



## Buddhism

### FOUNDER

- ▶ Siddhartha Gautama (563-483 BC)
- ▶ The Buddha (“Enlightened One”).

### DATE

- ▶ Founded about 525 BC as a reformation of Hinduism.
- ▶ Currently around 500 million Buddhists

### LOCATION

- ▶ Modern-day Nepal

### KEY WRITINGS

- ▶ The Mahavastu (“Great Story,” a chaotic collection covering the Buddha’s life story)
- ▶ The Jataka Tales (500 stories of the former lives of the Buddha)
- ▶ The *Tripitaka* (Three Baskets), which has more than 100 volumes
- ▶ The *Tantras* (as recorded in Tibetan Buddhism).

### WHO IS GOD?

- ▶ The Buddha himself did not believe in the existence of God.
- ▶ Others speak of the Buddha as a universal enlightened consciousness or as a god.

### WHO IS JESUS?

- ▶ Jesus Christ is not part of the historic Buddhist worldview.
- ▶ Buddhists in the West generally view Jesus as an enlightened teacher.
- ▶ Buddhists in Asia believe Jesus as an avatar or a *Bodhisattva* (but not God).

### WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

- ▶ The Holy Spirit is not part of their worldview.
- ▶ Buddhists do believe in and make offerings to spirits, though some practice deity yoga and invite spirit possession.

### HOW TO BE SAVED

- ▶ The goal of life is nirvana (“extinguishing”), to eliminate all desires or cravings, and in this way escape suffering.
- ▶ The Eightfold Path is a system to free Buddhists from desiring anything.

### WHAT HAPPENS AFTER DEATH

- ▶ People are reincarnated.
- ▶ People do not have their own individual souls or spirits.
- ▶ However, one’s desires and feelings may be reincarnated into another person.

### OTHER BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

- ▶ Gautama’s philosophy is contained in the Four Noble Truths:
  1. Suffering is universal.
  2. Suffering is caused by desire.
  3. To eliminate suffering is to eliminate desire.
  4. A path must be followed to achieve this (to end rebirth).

- ▶ Eightfold path to enlightenment:
  1. Right Understanding: knowing the truths of Buddhism.
  2. Right Intentions: directing the mind to aspire for the ideals of Buddhism.
  3. Right Speech: speaking without desire – truthfully, kindly, helpfully.
  4. Right Conduct: Acting without desire – non-violently, generously, etc.
  5. Right Livelihood: finding a job fitting the Buddhist life.
  6. Right Effort: energetic daily decision to promote good and true thoughts.
  7. Right Mindfulness: diligent awareness of all sensations of body and mind.
  8. Right Meditation: practice of Buddhist forms of mediation.
- ▶ If one follows these principles, one will become an arhat.
- ▶ With ignorance now eliminated, the Buddhist is then free to enter nirvana.
- ▶ Karma is “blown out,” and the cycle of rebirth is ended.
- ▶ In addition to fulfilling the Eightfold Path, the Buddhist monk who aspires to be a true and faithful follower of Gautama follows ten commandments forbidding:
  1. Murder
  2. Theft
  3. Fornication
  4. Lying
  5. Drinking alcoholic beverages
  6. Eating during times when abstinence is in force
  7. Dancing, singing, and all forms of worldly entertainment
  8. Using perfumes and/or ornamental attire
  9. Sleeping on beds that are not on the floor
  10. Accepting alms of gold or silver
- ▶ Some Buddhist groups talk about an “eternal Buddha” (life-force).
- ▶ Through the “Doctrine of Assimilation” the belief systems of other religions are blended into their form of Buddhism.