

A STUDY OF HIS LORD BUDDHA TEACHING AND THE LIFE HISTORY OF HIS LORD IN NEPAL AND INDIA

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Received: March 23, 2023; **Revised:** October 5, 2023; **Accepted:** October 5, 2023

Abstract

Followers of Buddhism didn't acknowledge a supreme god or deity. They instead focused on achieving enlightenment a state of inner peace and wisdom. When followers reached this spiritual echelon, they were said to have experienced nirvana. The religion's founder, Buddha, has been considered an extraordinary being, but not a god. The word Buddha meant "enlightened." The path to enlightenment was attained by utilizing morality, meditation and wisdom. Buddhists often meditated because they believed it helped awaken truth. There were many philosophies and interpretations within Buddhism, making it a tolerant and evolving religion. Some scholars didn't recognize Buddhism as an organized religion, but rather, a "way of life" or a "spiritual tradition." Buddhism encouraged its people to avoid self-indulgence but also self-denial. Buddha's most important teachings, known as The Four Noble Truths, were essential to understanding the religion. The Buddhists embraced the concepts of karma (the law of cause and effect) and reincarnation (the continuous cycle of rebirth). Followers of Buddhism could worship in temples or in their own homes. Buddhist monks, or bhikkhus, followed a strict code of conduct, which included celibacy. There was no single Buddhist symbol, but a number of images had evolved that represent Buddhist beliefs, including the lotus flower, the eight-spoked dharma wheel, the Bodhi tree and the swastika (an ancient symbol whose name meant "well-being" or "good fortune" in Sanskrit).

Keywords: Enlightenment; Wisdom Concepts; Beliefs; Bodhi Tree and Lotus Flower

Introduction

Gautama Buddha was born in the province of Lumbini, located in Southern Nepal, in 623 BC. He was born into a noble family of the Shakya Clan residing in the Himalayan foothills. The head of the Shakya clan, king Suddhodana, was his father, while his mother Maya was a Koliyan princess. It is said that the court astrologers predicted that he would become a great sage or a Buddha (Gautama Buddha, B.C. 623-543) (Rhys-Davids 2010; Esther Singleton, 2010) Buddha's father shielded him from the outside world and human suffering, and Buddha grew up with every luxury he could desire. It was after 29 years of living a sheltered and luxurious life that Buddha got a glimpse of the real world. In the streets of Kapilavastu, Buddha came across an old man, a sick man and a corpse. His charioteer explained to him that all beings are subjected to old age, sickness, and death. After hearing this, Buddha could not rest. While returning, he saw a wandering ascetic walking along the road. He comprehended that he could overcome all this suffering by becoming an ascetic and then decided to leave his kingdom in search of answers to the problems of suffering. In search of answers to the problems of suffering, Buddha bid a silent farewell to his wife without waking her, and left for the forest wearing a simple robe of an ascetic. He worked with two teachers: Eventually, Buddha left both his teachers in search of liberation. For six years, Buddha, along with five other companions, practiced asceticism by eating single grains of rice and conflicting mind against body. His five companions left him after Buddha decided to abandon asceticism. In a village, Buddha was offered a disc of milk and several vessels of honey by a woman named Sujata. After this, he went to bathe himself in the Niranjana River, and then sat beneath the bodhi tree, where he meditated. After seven days, he was liberated from the chains of human suffering and became "Buddha", the enlightened one.

Buddhism is sometimes seen as more of a philosophical system than a religion, because it does not have core beliefs about a creator god or gods. Additionally, it is different from the other world faiths in that its founder, Siddhartha Gautama, did not have a mystical vision, nor a revelation from a

higher being. Instead, he based his teachings on conclusions he drew after a very long period of deep thought, reflection and experience. It is generally accepted that Buddhism started with Siddhartha Gautama, an extraordinary and noble person, who came to be known as the Buddha. Siddhartha was born approximately 2,500 years ago in Nepal. He was born into a life of luxury as a prince. His father was King Suddhodana Tharu and his mother was Queen Maya. He grew up in India, which at the time was dominated by the Brahminic religions. He had many Hindu beliefs, including the idea of samsara which was deeply (BBC, 2023).

The Concepts and History of the Buddha

According to the Buddhist tradition, Shakyamuni Buddha was a Sakya, a sub-Himalayan ethnicity and clan of the north-eastern region of the Indian subcontinent. The Shakya community was on the periphery, both geographically and culturally, of the eastern Indian subcontinent in the 5th century BCE. The community, though describable as a small republic, was probably an oligarchy, with his father as the elected chieftain or oligarch. The Shakya were widely considered to be non-Vedic in Brahminic texts; their origins remain speculative and debated. Bronkhorst terms this culture, which grew alongside Aryavarta without being affected by the flourishing of Brahminism, as Greater Magadha. The Buddha's tribe of origin, the Shakyas, seems to have had non-Vedic religious practices which persist in Buddhism, such as the veneration of trees and sacred groves, and the worship of tree spirits (yakkhas) and serpent beings (nagas). They also seem to have built burial mounds called stupas. Tree veneration remains important in Buddhism today, particularly in the practice of venerating Bodhi trees. Likewise, yakkas and nagas have remained important figures in Buddhist religious practices and mythology the period between 400 BCE and 400 CE in the Book of Virtue of the *Tirukkural*, Chapter 32 pp. 311-320; C. 1st Century BCE to 5th Century CE. (Encyclopedia MDPI, 2022).

According to the Buddhist tradition, Gautama was born in Lumbini, now in modern-day Nepal, and raised in Kapilavastu. The exact site of ancient Kapilavastu is unknown. It may have been either Piprahwa, Uttar Pradesh, in present-day India, or Tilaurakot, in present-day Nepal. Both places belonged to the Sakya territory, and are located only 24 kilometers (15 mi) apart. In the mid-

3rd century BCE, the Emperor Ashoka determined that Lumbini was Gautama's birthplace and thus installed a pillar there with the inscription: "...this is where the Buddha, sage of the Śākyas (Śākyamuni), was born." The bulk of the Mahābhārata was probably compiled between the 3rd century BCE and the 3rd century CE, with the oldest preserved parts not much older than around 400 BCE. According to later biographies such as the Mahavastu and the Lalitavistara, his mother, Maya (Māyādevī), Suddhodana's wife, was a princess from Devdaha, the ancient capital of the Koliya Kingdom (what is now the Rupandehi District of Nepal). Legend has it that, on the night Siddhartha was conceived, Queen Maya dreamed that a white elephant with six white tusks entered her right side, and ten months later Siddhartha was born. As was the Shakya tradition, when his mother Queen Maya became pregnant, she left Kapilavastu for her father's kingdom to give birth. Her son is said to have been born on the way, at Lumbini, in a garden beneath a Sala tree. The earliest Buddhist sources state that the Buddha was born to an aristocratic Kshatriya (Pāli: Khattiya) family called Gotama (Sanskrit: Gautama), who were part of the Shakyas, a tribe of rice-farmers living near the modern border of India and Nepal. His father Śuddhodana was "an elected chief of the Shakya clan", whose capital was Kapilavastu, and who were later annexed by the growing Kingdom of Kosala during the Buddha's lifetime. Gautama was his family name. The early Buddhist texts contain very little information about the birth and youth of Gautam Buddha. Later biographies developed a dramatic narrative about the life of the young Gautam as a prince and his existential troubles. They depict his father Śuddhodana as a hereditary monarch of the Suryavansha (Solar dynasty) of Ikṣvāku (Pāli: Okkāka) (Austin, Christopher R. (2019, p.21). This is unlikely, as many scholars think that Śuddhodana was merely a Shakya aristocrat (khattiya), and that the Shakya republic was not a hereditary monarchy. The more egalitarian gaṇasaṅgha form of government, as a political alternative to Indian monarchies, may have influenced the development of the śramanic Jain and Buddhist sangha, where monarchies tended toward Vedic Brahmanism. The day of the Buddha's birth is widely celebrated in Theravada countries as Vesak. Buddha's Birthday is called Buddha Purnima in Nepal, Bangladesh, and India as he is believed to have been born on a full moon day. According to later biographical legends, during the birth celebrations, the hermit seer Asita journeyed from his mountain abode, analyzed the child for the "32 marks of a great man" and then announced that he would either become a great king (chakravartin) or a great religious leader. Suddhodana held a naming ceremony on the fifth day and invited eight Brahmin scholars to read the future.

All gave similar predictions. Kondañña, the youngest, and later to be the first arhat other than the Buddha, was reputed to be the only one who unequivocally predicted that Siddhartha would become a Buddha. Early texts suggest that Gautama was not familiar with the dominant religious teachings of his time until he left on his religious quest, which is said to have been motivated by existential concern for the human condition.

According to the early Buddhist Texts of several schools, and numerous post-canonical accounts, Gautam had a wife, Yashodhara, and a son, named Rahul. Besides this, the Buddha in the early text's reports that "I lived a spoiled, a very spoiled life, monks (in my parents' home)." The legendary biographies like the Lalita Vistara also told stories of young Gautama's great martial skill, which was put to the test in various contests against other Shakya youths (The Lalitavistara 2023).

The Buddha Teaching

Buddha's teachings, Buddha, also known as Sakyamuni Buddha, was the founder of Buddhism. Lord Buddha attained "Enlightenment" under the Bodhi tree. After attaining nirvana, Lord Buddha became a figure providing the wisdom he obtained and helped billions of people to end their suffering and attaining the state of Nirvana. Two main branches of Buddhism are Theravada Buddhism, and Mahayana Buddhism. Theravada has been widely supported by people of Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia and Mahayana Buddhism has been widely supported by East Asia.

After attaining nirvana, Lord Buddha started teaching the way of life to people. Near the city of Benares, he shared his first teachings to five holy men and they immediately understood his teachings and agreed to follow Lord Buddha. For forty-five years, Buddha along with his disciples started spreading Buddha's wisdom and teachings in India. The teachings of Lord Buddha were also known as Dhamma. Let's see some of the important teachings Lord Buddha has left behind for the sake of humanity. During his enlightenment, Buddha found answers to three universal questions and he explained these answers and truth in a simple way for his disciple. These Three Universal truths were some basic teachings of The Buddha.

1) Nothing is lost in the universe: The first universal truth found by Buddha is nothing is lost in this universe. Old solar systems have been disintegrated into cosmic rays. We are the children of our parents and we will be the parents of our children. If we destroy something around us, we destroy ourselves. If we lie to others, we lie to ourselves. Learning and understanding these truths, Lord Buddha and his disciples never kill any animal.

2) Everything changes: The second universal truth is everything changes and keeps on changing continuously. Dinosaurs, mammoths have been used to rule this planet but now we humans rule the planet. Life is like a river, it keeps on flowing, ever-changing.

3) Law of Cause and Effect:

The kind of seed sown will produce that kind of fruit.

Those who do good will reap good results.

Those who do evil will reap evil results.

If you carefully plant a good seed,

You will joyfully gather good fruit. (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2023).

It is mentioned in Dhammapada too, if we do some good things, then good things will come to us. If we do something evil, then evil things will happen to us. It is all due to cause and effect. This law of cause and effect is known as Karma. Most religions strongly believe in Karma, so do Buddhism. Good karma leads to good results and evil karma leads to bad results. The Four Noble Truths, The Noble Truth of Suffering “There is happiness in life, happiness in friendship, happiness of a family, happiness in a healthy body and mind, but when one loses them, there is suffering” (Jackson and Nason 2020).

What is Your Suffering From?

Suffering is everywhere. When people are born, they cry. When they are sick, they have pain. When they are old, they have sufferings with their body. When people die, someone dear feels sorrow for their death. The Noble Truth of Cause of Suffering: What are the causes of these sufferings? Why do we feel

pain? Why do people suffer? These are the result of greed or wanting more, ignorance, wrong idea of pleasure. The Noble Truth of End of Suffering. In order to end these suffering, one must be able to cut off their greed, the idea of having pleasure. One must learn and have knowledge to cut off their ignorance. The first way to end these suffering is changing one's views and must try to live in a natural way and must possess peaceful mind. The state when one ends their suffering and lives a peaceful way is known as Nirvana. This is the highest goal and aim of Buddhism and Buddha tries to spread his knowledge to people so that they can end their suffering. The Noble Truth of Path to end suffering: The path to end the suffering is called Noble Eightfold path or Middle way. Noble Eightfold Path or Middle Way The path to ending the suffering of people is known as Noble Eightfold Path or Middle Way. Noble Eightfold Path is one of the main teachings of Buddha. These teachings of Buddha described the way leading to an accession of dukkha and the state of self-awakening. The Noble Eightfold path is described below (D.II.321; M.I.61; M, III.251; Vbh.235.)

1) Right View: knowledge about the cause of suffering, knowledge to end the cause of suffering, knowledge of ways to end the suffering.

2) Right Intention: also called “Right Thought” is referred to the understanding of the right view that one should be able to differentiate between right intention and wrong intention. One should be free from ill will in what right intention will teach you.

3) Right Speech: avoidance of lying and ill speech. One should make best use of his/her speech and abandon false speech and always speak truth.

4) Right Conduct: never hurt others, criticize others, and well behaving is the right conduct. One should never conduct any actions that may harm others.

5) Right Livelihood: “Do not earn your living by harming others. Do not seek happiness by making others unhappy.” To install Buddha, one should never choose living where his way of living may directly or indirectly harm others.

6) Right Effort: also called “Right Endeavor”, one should always try to take any action on the goodwill of the people. Right mindfulness people must constantly keep their mind to phenomena that may affect the body and mind. This means one must be aware of their thoughts, words, and action.

8) Right Concentration also known as “right meditation”: Right concentration teaches people to focus on one thing or object at a time, thus, leading a quiet and peaceful mind.

Following these 8 Noble Eightfold Path, one can cultivate his/her wisdom and thus leading to the path to attain "nirvana". The Triple Jewel Lord Buddha establishes the three refuges for people to follow his teachings. A refuge is the place where people can rely on and go to for the purpose of safety. The three refuges that Lord Buddha establishes are as follows: The Buddha is the guide. The Dhamma is the path, The Sangha is the teachers and companions along the way. The Five Percepts. In Buddhism, Lord Buddha himself establishes five most important rules and called them Five Percepts: avoid killing, avoid taking anything which is not yours, avoid sexual misconduct, avoid lying, and avoid any toxic or alcoholic drinks.

These are some of the teachings, His Lord Buddha himself has passed down for the sake of humanity and for their well-being. Every Buddhists has studied these teachings and practiced them and vowed never to make any mistakes and blunders.

Remarks on the Results of the Buddha's Teaching

According to teaching of Lord Buddha many people often talk about following the Buddha. But why should we follow the Buddha? What is its basic purpose? This is something that a Buddhist should understand. The significance and purpose of following the Buddha is to attain perfection. If we can understand thoroughly our purpose in following the Buddha and feel confident that it is essential to follow the Buddha's teaching; then we will tread a true path and learn the essence of Buddhism rather than being side-tracked or practicing incorrectly. What is then the purpose of human existence in this world? What is then its meaning? We have to begin by observing ourselves to find an answer for this question. This is the only way to grasp the purpose of following the Buddha because Buddhism aims at resolving the problem of human existence. This aim may be common to all higher religions, but Buddhism gives a more complete view to the purpose of life and its meaning. For decades, we keep ourselves busy doing various things. We are busy from our very childhood until we age and die. But what have we achieved at in the end? This question is worth contemplating.

Some people have to be "busy" most of the time although they are doing nothing. They cannot answer when asked what they are busying about. Simply put, they find it impossible not to continue to be busy. Young people probably do not think this way, as they think their future is full of hope and brightness. But once they are middle aged, they will begin to have the same thoughts. I am not asking you not to be active and busy, but must examine what can you achieve in the end, as the saying goes:

“Life is like a honey-gathering bee, after collecting all the honey from myriad flowers, they age and their labor leaves them with nothing.”

Thich Nhat Hanh (1999)

Certainly, some people do acquire grand official title, wealth and high social position. But what they have gained is soon all gone. Everything seems to be a farce and an empty joy. We seem to accomplish nothing really. Older people generally have more intimate knowledge of such experiences. One common situation facing them is the raising of children. In their childhood, they always stuck to their parents. But once grown up, all of them will leave home to start their own life. This fact often causes us to become depressed and pessimistic. But this is not the Buddhist view of life.

Discussions

The Buddha has a lot to say about how to understand life. After his enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, he gives his first sermons to his disciples, teaching about the nature of suffering and the path to ending suffering. Over this lifetime, the Buddha offers a detailed and wide-ranging set of teachings that would ultimately be codified in what we now call Buddhism. Collectively, these teachings are known as the Dharma or Buddhadharma. As his teachings spread, they pick up parts of local religious traditions and cultures, and naturally adapt to reflect that. The Buddha's teachings span the nature of mind and emotions, the nature of suffering and the path to ending suffering, guidelines for living ethically, cosmology and the nature of reality, the possibility of achieving nirvana, and instructions for mind-training practices like meditation. At the heart of the Buddhist teachings are the eightfold path and the four noble truths, which is where

this deck begins. From the four noble truths to the Middle Way to the law of karma, here are some of the Buddha's most central teachings.

In his early teachings, the Buddha identified “three poisons,” or three fires, or three negative qualities of the mind that cause most of our problems-and most of the problems in the world. The three poisons are: greed (raga, also translated as lust), hatred (dvesha, or anger), and delusion (moha, or ignorance). The three poisons are opposed by three wholesome, or positive attitudes essential to liberation: generosity (dana), lovingkindness (maitri, Pali: metta), and wisdom (prajna) (Shanika Sriyananda, 2011).

Buddhist practice is directed toward the cultivation of these virtues and the reduction or destruction of the poisons; practitioners identify those thoughts that give rise to the three poisons and don't dwell on them, while nurturing the thoughts that give rise to the three positive attitudes. We don't need to look far to see the three poisons at work. We see them every day in the news and in the streets, and if we pay attention, we can see them in our own mind and actions. The arising of these feelings may be outside our control-we don't choose to be angry, for instance. But recognizing how greed, hatred, and delusion cause tremendous harm in the world can help us learn to manage them. Likewise, just as swallowing poison later causes sickness, nurturing these harmful attitudes leads to negative behaviors we will later regret. Though commonly referred to as poisons, the Buddha first introduced these mental attitudes as fires in the Fire Sermon (Adittapariyaya Sutta): “Monks, all is burning. Burning with what? Burning with the fire of lust, with the fire of hate, with the fire of delusion.” Fire is a central metaphor of Buddhism, typically as a negative quality of mind or consciousness. Putting out these fires is the goal of Buddhist practice. The word nirvana is derived from the extinguishing of fire. Sariputra, one of the Buddha's chief disciples, was once asked, “What is nirvana?” He answered, “The destruction of greed, the destruction of anger, the destruction of delusion-this is nirvana” Kulatunga, Prof. T. G. (2003).

The three poisons are depicted at the center of the Wheel of Life (bhavachakra), a visual representation of the sorrows of samsara. Greed is depicted as a rooster, hatred as a snake, and delusion as a pig. Importantly, they literally feed off one another; each animal consuming the tail end of the other in a vicious cycle of delusion. The centrality of the three poisons demonstrates their

role in powering the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, the escape from which is nirvana (Pelpola, Charith, 1998).

New Knowledges

The Triple Gem: - The Triple Gems are the three important things in Buddhism. These three gems are Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. One should take refuge in Buddha, Dharma as well as Sangha. One should actually know the true meanings behind these Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. "I Take Refuge in Buddha, I Take Refuge in Dharma, I Take Refuge in Sangha"

Three Universal Truths: - When Buddha attained Nirvana, he found answers and meanings of Three Universal Truths.

These three Universal Truths are: a). Nothing is lost in Universe, b). everything changes and keeps on changing continuously, c). Cause and effect

Noble Four Truths: - The Four Noble Truths teach us about the suffering, it's cause, how to end these sufferings, and the medium to end the sufferings. Noble Four Truths can be considered as the important Buddhist teachings and even non-Buddhist devout have heard of these four truths.

These four Noble Truths are: a). Suffering, b). Cause of Suffering, c). End of Suffering d). Noble Eightfold Path to end the Suffering.

Noble Eightfold Path: - Noble Eightfold Path is the path to end the suffering i.e., the fourth Noble truths. The teachings of Noble eightfold path showed way to end the suffering, and eliminate every cause of the sufferings. These eight paths are: a). Right View, b). Right Intention, c). Right Speech, d). Right Conduct, e). Right Livelihood, f). Right Effort, g). Right Mindfulness, h). Right Concentration.

Conclusions

Buddhism is profound, superb and wonderful. However, it is very much distorted and misinterpreted. The common misconception is held by a great many people (Group A) that in the wake of advanced development of science today, Buddhism, which promotes superstition, would become obsolete. On the other hand, some other people (Group B) cherish the notion that insofar as Buddhism is established on theological basis, with a view of spreading its moral teaching, it is not without a good measure of spiritual value to humanity. Whereas the

criticism of Group A shows sheer ignorance of Buddhism, apparently, the remark of Group B is paradoxical. In view of these misconceptions, the writer therefore presented his understanding of Buddhism based on direct perception from the scientific point of view. To Group A he would like to say that Buddhism is not only devoid of superstition, but on the contrary, is the best cure for every superstition in our world, because its Teaching is absolutely logical, impartial and rational. For the understanding of Group B, he would say that Buddhism is neither a theological religion nor a neurothesia for mental ills, but a Subject of Study, similar to science, to probe into the truths of life and the universe; Apart from its extraordinary functions and extensive application, it is a wholesome, practical Way of Living to be realized by self-experiencing only.

From the preceding chapters, it may be summed up that as a religion, Buddhism is based on absolute freedom and true equality; It is rational, liberal, objective, concrete, complete, positive, pragmatic and applicable at all levels. As a token of the writer's profound gratitude, this page is most sincerely and respectfully presented; may it gladden all those who have read it, enhance their faith and fortify their resolve to live up to the Buddhist Way of Life.

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