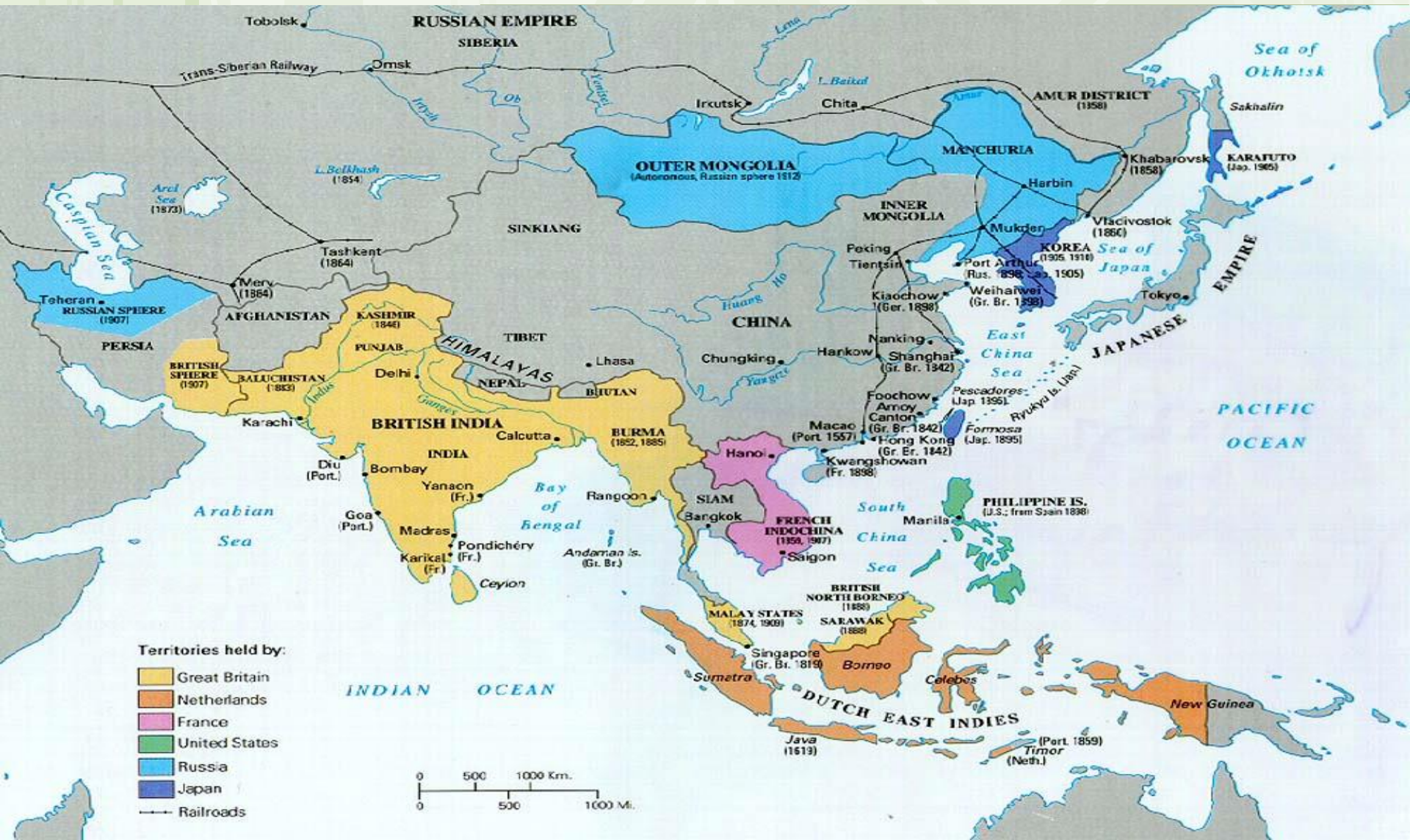


Buddhism in the Modern Era: Reactionary & Creative

Jonathan S. Watts
Keio University
Tokyo, Japan

Historical Development of SEB: Asian Colonial Era 16th to 20th Centuries



Anti Colonial Movements 1890-1949



❖ Sri Lanka

Anagarika Dharmapala 1864-1933

Anti-ritual, promoted Buddhist schools

Mahabodhi Movement

❖ Burma

Burmese non-violent activism

U Ottama 1889 & U Wisara 1929

generation of monks studied socialism
and Gandhianism in India



Humanistic & Socialist Movements 1910s-1930s



Monk Tai Hsu (Tai Hsu Fa Shi)

太 虛 法 師

❖ China

Humanistic Buddhism 人間佛教

Master Tai Hsu 太虛大師(1890-1947)

Master Yin Shun 印順導師(1906-2005)

Criticized emphasis on spirits and ghosts
and funeral services and rites

❖ Japan

Uchiyama Gudo 内山愚童師(曹洞宗Soto Zen)

Seno-o Giro 妹尾義郎(日蓮宗Nichiren)

Anti-imperialist and Internationalist
Supported Burakumin and Korean human rights
Thought Buddhist Sangha provided an ideal
social model for communal lifestyle

Humanistic & Rights Movements

Buddhist Movement Against Caste Discrimination
in India 1920s →

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar
Drafter of
Indian Constitution



Fascism & Nationalism



Harada Daiun Sogaku

❖ JAPAN

- ❖ Priests were drafted into the military as common foot soldiers and not just as chaplains
- ❖ East Asian Buddhist teaching of “repaying benefits” (報恩 *ho-on*) to parents and all sentient beings was shifted to emperor and state.
- ❖ Zen teachings were fused with Bushido (武士道) to teach giving up one’s life in battle; there is no-self that kills; and meditative fearlessness in the face of death.
- ❖ Doctrine of Two Truths (眞俗二諦 *shinzoku nitai*), key to Pure Land, Buddhists was twisted to say that the absolute truth of the Buddha was expressed in the relative truth of the Emperor in this world.
- ❖ Nichiren Buddhists developed “Nichiren-ism” which raised the law of the emperor to the level of the universal law of the *Lotus Sutra*.

[If ordered to] march: tramp, tramp, or shoot: bang, bang. This is the manifestation of the highest Wisdom [of Enlightenment]. The unity of Zen and war of which I speak extends to the farthest reaches of the holy war [now under way]

Humanistic & Socialist Movements 1950s-60s



❖ **Burma**
U Nu (Prime Minister 3x 1948-1962)
1960 Buddhist Socialism policy
Based on Ashokan statecraft



❖ **Thailand**
Buddhadasa
Dhammic Socialism
Clarified cooperative socialism vs.
Revenge of the underclass
in Vietnam War Era

Democracy & Peace Movements

Vietnam 1960s

Violence vs. Non-Violence Thich Nhat Hanh



Democracy & Peace Movements

Cambodia 1980s:
The Dhammayatra

Maha Ghosananda and the Nipponzan Myohoji



Democracy & Peace Movements

Korea 1980s →

The Jungto Society & Ven. Pomnyun Sunim



Democracy & Peace Movements

The Saffron Revolution 2007

1991



Aung San Suu Kyi Nobel Peace Prize



Independence & Rights Movement

- ❖ Non-violent resistance & Politicized Buddhism in Tibet & China 1959 →

