

Buddhism

- ▣ A complex system of beliefs developed around the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama who lived 2, 500 years ago in India.
- ▣ There is no one single “Bible” of Buddhism but all Buddhists share some basic beliefs.
- ▣ The religion is both a discipline and a body of beliefs.
- ▣ Buddha means “the Awakened or Enlightened One”.

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Four Noble Truths

- ▣ All life is suffering, pain, and misery, or *dukkha*.
- ▣ This suffering has a cause *tanha* or selfish craving and personal desire.
- ▣ This selfish craving can be overcome.
- ▣ The way to overcome this misery is through the Eightfold Path.

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Life's Goal

- ▣ The wheel of rebirth, known as *samsara*, condemns the individual to the suffering of being alive and striving.
- ▣ Life's goal is to escape from this cycle of rebirth. This release is called *Nirvana*, the highest bliss, the end of the self.
- ▣ The way to achieve *Nirvana* is to follow the path of the Middle Way.

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The Eightfold Path

- 1) Right Knowledge
- 2) Right Aspiration
- 3) Right Speech
- 4) Right Behaviour
- 5) Right Livelihood
- 6) Right Effort
- 7) Right Mindfulness
- 8) Right Concentration

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Exam Preparation Journal

- ▣ How can you apply the four noble truths in your life? Give me some examples.
- ▣ If the doctrines of Buddhism were to be summarized in one word, it would be...



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Two Vehicles

- ▣ The older tradition and more conservative is called Hinayana or the Lesser Vehicle.
- ▣ The more liberal tradition is called the Mahayana or the Greater Vehicle.
- ▣ Theravada Buddhists see him as a man, a saint, who chose to give up all his wealth and comfort to achieve Nirvana.
- ▣ Mahayana Buddhists stress the Buddha as a saviour who devoted his life to serving and teaching others.

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The Three Jewels

- 1) Buddha the teacher
 - 2) *Dharma* the teachings or laws
 - 3) *Sangha* the community of believers
- Buddhists believe that these three elements of their religion shelter and protect them in the world.
- The Three Jewels form the centre of their daily life.

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Exam Preparation Journal

- The Ultimate reality in Buddhism is not God, or Being, or Substance; it is *Śūnyatā* which is often translated as 'Emptiness'. Why does Buddhism take 'Emptiness' as the ultimate reality of the physical world?



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Holidays

- The Theravada tradition celebrates four days every month as *uposatha* days.
- Theravada Buddhists continue the practice of *vassa*, a three-month retreat.
- Three major points in the life of the Buddha are celebrated in all Buddhist countries: his birth, Enlightenment, and his death or final Nirvana.

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Buddhism in the United States

- Henry Olcott of the Theosophical Society has aided the cause of Buddhism by writing a Buddhist catechism. His spiritual associate, Helena Blavatsky, included Buddhist teaching in her metaphysical works.
- As early as the 1840s, Chinese immigrants appeared on the West Coast and brought their Buddhism with them.
- "Church" Buddhism among Japanese immigrants came to Hawaii in 1889 and to California a decade later. The carriers were Judo Shinshu missionaries of the Nishi Hongwanji movement.

Buddhism in the United States

- According to traditional account, at the time when he became a Buddha, Amida established the Western Kingdom, called the Pure Land.
- The second form of Buddhism in the United States, stressing meditation, became represented most notably in Japanese Zen and Tibetan varieties.
- The goal of Zen was to bring a person to enlightenment through the practice of meditation.

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Buddhism in the United States

- One school, Rinzai Zen, taught that enlightenment was a sudden event. Hence, its practice centered on meditation using *koans*, riddles or verbal puzzles meant to baffle the ordinary working mind.
- The other school, Soto Zen, taught that enlightenment was gradual.

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