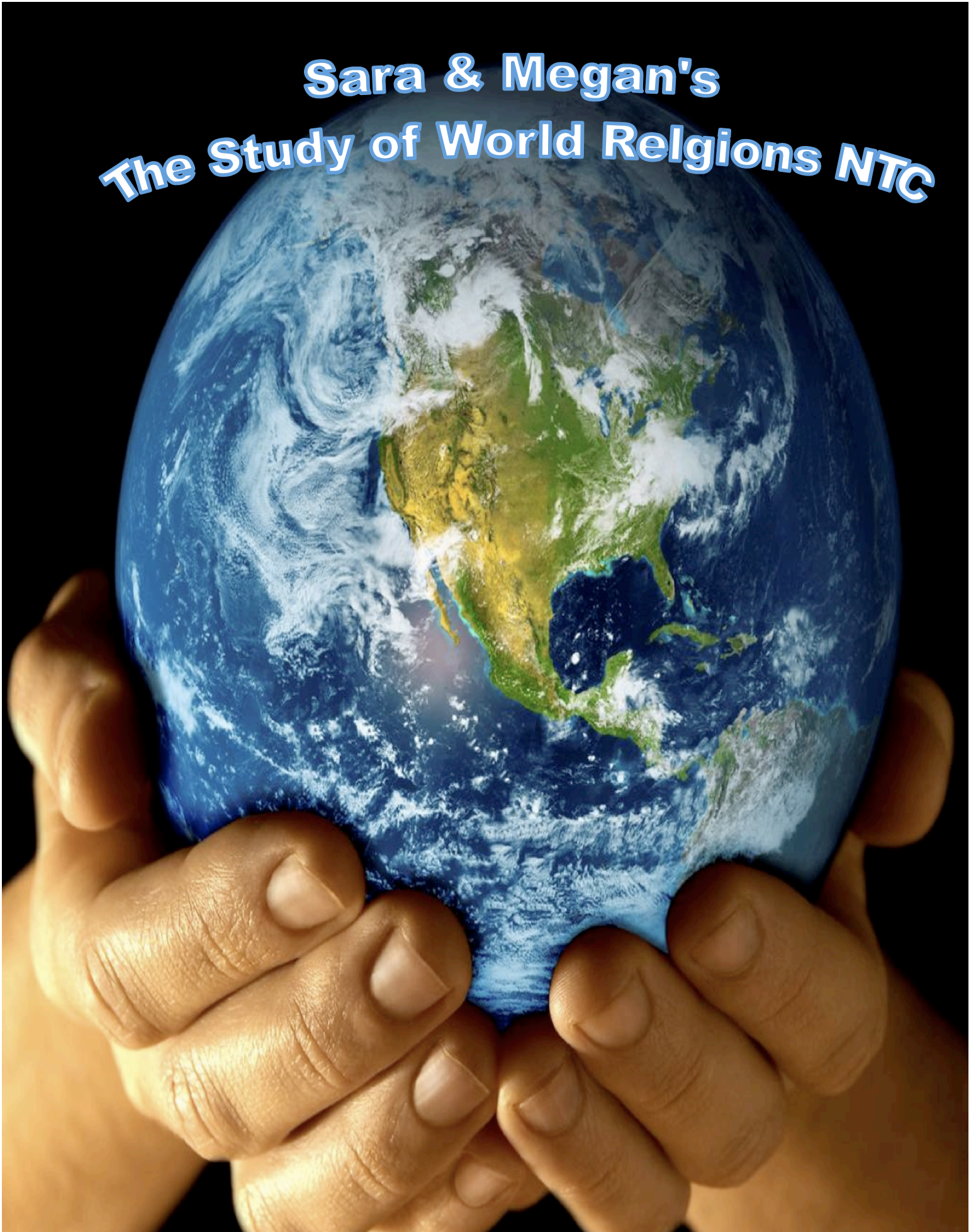


Sara & Megan's
The Study of World Religions NTC



Question 7: Are you for me or against me?

- The question was asked to Dulles, the Prime Minister of the time, and he answered "yes". So the answer to the question is "yes".

Question 8: How do you reduce a line (drawn on the chalkboard) without touching it?

Buddhism:

- Last class, we were talking about the Buddha's life and now we will say a few more things about his life and move on to his teachings.

The Life of the Buddha:

- In **Theravada** Buddhism, the humanity of the Buddha is maintained perniciously. The Buddha may have achieved nirvana, and he knew what was right for everyone to get there and to get salvation for everyone, but it was insisted that he was a human being just like us. The Buddha said that if a human constituent had one more instinct or temptation, he would never have made it. In Theravada Buddhism, the Buddha's humanity was maintained and insisted upon and he was buried after he died.
- **Mahayana** Buddhism had a more glorified view of Buddhism. **Arhat** is a person who is enlightened. The Buddha is distinguished from the Arhat in that he can lead others to enlightenment. The Buddha protects his famous virtue in the Jatakas, the stories of his previous lives.
- In Theravada, the pressure pushed the humanity of the Buddha into the view that there were several previous reincarnations that the Buddha had in order to prepare to be the Buddha. The greatness of the Buddha is so much that it is like a pressure that must be released from the Buddha. Thus, the pressure of the Buddha is released through the reincarnations. Thus, it can be seen as a lateral pressure relief. The Buddha does not achieve a greater human form, but rather stays human but reincarnates into different human forms.
- In Mahayana, the humanity of the Buddha is relieved through the cosmic Buddha, a cosmic universe. The pressure that builds up because of all the greatness of the Buddha is released vertically because the Buddha achieves a superior form. It was said that what we saw of the Buddha was merely a construct; it was a phantom. There are 3 bodies of the Buddha (**Trikaya**):
 - **Nirmana kaya** – the projected one. The Buddha was a supreme reality.
 - **Sambhoga kaya** – The Buddha's body of enjoyment. The other bodies in the universe enjoy his presence. Those who enjoy the presence of the Buddha, enjoy him as sambhoga kaya.
 - **Dharma kaya** - His third body is the body in which he appears on the earth, the body in which he appeared to be born, to strive for salvation, and to teach.

- In later traditions, people almost decided to bypass the Buddha in favour for his teachings. Why are we talking about the Buddha? We are talking about the Buddha because he was enlightened. Thus, the most important thing about the Buddha is not the Buddha himself, but rather the enlightenment of the Buddha.
- **Soteriological Economy** – The Buddha refused to answer a whole series of questions because they did not lead to nirvana.

Example: let's say someone asked you for directions. You are only there to give directions to one specific building, if you want directions to another building that is not your job. Similarly, the Buddha will not answer any questions if they do not help lead to nirvana.

- Zen Buddhism says that if you see the Buddha on the road, kill him because what is important is not the Buddha but the Buddha's enlightenment. These kinds of statements keep with the spirit of Buddhism. What are really important are the realizations of the Buddha.
- "He who sees the Buddha sees the dharma (teachings) and he who sees the dharma sees the Buddha".
- **Zen** in Japan is equivalent to **Ch'an** in China, **Dhyana** in India and **Jhana** in the language the Buddha spoke himself.
- The goal of everyone is to become an **Arhat**. One should seek enlightenment for the sake of others. Before the Buddha was a Buddha, he was a **Bodhisattva**, a Buddha to be. This view of Buddhism became very popular and soon there were many Bodhisattvas, many advanced students. The body of which the Buddha's students can appreciate Buddha is in the body of Sambhoga kaya.
- "If I am not going to be for myself, who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, than who am I?" How do we balance self-regard and other-regard? That is the basic problem of ethics everywhere.
- The theory of Mahayana (which translates to "large boat") is that we should not seek nirvana for ourselves. Mahayana thinkers said that Theravada thinkers have a "small boat". The Mahayana claims to interpret the Buddha's teachings in the right way: when we seek nirvana, we seek it in order to guide others. How do we guide others to salvation if I myself do not have salvation? You just have to point in the right direction without actually being there yourself. This is how the debate goes on between the Theravada and Mahayana.
- There are 3 models how the Buddhist acts: 1. Model of a king: The bodhisattva achieves nirvana first and then leaves others to find it. 2. Model of a helmsman, captain of a boat: The bodhisattva achieves nirvana at the same time as the others. For example, the captain of a ship would have arrived on shore at the same time as the passengers. 3. Model of a shepherd: The bodhisattva waits to make sure everyone achieves nirvana first, and then he will.
- This is the kind of thinking that characterizes Mahayana. This is the concept used much more in Mahayana than in Theravada.
- Finally, the Buddha ultimately says it is the truth that counts.

The Teachings of the Buddha:

- 4 noble truths:

1. The truth of the existence of suffering – **Dukkha**. The word literally means a terrible car ride, with bumps on the road and all. We say Dukkha is something more than ordinary suffering, they say it is like a chronic condition but there are 6 times when you're aware of it, six times we realize life is suffering: 1. When you are born – the trauma of birth. 2. The pathology of sickness. 3. The morbidity of old age. 4. The phobia of death. 5. When we are stuck doing something we don't want to do and 6. When we lack things we desire. On these 6 occasions, you experience what is called **Dukkha-Dukkata** – suffering of suffering. **Viparinama dukkhata** – suffering that is brought about by change or transformation. For example, when you are enjoying your health and then you suddenly become ill, or when you're doing well in life and then you get hit by a recession. Changes can always take place. **Sankhara-dukkata** – this is what makes Buddhism Buddhism. This is the most difficult pain to grasp, and is what makes Buddhism safe. The Buddha says every major system of thought has a concept of the human person. Christianity has a concept of a human person: body and soul. Who are we according to modern science? Body and mind. This deals with the human concept of Buddhism. Actually, the mind is a byproduct of the body, so we break down the barrier. We can ask a psychologist, and they will say that there is a body and mind. Within the mind there is the unconscious mind and the conscious mind. Hinduism argues that we have a physical body and a subtle body. It is the subtle body that leaves when we die. Buddhism also has a concept of the human body. According to Buddhism, there is **body, sensations, perceptions, volitions, acts of consciousness**. The body is called **Nama** and the rest is called **Rupa**. The Buddhist insists there is no permanent element in the person. This is the sharp contrast with other teachings in the world because a soul is considered to be permanent. In other religions, the body is perishable, but the soul is not perishable. If we are materialists, then we realize that the body is the ultimate reality and the mind is the by product. What part of you is permanent? We answer that our body is permanent, but it can't be, because our body constantly changes. Sensations change from moment to moment. Our perceptions change too. Mental volitions change. Acts of consciousness also change. Everything changes! This is very important in the Buddhist point of view. The point is that no matter how you slice the human person, whether in 5 ways or in 2 ways, there is no outer limit. The Buddha also believes in rebirth, but if there is no soul, how is there rebirth? They never managed to answer this question!

Now, the teacher asked all the students to repeat after him:

"The woods are lovely dark and deep

But I have promises to keep

And miles to go before I sleep."

- This was found on the Indians prime ministers desk before he died.
- When we repeated these words, did the words transgress into your mind? Before saying the words, they were in the teachers mind. Now, they are in our minds too. How did the words get into our minds? They did not leave the teachers mind and go into ours. According the Buddhist, the verse in my mind gave rise to the verse in your mind. Similarly, one body-mind complex ceasing to be gives rise to another body-mind complex. This is how rebirth occurs without a soul. But when

we are reborn, the same cycle occurs again and again, the six sufferings occur again: trauma of rebirth, etc. So life in general is suffering.

Example: suppose you have a lamp in your hand. A boy brings his lamp and asks you to light it. You take yours and light his. Did the flame leave your lamp and go to the boy's? No, it was the rebirth of the flame. Similarly, the soul does not leave one body and go into another body. How do we explain the relationship between the two flames? The flame in candle one has given rise to the flame in candle two and then the cycle can continue. Similarly, one physical organism can give rise to another during death. The best example is an echo. Let's say you go to the Grand Canyon and yell "McGill!" then you will hear McGill, McGill, McGill... Each time the echo becomes more distorted and silent but each McGill gives rise to another McGill. This is how the Buddhist explains rebirth without a soul. This is the proof of the existence of suffering

2. The truth of the arising of suffering. How did it arise? We go to the doctor and he says you have an infection. The first truth is that you have the existence of the infection. The second truth is the arising of the infection through bacteria. The word for the second truth is **Samudaya**.

Thought: "Science saves us from pain. Religion saves us from suffering."