

Name: _____

Date: _____

Buddhism

Buddhism is a world religion that began on the Indian subcontinent, but unlike Hinduism, Buddhism spread to many faraway lands. While Hinduism does not have a single founder, we can trace Buddhism back 2500 years to Siddhartha Gautama, a prince who lived in Shakya, a small kingdom at the foothills of the Himalayas in present day Nepal.

A legend says that before Siddhartha was born, a holy man told his father, King Suddhodana, that if Siddhartha remained in his father's palace, he would become a great king, but if he learned of the suffering of the outside world, Siddhartha would become a great teacher.

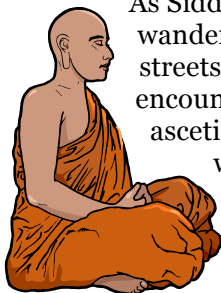
Because Suddhodana wanted Siddhartha to one day rule his kingdom, he shielded his son from anything unpleasant or disturbing.

Siddhartha was raised in luxury. Palace gardeners picked flowers soon after they blossomed so the young prince would never see death. When Siddhartha rode from the palace, guards cleared beggars and sick people from the streets before his chariot approached.

One day, Siddhartha saw two old men who had wandered into the path of his chariot; as the curious prince pursued these men he came across some people who were very ill. Then, he saw a funeral procession, and for the first time in his life, the prince encountered death. His chariot driver broke the news to Siddhartha that all of us get old, sick, and eventually die.

The prince was confused by what he had seen, so one night he put on a simple robe and secretly left his father's palace.

As Siddhartha wandered the streets, he encountered an ascetic—a holy man who had given up all



comforts and pleasures. Siddhartha observed that his new acquaintance was at peace, though he owned nothing.

The young prince left his palace and lived with Hindu gurus as an ascetic. He prayed and fasted. To fast is to eat little or no food. Siddhartha fasted so strictly that he became very weak. This made the prince realize that self-denial was not the path to truth.

Finally, Siddhartha sat down under a bodhi tree to meditate. To meditate is to calm your mind, often by focusing on a particular object. After many days and nights of contemplation, he reached enlightenment—a state of heightened wisdom.

Siddhartha realized that by putting aside one's

own selfish desires, a person can escape the cycle of death and rebirth to reach a state of peace and happiness called Nirvana.

Siddhartha told other people of his enlightenment and he became well known for his teaching. He taught his followers to seek balance in their lives. The path to happiness is neither through indulgence nor denial, he said, but a "middle way."

Siddhartha's students called him "the Buddha," which means "the Enlightened One," and the followers of Siddhartha's teachings are called Buddhists.

The Buddha did not want his teachings to replace other religions, though today over three hundred million Buddhists in all parts of the world adhere to his philosophy. His ideas traveled to China, Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia. Buddhism lost most of its influence on the Indian subcontinent by the eighth century, partly because its ideas were absorbed into Hinduism, and partly due to the rise of Islam. Buddhism is a major religious and moral force in the world, but it has been all but unknown in its homeland for over one thousand years.

The Four Noble Truths of Buddhism

Upon reaching enlightenment, Siddhartha realized what Buddhists now call the Four Noble Truths:

1. There will always be suffering in life.
2. The cause of suffering comes from our desire to continually search for something outside ourselves.
3. The way to end suffering is to overcome selfish desires.
4. The way to overcome selfish desires is to follow the eightfold path.

The Eightfold Path of Buddhism

Right View—Accept the world as it is and not as you want it to be.

Right Intention—Be motivated by good will, kindness, and empathy rather than anger, resentment, or greed.

Right Speech—Strive for your word to be helpful; do not lie or gossip.

Right Conduct—Be aware of your behavior and always work to be better.

Right Livelihood—Choose a career that results in joy rather than suffering.

Right Effort—Avoid anger, jealousy and other negative thoughts.

Right Mindfulness—Be aware and control your thoughts and emotions so your thoughts and emotions do not control you.

Right Meditation—Focus your mind and body so that you can find the path to enlightenment.

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Fill in the Blanks

Buddhism is a r__l__g__on that began on the Indian s__b__o__t__n__nt and spread to C__i__a, Korea, J__p__n, and s__u__h__a__t Asia. Buddhism is rooted in the teaching of S__d__h__r__ha Gautama, a p__i__n__e who lived at the foothills of the H__m__l__y__s about _____ years ago. Siddhartha was raised in such l__x__u__y that he was not allowed to see anything u__p__e__s__nt or d__s__u__b__ng. When Siddhartha did encounter s__f__e__i__g and d__a__h, he began a spiritual quest that ended when he achieved a state of heightened w__s__d__m called enlightenment. Siddhartha then became known as the B__dd__a, which means “the E__l__g__t__n__d One.”

The Buddha taught his followers that the path to happiness is not found in i__d__l__e__ce or d__ni__l. Instead they should seek b__l__n__e in their lives by finding a “m__d__le way.” Buddhists believe in *re__nc__rn__ti__n, but they also believe you can escape the cycle of d__a__h and r__b__r__h by putting aside your s__l__i__h desires. The Buddha did not want his *t__a__h__n__s to replace other religions, though today over three hundred million B__d__h__s__s adhere to his p__i__o__o__hy.

Answer in Complete Sentences

*1. Why would someone want to live as an ascetic? (You may want to ask your parent for help.)

2. How are Buddhism and Hinduism similar?

*3. According to the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism, why is there suffering and what can we do to end suffering?

*4. How would you summarize the Eightfold Path of Buddhism?

*This is a higher order learning question. Any reasonable answer is acceptable.