

# **Communicating with Buddhists**

**DISCERNING THE  
DIFFERENCE  
between**

**Buddhism and Christianity**

**By Dr. Alex Smith**



# The Lotus and The Cross

- Flourishing Buddhism
- Popular Buddhism
- Increasing Growth
- Confusing Concepts
- All Religions Same??
- Peaceful Buddhism?
- Compassionate?



*Confusion in our Pluralistic Contexts*

# Boddhisattva Kwan Yin



Kuan Yin statue  
inside Museum

# **Israel's Dark Demise: Eastern Religions Arise**

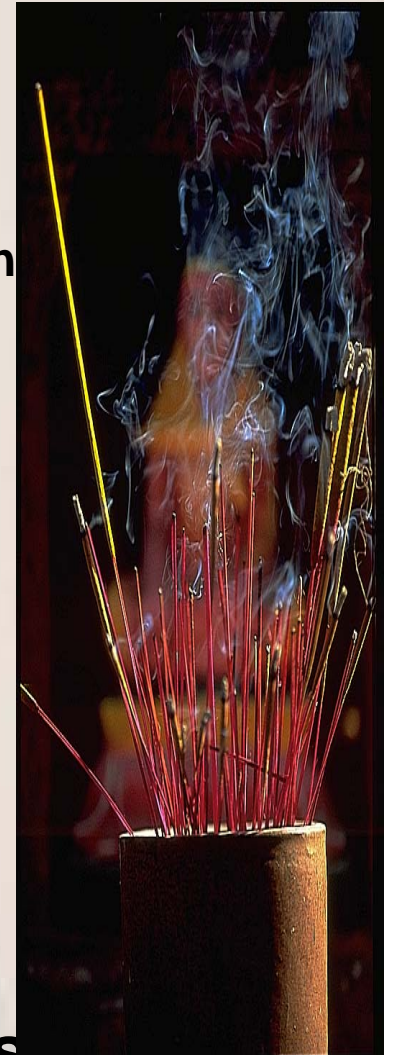
- >> 70 Years Exile – Captivity  
Jewish lowest spirituality**
- >> Daniel in Babylonian Palace:  
Gautama in North Indian Palace**
- >> This Era Coincides with the  
Rise of Most Eastern Religions**

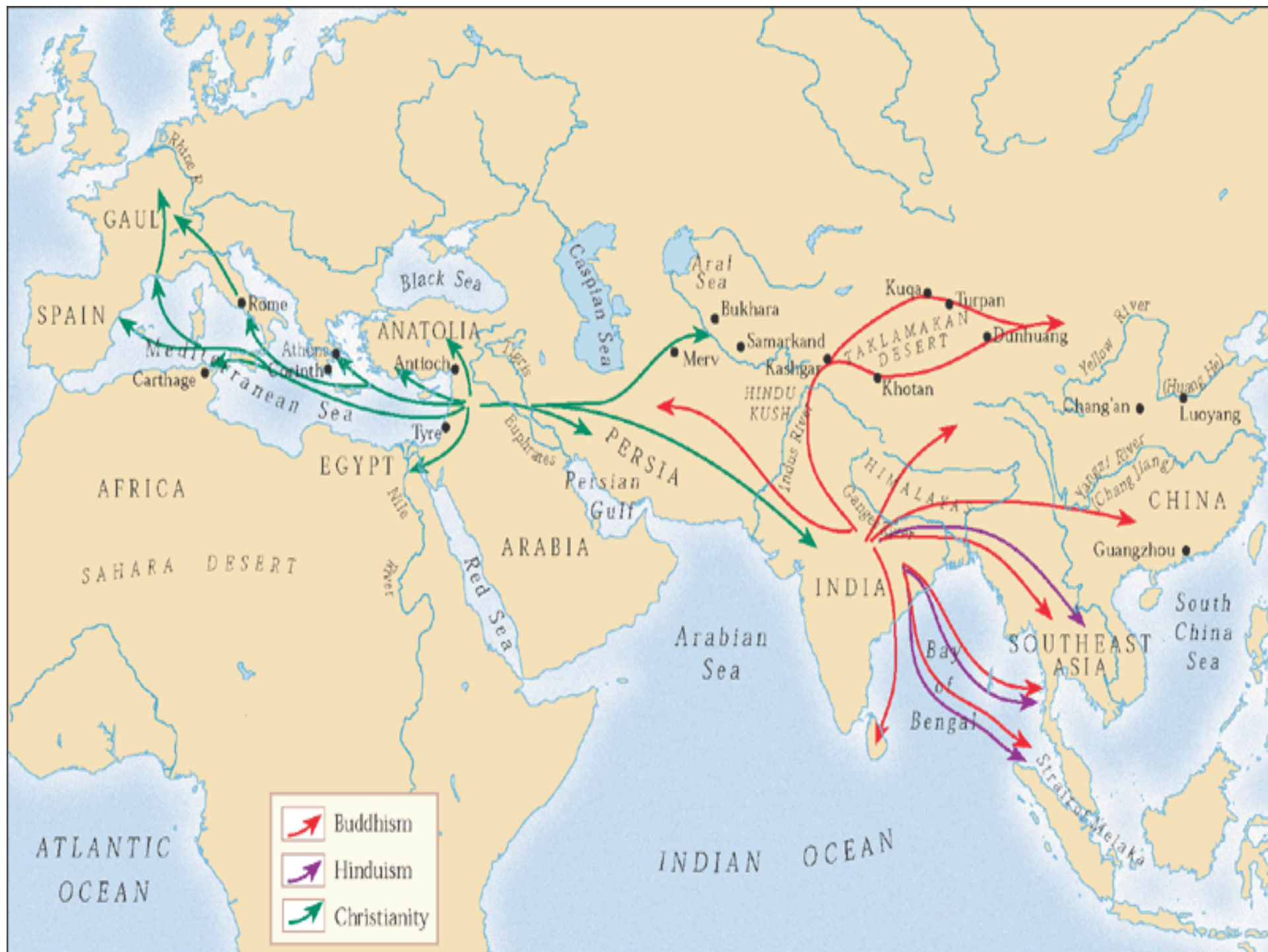




# **Significant Buddhist Influences: Syncretism**

- **Key Concepts Borrowed from Hinduism**  
Karma, Reincarnation, Nirvana, Monistic Worldview, Assimilation
- **Many Asian were Buddhist before Islam**
- **Some Folk Islam retain elements of  
Buddhist Worldview**
- \* **Syncretism in Western Churches**  
- hymnology, yoga, meditation
- \* **Media & Film include Buddhist Concepts**





# The Buddhist Revival

**China**: Many Urban Chinese Yuppies turning to Buddhism

**Bangkok**: Buddhist nun for 25 years, a dharma diplomat

**India**: Last 50 years 10 Million Dalits convert to Buddhism

**Western**: 12 million “night-stand” Buddhists in USA

**Eastern** *Half* of 10/40 Global Buddhist Concentration

**British Toynbee**: in 1930's said 21st Century marked by

*“the **interpenetration** of Buddhism & Christianity”*

# Top 10 Buddhist Populations

**1910      Core Buddhists      2010**

China	61,200,000	China	190,000,000
Japan	40,402,000	Japan	71,562,000
Myanmar	9,987,000	Thailand	56,497,000
Viet Nam	9,148,000	Viet Nam	44,383,000
Thailand	7,021,000	Myanmar	36,851,000
Sri Lanka	2,443,000	Sri Lanka	13,315,000
Cambodia	2,387,000	Cambodia	12,930,000
Nepal	1,013,000	India	8,500,000
South Korea	950,000	South Korea	7,325,000
Laos	908,000	Taiwan	6,250,000



# Highest Percentage Buddhist

**1910**

**%**

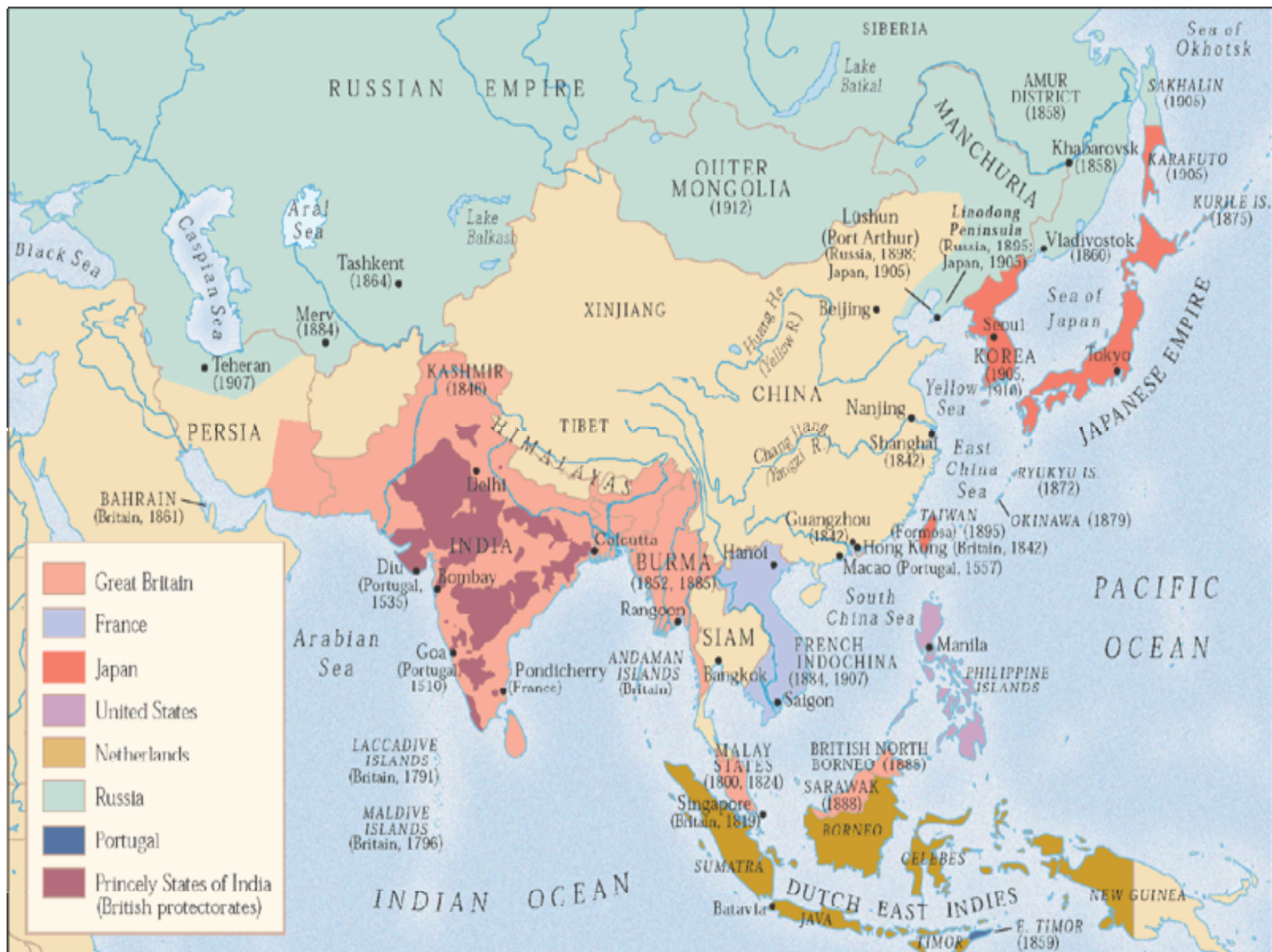
**2010**

**%**

## Core Buddhists

Thailand	90.9	Thailand	86.8
Myanmar	86.6	Cambodia	84.9
Cambodia	85.5	Myanmar	73.6
Japan	79.6	Sri Lanka	68.0
Bhutan	77.6	Bhutan	66.0
Viet Nam	69.3	Japan	56.0
Laos	60.3	Laos	52.9
Sri Lanka	59.2	Viet Nam	48.9
Mongolia	38.4	Taiwan	26.5
Nepal	20.0	Mongolia	24.9

Source: Pew Research Center



## Buddhist Sila: 5 Basic Prohibitions

**Abstain from taking life = Killing**

**Abstain from taking what is not given  
= Stealing**

**Abstain from distorting the facts = Lying**

**Abstain from illegal sexual actions  
= Adultery**

**Abstain from using intoxicants  
= Substance abuse**



# **Key Contrasting Concepts**

- 1. Source of Creation: Karma or God**
- 2. Nature of things: Illusion or Reality**
- 3. Nature of Humans: No Soul, No Eternal Spirit, or No “Ego” (individual personality)**
- 4. Nature of Sin: Karma or Rebellion**
- 5. Nature of Jesus: Only Human or God-man**
- 6. Source of Salvation: Self or Christ**





# **More Key Contrasting Concepts**

**7. Provision of Redemption: Merit or Substitution**

**8. Basis of Spiritual Life:  
Reincarnation or Regeneration**

**9. Destiny and Finality: Nirvana or Eternal Life**

**10. Authority of Scriptures: Intuition or Revelation**

**11. View of Suffering:  
Essential Nature of Existence or Effect of Evil**

**12. Principle of Extension: Assimilate or Exclusive**



## The Dalai Lama Said...

- **“We must take direct responsibility for**
- **our own spiritual lives, and rely upon**
- **nobody and nothing...**
- **If another being were able to save us,**  
**surely he would have already done**  
**so?**
- **It is time, therefore, that we**
- **help ourselves.”**



# Assimilation

SYNCRETISM

A Common Problem





# Copying Christian Symbol





# Buddhists USing Bible Text



# Practical Communication



- ~ Their Presuppositions pose problems
- ~ Listen to hear what they mean
- ~ We cannot transfer meaning
- ~ Need some feedback mechanism
- ~ Use stories, parables, illustrations
- ~ Oral drama, dance, music, pictures



NEPAL

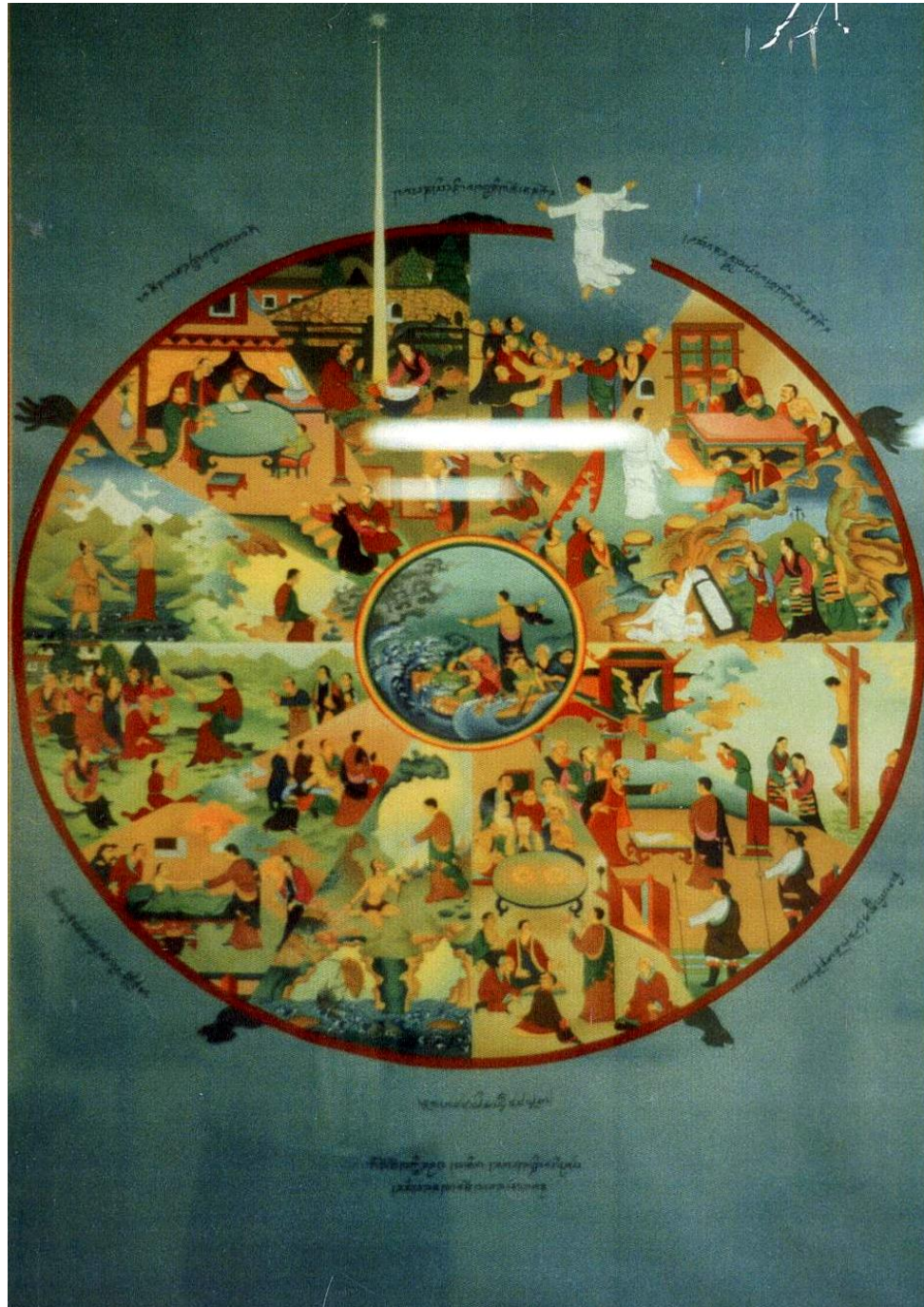
Thangka:

Sherpa

Painting

Christ's

Life



**Irina tells the biblical account of creation  
in the traditional 'epic poem' form of the  
Yakut Buddhist people of Siberia.**

***Using***

***Indigenous***

***Forms to***

***Communicate***

***Christ***





# Witnessing with love

- **Be sensitive to Holy Spirit**
- **Trust God & Pray intensely**
- **Be genuine friends (relate)**
- **Respect them & their religion**
- **Be credible & transparent**
- **Practice love & patience**
- **Focus on whole families**
- **Share Christ's "good news"**
- **Clarify crucial Bible concepts**
- **Check their understanding**
- **Don't press them to accept**
- **Rejoice in God's working**



# **PRAYER CALL: NO ONE CARED!**

**Will you**

**Pray for**

**The Billion**

**Buddhists**

**Worldwide?**

**COMMIT NOW!**



# Harvest Great: Laborers Few





# Will You Partner to Take Jesus

