Buddhism in Chinese History

One of the great themes in the history of Eastern Asia is the transformation of Chinese culture by Buddhism. This process can be traced across nearly two millennia and can be seen at work in almost every aspect of Chinese life and thought.

Buddhism in China — Ancient History to Beliefs Today

Buddhism first reached China from India roughly 2,000 years ago during the Han Dynasty. It was probably introduced to China by Silk Road traders from the west in about the 1st century CE. Han Dynasty China was deeply Confucian. Confucianism is focused on ethics and maintaining harmony and social order in society.

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Buddhism entered China during the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE). The first Buddhist missionaries accompanied merchant caravans that travelled along the Silk Road. Buddhism was probably introduced to China during the 1st-2nd centuries CE.

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China Buddhism: History Development, Sects

Chinese Buddhism is one of the oldest forms of Buddhism in history and China's oldest foreign religion. Chinese Buddhists believe in a combination of Taoism and Mahayana Buddhism, the latter of which teaches that enlightenment can be achieved in a single lifetime.

Buddhism in Chinese History

Arthuras Wright's book, "Buddhism in Chinese History," is a collection of six lectures presented at the University of Chicago by Arthur F. Wright in the late 1950's. The book is a balanced survey of the whole history of Buddhism in China from the Han Dynasty to the Sung. Wright's book is widely regarded as one of the best histories of Buddhism in Chinese culture.

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