

Theravadā Buddhism

Theravadā, literally meaning the School of Elders, is a branch of Buddhism that was formed about a hundred years after the Buddha's death and used the Pāli language as reference. It was initially based in Northern India and spread throughout India but didn't survive the persecutions of war on the Indian continent. Fortunately, Theravadā Buddhism reached the island of Sri Lanka approximately 300 years after the death of the Buddha, and there it endured and spread to Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos. It is now the official religion of these countries. Theravadā Buddhism was called the Southern School, or Hīnayāna Buddhism, but in 1950, the World Fellowship of Buddhists decided to standardize on the official name of Theravadā Buddhism.