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## MAPPING THE SCHOLARLY LANDSCAPE: QUANTIFYING THE EVOLUTION OF STUDIES ON BUDDHIST CULTURE\*

### INTRODUCTION

Buddhism emerged in India during the sixth century and subsequently spread to diverse regions across Asia and the globe, shaping the cultures and societies it came into contact with. Cultural practices within social groups such as beliefs, art, architecture, rituals, and traditions<sup>1</sup> have been developed and shaped by the context of Buddhism where it is established. Further, Buddhist culture is delineated by Buddhist cuisine, architectural styles, musical traditions, as well as the beliefs and conduct of both monks and the general populace.<sup>2</sup> Buddhism played a significant role in altering societal norms and transforming social institutions in ancient India, and it later spread to Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, Tibet, etc., including Japan through China and Korea in the sixth century.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Leslie A. WHITE, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, s. v. “culture,” August 5, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/culture>.

<sup>2</sup> Subhasmita MAHARANA, and Sarita KAR, “Buddhist Culture: An Overview on Environment,” *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology* 17, no. 12 (2020): 1722–37, <https://archives.palarch.nl/index.php/jae/article/view/7443>.

<sup>3</sup> Kenji MATSUO, *A History of Japanese Buddhism* (Folkstone, UK: Global Oriental Ltd, 2007), <https://terebess.hu/zen/JapaneseBuddhism.pdf>.

Even though Buddhism has illuminated cultural practices within these regions and countries, it is essential to acknowledge the inherent diversity and regional variations in such practices.

Buddhism is often regarded as a religion that emphasizes internal spiritual development and personal enlightenment, which allows it to be practiced and embraced by people from various cultural backgrounds. The adaptability and appeal of Buddhism in different cultures are indeed attributed to its focus on internal practice rather than rigid external rituals. Buddhism transcends cultural boundaries and can adapt easily from one culture to another, as evident in the presence of diverse Buddhist communities like Sri Lankan, Indian, Burmese, Thai, Japanese and Chinese Buddhists, etc.<sup>4</sup> In this sense, Buddhist cultural practices have evolved over centuries with societal and geographical influences, and they are not a static phenomenon. Apart from the spatial dynamics of globalization, it has also directly impacted cultures that are based on region, race or religion.<sup>5</sup>

As the cultural landscape of Buddhism remains inherently diverse and dynamic, scholarly endeavors have emerged to comprehend the nuanced nature of Buddhist cultures from vivid researchers. However, a notable gap exists as these scholarly practices have not been systematically reviewed. There is thus an imperative to comprehensively examine and map the scholarly landscape surrounding Buddhist cultural practices, providing a nuanced understanding of its evolving nature and scholarly contributions. To fill this gap, this article embarks an exploration of publication trends and the broader development of literature within this domain as well as delivers a thorough understanding of the scholarly landscape surrounding Buddhist culture. The main objective is then to portray the publication trends in Buddhist culture and the overall development of literature related to it. The study utilized bibliometric analysis and content analysis techniques to investigate the following research questions:

- (1) How do the publication and citation trends evolve over time?
- (2) Who are the most prolific authors in the field of Buddhist culture?
- (3) What are the most productive sources in the field of Buddhist culture?
- (4) What are the major countries contributing to the development of related research?
- (5) What are the most frequent keywords used and how are the keywords clustered in the related research?

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<sup>4</sup> Peter D. SANTINA, *Fundamentals of Buddhism* (Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc, 1984), [http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf\\_file/fundbud1.pdf](http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/fundbud1.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Aliaksandr BIRUKOU et al., "A Formal Definition of Culture," in *Models for Intercultural Collaboration and Negotiation*, ed. Katia Sycara, Michele Gelfand, and Allison Abbe (Dordrecht: Springer, 2013), 1–26, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-5574-1\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-5574-1_1).

The forthcoming sections will delve into various crucial facets. Initially, the study will offer an elaborate overview of the research advancements attributed to specific years. Following this, an examination of the frequently cited works and prolific authors will be provided. A quantitative assessment of the most influential sources in the realm of Buddhist culture will also be showcased. After scrutinizing the contributions from different countries to the evolution of scholarly works, the study will explore the primary themes in the related research and pinpoint any potential gaps in the existing literature.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Our culture serves as a reflection of our identity, revealing who we are to both ourselves and others.<sup>6</sup> The way of life that has developed in societies influenced by religion or societal norms is known to be the culture. Furthermore, the cultural landscape is enriched through the subsequent developments in ethical principles, spiritual practices, art forms, literature, architecture, and the profound aesthetic impact derived from Buddhist teachings. Buddhist culture is also rich with a tapestry of rituals and ceremonies integral to the practice contributing to the multifaceted dimensions that define and shape the cultural identity of Buddhism. These intertwined elements collectively form the essence of Buddhist culture, portraying a holistic picture of the profound influence that ethical principles, artistic expressions, and ritualistic practices have on the rich tapestry of this cultural tradition.

These cultural practices are deeply rooted in the teachings and philosophy of Buddhism, shaping the way people live their lives, interact with others, and perceive the world around them. The impact of Buddhism on culture is profound, fostering a sense of mindfulness, compassion, and inner peace among its followers. Moreover, Buddhist-inspired cultural traditions continue to evolve and adapt, reflecting the dynamic nature of both Buddhism and the societies it has touched.

A set of ethical principles is known to be the most important for the social behavior of Buddhists. Observance of the five precepts fundamentally initiates a Buddhist life. Further, non-violence (*Ahimsa*), compassion, mindfulness, and the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path are the way to Buddhist thinking. Non-violence and compassion for all living and non-living beings constitute the key principles in Buddhist philosophy. Practicing *Sati*, known as mindfulness

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<sup>6</sup> Robert BOGODA, *Buddhist Culture, the Cultured Buddhist* (Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1996), [https://www.bps.lk/olib/bl/bl139\\_Bogoda\\_Buddhist-Culture--The-Cultured-Buddhist.pdf](https://www.bps.lk/olib/bl/bl139_Bogoda_Buddhist-Culture--The-Cultured-Buddhist.pdf); BIRUKOU et al., "A Formal Definition of Culture," 1–26.

and awareness, encourages individuals to be conscious of their thoughts, actions, and intentions, promoting positive behavior and wise decision-making. Ethical conduct encouraged by the Noble Eightfold Path, which includes right understanding (*Samma ditthi*), right intention (*Samma sankappa*), right speech (*Samma wacha*), right action (*Samma kammanta*), right livelihood (*Samma ajiwa*), right effort (*Samma vayama*), right mindfulness (*Samma sathi*), and right concentration (*Samma samadhi*), is a core teaching of Buddhism. Selflessness and altruism<sup>7</sup> are also known as crucial followings of Buddhists. Moreover, the practice of generosity (*Dana*) and compassion (*Karuna*) are integral to Buddhist culture. Generosity means not simply material giving, but it extends to giving one's time, attention, and kindness to others. Compassion involves empathizing with others' suffering and actively working to alleviate it. Buddhism also teaches the principle of non-attachment, encouraging individuals to find contentment and happiness within themselves rather than relying on material possessions<sup>8</sup> and eliminating anger as a key objective in Buddhist practice.<sup>9</sup> This ethos influences lifestyles and attitudes toward material wealth and encourages detachment from materialism.

Further, Buddhism promotes respect for all forms of life. Buddhists adhere to the concept of karma, so they believe in the idea that one's actions and intentions in life have consequences, shaping their future experiences and circumstances.<sup>10</sup> Animals are given attention, and the right to live for all living beings, including the smallest ones, is ensured by Buddhist practices.<sup>11</sup> It fosters a sense of responsibility for the environment, encouraging practices that promote ecological sustainability and harmony with nature. Buddhist teachings emphasize the importance of forgiveness and patience. Cultivating these qualities helps individuals overcome anger and develop harmonious relationships with others. These ethical principles are not only followed by individual Buddhists but also contribute significantly to the cultural norms and values of societies influenced by Buddhism.

<sup>7</sup> Todd LEWIS, "Altruism in Classical Buddhism," in *Altruism in World Religions*, ed. Jacob Neusner and Bruce D. Chilton (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005), 88–113, [https://college.holycross.edu/faculty/tlewis/PDFs/Altruism\\_in\\_Classical\\_Buddhism.pdf](https://college.holycross.edu/faculty/tlewis/PDFs/Altruism_in_Classical_Buddhism.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Narada MAHATHERA, *The Buddha and His Teachings* (Taipei: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, 1998), [https://www.buddhanet.net/pdf\\_file/buddha-teachingsurw6.pdf](https://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/buddha-teachingsurw6.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Rev. Y. B. M. THAKURI, "Contemplation of Anger: An Application of the Satipatthāna Sutta in Dispelling Anger," *Vidyodaya Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 6, no.1 (2021): 43–57, <http://doi.org/10.31357/fhss/vjhss.v06i01.04>.

<sup>10</sup> "Buddhism and Conservation Fact Sheet" (Society of Conservation Biology, 2008), [https://conbio.org/images/content\\_groups/Religion/Bhuddism.pdf](https://conbio.org/images/content_groups/Religion/Bhuddism.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Roshi Philip KAPLEAU, *To Cherish All Life. A Buddhists View of Animal Slaughter and Meat Eating* (Rochester, NY: The Zen Center, 1981), [https://www.buddhanet.net/pdf\\_file/lifecherish.pdf](https://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/lifecherish.pdf).

They have shaped the moral fabric of many Asian cultures and continue to inspire people around the world, transcending religious boundaries and promoting universal values of kindness, compassion, and mindfulness.

Monastic traditions are a significant aspect of Buddhist culture, with monks and nuns playing vital roles in preserving and propagating Buddhist teachings. The founder of Buddhism practiced karma and encouraged his followers to embrace it as a means to cultivate detachment. The Buddhist monastic system comprises three interconnected elements: the community of monks and nuns (*Bhikkhus* and *Bhikkhunis*), the set of rules governing their conduct (*Vinaya*), and the physical facilities of the monastic residence (*Arama*).<sup>12</sup> Buddhists concerns four main listener communities (*Bhikkhu*, *Bhikkhuni*, *Upasaka*, *Upasika*). *Upasaka* and *Upasika* are the non-clergy group. Interestingly, monks and nuns shave their hair and wear a cotton robe which is usually in shades of yellow or earthy colors. The Buddhist monastic community (*Sangha*) often plays a role in community development, education, and social welfare, contributing to the overall well-being of society. Asceticism is also a popular practice in Theravada Buddhism,<sup>13</sup> while Japanese Buddhism is characterized by the acceptance of married monks, which signifies a departure from the fundamental precepts of Buddhism.<sup>14</sup> In this sense, Buddhism holds the distinction of being the earliest significant missionary religion in recorded history.

Buddhist monasteries, known as viharas, are centers of learning and meditation. Buddhist monasticism stands as one of the earliest and enduring forms of organized religious institutions globally. All forms of monasticism, both in India and the Western world, draw inspiration from Buddhist practices.<sup>15</sup> It has notably been widespread both in terms of geographical presence and cultural influence. Their architecture varies from region to region, but they commonly include prayer halls, living quarters for monks, stupas, Bo trees (*Ficus religiosa*), and courtyards for communal activities. Forest monasteries are also a common

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<sup>12</sup> Pinnawala SANGASUMANA, "Contemporary Changes of Buddhist Monastic System in Sri Lanka," *Vidyodaya. Journal of Buddhist Studies* 4, no. 1 (2015): 1–37, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305790300\\_Contemporary\\_Changes\\_of\\_Buddhist\\_Monastic\\_System\\_in\\_Sri\\_Lanka](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305790300_Contemporary_Changes_of_Buddhist_Monastic_System_in_Sri_Lanka).

<sup>13</sup> Isha GAMLATH, "The Rise of Popular Asceticism in Sinhalese Buddhist Culture: Some Significant Concepts and Practices," *IAFOR Journal of Cultural Studies* 1, no. 2 (2016): 23–35, <https://doi.org/10.22492/ijcs.1.2.02>.

<sup>14</sup> MATSUO, "A History of Japanese Buddhism."

<sup>15</sup> Soma THERA, *The Contribution of Buddhism to World Culture* (Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 2007), [https://bps.lk/olib/wh/wh044\\_Soma\\_Contribution-of-Buddhism-to-World-Culture.pdf](https://bps.lk/olib/wh/wh044_Soma_Contribution-of-Buddhism-to-World-Culture.pdf).

practice among Buddhist monks.<sup>16</sup> These vihara and stupa architectural designs were directly affected by the region and other political implications. The best example of geographically specific architecture is the “Zen Gardens” concept in Japan.<sup>17</sup> In that country, Zen Buddhism influenced the creation of minimalist gardens, where elements such as rocks, sand, and plants are arranged in a way that encourages meditation and contemplation, which is not practiced in other Buddhist countries. The gardens were designed to offer monks serene environment for reflection and meditation on Buddha’s teachings while taking strolls.<sup>18</sup>

Buddhist art and architecture present high diversity as well as they often feature depictions of Buddha, bodhisattvas, and other religious symbols, such as stupas, pagodas, temples, and sculptures found in Buddhist regions.<sup>19</sup> The influence of Buddhist culture on art and architecture is profound and varied, reflecting the rich diversity of Buddhist traditions across different regions and historical periods.<sup>20</sup> “Stupa” is a Sanskrit term that means a heap. Stupas are dome-shaped structures where sacred relics are placed. They serve as a focal point in Buddhist temples and show devotion and meditation. Historical records from the third century B.C. document that King Ashoka of the Mauryan dynasty unearthed and spread relics from eight original stupas. He then used these relics to construct thousands of more intricate stupas, crafted from materials like brick, stone, and stucco.<sup>21</sup> Buddhist monasteries and stupas are famous in the Asian region for their spectacular architectural features. This prominent concept in Buddhist architecture has influenced the design of temples and monuments in many countries in different touches. In Ceylonese Buddhism, stupas are bell-shaped and referred to as “dagaba,” while in Java’s culture, terraced temples such as Borobudur often

<sup>16</sup> Bhikkhu NYANATUSITA, “Buddhist Forest Monasteries and Meditation Centres in Sri Lanka. A Guide for Foreign Buddhist Monastics and Lay Practitioners,” n.d., accessed December 20, 2024, <https://www.bps.lk/olib/mi/mi008.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> Simon Regin PAXTON, “Japanese Stone Gardens: Diversity, Sustainability, and Consumerism,” in *Handbook of Research on Interdisciplinary Studies on Healthcare, Culture, and the Environment*, ed. Mika Marcus Merviö (Hershey, PA: IGI Global, 2022), 250–62, <http://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-8996-0.ch015>.

<sup>18</sup> Eric CUNNINGHAM, “Cultivating Enlightenment: The Manifold Meaning of Japanese Zen Gardens,” *Education About Asia* 21 no. 3 (2016): 32–36.

<sup>19</sup> Kanak Baran BARUA, “Buddhist Arts & Culture in Greater Asia,” September 11, 2018, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327579795\\_Buddhist\\_Arts\\_Culture\\_in\\_Greater\\_Asia](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327579795_Buddhist_Arts_Culture_in_Greater_Asia).

<sup>20</sup> Subhashis DAS, “Origin Of The Buddhist Stupas,” June 29, 2019, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334112619\\_ORIGIN\\_OF\\_THE\\_BUDDHIST\\_STUPAS](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334112619_ORIGIN_OF_THE_BUDDHIST_STUPAS).

<sup>21</sup> Lars FOGELIN, “Material Practice and the Metamorphosis of a Sign: Early Buddhist *Stupas* and the Origin of Mahayana Buddhism,” *Asian Perspectives* 51, no. 2 (2012): 278–310, <https://doi.org/10.1353/asi.2014.0005>.

appear. Pagodas are prevalent in East Asian Buddhist cultures (China, Japan, and Korea) – these are multi-tiered towers with curved eaves,<sup>22</sup> inspired by stupas, and they serve both religious and architectural purposes. Each of these builds up and develops with the influence of the origin country.

Buddhist sculptures and bodhisattva figures are also a prominent feature of Buddhist cultural development.<sup>23</sup> Sculptures of Buddha, often depicted in different mudras (hand gestures), form an integral part of Buddhist art. The Buddha's hand gestures symbolize teaching, contemplation, enlightenment, and wisdom.<sup>24</sup> These statues are made in various materials such as stone, wood, and metal, and they embody the spiritual essence of Buddhism with the influence of the originated country.

The aesthetic impact of Buddhist artworks has historically served as a prominent method for conveying Buddhist teachings and shaping its profound symbolic system through their figurative quality.<sup>25</sup> Arts, paintings, calligraphy and crafts also grew and developed with the light of Buddhism. Thangka paintings from the Tibetan region are a well-known art mostly visible on the walls of Buddhist monasteries or in caves. The Tibetan term “Thangka” stands for a rolled-up image or a “painted scroll.”<sup>26</sup> This art form is primarily recognized through paintings or embroideries on woven fabrics, typically made of cotton and prevalent in Tibetan Buddhist culture.<sup>27</sup> They often depict deities, mandalas, and scenes from the life of Buddha, serving as visual aids for meditation and religious instruction.

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<sup>22</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica*, s. v. “stupa,” accessed November 10, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/stupa>; Shubham JAISWAL, Avlokita AGRAWAL, and Geethanjali RAMAN, “Genesis of Stupas,” in *Revisiting the Role of Architecture for ‘Surviving’ Development. 53rd International Conference of the Architectural Science Association 2019*, ed. Avlokita Agrawal and Rajat Gupta (Roorkee, India: Architectural Science Association, 2019), 205–13, <https://anzasca.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/22-Genesis-of-Stupas.pdf>.

<sup>23</sup> Mònica LÓPEZ-PRAT, “Buddhist Clay Sculptures in Central Asia: Conservation and Restoration Problems,” in *Rammed Earth Conservation*, ed. Camilla Mileto, Fernando Vegas, and Valentina Cristini (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2012), 669–73.

<sup>24</sup> Preeti OZA, “Buddhist Iconography and Religious Symbolism in Different Buddhist Statues,” *SSRN Database*, May 12, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3842904>.

<sup>25</sup> Inken PROHL, “Religious Aesthetics in the German-Speaking World Central Issues, Research Projects, Research Groups,” *Material Religion* 6, no. 2 (2010): 237–39, <https://doi.org/10.2752/175183410x12731403772995>.

<sup>26</sup> Xiaojing LIU, “A Survey on Thangka Image Inpainting Method Based on Structure-Borne,” in *International Conference on Information Technology and Management Innovation* (Atlantis Press, 2015), 1217–23, <https://doi.org/10.2991/icitmi-15.2015.205>.

<sup>27</sup> Jacinta Boon Nee LOH, “Decision from Indecision: Conservation of Thangka Significance, Perspectives and Approaches,” *Journal of Conservation and Museum Studies* 8 (2002): 1–19, <https://cool.culturalheritage.org/jcms/issue8/0211Loh.pdf>.

Considering the Buddhist cave arts, Ajanta and Ellora caves located in India enjoy the greatest fame. Those are recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Sites and featured with intricate sculptures and paintings, showcasing the fusion of Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain art. Buddhist scriptures are often written in calligraphy, and they are considered an art form in themselves. The elegant strokes of calligraphic writing convey the sacred texts, and they are highly regarded in Buddhist cultures. Sri Lankan classical-style paintings predominantly depict religious narratives, with few exceptions such as the unique case found in Sigiriya.<sup>28</sup>

Buddhist culture is also blessed and enriched with symbolism and iconography. The lotus flower, with its ability to emerge pure and beautiful from muddy waters, symbolizes enlightenment in Buddhism. It frequently appears in art and architecture. The “Dharma wheel,” representing the teachings of Buddha, is a common symbol found in art, especially in countries following Theravada Buddhism.<sup>29</sup> Buddhist art and architecture continue to evolve, incorporating regional styles and modern influences while retaining their deep-rooted spiritual significance. The influence of Buddhist culture on art and architecture remains a testament to the enduring impact of Buddhism on human creativity and expression.

Considering the rituals and ceremonies practiced in Buddhism, they differ across cultures but often involve practices such as meditation, prayer, chanting, and offerings. These rituals and ceremonies are not just religious practices but also integral aspects of Buddhist culture, fostering a sense of community, mindfulness, and spiritual connection among practitioners. They reflect the core teachings of Buddhism, emphasizing compassion, mindfulness, and the pursuit of enlightenment.

Almsgivings and pirith chanting ceremonies are also common practices in Buddhist houses, especially in Theravada traditions. Pirith (*Paritta*) refers to a collection of protective chants or suttas found in the Pali Canon, the traditional scriptures of Theravada Buddhism. The rhythmic chanting of these texts is believed to have a purifying and calming effect on the mind and spirit. Chanting is performed by monks or non-clergy groups seeking protection and blessings to ward off negative influences or obstacles. Pirith chanting ceremonies are conducted in a specially designated platform called “Pirith mandapaya,” where a temporary canopy is set up above the platform area and decorated with natural leaves and flowers. Buddhists engage in acts of supporting monastic communities, temples, and charitable causes. Almsgivings (*Dana*) is considered a means of accumulating positive karma and

<sup>28</sup> Jayanthi BANDARA, “Religion in Colors: Buddhist Paintings in Sri Lanka,” *International Journal of Arts* 10, no. 2 (2020): 39–42, <https://doi.org/10.5923/j.arts.20201002.03>.

<sup>29</sup> T. B. KARUNARATNE, *The Buddhist Wheel Symbol* (Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1969), [https://www.bps.lk/olib/wh/wh137\\_Karunaratne\\_The-Buddhist-Wheel-Symbol.pdf](https://www.bps.lk/olib/wh/wh137_Karunaratne_The-Buddhist-Wheel-Symbol.pdf).



cultivating a compassionate heart. Buddhists often make offerings such as flowers, candles, incense, and food to the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha) to show respect and devotion as a part of their daily routine. Apart from those offerings, generosity (*daana*) is a fundamental Buddhist practice. Buddhist funeral rites often involve cremation of the deceased's body and subsequent memorial services, as well as they include chanting, prayers, and offerings for the departed soul's journey to the next life. Buddhist culture has a rich tapestry of festivals celebrated across different countries and regions where Buddhism is practiced. These festivals are not only religious occasions but also significant cultural events that bring communities together.

The Vesak festival commemorates the birth, enlightenment, and death of Buddha, which is celebrated every year on the full moon in May. Vesak is marked by the lighting of colorful lanterns. These artistic displays depict stories from Buddha's life and teachings. In Malaysia and Singapore, Vesak processions are held, and devotees participate in acts of charity such as giving away free food and organizing blood donation drives. In Sri Lanka, Poson and Esala full moon days are also considered significant. Poson is the full moon day in June, which the Sri Lankans believe as the day Buddhism was gifted to their country by the chief monk Mihindu and his team. Poson is mostly marked by the displaying of pandals (themed displays), structures of Mihinthalawa rock, and the structures of Mihindu Thero and his team. The Esala Poya ceremony comes on the full moon day in July. Esala Poya is thought to commemorate the occasion when Lord Buddha imparted his initial sermon, known as the "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta," to a group of five of his followers. Perahera festivals can be seen during July, and they typically feature elephants. Nevertheless, the most resplendent, extravagant, and visually captivating perahera takes place annually in the city of Kandy to honor the sacred tooth relic of Lord Buddha. Giving away free food is a very common practice during these full moon days in Sri Lanka. The citizens devote the full moon day of each month to observe "Sil" and other religious activities. Further, the Thai New Year, known as "Songkran," is celebrated in April, and it involves water festivals where people sprinkle water on Buddha statues and each other as a symbol of purification and renewal.

The "Katina" ceremony, held after the end of the Buddhist lent, includes offering robes and other necessities to monks, as a gesture of gratitude and merit making for the community. Katina is celebrated after the rainy (*wassana*) period of each year. These festivals not only reflect the religious significance of Buddhism but also highlight the cultural diversity and creativity within Buddhist communities. They serve as a means of expressing devotion, fostering a sense of

community, and promoting the values of compassion, mindfulness, and generosity, which are dominant to Buddhist teachings.

Besides, Buddhist culture has had a profound influence on literature across Asia and beyond. The teachings of Buddhism, its stories, and philosophies have inspired a wide range of literary works, including scriptures, poems, folk tales, and modern literature. In the very beginning, Buddha's words were transmitted through oral literature.<sup>30</sup> Later, it is believed that the Palm manuscripts came into practice. The Tripitaka, the traditional scriptures regarded as central to Theravada Buddhism,<sup>31</sup> and Mahayana sutras, fundamental texts in Mahayana Buddhism, contain the teachings of Buddha. These scriptures are revered as literary treasures and have influenced religious and philosophical literature. The palm-leaf manuscripts were used mostly as the source of written medium. The written communication in Sri Lanka is attributed to the arrival of Mihindu Thero. Chulla Wagga, considered the oldest palm-leaf manuscript in Sri Lanka, was written in the thirteenth century.<sup>32</sup>

Jataka tales are stories about the previous lives of Buddha. These tales illustrate the moral lessons and ethical principles for continuing a successful life, and there are 550 of them in literature. Jataka stories have been passed down orally and in written form, shaping moral consciousness and inspiring storytelling traditions in Buddhist cultures. Further, folk tales and parables derived from Buddhist traditions are prevalent in many cultures. These stories convey moral and ethical lessons, teaching kindness, compassion, and wisdom.

In Japan, Buddhist themes often appear in traditional forms of poetry like haiku and tanka. Haiku is the world's briefest poetic style, condensed and profound.<sup>33</sup> Nature, impermanence, and enlightenment are common motifs in these poems, reflecting Buddhist concepts. Zen Buddhism has influenced literature through koans (paradoxical questions or statements used for meditation). These are short and mysterious sayings considered highly valued as they constitute

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<sup>30</sup> Alexander WYNNE, "The Oral Transmission of Early Buddhist Literature," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 27, no. 1 (2004): 97–127, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bsz:16-jiabs-89455>.

<sup>31</sup> Mahinda DEEGALLE, "The First Sinhala Tripitakaya Translation: De Zoysa's 'Protestant' Buddhist Project for Mass Literacy in Twentieth Century Sri Lanka," *Vidyodaya Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 7, no. 2 (2022): 28–45, <https://doi.org/10.31357/fhss/vjhss.v07i02.03>.

<sup>32</sup> M. NISHANTHI, and Nanaya D. WIJAYASUNDARA, "Preservation and Conservation of Palm Leaf Manuscripts at the Library of University of Sri Jayewardenepura," *Vidyodaya Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 7, no. 2 (2022): 81–96, <https://journals.sjp.ac.lk/index.php/vjhss/article/view/5948>.

<sup>33</sup> Bruce ROSS, "The Essence of Haiku," *Modern Haiku* 38, no. 3 (2007), <https://www.modern-haiku.org/essays/RossEssenceHaiku.html>.

concise wisdom, which can help individuals overcome ignorance and free their minds. These sayings are often seen as having a therapeutic effect.<sup>34</sup> Zen masters often used koans to provoke deep contemplation, and haiku, with its simplicity and focus on nature, reflects Zen aesthetics. The connection between Buddhism and music is intricate. Buddhist melodies, designed to cleanse the hearts of listeners, strike a balance between strength and softness, embodying purity. Pirith chanting, known for its soothing melody, holds healing power. Musical chanting, often in Tibetan or Sanskrit, is a vital element in the religion, involving complex recitations of texts or celebrations of festivals. In Tibetan Buddhism, various ritualistic musical instruments, such as bowls, bells, tingsha, drums, cymbals, and wind instruments, play a significant role in conjunction with Buddhist practices.<sup>35</sup> Apart from these, the development of comics or graphic novels named manga in Japan are also believed to have been impacted by the Zen Buddhism.<sup>36</sup>

Further, Buddhist scholars have written extensive commentaries (aṭṭhakathā) and treatises exploring Buddhist philosophy, ethics, and meditation techniques. These writings have shaped intellectual discourse within Buddhist communities. These commentators likely refer to scholars, religious leaders, or historians who interpret religious texts or events, especially in the context of ancient India and Ceylon.<sup>37</sup> Buddhist stories and characters are often depicted in traditional theater and dance forms. Jataka tales provide root courses for folk theater. These performances convey religious narratives and moral teachings to audiences. Buddhist literature, both ancient and contemporary, continues to shape cultural identities and inspire creativity. It serves not only as a source of religious teachings but also as a reservoir of wisdom, ethical guidance, and artistic expression for people around the world.

Accordingly, Buddhism has had a profound impact on the cultural and artistic heritage of the countries where it has spread. It has influenced literature, philosophy, music, dance, and various other forms of artistic expression with the local traditions. Buddhism is not limited to a religion or a concept – it has developed a set of norms among the followers where it brings the followers to be productive spiritual beings in the society. Buddhism's influence on ancient Indian society

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<sup>34</sup> Steven HEINE, and Dale S. WRIGHT, ed., *The Koan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>35</sup> BARUA, "Buddhist Arts & Culture in Greater Asia."

<sup>36</sup> Elisabetta PORCU, "Down-To-Earth Zen: Zen Buddhism in Japanese Manga and Movies," *Journal of Global Buddhism* 16 (2015): 37–50, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1305880>.

<sup>37</sup> Lakshmi R. GOONESEKERE, *Buddhist Commentarial Literature* (Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 2008), [https://www.bps.lk/olib/wh/wh113\\_Goonesekere\\_Buddhist-Commentarial-Literature.html](https://www.bps.lk/olib/wh/wh113_Goonesekere_Buddhist-Commentarial-Literature.html).

was far-reaching, and its impact extended well beyond India's borders due to political powers. It helped shape the ethical, artistic, architectural, and intellectual traditions of the regions where it took root, leaving a lasting cultural legacy that continues to thrive not only in Asia but also in many parts of world today.

## METHODOLOGY

In order to investigate the research questions, this study utilized bibliometric techniques to explore the available body of literature. Digital databases such as PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science are widely used for the bibliometric procedure. Using conference papers, journal articles, books, literature reviews, newspaper articles, reports, and periodicals on the relevant theme, bibliometric methods are employed to access productivity in a quantitative manner.<sup>38</sup> In brief, bibliometric analysis encompasses the analysis of publication and citation data, providing insights into research trends, collaboration patterns among scholars, as well as the influence and impact of individual researchers or publications within a field.<sup>39</sup> It also supports pointing out the growth of scientific knowledge in the relevant area.<sup>40</sup>

According to Song Xu and others,<sup>41</sup> it offers a comprehensive overview of the literature and is beneficial in identifying research gaps. Bibliometricians utilize mathematical and statistical methods to measure and analyze scholarly communications.<sup>42</sup> The main stages of a bibliometric study are: 1) defining the scope and objectives for the study; 2) selecting appropriate techniques to fulfill the aims and objectives of the study; 3) defining search terms based on the study's scope and selecting a suitable database that covers the desired scope; 4) conducting the

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<sup>38</sup> Hamid DERVIŞ, "Bibliometric Analysis Using Bibliometrix an R Package," *Journal of Scientometric Research* 8 no. 3 (2019): 156–60, <https://doi.org/10.5530/jscires.8.3.32>.

<sup>39</sup> Massimo ARIA, and Corrado CUCCURULLO, "*bibliometrix*: An R-Tool for Comprehensive Science Mapping Analysis," *Journal of Informetrics* 11, no. 4 (2017): 959–75, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joi.2017.08.007>.

<sup>40</sup> DERVIŞ, "Bibliometric Analysis Using Bibliometrix," 156–60.

<sup>41</sup> Song XU et al., "Disruption Risks In Supply Chain Management: A Literature Review Based on Bibliometric Analysis," *International Journal of Production Research* 58, no. 11 (2020): 3508–26, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00207543.2020.1717011>.

<sup>42</sup> DERVIŞ, "Bibliometric Analysis Using Bibliometrix," 156–60; Hiranya DISSANAYAKE et al., "Spirituality and Sustainability: A Bibliometric Review," *Agora International Journal of Juridical Sciences* 18 no. 1 (2024): 165–84, <https://doi.org/10.15837/aijjs.v18i1.6753>.

bibliometric analysis and presenting the findings in alignment with the study's objectives; 5) deriving the conclusions from the study.<sup>43</sup>

#### SOURCE OF DATA

The analysis in this study employed data extracted from the Scopus database. Scopus is an enormous repository that houses millions of records encompassing various disciplines, such as journals, books, book chapters, and conference proceedings.<sup>44</sup> Additionally, the database serves as a citation index.

The data retrieval strategy is as follows: Search within – Article title, Abstract, Keywords → Search terms – “Buddhist Culture” → Document type – All document types → Date acquired – January 10, 2023 → Languages – All

Using the above criteria, the Scopus database refined articles dating back to 1969. To enhance comprehension, the study considered articles published between 1969 and 2022. By including a wide range of articles spanning over several decades, a more comprehensive understanding of the topic was achieved. The publication stage was limited only to the final documents and excluded the documents from 2023, as it was not yet a completed academic year at that time. Accordingly, a total number of 1913 articles was refined for the analysis.

#### METHODS USED

Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative method by its nature, and it is known as a systematic literature reviewing approach. For the quantitative analysis and graphical modeling of the data, the study utilized the Biblioshiny package in the R programming language. The Bibliometrix package, developed by Prof. Massimo Aria in 2017 using R, served as the foundation for the Biblioshiny software package. This advanced tool enables users to analyze large datasets through a web-based, online process.<sup>45</sup> To accomplish the study's objectives, performance analysis, science mapping, and network analysis techniques offered by the Biblioshiny software package were utilized as needed. Further, the VOSviewer tool was used to describe the co-occurrence of keywords in the field and to identify

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<sup>43</sup> Naveen DONTU et al., “How to Conduct a Bibliometric Analysis: An Overview and Guidelines,” *Journal of Business Research* 133 (2021): 285–96, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.04.070>.

<sup>44</sup> “Scopus Content Coverage Guide,” accessed June 19, 2025, <https://www.elsevier.com/products/scopus/content>.

<sup>45</sup> Hualin XIE et al., “A Bibliometric Analysis on Land Degradation: Current Status, Development, and Future Directions,” *Land* 9, no. 1 (2020): article 28, <https://doi.org/10.3390/land9010028>.

the word clusters.<sup>46</sup> VOSviewer is a software application designed for the generation of maps utilizing network data, developed by Nees Jan van Eck and Ludo Waltman in 2010.<sup>47</sup> These techniques aided in achieving a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Trend Analysis

Annual Publication Trend

Time series analysis brings out a clear picture of the evolutionary nature of the research in Buddhist culture-related studies over time. Fluctuations in the evolution of literature are depicted in the yearly analysis.

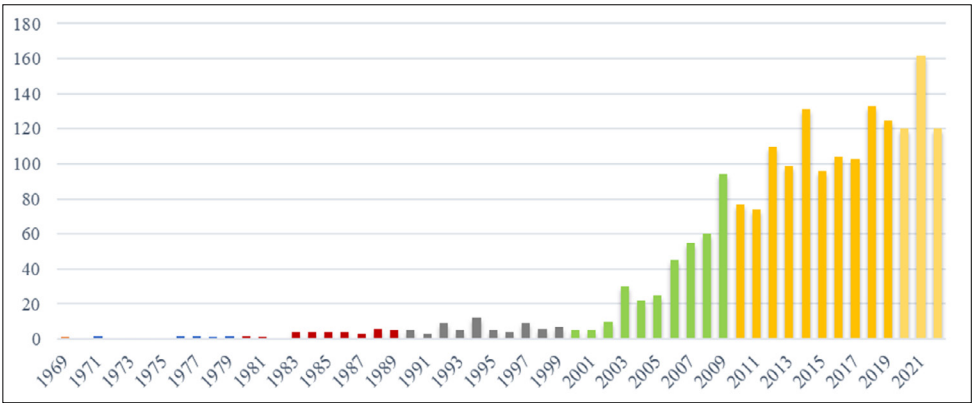


Figure 1: Annual publication trend

Source: Created by the authors, 2023

Between 1969-2001, the number of literatures depicted a slight increase, while the literature on Buddhist literature accelerated after 2001. It reached its peak in 2021 (162). The annual growth rate of the relevant literature is 9.45%. A minimum of 1 publication was issued per year, whereas some years (1970, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, and 1982) do not have any records. Starting from 2012, 2014

<sup>46</sup> Nees Jan VAN ECK, and Ludo WALTMAN, “Software Survey: VOSviewer, a Computer Program for Bibliometric Mapping,” *Scientometrics* 84, no. 2 (2010): 523–38, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-009-0146-3>.

<sup>47</sup> Humberto ARRUDA et al., “VOSviewer and Bibliometrix,” *Journal of the Medical Library Association* 110, no. 3 (2022): 392–95, <https://doi.org/10.5195/jmla.2022.1434>.

and continuous years between 2016-2022 recorded more than 100 publications per year. Decades are depicted in various colors in Figure 1.

English (1628), Russian (30), Chinese (30), French (11), Japanese (8), German (5), Turkish (5) and Korean (5) were the most used languages of publication in the database.

### Annual Citation Trend

The highest mean cited papers were recorded in 1992 (1.5), 1987 (1.71) and 2001 (1.76). The year 1979 was the least cited one (0). Further, 1983 (0.02) and 1996 (0.06) were barely cited.

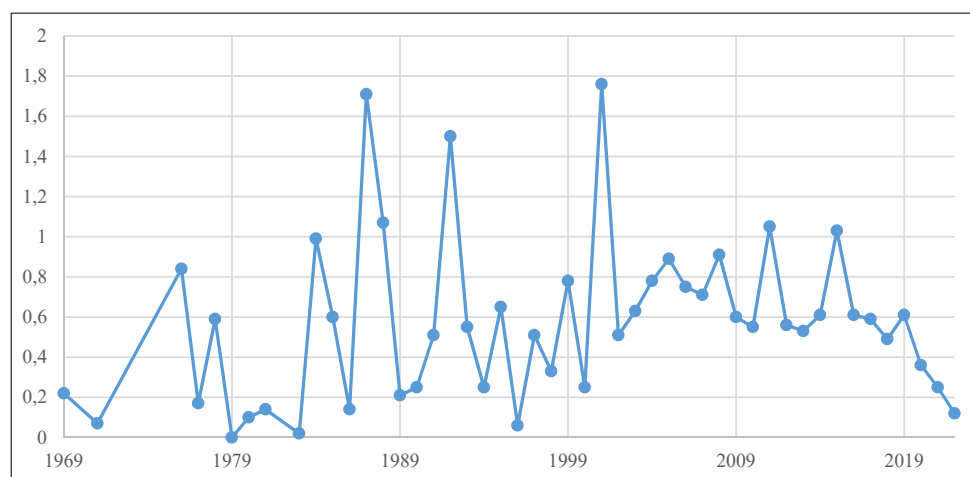


Figure 2: Annual citation trend

Source: Created by the authors using Biblioshiny package, 2023

### AUTHOR ANALYSIS

A total of 2874 authors have contributed to the study. The most produced author in the field is Prof. Stephen C. Berkwitz (9 articles). Wilailuk Chaityasit, affiliated with Thammasat University, S. Suwanlert (Association for Child and Adolescent Mental Health of London), and J. R. Weisz (Harvard University) were the most cited authors (Table 1).

The most produced author affiliation was the Mihidol University – a public university in Thailand founded in 1943.

Table 1: Author impact

	Element	h_index	g_index	m_index	TC	NP	PY_start
1	Chaiyasit W	4	4	0.11	356	4	1987
2	Suwanlert S	4	4	0.11	356	4	1987
3	Weisz JR	4	4	0.11	356	4	1987
4	Walter BR	3	3	0.08	305	3	1987
5	Wuthnow R	3	3	0.17	285	3	2007
6	Weiss B	3	3	0.08	273	3	1987
7	Pisitsungkagarn K	1	2	0.06	258	2	2008
8	Hsieh Y-P	1	1	0.06	257	1	2008
9	Neff KD	1	1	0.06	257	1	2008
10	Cohen E	2	3	0.06	189	3	1992

Source: Created by the authors using Biblioshiny package, 2023

SOURCE ANALYSIS

The 10 most impacted sources in the database are shown in Table 2. Accordingly, the Japanese Journal of Religious Studies has acted as a hub for knowledge sharing in this field. It has published 56 articles during the period. It shares the knowledge of religious studies in Japan. Journal started publishing in 1960 under the name of Contemporary Religions in Japan and bears the current name from 1974 onwards.

Table 2: Source impact

	Source	h_index	g_index	m_index	TC	NP	PY_start
1	Japanese Journal of Religious Studies	9	15	0.43	369	56	2003
2	Religions	7	9	0.78	104	44	2015
3	Frontiers in Psychology	6	8	0.43	129	8	2010
4	Journal of Religion and Health	5	6	0.29	97	6	2007
5	Mental Health, Religion and Culture	5	7	0.33	62	7	2009
6	Religion	5	7	0.14	50	7	1989
7	Buddhist Funeral Cultures of Southeast Asia and China	4	6	0.33	43	7	2012
8	Contemporary Buddhism	4	8	0.33	68	15	2012
9	International Journal for The Psychology of Religion	4	5	0.30	62	5	2011
10	Journal of Business Ethics	4	4	0.12	131	4	1993

Source: Created by the authors using Biblioshiny package, 2023



Table 3: Most cited papers

	Paper	Title	Total citations (TC)	TC per year
1	Wuthnow R., 2011	America and The Challenges of Religious Diversity	257	19.77
2	Neff K. D., Pisitsungkagarn, K., & Hsieh, Y.-P., 2008	Self-Compassion and Self-Construal in the United States, Thailand, and Taiwan	257	16.06
3	Cohen E., 1992	Pilgrimage Centers: Concentric and Excentric	184	5.75
4	Keyes C. F., 1984	Mother or Mistress but Never a Monk: Buddhist Notions of Female Gender in Rural Thailand	156	3.9
5	Purser R. E., 2015	Mindfulness Revisited: A Buddhist-Based Conceptualization	153	17
6	Grabenstein J. D., 2013	What the World's Religions Teach, Applied to Vaccines and Immune Globulins	152	13.82
7	Bowman K. W. & Singer P. A., 2001	Chinese Seniors' Perspectives on End-of-Life Decisions	149	6.48
8	Klessig J., 1992,	The Effect of Values and Culture on Life-Support Decisions	135	4.22
9	Tsai J. L., Miao F. F. & Seppala E., 2007	Good Feelings in Christianity and Buddhism: Religious Differences in Ideal Affect	123	7.24
10	Weisz J. R., Suwanlert, S., Chaiyasit, W., Weiss, B., Walter, B. R., & Anderson, W. W., 1988	Thai and American Perspectives on Over- and Under-Controlled Child Behavior Problems: Exploring the Threshold Model among Parents, Teachers, and Psychologists	119	3.31

Source: Created by the authors using Biblioshiny package, 2023

Table 3 presents the most cited documents in the related literature. Accordingly, the book *America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity* from 2011 and the paper titled “Self-Compassion and Self-Construal in the United States, Thailand, and Taiwan” from 2008 obtained overall the most total citations (257 each).

#### SPATIAL VARIATION OF MAJOR COUNTRIES IN RELATED RESEARCH

Publication trends in the countries can reflect the influences of the regions in relevant research. The influence of the region or the country can be determined by the publication trends. Figure 3 depicts the frequency of publications through color. Accordingly, the USA (708), China (511), Thailand (248), the UK

(173), India (138), Japan (123), and Australia (110) have contributed the most to the development of the field, considering the number of documents generated; other countries have released less than 100 publications. Among these countries with the most scientific production, four of them are from the Asian region, depicting its dominance in the field of Buddhist studies. While Buddhism originated in Asia, its influence extends far beyond its continent of origin, with the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia emerging as prominent contributors to relevant publications. It is also evident that most of the economically developed countries (the USA, China, India, Japan) have touched this area the most. Multiple country publications are mostly visible in the USA, China, Canada, and Thailand.

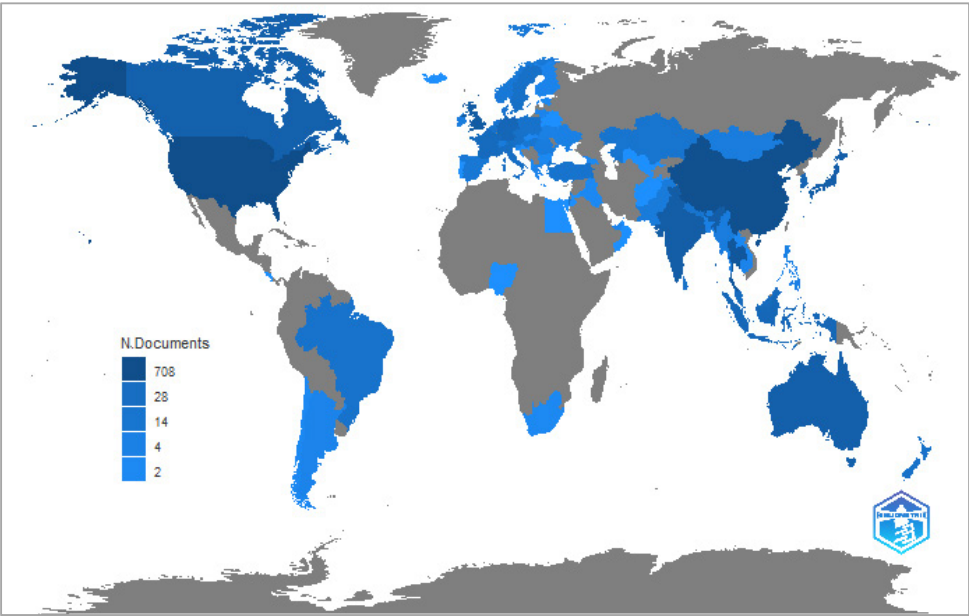


Figure 3: Scientific production by country  
Source: Created by the authors using Biblioshiny package, 2023

Countries with the most scientific production and their citation count are depicted in Table 4. Frequently cited countries often serve as indicators of significant influence in the field of Buddhist culture research, potentially leading to specific subfields or aspects of Buddhist cultural studies. Moreover, researchers and institutions can identify potential collaboration partners from these countries, thereby enhancing the quality and impact of their research efforts. The most cited country in this field is the USA, with a total citation count of 3615 (the number

of scientific productions is 708), and the average article citation for the USA is 13.3%, depicting the quality of work. The quality of research work in the USA is a result of investments in research infrastructure, quality of academic programs, and collaborations with other countries with strong backgrounds. China gained a total citation of 836 (511), while the United Kingdom gained 769 total citations for 173 scientific productions starting from 1969.

Table 4: Number of scientific production and citation count per country

	Country	Number of scientific productions	Total citations
1	USA	708	3615
2	China	511	836
3	Thailand	248	233
4	UK	173	769
5	India	138	276
6	Japan	123	206
7	Australia	110	495
8	Canada	95	381
9	Korea	62	130
10	Germany	52	45
11	Indonesia	50	6
12	France	37	69
13	Malaysia	34	53
14	Singapore	30	109
15	Italy	27	30

Source: Created by the authors using Biblioshiny package, 2023

The collaboration network provides deep insights into the spatial distribution of publications in collaborations (Figure 4). Those collaborations enable the academics to apply multiple disciplines to study the existing problems and also lead to innovative outcomes. Most of the publication collaborations in the field have been carried out by the USA with China (12), India (12), Thailand (12), the United Kingdom (9), Japan (8), and Australia (6). Further, Thailand has 6 collaborations with Australia, and China has 5 collaborations with the UK. Other countries have 4 or less collaborations with each other. Collaborations among European nations seem prevalent due to their geographical proximity and frequent partnerships. Countries such as the UK, Germany, Belgium, Greece, France, Denmark, Italy, Switzerland, and Sweden engage in regular collaborations with one another. Moreover, collaborations within East and Southeast Asia are widespread.

China, Japan, and South Korea have significant partnerships among themselves and with neighboring countries. The countries in Asia, North America (the USA, Canada), Oceania, Latin America (Chile, Costa Rica), Middle East, and North Africa (Egypt, Turkey, Jordan) also commonly collaborated in research related to the discipline.

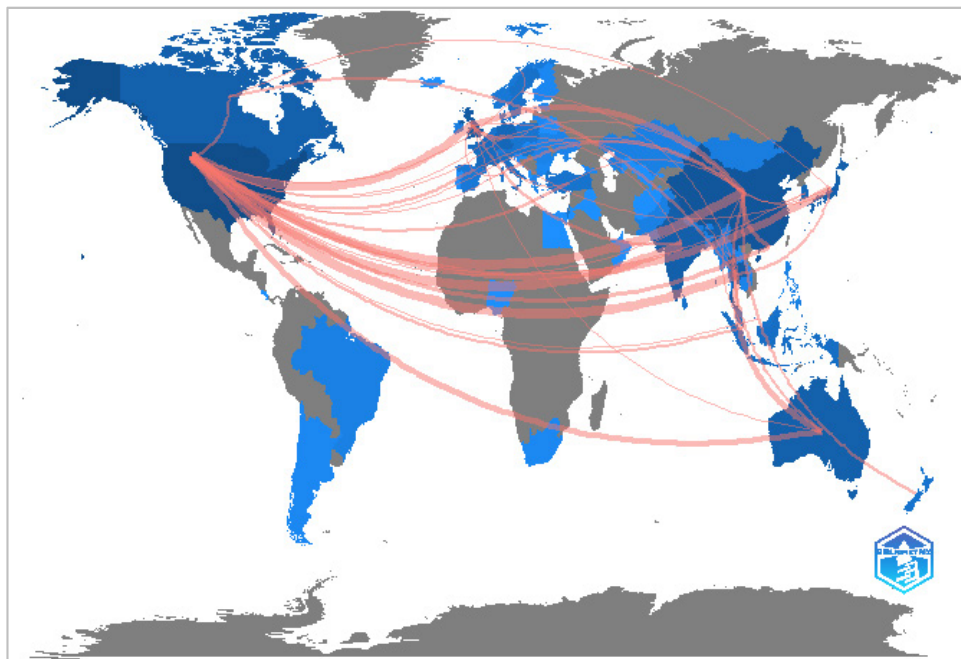


Figure 4: Country collaborations

Source: Created by the authors using Biblioshiny package, 2023

#### KEYWORD ANALYSIS

Co-word analysis includes the most frequent words in the related research of the Buddhist culture and how they co-occur in the research related to the theme. Figure 5 depicts the co-word analysis. VOSviewer tool was used to describe the co-occurrence of key words in the field. For the analysis, words that co-appeared more than 5 times were selected. Accordingly, among 8021 words, 365 words reached the threshold and were used for the co-occurrence analysis.

The dimensions of an item's label and the size of its associated circle are contingent upon the item's weight. Meanwhile, an item's color is assigned based on the cluster to which it is affiliated. Connecting lines between items symbolize

the links or relationships between them.<sup>48</sup> The distance between two words in the visualization approximately indicates the relatedness of the word in terms of co-citation links. Table 6 depicts the words belonging to the clusters.

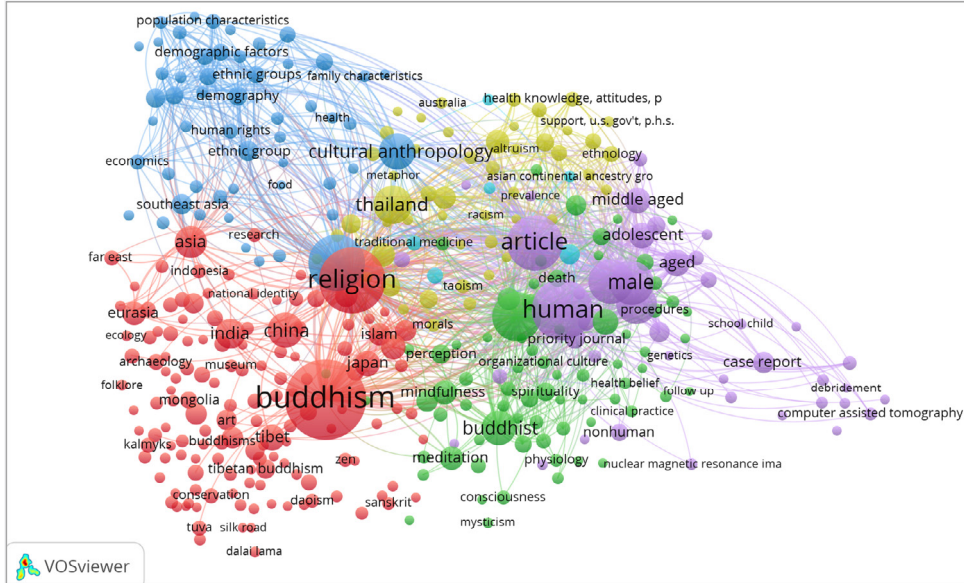


Figure 5: Co-occurrence of keywords

Source: Created by the authors using VOSviewer, 2023

Table 6: Words belonging to the clusters

Cluster and color	Number of items	Items
Cluster 1 Red	141	Buddhism, religion, China, Asia, India, Tibet, Eurasia, Far East, Japan, Tibetan Buddhism, Japanese Buddhism, Tuva, material culture, Zen, sustainable development, cultural tradition, Daoism, Judaism
Cluster 2 Green	73	human, mindfulness, meditation, spirituality, religion and psychology, mental health, awareness, consciousness, emotion, self-concept, depression, health belief
Cluster 3 Blue	53	culture, cultural anthropology, ethnic group, Southeast Asia, developing country, population, socio-economic factor, demography, human rights, social status, language, economics, environmental protection, policy, politics, social change

<sup>48</sup> Nees Jan VAN ECK, and Ludo WALTMAN, *VOSviewer Manual (Version 1.6.19)* (Leiden: Leiden University, 2023), [https://www.VOSviewer.com/documentation/Manual\\_VOSviewer\\_1.6.19.pdf](https://www.VOSviewer.com/documentation/Manual_VOSviewer_1.6.19.pdf).

Cluster and color	Number of items	Items
Cluster 4 Yellow	50	Thailand, cultural factor, psychological aspect, ethics, United States, Australia, education, Buddhist ethics, social values, Theravada Buddhism, racism, morality, ethnology
Cluster 5 Purple	42	article, human, female, male, adult, aged, adolescent, middle-aged, aged, major clinical study, animal, preschool child, physical examination, histopathology, laboratory test, computer-assisted tomography
Cluster 6 Light blue	6	Asian continental ancestry group, attitude, methodology, patient attitude, traditional medicine, young adult

Source: Created by the authors using VOSviewer, 2023

Cluster 1 seems to encompass a wide array of topics related to religion, culture, and sustainability, particularly within the context of Buddhism and its various expressions in different regions of Asia and beyond. Specifically, the research in this cluster determines the spatial distribution of Buddhism in countries and regions like China,<sup>49</sup> Asia, India,<sup>50</sup> Tibet,<sup>51</sup> Eurasia,<sup>52</sup> Tuva, Far East, and Japan.<sup>53</sup> This cluster also studies the branches of Buddhism such as Zen and cultural variations by Japanese Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism. Besides, intercultural aspects are revealed by the co-occurrence of themes such as Daoism and Judaism.

<sup>49</sup> Xing GUANG, "Buddhist Impact on Chinese Culture," *Asian Philosophy* 23, no. 4 (2013): 305–22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09552367.2013.831606>; Xinyi Ou, "The Successful Integration of Buddhism with Chinese Culture: A Summary," *Grand Valley Journal of History* 1, no. 2 (2011): article 3, [https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/gvjh/vol1/iss2/3?utm\\_source=scholarworks.gvsu.edu%2Fgvjh%2Fvol1%2Fiss2%2F3&utm\\_medium=PDF&utm\\_campaign=PDFCoverPages](https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/gvjh/vol1/iss2/3?utm_source=scholarworks.gvsu.edu%2Fgvjh%2Fvol1%2Fiss2%2F3&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages).

<sup>50</sup> Deo Kant MISHRA, "Role of Buddhism on Indian Culture," *International Journal on Arts, Management and Humanities* 6, no. 1 (2017): 1–2, <https://www.researchtrend.net/ijamh/pdf/1%20DR.%20DEO%20KANT%20MISHRA%201022.pdf>.

<sup>51</sup> Ruangsak NIRAJ et al., "Cultural Review: The Role and Status of the Deities in Tibetan Buddhist Practice," *Linguistics and Culture Review* 5, no. 1 (2021): 609–16, <https://doi.org/10.21744/lingcure.v5ns1.1445>.

<sup>52</sup> Huaiyu CHEN, and Edward Q. WANG, "Dunhuang on the Silk Road: A Hub of Eurasian Cultural Exchange—Introduction," *Chinese Studies in History* 53, no. 3 (2020): 187–91, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00094633.2020.1783156>.

<sup>53</sup> Sudipta DAS, & Subhajit CHATTERJEE, "Japan and Buddhism," *International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews* 7, no. 3 (2020): 340–43.

Cluster 2 seems to cover a range of topics related to human psychology,<sup>54</sup> mindfulness, spirituality,<sup>55</sup> religion,<sup>56</sup> and mental health, indicating a potential interest in the intersection between these areas and how they relate to human well-being.

Cluster 3 seems to include a wide range of topics related to culture, society, economics, politics, and development, particularly in the context of Southeast Asia<sup>57</sup> and developing countries. It suggests an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the complex interplay of factors that influence these regions.

Cluster 4 seems to focus on the cultural, psychological, ethical, educational,<sup>58</sup> and moral aspects, with an emphasis on Theravada Buddhism and its influence on social values and education. The inclusion of Thailand, the United States,<sup>59</sup> and Australia<sup>60</sup> may indicate a comparative or cross-cultural perspective, while the mention of racism suggests a consideration of social issues related to discrimination and bias.

Cluster 5 seems to involve a range of keywords that are typically associated with scientific articles, especially those related to medical or clinical research

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<sup>54</sup> Seth Zuihō SEGALL, and Jean L. KRISTELLER, “Positive Psychology and Buddhism,” in *Handbook of Positive Psychology, Religion, and Spirituality*, ed. Edward B. Davis, Everett L. Worthington Jr., and Sarah A. Schnitker (Cham: Springer, 2022), 211–25, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-10274-5\\_14](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-10274-5_14).

<sup>55</sup> Anuradha IDDAGODA, Rebecca ABRAHAM, and Ravi CHINTA, “Do the Dimensions of Workplace Spirituality Influence Organisational Outcomes? A Path Analytic Model and Moderated Regression Model,” *International Journal of Work Organisation and Emotion* 13, no. 4 (2022): 372–93.

<sup>56</sup> Anuradha IDDAGODA et al., “Religiosity as a Predictor of Job Performance among Sri Lankan Military Officers: The Mediating Role of Employee Engagement,” *Journal of Academy of Business and Economics* 22, no. 1 (2022): 36–53, <https://doi.org/10.18374/jabe-22-1.4>.

<sup>57</sup> Thanh Hang PHAM, and Ekaterina NIKOLAEVA, “The Soft Power of India Buddhism for the Sustainable Development in North East Asia,” in *E3S Web of Conferences* 258 (2021): article 05003, <https://doi.org/10.1051/e3sconf/202125805003>; Shantanu KISHWAR, “The Rising Role of Buddhism in India’s Soft Power Strategy,” *ORF Issue Brief*, no. 228 (Observer Research Foundation, 2018), [https://www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/ORF\\_IssueBrief\\_228\\_Buddhism.pdf](https://www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/ORF_IssueBrief_228_Buddhism.pdf).

<sup>58</sup> Somchai SRINOK et al., “Buddhism and Thai Educational System,” *Linguistics and Culture Review* 5, no. S1 (2021): 1335–42, <https://doi.org/10.21744/lingcure.v5ns1.1635>.

<sup>59</sup> Jaeyeon CHOE, and John McNALLY, “Buddhism in the United States: An Ethnographic Study,” *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage* 1, no. 1 (2013): 93–100, <https://doi.org/10.21427/D7FQ40>.

<sup>60</sup> Anna HALAFOFF, Ruth FITZPATRICK, and Kim LAM, “Buddhism in Australia: An Emerging Field of Study,” *Journal of Global Buddhism* 13 (2012): 9–25, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1306513>.

concerning human subjects, animals, and various research methods and examinations.<sup>61</sup>

Cluster 6 seems to encompass a range of topics related to healthcare, attitudes, and research methodology, with a specific focus on Asian continental ancestry groups and their perspectives, especially in the context of traditional medicine and the attitudes of young adults.

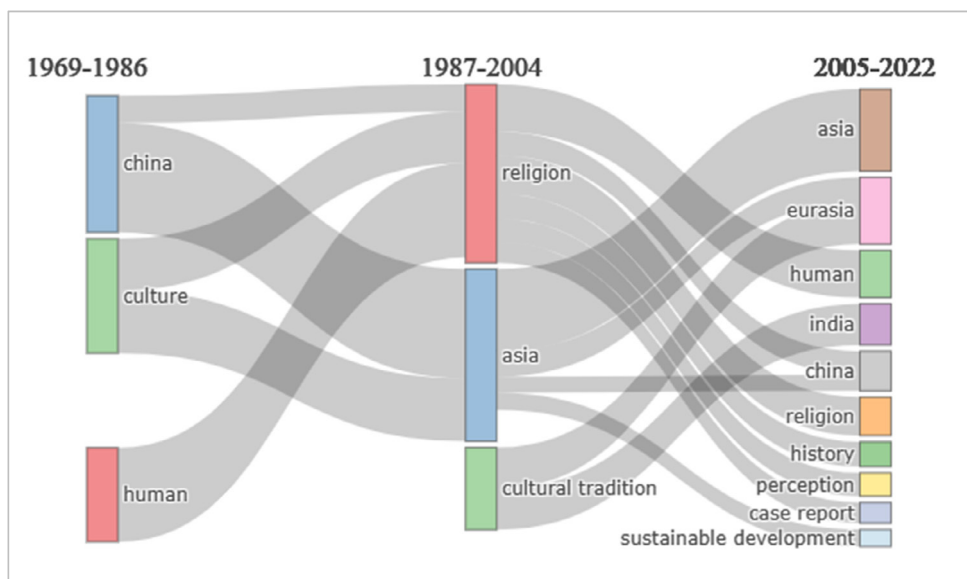


Figure 6: Thematic evolution of keywords

Source: Created by the authors using Biblioshiny package, 2023

The thematic evolution of keywords is determined by period to provide insight into how research themes and trends have changed through time within a certain field of study. The research in Buddhist culture appeared in 1969 in the Scopus database, with limited initial scholarly exploration. The oldest paper in the database was written by a Chinese author<sup>62</sup> based on a study on Thailand and Ceylon. The scope of the research in the field did not significantly broaden until the

<sup>61</sup> Anna ANDREEVA, "Buddhism and Medicine in Japan," in *Oxford Bibliographies in Buddhism*, ed. Richard Payne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1093/obo/9780195393521-0255>.

<sup>62</sup> T. O. LING, "Buddhist Factors in Population Growth and Control. A Survey Based on Thailand and Ceylon," *Population Studies* 23, no. 1 (1969): 53–60, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00324728.1969.10406027>.



2000s. The expansion of research on Buddhist culture commenced a broadening trajectory in 2005. As the topics were more diversified, regions such as Asia, Eurasia as well as countries such as China and India have become the main concerns. As illustrated in Figure 6, Asia has emerged as a prominent and enduring subject of interest, gaining traction as a trending topic since 1987 and being prominently highlighted in scholarly discussions as early as in 1969. This thematic prominence persists, with Asia continuing to be a trending focus in academic discourse until 2022. Out of a total of 30 papers composed in the Chinese language, 28 of them were published after the year 2005. One of the most important limitations is that the majority of the research outputs and books written in local languages of the root countries of Buddhist culture were not published in high-impact databases, even though they are rich in knowledge.<sup>63</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

The global landscape of Buddhist culture-related studies provides valuable insights into the evolution of literature in this field over the years. Bibliometric analysis highlights the evolutionary nature of research in Buddhist culture-related studies, showing periods of steady growth and significant acceleration in literature production. The analysis also underscores the varying impact of research across different years, and spatial variations emphasizing the importance of specific periods and regional contributions in shaping the field.

Buddhist culture-related studies are characterized by active contributions from various countries, both within and outside Asia. Collaboration among nations, especially those in Asia, Europe, North America, Oceania, the Middle East, and Latin America, enhances the richness and diversity of research in this field. The USA, China, and the UK emerge as key players, shaping the direction of research and influencing the quality of academic contributions.

Further, the co-word analysis and thematic evolution provide a comprehensive overview of the diverse and evolving research themes in Buddhist culture-related studies. Researchers can use these insights to identify key areas of interest, interdisciplinary connections, and emerging trends within the field, fostering further exploration and collaboration in the study of Buddhist culture. Researchers and institutions can leverage these insights to foster international collaborations and

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<sup>63</sup> Piyoda WIJESEKARA, and Hiranya DISSANAYAKE, "A Bibliometric Study of Literature on Buddhist Culture," paper presented at 16th International Conference on Pali and Buddhist Studies (Colombo, Sri Lanka, February 28, 2023), 14–15.

enhance the impact of their work in the dynamic and multidisciplinary field of Buddhist culture-related studies.

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MAPPING THE SCHOLARLY LANDSCAPE:  
QUANTIFYING THE EVOLUTION  
OF STUDIES ON BUDDHIST CULTURE

S u m m a r y

Culture reflects the customs, beliefs, values, arts, and social behaviors of human beings. Buddhism originated in North India and has spread globally over 25 centuries. With the need for a systematic analysis to uncover the trends and gaps in this domain of literature, the main objective of this article is to portray the publication trends and overall development of literature related to Buddhist culture. With the Scopus database as the source of data, the Biblioshiny package and the VOSviewer tool were used in the analysis and visualization of data. The total number of 1913 documents (date of acquisition: January 10, 2023) from 1969–2022 were refined for the study. Accordingly, the number of publications increased marginally between 1969–2001, while visible growth was noted after 2001. The USA, China, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and India were the most contributing countries. The evolution of themes in Buddhist culture became more complex after 2005. Psychology, mindfulness, and development were the most addressed aspects in this domain.

**Keywords:** Buddhist culture; bibliometric analysis; Biblioshiny; Scopus database; VOSviewer

MAPOWANIE KRAJOBRAZU NAUKOWEGO:  
ANALIZA ILOŚCIOWA EWOLUCJI BADAŃ  
NAD KULTURĄ BUDDYJSKĄ

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Kultura odzwierciedla zwyczaje, wierzenia, wartości, sztukę i zachowania społeczne ludzi. Buddyzm powstał w północnych Indiach i rozprzestrzenił się na całym świecie w ciągu 25 stuleci. W związku z potrzebą systematycznej analizy mającej ujawnić trendy i luki w tym obszarze literatury głównym celem niniejszego artykułu jest ukazanie trendów publikacyjnych i ogólnego rozwoju literatury dotyczącej kultury buddyjskiej. Jako źródło danych wykorzystano bazę Scopus, a do analizy i wizualizacji danych użyto aplikacji Biblioshiny oraz narzędzia VOSviewer. Łącznie do badania zakwalifikowano 1913 dokumentów (stan na 10 stycznia 2023 r.) z lat 1969–2022. Liczba publikacji wzrastała nieznacznie w latach 1969–2001, po roku 2001 odnotowano natomiast wyraźny wzrost. Najwięcej publikacji pochodziło ze Stanów Zjednoczonych, z Chin, Tajlandii, Wielkiej Brytanii i Indii. Ewolucja tematyki związanej z kulturą buddyjską stała się bardziej złożona po 2005 r. Najczęściej poruszonymi zagadnieniami w tym obszarze były psychologia, uważność (mindfulness) i rozwój.

**Słowa kluczowe:** kultura buddyjska; analiza bibliometryczna; Biblioshiny; baza danych Scopus; VOSviewer