

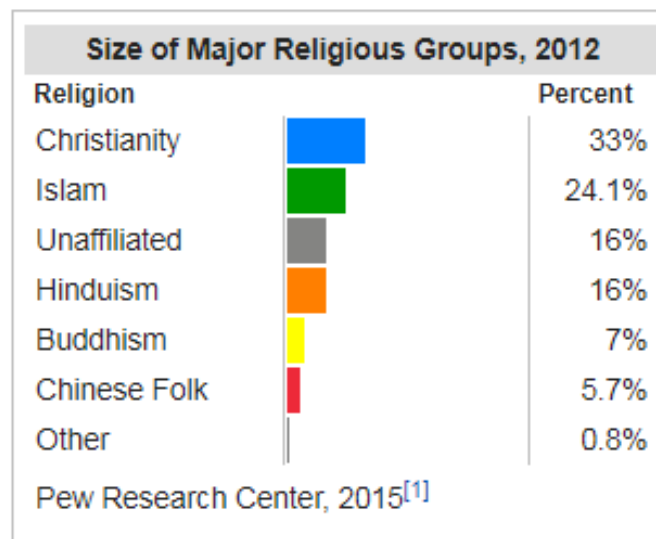
Buddhism and Buddha

1. Buddhism - A major religion

1.1 World's top religions⁽¹⁾


















Religion	Adherents	Percentage
Christianity	2.4 billion ^[3]	33%
Islam	1.8 billion ^[4]	24.1%
Secular ^[a] /Nonreligious ^[b] /Agnostic/Atheist	≤1.2 billion	16%
Hinduism	1.15 billion	15%
Buddhism	521 million	7%

(Number of followers)



(Percentage of followers)

1.2 Buddhism in the world⁽²⁾

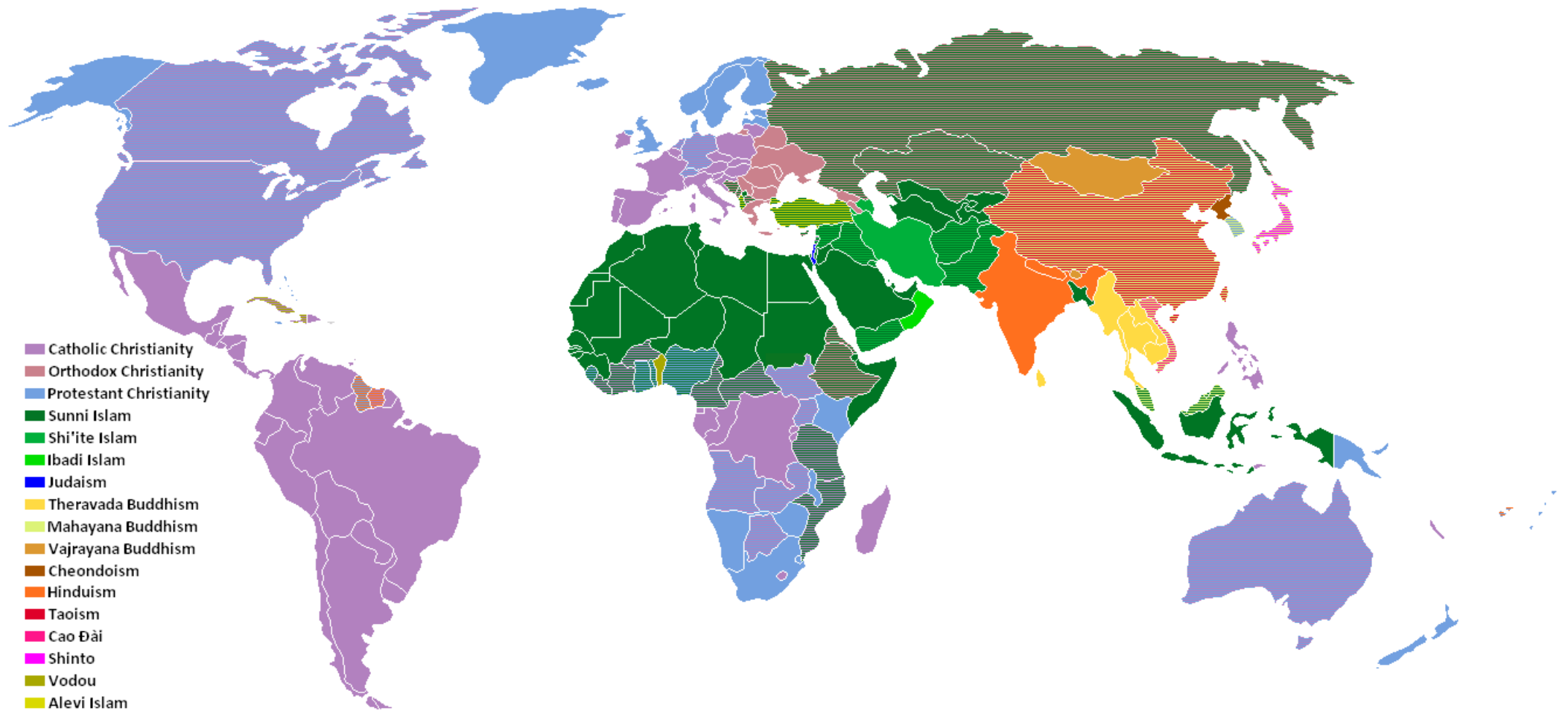
Country/Territory	Population (2013) ^[8]	% Buddhist: 1. Pew  , 2. ARDA 	Number of Buddhists
 China	1,349,585,838	18.2% ^[1]	244,130,000 ^[1]
 Thailand	67,448,120	93.2% ^[1]	64,420,000
 Burma (Myanmar)	55,167,330	87.9% ^[1]	48,415,960 ^[1]
 Japan	127,253,075	36.2% ^[1]	45,820,000 ^[1]
 Vietnam	92,477,857	16.4% ^[1]	14,380,000
 Sri Lanka	21,675,648	69.3% ^[1]	14,222,844
 Cambodia	15,205,539	96.9% ^[1]	13,701,660 ^[1]
 South Korea	48,955,203	22.9% ^[1]	11,050,000
 India	1,326,987,437	0.8% ^[1]	9,250,000
 Malaysia	31,112,021	19.8 % ^[1]	5,620,483
 Laos	6,695,166	66.1% ^[1]	4,092,000
 Mongolia	3,226,516	55.1% ^[1]	1,520,760
 United States	316,668,567	1.2% ^[1]	1,200,000 ^[13]
 Bhutan	725,296	74.7% ^[1]	563,000 ^[1]
 Australia	22,262,501	2.7% ^[1]	528,977

(Number of followers)

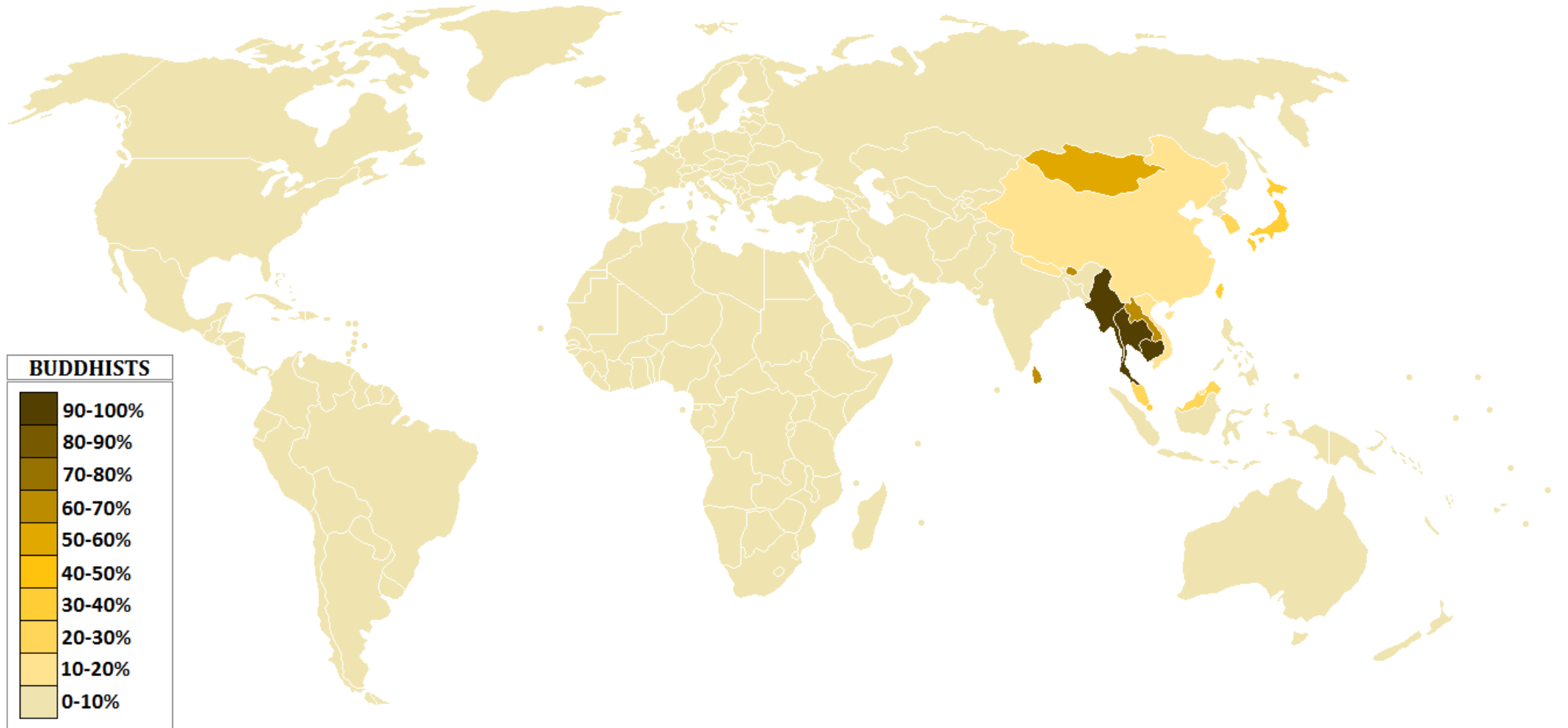
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 Singapore	5,460,302	33.9% ^[1]	
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 Taiwan	23,299,716	21.3% ^[1]	
 Malaysia	31,112,021	19.8 % ^[1]	5,620,483
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 Macau	583,003	17.3% ^[1]	
 Vietnam	92,477,857	16.4% ^[1]	14,380,000
 Hong Kong	7,182,724	13.2% ^[1]	
 Northern Mariana Islands	51,170	10.6% ^[1]	
 Nepal	30,430,267	10.3% ^[1]	
 Brunei	415,717	8.6% ^[1]	

(Percentage of followers)

1.3 Buddhism and other religions in the world [\(3\)](#)



1.4 Buddhism in the world II [\(4\)](#)



2. Buddhism - Human civilization's heritage

How the world benefits from the
existence of Buddhism?

(5 minutes debate with students)

3. Threefold Way⁽⁵⁾

1 - Ethics

“**Ethics**, also called **moral philosophy**, the discipline concerned with what is morally good and bad, right and wrong. The term is also applied to any system or theory of moral values or principles.” ⁽⁶⁾

- To live is to act, and **our actions** can have either **harmful or beneficial consequences** for **ourselves and others**
- **Buddhist ethics** is concerned with the **principles and practices** that help one to **act in ways that help rather than harm**
- The core **ethical code** is known as the **Five Precepts**⁽⁷⁾
- These are **not rules** or commandments, but **principles of training**, which are undertaken **freely** and put into practice with **intelligence and sensitivity**

(What do you think about? Could it evolve to match modern life style? Can a single person have the right approach on everything?)

2 – Meditation

- There are many things in life that are **beyond our control**
- However, it is possible to **take responsibility for** and to **change one's state of mind**

- According to Buddhism, meditation is the **best way to achieve it**
- Buddhism teaches that meditation is the **only real antidote to:**
 - Anxiety
 - Hatred
 - Discontentedness
 - Sleepiness
 - Confusion
 - Etc.

- Meditation is a mean of **transforming the mind**
- It can have a **transformative effect** and can lead to a **new understanding of life.**

- Buddhist meditation practices are techniques that encourage and develop:
 - Concentration
 - Clarity
 - Emotional positivity
 - Clear seeing of the true nature of things
 - Etc.

3 – Wisdom

- The aim of all Buddhist practices, including meditation, is ***prajna***, or **wisdom**
- Buddha taught that the fundamental cause of human difficulties is our **existential** ignorance – our failure to understand the true nature of reality and wisdom is the opposite of this
- It is not enough to know Buddha's philosophy, or even to have a good understanding of it. The ultimate aim is to realize the truth by oneself and to be transformed by that realization.

4. Four Noble Truths⁽⁸⁾⁽⁹⁾

1. All existence is **dukkha** - SUFFERING

- The word dukkha has been variously translated as ‘suffering’, ‘anguish’, ‘pain’, or ‘unsatisfactoriness’.
- The Buddha’s insight was that our **lives are a struggle**, and we **do not find ultimate happiness or satisfaction in anything we experience**. This is the problem of existence.



2. The cause of **dukkha is craving** – THE CAUSE OF SUFFERING⁽¹⁰⁾

- desire, wish, lust, eagerness, thirst
- The natural human tendency is to **blame** our difficulties on **things outside ourselves**.
- Actually, according to Buddha teachings, the root is to be found **in the mind itself**.

- What do we crave for?
 - Food we love to eat
 - Entertainment
 - Popularity
 - Money
 - Beauty
 - Holidays
 - Etc.
- To experience all this **depends on who we are and where we are.**
- Craving can be explained as the **strong desires that people have** for pleasing their **senses** and for experiencing life itself.
- Buddhists believe that **anything that stimulates our senses or our feelings can lead to craving.**

What do you think about?

EXTRA CONTENT

Diogenes the Cynic⁽¹¹⁾ (founder of the Cynic⁽¹²⁾ School)

- “In our endeavor to make sense of human existence, we must direct our attention primarily to the physical world because we are primarily physical beings.”
- “Live each moment as if it was the only moment of life; life is short and ephemeral⁽¹³⁾.”
- “It is in the basic needs of animals that men must mirror himself to lead his life.”



Aristotle – Basic needs vs Luxury

Hedonism⁽¹⁴⁾ - in ethics, a general term for all theories of conduct in which the criterion (method of judgment) is pleasure of one kind or another

- Aristippus of Cyrene argued that the goal of a good life should be the **sentient (conscious) pleasure of the moment** or, if you prefer, that **pleasure is the only rational aim of life.**

3. The **cessation of dukkha comes with the cessation of craving** – THE END OF SUFFERING

- **As we are the ultimate cause of our difficulties, we are also the solution.**
- **We cannot change the things that happen to us, but we can change our responses.**

4. There is a **path that leads from dukkha** – THE MIDDLE PATH

- Although the Buddha throws **responsibility back on to the individual**:
 - He also taught methods through which we can change ourselves
 - For example, the **Noble Eightfold Path**.

LET'S WONDER (analyzing Buddhism from a Western philosophical perspective):

- **Four Noble Truths** – the goal is to minimize... **craving**
- **Hedonism / Epicureanism**⁽¹⁵⁾⁽¹⁶⁾ – the goal is to pleasurably enjoy... to be **alive**
- Can we reach a compromise?
- Let's go:

5. Noble Eightfold path⁽¹⁵⁾

1. Right Understanding

To understand the **Law of Cause and Effect** and the **Four Noble Truths**.

2. Right Attitude

Not harboring thoughts of greed and anger.

3. Right Speech

Avoid lying, gossip, harsh speech and tale-telling.

4. Right Action

Not to destroy any life, not to steal or commit adultery.

5. Right Livelihood

Avoid occupations that bring harm to oneself and others.

6. Right Effort

Earnestly (being serious in intention) doing one's best in the right direction.

7. Right Mindfulness

Always being aware and attentive.

8. Right Concentration

To making the mind steady and calm in order to realize the true nature of things.

To think about: Is it possible (or not) that certain Buddhist followers, in their sincere and honest intent to preserve Buddhism traditionally intact, end by not respecting the totality of this 8 principles? Please focus on principles 1, 6 and 7.

Again, to think about:

Fatalism - the belief that all events are predetermined and therefore inevitable.

What is your perspective?

Passivism - the quality of being passive

Passive - not participating readily or actively; inactive; not involving visible reaction or active participation.

(the book I read about Buddhism in Lampang – chapter about accidents – good/bad karma - consequences on Thai way of driving)

So, can passivism solve the problems related with the human condition?

- The natural human tendency is to **blame** our difficulties on **things outside ourselves**. According to with Buddha teachings, the root is to be found **in the mind itself**.

Passivism 2 – we should not blame nothing and nobody. We should find the root of craving in our own minds.

Sure. Thinking and analyzing (or meditation, etc.) are good tools for the better understanding of the problems we face. **But then what?**

Confronted with injustice, oppression, avoidable starvation/misery/sufferance, **should we act or not?**

And if we act against something or somebody, is it reasonable or not to assume that we will be acting against who/what we blamed for our suffering?

Passivism 3 – You are poor, born in a poor family. Poverty makes you suffer (let's say, physically).

- Should you **blame** the social structure that imposes restrictions upon your person?
- Should you try to find the root of your suffering **in your mind**?
- Both?
- **Using your mental processes** to understand the sources of your physical/spiritual suffering, and then **act accordingly**?

To know more:

- Religious Composition by Country: <http://www.pewforum.org/files/2012/12/globalReligion-tables.pdf>
- (1) - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_religious_populations
- (2) - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism_by_country
- (3) - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religions_by_country
- (4) - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_religious_populations
- (5) - <https://thebuddhistcentre.com/text/threefold-way>
- (6) - <https://www.britannica.com/topic/ethics-philosophy>
- (7) - <https://thebuddhistcentre.com/text/ethics>
- (8) - <https://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/bs-s02.htm>
- (9) - <https://thebuddhistcentre.com/text/four-noble-truths>
- Noble Truth 1: <https://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/bs-s03.htm>
- (10) – Noble Truth 2: <https://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/bs-s04.htm>
- Noble Truth 3: <https://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/bs-s05.htm>
- Noble Truth 4: <https://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/bs-s06.htm>
- (11) - <https://www.philosophytalk.org/blog/diogenes-cynic>
- (12) - <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/cynic?s=t>
- (13) - <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/ephemeral?s=t>
- (14) - <https://www.britannica.com/topic/hedonism>
- (15) - <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/epicureanism?s=t>
- (16) - <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Epicureanism>
- (17) - <https://thebuddhistcentre.com/text/noble-eightfold-path>

- http://www.filosofia.com.br/historia_show.php?id=30 (in Portuguese)