

BUDDHIST WORLD PRAYER GUIDE

**21 DAYS OF PRAYER
2023 EDITION**

SPECIAL FOCUS ON CHINA

Join Christians around the world
in prayer for our Buddhist neighbors

Welcome

to the 21 Days Buddhist World Prayer Guide

“Don’t burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame. Be alert servants of the Master, cheerfully expectant. Don’t quit in hard times; pray all the harder.” Romans 12:11-12 MSG Version

This first century admonition from the Apostle Paul could just as easily have been written in 2022. The lingering chaos from the pandemic, war in Ukraine, persecution of Jesus followers in much of the world, economic recession; it is easy to just throw up our hands and ask, “what can one person do?”

Paul gives us the answer. Stay focused on the Word of God, expectant that He will respond, and pray all the harder.

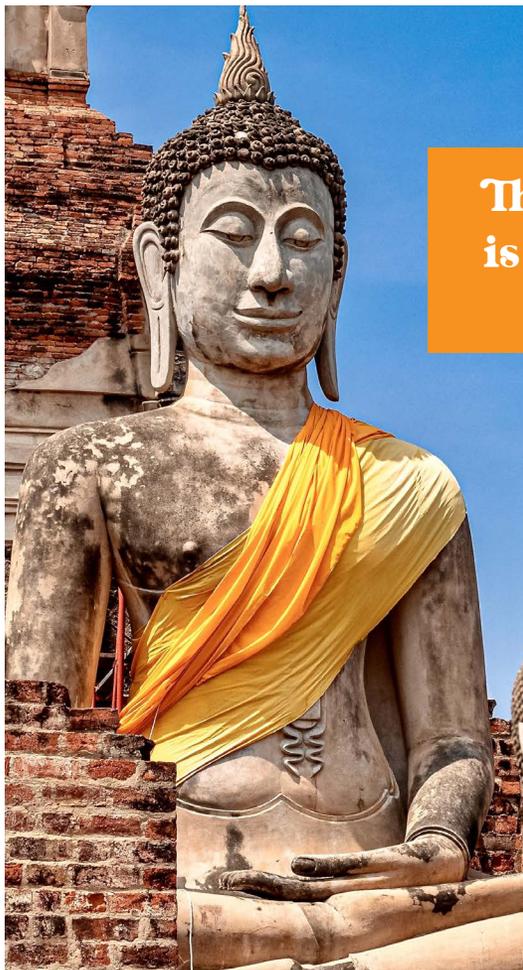
With this guide we invite you to pray specifically that God will become known to the one billion people across the globe who are at least nominally Buddhist. Each day, beginning January 2, 2023, you will learn something about Buddhist practice and influence in a different place.

A special focus for this year is the country of China. The guide culminates on January 22, Chinese New Year. We profile eight of China’s largest cities, and a specific people group within that city to pray for.

The Buddhist World Prayer Guide is being translated into eight languages and distributed through more than 1000 prayer networks worldwide. You will be participating with more than 2 million Jesus followers in intercession for our Buddhist neighbors.

We welcome you to join with us, to remain “cheerfully expectant,” and to “pray all the harder.”

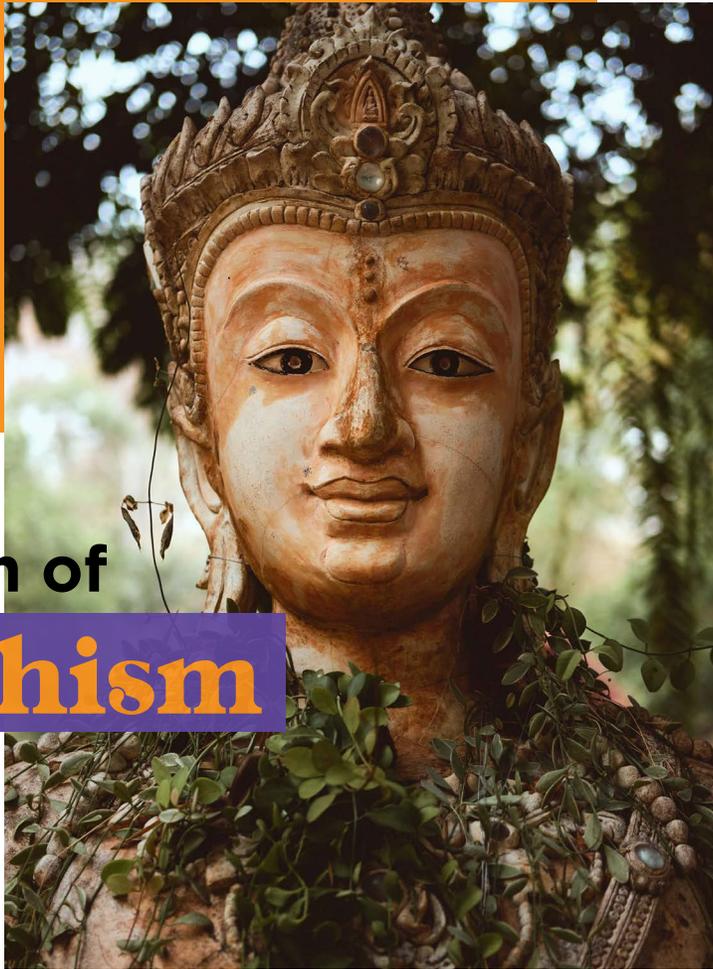
Jesus Is Lord!



**This prayer guide
is an invitation to
awakening**

**“Jesus told them,
‘Roll away the stone.’
Then Martha said, ‘But
Lord, it’s been four
days since he died—by
now his body is already
decomposing.’ Jesus
looked at her and said,
‘Didn’t I tell you that if
you will believe in me,
you will see God unveil
his power?’”**

John 11:39-40



The origin of

Buddhism

Prince Gautama was born in the southern part of modern-day Nepal in the sixth century BC. He noticed marks on the child's body and foretold that he would grow up to be a world ruler and enlightened one. His father, desiring Gautama to be a great ruler, sought to protect him by providing a life of luxury.

At age 29, however, Gautama was exposed to the suffering outside the palace where he lived. As a result he spent six years as a wandering ascetic in search of a solution to the problem of suffering. In vain he tried various meditation techniques, hoping for insight. Finally, he resolved to sit beneath a bodhi tree until he had attained the enlightenment he sought. Though tempted by Mara (the Evil One), he persisted and eventually achieved what he believed to be a realization of supreme truth. From that point on he was considered to be the "Buddha", which means an "Awakened One" or "Enlightened One".

continued overleaf

Buddhism

The teaching of Buddha (called the Dharma*)

The Buddha found his original companions in the search for enlightenment and preached his first sermon to them. Unlike most religions there was no supreme deity involved. Instead he outlined the “Four Noble Truths”:

1. **Life is full of suffering.**
2. **Suffering arises from ignorance and desire.**
3. **Suffering can only cease by ending ignorance and desire.**
4. **The way to end ignorance and desire is through the “Middle Way” or “Noble Eightfold Path”.**

“Suffering” according to the Buddha arises due to our clinging to and craving for impermanent things that keeps us all caught in an ongoing process of death and rebirth where everything, even one’s very self, is impermanent and an illusion. The only way to get off that endless cycle of rebirths is to walk the “The Middle Path”, avoiding extremes and living with right understanding, thought, speech, conduct, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and finally right concentration. The end-goal is not eternal communion with God, but rather—like the flame of a candle being extinguished—a state where craving is ended.

Actual Buddhist practice today

People see Buddhism as their own folk religion, even though it does not relate to a high deity. As such, it’s like a blanket that falls on existing cultures and conforms to the landscapes underneath. In Tibet, the Bon religion of shamanism was overlaid with Buddhist monasteries for meditation. In Buddhist Thailand, lay people offer monks cigarettes in their alms bowls; in Buddhist Bhutan, however, smoking is a sin. The Thai Buddhist council strictly disallows women’s ordination and forbids women from entering holy places inside temple grounds, yet Nepal and England ordain female monks. Cambodian Buddhists have no discussion in the temple concerning care for the environment, while Western Buddhists incorporate environmental activism into their practice of the dharma.

** For clarity, this guide follows the Sanskrit spelling of Buddhist terms, rather than the Pali spelling. Dharma is the Sanskrit spelling; the Pali spelling would be dhamma.*



Buddhism

There are three major streams of Buddhism: Theravada, Mahayana and Tibetan.

Theravada Buddhism

emerged from Sri Lanka, where the Buddha's sermons and teachings were first canonized. It focuses on the attainment of enlightenment through personal meditation and good deeds. Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos follow this tradition.

Mahayana Buddhism

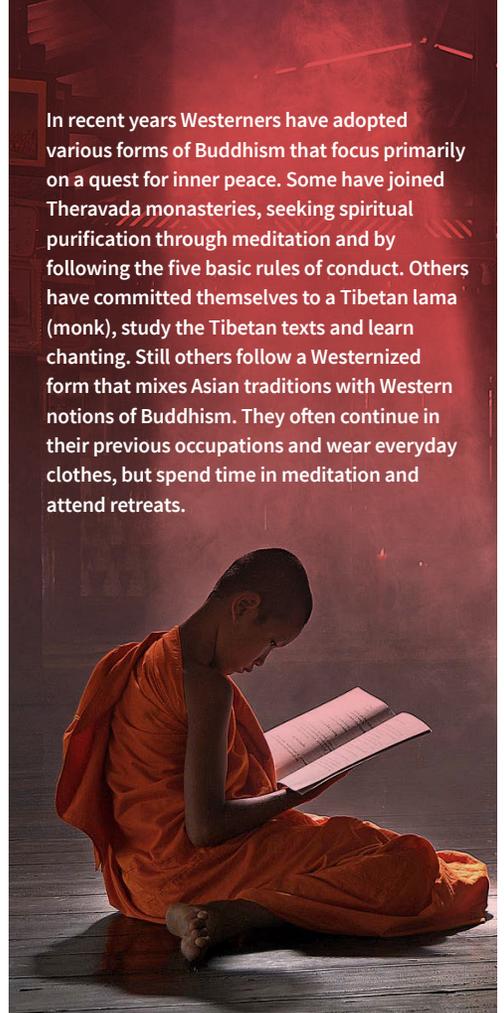
emerged based on texts attributed to Buddha, which taught that a bodhisattva, or enlightened being, could choose to delay entering nirvana (the ultimate spiritual goal of liberation) to deliver other sentient beings from their karmic suffering (based on a person's past actions). This stream of Buddhism was traditionally practiced in China, Japan, Vietnam and the Korean peninsula.

Tibetan Buddhism

arose in India in AD sixth century, with a focus on accelerating enlightenment through ritual practices and visualizing heavenly bodhisattvas.

In recent years Westerners have adopted various forms of Buddhism that focus primarily on a quest for inner peace. Some have joined Theravada monasteries, seeking spiritual purification through meditation and by following the five basic rules of conduct. Others have committed themselves to a Tibetan lama (monk), study the Tibetan texts and learn chanting. Still others follow a Westernized form that mixes Asian traditions with Western notions of Buddhism. They often continue in their previous occupations and wear everyday clothes, but spend time in meditation and attend retreats.

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Countries with more than 1,000,000 Buddhists

Country	Country population 2020	Buddhist Population 2020	Percentage 2020
China	1,439,324,000	228,117,000	15.8%
Japan	126,476,000	70,539,000	55.8%
Thailand	69,800,000	60,846,000	87.2%
Viet Nam	97,339,000	47,334,000	48.6%
Myanmar	54,410,000	40,469,000	74.4%
Sri Lanka	21,413,000	21,413,000	68.0%
Cambodia	1,6719,000	14,380,000	86.0%
South Korea	51,269,000	12,637,000	24.6%
India	1,380,004,000	9,799,000	0.7%

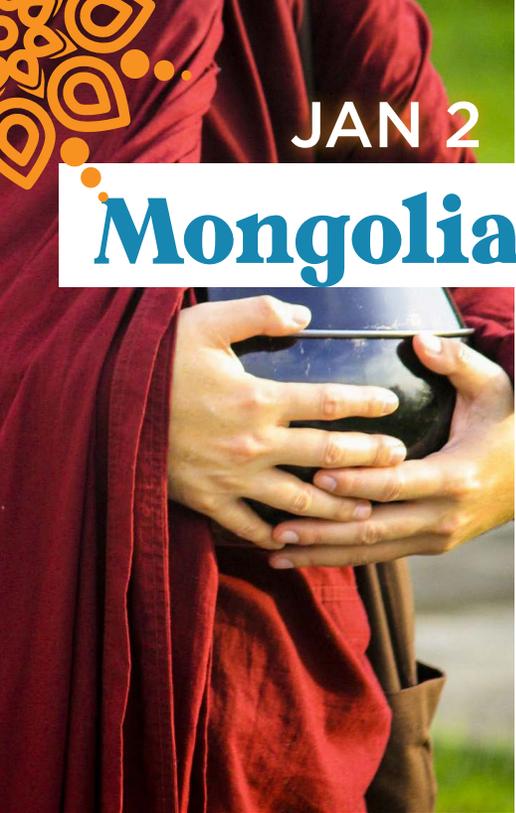
Country	Country population 2020	Buddhist Population 2020	Percentage 2020
Taiwan	23,817,000	6,304,000	36.5%
United States	331,003,000	4,300,000	1.3%
Laos	7,276,000	3,815,000	52.4%
Nepal	29,137,000	3,546,000	12.2%
Indonesia	273,524,000	2,185,000	0.8%
Mongolia	3,278,000	1,906,000	58.1%
Malaysia	32,366,000	1,712,000	5.3%
Bangladesh	164,689,000	1,182,000	0.7%
Hong Kong	7,497,000	1,170,000	15.6%

Data source: Todd M. Johnson and Brian J. Grim, eds., *World Religion Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed October 2022)

Buddhists around the world

Cities with a notable percentage of Buddhists of the country's population.





JAN 2

Mongolia

Buddhism is the “official” religion of Mongolia, practiced by nearly 60% of the people. The close connection with Tibetan Buddhism goes back more than 500 years.

The communist invasion of 1939 nearly eradicated Buddhism, destroying temples and killing or isolating monks. As recently as 1990 there was only one monastery in use with just 100 monks (lamas).

The majority of Mongolians live across the border in China. Alcoholism is a persistent problem, as is their status as an ethnic minority not well received by the Chinese. Abuse within families and a high divorce rate add to their sense of isolation.

Contemporary religious practice involves worship of idols of Buddha. There is the

belief that the more expensive statue you can afford the better the protection and favor you will enjoy. Failure to receive this divine assistance is attributed to the “cheap statue” or a failure to properly perform the annual rituals necessary to ward off evil and bring good luck.

Another characteristic of Mongolian worship is animism. The connection between man and nature is fundamental; trees, mountains, and animals are considered sacred. Burning of incense accompanies this worship. Temples give out “blessed cellophane tape” that is put on car windows to protect against accidents.



Ways To Pray:

- That the Christian community (3% of the population) will be empowered to share their faith.
- Pray that educational opportunities will be extended to Mongolian children, and that child labor will be eliminated.
- Ask for release from alcoholism and the restoration of families
- Pray for liberation from shamanistic and occult practices

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The connection between man and nature is fundamental; trees, mountains, and animals are considered sacred.

“Don’t chase after ghost-gods. There’s nothing to them. They can’t help you. They’re nothing but ghost-gods!”

1 Samuel 12:21 (MSG Version)

JAN 3

Japan



“The whole earth will acknowledge the Lord and return to him. All the families of the nations will bow down before him.”

Psalm 22:27 (NIV Version)

While Japan has traditionally been classified as a Buddhist nation, the reality is that it has become increasingly post-religious. Some practices are continued: visiting and maintaining ancestral graves, wearing of good luck amulets, and registering births at the local Buddhist temple.

Even so, the majority of Japanese citizens, particularly those under age 50, do not identify as followers of any religion. In this highly competitive society it is often considered “weak” to be religious. Some have called Japan “a superpower without a moral compass.”

One result of this ennui is a high suicide rate, especially among young people. More than 30,000 each year take their own lives.

Many Japanese will pick aspects of Shintoism, Buddhism, and occult or animistic practices and develop their “personal faith” without concern

about contradictions. A heavy emphasis in this belief system is that Gods are everywhere, in the stones, trees, clouds, grass, etc.

Since there are very few Christians in Japan there is a problem obtaining bibles and other faith based literature. Related to this is the fact that many of the current pastors are elderly, but can’t retire as there is no one to take over their congregation.

The majority of the Christian community in Japan is women. Since they work so many hours, men do not have time for religion. This becomes a self-reinforcing problem—few men in a church confirms the misconception that church is primarily a place for women.



Ways To Pray:

- With the world’s lowest birth rate and highest life expectancy, Japan has a rapidly aging population. Pray for more Christian nursing homes and hospices, and Christian health workers from other countries to fill positions.
- Ask God to remove the spirit of delusion that leads to worship of the occult.
- Pray for a new generation of Christian leaders to be developed in Japan

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A heavy emphasis in this belief system is that Gods are everywhere, in the stones, trees, clouds, grass, etc.

JAN 4

Vietnam



“He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.”

Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NIV Version)

Vietnam is one of the few communist nations left in the world. Although the economy has integrated capitalistic principles to fuel its growth, the majority of the population still suffer with continued oppression and increasing social problems.

Spiritually the Vietnamese still worship ancestors as well as a spiritual mixture that includes Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. As the country has become more prosperous there is a growing middle class that embraces materialism.

Nevertheless, a growing, witnessing Church is emerging from years of persecution. In both Catholic and Protestant churches there is a growing missionary vision. Significantly, there are 119 different people groups in

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The Vietnamese diaspora is seeing many people coming to faith and bringing the Gospel back to Vietnam.

Vietnam and the churches are ministering to many of these.

The Vietnamese diaspora is seeing many people coming to faith and bringing the Gospel back to Vietnam. Significantly, since they are familiar with the customs and religious traditions of the country, that can convey story of the creator God and His son Jesus by referring to Him as “Ong Troi,” the highest-ranking power who created heaven and earth.

Another positive development in growing Christian church is a discipleship movement among women. This is expanding to many districts and villages.



Ways To Pray:

- Pray for the continued maturing of the Vietnamese church so the Jesus might be known throughout the nation.
- Pray that Jesus followers will communicate the good news in ways Vietnamese Buddhists can fully understand and embrace.
- Ask that the people abandon ancestor worship and find the truth in the living God.

JAN 5

Cambodia



“I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me. To a nation that did not call on my name, I said, “Here am I, here as I.”

Isaiah 65:1 (NIV Version)

Theravada Buddhism has been the national religion of Cambodia since the 15th century. Every village has a temple that is supported and maintained by everyone in the village, even the poorest. These local shrines are often tiny and drab structures with roughly formed representations of the Buddha inside.

Temples in the city are larger, ornate, and have impressive idols of Buddha. But the worship is the same: burning incense, bowing in supplication, and attempting to placate the myriad of spirits that control the world.

Despite this devotion Cambodians remain poor and are frequently victimized by the social traumas of the past under the Khmer Rouge. Half of the governments

budget is underwritten by foreign aid. The opportunities for education are very limited. Crime is rampant, human trafficking, orphanages for profit, and the sex trade are widespread.

The Khmer language word for happiness and personal peace is sok. Cambodians strive to achieve sok by placating spirits and wearing amulets. These efforts do not provide spiritual peace, this can only come through a relationship with the living Jesus.

Despite the attention to Buddhist traditions and merit making, the people of Cambodia are searching spiritually. This is an open field for the Lord of the Harvest.



Ways To Pray:

- Pray that the Jesus followers in Cambodia will lead the way in healing the wounds still remaining from the Khmer Rouge genocide.
- Ask that Cambodian Buddhists come to know that Jesus is the Prince of Peace and the only way to achieve sok.
- Pray for deliverance and salvation for the millions of children in bondage to forced labor, human trafficking, and the sex trade.

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Every village has a temple that is supported and maintained by everyone in the village, even the poorest.



JAN 6

Buddhist Diaspora



“The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God.”

Leviticus 19:34 (NIV Version)

Many of the adherents of Buddhism live in poverty. Children are sold to pay debts, alcoholism is a common problem, and life is a constant attempt to ‘make merit.’

When the opportunity to go to another country for work or education presents itself young Buddhists grab ahold of it. Another way that they are able to relocate is with a relative who has gone before and can help them emigrate. Many young women will marry foreign nationals and go to their country.

What frequently happens though is they get to their new location but find it very

difficult to assimilate into the new culture. Language and customs are so different and frequently they are ignored or sometimes discriminated against.

The Buddhist temple may provide some familiar customs, but the monks can do little to relieve the loneliness and frustration.

Many of these people would be willing to discuss spiritual things if only someone would take the time.

How can you connect with Buddhists in your town to tell them your Jesus story and the Gospel message?



Ways To Pray:

- Pray that Western Jesus followers will actively seek the Buddhists in their midst and introduce the Prince of Peace.
- Ask that Buddhist background believers living abroad will become disciples and tell their families back home too, so they also can become disciples.

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**How can you connect with
Buddhists in your town to tell
them your Jesus story and the
Gospel message?**

JAN 7

Laos



“Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.”

John 15:4 (NIV Version)

Buddhist beliefs in this SE Asian nation of more than 7 million are driven by attempts to appease the spirits and “make merit.” Since most of the population live in rural, agrarian villages, this results in blindly following traditions.

At weddings the guests tie thin white cotton strings onto newly-weds wrists to bless them and ward off evil. When a child is born the villagers come together to tie “blessed” cotton strings onto the infant’s wrists to keep all 32 good resident spirits in place. Once

a year the village runs yards of string from the temple to every home.

Despite this, and even in the face of government persecution, the Christian church in Laos is growing rapidly. Native Laotians lead almost all churches and evangelism efforts. The “approved” Lao Evangelical Church as well as many underground house churches are fostering this growth. However, most of these congregations lack a trained pastor.

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Despite this, and even in the face of government persecution, the Christian church in Laos is growing rapidly.



Ways To Pray:

- Christians from mainly tribal backgrounds now make up 3% of the Lao population. Pray that they will successfully make disciples among their many Buddhist neighbors.
- Pray for leadership training for the many house church leaders.
- Ask that in the face of increasing persecution Jesus followers will rely totally on God.



The State of Religion in China

The People's Republic of China is officially an atheist state, but there are five religions that are recognized by the government: Buddhism, Taoism, Catholicism, Protestantism, and Islam. In recent years there has been an increased tolerance of Confucianism and Chinese Folk Religion as part of China's cultural inheritance.

Christianity was reintroduced to China in the 16th century by Jesuit missionaries. During the revolution in 1949 Christian missionaries were expelled from the country and churches closed. As part of the economic reforms in the late 1970's restrictions on religious activities were relaxed.

Today Chinese citizens over the age of 18 are only permitted to join "officially sanctioned" Christian groups that are registered with the government. The Protestant "Three-Self Patriotic Movement" is one of these.

The fastest growing movement of Jesus followers is happening in the underground house church movement. Members of these congregations are considered the 'silent majority' of Christians in China.

For this 21 Day Prayer Guide we are focusing on eight cities in China. In each city we are profiling one people group and asking that you pray for the name of Jesus to become known in that group. Many of the people who have migrated to cities maintain close connections with their home province and village and try to return annually.

Pray that these urban centers will become "sending hubs," creating a ripple effect of believers traveling throughout the country sharing with their people group.

JAN 8

Beijing



Beijing is the capital city of the People's Republic of China. It is the world's most populous capital city with over 21 million residents.

The Han Chinese People

The Han represents the majority of China's people and in many senses dictate what is and is not considered Chinese. The Han is the majority ethnic group in China, making up 92% of the mainland's population. They also constitute the world's largest ethnic group, with 18% of all people on earth being Han.

The Han take their name from the Han dynasty, which, though not the dynasty to first unite China, represented a halcyon era of politics and art. It was also the dynasty during which China's most influential historian lived and wrote, and the dynasty that would continue to be romanticized through literature for thousands of years to come.

Han people are adherents of a wide variety of religious traditions. Many are Buddhists, others follow Confucius, or are Taoist. However there are many Catholics and Christians both in China and the 53 countries around the world with a Han Chinese population.



Ways To Pray:

- Pray for 50 new Christ-exalting multiplying house churches amongst the people groups of Beijing.
- Pray for a Bible in Chinese sign language and Chinese Jinyu.
- Pray for John 17 oneness among the house church leaders in Beijing.
- Pray for the hundreds of millions of rural dwellers that have relocated to China's urban centers like Beijing. Many millions cannot support their families and end up in cities without basic social services or educational opportunities, which creates overcrowding and unemployment.
- Pray for God to restrain the lawlessness and stronghold of abortion (13 million abortions every year in China).

JAN 9

Xining



Xining is the capital city of Qinghai province in western China and the largest city on the Tibetan plateau. It has a population of 1.6 million.

The Wutun People

The Chinese government does not recognize the Wutun as a separate people group but includes them under the Tu nationality. The Wutun resist this classification and insist on their own status.

Tibetan Buddhism is the only religion among the Wutun. They are fanatical believers. Their whole ethnic identity is bound up in their religion. Although they do not have their own temples, the Wutun frequent Tibetan temples in the Tongren area. Like all Buddhists, the Wutun believe they will end up in a state of bliss after death. But being better and more privileged, they believe they will go there directly, while other Buddhists achieve enlightenment only after going through many trials and testing's.

Many of the Wutun are skilled artists. Buddhist scenes and the Buddha himself are the most common subjects of their paintings. They claim their artistic skills came about because the original soldiers studied art in Nepal.

The Wutun have an almost complete lack of knowledge about the existence of Christianity



Ways To Pray:

- Pray for 50 multiplying house churches in the 10 people groups of this city.
- Pray for Bible in Tibetan, Amdo, Tibetan Khams, and Tu.
- Pray for 10,000 missionaries to be raised up and sent to the 10/40 window to share the gospel!
- Pray for a campus awakening at Qinghai University.
- Pray for Jesus to break the power of Tibetan Buddhism over this city.



JAN 10

Hohhot



Hohhot is the capital city of Inner Mongolia with a metro area population of 3.1 million souls.

The Jin Chinese People

The Jin is part of the larger Han Chinese population, but separated by their “heart” language, Jinyu. Many live in what is historically considered one of the most backward and far-flung parts of China. Jin is spoken in a total of 175 cities and counties throughout Northern China.

There are estimated to be 1.2 million Jin believers throughout China, this in a population of 50 million. One city, Hebei, where more than 10 million Jin speakers live - is the strongest Catholic region in China with more than 800,000 church members. Two-thirds of the population of Shanxi Province are Jin. Recent research indicates there are 200,000 Protestants in Shanxi Province alone.

Pray that these believers will become evangelists to the Jin diaspora.



Ways To Pray:

- Pray for 50 multiplying house churches in the 4 people groups of this city.
- Pray for a Bible in Chinese, Jinyu.
- Pray for indigenous missionaries to be raised up and sent to Inner Mongolia to share the gospel.
- Pray for families in the house churches to rescue and adopt orphans. Pray for the child missionaries to feel courage from the Lord and experience no mental or spiritual torment as they follow the Lord's plan.
- Pray for God to bind the powers of Buddhism located at the Da Zhao Temple and release the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ upon them



JAN 11

Chengdu



Chengdu is the capital of southwestern China's Sichuan province. Chengdu's history dates to at least the 4th century B.C. It is home to the Giant Panda research center and has a population of 16.5 million.

The Mianchi Qiang People

At one time in history there were 62 unique Qiang tribes. Most of these have been assimilated into larger peoples or have simply vanished. The name “qiang” means herdsmen and for centuries was a generic description for a large number of nomadic tribes.

Today there are nine distinct Qiang languages and groups, all living primarily in Sichuan province. The Mianhi Qiang number around 30,000, with 200 known Jesus followers. Many of these have moved to Wenchuan to avoid persecution in their home areas.

Chengdu is the largest city in Sichuan, with a population of Qiang peoples living in tight knit communities within the city. It is typically young people who move, hoping to find work so they can send money home.



Ways To Pray:

- Pray for 50 Spirit-led multiplying house churches in each of the 19 people groups in this city!
- Pray for a Bible in Mawo and Mianchi Qiang languages.
- Pray for 10,000 missionaries to be sent from this city to the 10/40 window nations.
- Pray for a mighty children's prayer revival in this city.
- Pray for God to bind the spirit of fear and intimidation.



JAN 12

Wuhan

The Tujia People

The Tujia, whose name means “natives” or “original inhabitants,” are one of China’s officially recognized nationalities. 170,000 Tujia are able to speak their language. Education is conducted in the Tujia language until the third grade; after that, Mandarin is used.

The Tujia practice nuo (exorcism) ceremonies. The Tujia evoke the spirits of Fuxi and Nuwa - the first human beings according to Chinese legend. The ceremony includes supernatural feats such as climbing ladders of sharp knives and walking on hot coals or glass.

The Tujia regard the bull’s eye as a symbol of the victory of good over evil. Other common motifs include the snake and the white tiger.

Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries first entered Tujia areas with the gospel near the end of the nineteenth century and established a small number of churches, schools, and medical clinics among the Tujia. Today it is estimated that there are between 13,000 and 30,000 Tujia Christians, a tiny proportion for such a large group.



Wuhan is the capital of Hubei Province. It is the most populous city in central China with more than 11.4 million people.



Ways To Pray:

- **Pray for 50 Christ-exalting multiplying house churches in the 5 people groups in this city.**
- **Pray for a Bible in Miao, Western Xiangxi.**
- **Pray for Christians to have influence in the sciences, healthcare and marketplace for the sake of the gospel.**
- **Pray for a revival in the major universities of Wuhan.**
- **Pray for God to dismantle the power of Buddhism in the 4 major Buddhist temples in this city.**



JAN 13

Kunming

Kunming, the modern capital city and transportation hub of China's southern Yunnan province. Known for its parks and limestone formations, as well as a large student population. Population is 7 million. It is considered one of the most "livable" large cities in China with a moderate year around climate and little to no pollution.

The Luoluopo People

The name Luoluopo means "tiger dragon people" in the Luoluopo language. There are roughly a half million people who speak this language.

The Luoluopo celebrate the Tiger Festival between the eighth and the 15th days of the first lunar month. The Luoluopo believe they are descended from tigers. The hero of the festival is the tiger, a person in costume who, after dancing on the open ground, rides a mountain god float to call on each home in the community and offer them a blessing.

Luoluopo youth are expected to be sexually active before marriage. All villages have a "flower house" where young people are allowed to come together after dark. Fidelity in marriage is stressed only after the first baby is born.



Ways To Pray:

- Pray for 50 multiplying house churches in the 53 people groups of this city.
- Pray for a Bible in Lolopo
- Pray for 10,000 missionaries to be raised up from this city and sent to the 10/40 window nations with the gospel.
- Pray for a children's revival to break out in this city.



JAN 14

Guangzhou

Guangzhou is a sprawling port city northwest of Hong Kong on the Pearl River. It is the home to the annual Canton fair, the oldest and largest trade fair in China. 15.5 million people live here.

The Zaomin People

The Zaomin are part of the large Yao nationality and have lived in Guangdong province since the 13th century. There are approximately 50,000 people that identify as Zaomin. Their primary language is Dzao Min.

Today most Zaomin adhere to a religious mixture that includes Daoist, animist, and Buddhist elements. The Zaomin believe that when they die their moral conduct will have to be accounted for. Numerous songs and chants record what they will be asked. Their answers determine whether their soul will be able to enter into rest or not.

An interesting tradition that is maintained in the rural villages is that the job of women is to gather firewood. Men say a quick way to find out whether a woman is industrious is to check the fuel piles outside her home.



Ways To Pray:

- Pray for 50 Discipleship-driven multiplying house churches in each of the 8 people groups in this city.
- Pray for ongoing translation work of key parts of the New Testament into local languages
- Pray for the Deaf people in Guangzhou to open their hearts and follow Jesus.
- Pray that God will shine the Light of Christ in all the dark places in this oppressed city.
- Pray that the strongholds of tradition, wealth and false knowledge would be broken

JAN 15

Nanning



Nanning, a city in southern China near the Vietnam border, is capital of the Guangxi region. It is known as the “Green City” because of its abundance of lush subtropical foliage. It is home to 7.3 million people.

The Bunuo People

For centuries the Chinese preferred to ignore the Bunuo; they considered the Bunuo to be ignorant barbarians living in the remote mountains. They were described as “a treacherous and aggressive people”.

With a population of just 23,000 the Bunuo are a practically untouched people group, separated from the Gospel by geographical, political, cultural, and linguistic barriers. Because they are not officially recognized by the Chinese government, the Bunuo are unknown to both Chinese and Western Christians. There are very few believers of any kind in the part of Guangxi inhabited by the Bunuo.

The religious beliefs of the Bunuo include many different rituals borrowed from Daoism and Buddhism. It is not known if the Bunuo worship Pan Hu, as do many other Bunuo and Yao groups in Guangxi.



Ways To Pray:

- Pray for 50 multiplying house churches in each of the 28 people groups in this city.
- Pray for massive Bible translation needed, 17 out of the 28 people groups still need Bible Translation.
- Pray for an awakening at the large Guangxi University, a medical school, and school of agriculture.
- Pray for a children’s prayer revival in this city.
- Pray for God to send for laborers to the harvest fields of this city during Chinese New Year.

JAN 16

Sri Lanka



“Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’”

Matthew 19:26 (NIV Version)

Buddhism arrived on the shores of Sri Lanka in the third century BC, when emperor Ashoka of India converted to Buddhism and started sending missionaries. Sinhalese speakers, who adopted the new religion, were the first to record Buddha’s teachings in 25 BC.

Over the centuries, when Buddhist practice ebbed significantly, Sinhalese kings would send envoys to Burma and Thailand requesting help to reignite the Buddhist flame.

During the British colonial era, the Sinhalese Buddhist majority and the Tamil Hindu minority united against foreign rule. Unfortunately, following independence in 1948, a law was passed in 1956 recognizing

Sinhala as the official language of the nation. This set the stage for conflict with the country’s Tamil Hindu population (who speak Tamil) that escalated into a 25-years war in which tens of thousands were displaced and/or killed.

The end of the war in 2009 coincided with a rising movement associating Buddhism with national culture and persecuting religious minorities, including Christians.

Today, Sinhalese Buddhists make up 70 percent of Sri Lanka’s 22 million people. To these Buddhists, turning to Jesus is equated with a return to Western cultural imperialism and loss of social identity.



Ways To Pray:

- Pray that Christians will share the gospel using appropriate Sri Lankan cultural patterns that break imperialistic stereotypes.
- Ask for a spirit of humility to sweep through Sinhalese Buddhist communities, resulting in hearts that seek spiritual truth and families that respond to the love the Father through Jesus.

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**Today, Sinhalese Buddhists
make up 70 percent of
Sri Lanka’s 22 million people.**



JAN 17

Bhutan



“We use God’s mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments.”

Romans 10:4 (NIV Version)

Bhutan is a tiny kingdom nestled in the Himalayas. Tibetan Buddhism is woven in to every fiber of Bhutanese culture. Bhutan is portrayed as one of the happiest places on earth, yet Bhutanese people’s lives are filled with fear. These fears are centered around appeasing local deities and warding off evil with religious rituals. The elderly can often be found in trance-like states spinning prayer wheels and reciting mantras in hope of a better life after death.

To convert to Christianity could mean losing jobs and being disowned by family and friends. Having a “house church” or even a meeting with friends with the intent

of sharing the love of Jesus can result in imprisonment.

Bhutan is isolated from the rest of the world not just by its terrain, but also because of its suspicion of outsiders. Visas cost \$250 a day and visitors must always be accompanied by a registered guide. Visiting a temple or other areas requires special permits.

There is a fledgling group of Tibetan Buddhists that have turned to Jesus, less than 1000 at this time.

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Tibetan Buddhism is woven in to every fiber of Bhutanese culture.



Ways To Pray:

- Pray that the small but growing group of Jesus followers would stay firm in their faith and be bold to share the good news with those who are most broken.
- Ask for the Holy Spirit to create a massive outpouring across Bhutan that would create visions of Jesus and a spiritual openness in every segment of society.
- Pray for the gospel to be taught through oral stories and traditional art forms as literacy is low and tools for evangelism in their language are very limited.



JAN 18

Nepal



“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

Colossians 1:13-14 (NIV Version)

Buddha was born at Lumpini, Nepal. Even though Nepal has been primarily a Hindu country in the past, Buddha is equally honored along with Shiva and other Hindu gods.

In 2008 a new opportunity began when the Hindu monarchy finally ended after pro-democracy protests. This initially led to an era of opportunities for Christian ministry. However, the backlash against religious conversion and the “hurting of religious sentiment” have now been criminalized. These laws are specifically directed at Christian missions.

Thousands of Nepalese Buddhists live in the high mountains of Nepal. They deal with a harsh climate, limited agricultural land, and intense poverty. Families traditionally send one son to the military and one to serve as a Buddhist monk. Some children are sent to charity schools in

larger cities. Frequently a daughter is sold to an “employment broker” who is really taking them to India and the sex trade.

The image of Christianity in Nepal is as a foreign, mostly Western, intrusion that undermines traditional culture and values and appeals only to the lower castes. Despite this we are seeing a growing strength among Nepalese Christians as they forge a fully Nepali, fully Christian identity.

That being said, persecution remains and is intensifying. This comes from the religious majority, but also socially within families and communities. Pray for grace and perseverance for believers, and that Christians will be accepted and appreciated for their contribution to the nation’s well being.



Ways To Pray:

- Pray for the Nepal Christian Society as it seeks to provide a forum for prayer, sharing, unity, and cooperative ministries.
- Ask that God will send dreams and visions of Jesus to lamas and the heads of Buddhist households across the mountains of Nepal.
- Pray for laborers who will travel from village to village in the high mountains, telling the stories of Jesus to whole families.

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the backlash against religious conversion and the “hurting of religious sentiment”

JAN 19

United States



“Tune your ears to wisdom and concentrate on understanding. Cry out for insight and ask for understanding.”

Proverbs 2:2-3 (NIV Version)

Did you know that the most diverse Buddhist city in the world is Los Angeles? With 300 temples and meditation centers from nearly every Buddhist sect in the world LA encompasses the entire spectrum of Buddhist beliefs.

Buddha keychains, ornaments, t-shirts, necklaces, and phone cases are readily available. Wonder how pervasive Buddha ‘swag’ is in America? Check out www.redbubble.com.

Buddhist ideas are actively promoted in the US and throughout Western societies through images of peace, calm, and wisdom without any discussion of the worldview behind the façade. An example of this is the “Compassionate schools” program, which promotes itself as secular yet was developed by a professor of Tibetan Buddhist studies. The curriculum

is based on two Tibetan Buddhist tenets of “mindfulness” and “contemplation.”

Buddhist worldview is actively celebrated in movies such as Star Wars, Kill Bill, and Dr. Strange. Business leaders like the late Steve Jobs of Apple actively promote Buddhist meditation. The local garden center will frequently have a Buddha figurine available to evoke calm in our yards.

Buddhist meditation is popular on college campuses. The contrast with Christian meditation couldn’t be more stark. In Buddhist meditation the focus is on emptying the mind, where Christian meditation fills the mind with scripture and gazing on God’s beauty.



Ways To Pray:

- Ask that God will open the eyes of people who don’t understand that the true end of Buddhism is the annihilation of self.
- Pray that American Buddhists will be set free from merit-making and bondage to evil spirits.
- Pray that Jesus followers here in America will engage with and pray for Buddhist friends and neighbors with love, mercy, and the truth of Jesus.

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Business leaders like the late Steve Jobs of Apple actively promote Buddhist meditation.



JAN 20

Thailand



“Their idols are merely things of silver and gold, shaped by human hands. They have mouths but cannot speak, and eyes but cannot see. They have ears but cannot hear, and noses but cannot smell. They have hands but cannot feel, and feet but cannot walk, and throats but cannot make a sound. And those who make idols are just like them, as are all who trust in them.”

Psalm 115: 4-8 (NIV Version)

As a “works based” religion, Buddhism has many traditions that followers are called to continue as part of overcoming their karma. Prominent among these is the Heet sipsong, translated as “12 Traditions.”

Each of these traditions is associated with the monthly moon cycle and focuses on a temple ritual in which every village family is expected to participate. The traditions include actions such as offering monks special sticky rice treats, offering money for monks to do penance, listening to Buddha’s greatest sermons, pouring sacred water, and giving robes to monks.

Most Thai houses, even in urban areas, as well as government buildings and Buddhist temples have a “spirit house.” These are

miniature houses that are set on a pillar in the yard. Adherents prepare gifts of fruit and flowers, take them to this house, lift their hands to demonstrate respect, and place their gift in front of the tiny house.

These actions are designed to bring merit to counter any bad thoughts or actions of the previous month. By honoring the spirits and the traditions of Buddhism the people hope to be reborn into a higher state of enlightenment.

Sadly, they recognize that it is unlikely, even for the monks, to reach enlightenment in this lifetime.



Ways To Pray:

- Ask for open eyes for Thai Buddhists to see that fruit, flowers, and sticky rice can never cleanse their hearts or earn enough merit to change their karma.
- Pray that they will come to know the true creator of the world: “The earth is the Lord’s” (Psalm 24:1)
- Pray that the generational cycle of traditions passed down will be broken so the truth of the grace of Jesus can be understood

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Prominent among these is the Heet sipsong, translated as “12 Traditions.”

JAN 21

India



“See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.”

Colossians 2:8 (NIV Version)

Buddha was born in Nepal but achieved enlightenment in India. In the midst of a morally strict Hindu society he preached “the Middle Way.” This was an effort to find common ground between the extreme ascetic wing of Hinduism and the more common practices that resulted in greed and exploitation on the other.

Some have called Buddhism a reform movement of Hinduism. Now, 2600+ years later, Hindus in India are finding Buddha’s teaching attractive and are converting again. This is caused by the caste system that still governs the society.

The Dalits/Bahujans/Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes comprise 25% of the population. These groups have been oppressed for thousands of years due to the caste system.

Women and children suffer the most. Estimates are that 35 million children are orphans, 11

million are abandoned (90% of these are girls), and 3 million live on the streets.

The Church in India is highly diverse. Orthodox churches trace their heritage to the Apostle Thomas. Catholics represent the largest group in India with 20 million believers and are respected for their work with the poor. In the last 15 year evangelical and Pentecostal denominations have seen explosive growth.

Persecution of the Christian church has been steadily increasing in recent years. In parts of India Hindu mobs have burned churches and killed Jesus followers. There have been few repercussions for this as 80% of Believers are from the lower castes.



Ways To Pray:

- Pray that the Dalits and other ‘lower castes’ would come to realize that Jesus accepts all people.
- Ask that church leaders, especially in rural areas, will be able to stand against Hindu persecution.
- Pray for training for pastors, teachers, evangelists, and missionaries.

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Now, 2600+ years later, Hindus in India are finding Buddha’s teaching attractive and are converting again.



JAN 22

Ask the Lord of the Harvest!

“After this the Lord appointed 72 others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’”

Luke 10:1-2 (NIV Version)

Jesus was a better teacher than any of his disciples. So why did he send out 72? His solution to a shortage of laborers was not to draw everyone to his preaching but to raise workers who would personally engage with those far from God.

In North-east Thailand, Christians have held evangelistic meetings for about three decades. The result has been thousands of “raised hands for Christ” but less than a few hundred lasting disciples. In 2018, by contrast, 14 ministry teams of ordinary church members regularly went out prayer walking, sharing their testimony and giving simple Jesus presentations. By mid-2019 these teams had started 35 new discipleship groups, with 240 new disciples regularly attending.

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In Central Thailand a completely different group of Christians went house to house talking about Jesus. Interested people from a single village were invited to hear the gospel as a group. Those who responded to Jesus were formed into faith communities, which met in that village. By mid- 2019 they had planted 423 simple village churches.

Most Buddhists in Asia live in rural societies that maintain strong community bonds. Good news must include God’s care not just for individuals but also for families and villages.



Ways To Pray:

- Pray that Buddhist-background believers will not rely on famous preachers or tracts but will share their testimonies of Jesus personally with neighbors and friends. Ask for conviction from the Bible that ordinary Christians can and must be God’s witnesses today for their own people group.
- Ask that new believers and near-neighbor believers will be filled with the Holy Spirit to speak truth boldly. Pray that they will start groups of disciples who go out and do the same—share the good news and start new groups!



Ways to pray using Scriptures

Over the 21 days of prayer we have joined with others from around the world, all together at the same time, focused on the same places and people. We would like to encourage everyone not to stop. Let's keep going and use the content of the guide throughout the year.

Below are a few ways to use the Scriptures to pray for needs and peoples in the Buddhist world. God's Word is powerful and effective: Jesus, the living Word of God, created the universe by the power of His Word. We encourage you to use the Scriptures to help you continue to pray.

"And they sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. 10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.'

(Revelation 5:9-10)

Pray that Jesus, the slaughtered Lamb, would get the glory His Name deserves through the worship of every tribe, language, people group and nation.

"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

(2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

Ask God to tear down all the strongholds that hold people under Buddhism, and to set them free in Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life.

"Have faith in God," Jesus answered. "Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."

(Mark 11:22-24)

Ask God to give His people great faith to ask for things that seem impossible, leading to a Jesus movement in each people group and place in the Buddhist world.

Ways to pray using Scriptures



“Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?”

(Luke 14:28)

Pray for God to raise up His people who see the big picture of the Buddhist world with His eyes and can see areas needing His workers and His resources.

Pray that these people would be able to share this in a way that the Body of Christ can act in God’s way, sending workers and resources where God needs them.

“But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

(Matthew 13:23)

Ask God to have Jesus-followers grab hold of every opportunity to share the good news far and wide.

Ask that they would share in ways that the people would really understand and as a result respond to God.

“Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.”

(Mark 16:20)

Praise God that He promises signs and wonders to confirm His word.

Pray for believers to expect miracles without any doubts as they proclaim who God is and pray for those with a Buddhist background.

“When you enter a house, first say, “Peace to this house.” If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.”

(Luke 10:5-7)

Pray for believers to recognize when people’s hearts are ready to receive Jesus.

Pray that believers would reach out through family, neighborhood and village relationships to see disciples become disciple-makers, who in turn become disciples who become disciple-makers.

“Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.”

(Psalm 27:14)

For every believer sharing the gospel in the Buddhist world, pray for the power to withstand hardship, stress, persecution and suffering.

Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.”

(Acts 19:8-10)

Pray that as Jesus fellowships grow deeply and multiply very quickly, these new fellowships would start growing into neighboring people groups and even into other cultures so that all peoples and places would hear the good news and have a chance to respond.

“Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.”

(Luke 10:4)

Pray that believers sharing the good news with Buddhists would have all their needs met.

Pray also for such a strong desire from the Lord to pray, share the good news and to make any sacrifices needed to see groups of Jesus fellowships start and multiply.

“Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.”

(1 Timothy 4:12)

Pray for both men and women and for all generations to be totally involved in being both disciples and growing as fruitful disciple-makers among the harvest of those ready to respond to God.

“Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.”

(John 15:4)

Ask Father God to help every believer have life so intimately connected with Jesus that he or she would bear much fruit for God’s glory.

“Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

(Philippians 3:13-14)

Ask God to help every believer keep forward momentum as they daily hear His voice, obey Him and faithfully and fervently share with others.

“For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

(Matthew 6:13, most Greek manuscripts)

Pray that every person and every place that is now under the influence of Buddhism would come to fully experience God’s kingdom, the power and glory of Jesus, His righteousness, and the peace and joy of the Holy Spirit.



Ways to pray using Scriptures

“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”

(Ephesians 4:3-4)

Ask Jesus to help the Body of Christ work together as one even as He and the Father are one.



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