



5 Facts You Need to Know about: Buddhism in the United States

1. Buddhism is a major world religion originating in India between the 6th and 4th centuries BCE. There are approximately 1.2 million Buddhists in the United States. Worldwide there are an estimated 488-535 million.
2. The first enlightened Buddha was Siddhartha, who is credited with the ideas of the Eightfold Path (also known as the Middle Way) and achieving a release from suffering known as nirvana. Since then, Buddhism has developed many different sects both in focus (Theravada, Mahayana, Zen, Vajrayana, etc.) and location (Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Tibetan, etc.).
3. Buddhism is a non-theistic tradition, self-described as more philosophy than faith.
4. Buddhism has been a part of the American religious landscape since the 19th century, with waves of practicing immigrants bringing their religion during the California Gold Rush in 1849 and through the opportunities provided in the Immigration Act of 1965.
5. Buddhism gained a heightened interest during the Beat movement in the 1950s, inspiring writers like Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsburg. Other famous American Buddhists include: Tina Turner, Orlando Bloom, Tiger Woods, Keanu Reeves, Herbie Hancock, Richard Gere, and the late Steve Jobs.

Learn more at:

<http://americanhistory.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.001.0001/acrefore-9780199329175-e-320>

<http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/religious-tradition/buddhist/>

These five points are not meant to be comprehensive or authoritative. We hope they will encourage you to explore this tradition more deeply and seek out members of this community to learn about their beliefs in action. It is our firm belief that in understanding our differences we will better understand our common humanity

11/2017