

Tang Chinese influence on East Asia and the spread of Buddhism



1. What makes East Asia “East Asian”?
2. Why did Europeans and others group China, Japan, and Korea together culturally?
3. In what ways is the grouping together of China, Japan, and Korea valid?



What type of evidence would we find if one culture had a heavy influence on another?

-What parts of the “mother culture” would likely spread?

-What parts would NOT spread?

Rice Cultivation Requires Large-Scale Co-operation



The Big Picture

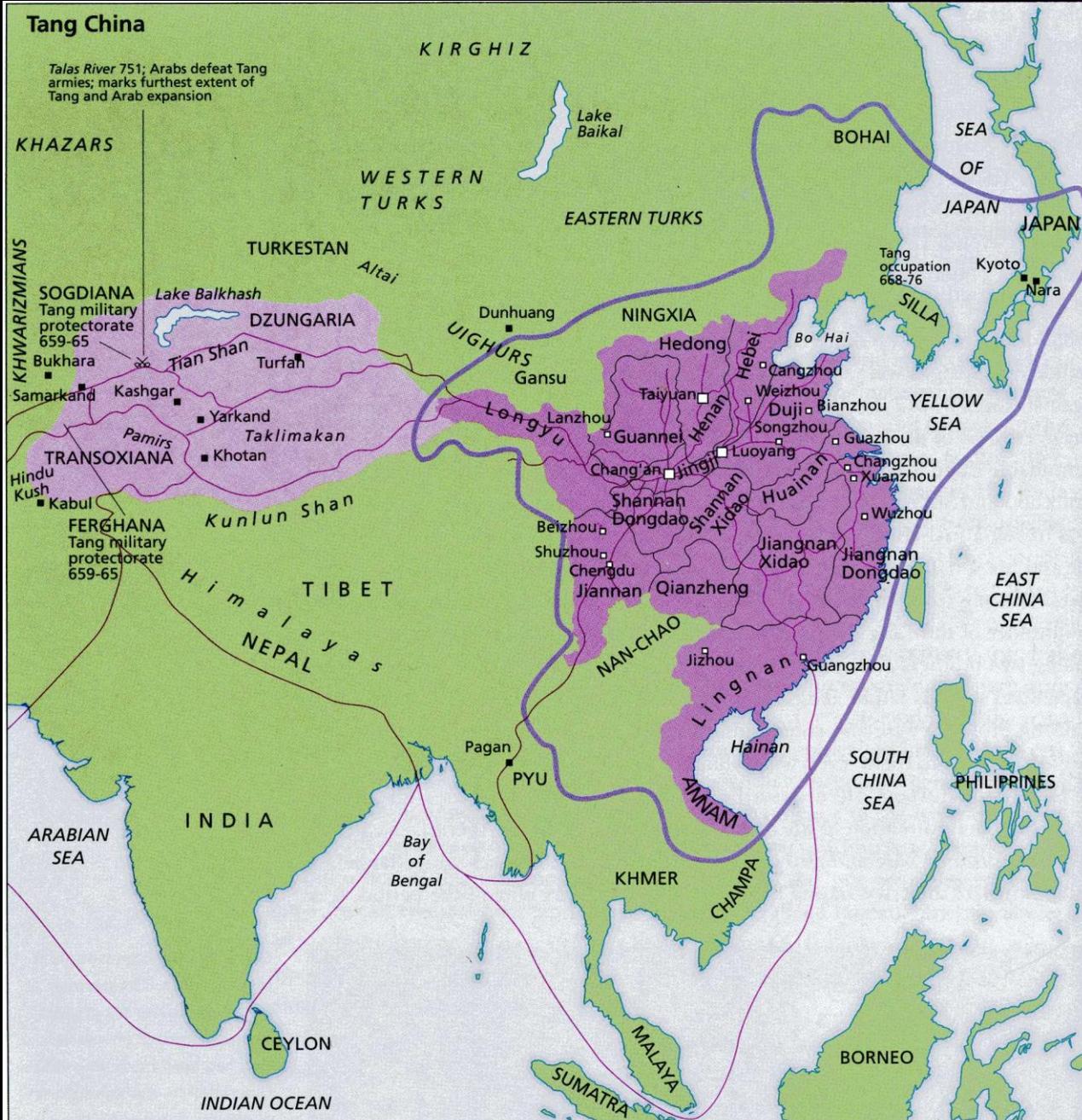
- Approaching 1000 CE, due to the spread of ideas, cultures, etc in East Asia, areas became more **similar** – CON-vergence
 - Mostly this meant that Korea, Japan, and Vietnam adopted parts of Chinese culture
- After the fall of the Tang, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam start changing to become more **different** (DI-vergence)
- This pattern is GLOBAL in scope – it was also happening throughout Afro-Eurasia

Tang China

- **Rule by outsiders** – the Tang were northern nomadic peoples & NOT the same ethnic group who ruled the Han Dynasty
- **Trade Contacts:** trade in Silk and other luxury goods to Korea, Japan, and elsewhere.
- **City of Chang'an:** international city with foreign areas. Population over 1 million.
- **Tributary relationships:** Many areas paid tribute to the Tang emperor to maintain good relations

Tang China

Talas River 751; Arabs defeat Tang armies; marks furthest extent of Tang and Arab expansion



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|---|------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
|  | Tang empire |  | trade route |  | metropolitan prefecture |
|  | under temporary Tang control |  | area of Chinese cultural influence |  | major prefecture |

The Chinese cultural “package”

- The Chinese cultural “Package” included:
 - **Confucianism**
 - **Chinese versions of Buddhism**, including Chen & Pure Land Buddhism
 - The Chinese **Writing system**
 - **Chinese architectural styles**, including urban planning
 - **System of government**, including system of ranks, titles, and functions

Origins

- Siddhartha Guatama was a kshatriya-caste prince in the NE of India.
- After attaining nirvana, he lived decades during which he wandered and preached
- By preaching he set in motion the “Wheel of Dharma” (or “Wheel of Law”)
- Buddhism appealed mainly to the lower castes of India and those outside the control of the Hindu heartland

Initial Spread

- Mauryan emperor ASHOKA converted to Buddhism and ruled according to Buddhist principles
- The Edicts of Ashoka were written law
- Ashoka encouraged missionary activity – esp. to Sri Lanka (Ceylon)

Syncretic Buddhism

- Buddhism was originally an individualistic,, psycho-spiritual discipline with no gods, church, or rituals
- As it spread, it became more like a religion:
 - The Buddha became god-like
 - Stupas (shrines) were erected over remains of the Buddha; pilgrimages to the shrines became important
 - Monasteries with hierarchies of monks and nuns started
 - Local gods and goddesses were absorbed as Bodhisattvas

Mahayana Buddhism

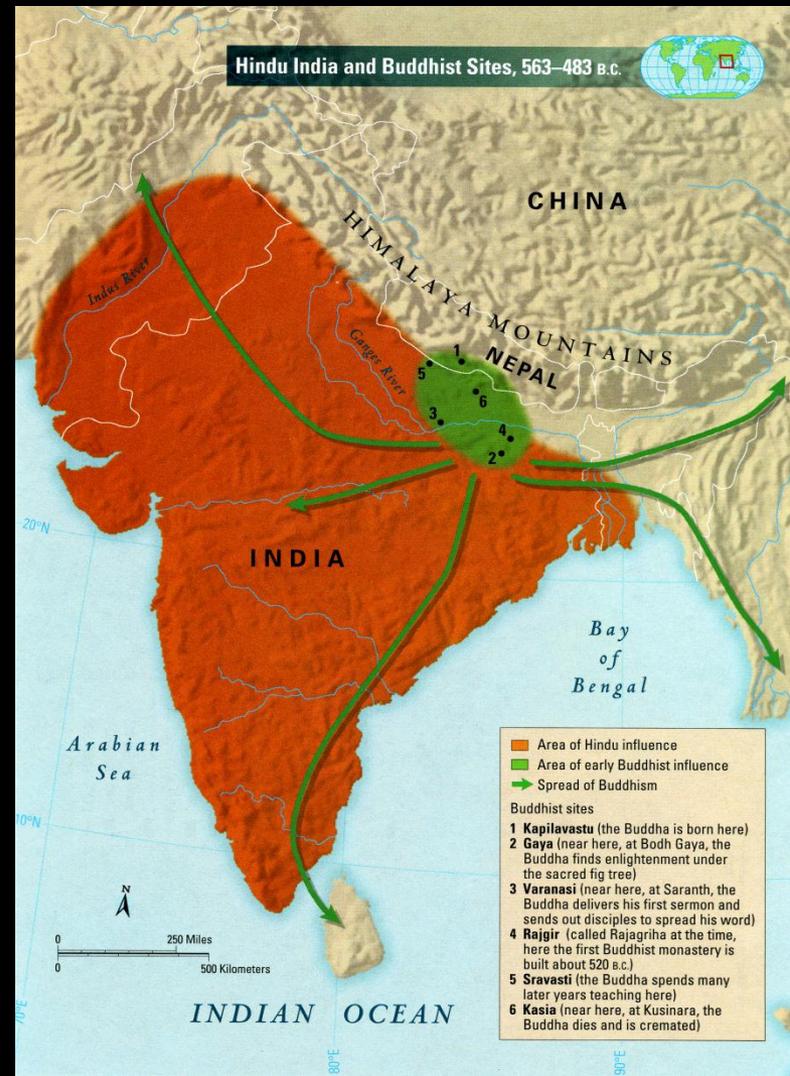
- The “greater vehicle”: Buddhism for the masses
- Theistic and syncretic
- Key role of Bodhisattvas

Theravada (Hinayana) Buddhism

- “Traditional” Buddhism
- Non-theistic
- Individualistic
- Anti-ritualistic
- “pure”
- Hard for most people to understand

Buddhism spread North, East, and SE

- Spread into Himalayas – Tibetan Buddhism
- Spread along Silk Road to China:
 - “Pure Land” Buddhism (Salvationist)
 - Chen Buddhism (“awareness” Buddhism)



Spread of Buddhism

- Chen Buddhism spread through Korea into Japan, where it was blended with SHINTO (nature religion) and became ZEN



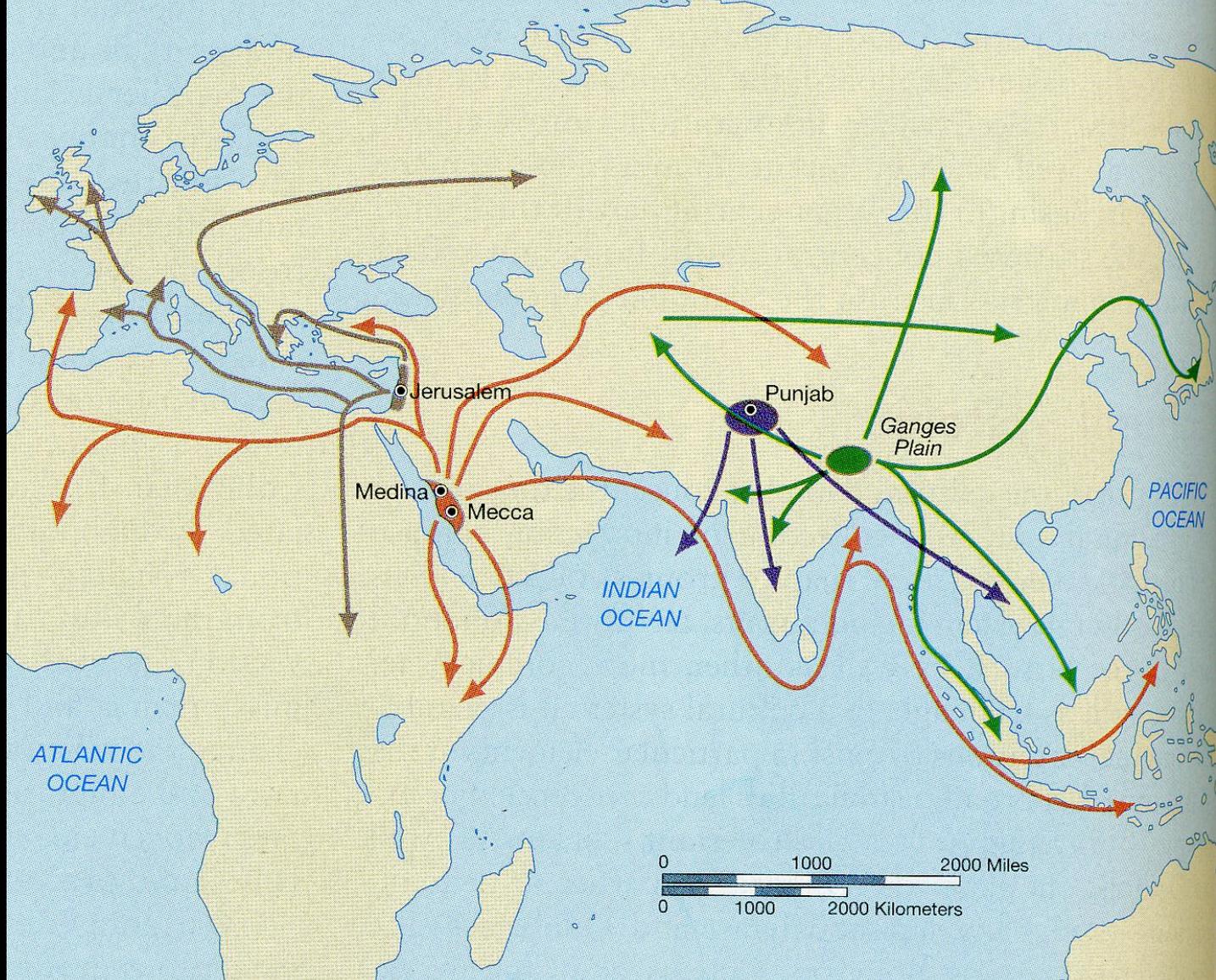
Spread of Buddhism

- Spread through IO network into SE Asia
 - Sometimes Mahayana (syncretic) e.g. Indonesians
 - Sometimes Theravada, e.g. Thai, Burmese

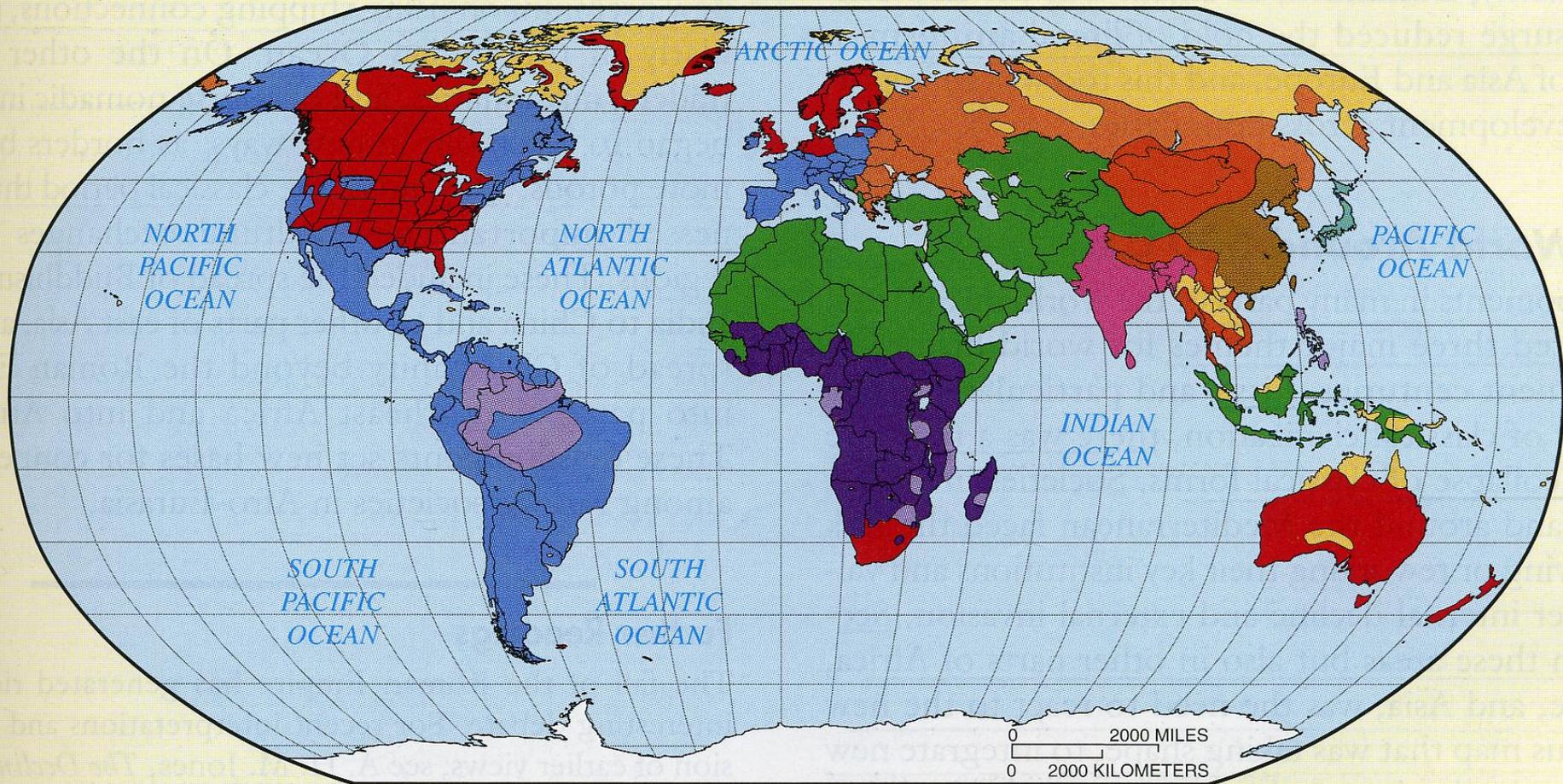
Buddhism back in India

- New developments in Hinduism and the perceived difficulty of Theravada caused two reactions:
 - Syncretic Buddhism (Mahayana)
 - Retreat of Buddhism

Buddhism became a minority religion in India after Ashoka



| Christianity | Islam | Hinduism | Buddhism |
|--|--|--|--|
|  Core |  Core |  Core |  Core |
|  Spread |  Spread |  Spread |  Spread |



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|---|--|---|---|
| ■ Mostly Roman Catholic | ■ Islam | ■ Buddhism | ■ Traditional and Tribal |
| ■ Mostly Protestant | ■ Hinduism | ■ Chinese Religions | ■ Tribal and Christian |
| ■ Mostly Eastern Orthodox | ■ Judaism | ■ Shinto and Buddhism | ■ Tribal, Christian, and Muslim |

Major Religions of the Modern World

What makes East Asia “Asian”?

Why did Europeans and others group China, Japan, and Korea together culturally?

Was the grouping valid?