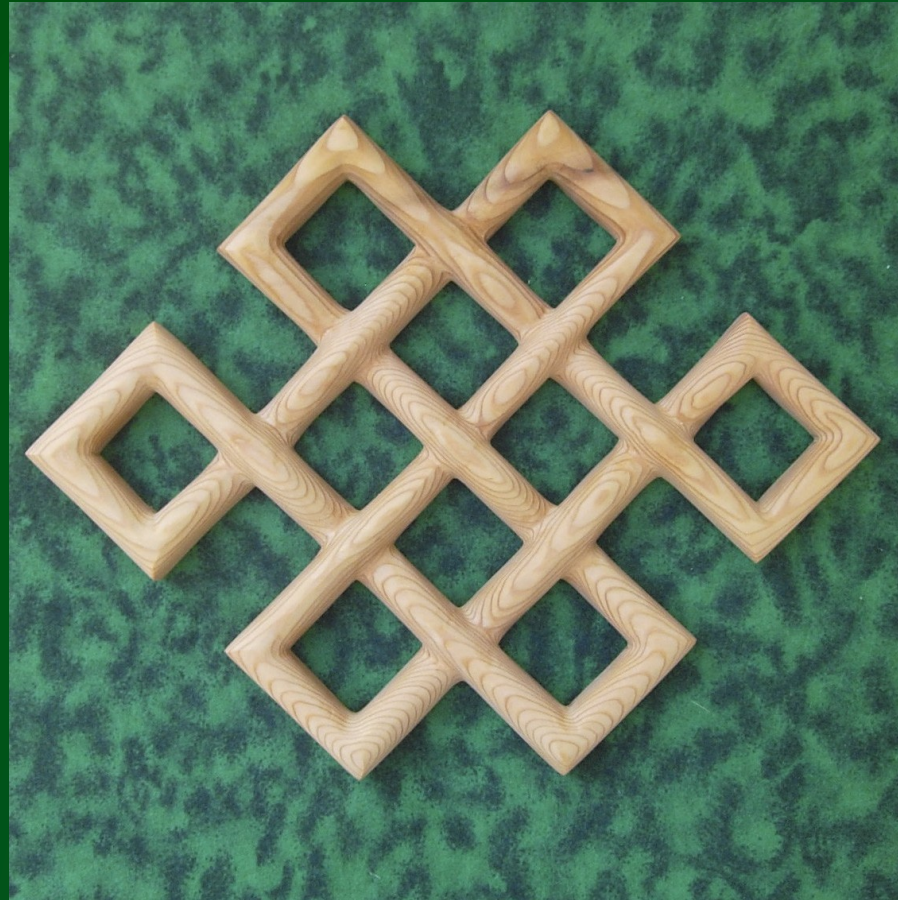


“The Cross and the Endless Knot” BUDDHISM and MISSION:



Dr. Glenn Russell, Andrews University

ORIGIN



- Began as a reform movement within Hinduism in the 6th century BC
- Key similarities between Hinduism and Buddhism:
 - 1) belief in re-incarnation
 - 2) the law of Karma
- Buddhism became a new religion, not just a reform within Hinduism

3 KEY DIFFERENCES

- Buddhism rejects the idea of the individual soul (atman) uniting with the universal source of life (brahman)
- Buddhism does not accept the Hindu holy writings
- Classical Buddhism denies the existence of God or gods



Treasure of Chiekoin Temple

WHO WAS BUDDHA?

- **Siddharta Gautama**
- later title was “**Buddha**” = enlightened one
- born about **560 BC**, northeastern **India**
- **Myths & fables re: conception & birth**
- **many previous lives**



- **son of a rajah, grew up as a prince**
- **grew up in luxury; spoiled; well-educated**
- **married at age 16 and had a son and a harem**



- **materialism left him feeling chained and unhappy**

- **“4 Great Signs” (realities of life):**
decrepit old man, diseased man, a dead man and a hermit monk
- **3 journeys from home; saw 3 of these signs**
- **saw the tragedy of suffering – Hinduism failed**
- **4th journey: saw a wandering hermit monk**

- **At age 29 he saw all these sights and realized the true condition of humanity.**

The Great Renunciation:

- **Told father: “It is not right to hold by force a man who is anxious to escape from a burning house.”**
- **concluded that all life’s pleasures and attachments are vain and worthless**
- **what really matters is true “knowledge”**
- **The Great Renunciation:**
prince -> seeker (wandering monk)

THE QUEST FOR TRUTH

- **At the age of 29, Gautama left his home and became a homeless wanderer**
- **Began a lifelong quest for truth and enlightenment**
- **Became very concerned with issue of suffering**
- **Concluded that Hinduism was corrupt and ineffective**

- **Gautama's early life had been the path of self-indulgence (materialism, pleasure-seeking and selfish desires)**
- **Next Gautama tried the path of extreme self-denial (asceticism); practiced extreme fasting, yoga, etc**
- **Abandoned both paths as futile & ineffective**
- **Middle Path**



Temptations

For 7 years Siddharta struggled to find answers; he also faced many temptations from Mara, the Evil One



Meditating – seeking to find the answer to the problem of suffering



Attaining Enlightenment

One day, beneath a bodhi-tree, during deep meditation he attained the solution (enlightenment)

- He attained the “divine eye” and perceived the Eightfold Path toward truth and liberation
- Now he became Buddha = the enlightened one



- **Buddha gathered a group of disciples around him**

- **Next 44 years spent in meditation & itinerant teaching**



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1. Suffering exists

2. The cause of suffering is human desires and passions.

3. Suffering ceases when you eliminate all human desires.

4. Freedom from suffering is achieved by following the “Eightfold Path”

THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

1. Right KNOWLEDGE
2. Right ATTITUDE
3. Right SPEECH
4. Right ACTION
5. Right OCCUPATION
6. Right EFFORT
7. Right MINDFULNESS
8. Right COMPOSURE
(CONCENTRATION)

ENLIGHTENMENT



Suffering: Problem & Solution

- Life is temporary, sorrowful and full of selfishness.
- **Solution:** achieve a **state of consciousness** where one progressively **extinguishes** all the yearnings of self and denies the existence of one's personal identity.



N I R V A N A

- Built upon 4 noble truths:
- Literally “blowing out” the flame of desire – the ultimate state beyond cravings and desires
- All human desires and cravings are extinguished since they are the source of suffering
- The ultimate goal is enlightenment = liberation from samsara
- Individual self is extinguished

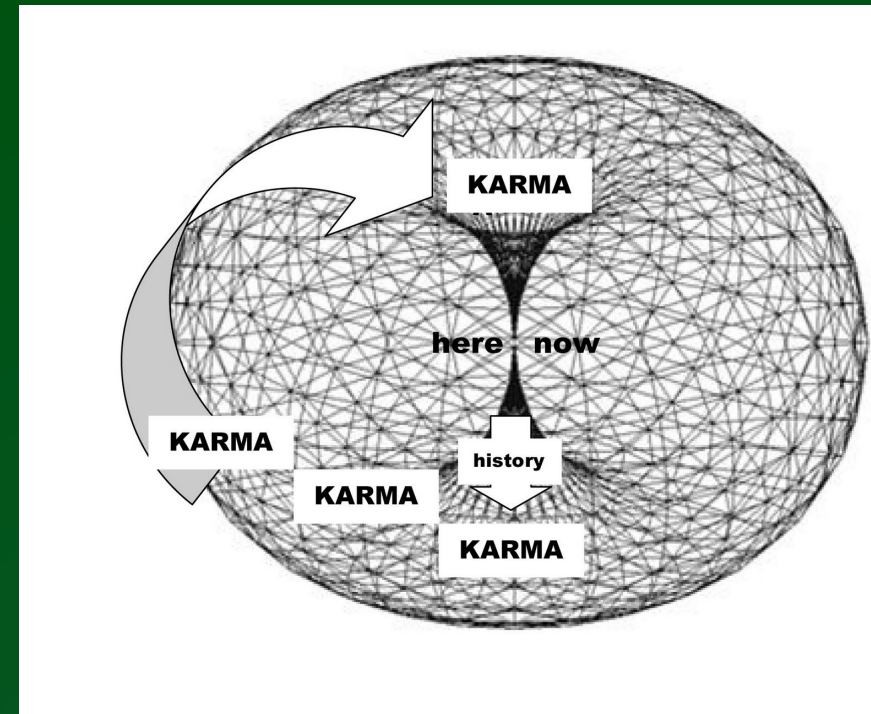
DHARMA: law or teaching

- Religious teaching or knowledge
- Includes moral and physical laws
- Buddhist view of knowledge
(not intellectual understanding as in West)
- Source of this knowledge?
found within through enlightenment
- rules 4 essential elements:
earth, water, fire, air



KARMA

- The law of cause and effect
- Determines the quality of the works and actions of one's life
- Establishes the order of universe
- Human beings are in bondage to this cycle of good and evil actions.
- Liberation from Karma through Buddhism

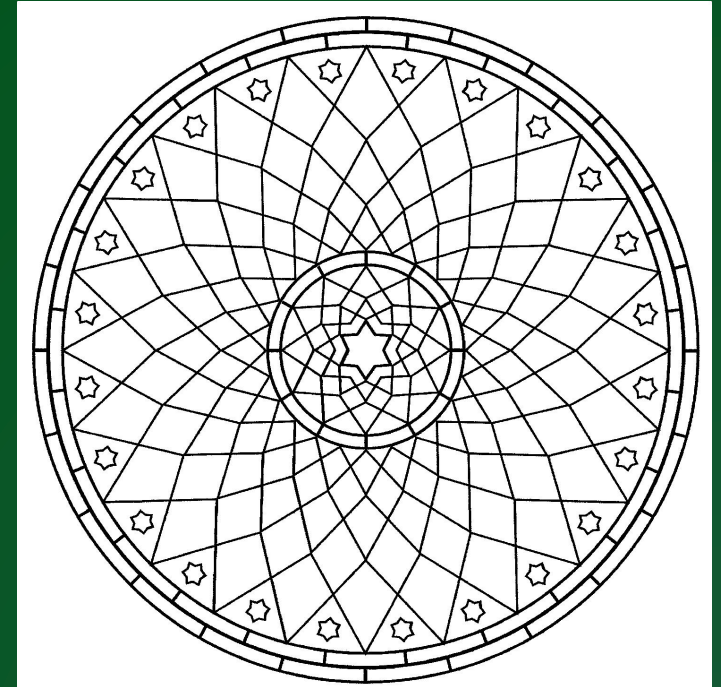


Balance in all things



Buddhism and Atheism

- **Buddhists do not believe in God**
- **Honor Buddha but he is an enlightened human being, not a savior or redeemer**
- **Mandala (“circle”) - life is a closed circle – Mandala is a way to get in touch with the spirits of nature and of ancestors**



The importance of thoughts and attitude



WE ARE SHAPED BY OUR THOUGHTS;
WE BECOME WHAT WE THINK.
WHEN THE MIND IS PURE,
JOY FOLLOWS LIKE A SHADOW
THAT NEVER LEAVES.

Buddha

Monks

- **The ideal life**
- **Only monks have time to complete the eightfold path**
- **Observe 227 rules**
- **Assist in worship at pagoda (temple)**

Buddhist Monk



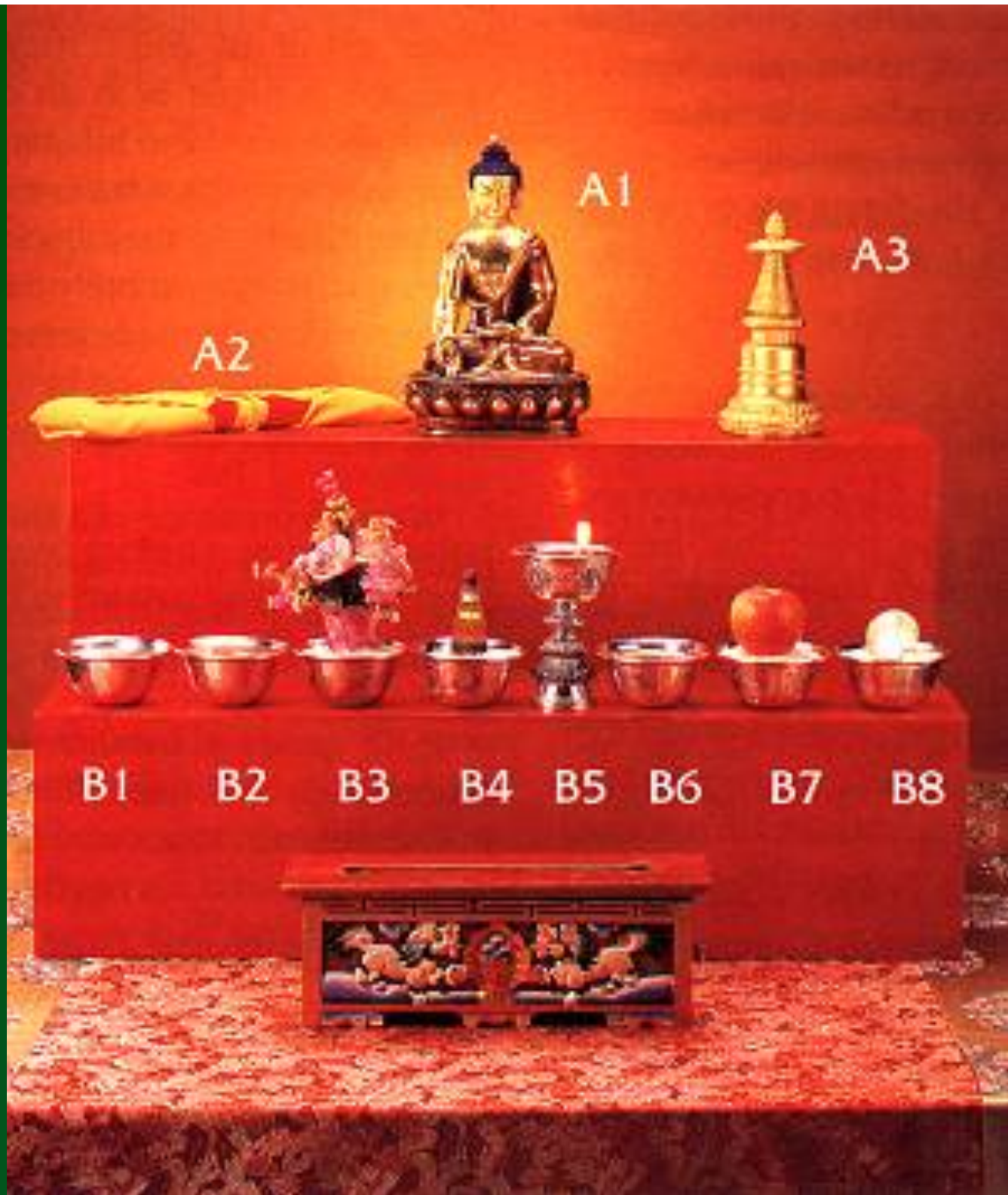
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Offerings and gifts at shrines (done both at home and at the pagoda)



Shrine



Prayer Wheel





Buddhist monk praying

“The Three Baskets”

Theravada Buddhism

- Sayings of Buddha were written down then categorized into 3 groups. Thus the 3 “baskets” (sets) of sacred writings in Buddhism.
- **Sutras (sermons and dialogues), rules for monks, statements about doctrines**
- The most important biographical accounts of Buddha’s life were not written until about 500 years after his death.

fact & myth intertwined

Divisions within Buddhism

MAHAYANA

- believe enlightenment is available for all
- pray to Buddha for grace & deliverance
- believe celestial beings (bodhisattvas) have reservoirs of Karmic merit

THERAVADA

- enlightenment for only select few (monks)
- Buddha is the human ideal
- enlightenment attained only through one's own efforts



Zen Buddhism

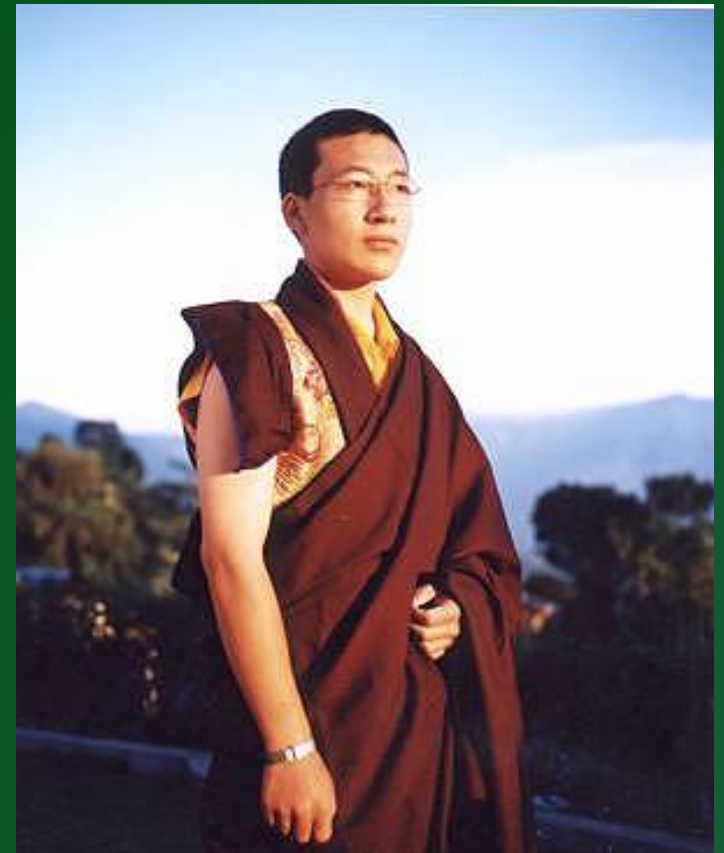
- “Zen” means meditation
- Most popular form of Buddhism in West
- Enlightenment is totally dependent upon self-effort (meditation)





Buddhism Today

* 5th largest
religion in the
world



The Appeal of Buddhism in the West

- It's appreciation for form and beauty
- It appears to be tolerant – “I don't need to answer to or obey God.”
- It provides a religion acceptable to sceptics and atheists.
- It appeals to human sense of works and justice – more “natural” than grace
- It has a high ethical & moral emphasis

Matthew 12:43-45 Warning

- "When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it.
- Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order.
- Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first.

Major Differences Between Buddhism & Christianity

- Atheism:
- Idolatry:
- Role of the self:
- Desires:
- Prayer and Meditation:
- Ultimate Goal:

Mission to Buddhism

CENTER FOR EAST ASIAN RELIGIONS

PO Box 234

Prakanong, Bangkok 10110, Thailand

Click here to contact this center

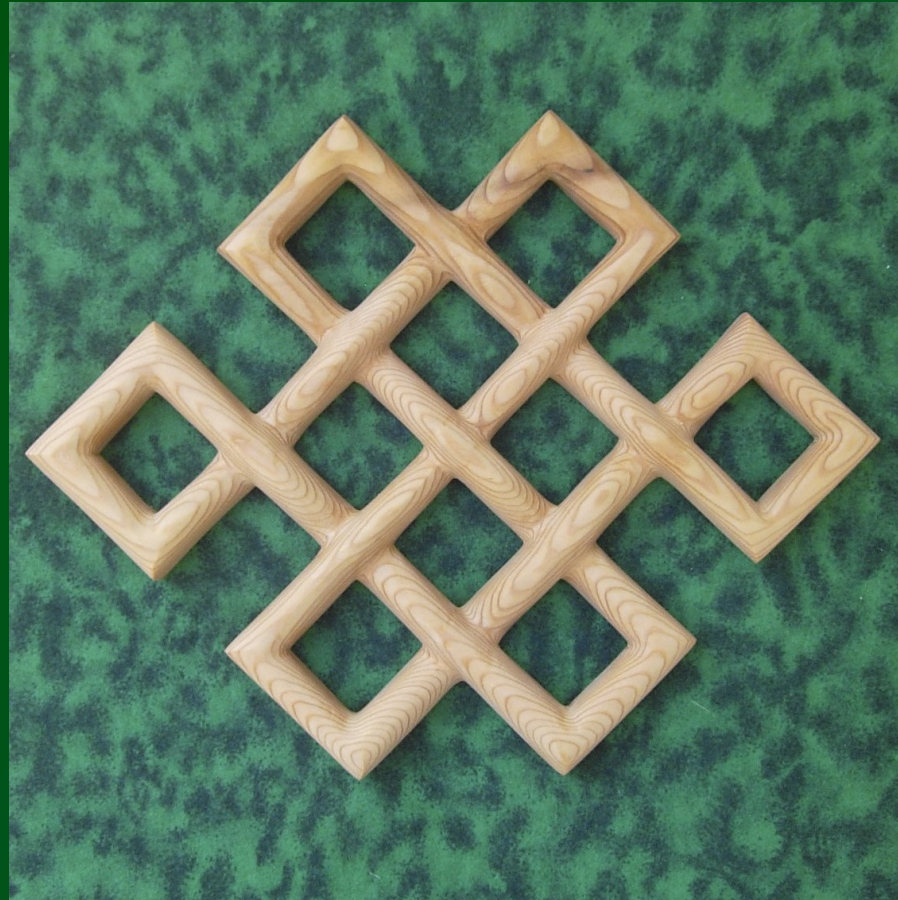
Web: **CEAR.AdventistMission.org**

Missions in a Buddhist land

● Andres Acuña



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“To ALL!”

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