

# Engaging Your Buddhist Population

**Market Expansion Through Cultural Understanding**



Community  
Connected

Laura Pham PharmD  
Angelina Tucker PharmD , BCGP, CDCES  
Community Connected  
CPESN USA

# Objectives

1. Identify the population distribution by state and national statistics of the Buddhist population
2. Describe the history and core beliefs of the Buddhist
3. Describe how a pharmacy owner can better engage with the Buddhist employees and patients.
4. Identify the stakeholders in the community committed to Buddhist health and explain how a pharmacy owner can expand his services.
5. Identify, explain, and debunk the stereotypes that pharmacy staff should be aware of when interacting with the Buddhist Population.

# Setting the Stage

- A pharmacy owner in a diverse community realizes few Buddhist patients visit their store, even though there is a Buddhist Center nearby.
- Question: How can this pharmacy become a trusted, inclusive health destination and improve engagement with the Buddhist community?



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Vice President of the Huong Dao Vipassana Bhavana Center,  
CEO of The Ancient Sacred Buddhist Scripture Stupas.  
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# Community Connected

Preparing community pharmacies to thrive through the provision of patient-centered services delivery within the diverse communities where they live, work, play and pray.

Preparing pharmacies to be

Service delivery that is relatable and amenable

Celebrate the diverse life, education, and work

Resolve barriers to health

Foster community stakeholder engagements

Adaptable and mindful

Access to opportunities for grant

# History of Buddhists in America

Buddhism is the **fourth largest religion** in the world behind Christianity, Islam and Hinduism.

Jane Lampman, Christian Science Monitor, September 4, 2006.  
<http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0914/p14s01-lire.html>

Buddhism arrived in the West officially in 1893 with the opening of the **World Parliament of Religions in Chicago**, where it was represented by Rinzai Zen Teacher Soyen Shaku of Kamakura, Japan.

Paul Alan Laughlin, Getting Oriented. (Santa Rosa, Polebridge Press, 2005), 137.

Majority, Buddhism became popular in the United States with Asian immigrants. Before 1965, those who wanted to come to America were subject to a quota system. Immigration law favored people from northern Europe and outright discriminated against people from the East by barring all Asians from entering the country.

*But on Oct. 3, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Immigration and Nationality Act, abolishing quotas and opening the doors to "those who can contribute most to this country – to its growth, to its strength, to its spirit."*

"Immigration and Nationality Act" Lyndon B Johnson Presidential Library.  
<https://www.lbjlibrary.org/news-and-press/media-kits/immigration-and-nationality-act>

Every wave of immigration resulted in an increased awareness of and interest in Buddhism. Many soldiers returning from duty after the Korean War (1950s) and Vietnam War (1960s-70s) had a deep respect for the courage and skill of their adversaries. Martial arts classes are where many Westerners gained their first experience of meditation and Eastern culture.

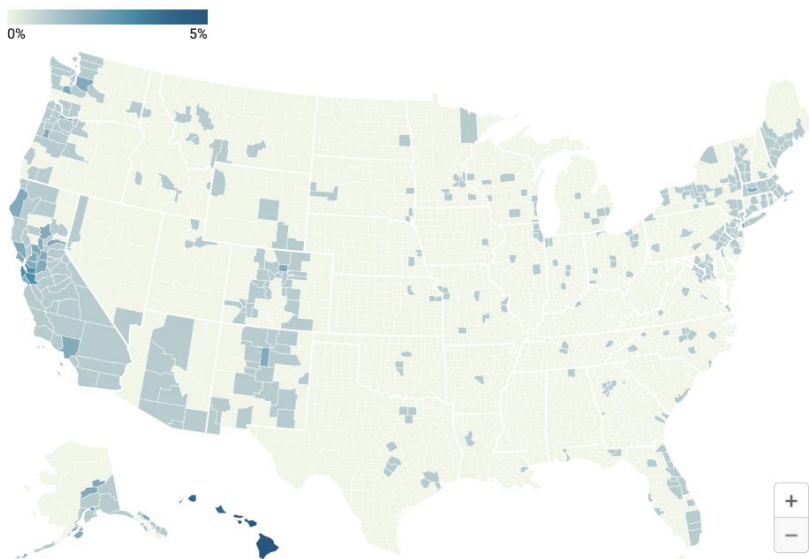
Barbara Hadley, "The Growth of Buddhism in America". *Unity Institute's Lyceum*, April 14, 2011

# Buddhist American Population

- In 2020, the Census of American Religion found that Buddhist Americans make up 1% or 3 million of the U.S. population

## Buddhist

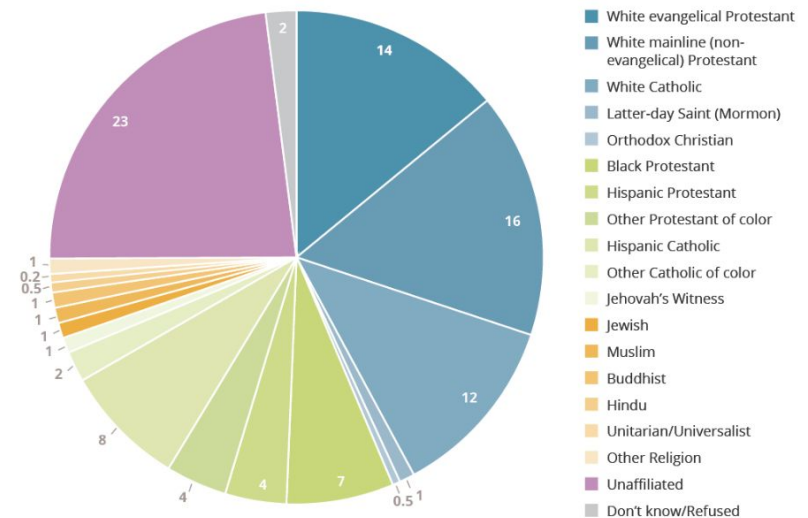
### Buddhist Identity, by County



Source: PRRI 2020 Census of American Religion. • Created with Datawrapper

FIGURE 1. The American Religious Landscape in 2020

Percent who identify as:



Source: PRRI 2020 American Values Atlas.

# Population Search

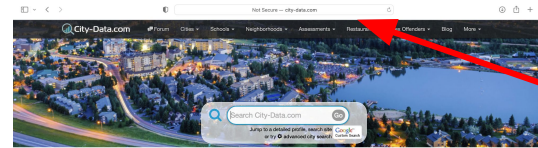
Searching your county or zip code to view the demographic data of the patients that live around your pharmacy.

US census, Centers for Disease Control (CDC), state health department or another source

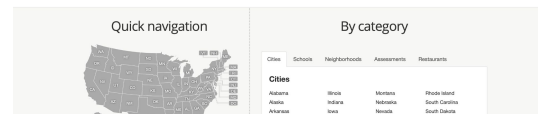
<http://www.city-data.com/>

<https://www.census.gov/>

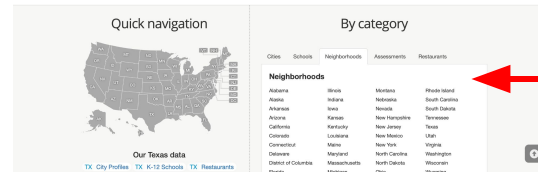
<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings>



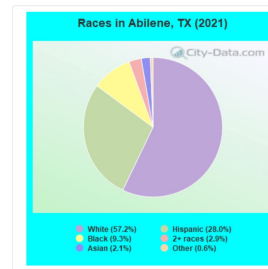
Step 1:  
Go to <http://www.city-data.com/>



Step 2:  
Type in your city of concern



or search by category here



White alone	57.2%	76,100
Hispanic	28.0%	36,300
Black alone	6.3%	11,804
Two or more races	2.9%	3,700
Asian alone	2.1%	2,714
Other race alone	0.6%	760
American Indian alone	0.02%	20

Step 3:  
Scroll down to see the demographic

# Engagement Employees

Creating a business proposition around a niche market



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# Engaging Your Employees

## Buddhist Religious Holidays

- Lunar New Year (Tết)
  - Buddha's Enlightenment (Phật thành đạo)
  - Buddha's Birthday / Vesak (Phật Đản)
  - Parent's Day (Vu Lan)
  - Parinirvana Day
- In Vietnamese Buddhist practices, all dates above are from the moon/lunar calendar
  - Many Buddhist holidays are not public holidays - hence an employee may ask
    - for the day off to celebrate with his family
    - to change shifts with someone else

For upcoming dates click [HERE](#)

**Key Takeaway:** As an employer, knowing when these days are will help in creating the schedule

# Engagement During the Holidays

## Lunar New Year (Tết) -

- Greet your patients/employees with “Happy Lunar New Year” or “Chúc Mừng Năm Mới”. Listen to a video on the pronunciation [HERE](#)
- **Key Takeaway:** Ask your employees how they’re celebrating the day!

## Buddha's Birthday / Vesak (Phật Đản)

## Buddha's Enlightenment (Phật thành đạo)

- Celebrate Buddha’s Birthday and Enlightenment by decorating the pharmacy with your employees
- **Key Takeaway:** Consider placing artificial lotus flowers in vases or creating paper lotus flower garlands. They are a symbol of purity and enlightenment in Buddhism.

## Parent's Day (Vu Lan)

- The festival is dedicated to expressing gratitude and filial piety towards parents and ancestors.
- In some regions, people wear roses during Parent's Day to symbolize gratitude and appreciation for their parents. Considering selling different colors of artificial roses during this time
- **Key Takeaway:** Express your condolences to employees or patients who have lost a loved one



# Patient Engagement

How to “Market” to Your Buddhist  
Population



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# Engaging Your Patients Pharmacy Staff

Buddhists often appreciate patience and a calm demeanor in interactions

- Provide mindful and attentive customer service
- Make an effort to be present and listen actively to their needs and concerns



# Engaging Your Patients

## Pharmacist Counselling & Inventory Supply

Buddhism is a global practice

- if you have a significant Buddhist population in your area whose primary language is not English, consider offering multilingual services to accommodate their needs

Buddhists emphasize ethical and sustainable living

- Stock products that align with these values, such as cruelty-free, or eco-friendly items
- Consider clearly labelling vegetarian and vegan-friendly products to make it easier for your customers to find suitable options

# OTC Products (RX)

Here are a few **pharmaceutical companies that are known for cruelty-free practices** according to PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals):

1. **Johnson & Johnson (McNeil Consumer Healthcare)**: has been known for its commitment to cruelty-free practices
2. **Bayer Consumer Health Division**: includes brands like Aleve and Alka-Seltzer - has been recognized for not conducting animal testing.
3. **GlaxoSmithKline (GSK)**: has committed to not testing its products on animals and is involved in producing various OTC medications.
4. **Procter & Gamble (P&G)**: Known for pharmaceutical brands such as Vicks and Pepto-Bismol. P&G has made commitments to end animal testing for its consumer products.



# OTC Products (Celebrations)

Here are a few products a pharmacy can consider selling during holidays/ celebrations:

## 1. Candles and Incense Sticks:

- Many Buddhists light candles and incense sticks during Vesak. Offering these items in the pharmacy can be a thoughtful addition.

## 2. Flowers:

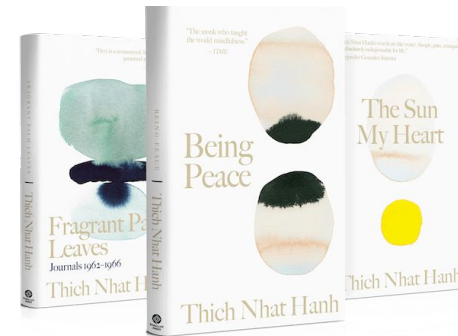
- Flowers play a significant role in Vesak celebrations. Selling fresh flowers or even flower garlands can be a popular choice.

## 3. Offering Religious Items:

- Small Buddha statues, prayer beads, and other religious items may be appreciated by those celebrating Vesak.
- (Ensure that these items are culturally sensitive and appropriate)

## 4. Books and Literature:

- Books related to Buddhism, mindfulness, and meditation may be of interest to those celebrating Vesak. Consider stocking literature that aligns with the spiritual themes of the festival.



# Engagement Community Stakeholders

Networking- Going outside your comfort  
zone

# Temple / Monastery

## “A Place of Worship for Buddhists”

Temples, Monasteries or “Chùa” are all sacred spaces of worship. Places of worship can also be local communities (Sanghas).

A sangha is a local community of mindfulness practitioners who gather to

- meditate
- share their joys and difficulties
- encourage each other on the path of practice

**Key Takeaway:** monasteries are a [mindfulness practice center](#)

- “a place to quiet the mind, look deeply, and enjoy the wonders of life within and around us through the practices of sitting meditation, walking meditation, mindful eating, deep relaxation meditation, and sharing togetherness”

# Prominent Figures in Buddhism

The priest in Buddhism is called “Thay”- Teacher

- **Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh** was a global spiritual leader, poet, and peace activist, revered throughout the world for his powerful teachings and writings on mindfulness and peace
- His key teachings were that, through mindfulness, we can learn to live happily in the present moment—the only way to truly develop peace, both in one’s self and in the world

**Networking Opportunity**: A pharmacy owner can ask to be a part of [events scheduled at monasteries](#) to better engage with community members in their area. No registration is needed.

# Engaging Community Stakeholders

- Global Conference on Buddhism Poland 2026
  - Ajahn Brahm is coming to Poland! - November 6 - 8 2026
  - Click [HERE](#) for more
- [Global Sangha Directory](#)
  - Click [HERE](#) to find a monastery in your city

**Key Takeaway:** Build relationships with trusted leaders in your community.

# Museums

Museums dedicated to the history of Buddhism in the U.S. and abroad:

- The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York “Art and Buddhism: A Journey” exhibit, view more [HERE](#)
- The Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art in Washington DC features an exhibit called, “Encountering the Buddha”, view more [HERE](#)
- The Musée Jacquemart-André has the finest private collection of art works in Paris, France including “The Museum of Tibetan Art”, view more [HERE](#)

# Remembering Buddha - Vesak Day

"Vesak" is a sacred day to millions of Buddhists around the world. It was on the day of Vesak in the year 623 B.C., that the Buddha was born.

The General Assembly, by its resolution 54/115 of 1999, recognized internationally the Day of Vesak to

- acknowledge the contribution that Buddhism, one of the oldest religions in the world, has made for over two and a half millennia and continues to make to the spirituality of humanity
- This day is commemorated annually at the UN Headquarters and other UN offices

**Key Takeaway:** “At this time of strife, the Buddha’s teachings of tolerance, compassion, and service to humanity are a source of solace and strength. As we navigate the path to a better future, let us seize the spirit of Vesak.” - [UN Secretary-General António Guterres](#)

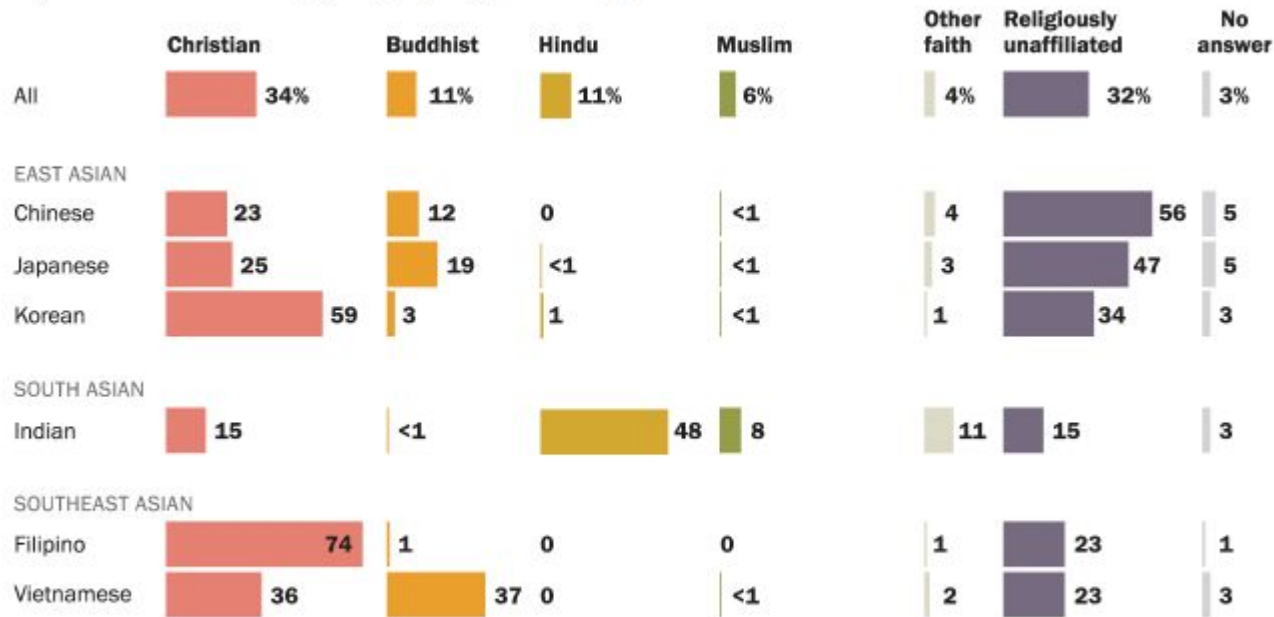
Avoiding, Debunking , Demystifying

# Stereotypes

# Stereotype

## Are all Asian Americans Buddhist?

% of Asian American adults, by origin group, who identify as ...



No, Christianity is the largest faith group among Asian Americans ([34%](#)).

Note: Figures for Asian Americans who trace their origin to other countries not shown due to insufficient sample size.

Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023.

"Religion Among Asian Americans"

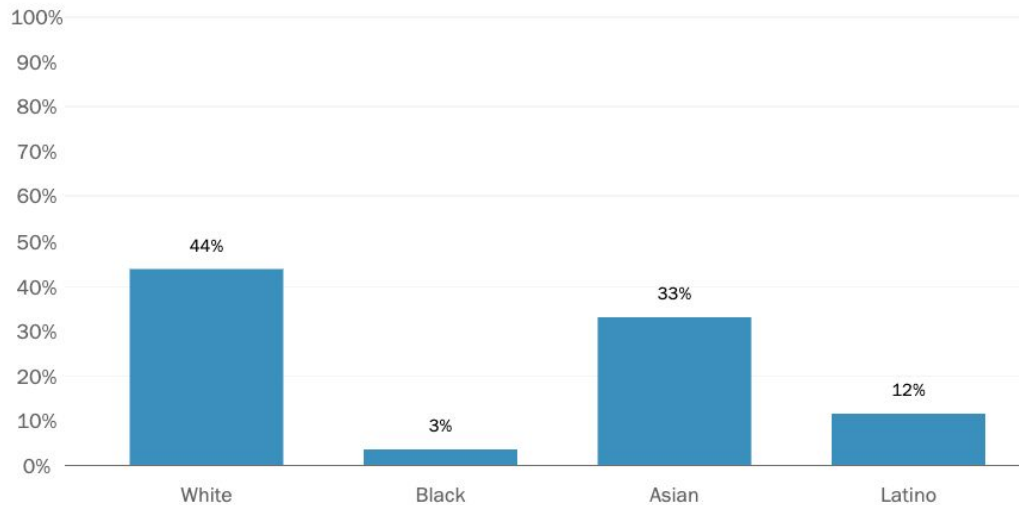
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

# Stereotype

## Are all Buddhists in America Asian?

### Racial and ethnic composition among Buddhists

*% of Buddhists who identify as...*



### Buddhist Americans are racially and ethnically diverse

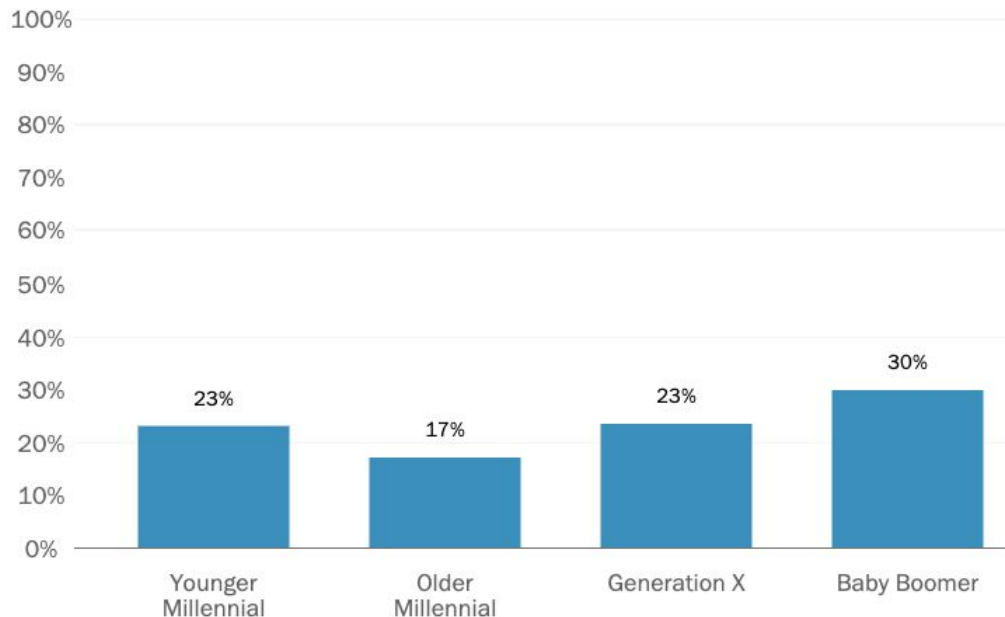
However, the majority of Buddhist American adults are white (44%) while about three-in-ten are Asian (33%). Fewer are Latino (12%) or Black (3%).

# Stereotype

## Are all Buddhists in America the younger generation?

### Generational cohort among Buddhists

*% of Buddhists who are...*



The majority of Buddhist American adults are [Baby Boomers \(30%\)](#) while Gen X and Younger Millennials account for 23%. Older Millennials are the least with 17%.