

SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH BUDDHISTS PART 1

Main Idea: Jesus Christ offers
something far greater than Nirvana.

John 8:12

Apologetics 05.15.13



BUDDHISM

1) ORIGINS OF BUDDHISM

Life of Buddha





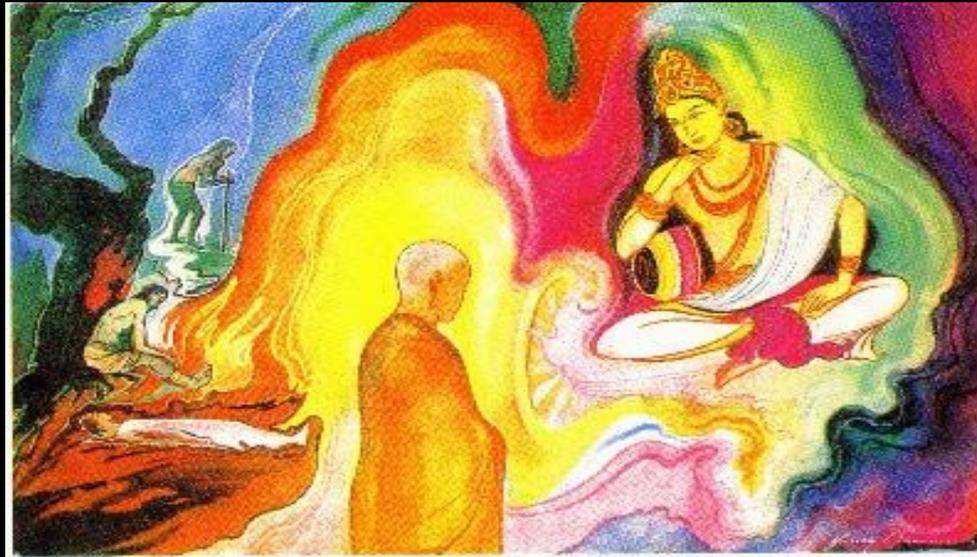
The Birth of the Buddha.

On a full-moon day in the month of May (Visakha) 2600 years ago was born a Prince named Siddhartha. His birth took place at Lumbini (modern Rumindei in Nepal), where his mother Mahamaya, the chief queen consort of King Suddhodana of Kapilavatthu, rested with her royal retinue, on her way to her parental home in Devadaha. In the picture Queen Mahamaya stands under a flowering sala tree holding on to one of its branches.



Life as a Prince.

Manifold was the variety of all the sensuous delights within the palace, the music and song that filled the palace halls by night and day; the beauty and grace of its dancing girls; the fragrance of subtle perfumes; the finest silks and priceless gems for jewelry and adornment; and rare delicacies and foods for the royal table. And yet, day after day, seated amidst all this luxury the Prince remains unmoved. Ever in thoughtful mood, with a far-away look in his beautiful eyes he muses on the fleeting nature of life's so called pleasures and its doubtful delights.



The realities of life.

All King Suddhodana's efforts to protect his son from the four sights of old-age, disease, death, and a recluse/wandering mendicant are of no avail. On a certain occasion, on his way to the royal pleasure gardens the Prince is confronted by each one of these very sights, and is filled with doubts and deep misgivings. Soon after this he meets a wandering ascetic, impressed by the somber garb and quiet demeanor of the homeless recluse the Prince looks long and hard at him, and then, makes up his mind to leave the palace for a life of homelessness.

The Legend of the Four Passing Sights

Siddhartha experienced a radical transformation while on a journey. Along the road, he witnessed:

1. an elderly man, thereby learning the reality of aging;
2. a person ravaged by disease, thereby learning the reality of sickness;
3. a corpse, thereby learning the reality of death;
4. a community of monks with their begging bowls, thereby learning the reality of want.

Aging, sickness, death and want;

Q: Siddhartha inquired whether there was a realm where human beings can be freed from these facts of human existence. Can anyone escape suffering and death?

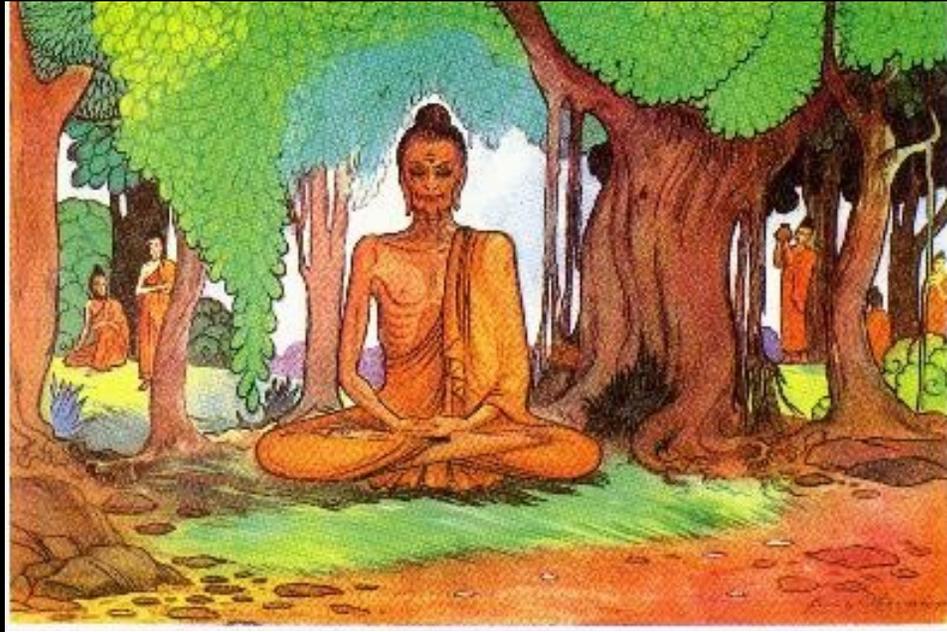
Q: How can we use Jesus' response to the "4 Sights" as a springboard for the Gospel?



The Great going forth.

1. Siddhartha's son is born
2. Siddhartha runs away (to save the world from suffering)

This is called "The Great Renunciation."



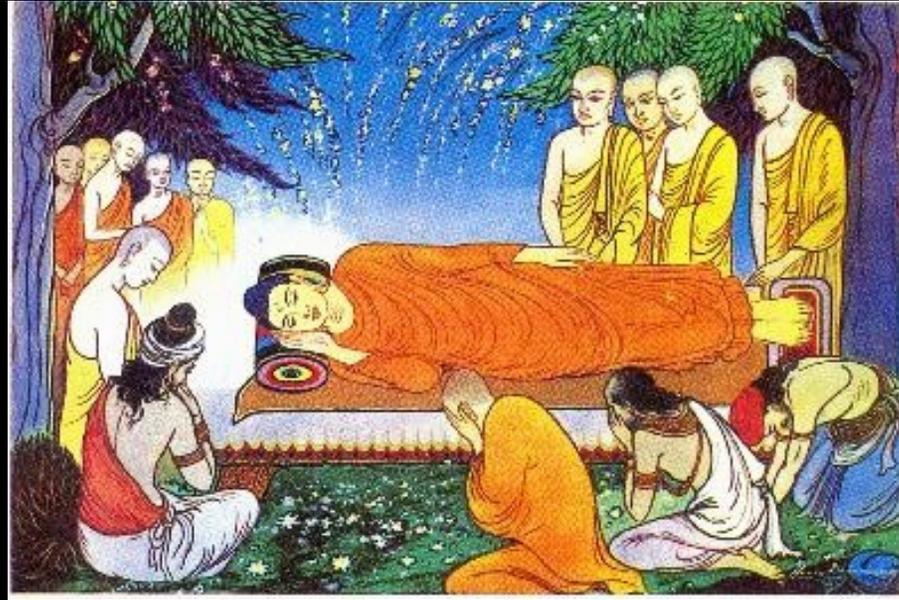
Experiment with Asceticism (extreme self-denial)

- Lives as an ascetic for 6 years
- Consults the 2 greatest religious teachers of the day (Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta)
- Is not satisfied with their answers
- Becomes emaciated from only eating 6 grains of rice on certain days



Enlightenment

- Rejects both luxury and asceticism
- Calls it the “Middle Path/Way of Moderation”
- Siddhartha sat under the Bodhi-tree at Buddhagaya to meditate, determined not to arise until he had achieved enlightenment; he does and attains Samma Smabodhi, thereby becoming the Supreme *Buddha* (= ‘awakened’ or ‘enlightened one’).

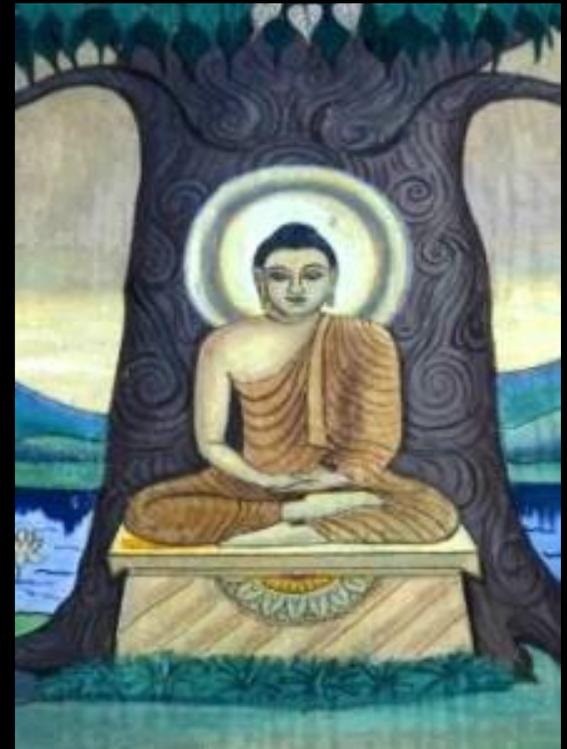


Death of Buddha

Passed away at 80 years old under a tree
from eating a piece of spoiled pork

*Trees & Buddhism

1. Was born
2. Gained enlightenment
3. Died



Buddha's Dying Words

“So, Ananda, you must be your own lamps, be your own refuges. Take refuge in nothing outside yourselves. Hold firm to the truth as a lamp and a refuge, and do not look for refuge to anything else besides yourselves. A monk becomes his own lamp and refuge by continually looking on his body, feelings, perceptions, moods, and ideas in such a manner that he conquers the cravings and depressions of ordinary men and is always strenuous, self-possessed, and collected in mind. Whoever among my monks does this, either now or when I am dead, if he is anxious to learn, will reach the summit”

2) GOD IN BUDDHISM

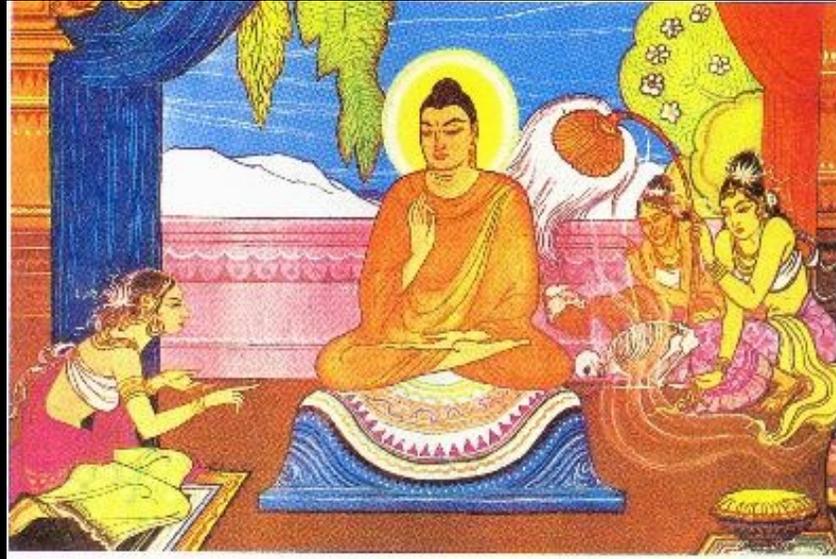
- There is no “God” in Buddhism, only bodhisattvas (humans who have reached Enlightenment).
- Buddhism is more of a philosophy than a religion.

Q: How would the absence of an all-powerful God affect how you live?

3) HUMANITY IN BUDDHISM

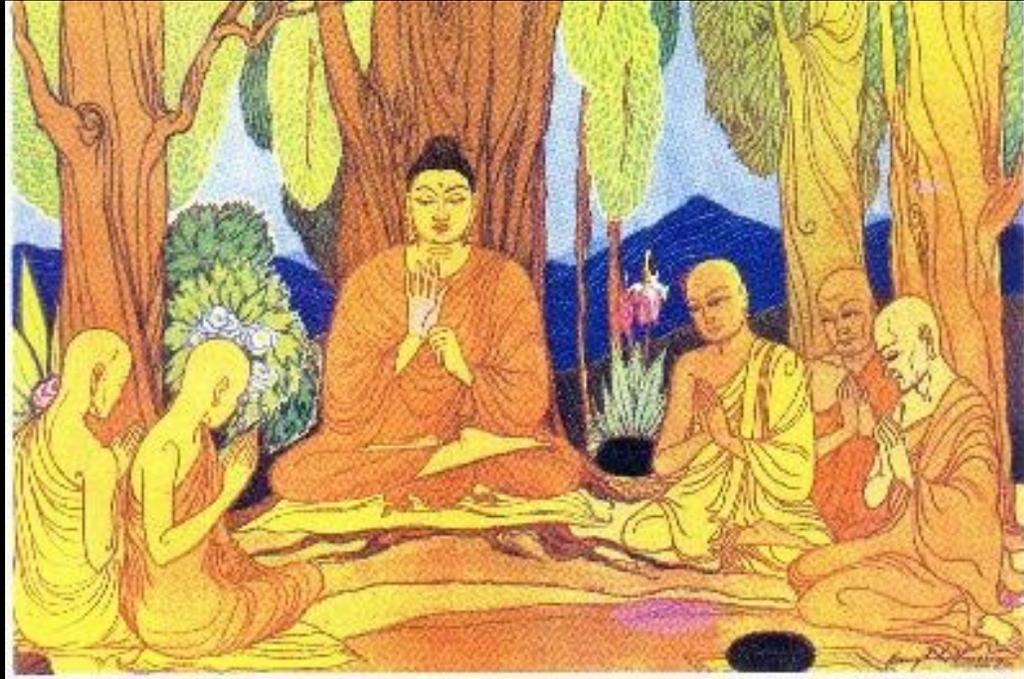
- “There is no individual “self,” only *anatman*, the nonself. The thing we call a “self” is merely a bundle of perceptions with nothing to tie the bundle together and no beyond the bundle.”

Corduan, 318.



The Philosophy of change

- All conditioned things are in a state of flux/change = they are impermanent
- Thus, existence itself is impermanent
- Whatever is impermanent is subject to suffering
- Thus: Life is unsatisfactory



Buddha teaches that all Phenomena is soulless

When a thing is impermanent, as all conditioned things are, and thus susceptible to change, there can be no overlord or Self. Helpless in arranging things according to its wishes there can be no soul as master over mind and body. The Buddha explains the soullessness of beings to the five bhikkhus at Isipatana in Benares, in the discourse on soullessness (Anattalakkana Sutta).

4) WORSHIP/LIFESTYLE IN BUDDHISM

- Buddha's First Sermon

"The Middle Way" = Fourfold Noble Path/Four Noble Truths

1. Existence itself is suffering
2. Suffering comes from craving/desires and attachment
3. There exists a cessation of suffering, which is called **Nirvana**
4. There is a path to nirvana, which is eightfold

Eightfold path = How to attain Nirvana

1. Right views
2. Right resolve
3. Right speech
4. Right action
5. Right livelihood
6. Right effort
7. Right mindfulness
8. Right concentration

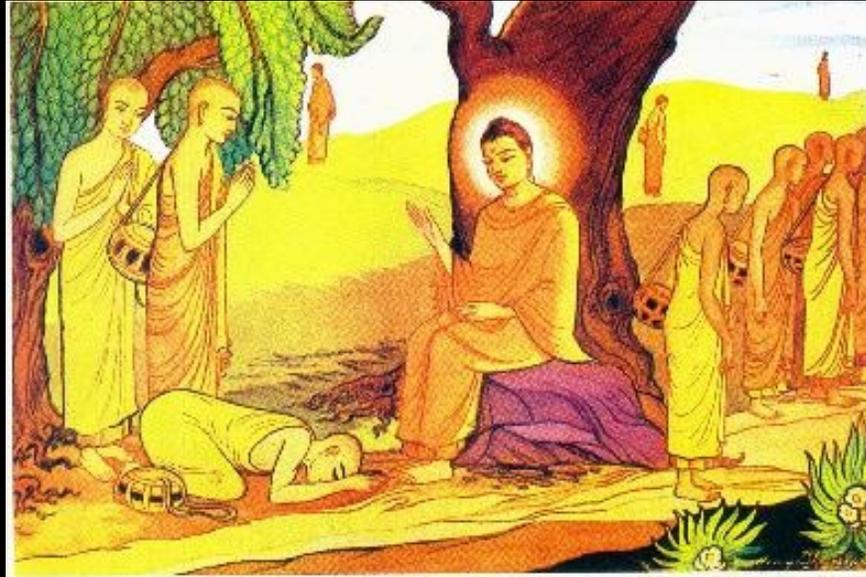
Q: How could you use the 8-fold path as a springboard to the Gospel?



The
Deer
Park
Sermon

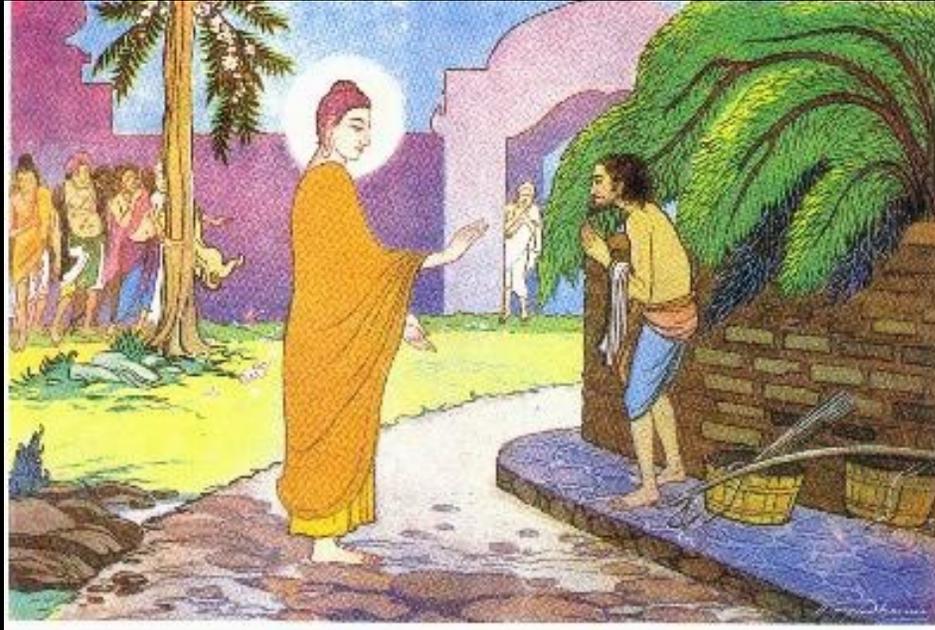
The First Discourse

Having realized the Four Noble Truths (the Noble Truth of Suffering; the Cause of Suffering; the Cessation of Suffering; and the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering) by himself, the Buddha now decides to teach them to the five ascetics who had earlier served him at Uruvela, in Buddhagaya. At the end of this First Discourse (or Sermon), which is known as the "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta" and given to the five ascetics who were now living at Isipatana in Benares, the oldest of them, Kondanna realizes the first path and fruition of the Stream-winner (Sotapanna), or one who goes against the stream of *Samsara* (the recurring cycle of life and death).



“Go now and wander for the welfare of the many.”

- Buddha’s 1st 5 disciples attain the highest “level” of sainthood in one week after the 1st sermon
- Before the rainy season is over fifty five others have followed suit. The Buddha now sends out His disciples: - 'Go forth, ye bhikkhus, for the welfare of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, welfare and happiness of gods and men.'
- Accordingly the disciples set forth to spread the new teaching.



Towards human dignity

- Rejecting the caste system: appointing a beggar/scavenger named Sunita to a high stature
- Buddha's point: a man becomes neither a Brahman nor a low-caste by birth, but by deeds alone.

[Note: Since Buddhists believe that a Brahman or supreme god cannot exist, how can a man become one?]



Ministering to the sick = The Scourge of Karma

- Virtually no attention was paid to the sick

Q# Why not? *key (last week's discussion)

- Putigatta Tissa Thera was a monk who was stricken by a skin disease which spread covering his whole body with a mass of ulcerating matter. Lying unattended by the fellow monks his condition worsens. The Buddha going to the stricken monk who now lies dangerously ill, bathes him in warm water with the help of Ananda Thera, and cleans his robes.



Having made him comfortable the Buddha expounds the Teaching (Dharma) to him, explaining the true nature of the human body. Enlightened by the discourse the Thera becomes a follower of Buddha.

- The Buddha then addresses the other monks on the ennobling task of caring for the sick.
- His followers started to build wards for sick monks in all large monasteries.
- Later king Dhammasoka was to build hospitals not only for the public but also for sick animals.

5) SIN & SALVATION IN BUDDHISM

- “Salvation...consists of release from the cycle of reincarnation by realizing that there is no cycle of reincarnations.”

- Corduan, 2nd ed., 319.

