



SHARING JESUS WITH...

BUDDHISM

There are estimated 400 million Buddhist in the world today

THE UNITED STATES IS HOME TO ABOUT 3.5 MILLION.

Other story details

Mara, a destructive god tried to tempt Gautama and ruin his concentration as he searched.

Gautama's physical body remained on earth while spiritual body "dharma body" entered nirvana.

Buddhist believe that there have been many "Buddhas" that have existed and are yet to come still.

Think about the number of protestant churches today, but imagine they do not share a common core set of beliefs. That is what Buddhism is like.

Although Buddhism has over 18 different schools, it started as two major school and grew to five large schools that make up the large majority today.

BUDDHIST BEGINNINGS

The stories of Buddhism's origins are fuzzy and some details are contradictory.

Who was the founder of Buddhism?

Siddhartha Gautama was a Hindu prince. Before his birth his mother dreamed he would be destined for greatness as either a great king or a religious leader. His mother died when he was 7 days old. His father wanted him to be a King so he kept Gautama from all religious influences as well as all suffering, old age, disease, and death. At 29 years old, Gautama left the palace and explored the country side where he witnessed all these things. For seven years Gautama was searching for meaning in what he saw. In desperation he sat down under a fig tree and decided he would either find the answers (enlightenment) or he would just die. He ate a meal and fell asleep. When he woke up in the morning he had achieved enlightenment and become **the Buddha "awakened one."** He returned home to reconcile with his wife and family. He begin to teach his family and followers about how to find enlightenment and Buddhism begin to grow. Gautama Buddha died eating a spoiled piece of pork that someone gave to him as an offering.

When did it begin?

Gautama Buddha lives in the 6th century BC (563-483BC).

BELIEFS OF BUDDISM

Buddhism has a wide variety of beliefs and practices.

Because Buddhism has a wide range of beliefs and schools, it makes it difficult to identify a basic core of beliefs of Buddhism.

What do Buddhist believe?

Buddhism teaches that life is not life of luxury or a life of self-deprivation but a middle way that is balanced.

BUDDHISM IS THOUGHT OF NOT AS A RELIGION BUT RATHER AN AGNOSTIC PHILOSOPHY.

Buddhists Belief:

Karma still holds us until we realize we are not held by it.

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

1. To live is to suffer.
2. Suffering is caused by attachment to life.
3. To eliminate suffering one must eliminate attachment.
4. One can eliminate attachment by following the Noble Eightfold path.

THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

1. The right View
2. The right Intention
3. The right Speech
4. The right Action
5. The right Livelihood (a monk)
6. The right Effort
7. The right Mindfulness
8. The right Concentration

Common Misunderstanding:

Buddhist do not worship Buddha.

The Buddhism Glory Days:

The 3rd century BC were the glory days of Buddhism. King Asoka made it the national religion of Maurya Empire during his tenure.

How is Buddhism different than Hinduism?

There are many differences but, in Hinduism *Atman* is the supreme self and is identical with *Brahman*. In Buddhism, there is no such thing as a real “self.” All of life is an *illusion*. Even the cycles of reincarnation are an illusion that do not truly exist.

Buddhism rejects the caste system and the Vedas (Hindu scripture) as authoritative of Hinduism.

Do Buddhists believe in sin?

Buddhist do not have a concept of sin like Christians do. They believe life is full of *suffering*. Buddha taught that the problem of life was two-fold. 1. The world is always changing, and 2. No one can hold to anything in life.

Do Buddhists have a concept of salvation?

Buddhists believe that their ultimate goal is to be released from this illusion of cycles of reincarnation and into enlightenment. Enlightenment is *finally extinguishing the flame of life* and entering a state of permanent non-existence.

Buddha taught that enlightenment can be achieved by following the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eight-fold path (see left).

What are the holy scriptures of Buddhism?

After Gautama Buddha’s death a first council was formed. His teachings were collected together known as the *Tripitka (Pali) “Three Baskets.”* There are many other writings, one recent writing of Pure Land Buddhism is the *Lotus Sutra*.

What are the major schools of Buddhism?

Theravada Buddhism was the first school to form. It spread across the southern nations of SE Asia. (See map on page 4). Only monks can achieve enlightenment in this school. They shave their heads and wear the unsown yellow robes.

Mahayana Buddhism developed a couple of centuries later. It developed ways the non-monks might become enlightened. In Mahayana Buddhism not only does the self not exist, but neither does the world, it is all an illusion. It spread into north SE Asia.

Zen Buddhism formed out of Japan. It focuses on meditation, introspection, and self-control. Known for its riddles without answers. Ex. What is the sound of one hand clapping? They are known to strike themselves with a *Keisaku* (loud paddle).

Forms of Buddhist exercise were developed to help with concentration. Ju-jitsu and K'ung-fu are most common. To use them for fighting is a break from true Buddhism.

Buddhism is a global practice but Myanmar and Thailand are 90 percent Buddhist. Japan is 60 percent. China is 17 percent.

Extra Resources

BOOKS

The Many Faces of Faith,
Richard Losch

Christianity and Religious Diversity, Harold Netland

Neighboring Faiths,
Winfried Corduan

APPS

Stand to Reason

Cross Examined

Upcoming Topics

4/9—No Class (Easter)

4/16—No Class (Bus. Mtg.)

4/23—New Age/
Progressive Christianity

Vajrayana Buddhism “The Diamond Vehicle” developed late in India from texts called the “**Tontras.**” It is a mystic form of Buddhism that uses magic. It is action based practices that can lead someone to enlightenment, even some bad/evil actions. This school teaches it is possible to reach enlightenment in a single lifetime.

Amitabha or Amidism Buddhism “The Pure land” also came in the fourth century AD. A very compassionate school that means to come to a land or place where one is not hindered by Karma or suffering. They live in seclusion. The use of chants, mantras, repetitive recitations are common.

BUDDHISM IN THE MODERN WEST

What type of Buddhism is predominant in the USA?

Zen Buddhism was brought to the United States in the 1,800's.

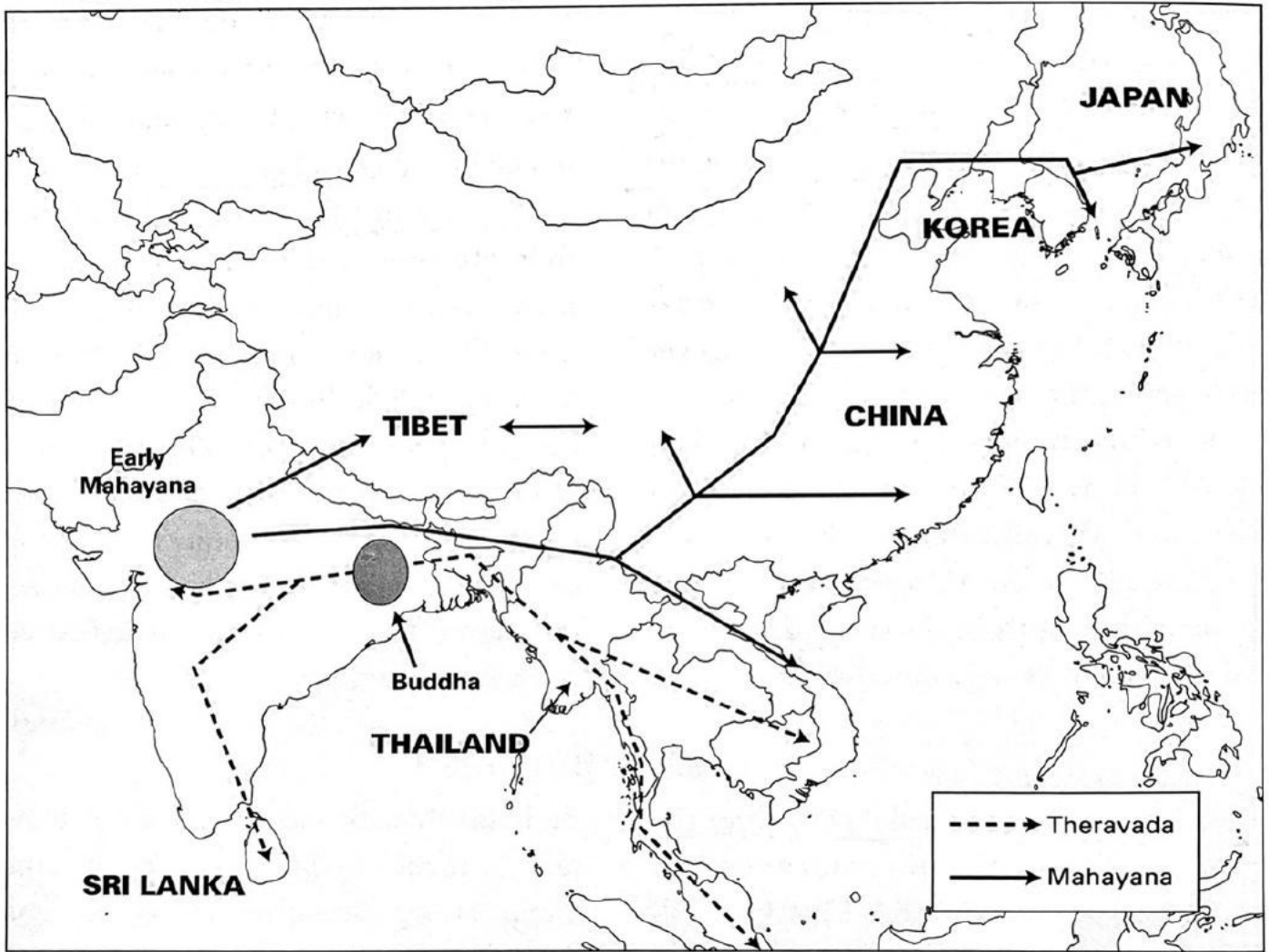
What's new in Buddhism in recent times?

There are three major changes in modern Buddhism.

1. Reason, Experience, and Intuition are elevated over traditional practices of scriptures and authority. It has become an individual practice. 2. The spiritual beliefs are removed. 3. It has become linked with western philosophy and used a form of spiritual therapy.

SHARING JESUS WITH BUDDHISTS

- Avoid words like “rebirth, born again, and regeneration.”
- Don't assume beliefs, ask questions and talk with them.
- Focus on the Uniqueness of Christ as a historical figure against the fuzzy Buddhist myths. **2 Peter 1:16.**
- Buddhist struggle with suffering and the endless cycles of it. The idea of Christ setting us free is powerful. Explain how God uses suffering to make us more Christ-like. It is a works based worldview that grace can really speak to. Sin is the real source of suffering, and it is temporary. **2 Corinthians 4:18.**
- You can compare eternal life from God to the Nirvana non-existence of Buddhism. Buddhism holds no hope. **Revelation 21:4.**
- Share your testimony how God freed you of guilt.
- You can use the Eightfold path with Scriptures in the Bible.
- Use the Prodigal Son (**Luke 15**) and explain the grace of the Father. Similar story in Lotus Sutra, but of works.
- The Buddhist teaching of the “self,” versus what we have as Christians (purpose and significance). **Ephesians 2:10.**
- Speak of God as personal and loving.



Map 10.2. Expansion of Buddhism

Applies to monks only.									
Applies to monks and laypeople on special days.									
Applies to all: monks and laypeople.									
The Ten Precepts									
1.	Do not harm any living being. (<i>Ahimsa</i>)								
2.	Do not take what has not been given to you (do not steal).								
3.	Do not commit sexual immorality.								
4.	Do not lie.								
5.	Do not partake of alcoholic drinks.								
6.	Do not eat in excess, or after noon.								
7.	Do not attend entertainments, such as dancing or theater.								
8.	Do not decorate yourself or use jewelry or cosmetics.								
9.	Do not sleep on high or wide beds.								
10.	Do not touch gold or silver (money).								

Table 10.1. The Five, Eight and Ten Precepts

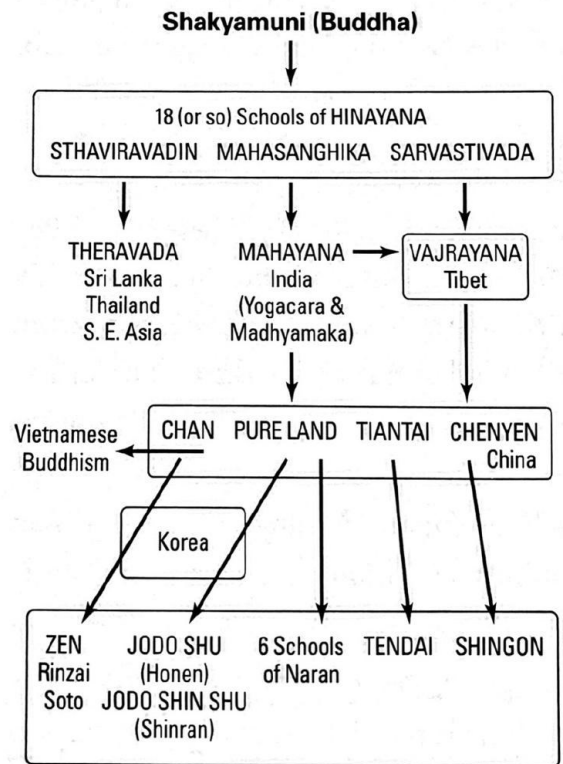


Figure 10.2. Development of Buddhism