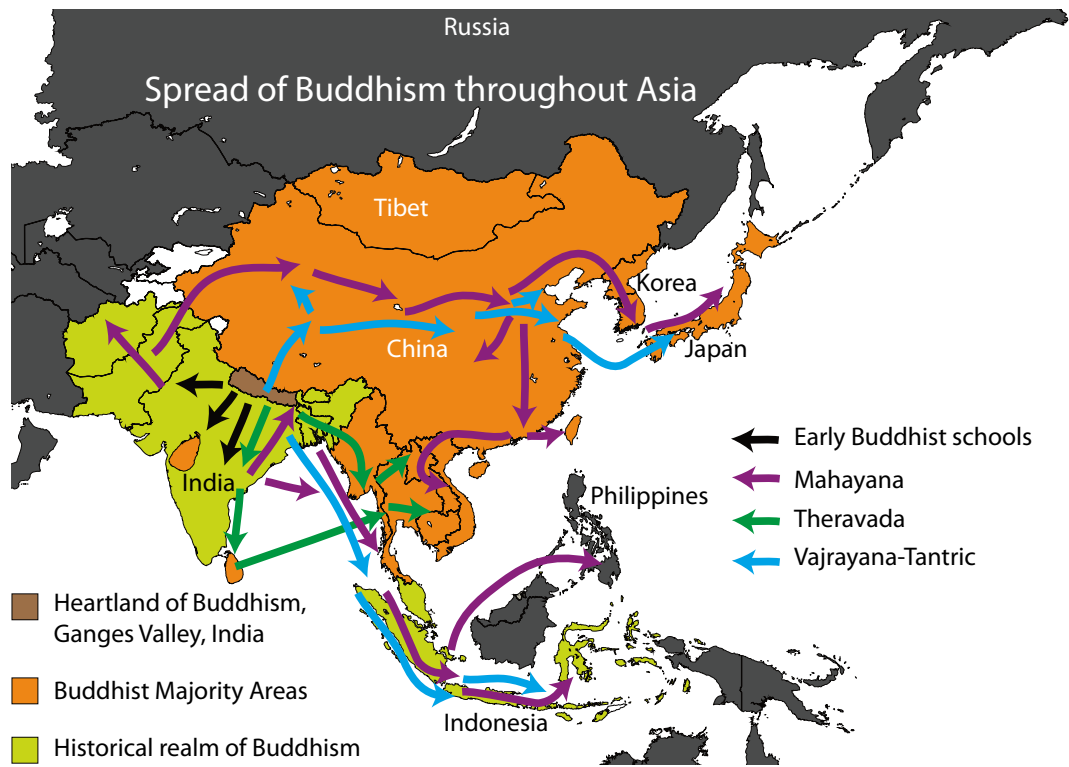


Figure 20: Spread of Buddhism throughout Asia

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 Gunzheoyney," 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 Nhất Hạnh 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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Life of the Buddha: A spiritual Journey, BBC

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Timelines of Buddhist History, Buddha Net

www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/history/b_chron-txt.htm

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Date	Significant Development
Life of The Buddha	
<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>6th Century BCE</p> </div>	<p>Birth and life of the Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama</p> <p>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.</p>
<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>461 BCE</p> </div>	<p>Gautama leaves home to search for a solution to suffering.</p> <p>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.</p>

Date	Significant Development
	<p>Gautama becomes The Buddha.</p> <p>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."</p> <p>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.</p>
	<p>Gautama dies.</p> <p>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.</p>

Early Buddhism

	<p>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.</p>
	<p>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.</p>
	<p>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.</p> <p>Third Buddhist Council held at Pataliputra (250 BCE) with the support of Emperor Asoka.</p> <p>The modern Pali Tipitaka is now largely completed.</p>

Date	Significant Development		
	<p>Theravada is officially introduced to Sri Lanka by Mahinda, son of Ashoka, during the reign of Devanampiya Tissa of Anuradhapura.</p>		<p>The Fourth Buddhist Council is held at Jalandhar or in Kashmir around 100 CE (not recognized by Theravadas).</p> <p>Buddhism is established in Cambodia 100 CE and in Vietnam 150 CE.</p> <p>The composition of Lotus Sutra and other Mahayana Buddhist texts occurs.</p> <p>Mahayana Buddhism is introduced in China and Central Asia.</p>
	<p>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.</p> <p>Theravada Buddhism first appears in what is today Burma and Central Thailand.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The Mahayana school emerges.</p>		<p>A translation centre is established in China. An Shigao, a Buddhist translator, establishes a translation centre in Luoyang, the imperial capital of China.</p>
			<p>Expansion of Buddhism to Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, and Indonesia.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The Yogacara (meditation) school was founded by Maitreyanatha.</p> <p>Buddhist influence in Persia spreads through trade.</p>


Date	Significant Development
<p style="text-align: center;">4th Century CE</p>	<p>Development of Vajrayana Buddhism in India.</p> <p>The Translation of Buddhist texts into Chinese by Kumarajiva (344–413) and Hui-yüan (334–416).</p> <p>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.</p>

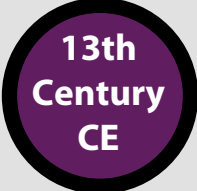

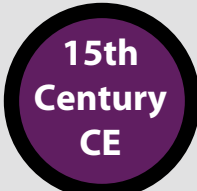

Expansion into Asia

<p style="text-align: center;">5th Century CE</p>	<p>A Buddhist monastic university is founded at Nalanda, India.</p> <p>Buddhaghosa composes the Visuddhimagga and major commentaries in Sri Lanka.</p> <p>Buddhism is established in Burma and Korea.</p> <p>The Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hsien visits India.</p> <p>The Amitabha (Amida) Pure Land sect emerges in China.</p> <p>In 433 CE, Sri Lankan Theravadin nuns introduce full ordination lineage into China.</p> <p>Mahayana Buddhism was introduced into Java, Sumatra, Borneo, mainly by Indian immigrants.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">6th Century CE</p>	<p>Around 520 CE, Bodhidharma travels to China from India and founds Chan (Zen) Buddhism.</p> <p>In 538 CE, Buddhism enters Japan from Korea.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Buddhism flourishes in Indonesia.</p> <p>Jataka Tales are translated into Persian by King Khusru (531–579 CE).</p>

Date	Significant Development
<p style="text-align: center;">7th Century CE</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Both Chinese and Indian Buddhist schools attempt to influence Tibetan Buddhism</p> <p>Shotoku Taishi adopts Buddhism and Confucianism as state religions of Japan.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">8th Century CE</p>	<p>Academic schools (Jōjitsu, Kusha, Sanron, Hossō, Ritsu, and Kegon) proliferate in Japan.</p> <p>Guru Rinpoche/ Padmasambhava converts Tibet to Buddhism.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>In 794 CE, the debates are decided in favour of Indian Buddhism, and translations from Chinese sources are abandoned. Vajrayana Buddhism (Tantrism) emerges.</p> <p>The Nyingma School of Tibet Buddhism is established.</p> <p>Jataka Tales are translated into Syrian and Arabic under the title: Kalilag and Damnag.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">9th Century CE</p>	<p>Khmer kings build Angkor Wat, the world's largest religious monument.</p> <p>Tendai School (founded by Saichō (767–822 CE) and Shingon School (founded by Kukai (774–835 CE) appear in Japan.</p> <p>In 845 CE, the great persecution of Buddhists in China is launched.</p> <p>The biography of Buddha is translated into Greek by Saint John of Damascus and distributed in Christianity as <i>Balaam</i> and <i>Josaphat</i>.</p>

Date	Significant Development
	<p>Between 900–1000 CE, the first complete printing of Chinese Buddhist Canon, known as the Szechuan edition is produced.</p> <p>Buddhism is introduced to Thailand.</p> <p>900–1000 CE, Islam replaces Buddhism in Central Asia.</p>
	<p>The revival of Theravada Buddhism in Sri Lanka and Burma and the decline of Buddhism in India occur.</p> <p>Marpa (1012–1097 CE) begins the Kargyu School of Tibetan Buddhism.</p> <p>The Sakya School of Tibetan Buddhism is established.</p> <p>Milarepa (1040–1123 CE) becomes the greatest poet and most popular saint in Tibetan Buddhism.</p> <p>The <i>bhikkhus</i> and <i>bhikkhunis</i> (monk and nun) communities at Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka, die out following invasions from South India.</p>

	<p>Theravada Buddhism is established in Burma.</p> <p>Honen (1133–1212 CE) founds the Pure Land School of Japanese Buddhism.</p> <p>Eisai (1141–1215 CE) founds the Rinzai Zen School of Japanese Buddhism.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Between 1140–1390 CE, in Korea, Buddhism thrives during the Koryo dynasty.</p>
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Date	Significant Development		
	<p>Theravada Buddhism becomes established in South East Asia.</p> <p>Theravada Buddhism spreads to Laos.</p> <p>Zen Buddhism is introduced to Japan from China by the monk Eisai.</p> <p>Between 1173–1263 CE, Shinran founds the True Pure Land School of Japanese Buddhism.</p> <p>Between 1200–1253 CE, Dogen founds the Soto Zen School of Japanese Buddhism.</p> <p>Between 1222–1282 CE, Nichiren founds the school of Japanese Buddhism named after him.</p> <p>Mongols convert to Vajrayana Buddhism.</p> <p>The tradition of seeking the reincarnations of Tibetan leaders begins among Tibetan Black Hat Buddhists.</p> <p>Buddhism is introduced to the West:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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. 		<p>Buston collects and edits Tibetan Buddhist Canon</p> <p>In 1360 CE, Rulers of north (Chieng-mai) and northeast (Sukhothai) Thailand adopt Theravada Buddhism. It becomes state religion.</p> <p>Theravada Buddhism is adopted in Cambodia and Laos.</p> <p>Tsongkhapa, a Tibetan Buddhist reformer and the founder of Dgelugspa or Gelugpa, or 'Yellow Hat' order lives from 1357–1419 CE.</p>
			<p>Tsongkhapa founds the first of three major Buddhist monasteries in Tibet.</p> <p>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.</p>
		<p>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.</p> <p>Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso, the Great Fifth" Dalai Lama meets Qing Emperor Shunzhi near Beijing and establishes relations.</p>	











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


<p style="text-align: center;">Spread of Buddhism to the West / Modern Era</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">19th Century CE</p>	<p>New Buddhist sects begin to emerge in Japan.</p> <p>In 1852 CE, the German translation of the Lotus Sutra is done.</p> <p>In 1853 CE, the first Chinese Temple is built in San Francisco, USA.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>In 1862 CE, the first Western translation of the Dhammapada into German is done.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>In 1899 CE, Gordon Douglas becomes the first westerner to be ordained in Theravada Buddhism.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">1900 CE</p>	<p>Shintoism is reinstated in Japan as part of an effort to limit Buddhist influence.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">1903 CE</p>	<p>The Buddhist Mission Society in Germany, is founded.</p>

Date	Significant Development	1946 CE	The Manitoba Buddhist Church (Temple) opens.
1904 CE	In Burma, German Anton Walther Florus Gueth becomes one of the earliest Westerners to become a fully ordained <i>Bhikkhu</i> (monk) and takes the name Nyanatiloka Mahathera.	1949 CE	Buddhists regain some control of the site of The Buddha's Enlightenment at Mahabodhi Temple in India.
1905 CE	The first Japanese Buddhist temple is built in Vancouver.	1950 CE	The Chinese take control of Tibetan Buddhism.
1907 CE	The Buddhist Society of Great Britain is founded.	1952 CE	The Founding of World Fellowship of Buddhists occurs.
1924–29 CE	The Taishō Shinshū Daizokyo edition of Chinese Buddhist Canon is printed in Tokyo.	1954–56 CE	The sixth Buddhist Council is held at Rangoon, Myanmar/Burma.
1930 CE	Soka Gakkai, based in Nichiren Buddhism, is founded in Japan.	1956 CE	Hindu leader B.R. Ambedkar converts to Buddhism along with 350,000 followers, creating the Neo-Buddhist movement.
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.	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	<p>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.</p> <p>A British woman, Freda Bedi, is the first Western woman to be ordained in Tibetan Buddhism.</p>
1968 CE	<p>The first five American <i>Bhikkhus</i> and <i>Bhikshunis</i> are ordained in the Chinese tradition.</p> <p>The Western Buddhist Order, founded by Urygen Sangharakshit, ordains five members.</p>
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		
	<p>Burmese military government forces its authority over the Sangha, and violence against Buddhist monks continues through the decade.</p>		<p>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.</p>
	<p>China: The Shanghai Institute of Buddhism is established at Jade Buddha Temple, by the Shanghai Buddhist Association.</p>		<p>Subhana Barzagi Roshi becomes the Diamond Sangha's first female roshi (Zen teacher) on March 9, 1996, in Australia.</p>
	<p>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."</p>		<p><i>Bhikkhuni</i> (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 <i>Vinaya</i> (monastic code), but is lauded by others in the community.</p>
	<p>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.</p>		<p>Bamiyan, Afghanistan: The world's tallest ancient Buddha statues dating back to the sixth century are destroyed by the Taliban regime.</p>
	<p>A giant statue of The Buddha is constructed on an island in Hyderabad, India.</p> <p>Wat Yanviriya in Vancouver becomes the first Thai Buddhist temple in Canada.</p>		<p>Ayya Sudhamma Bhikkhuni is the first American-born woman to be ordained a <i>bhikkhuni</i> in the Theravada school in Sri Lanka.</p>
			<p>The first World Buddhist Forum is held.</p>

Date	Significant Development
	<p>Myanmar/Burma: Buddhist monks and nuns lead protests against military rule in Burma.</p> <p>Myokei Caine-Barrett, born and ordained in Japan, becomes the first female Nichiren priest in the Nichiren Order of North America.</p>
	<p>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.</p>
	<p>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.</p> <p>The Western Buddhist Order is founded by Urygen Sangharakshita and becomes the Triratna Buddhist Order and Friends of the Western Buddhist Order to Triratna Buddhist Community.</p> <p><i>(continued)</i></p>

	<p>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 <i>bhikkhuni</i> in the Drikung Kagyu lineage of Buddhism.</p> <p>Four novice nuns are given the full <i>bhikkhuni</i> 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.</p> <p>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.</p>
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Date	Significant Development		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.
	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.		
	There are just under 500 Buddhist organizations listed in Canada serving a population of 366,830 Buddhists (2011 Census).		Twenty Tibetan Buddhist nuns become the first Tibetan women to earn <i>geshe</i> degrees (Buddhist academic degrees, similar to a Ph.D.).
	Tibetan Buddhist nuns and women are allowed to take the geshe exams for the first time.		

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:

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