



reasontostand.org

706.860.7493

Buddhism

Many of us, especially in the south, think that we will never encounter an eastern religion such as Buddhism. While we may never run into a Buddhist monk at Wal-Mart, we are subjected to eastern beliefs such as karma, dharma, and reincarnation constantly thanks to modern forms.

- Historyⁱ
 - Siddhārtha Gautama was a prince in what is now Nepal into a Hindu family
 - Lived a life of luxury
 - Father tried to remove all suffering, sickness, and death from son
 - At the age of 29, Siddhārtha decided that wealth was not the answer to life and set out on a journey to find what was
 - Encountered three things that changed his life
 - An old man
 - A diseased man
 - A decaying corpse
 - Concluded that the problem with man was with extremes
- Beliefs
 - Pantheism
 - All is god, god is all
 - One stream of consciousness
 - A culture as much as a belief system
 - Karma
 - The account of your conscious stream
 - Your goal (usually) is to have good karma when you die
 - The Middle Way
 - Non extremism
 - Uses “koans” to help people think in terms of the impossible
 - Imagine a one-ended stick
 - A square-circle
 - Imagine the sound of one hand clapping
 - Nirvana
 - Largely interchangeable with the concept of “Enlightenment”

- A state of enlightenment which is characterized as “supreme bliss”.
 - The ultimate fulfillment of the Middle Way
 - Buddha attained “enlightenment” while meditating under a bodi tree.
 - Brahma
 - The ultimate state of enlightenment in which a being is absorbed directly into the universal consciousness.
 - This is the esoteric end to all Buddhist beliefs and life
 - A person who attains Brahma basically blinks out of existence
 - Three main ways to practice Buddhism
 - Mahayana or Zen Buddhism
 - Dharma or the teachings or laws espoused by Buddha
 - Vedic Scriptures
 - A collection of 700 verses written by Krishna (the blue god of Hinduism)
 - Primarily the Bhagavad Gitaⁱⁱ
 - The most popular method
 - Includes the Dalai Lama
 - Bodhisattva
 - A guide who is close to achieving Brahma
 - Youngest Bodhisattva was seven years old
 - Theravada
 - This is the oldest form of Buddhism
 - Concerned with learning from experiences
 - Stresses applying wisdom from guides
 - Goal is the liberation from suffering
 - Vajrayana or Tantric Buddhism
 - Focused on physical actions, called “tantras” moreso than philosophy
 - Some sects focus on sensuality which translates most often into sex
 - Some sects focus on doing as much evil as possible to “fast track” their way to Nirvana
- Tactics
 - What’s real?
 - Let’s look at the problems of an illusionary reality
 - Why study if we all end up in the same place?
 - Is pain really bad?
 - Pain warns us of danger
 - Mental “pains” like our consciousness warn us of moral failings
 - Where does this notion of right and wrong come from?
 - Who decides what is right and what is wrong?
 - Isn’t the pursuit of Nirvana itself a passion or goal?
 - Isn’t logic the same for me as it is for you?

ⁱ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gautama_Buddha

ⁱⁱ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhagavad_Gita