



Trends and Development of Theravāda Buddhism in Australia

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Buddhism has enjoyed a remarkable history of successful adaptation to cultures quite alien from that of its birthplace, India; such as China, Japan and Korea, for example.

In more recent times, this philosophy has begun to take root in the nation-states of the West, including Australia.

In my PhD thesis I am exploring one of Buddhism's traditions, *Theravāda*, as it attempts to find its place in Australia, where *Mahāyāna*, especially Zen and Tibetan traditions, appears to be attracting far greater numbers of converts. I have chosen, however, not to exclude some analysis of the *Mahāyāna* traditions because, unlike many traditional Buddhist countries where just one tradition arose to prominence, we are seeing all Buddhist traditions take root and each is bound to exert some influence on the other.

In this paper I want to focus on some of the challenges that Buddhism generally, and *Theravāda* in particular, faces in its quest to find a home in Australia in the twenty first century.

These challenges include the role of women in the conservative *Theravāda* tradition, Buddhism and science; what unites and divides the traditions; some of the trends likely to develop within *Theravāda*, and a review of some of the more trenchant criticisms of the tradition.