

Southern New Hampshire University

Buddhism in the West

1960s America

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Fulfillment of the Master of Arts in History

By

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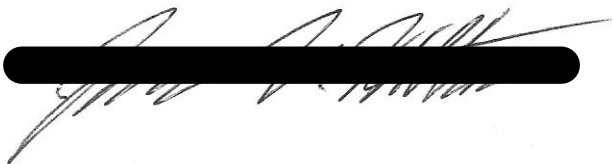
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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to understand Buddhism in the United States during the 1960s. I will be going over Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana Buddhism and comparing their morals, values, and virtues with three movements of the decade listed above. These movements are the Hippie Movement, Black Liberation, and Women's Liberation. The theme I will specifically be looking at is liberation between all three of these events and to find out what the word means to each individual movement.

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Preface

This essay was inspired because I find it fascinating applying social, cultural, and philosophical lenses to historical events. Writing this essay has given me a chance to dive deeper into the movements that I learned about in grade school and also have an in-depth view on a religion that is not talked about primarily in Western community.

I have always had a fascination with Buddhism after I wrote a paper on the way the Yuan Dynasty and the Mongol empire. I concluded through my research was that one of their tactics in conquering China and Tibet was their incorporation of Buddhism. The Mongols used the heritage of Tibetans and Chinese with Buddhism to create a system that benefited the people while staying loyal to a foreign empire.

Acknowledgments

To my wonderful family that helped me with this essay and supported me.

Glossary

Siddhartha: also known as Gautama Buddha, or Shakyamuni in Mahayana Buddhism. He was said to be a prince who experienced enlightenment while sitting under a tree.

Mahayana: The second branch of Buddhism; this was said to have come to Tibet in the 1st century A.D. Also known as *The Great Vehicle* in English.

Theravada: The first branch of Buddhism; this was said to be the practice of Siddhartha and his followers. Also known as The School for Elders in English.

Vajrayana: The third branch of Buddhism is newer than Theravada and Mahayana because it involves tantric practices. Also known as Thunderbolt or Diamond Vehicle.

Nirvana: The final goal in Buddhism reaching the state of perfect happiness.

Dharma/ Dhamma: An aspect of truth or reality

Agni-Horta: Ghee throne into fire

Dukka: gloom or despondency

CIMC: Cambridge Insight Meditation Center in Massachusetts

Wat Phila: Thai Immigrant Theravada Buddhist Organization in Philadelphia

Pratigha Anger, Rage, Irritation

Chos: Culture

YIP : Youth International Party was also known as Yippies; they were a more radical type of hippie

Introduction

Buddhism is a religion that dates back to the 5th century in the northern Indian region. Founded by Siddhartha Gautama (b. 563-483 BCE), it is still debated on where exactly he was born, but all scholars believe it was around the region where India and Nepal meet. Then four centuries later, the religion went to Tibet and became a new form of Buddhism. The old tradition of Buddhism is called Theravada, which is translated the school of Elders, and Mahayana, which is translated to the Great Vehicle in Sanskrit. Theravada was originally practiced by Siddhartha and his students, but the most popular form today is Mahayana, practiced by Tibetan Buddhism. Another form of Mahayana that is also practiced is Vajrayana Buddhism which is a more abstract way of looking at Buddhism. Since Siddhartha was from the northern region of India or Nepal, that was a big factor in how Indian Buddhist texts came to Tibet. Another catalyst in Tibet was the military King Songsten Gampo unified Tibetan tribes in 641 AD and captured one of his wives from Nepal. She was responsible for her husband's conversion which led to Gampo building Buddhist temples around in Tibet.

In other regions of the world, many scholars believe that the Silk Road was responsible for Buddhism entering China via Western merchants. The Silk Road started in the second century up until mid-15th century. This was possible because many of the merchants that came to different parts of Asia would trade for silk as well as buying. At the time Buddhism already existed in Tibet from around the 6th century, and they did not have the means to translate Indian

texts. So, they used art to portray the religion. The merchants would trade the beautiful tapestries and statues for silk making the earliest forms of Buddhist contact within the Chinese empire.

The reason it is one of the largest religions in the world is due to its adaptability throughout the world. Shintoism, a religion based on the nationalism of Japan, has been based off of Buddhist teachings. It has also been able to spread from the East and come to the West; Buddhism has also been able to make its way into the Psychedelic movement of the 1960s. The sixties were a changing time for the United States; there was an unpopular war, the civil rights movement was taking place, and even the highest office in the nation was going through a crisis. This essay will be looking at the origins of Buddhism in the beginning and looking at the three types of Buddhism, which are Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. It will also look at Buddhism in Asia, Buddhism in the West, and Buddhism within politics and the economy.

Specifically, what this paper will look at is the focus of Buddhism in twentieth century United States. We will look at three movements of the 1960s which are: the Hippie or Psychedelic Movement, the Civil Rights Movement, and the second wave of Feminism, also known as Women's Liberation. Buddhism in the 1960s gave an affirmation to nonconformists of American society through gendered identity, racial and ethnic identity, and anti-authoritarian norms that liberated each movement to their own uniqueness.

Each movement appropriated Buddhism in an effort to support their causes. Generally, Buddhism is seen as a peaceful religion or philosophy of life; its main purpose is to accept the natural and live harmoniously. But in the 1960s had a different way of practicing Buddhism

since the hippie movement, the civil rights movement, and women's liberation had a method of fighting their oppressors; this was less of the element of living harmoniously, but rather 'stirring the pot' within society.

What is needed to follow Buddhism is to have discipline. The definition of discipline in the context of this paper is the use of self-control. When applying discipline to Buddhism, the definition becomes more complex in involving: obedience, meaning one is prescribed to conduct themselves within a moral sense, regulating order and maintaining authority, and developing attitudes that are key to success. An example of obedience is the way in which Mahayana Buddhism conducts itself, it is more involved in creating a sacrificial individual to benefit the good of man. The moral sense of Buddhism is to acknowledge that man is flawed, this goes over the simple definition of moral, where one knows the difference between good and evil, because good and evil is subjective to different people around the world. Many of the different sects of Buddhism have different ways of practicing these central themes of discipline, while still being true to their different heritages and traditions. Buddhism has even found its way into the social affairs from politics to the economy, such as business and tourism.

Although many outsiders believe that Buddhism is practiced the same way, there are different type of sects and there are different types of populations that make up those sects. The reason these denominations are so different from each other is due to the traditions and values that each group has. Yes, Buddhism in the East and Buddhism in the Western world would have a greater disparity in the religion due to contrasting of philosophies, but many parts of Asia, such as the Southeast and Central have incorporated their own nationalism and patriotism within

Buddhism. For instance, Shintoism is a form that is native to Japan where it has created a haven where the Japanese can pray to the preservation of Japan and Japanese culture. Another example is Chinese Buddhism. Chinese Buddhism came from India via the Silk Road and has flourished within China for incorporating the already prevalent religion of Daoism, or Taoism, and Confucianism. During the reign of Mao Zedong in the 1960s, the endurance of Buddhism was tested by the Cultural Revolution, Buddhism had to show that it was not just a religion but also a supporter of the Chinese sociopolitical movement.

Since Buddhism adapted differently in many regions of Asia, this could give us a clear understanding of how it can conform to the daily lives of the West who have a completely different philosophy than in regional Asia. As mentioned before, there can be stark differences in the practice of Buddhism, specifically, when the United States is on the other side of the world of where the religion was founded. But many minorities of America found their way to Buddhism to escape the oppression of systematic racial discrimination and sexism. This happened during the 1960s (which is ironically enough the exact same time when Mao suppressed Buddhism in China) and it gave Americans a sense that they can be free and liberated within the spiritual world even though their body is physically suffering. Buddhism also contributed to the Japanese and Japanese-American community within the Americas. Issei Buddhism was a form of Buddhism that the Japanese community could use to define themselves among other Asians in America. This form of Buddhism contributes to Japanese-American study today.

What can be seen throughout the world, is that these different types of Buddhism have the purpose of giving knowledge to the individual. Early on in history, Buddhism looked at spiritual knowledge. Spiritual knowledge is understanding the true nature of reality and

understanding the positive and negative aspects of life, such as, Shinto and understanding the creation of the world had kamis of creation and kamis of destruction. But overtime, Buddhism came into contact with the advancement of technology and economies and with those advancements' humanity changed. Life was not so much centered on religion, but to play the game of who was the strongest nation. The knowledge for Buddhism was still present, but it adopted a new type of knowledge which was used for sociopolitical movements. The sociopolitical knowledge that Buddhism created is understanding social affairs and political affairs and how they can overlap.

What the Hippie, Civil Rights, and Women's movement have in common is that they all sought solace outside of what was the norm in American and Western society. They found a way to embrace their oppression and turn it around to create a new identity for themselves to uplift their own communities. The hippies used their illicit psychedelic drugs to create art and music that created a new way of sensationalizing, thinking, and feeling life; the Civil Rights Movement spawned the Black Liberation Movement; and the Women's Liberation realizing their potential in contributing to the benefit of society in the family structure and the social and political structure.

This essay relies heavily on many books and articles relating to Buddhism and theology. The types of Buddhism that will be in relation to this essay are the three branches of Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. All have different aspects and perspectives of achieving the same goal: awakening, knowledge, and enlightenment. These branches started in Asia but slowly migrated to the West, but it is because of its ability to relate to the different cultures in Asia, that it was able to adapt to Western culture, specifically the United States.

Chapter one, is introducing the three branches of Buddhism and their differences and history. The primary sources that are also used in this essay are of a different variety. For chapter two, I have mainly used videos of news channels interviewing leaders, such as Aldous Huxley, and others explaining psychedelics and its impact on the physical, emotional, and mental state of the individual. For chapter three, I have focused my sources on content that centers around Black Nationalism and Black Liberation. The comparison between Asian countries holding onto their culture and heritage even after Buddhism and imperialism enter can relate to Black America and their struggle to identify themselves within White Supremacy. Many of the sources look at how Asian countries, such as, China, Tibet, and Japan, have created their truth within Buddhism. And lastly for chapter four, the liberation that came with the second-wave of feminism. The first-wave was in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries demanding the human right to vote, and in the 1960s and 70s, having American society understand the value of women and the significance they bring to intellectualism and the family dynamic. Some of the sources include books by theologian feminists and also comparing gender within Theravada Buddhism.

This essay will show that the Hippie Movement, the Black Liberation Movement, and Women's Movement all had the idea of liberation through finding their own identities and establishing a way to fight injustice within society. These three counter revolutions were the iconic ideas of the changes of society in the 1960s. The Black Liberation has created Black Nationalist Art and inspired groups, such as the Black Panthers, that show the black community investing in themselves. Black Liberation from the 1960s has inspired changes that have translated into the twenty-first century where there are more black businesses being showcased and African-American Studies being taught in schools. The second-wave of feminism has also

inspired changes that go into the twenty-first century where the goal of feminists has also looked at gendered rights with many schools teaching Women and Gendered Studies.

Chapter 1: The Three Types of Buddhism

These three types of Buddhism are the foundation of how different types of Buddhism formed around the world. How do these types give way to the diversity of global Buddhism? The three types of Buddhism have evolved and changed over time with the ever-changing view of life. Theravada, which is the oldest form is said to be passed down from family member to family member, this family is called the Brahmins and this was said to be Siddhartha's surname. The next iteration came a century later called Mahayana. Based on the sources it is said to still practice traditions of Theravada but focuses on the living as well as the reincarnation of the spirit. The last is a little more contemporary and said to be an experience the psyche. Vajrayana Buddhism is the experience of tantric practices and says to be an esoteric version rather than its predecessors. In this chapter, I will attempt to review all three main branches of Buddhism and attempt to infer why the latter two branches of Buddhism diverged from Theravada Buddhism. The reasons listed are that the gender equality within the order and practices must have been little to non-existent around the time of Siddhartha, which was around 500s BCE. Another reason is due to the fact that many were not able to join the religion because they needed to be educated, so the lower castes of India could not join. They all have one thing in common and that is they are seeking to further knowledge of Enlightenment.

The first school is the Theravada Buddhism which is the oldest. This is the oldest form of Buddhism and is the most notable figure of this branch of Buddhism is Siddhartha. The philosophy of Theravada Buddhists is their search for nirvana. Nirvana consists of self-restraint

and realization an individual's non-self, meaning that one day one will be reborn into another vessel, such as a deity or another human, which is referred to as karma.

Women were usually not part of the order which is probably one of the reasons why some left this school¹. Within the general religious context, many women are now participating in the main orders of religion and tradition. For instance, there are now more women as priests and reverends in Christian churches, they are rabbis in Jewish temples, and the idea has even been entertained in Catholicism. Looking at the twenty-first century, religion has progressed some with society and Theravada Buddhism does not look like it was inclusive.

Many of the themes of Theravada are conservative, not in the political sense, but there is an inclination to the older teachers or monks. The Brahmins pass down the traditions of the Buddha with the utmost diligence, meaning that a son will have to observe, meticulously, his father practice in order for traditional practice to be carried on.

Mahayana which is the most popular branch; this is said to be known as modern Buddhism. This the most common form of Buddhism practiced in Asia. Since this is the most widespread type of Buddhism in Asia, such as Korea, Japan, and Vietnam, there will most likely be room for “many disagreements”² partly due to different social and cultural issues. Mahayana Buddhism is accustomed to different variations of philosophy, but the number one rule that these variations

¹ Richard F. Gombrich. *Theravada Buddhism : A Social History From Ancient Benares to Modern Colombo*. Vol. 2nd ed. The Library of Religious Beliefs and Practices. London: Routledge, 2006. <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.snhu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=171117&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

² J.A.Silk, “What, If Anything, is Mahāyāna Buddhism? Problems of Definitions and Classifications.”. *Numen: International Review for The History of Religions*, 49, no. 4. (2002): 356. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/17735>.

follow is that they have to know the rules before they break them. What is meant by rules is that there are necessary steps and traditions that come to the old school form of Buddhism that need to be tied into the newer tradition of Buddhism. This rule that all sects of Mahayana follow can be simplified:

“in saying to know what an apple is not, you must first know what an apple is, and to accept the definition of an apple you must know the different variations, such as MacIntosh, Red Delicious, and Fuji”.³

Mahayana is the thought of relating Buddhism to a more humanistic approach. It is described as a way of focusing on the aspect of life and death by looking Foguashan and Ciji as the layout for Chinese Buddhism. Fo Gua Shan is Humanistic Buddhism and Ciji is compassion relief organizations, which are both based in Taiwan; originally, they were the names of two monks who contributed to the many sects of Chinese Buddhism. The way that the two monks lead the religion was “Buddhism for the dead”⁴ and focusing on the rituals to send the living to death correctly to prepare them for the afterlife, which can include reincarnation.

Vajrayana is a more tantric version of Buddhism. It is the newest thought of Buddhism and is most known for its use of psychedelics. The root of Vajrayana is from Indian Buddhism, which is the oldest form of Buddhism. Since it is Indian Buddhism, there is a connection of Theravada philosophy; since Theravada had monks and nuns and higher socio-economic groups

³ Silk, 356.

⁴ Aristotle Chan Dy. “Buddhist Modernism in the Philippines: Emerging Localization of Humanistic Buddhism.” *Religions* 13, no. 3 (March 2022): 220. doi:10.3390/rel13030220.

and the practice was in India, many of the higher castes would practice rituals, such as the agni-horta. Lower castes, or ‘untouchables’ did partake in the agni-horta rituals as well from seeing the higher castes, yet it is not made clear if they had their own separate rituals or the agni-horta was the only time the castes would join together. The fact that the lower castes partook in these rituals relates to how the tradition of Vajrayana was passed down. Crowley states that:

“they [higher castes] passed on their permission to practice their rituals in a formal initiation ceremony. But, unlike the Brahminic father-to-son initiation, these initiations were formed by a tantric guru and were open to all”⁵

Thus, this statement led to the spread of Vajrayana moving across India where poorer people of India could participate in Buddhism without the literacy and education of monks, nuns, and higher castes. This may have also been likely easier for Buddhism to leave the Himalayan regions of where India and Nepal meet the scriptures were in languages that were exclusive to Theravada Buddhism. This means that since the Tantric gurus of Vajrayana used the psychoactivity of the groups willing to participate in Buddhism rather than reading scriptures and praying to foreign deities.

Since the lower castes of India were usually the farmers or the workers of laborious work, most of them would own cows and according to Crowley, many of the psychedelic mushrooms that were used for Vajrayana have been found in the droppings of cow excrements. Naturally, the farmers would eat these mushrooms to get rid of hunger, but along the way they had to realize

⁵ Mike Crowley, *Secret Drugs of Buddhism: Psychedelic Sacraments and the Origins of the Vajrayāna*. (Santa Fe, NM: Synergetic Press, 2019): 254.

that these mushrooms gave off a vibe of reality meets fantasy, or a heightened sensory domain that was unexplained other than the feeling of reaching nirvana.

Theravada focuses on dying which should determine how one lives his life, but Mahayana says that they can still focus on the dead and dying, yet there can also be a way to live a good life without necessarily focusing on a death or a rebirth. Both look at living in dying in different ways and they both agree that they should lead a life of piety and peace, but Mahayana just goes a little further to promoting charity and helping the community. Vajrayana is actually very different but still accepts the principle of piety and peace; it just looks at the individuals experience of Buddhism. It does not worship deities to the point where one can reach the experience of a god with psychedelics. Most likely the reason there are no gods is because the philosophy is to see the unjustness of the reality of power⁶ and try to remove it, such as a king or government.

All three of these forms of Buddhism are not the only sects of Buddhism in the world, but these three types were an important building block in creating modern global practices of Buddhism. There may have been a need for women who wanted to enter the order, there may have been a need for the poor to seek enlightenment. There may have been a need for the Brahmin family to find enlightenment because just being a royal family was not fulfilling enough. Although, these three are different there is understanding of dharma or to seek out the truth of reality. The sects of Buddhism are just different paths taken by different followers in order to reach the peak of spiritual knowledge.

⁶ *Secret Drugs of Buddhism: Psychedelic Sacraments and the Origins of the Vajrayāna*. 253.

Mahayana Buddhism is one of the most well-known versions of Buddhism and from that has stemmed many sects within Central Asia. These include Chinese Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism, and Shintoism. Chinese Buddhism, also called Han Buddhism after the dominant ethnicity of the Han, has also become diverse in creating its own sects of Chinese Buddhism.

Chinese Buddhism includes Chinese philosophy, such as Confucianism and Daoism. There are multiple forms of Buddhism, such as Zen Buddhism, Huayan, Pure Land Buddhism, and Zhuan FaLun. These forms have the fundamental principle of trying to live off the land; it is trying to teach its followers how to make the most of what little they have and be thankful for what they do have, rather than what they do not have. By acknowledging the suffering of human kind, one is allowed to see the filial piety and happiness and pleasure. Looking at a type of Buddha Law, or Buddha Fa, is said to not be the Dharma of Buddhism, neither the school of Tao. It is said to be a fusion of both schools, or rather a of taking laws from each religion and referring to itself as a cultivation. Zhuan FaLun is a practice that is said to mean dharmacakra, or turning the wheel of the law. The meaning of this is similar to the meaning of Mahayana, which is The Great Vehicle.

The main principle of Taoism is to be align with nature by living the simple life. The most famous symbol of Taoism is the yin-yang symbol; yin means negative or passive state and yang is the positive or active state.⁷ Yin and Yang and embrace the philosophy of material energy formed to create the earth. There is a need for negative energy just as much as positive energy

⁷ Wang, Shu-Yi and Joel Wong. "Chinese Indigenous Strengths: Lessons from Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism." *Chinese Indigenous Strengths: Lessons From Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism*, August 2021. doi:10.1037/e506222022-001. 7

for the world to stay in balance from light to darkness, men and women and sexual coupling, and annual cycles such as the order of seasons.

The main principle of Confucianism is to achieve harmony, specifically interpersonal harmony⁸. The definition of interpersonal is relating to relationships involving people; the term interpersonal has the realization there can be unhealthy and healthy interpersonal relationships.

Buddhism uses *dukka*, which is pain. In the context of the physical world, *dukka* is what the mortal life consists of. Many think that this is a sort of pessimistic look on the worldly plane, but Buddhism wants understands man can get happiness and satisfaction from worldly possessions but it is a “temporary”⁹ happiness and man should not crave this all the time or worldly possessions will take control of him.

Chinese principles want to live off the land and create filial piety between fellow men to live harmoniously. The principles of the Chinese also agree with Buddhism and worldly possessions. Many of the Chinese who embraced Buddhism when it came to China were peasants who were dirt poor; they did not have the luxury of politicians or royalty, so they had to make do with having a hard life. They used Buddhism and their Chinese principles to turn their life around and see the benefit of what they did have that kept them alive, rather than what they did not have. Buddhism and Chinese culture both agree on living a simple life and to not pride yourself on

⁸ Shu-Yi, Wang and Joel Wong. “Chinese Indigenous Strengths: Lessons from Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism.” *Chinese Indigenous Strengths: Lessons From Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism*, August 2021. doi:10.1037/e506222022-001. 9

⁹ David J. Kalupahana, *Buddhist Philosophy: A Historical Analysis*, (Honolulu, HI: The University of Hawaii Press, 1976): 37.

possessions, but the small difference is that Chinese culture has brought the elements of human interaction within Buddhism rather than just relying on the positive relationships with deities.

The school Theravada and Mahayana

Tibetan Buddhism is technically the creator of Mahayana Buddhism and the catalyst that showed that Buddhism can be adapted to different cultures. But first to understand Tibetan Buddhism, we must understand Indian Buddhism. It is not a question of which school is right or wrong in practicing, but how each regional form of the religion has survived to cohabitate with the inhabitants of that region. In general, Buddhism is the study of human experience using a psychological framework; the psychic activity within the individual determines the degree of how they can achieve and receive the evolution of higher knowledge, enlightenment, and nirvana. Higher knowledge is understanding that there is knowledge that may be able to be achieved; enlightenment is when the higher knowledge is obtained and the individual experiences that there can be more knowledge than just the initial higher knowledge; and nirvana is when the highest knowledge has been achieved (there is most likely no other knowledge that can be obtained and that is what Siddhartha, or Gautama Buddha, achieved which is why he is seen as a deity). Indian Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism have their own specifics on the path of spirituality.

Indian Buddhism

There are two levels of experience that men must go through in order to achieve religious thought. Religious thought is the addresses theological and philosophical factors of life. The first

experience is acceptance and the four aspects of it are: the Sea of Change, the womb, order, and culture.

The Sea of Change is the characterizing the instability of life. The womb is the maternal quality of Indian Buddhism. All life begins in the womb and it is responsible for “the diversity, color, and variety”¹⁰ that man needs in his life. Nature is a diverse force since it has many variations, such as the seasons; men should be like nature and should have a diverse portfolio of social languages to talk to many different people. Order is society as an extension of the cosmic realm and therefore has no autonomy. The humanity which we are accustomed has already been determined. Society already has a “specific temporary purpose”¹¹ which can be experienced by transcendence. Culture, also called *Sanskriti*, is a “refinement of nature”¹² meaning it is a microcosm of nature. It is the heritage and traditions of society that pay homage to the harmony of man and nature; culture lives within nature. Culture is a concept of *dharma* which is a preserved tradition. This proves that Siddhartha wanted the teaching of Buddhism to be distributed throughout the world. He understood the variations of background within the existence of man, such as personality, color, and language. Thus, Siddhartha wanted the teachings of Buddhism to be spread among the diverse population of man. Looking at the word *Sanskriti*, it almost looks similar to the word *Sanskrit*, which the language Indian Buddhist texts were written in. This can be connected to how the Buddhist texts in the original language were meant to be spread out to new land and translated into different languages.

¹⁰ Paul Younger, *Introduction to Indian Religious Thought*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1972, 32.

¹¹ Paul Younger, *Introduction to Indian Religious Thought*, 37.

¹² Paul Younger, *Introduction to Indian Religious Thought*, 47.

These four factors are what make up the structure of man's experience in physical reality, which is called acceptance. Acceptance is man accepting that he will not be truly satisfied within the physical but he understands the order in which things are created. The Sea of Change creates a "warm rhythmic vitality"¹³ for the womb to release its creations out into the world. Rhythmic vitality can be found in all sorts of places such as music and the skill of painting and calligraphy. Rhythmic vitality is the art of using the natural air of the heart and soul that is relative to the universe. For instance, the reason why many Asians use calligraphy to calm the mind is because they center their focus to slow but steady movements of the stroke of the pen to paper; creating lines that are smooth and not rough.

The second experience of man throughout Indian Buddhism is transcendence. The factors that go into transcendence are: tradition, self, the transcendent, and salvation.

Tradition relates back to order within acceptance. Tradition is when men accept what is authoritative and true. This is connected to the Sea of Change where the sea does not end after the ending of humanity, but continues on the Sea has tradition and truth within it, therefore there is abundant amount of knowledge that can be pursued in accepting the Sea and spiritual questions will be answered.

The quest for salvation begins with "the discovery of self"¹⁴ and by doing so, one will be able to discover the experience of body, breath, bliss, mind, and consciousness. The self has come to realize transcendental wisdom and has is on the path a higher plane of perspective. Perspective is

¹³ Paul Younger, *Introduction to Indian Religious Thought*, 47.

¹⁴ Paul Younger, *Introduction to Indian Religious Thought*, 83.

the development of asking “existential questions”¹⁵ by beginning to understand age, death, and suffering. The individual has the wisdom to look at themselves and know what it is like to experience true nirvana.

The transcendent is the realization is that the self lives in the shadow of the real. This is the difference between Western and Eastern philosophy where one asks if God exists, but Indian tradition asks whether the world exists. Salvation is the state has already been realized. There is no more experimentation, rather the ending of life has begun for man. Man can finally lead the worldly plane and relinquish dukka, or pain and suffering.

Tibetan Buddhism

Rather understanding that there is pain and suffering and letting the gods take control of man, Tibetan Buddhism looks at four principles of Suffering. These principles look at suffering and does not necessarily try to fix it, but ease the restraint of pain. The restraint of pain determines that Tibetan Buddhism has incorporated the solution of men helping men while still having a connection to nature and the cosmic order.

The truth of suffering is man acknowledging that humanity is doomed to suffer and have cessation, meaning that there is an inevitable end to life. Finding the cause of suffering goes along with knowing and understanding the truth of suffering, but there is a difference. Finding the truth looks at the burden of humanity’s suffering and accepts it. There is no way to avoid suffering, but to embrace it and live with it instead of avoiding it, for if it is avoided that would cause the humans to be fearful of life and therefore will not seek out new spiritual knowledge in

¹⁵ Paul Younger, *Introduction to Indian Religious Thought*, 88.

fear of negativity. Finding the cause of suffering is when an individual approaches a temporary problem and looks at how they can solve while knowing this can not be solved permanently. Finding the cause can bring less suffering to the recipient of the solution both individuals can live harmoniously with each other with filial piety and loyalty to other men.

The solution to the cause is not the permanent solution to humanities suffering because there is an acceptance that suffering will always take place within humanity. But humanity can lessen the suffering temporarily by becoming selfless or sacrificing oneself for another. This lets the selflessness understand their own emotions which invites empathy into the heart and soul of the individual. This sacrifice and selflessness can also be applied to the good of the preservation of nature.

Implementing rightful action goes with the solution for suffering. Tibetan Buddhism focuses on relieving the suffering of man, but does not focus on relieving the stress of the individual who is selfless. The selfless individual is taking on the suffering of the other individual, which will therefore promote reincarnation. Reincarnation is the rebirth of the soul into another's body; when this happens the sufferer will be reborn into another body, which will be an award from the gods.

What do India and Tibet have in common

The commonality of the two influential types of Buddhism is that it acknowledges the suffering that humanity goes through, although Indian Buddhism uses the gods as the all-powerful beings who are the only one who can understand true happiness and pleasure. Tibetan Buddhism, while also acknowledging humanity's imminent suffering, tries to give man a

purpose of being able to experience a sliver of what happiness and pleasure look like, since deities still have more experience in knowing happiness and pleasure. The reason why Mahayana Buddhism is known as the Great Vehicle is because it progresses Theravada Buddhism forward like a vehicle. Mahayana works from the foundation of Theravada by moving humanity forward in achieving the right mindfulness and the right ideas to achieve preparation of transcendence.

It is necessary to share how the form of Buddhism in India that was Theravada changed in Mahayana in Tibet. It is easy for Tibet to have mingled with people from the regions of the Himalayas since Siddhartha was rumored to be born around the part of Northern India and Nepal, and Tibet is also in the Himalaya region.

How does the appropriation of Buddhism in Asia relate to America? Buddhism was able to move throughout Asia since it was able to mold itself to the different lifestyles of its Asian people, it was able to come to the U.S. where Americans did not just practice Asian forms of Buddhism, but were able to create their own philosophies to go with American thinking. There were no teachers or family members in America to pass down the traditions of Buddhism, so Americans found a way to incorporate their community values within the religion.

The connection all three movements of the 1960s had in common were linked to Buddhism through Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. The Hippie Movement was linked to Vajrayana for the reason of psychedelics.

Black Liberation Movements were linked to Mahayana. The reason for this is because it aligns with many of the Buddhist sects in central Asia, such as China. The nationalism of the Black American's liberation can also be linked to the Japanese religion of Shinto.

Lastly, the second wave of feminism was linked to Theravada Buddhism. Even though Theravada's past is linked to the separation of genders, the school of thought known as The School of Elders, has "aim of the path [of] the cultivation of 'right-view' (*sammā-ditṭhi*) and the abandoning of 'wrong-views' (*micchā-ditṭhi*)"¹⁶

¹⁶ Paul Fuller, *The Notion of Ditthi in Theravada Buddhism : The Point of View*. Routledge Curzon Critical Studies in Buddhism. (London: Routledge, 2005): 1. www.Ebsco.com

Chapter 2: Hippies and Psychedelics

The drugs of the 1960s would give an 'other world experience' to many who participated in the dope trend, such as LSD. Experiences of LSD can be documented by some well-known people of the era where there is a sensation that carries one to another realm of emotions and images that were never imagined before, whether it be a positive or negative experience. The drugs of the psychedelic gave way to the liberation of the mind. In this context, liberation is viewing new things and experiencing life in a way that teaches you a new philosophy about oneself and possibly one's environment.

There were many different sub-genres of hippies, such as the yippies and the diggers. In fact the well-known hippies that are remembered today outlasted the yippies; both parties had the same approach of pointing out the corrupt and unjust society of the decade, but the yippies would go out of their way to stage a protest of action, bizarreness, and lewdness which would even instigate violence.

The Yippies were, in fact, performers, for one of their leaders, Abbie Hoffman, was a theatrical activist who also worked with avid anti-war protesters, such as Jerry Rubin. By the late 1960s, Hoffman and Rubin had decided that the politics has become an atrocity. They had a government that participated in unjust war, a market economy feeding into consumerism and greed, with politicians falling into corruption. The only thing that they could do was to fight 'fire with fire'; if the absurdity of the government is performative, then they will mirror the absurdness with absurdness. The performative act of the obscurities of Yippie protest showed

many times that they would create “mock campaign signs and Electoral pamphlets”¹⁷ with a crowd of spectators standing by from journalists, undercover police, and the public.

Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin would later organize an event in Chicago in 1968 called the ‘Festival of Light’. In this event, there would be marijuana, music, many young people with a ‘freakish’ appearance (what is meant by ‘freakish’ is that many wore long hair and vibrant, outlandish clothing). This was the event that brought about a pig as a nominated presidential candidate opposing Richard Nixon. The festival was a way protesting against the Democratic National Convention, since Hoffman had seen the party for supporting the Vietnam War. The Democrat party was seen as the bearers of death over this war, and the only way the Yippies sought to relieve death was through light.

Light within Buddhism is basically the symbol for enlightenment; the individual is left in the dark when they cannot see the true meaning of life, but once they go out and seek it (not necessarily finding it) they have gone into the light. Many practicing Buddhists do not find enlightenment since the ones who do are deified and become Buddhas. But many do choose the path to enlightenment when they choose Buddhism and this does give the ones on the path to enlightenment knowledge of how to live in the physical realm. For instance, the phrase ‘it is not a race, but a marathon’ ensues that the journey of the individuals that take on Siddhartha’s path to enlightenment will not be the exact same path; neither will the path of another man. Yet, the own path of the individual is truly precious because it belongs to them, and it can cater to the

¹⁷ Susanne Elizabeth Shawyer, “Radical Street Theatre and the Yippie Legacy: A Performance History of the Youth International Party, 1967-1968” PhD. The University of Texas Austin, 2008: 147. Scholar.google.com.

needs of that individual. Each path can give answers to questions that may have never even be questioned as the journey goes farther and farther along.

The Hippie Movement was a revolution, but they wanted it to be a positive experience of joy and laughing, so that is why the yippies were the ones who staged the most eccentric protests. These theatrics got spectators talking, whether it was negative or positive opinions, the hippie movement caused a band of young Americans to seek truth and morality.

Liberation of the mind

Liberation of the mind is “the nervous system devoid of mental-conceptual activity”¹⁸; but what is interesting about this definition of devoid is that it does not necessarily explain if it is positive or negative. The sensation of a psychedelic experience can create: pressure in the body; the body might feel like it is expanding that may be similar to atoms separating; a tingling sensation; and even a feeling of clamminess. Many can have positive experiences with drugs and negative experiences with drugs; it all depends on how much the body can take, and we all know that everyone is different. For example, a body builder could most likely can lift 100 pounds or more, but a child could only carry five; the point is that different people can handle the things to a certain degree. This can also apply to receiving knowledge. Another example would be that a college student could receive information from 50 minutes to an hour course, yet a 5-year-old would not be able to stay seated in a class for let alone five minutes without going crazy. This

¹⁸ Timothy Leary, *The Psychedelic Experience: A Manuel based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead*. (New York, NY: Citadel Press Books, 1992): 24.

can be applied to the seeking of knowledge in Buddhism. Within Buddhism there is a cause to gain access to more knowledge, and within that knowledge is liberation of the mind. The college student may not receive or understand everything that was said by the professor in that course, but the lecture did make them leave with a new insight on how to approach a problem or how they can experiment on a situation themselves. The word 'Liberation' tends to mean a positive experience such as leaving the suffering of bondage or leaving an oppressor. But what is usually overlooked is the negative side of liberation. People with negative experiences go through trial and error just like those with positive experiences to see what the body can and cannot handle. That is why many people who have had experiences with drugs either kept taking them or stopped due to its overwhelming affects.

The two types of states for the positive and negative experience are: confusion and certainty.

The first experience is new to everyone and is supposed to create a state of "confusion"¹⁹ where there is no recognition or understanding of what the individual is experiencing, this is probably why when one is high on drugs or has an orgasm, they are not able to respond properly and only after the effects where off they can properly record what went on during the sensations of their body since they are now back in a state of consciousness. The individuals who first begin a psychedelic trip are a novice to psychedelics and cannot and do not fathom what exactly is happening to them. Therefore, they are able to interpret after their experience if the psychedelics was a proper way for them to experience nirvana or not; either way the mind was 'Liberated' so that their decisions were not clouded by the assistance of society or cultural norms influencing

¹⁹ Timothy Leary, *The Psychedelic Experience*, 30.

their decisions. At the time of the psychedelic experience, it is the only time that the individual is influenced by their own body and their own subconscious; this ultimately leads to the decision as to whether they want to continue down this psychedelic experience, or find another path to enlightenment or a great awakening.

The second state is certainty. Certainty, is being true to one's self and refining "faculty of reason itself by learning and debating."²⁰ This means that one has ventured out to seek new knowledge about the understanding of themselves which can translate into the understanding of man. There is also an element of science used within Buddhism using the trial-and-error method of finding out the capacity of how much information one can take in.

Buddhism applies liberation of the mind to society by showing its followers the unjustness of the way the government or the social norms of a culture were supporting one group while prohibiting another; this philosophy can be found in Mahayana Buddhism. Like Theravada Buddhism, the basis of the religion is to achieve *dharma*, or moral righteousness.

When experiencing psychedelics through drugs, art, or music, many of the participants went through a liberation of the mind. Noticing the oppression within Western and American culture. These things are liberation of women from the bondage of the patriarchy, the need for liberation of the oppression of racial discrimination, and a need for liberation of the Vietnam war.

²⁰ Pinker, Steven. *Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason Science, Humanism, and Progress*. (New York, NY: Viking, 2018): 3.

Drugs, such as, LSD and Ecstasy, were a way to escape the woes of reality. Many soldiers of the Vietnam War were on hallucinogens to escape the violence and death war brought.

Buddhist art and psychedelics

The image of Buddhism was prevalent in the Hippie Movement. Most of this can be contributed to the visual effects of the Psychedelic Movement within. The art that was portrayed during this era tried to convey an image, but also an idea that went along with it. Opposite ideas collided with each other, such as the past and the future, feelings of rationality and irrationality, regular and irregular. Architecture became avant-garde, and the term ‘Archigram’ was created. This new form of architecture let artists “explore[] informality and monumentalism”²¹ which means that the object of the design was to challenge the observer and their view on authority. Archigrams used various textures and colors to provide a psychedelic experience for the audience.

Psychedelic Art was a good way of spreading the word of the Psychedelic movement. On September 9, 1966, Jackie Cassen created a slide show for the audience to show what the visions of LSD were like. What is interesting is that she says in the interview with life that ““everything moves and is immaterial””²². This could suggest two things: 1) ‘immaterial’ could mean that she is able to ‘see’ everything with LSD and so it is easy to determine what matters and what is irrelevant; due to the hallucinations and the sensitivity of the sensory abilities of Cassen, this

²¹ Jill D'Alessandro, Coleen Terry, Victor Binder, Dennis McNally, Joel Selvin, and Ben Van Meter, *Summer of Love: Art, Fashion, and Rock and Roll*. (San Francisco, CA: University of California Press, 2016). 164.

²² “PSYCHEDELIC ART. (Cover Story).” *Life* 61, no. 11 (September 9, 1966): 62. <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.snhu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lma&AN=112818426&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

could mean that she is actually experiencing the physical world through a cosmic reality. Or 2) she could actually mean that she is experiencing nirvana (whether she knew anything of Buddhism or not was not mentioned in the article, but for the sake of this essay nirvana is used in this context because it gives a heightened feeling of self and everything that surrounds you whilst experiencing a new type of knowledge), or at least her version of it since many people have tried LSD and have had drastically different experiences because everyone's psychoactivity is different.

The experience of psychedelic art was able to exceed the regular experiences of everyday life, challenging the positive and negative by giving an opportunity to look at different angles of everything. In this context, 'everything' means social, political, economically, sexually, and racially.

According to Vajrayana Buddhism, psychedelics can be used to metaphorically open one's eyes to the corruption of a king. During this time, many of the participants of the Hippie Movement were young teenagers and adults that witnessed a great corruption in U.S. Government, which was the Watergate Scandal.

There was most likely a distrust in the United States government. It most likely can be stated by the public that many people do not agree or even like politicians, but the US government took a hard hit in its popularity amongst the public during the Nixon era (January 20, 1969-August 9, 1974).

Richard Milhous Nixon 37th President of the United States and is infamously known for his Watergate scandal. This was where there were five men who bugged the Democratic National

Convention and the headquarters was at the Watergate Hotel. The men were eventually liked to the White House and the conduct of the Richard Nixon was now on the line. All of this was happening during the course of his re-election, of course Nixon denied this, but to the public this looked like a lust for power. What really solidified the distrust was the reelection of Nixon in 1972, clearly, to the generation influenced by Vajrayana Buddhism that this was a form of a King bringing unjustness to his reign.

Most of the older generation did not pay attention to Watergate, they would say “many more things are bothering Americans...”²³ “I think they are making a big fuss over nothing”²⁴ “Nothing has been proven illegal about what he’s done, and he’s on the right track”²⁵. This was before the white house tapes came out, but it represented how the older generation let the significance of their surroundings influence their decisions. Dick Cavett was a few of the mediums on television in the 1970s that actually covered the Watergate scandal, since there was not much coverage on the scandal the public did not think anything of the Nixon fiasco.

Cavett had a following of many, but he was favored mostly by younger audiences. He would always wear suits of various neon colors of every episode which represented the vivid colors used in psychedelic art. In his introduction to his show, there would be his name with a picture of a lotus flower next to it, showing the ‘flower power’ of the era. The Lotus flower is a very special image in Buddhism. Too many cultures there is a significant meaning, but Buddhism in

²³ *Dick Cavett's Watergate*. Films On Demand. 2014. Accessed December 9, 2022. <https://fod.infobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=105049&xtid=93453>.

²⁴ *Dick Cavett's Watergate*. Films On Demand. 2014. Accessed December 9, 2022. <https://fod.infobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=105049&xtid=93453>.

²⁵ *Dick Cavett's Watergate*. Films On Demand. 2014. Accessed December 9, 2022. <https://fod.infobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=105049&xtid=93453>.

particular, “denot[] the essence of enlightenment to those who have meditated and will meditate”²⁶ on deep and intense thoughts.

Many of the younger generation did not see this scandal as something that should be taken lightly, after all, it is the highest person in power that committed a heinous crime and it would be most likely be overlooked. What was also not fair in this scandal is that John Dean, Nixon’s White House counsel, and a few other men were thrown under the bus, but John Dean did not think it was fair to go to jail for the president. The infamous Nixon tapes come out and were released with the help of Alexander Butterfield, a deputy assistant to Nixon.

In 1972, Richard Nixon is reelected as president amid the Watergate scandal. How could anyone allow the president of the United States to get reelected after he committed a serious crime? His resignation was no better for when he resigned, he was pardoned by Gerald Ford a month later.

The Vietnam War

On March 8, 1965 the first engagement of Americans involved in the Vietnam War commenced in Da Nang; two battalions made their way onto the beaches. This was one of the first major wars where millions of Americans could witness the atrocities of war “through the medium of television”²⁷ instead of just hearing it on the radio or reading about in the newspapers. As time passed throughout the decade, more and more protests for America to detract from Vietnam began to pop up, especially among college campuses. There were already

²⁶ Willard E. Ward, The Lotus Symbol: Its Meaning in Buddhist Art and Philosophy, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*. Vol. 11, no.2, (Dec 1952): 135. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/426039>.

²⁷ Michael C. Mitchell, “Television and the Vietnam War” *Naval War College Review* 37, no. 3 (May-June 1984): 42. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44636560>.

protests of peace and anti-war in the beginning of the decade, but the Vietnam War was the catalyst for the Hippie Movement and their message.

The counterculture of the Hippie Movement inspired other sub-sections of hippies. For instance, YIP was founded in 1968. It is commonly assumed that hippies were the groups that were the anarchists or the radical protesters of the 60s and 70s in America, but hippies were not usually protesters, it was YIP, or Yippies, that would engage in radicalism. The Diggers were also an anarchist party that was founded two years earlier and they would try to get hippies into the political scene as well, but they were not very efficient in doing so. There are several reasons why hippies were never accepted in the political scene; one reason is the whole movement was about anti-authority, so even if one of them did run, it would be unlikely their community would vote for them, not to mention hippies were a marginalized group in American society and did not fit traditional norms. The second reason is the Yippies and the Diggers were small liberal groups in New York compared to hippies that were in California; hippies would mainly get together in San Francisco, so all three parties would never meet and therefore have different values on what a ‘peaceful’ society looked like. Lastly, Yippies “love iconoclastic comedy”²⁸ where they do not take things seriously to the point where they nominated a pig for a presidential candidate. Yippies were seen as “political provocateurs”²⁹ that reflected revolutionary action while making a mockery of current authority.

²⁸ Susanne Elizabeth Shawyer, “Radical Street Theatre and the Yippie Legacy: A Performance History of the Youth International Party, 1967-1968” PhD. The University of Texas Austin, 2008: 9. Scholar.google.com.

²⁹ “Radical Street Theatre and the Yippie Legacy: A Performance History of the Youth International Party, 1967-1968”, 3.

During this time, the Summer of Love started around 1967 which would eventually lead to the first Woodstock Music Festival in 1969. This was a three-day celebration that promoted peace, music, and love. Many musicians such as Janice Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, The Who, and The Grateful Dead would come and perform at Woodstock bringing 300,000 to 400,000 attendants. The music of the Hippie Movement was a great way to fuel its messages. The music would promote living off the land, human rights, and “greater sexual freedom”³⁰

The hippie movement did not just spread across America, but also to Europe, where there were many physical barriers and barriers of human rights.

The end of the ‘Hippie’

Hippies would not usually call themselves ‘hippie’, they would more often call themselves flower children because the flower symbolizes peace. Their name derived from the word ‘hip’ meaning they are opening their minds and their spirits to their surroundings; there is always time to open up and take in new knowledge about the way of life. Hippies wanted to question the status quo and face-off against what they believed was an unjust society.

Unlike Black and Women’s Liberation, the Hippie Movement died out in a very direct way in which hallucinogenics, such as mushrooms and LSD. The illegalization of LSD led to the marginalization of even more young people; not to mention many of these drugs were used by American soldiers in the Vietnam War in coping with the bloody war. This led to the rise of

³⁰ William Jay Risch, “Soviet ‘Flower Children’: Hippies and the Youth Counter-Culture in 1970s L’Viv”, *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, no.3 (July 2005): 566. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30036343>.

homelessness for many people which also led to crime rates. In October of 1967, the Diggers held a march called “Death of the Hippie March”, this was the end of the commercialization of Hippie Culture, yet it was not the death of its morals and values. Protests of the Vietnam War still went on to the point where half a million protesters showed up in Washington D.C. in 1969. Although many of the protests were not physical in the past, many physical altercations, such as Altamont Music Festival, Charles Manson Murders, and the National Guard Shootings at Kent State were enough to shut the generation of love down. The Kent State shootings caused some schools and colleges to shut down in the event to prevent anti-war protests getting out of hand and becoming violent. The shootings of the Kent State Students in Ohio was a factor in the America public shifting their view on the Vietnam War and the current President.

In 1970, Nixon invaded Cambodia, which was a neutral country in South East Asia. The supply route for the North Vietnamese soldiers passed through Cambodia. This was done without the consideration of the US Secretary of Defense, William Rodgers, and the public did not find out about the invasion until Nixon announced it in a public announcement. This started the protest at Kent State where there were aggressive altercations with the students and the local police. Water bottles were thrown at police cars and students lit fires in the street; many of the students tried to prevent the firefighters from putting out the flames. Kent State closed for six weeks after the protests of took place.

Chapter 3: Black America's Liberation

Buddhism was seen to Americans as a religion that let the individual question society, politics, and morality. Buddhism was a gateway for women to be heard and to also have authority in their own perspective of life. The religion gave many minority groups a voice, such as women, but it also gave a voice to blacks during the Civil Rights movement.

Civil Rights Movement

The Civil Rights movement lasted from 1954 to 1968. This movement was a revolution that brought forth consciousness or the disparity of racial discrimination, racial segregation, and racial disenfranchisement.

Black Americans have been finding their way towards Buddhism because “extremely radical”³¹ thinking where Buddha rejected the systematic oppression and the caste system of India. This gave blacks of the Civil Rights movement an opinion that it is possible to reject the social norms of society and find a way to feel liberated. What was also caught the eye of Black Americans was that Buddha's teachings included suffering. The suffering that the black community went through was the struggle of being able to vote, being able to go to school to get a decent education, and having a right to having financial wealth through obtaining a decent job or having a right to have a business.

³¹ Jan Wilis, “Yes, We’re Buddhists Too!” *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 32 (2012): 39. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23274466>.

Unfortunately, there will always be oppression and discrimination in the world whether it be institutionalized or personal, but the individuals who experience these oppressions can reflect inwardly on themselves and look for their own self-worth.

Some blacks did not want to follow Christianity anymore since it was the religion of slave masters who owned their ancestors. The negativity of Christianity could also be seen by the standards of discriminatory whites during the Civil Rights period. Christianity was used to justify racial discrimination in the eyes of the children of the movement and would go and venture into other forms of religion.

Mahayana recognizes that there is a struggle that is present in life that everyone goes through. Black Americans have realized that they are going to go through this struggle, although they are not necessarily at peace with this struggle, they have understood this struggle as a bonding method for their community.

One of the sub-categories of Mahayana is Chinese Buddhism. Chinese Buddhism philosophy is filial piety, meaning that one person sacrifices themselves in order to bring another happiness. Filial piety in Chinese Buddhism and in Black America during the 1960s were very different; one is described to be an extreme form and the other can be an act of a simple gesture or favor. But one thing that is in common is that both cultures understand that there is a need for a brotherhood among its community; it is seeing others as an extension of the family or oneself that creates a natural bond.

The stereotypical religion of Black America, especially during the Civil Rights movement, would have been Christianity, but more blacks were questioning the philosophy of Christianity

and asking the question “If we worship the same God, why does he favor one over the other?”

This question that Black America had was the result of a change in the philosophy of life for them. If you look at history, you see the rise of Islam in Black America and its association with the preachings of Malcolm X.

The suffering that is portrayed in Christianity and the suffering portrayed in Buddhism are very different. Both religions praise suffering and deem it necessary, but Buddhism looks at suffering as a natural process, whereas Christianity goes out of its way to find suffering. To the point where in the 1600s, Franciscan monks would flog themselves, the scars of suffering show that you are going through the pain Jesus went through as he was crucified. These scars “possess[] strength and power”³² and is almost seemingly a badge of honor in Christianity.

Buddhist Suffering, according to Mahayana Buddhism, is filial piety; this is a very common theme in Chinese Buddhism. Chinese Buddhism is sacrificing one’s pleasure in order to relieve the other, in this case, it is family members. Chinese Buddhists and Black Buddhist see their communities as an extension of each individual; each individual has a part in upholding standards, values, ideas, and filial piety in helping the community exceed.

Mahayana Buddhism is one of the most well-known versions of Buddhism and from that has stemmed many sects within Central Asia. These include Chinese Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism, and Shintoism. Chinese Buddhism, also called Han Buddhism after the dominant ethnicity of the Han, has also become diverse in creating its own sects of Chinese Buddhism.

³² Andrew Pulver. “Easter in Art Review” *The Guardian* (April 2022). www.theguardian.com

Chinese Buddhism includes Chinese philosophy, such as Confucianism and Daoism. There are multiple forms of Buddhism, such as Zen Buddhism, Huayan, Pure Land Buddhism, and Zhuan FaLun. These forms have the fundamental principle of trying to live off the land; it is trying to teach its followers how to make the most of what little they have and be thankful for what they do have, rather than what they do not have. By acknowledging the suffering of human kind, one is allowed to see the filial piety and happiness and pleasure. Looking at a type of Buddha Law, or Buddha Fa, is said to not be the Dharma of Buddhism, neither the school of Tao. It is said to be a fusion of both schools, or rather a of taking laws from each religion and referring to itself as a cultivation. Zhuan FaLun is a practice that is said to mean dharmacakra, or turning the wheel of the law. The meaning of this is similar to the meaning of Mahayana, which is The Great Vehicle.

The main principle of Taoism is to be align with nature by living the simple life. The most famous symbol of Taoism is the yin-yang symbol; yin means negative or passive state and yang is the positive or active state.³³ Yin and Yang and embrace the philosophy of material energy formed to create the earth. There is a need for negative energy just as much as positive energy for the world to stay in balance from light to darkness, men and women and sexual coupling, and annual cycles such as the order of seasons.

The main principle of Confucianism is to achieve harmony, specifically interpersonal harmony³⁴.

The definition of interpersonal is relating to relationships involving people; the term

³³ Wang, Shu-Yi and Joel Wong. "Chinese Indigenous Strengths: Lessons from Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism." *Chinese Indigenous Strengths: Lessons From Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism*, August 2021. doi:10.1037/e506222022-001. 7

³⁴ Shu-Yi, Wang and Joel Wong. "Chinese Indigenous Strengths: Lessons from Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism." *Chinese Indigenous Strengths: Lessons From Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism*, August 2021. doi:10.1037/e506222022-001. 9

interpersonal has the realization that there can be unhealthy and healthy interpersonal relationships.

Buddhism uses *dukkha*, which is pain. In the context of the physical world, *dukkha* is what the mortal life consists of. Many think that this is a sort of pessimistic look on the worldly plane, but Buddhism wants understands man can get happiness and satisfaction from worldly possessions but it is a “temporary”³⁵ happiness and man should not crave this all the time or worldly possessions will take control of him.

Chinese principles want to live off the land and create filial piety between fellow men to live harmoniously. The principles of the Chinese also agree with Buddhism and worldly possessions. Many of the Chinese who embraced Buddhism when it came to China were peasants who were dirt poor; they did not have the luxury of politicians or royalty, so they had to make do with having a hard life. They used Buddhism and their Chinese principles to turn their life around and see the benefit of what they did have that kept them alive, rather than what they did not have. Buddhism and Chinese culture both agree on living a simple life and to not pride yourself on possessions, but the small difference is that Chinese culture has brought the elements of human interaction within Buddhism rather than just relying on the positive relationships with deities.

Originally, Buddhism was an Indian religion with its own Indian customs, values, and ideas, but as the religion spread to other regions of Asia, specifically China, the middle country was able to

³⁵ David J. Kalupahana, *Buddhist Philosophy: A Historical Analysis*, (Honolulu, HI: The University of Hawaii Press, 1976): 37.

add its own customs to Buddhism. Just like the Chinese, Black Americans were able to incorporate their wisdom and appropriate Buddhism to fit their needs.

Filial Piety

Filial Piety can mean different things within a familial structure. It can be the relationship between a child and parent; sibling relationships; and spousal relationships.

The family dynamic is very important to the structure of Black Buddhists. Parents are willing to admit that they are on a journey to enlightenment with their children by “walk[ing] alongside them; sometimes [leading] the way; other times we are led”³⁶; meaning that parents will go through the positive and negative experiences of raising a child by ensuring that their child understands life. Parents do get the last say in how their children grow up, but it is also the responsibility of the parent to help grow a child’s autonomy so when the child grows into adulthood, they can be independent and make the best decisions for themselves. In turn, the adolescents that grew into adulthood can take care of the aging parents, which creates a relationship of mutual effect. Since Buddhism believes in karma, this can be seen as parents ‘paying it forward’ meaning their positive energy that was put into raising children has come around to have the children taking care of the parents.

Filial Piety is most notably found in the Pure Land Buddhism sect of Chinese Buddhism, but Zen Buddhism is different since it uses its values to convey finding strength in spirituality. Zen Buddhism has an edict where it is said that it caters to the justness of society. Like

³⁶ Edited by Valerie Mason-John, *Afrikan Wisdom*, (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2021), 34.

Vajrayana, Zen Buddhism challenges individuals to find the unjust in leaders, but Zen Buddhism also gives a justification of using war to bring about peace.

Zen Buddhism within Black Liberation

Although Zen Buddhism initially attracted the Japanese Samurai of the Tokugawa (Edo) Period (1603-1868), Black Americans in the 1960s were not starting wars to overcome their oppression in society. But what was to be admired was their fighting spirit. Many did protest the unjust laws and regulations of segregation knowing the risks and consequences against going up against authorities, yet they knew they were doing this, not just for themselves, but the fabric of the black community as well. Zen Buddhism was a path that resonated with the samurai, for they are fighting for what they believe is just while also taking care of their loved if ever in danger.

The strength of the community or a nation starts with the individual. Although the individual can find strength in one's self, as humans, we still need to feel supported and cared for to survive physically, mentally, and psychologically. Therefore, Black Buddhists can relate to Mahayana Buddhism, and more specifically, Chinese Buddhism.

What can also be attributed is how the black community tries to uplift its own community. They have been taking part in learning more about their ancestry and where they come from, almost to a point where they are seeking to put their identities on a pedestal. This seems contrary to Buddhism since its philosophy is more of a humbling of individuals and groups, but Black

Liberation is restoring and reclaiming “the humanity and dignity”³⁷ of the past, present, and future of the black community and diaspora.

The reason Black Americans divested from Christianity is because it catered to a Euro-centric standard of “social control”³⁸ where blacks were at the bottom of society.

During the 1960s and 70s, Tibet was fighting a battle with China, one wear Tibetans had to find ways to hold onto their Tibetan traditions. Some Tibetans even had to flee Tibet after an unsuccessful revolt in 1959 that caused the 14th Dalai Lama, Gyalwa Rinpoche, to flee to India. The country most well-known for associating with Mahayana Buddhism is Tibet; the country is known for housing the Dalai Lama which is the head monk in Mahayana Buddhism and is well-known throughout the world, even in non-Buddhist communities. But even though the Dalai Lama was fled to India and is exiled, he still represents the spirit of democracy of Tibet. A constitution was created in 1963 for the country in order for to Tibet to remember their democratization that is opposing Chinese rule. In this constitution he “the Buddha’s teachings in principle complied with democracy”³⁹ making it essential for the country to focus on their Mahayana teachings. Although the he cannot hold political office, he still explained that democracy lies within the hands of the people.

Sine his holiness is from Tibet and carries the values of his country, then he is able to capture a Tibetan audience in hopes that they will not forget their identities whether under Chinese rule or

³⁷ Edited by Valerie Mason-John, *Afrikan Wisdom* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2021) 85.

³⁸ Edited by Valerie Mason-John, *Afrikan Wisdom* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2021) 81.

³⁹ Trine Brox, “Democracy in the Words of the Dalai Lama” *The Tibet Journal*. 33, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 85.

not. There is a “genuine people’s power”⁴⁰ that is within the Tibetan people that is strong in withstanding the suffering of Chinese oppression.

Similar to Tibet’s situation, it is very important that Black Americans are able to practice *chos*, or culture, and pass it along to future generations. Many Black liberators have realized that the history of Black America will never be told, or if ever, slightly touched upon; therefore, many have created art, music, literature, and many more to get the message of Black Nationalism across.

In Asia, many nations used Buddhism as a way to promote their countries values, traditions, and art. Japan used Buddhism as a base for Shintoism where many worship Japan and the men who live in the country. It is men and nature centered in Japan working together to create a harmonious physical reality.

How Shintoism became the religion of Japan

Hirata Atsutane (1776-1803) was not the founder of Shintoism, but he is very well known for its spread among the nation. He has studied Mahayana Buddhism, Confucianist, and Western philosophies in order to come about a new way of Japanese living.

Atsutane’s knowledge of Buddhism was actually very “basic”⁴¹ which gave him the right amount of space for him to create wiggle room for him interpreting the study of Mahayana Buddhism. This most likely led to his critique that Sakyamuni did not teach Mahayana Buddhism, but was

⁴⁰ “Democracy in the Words of the Dalai Lama”, 86.

⁴¹ Iyanaga Nobumi, “A Precursor of Studies of Comparative Mythology: Hirata Atsutane,” *Japan Mission Journal* 75, No. 3 (2021): <http://academia.edu/5268235>. 173.

later created⁴² although Hirata never mentions if he thinks “the Great Vehicle” was created during the life of Sakyamuni or after. The fact that Atsutane was willing to go against a sacred theory was not something a devoted Tibetan monk would do; this showed that Hirata Atsutane was more involved in solid evidence and “concrete data”⁴³ about Buddhism; there was no need for the spiritual side of Buddhism but rather what was happening to the people in the physical world.

There is a need for man to work in harmony with the nature gods, which are referred to as Kami, that way, men can live off the land. Like various forms of Chinese Buddhism, Shintoism derives off of knowing how to work harmoniously and live off the land.

Symbol of Japan

Like Theravada Buddhism, the Japanese Religion is linked to ancestral rites; the rites and traditions have linked Shintoism as symbol of Japan. The difference between Buddhism and Shintoism is the relationship between deity and men. There is heightened knowledge or enhanced awareness, enlightenment, and nirvana; all three are different degrees of knowledge, but nirvana is the highest form of nirvana that is achieved. In Buddhism, most men do not achieve nirvana and reach enlightenment (nirvana is reserved for different types of Buddhas), but Shintoism sees the deities within nature but at sees Nihongi⁴⁴ or Japanese men as deities.

The religion became the national symbol for Japan because this gave everyone in Japan a purpose in benefiting the good of the nation. No matter the economic class, or the amount of

⁴² Nobumi, 173.

⁴³ Nobumi, 174.

⁴⁴ W.G Aston, *Shinto: The Ancient Religion of Japan*. (London, UK: Constable & Company, 1921): 48.

education, the fact that man was able to have a hand in the way the world works by working with deities can make any man seem important. As stated before, Shintoism was created during the Meiji period in order to bring itself into the twentieth century like its Western counterparts. The Shintoism principles also were present during the World War, in which many of the soldiers went to war in the honor of the emperor.

Since Japan is the birthplace of the *Kami*, Japan has been able to incorporate their traditions and cultures within a religion giving way to the success of passing down Japanese traditions.

Shintoism has also made it possible for individuals to personalize their own relationship with the *Kami*.

This can be related to Shintoism since Japan has also used Buddhism to facilitate their own patriotism and nationality. Although Buddhism was the foundation for Shintoism, Shinto is very different because it believes Japanese individuals have their own deities within them. Not to be confused as Japanese people seeing themselves as actual gods and should be worshiped just like a Greco-Roman god (because their actual gods are named *kami*), it is more of a sense that each individual, each living being, each earthly realm, has its own metaphysical aura, or energy, that gives protection to the beings and environment. Much like Taoist principles, Shinto believes there are opposites in the world that are necessary in maintain balance; like *yin and yang*, *kami* is not just one phenomenon watching over, but multiple entities assigned to one space. For instance, Shintoism believes that there is a god of creation and a god of destruction, one is not necessarily evil and one is not necessarily good, but it is vital that each understand their job in creating a balanced realm. This translates into humans on the physical seeing that is also their duty to also bring balance to realm (which is not to the severity of a god).

For instance, Buddhism and Shintoism look at the metaphor for death differently. There is a film called *Departures*, which involves a man who takes a job as an undertaker. There is a negative stigma against this, but he takes the job out of desperation. The touches upon a few themes, “such as social prejudice, marital discord, and the reaffirmation of life upon witnessing death”⁴⁵. This film was loosely based off a Buddhist book with a similar premise of the main character taking a job as an undertaker. The reason why it is ‘loosely based’ is because the creator did not want to be associated with the film for reasons of a different perspective on death. In *Departure*, the director wants to the audience to relate to the main character through “common human experiences”⁴⁶. Japan is a culture that likes to avoid the topic of death, for example they see the number 4 (which is *shi* but many say *yon* in the hopes of not seeming unlucky since *shi* phonetically sounds like death in the Japanese language) as a symbol of death, so they even go out of their way to omit number 4 elevators in building to disassociate from bad luck. The Japanese audience can understand all the things that the main character is going through, such as his wife threatening to leave due her husband being associated with death.

Within the Buddhist version, *The Coffin Man*, the author understands that taking on the role of an undertaker is associated with negative stigma. Over time, he comes to understand himself and death, taking pride in his work in creating a process that shows respect to the dead; he even becomes known as Mr. Death by the townspeople because they know he will take good care of their death. The moral of the story, was not for the town to except the author, but he found his own way to except himself by understanding death. According to the Tibetan Book of

⁴⁵ Yoshiko, Okuyama, “Shinto and Buddhist Metaphors in *Departures*” *Journal of Religion & Film*. 17, Issue 1, Article 39 (April 2013): <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu>. 2.

⁴⁶ “Shinto and Buddhist Metaphors in *Departures*”, 2.

the Dead, Death is said to be a ‘Natural Liberation’. Like in the Psychedelic movement of the 60s and 70s, the word ‘Liberation’ or ‘liberated’ in the context of Buddhism can lead to the experience or awakening of nirvana. The ‘Liberation’ that is referred in the Book does not reference drugs, but the psychedelic feel of being closer to the deity one worships. Whether it be through prayers as monks do or through traditional rituals, one is determined to leave the negativity of the body that was committed, “‘consciously or unconsciously’”⁴⁷, that results in an “‘unsurpassed state’”⁴⁸

The difference between Shintoism and Buddhism is the way both religions see death. They both similarly start to develop a positive relationship within the undertaking field and notice that they are “‘prepar[ing]’”⁴⁹ people for death. Since death is a part of life, they are participating in a ritual that is greater than themselves; almost as to acting like St. Peter opening the gates to heaven in Christianity. But, the difference between the two is that Shintoism has the added of effects of outside adversities, such as marital problems and a father-son relationship. Buddhism is the life of the author, Aoki, and his path to spiritual awakening. Therefore, these two forms of Japanese media have shown the divulgence of Shintoism from Buddhism.

At the end of the day the topic of these two forms of media that are about death and the human experience that goes along with death. The original Buddhist version is not necessarily the correct way for anyone to face death, but it is more centered on the Coffin Man letting go of the mortal world around him and embracing the fact that he is finding his own way in experiencing a

⁴⁷ Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche) *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Gyurme Dorje, Trans.) (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2005). 120.

⁴⁸ “Shinto and Buddhist Metaphors in Departures”, 119.

⁴⁹ “Shinto and Buddhist Metaphors in Departures”, 5.

higher plane that is not of this world: bringing the dead of the physical world into the plane of the spiritual world. Shintoism has shown death something that has to be dealt with in the physical after the dead individual is brought to the spirit world. There is grief from loved ones; there is a fear of death in the physical world when a loved one dies because it is not known who is going to die next, and what awaits in death. Shintoism has adapted Buddhism and its view of death as supernatural, but Shintoism incorporates the effect on the people who have been left behind after death, whereas Buddhism focuses on the redistribution of the energy and the soul of the dead individual.

Buddhist rituals are ways to become closer to buddhas and deities and get the experience of higher knowledge, but these practices can also be used to purify. Referring back to Shintoism and how it has incorporated nationalism and patriotism of Japan in its religion. Like what was said before with Japanese speed dating, Japan has used daily regiments to incorporate religion, therefore Shinto can be relevant in places such as school and the office.



Figure 8⁵⁰

These businessmen are performing a Shinto ritual in order to bless the business year. It is crucial to still have deities on one's side in business because it brings luck for oneself and coworkers. Each businessmen works together for the use of solidity and compassion⁵¹ and not for wealth and fame but as a working entity of the benefit of one's company, the benefit of the family, and the country. There is also the principle of using "patience and curiosity"⁵²; patience for waiting when the time is right, such when it is the right time to invest, and curiosity, such as having a new way of thinking when approaching a project. These few ways of thinking can be the foundation that is needed to start the business year in the right direction.

Black Nationalism

⁵⁰ "Blessings for the First Business Day of the Year." In *Gale World History Online Collection*. Detroit, MI: Gale, 2019. *Gale In Context: World History* (accessed November 28, 2022). https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/XLOBFT704914772/WHIC?u=nhc_main&sid=bookmark-WHIC&xid=4ab10e0c.

⁵¹ Edited by Melvin Mcleod, *Mindful Politics: A Buddhist Guide to Making the World a Better Place*. (Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2006): 160.

⁵² Edited by Melvin Mcleod, *Mindful Politics: A Buddhist Guide to Making the World a Better Place*. (Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2006): 144.

Many people in the Black community started embracing anti-violent protests in the middle of the decade, yet there were still factors that contributed to the support of the Black community. Racial segregation and equal rights were important in obtaining equality in America, but there was also poverty and homelessness from racial inequities. Many young Black Americans were inspired to create their own economic, social, and political power rather than integrating in a society they were not accepted in.

For the context of Zen Buddhism, one could compare the Samurai of Japan to the Black Panthers. The Black Panthers were also known as the Black Panther Party and they were known as a political party used in defense against police brutality against the Black community. In 1966, Huey Newton and Bobby Seale founded the organization after the assassination of Malcolm X; they would dress in black berets and black leather jackets patrolling as armed citizens around different U.S. cities.

The Black Panther Party was just like Japanese Samurai because they both instilled autonomy, trustworthiness, and courage that represented their nations. Sure, Black America was not a country, but in the 1960s and 70s, it was the dedication of young Black men and women investing in their community to make an identity and a marginalized economy thrive.

The Samurai and Black Panthers had a duty that motivated them into putting what they believed in before themselves. Black Panthers would get into many violent situations in attempts to protect those around them. The core principles of the Samurai are loyalty, compassion, courage, self-control, integrity, honor, respect, and justice.

What justice means to the Black panthers is that they want freedom. Freedom to walk in public without feeling afraid of non-violent or violent opposition. Freedom was also a chance to “determine the destiny of our Black Community”⁵³ by moving away from how White America portrayed the identity of the Black community. By using the phrase ‘Our Black Community’, this shows how the BBPs show their loyalty to the community and their nationalism. They are willing to invest themselves in creating a just life for their fellow neighbors and compatriots to bring a better future for Black youth.

The conduct of self-control we can see from BBPs where they were armed civilians, just like Samurai, but would only use force when they had to. Newton and Seale would draw on different writings across the world, such as teachings from China. The idea of self-control is that ‘you pick your battles’ that you do not use all of your energy for one situation if there might be a situation that is also required of your energy. First the Party does not want to instigate violence on account of bringing more opposition to America accepting Black rights as Human rights; and they cannot physically fight everyone who is an opposition, whether physically or mentally. The Black Panthers need their energy to know how to de-escalate situations in order to protect themselves, and most importantly, those that are being protected. By being able to show self-control, one is showing that they are able to have respect for themselves and even for their opponents. The feeling of rage is very strong especially when one is the victim of unjust circumstances, and choosing not to use violence is very hard since the anger wants to be released. By using self-restraint with non-violence, this shows that one is valuing human life to the point where they do

⁵³ “The Black Panther Party” *African American Heritage* www.archive.gov.

not want to have rage consume, and they respect human life enough to not regret any violence to the opposition unless it is necessary in defending the weak.

Buddhism can “reinforce rather than undermine”⁵⁴. In contrast to Buddhism during the reign of Mao Zedong, it is generally seen in Asian countries how Buddhism benefits the economy, specifically through business. Buddhism helps run businesses through merit and karma. The company-client relationship is very important within the company, if the company wants to thrive.

An example of how Buddhism can be applied to businesses in Asia is how the company treats its customers. The clientele relationship can determine how much revenue a company makes, because the client is the reason why the company makes money. The company uses merit and reputation in order to form the optimal business relationship with their clients. The company has to have a good reputation by being respectful to the client and catering to their needs; this makes the client have faith and trust within the company making it more likely that the client will come back for the company’s services. If the company does not respect the client or does not fulfill services for the client, they are adding on pain and suffering for that client which will mean the client will most likely not come back. If the company does not have the selflessness to provide a

⁵⁴ Edited by Trine Brox and Elizabeth Williams-Oerberg, *Buddhism in Business: Merit, Material Wealth, and Morality in the Global Market Economy*, (Honolulu, HI: The University of Hawaii Press, 2020), 22.

good experience for the client, then the business will go through karma and will go through a bad fiscal year.

This form of Buddhism that is applied to the business scenario was Mahayana Buddhism, in which the company takes on the suffering of the client in order to create a respectable reputation among the business community. The following of Buddhism by businesses can also get people to talk about the morality and merit of the businesses, which can drive in more business for the companies.

Places around the world have adopted Buddhist practices, such as the mindful employee. The employees of the company engage in mindfulness practices such as meditation to create a healthy work environment. This will potentially lead to higher productivity in work and a healthy mentality sustaining a work-life balance.

People know how to be mindful and seed mindfulness, but it is like “a seed nesting within everyone”⁵⁵, a seed needs to be nurtured and taken care of every once in a while, or it will die. For example, if an employee comes to work and they have not gone through a therapeutic session to restore their mental health, that employee will most likely feel tired and lethargic and confused. This will be an obstacle in finishing or that was originally assigned to that employee and if that work is not done it will affect the rest of the company. Remember, when Buddhist practices are applied to business every individual sees themselves as part of the order within which the business is the authoritative truth. The staff have to support each other, and a lethargic team member who can not work will bring down the company. One of three things may happen:

⁵⁵ Edited by Trine Brox and Elizabeth Williams-Oerberg, *Buddhism in Business: Merit, Material Wealth, and Morality in the Global Market Economy*, (Honolulu, HI: The University of Hawaii Press, 2020), 95.

1) the tired employee did not get their work done as quickly as a normal employee and then they have to work overtime in order to compensate lost time, creating a cycle of lethargy. 2) The tired employee is too tired that the boss gives work that was initially for the tired employee to a healthy employee; this means that the healthy employee has double the work load, and this will potentially lead to the demise of mental health for the healthy employee. Or 3) the boss fires the tired employee and has to replace the tired employee; the tired employee is left with no job and the lack of employment can create a deeper decline in mental health.

In conclusion, the prospect of Buddhism applied to business affects the well-being of the company, the client, and the employees. These Buddhist principles that are applied can go all the way back to the acknowledgement of suffering within mankind. The company will suffer if the client cannot be helped, the client will suffer because the client is disrespected, and the employee will suffer from mental issues if work-related stress is not addressed.

Initially Buddhism was centered on spirituality, ritual, doctrines, myths, and ethics. As Asia started comparing themselves to the West and had the prime focus of advancing its nations, the scholarly issues of Buddhism had left the public. Buddhism knew that it had to find a way to reinvent itself in a less spiritual world and now it has found its way in focusing on economic issues.

Like Shintoism, the black community has made an effort, arguably since the Great Migration of the early 1900s, that they have to invest in their own to separate themselves from the image of the oppressed and the weak. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s was not just about having equality of the Whites, but also to uplift themselves by getting to know themselves through racial and ethnic identity.

Many blacks were centered on investing in their own businesses creating their own schools and the ‘back to africa’ movement. This movement within a movement was a way to take charge of getting to know the lost African heritage of Black American ancestry.

Chapter 4: Second Wave of Feminism

In general, the women's liberation movement of the 60s and 70s were about women fleeing from the idea of being to subordinates of the patriarchy and having the right as being seen as a people who can make equal contributions to society.

Women used the stereotype of staying in the household as a way to uplift themselves. They turned what the patriarchy saw as 'inferior' because it did not contribute to the workforce as a way to facilitate the idea that women are vital to the contributions they make to the family and household. Staying at home is so much more than sitting at home and waiting patiently for the husband to come home; a husband contributes his part to the survival of the family and the wife contributes the other half. For instance, the husband works and he brings the money home, he gives an allowance for the wife to buy groceries; seems simple enough, but most men during the 1960s were not trained to be a homemaker whereas women were; it is great that one has money to afford groceries, but how can one be able to eat without preparing a meal, when coming home from work, one is too tired to cook for oneself which essentially leads to unbalanced diet.

Women's rights and Buddhism in the context of Theravada

The Women's movement of the 1960s was a second wave of feminism coming from the first wave from 1848 to 1920. Unlike the first wave, women had achieved the right to vote but this second wave had more of a hold on female intellectualism. Female intellectualism gave women the perspective for of developing their own autonomy within the intellectual community. With this type of intellectualism women could develop new philosophies and work in academia

with their male counter parts. The oppression that women had to overcome was caused by Institutional sexism which is the act of discrimination against sex in organized institutions, such as the work force. At this time many women would try to find their own particular niches and studies pertaining to the women's movement, such as an affiliation with Buddhism.

From what has been previously mentioned in Chapter one is that the role of women playing a part in rituals of Theravada Buddhism were very small. Theravada, known as the school for Elders, was a foreign concept to women; it was more appealing to them since it was Eastern philosophy and completely different than United States philosophy.

Many of the women in the West, specifically America had more time on their hands to perform these Brahmin rituals that were done centuries ago in India. Rather than the lower castes of India, the women of America in the 20th century did not have to experience the need to work long hours a week to survive and they did not need to find mushrooms grown from cow dung to partake in Vajrayana Buddhism. The luxury of being in the United States gave the population an opportunity to increase literacy levels and education levels; meaning women and men had more of a luxury to study what they were interested in or follow something that they were interested in. Many of the women of America were able to succeed in practicing in Theravada Buddhism, where their Indian counterparts did not get the opportunity.

Since Theravada was a foreign concept to the women of America, they were not taught the same exact ways to practice like one from India. Even though two people may practice the same sect of Buddhism, their different backgrounds, such as growing up in different countries, can determine how one practices based on the values that were instilled by their home country. The organization of Buddhism in the United States was not that of Southeastern or Central Asia,

so many US women studying Theravada were “unaware of how male-dominated”⁵⁶ Theravada Buddhism had traditionally been. This gave US women the opportunity to think about the philosophy of Theravada Buddhism from the female perspective which led a path for them to look into becoming Buddhist priests.

Women were able to separate the issue of gender from Theravada by finding out that there were those who wrote the ancient scriptures in India that were discriminatory towards women. By US women taking an interest in the study of Theravada they have realized that Gautama Buddha was against discrimination and that he also did not like the caste system within India which they the poor unable to participate in Buddhist rituals. This was one of the methods of feminism, which was consciousness raising. Liberating individuals in believing that Buddhist principles are not bound to the sentient being's socio-economic status or gender. When women were added into Theravada Buddhism, they were able to point out the unjustness the higher caste in India and the patriarchy had in gatekeeping the religion.

Women of Brazil

The Women's liberation movement had indeed raised conscious awareness across state lines in the United States. The Women's movement was so strong in the United States that it crossed over into another continent where women from the country of Brazil, where women would gather around and talk of their own intellectualism. Most of these meetings did not take place in meeting halls but “each other's living rooms”⁵⁷ where they had their own gynecological

⁵⁶ Chand R. Sirimanne, “Buddhism and Women- the Dhamma has no Gender” *Journal of International Women Studies* 18, Issue 1, Article 17 (November 2016): <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol18/iss1/17>. 275.

⁵⁷ Millie Thayer, “Translations and Refusals: Resignifying Meaning of Feminist Political Practice” *Feminist Studies* 36 Issue 1 (Spring 2010): 200. [Translations and Refusals: Resignifying Meanings as Feminist Political Practice - Document - Gale OneFile: Contemporary Women's Issues \(snhu.edu\)](#).

examinations and studied herbal remedies. Buddhism and medicine have always had a relationship; it has always have been practiced differently in regions of the world. Since Buddhism is an Asian religion, it uses an Eastern style of medicine that looks at the anatomy of the body in different ways then the European style. It involves chakras which pinpoint the blockage in one's spiritual energy that can affect the physical. Chakras are focal points in meditative practices denominated as a form of Tantra. Chakras are usually color coded and this makes it easier for doctors to find the corresponding herb that helps unblock the Chakras by using the same-colored herb as the colored Chakra.

The fact that these women were taking their time to understand the female anatomy shows that there was a lack of female intellectualism within the medical community. It can also be said that women were not getting diagnosed correctly due to their doctors using sexual discrimination against them. The women of Brazil used Buddhism to understand the unjustness of the medical community and the lack of knowledge of female anatomy. They were able to understand themselves physically and mentally showing their quest for knowledge.

Feminist Rage

Feelings, usually, are a universally communicative way to get one's point across when they cannot speak for themselves.

Feminist Rage is just that. It seems like a very simplistic issue of women being mad at the patriarchy, but is a more complex than that. Like all emotions, it is good to understand that one is

angry and to understand the root cause of the anger. Buddhism acknowledges the suffering that a people go through and encourages to embrace life through the negative; humanity goes through suffering therefore a certain group of people is also susceptible to suffering.

What can be seen a Liberation within Feminist Rage is that women have been bottling their emotions for very long, they have had to go through stereotypes, and they feel undervalued. Addressing the cause of why one is mad is a step in a new awakening since one can find a way to rectify a problematic situation. Understanding one's frustration is liberation within itself. There is a feeling of understanding the complexity of anger, since everyone's feeling of anger is different, and by understanding it one is thus able to control it.

One who may not understand another's emotion may shame them whether positive or negative because they can only see their own perspective of life. It is the duty of the one who was the emotion to communicate clearly and thoroughly to the other individual so they both have an understanding of the emotion and rectify the situation. For example, since Feminism wants to show the value of women in the family; let's say a housewife who is also a mother wants to feel more appreciated by her family. Her children come home from school and she has to help them with their homework and get started with dinner, yet there is no gratitude from the children because they go through this routine every day. Next, her husband comes home from work and he does not give a greeting when he comes home but demands where the dinner is; all she would want is a little adult conversation to help cope through her stressful day. The husband and the children go to bed after they had their dinner, and the wife feeling in a rut since she goes through this routine every day with no kind words from her family.

It is easily understandable to sympathize with the wife for feeling unappreciated, but we also act to look at how we can solve the problem. Everyone in this scenario has their own routine; the housewife has the routine of taking of the house and the children, the children have the routine of school and homework, and the husband has to go to work. Each party has their own routine, so it is understandable that everyone is caught in their own routine that they cannot understand the emotions of the other person.

If the wife gets the courage to confront her husband and children about the way she feels, they can either choose to embrace her feelings or dismiss them altogether. This is what Feminist truly want; they want to be appreciated for what they do and what they can potentially bring to society if given the opportunity. Society can either choose to embrace this feminist perspective or dismiss it altogether; if society does choose to embrace this perspective, this does not mean there will be a sudden change, but there can be a positive progression throughout time. Just like the husband and children who have their own personalities, problems, and emotions, they probably had no idea how their wife and mother was feeling. If they choose to listen and positively respond to the exclamation of the mother's emotion, there can be change for the better; but just like society, the children and the father have their own emotions to consider as well, so they will have to find a way to balance their needs while meeting the wife's needs. Each party has to work together to get a society, or home, where everyone is valued for their strengths and necessities.

The reason why feminist rage is brought up is because this was the initial cause of the outburst of the feminist movement in the 1960s.

In the context, of Buddhism, suffering is rage, and Buddhism dictates that one has to understand their rage. This is a form of liberation for feminists; they are releasing the anger that is mentally

and emotionally bringing them down and channeling it into something for the greater good. Formation of advocating for intellectualism among women was pushed, a lack of women in politics was addressed, and this gave way to a whole new academic subject of women and gendered studies. What Theravada Buddhism says about rage, or Pratigha, is that one should not ignore it but to embrace “anger concepts [to] increase [one’s] understanding of anger”⁵⁸ which can help reduce or prevent further anger which can create violence. Feminists used their control of their anger to remind themselves to love themselves. What Theravada in the US has in common with the Southeast Asian version “involves non-response to provocation [] and neither seeking revenge and or violent means”⁵⁹, which brings the power for the individual who is angered to control the external situation which is causing the irritation. Yet, there is a difference of “treating others with love and kindness”⁶⁰ between the two cultures in religion. Like in the early twentieth century, men were not keen to women’s liberation because of the question of the status quo; there was a shift in the family dynamic and the work economy. But the push back from men made the goal of the movement even more essential because that just proved that the patriarchy devalued them and their experiences.

Women’s Liberation

wanted to have the value in society whether it was being within the home or outside the home. Women’s Liberation was a movement to give women the freedom to choose. Some chose to be wife and mother’s and some chose to be part of intellectualism, such as politics and academics.

⁵⁸ Vanchai Ariyabuddiphongs, “Anger Concepts and Anger Reduction Method in Theravada Buddhism” *Spirituality in Clinical Practice*, Siam University (Mar 2004): 2. www.researchgate.net.

⁵⁹ “Anger Concepts and Anger Reduction Method in Theravada Buddhism” 4.

⁶⁰ “Anger Concepts and Anger Reduction Method in Theravada Buddhism” 4.

The reason for the scenario of the wife and her family in the earlier portion of this section is because women needed to find their liberation in the family. The stereotype for women has been to get married and have children, and that is great for women who do want that life as a housewife. Although, women will either put their careers on hold or leave the workforce all together to devote their time to their husband and children, it is their choice to do so, but just like any other job you would like to feel valued for being part of the group. Like any other job, “[m]others are not naturally endowed with the skills necessary”⁶¹ in motherhood; it takes time and practice to understand how to become a vital support in the family structure.

Although, there are some feminists who believe that oppression comes from the patriarchy and motherhood supports the patriarchy.

Theravada and gendered equality

Although Theravada was traditionally a male-dominated religion, women have turned to this particular sect. Theravada has had many organizations open in the United States where men and women understand that they are equally compatible to practice the traditions of this branch of Buddhism. In 1965, Theravada came to the U.S. through Thai immigrants with their religious philosophies transferring to Americans. Theravada organizations in the United States have embraced women, yet there are still different cultures within these organizations. For example, there is the Wat Phila in Philadelphia founded by Thai Immigrants and CIMC in Massachusetts that has mostly converted American Buddhists.

⁶¹ Michelle Budig, “Feminism and Family” *The Blackwell Companion to the Sociology Families*. (Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell Publishing, January 2004): 428. www.researchgate.net.

By looking at the two contrasting organizations, the culture of the converted Americans seems to greatly differ from the Thai immigrants. In the Americas, primarily the United States, has a society that is influenced by American values regardless of what any other religions practice. Both organizations gave out responsibilities to their male and female members, but Wat Phila has monks that are male, yet have women and men to “interact with monks in a slightly different way”⁶², such as monks and women not touching each other. Even though Buddha taught men and women, he still created a book of guidelines, called *Vinaya*, that say how men, particularly monks, should act around women. Men are not allowed to take anything from women, instead women must place the item on “neutral surfaces” and then the monk can take the item of the surface.

CIMC is very different to Wat Phila. CIMC “are generally unaware of any gap between” men and women and they believe that both genders can access the same teachings and have the same amount of power within the organizations. This can be due to their less traditional form of practicing Theravada contrary to Wat Phila philosophy coming straight from Thailand.

American-born converts have grown up and have experienced women trying to hold different jobs and positions in society, so if there to be only male monks it would “ha[ve] to be questioned as discriminatory”⁶³ since there are female ordained Christian priests and Rabbis.

⁶² Wendy Cadge, “Gendered Religious Organizations: The case of Theravada Buddhism in America” *Gender and Society* 18, no. 6 (Dec 2004): 784. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4149394>.

⁶³ Rita M. Gross and Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Religious Feminism and the Future of the Planet: A Christian Buddhist Conversation*, (London, England: Bloomsbury Academic Productions, 2016), 13.

According to Theravada Buddhism, anger can cloud one's judgement causing "experiences [of] pain and grief about the pervasions of peace and justice"⁶⁴. The clarity that is needed to overcome the anger can be directed to the goal of change. The change in the Women's Liberation came from the feminist rage the women, but they took control of their anger and used it to show their value in American society.

⁶⁴ Rita M. Gross, *A Garland of Reflections: Forty Years of Religious Exploration*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009), 240.

Conclusion

Siddhartha was a prince and a member of royal society. His father forbade to go on a pilgrimage and even tried to keep his son from leaving the palace, but somehow Siddhartha managed to escape. Siddhartha created his own movement in going against the norms of the higher class and royal life and sought poverty to become awakened. What is something that every living thing seeks out to survive? Shelter. His very own shelter that he left was the thing that was holding back his wisdom; he realized that “his palatial estate functioned more as a cage than an opportunity”⁶⁵; the very thing that was keeping him away from the harsh outside world, was ironically, keeping him *from* the outside world. If anyone has seen a princess movie before, many of the times she longs to see what goes on outside the palace walls. This usually leads to her finding her life’s path and ultimately makes her a great ruler when it is time to take the throne. Although Siddhartha left the palace and never came back and ultimately abandoning his royal position and his family, he found his life’s work after leaving the palace grounds and achieved his own awakening leading others, decades and hundreds of years, later to follow him after his death. This can cause one to wonder if he knew he would create a religion that would span across time and the globe.

What was seen as shelter in 1960s America was the norms of its society. The norm for hippies that they were supposed to conform to was set out to be a clean cut, black and white façade and also the overview of life. The Hippie Movement did not want to conform to a government that decided everything for themselves; it is up to the individual to find their own

⁶⁵ Jeffrey K. Mann, *When Buddhists Attack*. (Rutland, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 2012), 16.

positive and negative experiences through life. This leads into Black Liberation, where Black Americans already decided that they would not conform to a country that did not care about them, so they created a brotherly community that took care of each other.

The purpose of this essay is to shed light on how historians can look at Buddhism from a different perspective. Yes, Buddhism is primarily practiced in Asia, and yes, the invaluable texts and artwork that trace the religion back can also be found in Asia. But just because Asia has a rich history of Buddhism, does not mean it is richer than the Americas. Scholars cannot rule out the fact that America has created a spot for itself in the overall history of Buddhism. Whether it said to be a religion or just a way of life, Buddhism has been able to spread across the world and has been able to morph and conform to the society it lands in.

Rita M. Gross once said in her book, “anger about one’s own perceived unjust situation is not is not significant to anyone”⁶⁶, and in the context of this essay, it can be applied to all of these movements that were listed above. Although Gross was talking about Feminine rage within religion, she expresses the idea that there will be no change if there is nothing done. Haiti was not the first black independent country just by sitting around feeling sorry for themselves; revolutions take planning, revolutions need leader, and revolutions need time to fester in people’s minds in order for the message to come across. Money is not the only thing that needs to be invested for something to succeed in; it takes time and dedication as well. To all the protestors of the Hippie Movement and their take on the Vietnam War, the speeches of Malcolm X telling the black community to stand up and to not let White America ‘walk all over’

⁶⁶ Rita M. Gross, *A Garland of Feminist Reflections: Forty years of Exploration*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009), 232.

them, and to the women organizing protests. such as ‘take back the night’, trying to secure the safety of women against sexual assault. All of the objectives of these movements were, at first, a n idea that came from rage. Yet, as time went on many questioned their anger and took action; and yes, some did use violence as their solution, but others were tired of being angry, they were tired of not knowing what to do, and so they planned with their fellow community to create change.

What is different from all of the historiography on Buddhism is that it only focuses on the philosophies and ways of life of Asian regions. While Asia has had a few hundred years in studying and practicing Buddhism, it should not be ruled out that it is only exclusive to Asia. If we only look at Asia as the true followers of Buddhism and the ones who influence the religious practices outside of Asia, then why can we not make an argument that since Buddhism originated in Northern India, then Theravada Buddhism is the true Buddhism and all other forms are obsolete. We could also argue that Nepal is holier than India since there is a debate on whether Siddhartha was from Nepal or India, even though the region he was born in between those two countries. If we support answers like this, we can say that we exclude all sects of the same religion, since sects are usually not the original way of worshipping a religion. Unless there is a rich history of texts and art, then that is the true way of worshipping a religion.

If we only focus how far back the history of religion is practiced in one area, we may not be able to understand how to preserve some ancient traditions since time progresses. In many Asian countries, such as Japan, they are incorporating Buddhism into progressive ways to get the youth to participate. Japan has created blind dates that center around activities that relate to

Buddhism. This attracts the use as they progress into a more high tech twenty-first century and monks can get new converts that will be willing to pass on religion to future generations.

The fact that Buddhism can spread to the New World and take root in a country that was less than 300 years old shows how much the adaptability of Buddhism can create a haven for anyone from any culture.

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