

**Buddhism and How to Engage Buddhists**  
**What They Believe**  
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**Buddhism Backgrounds:**

- Some say it developed from Hinduism- name from the Indus Valley, River North Western India
- Roughly 1500-500 BCE at the end of the Vedic period
- Vedas were a collection of wisdom, poetry and songs, only top people in caste allowed to perform rituals

**Buddhism - Siddhartha Gautama “Buddha”**

- 6 years as an ascetic failed him, walked to the edge of a river and collapsed. He then woke and ate. 5 ascetics watching him were upset at his failure to continue.
- Soon after, he sat under Bodhi-tree (fig tree) at Bodh-gaya (10-day journey southwest from his birthplace.)
- Realized that actions (karma) are motivated by desires (*Upanishads* of Hinduism, *Yajnavalkya*)
- Rid oneself of desires of this world, and then desire only dharma (ultimate reality) then forever move into Nirvana. Samsara (Rebirth) would not be necessary anymore.
- At this point he achieved enlightenment becoming the Buddha or “enlightened one.”

**Buddhism Concepts:**

- Dharma – Ultimate Reality
- Trishna/Tanha – Craving Desire
- Dhukka – Suffering
- Karma – Actions and Consequences
- Samsara – Birth and rebirth process moving between one life and another, or one reality and another.

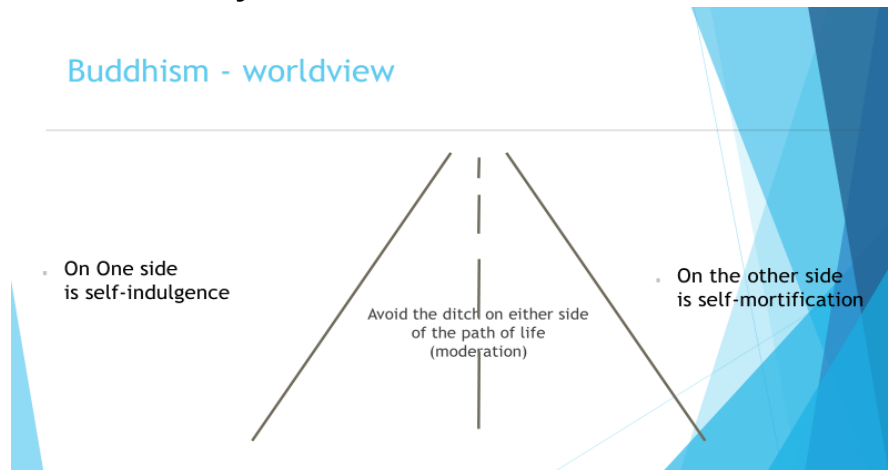
- Attain Nirvana (freedom from Samsara) through clarity of thought. Nirvana – means “blown out.”

## **Buddhism Belief Components:**

### **Four Noble Truths –**

1. Life contains suffering (Dhukka)
2. Suffering comes from Desire
3. When our attachment to desire ends, so does the suffering.
4. The path to end suffering is to follow the Eight-fold path (guidelines for day-to-day living)

### **The Middle Way –**



### **8-fold Path – Removal of Desire**

1. Right Understanding – Seeing the world as it really is, not how we choose to see it.
2. Right Intent – To decide to commit to Buddha’s middle path rather than to desire the world.
3. Right Speech – Recognition of truth, no gossip, no harsh words, compassionate talk.

4. Right Action – Live ethically, Do not kill/steal/lie/intoxicate, No sexual misconduct.
5. Right Livelihood – Work well if one is able, do not engage in slavery/weaponry/harm to another living being.
6. Right Effort – Enthusiasm, steadiness, determination, positive thinking.
7. Right Mindfulness – To be clear and undistracted, aware of past actions and of future interactions.
8. Right Concentration - Focused attention in a worth direction, basis of meditation.

### **Three Jewels/Cornerstones of Participation:**

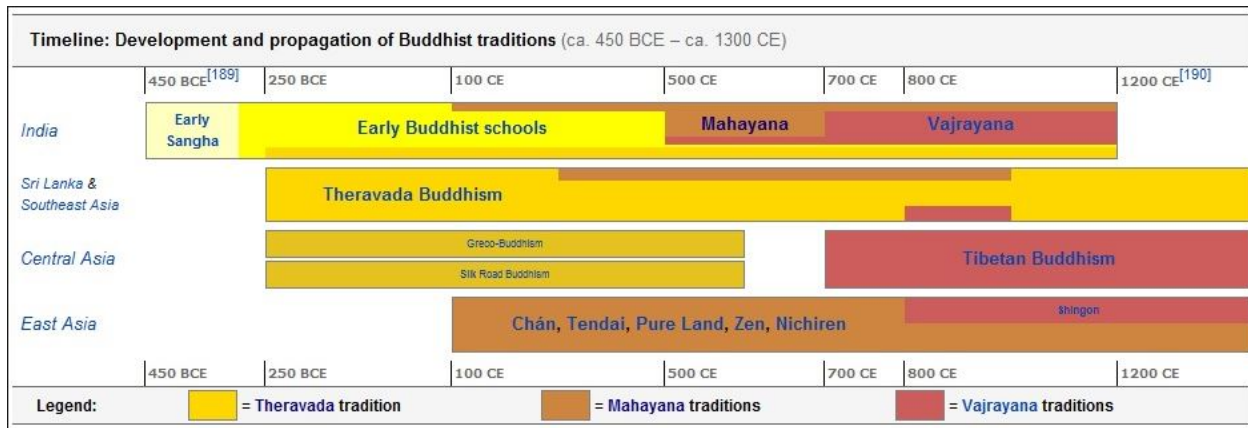
- To become Buddhist is to take the oath, follow the teachings as a part of a community.
  - "I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the Dharma, I take refuge in the Sangha."
1. Buddha – The Enlightened One, referred to in our literature as “Lord” or “The”
  2. The Dharma – Truth, which is the teaching of the Buddha
  3. The Sangha – (Order of Disciplines) The Community of the Buddha, any size grouping of monks, nuns, or followers.

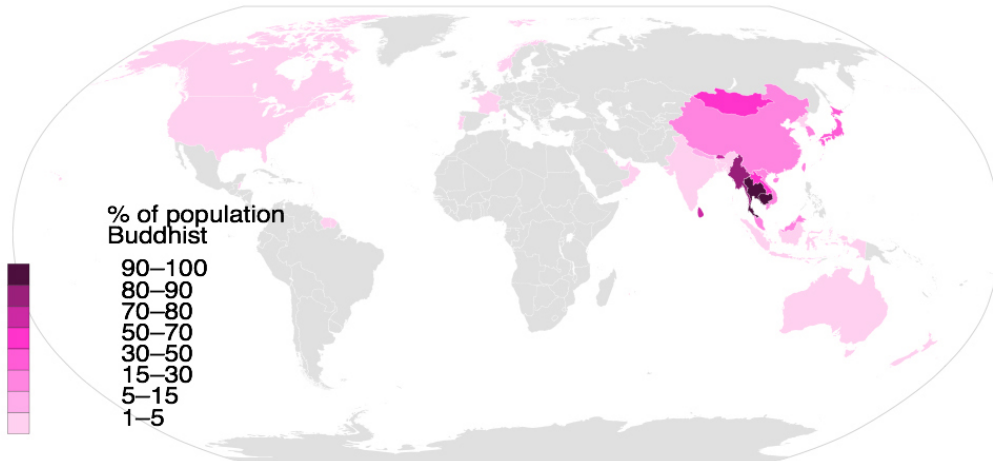
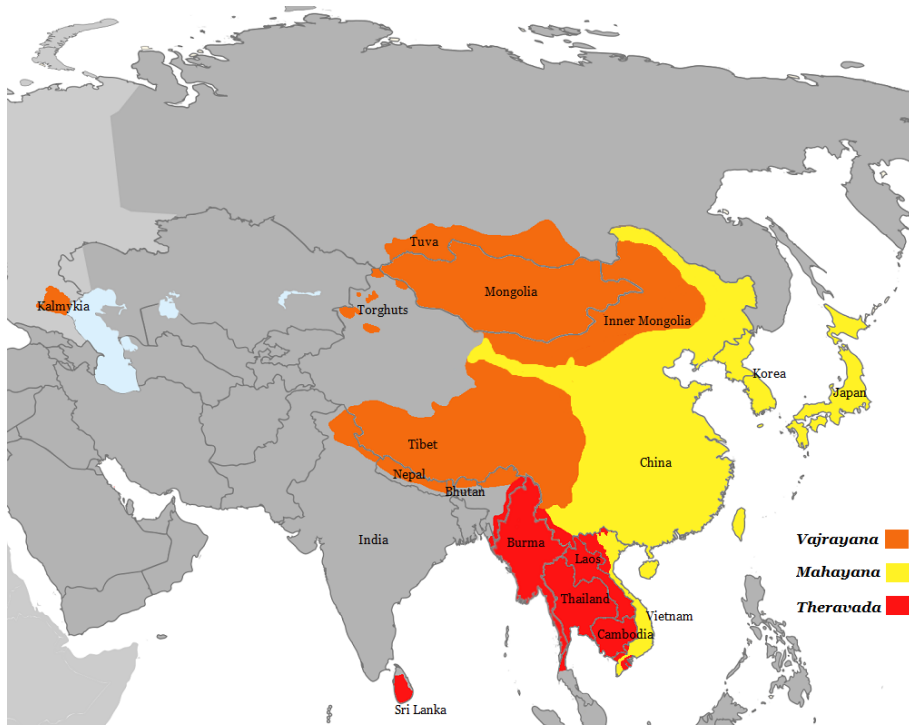
### **Five Precepts/Ethical Guidelines:**

1. Do not kill living things
2. Take only what has been given
3. Do not misuse the sense in indulgence, be satisfied with simple things
4. Do not lie
5. Do not become intoxicated

### **Buddhism Branches and Populations:**

- Theravada- School of the Elder Monks (Hinayana—lesser vehicle) Mirrors original experiences of Siddhartha Gautama Buddha. A personal journey with assistance of a teacher.
  - Geographic Region: Sri Lanka, Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand
- Mahayana - Great Vehicle
  - Team effort - Bodhisattva and celestial beings assist the Buddhist on their path.
  - Geographic Region: China, Korea, Japan, Vietnam
- Vajriyana - Tibetan Buddhists
  - Known as Tibetan Buddhists, lama-based
  - Geographic Region: Northern India, Nepal-Tibet, Mongolia





**Sacred Texts of Buddhism:**

- The Sutras - Words and teachings of the Buddha
  - Tripitaka (three baskets) - Pali Canon (Sole Sacred Text to Therevada Buddhists)
    - Dhammapada - Sayings of Buddha from within the Tripitaka
  - Mahayana Sutras

- Lotus Sutra/Heart Sutra, etc. - Primary books which is a sermon regarding the components of Buddhism, i.e. Bodhisattvas, spiritual beings, mediation
- Vajrayana Literature
  - Tibetan Book of the Dead - read so that those who are in Samsara can achieve Nirvana

### **The Chinese Branch of Buddhism:**

- Amitabha (Pure Land)
- Chan (meditation hall shown)
  - Zen in Japanese
- Esoteric sect
- Tian-Tai (rationalist sect)
- [note that China also hosts Tibetan Buddhists (Tibet and Inner Mongolia), and Theravada Buddhists (Daizu)]

### **How To Engage:**

1. Be careful about terminology
  - Be “Born Again” means something different among Buddhists
2. Understand the basics of their questions and worldview
  - Nirvana does not mean ‘Heaven’
  - Karma vs. Grace
  - Suffering and death
    - Suffering is an illusion

- Goal is the loss of desire and self

**How to Relate:**

1. Truth is relational – relationships take time.
2. Answer their questions, not ours
3. Be real
4. Learn and listen
5. Point to Jesus
6. Love covers a multitude of sins
7. Pray
8. Be open for the Lord to break in with miracles.