Outline Of Buddhism Essay, Research Paper

Outline of Buddhism

Buddhism is the oldest of the four major religions in the world today. Its followers

inhabit such countries as India, China, Bhutan, Mongolia, Korea, Vietnam, Japan, and

much of southeastern Asia and parts of Malaysia. A rough estimate of the amount of

devotees is 400 million followers and one million monks and nuns. Buddhism can be

considered a religion, a philosophy, and ideology, or even a cultural lifestyle.

The philosophy itself originated over 2,500 years ago in India. The term Buddha,

?Enlightened One,? was generated during the 6th century B.C. The personal name of

the man who created the name Buddha was Siddhartha Guatama. A member of the Sakya

clan and warrior class, he was born in Lumbini, a village in northern India. His mother

died when he was a week old and his father married his maternal aunt, who brought her

stepchild up affectionately. Siddhartha had a pleasant childhood; he was a a very erudite

child who mastered his lessons. In keeping with the customs, he married at age sixteen.

His bride was a beautiful young princess; Yasodhara, his first cousin. They had a happy

Marriage for thirteen years and eventually had a son. When Siddarthra was twenty-nine,

He entered a state of homelessness and went in search for answers to the problems he

Had seen. His own rich and happy existence had failed to content him because he still

Had seen the realities of life. For six years he studied under the famous teachers of

India and mastered the current philosophies and religious thoughts. None of these

Satisfied him however.

Determined to come to an understanding, he sat beneath the Bodhi (tree)

One day until dawn. He then realized the problems of life and cessation. From

That day on he was known as the Enlightened One, or Buddha. The next 45 years

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of his life were dedicated to missionary work throughout India and creating a group

of disciples. People of all castes began to follow his teachings. Buddha died at the age

of eighty in the village of Kusinara.

The concept of Buddha is based on this man. Followers seek to reach a stage of

enlightenment by following the Dharma, or Law of the Buddha. Neophytes must first

learn the five precepts of Buddhism:

1. Refrain from taking life

2. Refrain from stealing

3. Refrain from improper sexual activity

4. Refrain from lying

5. Refrain from indulging in intoxicants

To reach enlightenment, one must follow the eightfold path; right views, right

thinking, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right endeavor, right memory,

and right meditation. Following these guidelines is the only way to reach Nirvana-

the state of no longer being reincarnated and no longer suffering.