

# Syncretism of Buddhism

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(Biblical Notes)

# Agenda

1. **Brief History of Buddhism**
2. **Buddhism as World Religion**
3. **Buddhism Believes**
4. **Buddhism Practices**
5. **Buddhism Influence in the World.**
6. **Summary**

## About the founder of Buddhism

1. Siddhartha Gautama, or called Gautama Buddha, was born about 5th century BC in Lumbini, now in modern-day Nepal, died in Kushinagar, India. The exact birth and death of date and place of Gautama is unknown.
2. Gautama is family name; Siddhartha is first name means 'to finish the goal'. Buddha is the title, literally means enlightened one, a knower, the awakened.
3. Gautama's ideology originated from the thinking of experiences of suffering (aging, illness, death, fears, failure/loss, etc) -- where does the suffer come from, how can we remove suffer to gain long lasting happiness. (Contrast to John 1:13)

# How Did Buddhism Become World Religion?

1. Classical Buddhism is a theoretically atheistic and intellectual pursuit.
2. But, it survives not in intellectual principle, but grafted onto another system of the aspirations of mankind.
3. Buddhism seek a magical, swirling source of power to remove pain to gain happiness.
4. Buddha is both divinity and a significant teacher when needed. Buddha usually resides in idols or images and is worshiped like the spirits. Spirits serve as guardians of land, buildings, and anything man desired.
5. Temple or altar where spirits are appealed to, implored and worshiped are very much a part of the religious system.

# Buddhism Basic Believe: Appeal of Buddhism:

1. Buddhism appeals to both the human mind and spirit. They believe that man can master his own destiny without need of others.
2. Through manipulating the rituals, Devotees can remove his fears and provide promises, certain degree of success, security, happiness.



# Buddhism Basic Believe :Holism

Buddhism believes that the universe, the spirit world and man are all part of the same fabric. Each needs the other to activate it. The world is mystically reciprocated. Any state of the world at a moment is the result of previous moment and the reason for the next moment.

Holism require man to love man, animal, plant and all nature to keep his harmony relationship and happiness for ever.

Chinese Buddhism prohibits killing and eating any animals. Killing any animal would bring the inauspicious consequence for the killers. All buddhist must be vegetarian.

# Buddhism Basic Believe: Spiritualism

1. Any physical realm has a spiritual coordinate. The spiritual realm has direct bearing on the physical realm.
2. To harmonize with life, one must, through mediation, communicate between the visible world and the invisible supernatural world.
3. However, Buddhists admit that the caprice reigns. The tragedies, catastrophes and other events are difficult to control.

# Buddhism Practice of Ritual

1. The Buddhism ritual gives the performer confidence that he has power, the sense of security, meaning and identity within the context of its belief system. It also sustains the sacred in life. The belief validates ritual and ritual validated belief.
2. Buddhism ritual binds people together socially, psychologically and physically.



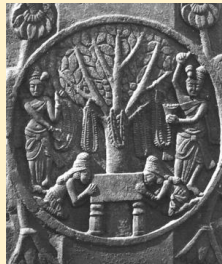
# Buddhism Practice the Power of Words

1. Word is one of ways for Buddhist to seek to control his world. Spell is used for benolevent. The curse is used to attack his enemy.
2. People who repeatedly recite of words can inherit superpower to produce the desired results, can secure exorcisms, call up spirits, and deal with situations requiring drastic action.
3. For example: Buddhism believe that anyone or who before dying keep reciting “Ah Mee Toh Foh, “, then they can enter spiritual western joyful garden Buddhism described.

# Buddhism Practice of the Power of Symbolism

These symbols serves to secure and protect places, people and times from the attacks of evil spirits, to invite benevolent spirits to exercise good offices on behalf of supplicants, to feel secure, endued with power and confidence.

1. Swastika 卐 (Falun Gong emphasize it recently in China)
2. the Dharma wheel, began in the 4th century BCE in India.
3. the Bodhi tree (early in India) and the lotus flower (5th Century in China).



# Buddhism Practice of the Harmony Relationship

1. Good deed. To do good deed can accumulated the positive spirits for his life so that can reduce the inauspicious events.
2. Tolerance: nonviolence/co-existence and to be kind so that he can accumulate his positive energy.
3. Love: To love people, animal, plant and all nature to help to make his life harmony.

# Buddhism Syncretism

The syncretism is the amalgamation or attempted amalgamation of different religions, cultures, or schools of thought.

Buddhism became a world religion is due to its syncretism of different animists practices and thoughts. Recently years, we found that Buddhism began to syncretize the Bible and Christian Church for its flexibility in world.

# Sample of practice adopted in history

- Buddha pray beads (Rosary )(4th Century AD)
- Crown (5th Century AD)
- clothing/robs
- Vegetarianism (7th Century AD)
- Gongfu (life power, martial, 500 AD in China Henan)
- divination/prediction (5th century AD)
- taboo (5th Century AD)
- Literature/arts (6th century AD)
- novels (16th century AD)



# Recent Syncretism Adopted from Christian Church

- Music / songs / Choir (recent years)
- Children Care (recent years)
- Sunday School (recent years)
- Acceptance of children monks (recent years)
- Public leaflet/movies/multimedia flooding (recent years)

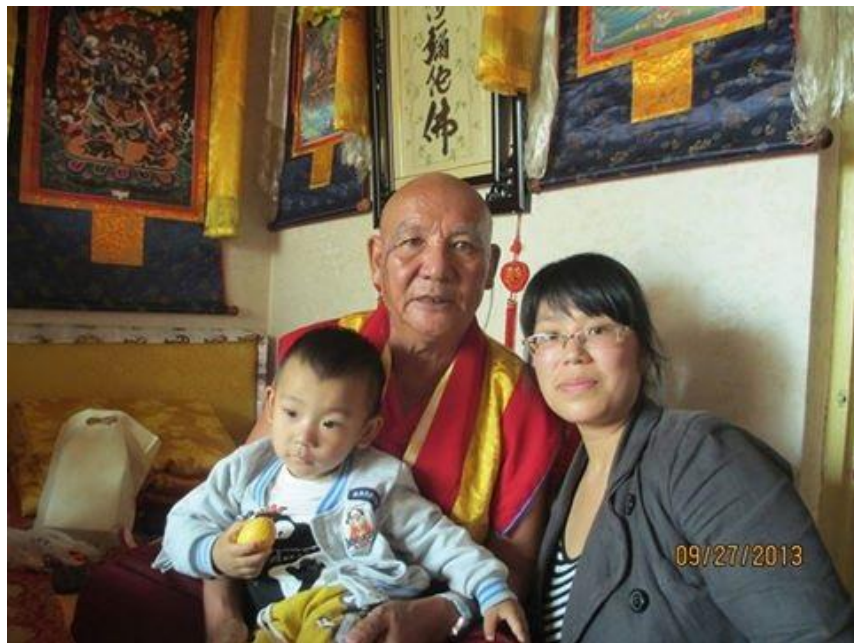
Buddhism is undergoing a radical change in its history that I never saw before recently.



# Buddhism Influence in the World

Buddhism is widely considered the most peaceful religion in the world. Over the past two thousands of years, experienced several times of persecution, the Buddhism had eventually conquered all the Chinese earlier thoughts and culture, and became the master religion of China. Now with the sympathy of being discriminated, Buddhism had steadily spread into American and other Christian territory and seems to be winning all hearts of the world silently.

Prominent Figures include Albert Einstein, Dalai Lama, Mark Zuckerberg, etc.



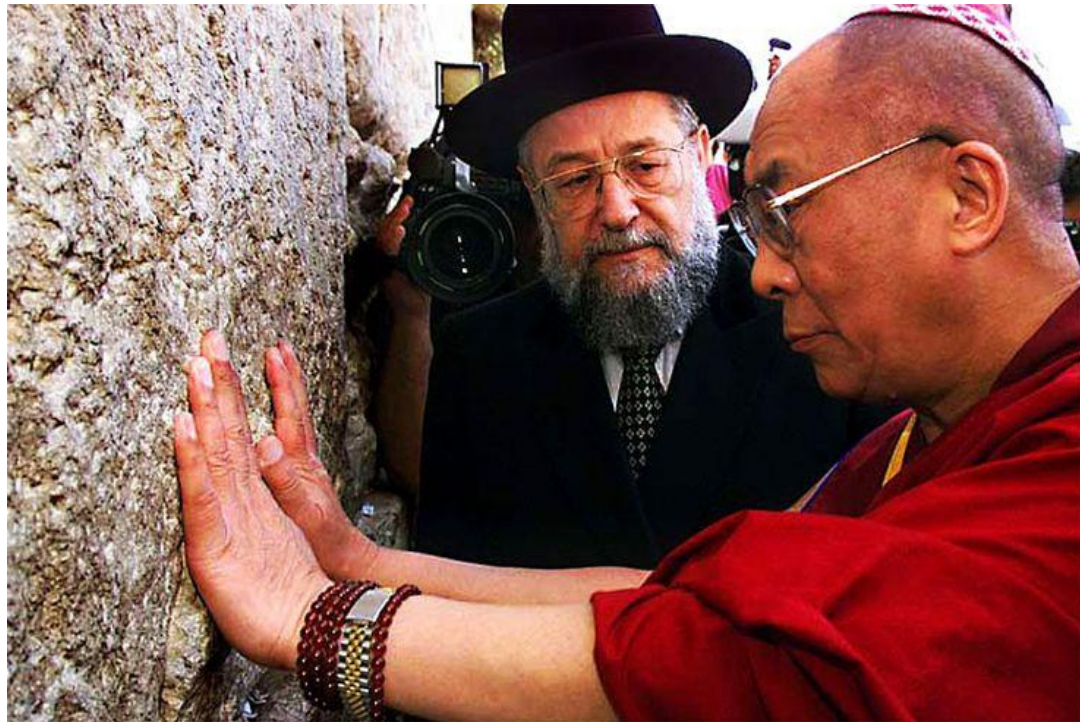
A mother brought her child to Buddhist monk for divination and to seek the protection, benevolence and bless.




(Albert Einstein 1941)

“The religion of the future will be a cosmic religion. It should transcend a personal god and avoid dogmas and theology. Covering both the natural and the spiritual, it should be based on a religious sense arising from the experience of all things, natural and spiritual and a meaningful unity.

Buddhism answers this description. If there is any religion that would cope with modern scientific needs, it would be Buddhism.”



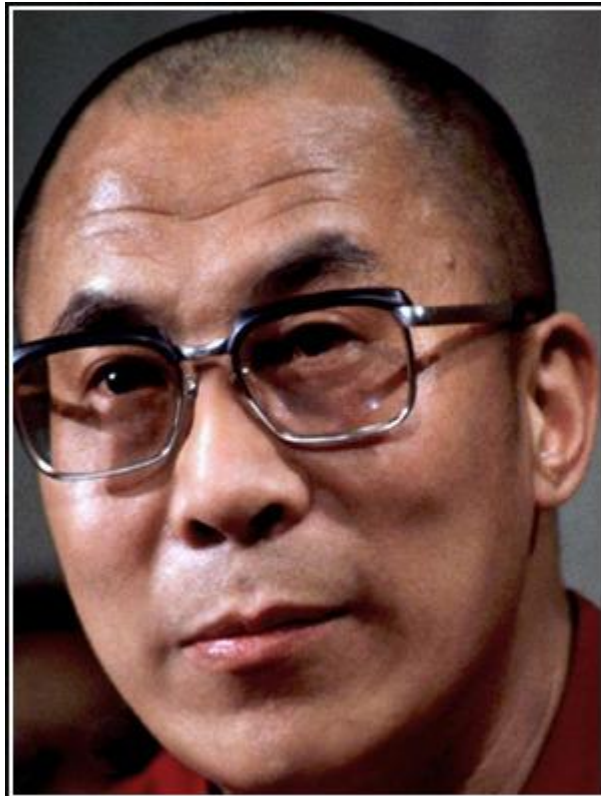
Dalai Lama with kippah on bald head in western wailing wall, Jerusalem, Mar 22, 1994.



What is Love?  
Love is the  
absence of  
judgement.

~Dalai Lama

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pain is inevitable,suffering is optional...  
we have bigger houses,but smaller  
families. More conveniences,but less  
time. We have knowledge,but less  
judgements; more experts,but more  
problems ; more medicines but less  
health.

— Dalai Lama —

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The Dalai Lama once said that 'If science proves some belief of Buddhism wrong, then Buddhism will have to change!' This is a great thought! And great thoughts belong to great men only!

— Mehmet Murat Ildan —

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Maybe the Dalai Lama is the only person who is totally honest, and even with him, he's skillful not to hurt anybody. He's skillful.

(Richard Gere)





Mark Zuckerberg in Xi'an,  
China, October 26, 2015

# Summary

- By syncretizing all different of animism as well as the Bible and Christian Church, Buddhism have become the third biggest world religion today.
- Keeping changing its animism styles and contents and becoming more and more similar to Christian will make it more and more challenging for the missionary work.