

Summer 2 - Week 10 RE

Lesson 2

Can I understand myths and misconceptions about Buddhism?

This lesson we are looking at the misconceptions people have about Buddhism as a religion.

Buddhism is the fourth largest of the main religions in the world with 376 million followers compared to the 2.3billion Christians.



Dharmachakra one of the symbols of the Buddhist faith.

Misconception - Buddhism is only practiced in China

This misconception often happens as Buddhist statues are seen in Asian or Chinese restaurants.

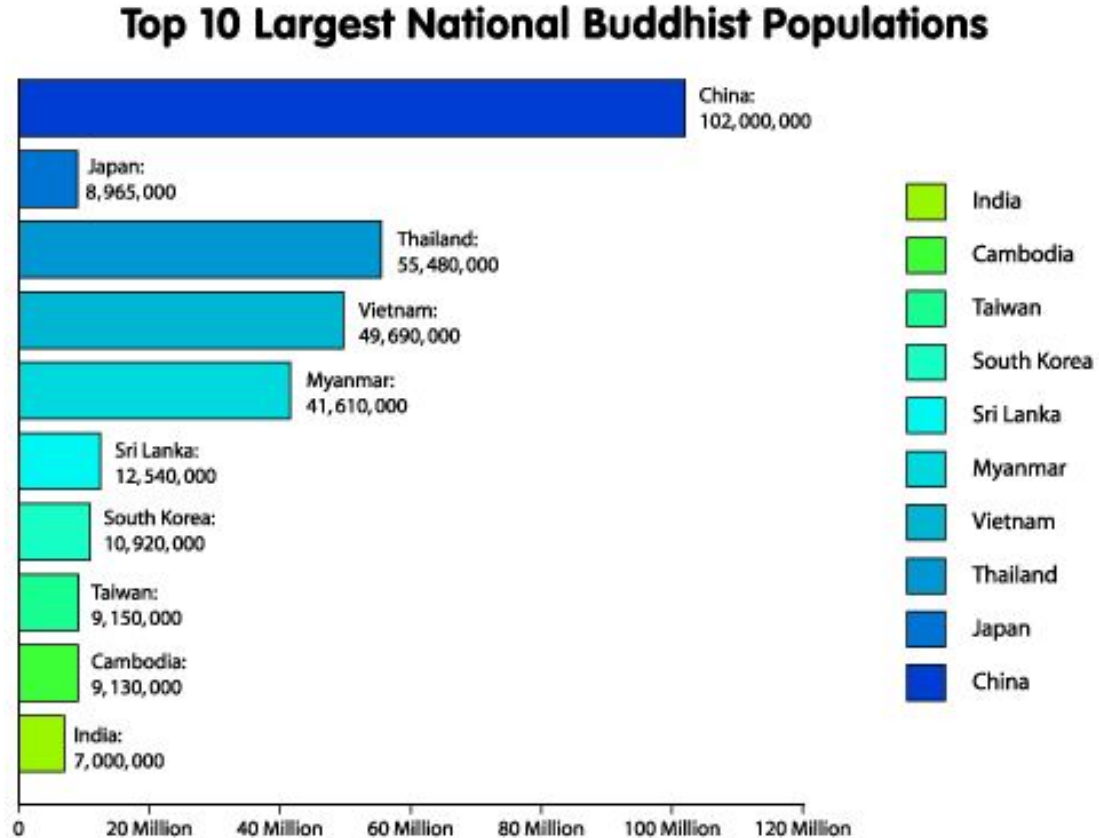


Gold laughing Buddha in a chinese restaurant.

This is not true.

The truth is that Buddhism is a major religion in many Asian countries, including Thailand, Japan, and India. In fact, historical accounts claim that origami, the Japanese art of paper folding, was first brought to Japan by Buddhist monks.

It is true that China has the highest number of Buddhists compared to other countries, but it is not exclusive to the country.



Misconception - All Buddhists meditate

This misconception comes through people's understanding that monks meditate.



This is not true.

The the majority of Buddhists throughout history have not meditated. Meditation has traditionally been considered something only monks do, and even then, a specialty only of certain monks.

It is only since the 20th century that the practice of meditation has begun to be widely practiced by people other than monks.



Buddhist monks meditating.

Misconception - All Buddhists are vegetarians

This misconception often happens as some Buddhist are vegetarian and people assume this is because of their religion not their personal beliefs.



Buddhist vegetarian dinner .

This is not true.

Bhikṣu, the Sanskrit term translated as "monk," literally means "beggar." Buddhist monks and nuns originally begged for their daily meal (and some still do) and therefore were supposed to eat whatever was offered to them, including meat.

According to some sources, the Buddha had a disease called dysentery after eating some pork. In the centuries after the Buddha's death, vegetarianism began to be promoted in some Buddhist texts. However, even today, not all Buddhist monks and nuns are vegetarians. For example, in China they are; in Tibet they are not.

Misconception - Buddha statues depict the Buddha

This misconception happens as people do not participate in the religion misunderstand the idols.



Laughing Buddha statue.

This is not true.

Most of these statues do not actually depict the original Buddha, Siddharta Gautama.

The statues depicting a large-bellied bald man are known as “the laughing Buddha,” and are separate from the original Buddha, who was thin.



Laughing Buddha statue.



Statue of Siddharta Gautama.

Misconception - Buddhists believe in reincarnation

Again this misconception happens as people do not participate in the religion and do not understand the beliefs.



Buddhism picture symbolising rebirth.

This is not true.

While some Buddhists believe in reincarnation, most don't. Buddhists do believe in rebirth, which is an entirely different concept regarding the passing on of emotions, memories, and tendencies.



Buddhism picture symbolising rebirth.

Your task. Over this unit we are going to make our own folio style project for myths and misconceptions in religion.

Carrying on from the work of Lesson 1.

In the next third of the page we will write about Buddhism.