

# INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM

*Understanding the Theology of the Buddhist Religion*

By

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# THREE MAJOR STREAMS OF BUDDHISM

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- **Theravada Buddhism-** or “insight meditation”-Follow the Pali canon, believe the Buddha was a man who achieved enlightenment in his lifetime. Generally related to “southern school” after canonization and exists primarily in Southeast Asia— Thailand, Cambodia, Burma, the west etc.—in the west, major figures are: Jack Kornfield, Joseph Goldstein, SA Gnanananda. Sharon Shalzburg etc.
- **Mahayana Buddhism-** Zen (Japanese), Chan (Chinese) and/or Pure Land— Follow Pali canon translated usually into Sanskrit as well as commentaries of religious figure overtime (these are seen as sacred text too). Believe the Buddha was **one** manifestation of enlightenment (existence of past, present and future Buddhas). Generally related to the “northern school” after canonization and exists primarily in China, Japan, Vietnam, the west etc. ---in the west presented by Thich Nhat Hanh, Suzuki Roshi, Joan Halifax, etc.
- **Vajrayana Buddhism-** known as an extension of Mahayana Buddhism—exists primarily in Tibet, Bhutan, Nepal, the west etc.---in the west major figures are: Trungpa Rinpoche, H.H. The Dalai Lama, Lama Yeshe etc.

# FOUNDATIONS OF BUDDHISM

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- **Buddhism** is a [nontheistic religion](#) that encompasses a variety of traditions, beliefs and practices largely based on [teachings](#) attributed to [Siddhartha Gautama](#), commonly known as the Buddha ("the awakened one"). According to Buddhist tradition, the Buddha lived and taught in the eastern part of the [Indian subcontinent](#) sometime between the 6th and 4th centuries [BCE](#). He is recognized by Buddhists as an [awakened](#) or [enlightened](#) teacher who shared his insights to help [sentient beings](#) end their [suffering](#) through the elimination of [ignorance](#) and [craving](#). Buddhists believe that this is accomplished through [direct understanding](#) and the perception of [dependent origination](#) and the [Four Noble Truths](#). The ultimate goal of Buddhism is the attainment of the sublime state of [Nirvana](#), by practicing the [Noble Eightfold Path](#) (also known as the [Middle Way](#)).

# FOUNDATIONS OF BUDDHISM

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- After the death of Siddhartha Gatauma Buddha, the canonization process began. Scripture was agreed upon and within these discussions a large disagreement occurred regarding the nature of enlightenment or of the nature of the “arhat.”
- **THE BIG QUESTION:** Was enlightenment unique to the experience of the figure known as Siddartha Buddha or is it a “state of being” beyond the teachings and path set forth by the Buddha.?
- Two schools were created out of this fundamental disagreement the northern school (an arhat is not strictly an attainable state of being but is the “nature of reality”) and southern school (the arhat is a state attainable only through effort, discipline and following the teaching of the Buddha).

# TEACHINGS OF BUDDHISM

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- [Buddhist schools](#) vary on the exact nature of the path to [liberation](#), the importance and [canonicity of various teachings and scriptures](#), and especially their respective practices. One consistent belief held by all Buddhist schools is the lack of a [Creator deity](#). The foundations of Buddhist tradition and practice are the [Three Jewels](#): the **Buddha**, the [Dharma](#) (the teachings), and the [Sangha](#) (the community). Taking "[refuge](#) in the triple gem" has traditionally been a declaration and commitment to being on the Buddhist path, and in general distinguishes a Buddhist from a non-Buddhist. Other practices may include following [ethical precepts](#); [support of the monastic community](#); [renouncing](#) conventional living and becoming a [monastic](#); the development of [mindfulness](#) and practice of [meditation](#); cultivation of higher wisdom and discernment; study of scriptures; [devotional](#) practices; ceremonies; and in the Mahayana tradition, invocation of buddhas and [bodhisattvas](#).

# TEACHINGS OF BUDDHISM-Samsara

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## SAMSARA

- Within Buddhism, samsara is defined as the continual repetitive cycle of birth and death that arises from ordinary beings' grasping and fixating on a self and experiences. Specifically, samsara refers to the process of cycling through one rebirth after another within the six realms of existence (refer to slide below on six realms) where each realm can be understood as physical realm or a psychological state characterized by a particular type of suffering. Samsara arises out of [avidya](#) (ignorance) and is characterized by [dukkha](#) (suffering, anxiety, dissatisfaction). In the Buddhist view, liberation from samsara is possible by following the Buddhist path

# TEACHINGS OF BUDDHISM- Karma

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## KARMA

- [In Buddhism, Karma](#) (from [Sanskrit](#): "action, work") is the force that drives [samsāra](#)—the cycle of suffering and rebirth for each being. Good, skillful deeds ([Pāli](#): "kusala") and bad, unskillful ([Pāli](#): "akusala") actions produce "seeds" in the mind that [come to fruition](#) either in this life or in a subsequent [rebirth](#). The avoidance of unwholesome actions and the cultivation of positive actions is called [śīla](#) (from Sanskrit: "ethical conduct").
- In Buddhism, karma specifically refers to those actions of body, speech or mind that spring from mental intent ("[cetana](#)"), and bring about a consequence or fruit, ([phala](#)) or result ([vipāka](#)).

# TEACHINGS OF BUDDHISM- Karma

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## KARMA (cont.)

- In Theravada Buddhism there can be no divine salvation or forgiveness for one's karma, since it is a purely impersonal process that is a part of the makeup of the universe.
- In Mahayana Buddhism, the texts of certain [Mahayana sutras](#) (such as the [Lotus Sutra](#), the [Angulimaliya Sutra](#) and the [Nirvana Sutra](#)) claim that the recitation or merely the hearing of their texts can expunge great swathes of negative karma. Some forms of Buddhism (for example, [Vajrayana](#)) regard the recitation of [mantras](#) as a means for cutting off of previous negative karma. The Japanese [Pure Land](#) teacher [Genshin](#) taught that [Amida Buddha](#) has the power to destroy the karma that would otherwise bind one in saṃsāra

# TEACHINGS OF BUDDHISM- Rebirth

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## REBIRTH

- Rebirth refers to a process whereby beings go through a succession of lifetimes as one of many possible forms of [sentient life](#), each running from conception to death. Buddhism rejects the concepts of a permanent [self](#) or an unchanging, eternal [soul](#), as it is called in [Hinduism](#) and Christianity. According to Buddhism there ultimately is no such thing as a self independent from the rest of the universe (the doctrine of [anatta](#)). Buddhists also refer to themselves as the believers of the anatta doctrine—Nairatmyavadin or Anattavadin. Rebirth in subsequent existences must be understood as the continuation of a dynamic, ever-changing process of "dependent arising" ("[pratīyasamutpāda](#)") determined by the laws of cause and effect (karma) rather than that of one being, [transmigrating](#) or [incarnating](#) from one existence to the next.

# TEACHINGS OF BUDDHISM- Rebirth

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## REBIRTH (cont.)

- Each rebirth takes place within one of five realms according to Theravadins, or [six](#) according to other Mahayana schools.
- [Naraka beings](#): (Hell realm)those who live in one of many Narakas (Hells);
- [Preta](#): (Hungry ghost realm) sometimes sharing some space with humans, but invisible to most people; an important variety is the [hungry ghost](#);
- [Animals](#): (Animal Realm)sharing space with humans, but considered another type of life;
- [Human beings](#): (Human realm)one of the realms of rebirth in which attaining Nirvana is possible;
- [Asuras](#): (Jealous god realm)variously translated as lowly deities, demons, titans, antigods; not recognized by Theravāda (Mahavihara) tradition as a separate realm;
- [Devas](#) (God realm)including [Brahmas](#): variously translated as gods, deities, spirits, angels, or left untranslated.

# TEACHINGS OF BUDDHISM-The Four Noble Truths

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## The Four Noble Truths

- The teachings on the Four Noble Truths are regarded as central to the teachings of Buddhism, and are said to provide a conceptual framework for Buddhist thought. These four truths explain the nature of [dukkha](#) (suffering, anxiety, unsatisfactoriness), its causes, and how it can be overcome. The four truths are:
  - (1): The truth of *dukkha* (suffering, anxiety, unsatisfactoriness)
  - (2): The truth of the origin of *dukkha*
  - (3): The truth of the cessation of *dukkha*
  - (4): The truth of the path leading to the cessation of *dukkha*

# TEACHINGS OF BUDDHISM-The Four Noble Truths

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- The **first truth** explains the nature of [dukkha](#). *Dukkha* is commonly translated as "suffering", "anxiety", "unsatisfactoriness", "unease", etc., and it is said to have the following three aspects:
  - The obvious suffering of physical and mental illness, growing old, and dying.
  - The anxiety or stress of trying to hold onto things that are constantly changing.
  - A subtle dissatisfaction pervading all forms of life, due to the fact that all forms of life are changing, impermanent and without any inner core or substance. On this level, the term indicates a lack of satisfaction, a sense that things never measure up to our expectations or standards.
- The **second truth** is that the [origin](#) of *dukkha* can be known. Within the context of the four noble truths, the origin of *dukkha* is commonly explained as craving (Pali: [tanha](#)) conditioned by ignorance (Pali: [avijja](#)). On a deeper level, the root cause of *dukkha* is identified as ignorance (Pali: [avijja](#)) of the true nature of things. The **third noble truth** is that the complete [cessation](#) of *dukkha* is possible, and the **fourth noble truth** identifies a [path](#) to this cessation

# TEACHINGS OF BUDDHISM- Noble Eightfold Path

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## Noble Eightfold Path

- The [Noble Eightfold Path](#)—the fourth of the Buddha's [Noble Truths](#)—consists of a set of eight interconnected factors or conditions, that when developed together, lead to the cessation of [dukkha](#). These eight factors are: Right View (or Right Understanding), Right Intention (or Right Thought), Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.
- [Ajahn Sucitto](#) describes the path as "a mandala of interconnected factors that support and moderate each other." The eight factors of the path are *not* to be understood as stages, in which each stage is completed before moving on to the next. Rather, they are understood as eight significant dimensions of one's behaviour—mental, spoken, and bodily—that operate in dependence on one another; taken together, they define a complete *path*, or way of living

# TEACHINGS OF BUDDHISM-The Four Immeasurables

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## The Four Immeasurables

- While he searched for enlightenment, Gautama combined the [yoga](#) practice of his teacher Kalama with what later became known as "the immeasurables". Gautama thus invented a new kind of human, one without [egotism](#). What [Thich Nhat Hanh](#) calls the "Four Immeasurable Minds" of love, compassion, joy, and equanimity are also known as [brahmaviharas](#), divine abodes, or simply as four immeasurables. [Pema Chödrön](#) calls them the "four limitless ones". Of the four, [mettā](#) or loving-kindness meditation is perhaps the best known. The Four Immeasurables are taught as a form of meditation that cultivates "wholesome attitudes towards all sentient beings." The practitioner prays:
  - May all sentient beings have happiness and its causes,
  - May all sentient beings be free of suffering and its causes,
  - May all sentient beings never be separated from bliss without suffering,
  - May all sentient beings be in equanimity, free of bias, attachment and anger

# TEACHINGS OF BUDDHISM-The Middle Way

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## Middle Way

- An important guiding principle of Buddhist practice is the [Middle Way](#) (or Middle Path), which is said to have been discovered by Gautama Buddha prior to his enlightenment. The Middle Way has several definitions:
- The practice of non-extremism: a path of moderation away from the extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification;
- The middle ground between certain [metaphysical views](#) (for example, that things ultimately either do or do not exist);
- An explanation of [Nirvana](#) (perfect enlightenment), a state wherein it becomes clear that all dualities apparent in the world are delusory;
- Another term for [emptiness](#), the ultimate nature of all phenomena (in the [Mahayana](#) branch), a lack of inherent existence, which avoids the extremes of permanence and nihilism or inherent existence and nothingness.

# TEACHINGS OF BUDDHISM-Three Marks of Existence

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## Three Marks of Existence

- The Three Marks of Existence are ***impermanence, suffering, and not-self***.
- (1): **Impermanence** (Pāli: [anicca](#)) expresses the Buddhist notion that all [compounded or conditioned phenomena](#) (all things and experiences) are inconstant, unsteady, and impermanent. Everything we can experience through our senses is made up of parts, and its existence is dependent on external conditions. Everything is in constant flux, and so conditions and the thing itself are constantly changing. Things are constantly coming into being, and ceasing to be. Since nothing lasts, there is no inherent or fixed nature to any object or experience. According to the doctrine of impermanence, life embodies this flux in the aging process, the cycle of rebirth (saṃsāra), and in any experience of loss. The doctrine asserts that because things are impermanent, attachment to them is futile and leads to suffering (dukkha).

# TEACHINGS OF BUDDHISM-Three Marks of Existence

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- (2): **Suffering** (Pāli: दुक्ख [dukkha](#); Sanskrit दुःख *duḥkha*) is also a central concept in Buddhism. The word roughly corresponds to a number of terms in English including [suffering](#), [pain](#), unsatisfactoriness, sorrow, affliction, [anxiety](#), dissatisfaction, discomfort, [anguish](#), [stress](#), misery, and [frustration](#). Although the term is often translated as "suffering", its philosophical meaning is more analogous to "disquietude" as in the condition of being disturbed. As such, "suffering" is too narrow a translation with "negative emotional connotations" that can give the impression that the Buddhist view is [pessimistic](#), but Buddhism seeks to be neither pessimistic nor optimistic, but realistic. In English-language Buddhist literature translated from Pāli, "dukkha" is often left untranslated, so as to encompass its full range of meaning.

# TEACHINGS OF BUDDHISM-Three Marks of Existence

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- (3): **Not-self** (Pāli: [anatta](#); Sanskrit: *anātman*) is the third mark of existence. Upon careful examination, one finds that no phenomenon is really "I" or "mine"; these concepts are in fact constructed by the mind. In the [Nikayas](#) anatta is not meant as a metaphysical assertion, but as an approach for gaining release from suffering. In fact, the Buddha rejected both of the metaphysical assertions "I have a [Self](#)" and "I have no Self" as [ontological views](#) that bind one to suffering. When asked if the self was identical with the body, the Buddha [refused to answer](#). By analyzing the constantly changing physical and mental constituents ([skandhas](#)) of a person or object, the practitioner comes to the conclusion that neither the respective parts nor the person as a whole comprise a self.

# TEACHINGS OF BUDDHISM- Dependent Arising

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## Dependent arising

- The doctrine of [pratītyasamutpāda](#), (Sanskrit; Pali: paticcasamuppāda; Tibetan: rten.cing.'brel.bar.'byung.ba; Chinese: 緣起) is an important part of Buddhist metaphysics. It states that phenomena arise together in a mutually interdependent web of cause and effect. It is variously rendered into English as "dependent origination", "conditioned genesis", "dependent co-arising", "interdependent arising", or "contingency".
- The best-known application of the concept of pratītyasamutpāda is the scheme of [Twelve Nidānas](#) (from Pāli "nidāna" meaning "cause, foundation, source or origin"), which explain the continuation of the cycle of suffering and rebirth ([samsāra](#)) in detail

# TEACHINGS OF BUDDHISM- Emptiness

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## Emptiness

- [Mahayana](#) Buddhism received significant theoretical grounding from [Nagarjuna](#) (perhaps c. 150–250 CE), arguably the most influential scholar within the Mahayana tradition. Nagarjuna's primary contribution to [Buddhist philosophy](#) was the systematic exposition of the concept of [śūnyatā](#), or "emptiness", widely attested in the [Prajñāpāramitā](#) sutras that emerged in his era. The concept of emptiness brings together other key Buddhist doctrines, particularly anatta and [dependent origination](#), to refute the metaphysics of [Sarvastivada](#) and [Sautrantika](#) (extinct non-Mahayana schools). For Nagarjuna, it is not merely sentient beings that are empty of [ātman](#); all phenomena ([dharmas](#)) are without any [svabhava](#) (literally "own-nature" or "self-nature"), and thus without any underlying essence; they are "empty" of being independent; thus the heterodox theories of svabhava circulating at the time were refuted on the basis of the doctrines of early Buddhism. Nagarjuna's school of thought is known as the [Mādhyamaka](#).

# TEACHINGS OF BUDDHISM- Nirvana or Liberation

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## Nirvana

- [Nirvana](#) (Sanskrit; Pali: "Nibbana") means "cessation", "extinction" (of [craving](#) and [ignorance](#) and therefore [suffering](#) and the cycle of involuntary rebirths ([samsāra](#))), "extinguished", "quieted", "calmed"; it is also known as "Awakening" or "Enlightenment" in the West. The term for anybody who has achieved *nirvana*, including the Buddha, is [arahant](#).
- [Bodhi](#) (Pāli and Sanskrit, in [devanagari](#): बोधि) is a term applied to the experience of Awakening of arahants. *Bodhi* literally means "awakening", but it is more commonly translated into English as "enlightenment". In [Early Buddhism](#), *bodhi* carried a meaning synonymous to *nirvana*, using only some different metaphors to describe the experience, which implies the extinction of *raga* (greed, craving), *dosa* (hate, aversion) and *moha* (delusion). In the later school of [Mahayana Buddhism](#), the status of *nirvana* was downgraded in some scriptures, coming to refer only to the extinction of greed and hate, implying that delusion was still present in one who attained *nirvana*, and that one needed to attain *bodhi* to eradicate delusion:

# TEACHINGS OF BUDDHISM- Nirvana or Liberation

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## Nirvana

- Therefore, according to Mahayana Buddhism, the [arahant](#) has attained only *nirvana*, thus still being subject to delusion, while the [bodhisattva](#) not only achieves *nirvana* but full liberation from delusion as well. He thus attains *bodhi* and becomes a *buddha*. In Theravada Buddhism, *bodhi* and *nirvana* carry the same meaning as in the early texts, that of being freed from greed, hate and delusion.
- The term [parinirvana](#) is also encountered in Buddhism, and this generally refers to the complete *nirvana* attained by the *arahant* at the moment of death, when the physical body expires.

# PRACTICES OF BUDDHISM- Yoga and Meditation

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## Yoga and Meditation

- Buddhism traditionally incorporates states of meditative absorption (Pali: [jhāna](#); Skt: [dhyāna](#)). The most ancient sustained expression of yogic ideas is found in the early sermons of the Buddha. One key innovative teaching of the Buddha was that meditative absorption must be combined with liberating cognition. The difference between the Buddha's teaching and the yoga presented in early Brahminic texts is striking. Meditative states alone are not an end, for according to the Buddha, even the highest meditative state is not liberating. Instead of attaining a complete cessation of thought, some sort of mental activity must take place: a liberating cognition, based on the practice of mindful awareness.
- [Meditation](#) was an aspect of the practice of the [yogis](#) in the centuries preceding the Buddha. The Buddha built upon the yogis' concern with introspection and developed their meditative techniques, but rejected their theories of liberation. In Buddhism, [mindfulness](#) and [clear awareness](#) are to be developed at all times; in pre-Buddhist yogic practices there is no such injunction. A yogi in the Brahmanical tradition is not to practice while defecating, for example, while a Buddhist monastic should do so.

# PRACTICES OF BUDDHISM- Yoga and Meditation

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## Yoga and Meditation

Samatha meditation starts from being mindful of an object or idea, which is expanded to one's body, mind and entire surroundings, leading to a state of total concentration and tranquility (*jhāna*) There are many variations in the style of meditation, from sitting cross-legged or kneeling to chanting or walking. The most common method of meditation is to concentrate on one's breath (anapanasati), because this practice can lead to both *samatha* and *vipassana*'. In Buddhist practice, it is said that while *samatha* meditation can calm the mind, only *vipassanā* meditation can reveal how the mind was disturbed to start with, which is what leads to insight knowledge (*ijñāna*; Pāli *ñāṇa*) and understanding (prajñā Pāli *paññā*), and thus can lead to *nirvāṇa* (Pāli *nibbāna*). When one is in *jhana*, all defilements are suppressed temporarily. Only understanding (*prajñā* or *vipassana*) eradicates the defilements completely. *Jhanas* are also states that Arahants abide in order to rest.

# PRACTICES OF BUDDHISM- Yoga and Meditation

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## Yoga and Meditation

*Prajñā* (Sanskrit) or *paññā* (Pāli) means wisdom that is based on a realization of [dependent origination](#), The Four Noble Truths and the [three marks of existence](#). *Prajñā* is the wisdom that is able to extinguish afflictions and bring about *bodhi*. It is spoken of as the principal means of attaining *nirvāṇa*, through its revelation of the true nature of all things as [dukkha](#) (unsatisfactoriness), [anicca](#) (impermanence) and [anatta](#) (not-self). *Prajñā* is also listed as the sixth of the six [pāramitās](#) of the Mahayana.

Initially, *prajñā* is attained at a conceptual level by means of listening to sermons (dharma talks), reading, studying, and sometimes reciting Buddhist texts and engaging in discourse. Once the conceptual understanding is attained, it is applied to daily life so that each Buddhist can verify the truth of the Buddha's teaching at a practical level. Notably, one could in theory attain Nirvana at any point of practice, whether deep in meditation, listening to a sermon, conducting the business of one's daily life, or any other activity.

# PRACTICES OF BUDDHISM- Traditions and Lineages

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## Zen, Chaun and Pure Land

- Zen Buddhism (禪), pronounced [Chán](#) in Chinese, *seon* in Korean or *zen* in Japanese (derived from the Sanskrit term *dhyāna*, meaning "meditation") is a form of Buddhism that became popular in China, Korea and Japan and that lays special emphasis on meditation. Zen places less emphasis on scriptures than some other forms of Buddhism and prefers to focus on direct spiritual breakthroughs to truth.
- Zen Buddhism is divided into two main schools: [Rinzai](#) (臨濟宗) and [Sōtō](#) (曹洞宗), the former greatly favouring the use in meditation on the [koan](#) (公案, a meditative riddle or puzzle) as a device for spiritual break-through, and the latter (while certainly employing koans) focusing more on [shikantaza](#) or "just sitting".
- Zen Buddhist teaching is often full of paradox, in order to loosen the grip of the ego and to facilitate the penetration into the realm of the True Self or Formless Self, which is equated with the Buddha himself. Pure Land traditions are a later development of Zen schools.

# PRACTICES OF BUDDHISM- Traditions and Lineages

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## Vajrayana and Tantra

- Though based upon Mahayana, Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhism is one of the schools that practice [Vajrayana](#) or "Diamond Vehicle" (also referred to as Mantrayāna, Tantrayāna, [Tantric](#) Buddhism, or [esoteric](#) Buddhism). It accepts all the basic concepts of Mahāyāna, but also includes a vast array of spiritual and physical techniques designed to enhance Buddhist practice. Tantric Buddhism is largely concerned with ritual and meditative practices. One component of the Vajrayāna is harnessing psycho-physical energy through ritual, visualization, physical exercises, and meditation as a means of developing the mind. Using these techniques, it is claimed that a practitioner can achieve Buddhahood in one lifetime, or even as little as three years. In the Tibetan tradition, these practices can include [sexual yoga](#), though only for some very advanced practitioners

# PRACTICES OF BUDDHISM-Taking Refuge

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## Refuge in the Three Jewels

- Traditionally, the first step in most Buddhist schools requires taking refuge in the Three Jewels ([Sanskrit: tri-ratna](#), [Pāli: ti-ratana](#)) as the foundation of one's religious practice. The practice of taking refuge on behalf of young or even unborn children is mentioned in the [Majjhima Nikaya](#), recognized by most scholars as an early text (cf. [Infant baptism](#)). Tibetan Buddhism sometimes adds a fourth refuge, in the [lama](#). In Mahayana, the person who chooses the [bodhisattva](#) path makes a vow or pledge, considered the ultimate expression of compassion. In Mahayana, too, the Three Jewels are perceived as possessed of an eternal and unchanging essence and as having an irreversible effect: "The Three Jewels have the quality of excellence. Just as real jewels never change their faculty and goodness, whether praised or reviled, so are the Three Jewels (Refuges), because they have an eternal and immutable essence. These Three Jewels bring a fruition that is changeless, for once one has reached Buddhahood, there is no possibility of falling back to suffering

# PRACTICES OF BUDDHISM-Bodhisattva and Tantric Vows

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## **BODHISATTVA VOWS**

- In the Mahayana tradition practitioners take their Bodhisattva Vows usually as a vow to continue to exist within the cycle of existence in order to free other beings---basically denying the notion of individual salvation.

## **TANTRIC VOWS**

- In Vajrayana Buddhism there are a series of vows taken usually within the notion of secret mantra---vows are given during a ceremony and usually include instruction in a particular practice with a provided mantra---i.e ngondro, vajrasattva, mandala, dzogchen, mahamudra---each related to specific teachers, schools and lineages.

# MODERN BUDDHISM

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## Buddhism today

- By the late Middle Ages, Buddhism had become virtually extinct in India, and although it continued to exist in surrounding countries, its influence was no longer expanding. It is now again gaining strength worldwide. China and India are now starting to fund Buddhist shrines in various Asian countries as they compete for influence in the region.
- Most Buddhist groups in the West are nominally affiliated with at least one of these three traditions:
- [Theravada](#) Buddhism, using [Pāli](#) as its scriptural language, is the dominant form of [Buddhism in Cambodia](#), [Laos](#), [Thailand](#), [Sri Lanka](#), and [Burma](#). The [Dalit Buddhist movement](#) in India (inspired by [B. R. Ambedkar](#)) also practices Theravada.

# MODERN BUDDHISM

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## Buddhism today

- East Asian forms of [Mahayana Buddhism](#) that use Chinese scriptures are dominant in most of China, Japan, [Korea](#), [Taiwan](#), [Singapore](#) and [Vietnam](#) as well as such communities within Indochina, Southeast Asia and the West. Vietnam and Singapore are major concentrations of Mahayana Buddhism in Southeast Asia.
- [Tibetan Buddhism](#) is found in [Tibet](#), [Bhutan](#), [Nepal](#), [Mongolia](#), areas of [India](#) (it's the majority religion in [Ladakh](#); significant population in [Himachal Pradesh](#), Arunachal Pradesh and [Sikkim](#)), China (particularly in [Inner Mongolia](#)), and Russia (mainly [Kalmykia](#), [Buryatia](#), and [Tuva](#)).

# MODERN BUDDHISM

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## Buddhism today

- Formal membership varies between communities, but basic lay adherence is often defined in terms of a traditional formula in which the practitioner takes refuge in The [Three Jewels](#): the [Buddha](#), the [Dharma](#) (the teachings of the Buddha), and the [Sangha](#) (the Buddhist community). At the present time, the teachings of all three branches of Buddhism have spread throughout the world, and Buddhist texts are increasingly translated into local languages. While in the [West](#) Buddhism is often seen as exotic and progressive, in the East it is regarded as familiar and traditional. Buddhists in Asia are frequently well organized and well funded. In a number of countries, it is recognized as an official religion and receives state support. Modern influences increasingly lead to [new forms of Buddhism](#) that significantly depart from traditional beliefs and practices.
- Overall there is an overwhelming diversity of recent forms of Buddhism

# INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM

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- QUESTIONS or COMMENTS????



# OUR VISION

PATIENT-INSPIRED HEALTH CARE WITHOUT BOUNDARIES