

## BUDDHISM

*Why should we as believers learn about cults and religions?* (Eph. 4:14-15; Col. 2:8; 2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Peter 3:15)

### A. Defining Buddhism

BUDDHISM is a generic term referring to a variety of religious and philosophical traditions that have developed from the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama

**“Do not try to use what you learn from Buddhism to be a Buddhist; use it to be a better whatever-you-already-are.” – Dalai Lama**

**MONISM is the theory that denies the existence of a distinction or duality in some sphere, such as that between matter and mind, or god and the world**

**RELATIVISM is the belief that knowledge, truth, and morality exist in relation to culture, society, or historical context and are not absolute**

### B. History & Development of Buddhism

#### THE “SRAMANA” MOVEMENT

Although the teachings of the Buddha were “born” out of a Hindu worldview and his teachings share some important ontological concepts like SAMARA and KARMA. Buddhism is considered a NON-VEDIC tradition and was part of the “sramana” movement in Northern India in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. Sramanas were ascetic monks or holy men teaching a variety of doctrines that diverged from Brahminism and did not consider the Vedas as authoritative. Jainism is another example from the sramana movement and developed around this same time.

#### BUDDHA WAS A REFORMER NOT A RIVAL

Buddhism’s rise in popularity came at a time when the Hindu religious traditions had become a kind of “dry well” for many people because of the caste system which at that time elevated the Brahmin Caste to the only caste fit for enlightenment. Buddhism on the other hand made NIRVANA available to all. Buddhism was not a rival of Hinduism but an attempt to reform it. Many of the early Buddhist monks were of the Brahman caste.

SHINTOISM is the indigenous the religion of Japan. It has no known founder or official sacred scriptures, and no fixed dogmas. Shinto god’s are called Kami and are linked to various concepts, locations and objects.

CONFUCIANISM is a philosophy and belief system from ancient China, which laid the foundation for much of Chinese culture. Confucius was a philosopher and teacher who lived from 551 to 479 BC His thoughts on ethics, good behavior, and moral character were written down by his disciples in several books, the most important being the *Lunyu*.

TAOISM is a religion and philosophy from ancient China connected with Lao Tzu around 500 BC the emphasis is harmony in nature between humans and animals and balance of good and bad chi (energy) in the universe.

THE THREE TEACHINGS is the synchronization of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism

### C. Who is the Buddha?

BUDDHA NATURE is the teaching that all humans have the potential of becoming enlightened like Siddhartha Gautama. According to this teaching there have been many Buddhas, perhaps an infinite amount given the Buddhist take on the cyclical nature of time and multiple universes.

MAITREYA is the future Buddha that many followers of Buddhism, especially of the Mahayana Buddhism, look forward to coming back to establish a new Dharma (teaching of how to live)

### SIDDARTHA'S BIRTH

- The Buddha was born about 2500 years ago (563 BC) in the foothills of the Himalayas and considered modern day Nepal.
- He was only son of King Suddhodhana and Queen Mahamaya
- Before his birth there was a prophecy that he would be a great political or spiritual leader
- According to legend he was born with the ability to walk and talk.
- His first words were, ““I am the king of the world!” “For enlightenment I was born, for the good of all that lives. This is the last time that I have been born into this world of becoming”
- The prophecy foretold that if Siddhartha was sheltered in the palace, then he would become a great king but if he left the palace and experienced the FOUR SIGNS then he would become a spiritual leader. His father chose to keep him inside.
- He marriage was arranged, he married Yashodara. They had a son named and they had a son named Rahulan which means “fetter.

### THE FOUR SIGNS

- At age 29 he left the palace on several occasions after the birth of his son
- The first thing he saw was an old man.
- The second thing he saw was a sick man.
- The third thing he saw was a dead man.
- The fourth thing he saw was a holy man.

### THE GREAT RENUNCIATION

- The four signs lead him to renounce his life and take on the life of a sramana monk
- He abandon his wife, his child, and his responsibilities
- “He vowed to live an unfettered existence. Family was not part of the life of a spiritual seeker; he had to go forth alone.”
- He joined 5 monks who viewed asceticism as a means of “burning off“ bad karma

### ENLIGHTENMENT

- After 6 years in asceticism he broke his vow and was abandoned by his 5 monk friends
- He made a new vow to stay under “the bohti tree” until he reached enlightenment of die
- Amazingly he reached enlightenment and started telling everyon about it

## D. Common Beliefs

THE TRIPITAKA is also referred to as “The Three Baskets” or “The Pali Canon” and was based on oral tradition until 200 AD which means that the writings are 400 years removed from the Buddha himself. There are 50 volumes (11 larger than the Bible)

Vinaya Pitaka – (The Basket of Order)

Sutra Pitaka – (The Basket of Discourses)

Abhidhamma Pitaka – (The Basket of Higher Teaching)

BELIEF IN GOD is left up to the Buddhist practitioner. Buddha himself spoke little on the subject. Some say that Buddhism is atheistic, but this really depends on the Buddhist.

THE NATURE OF LIFE in Buddhism is summed up in “The Three Marks” (1) Dukkha: Suffering, (2) Anicca: Impermanence, and (3) Anatta: No-Self

THE NATURE OF MAN in Buddhism is summed up in “The Five Aggregates” (1) Matter or the 5 senses, (2) Feelings, (3) Perception, (4) Volition, (5) Consciousness. These aggregates are considered interdependent and used as evidence for the claim that there is “no-self” to be found underneath it all.

### THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

1. The Truth of Dukkha
2. The Truth of the Cause of Dukkha (Samudaya)
3. The Truth of the Cessation of Dukkha (Nirodha)
4. The Truth of the Path that Leads to the Cessation of Dukkha (Marga)

### THE EIGHTFOLD PATH

1. Right Understanding: Believe the Four Noble Truths
2. Right Aspiration: Renounce all desire
3. Right Speech: Speak only truth and do not say evil things
4. Right Behavior: Exercises self-control and do not do evil things
5. Right Occupation: Work to the benefit of others and do not hurt people or the earth
6. Right Effort: Commit totally to the “Middle Way”
7. Right Mindfulness: Exhibit mental self-control
8. Right Meditation: Perform meditation through yoga to obtain complete moments of detachment

### THE THREE JEWELS

1. The Buddha – The Yellow Jewel (the example and help of the Buddha)
2. The Dharma – The Blue Jewel (the teachings of Buddhism)
3. The Sangha – The Red Jewel (the community of Buddhists)

### SCHOOLS OF BUDDHISM

1. Theravada – “The Teaching of The Elders.”
  - a. Key Virtue = Wisdom
  - b. Considered to be the oldest and closest practice of Buddhism to the Buddha
  - c. No God, only Nirvana, Buddha is a saint
2. Mahayana – “The Greater Vehicle”
  - a. Key Virtue = Compassion
  - b. Buddha is the Savior and is worshiped by some as God
  - c. Has many sects including Zen Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism

3. Amidism – “Pure Land”
  - a. Key Virtue = Faith
  - b. Goal is to be reborn into the “pure land” in the next life.
  - c. Amitabha Buddha is the Savior

#### BUDDHISM INFLUENCE

1. Martial Arts – many teachers promote religious teaching in class
2. Zen – the idea of peaceful mind, habits, and surroundings
3. Mindfulness – big in self -help, business, and counseling
4. Yoga – many teachers promote religious teaching in class
5. Hollywood – many stars are buddhis and “Star Wars” was built on Buddhist Ideas

What is the Biblical Response to Buddhism? (2 Cor. 6:14-16; 2 Cor 5:20; Phil 4:6-9)