

# OVERVIEW OF BUDDHISM



## **KEY PERSON, DATE, LOCATION**

GAUTAMA SIDDHARTHA, (563-483 BC), ALSO KNOWN AS BUDDHA (“ENLIGHTENED ONE”)

FOUNDED IN MODERN-DAY NEPAL AND INDIA AS A REFORMATION OF HINDUISM

## **KEY WRITINGS**

THE MAHAVASTU (“GREAT STORY,” A COLLECTION COVERING THE BUDDHA’S LIFE STORY), THE JATAKA TALES (550 STORIES OF THE FORMER LIVES OF THE BUDDHA), THE TRIPITAKA (“THREE BASKETS”), AND THE TANTRAS (AS RECORDED IN TIBETAN BUDDHISM)

## **WHO IS GOD?**

THE BUDDHA HIMSELF DID NOT BELIEVE IN THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

OTHERS SPEAK OF THE BUDDHA AS A UNIVERSAL ENLIGHTENED CONSCIOUSNESS OR AS A GOD

## **WHO IS JESUS?**

JESUS CHRIST IS NOT PART OF THE HISTORIC BUDDHIST WORLDVIEW

BUDDHISTS IN THE WEST TODAY GENERALLY VIEW JESUS AS AN ENLIGHTENED TEACHER, WHILE BUDDHISTS IN ASIA BELIEVE JESUS IS AN AVATAR OR A BODHISATTVA, BUT NOT GOD

## **WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?**

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS NOT PART OF THIS BELIEF

BUDDHISTS DO BELIEVE IN SPIRITS, AND SOME PRACTICE DEITY YOGA AND INVITE SPIRIT POSSESSION

## **HOW TO BE SAVED**

THE GOAL OF LIFE IS NIRVANA, TO ELIMINATE ALL DESIRES OR CRAVINGS, AND IN THIS WAY ESCAPE SUFFERING

THE EIGHTFOLD PATH IS A SYSTEM TO FREE BUDDHISTS FROM DESIRING ANYTHING AND EVENTUALLY ACHIEVE NONEXISTENCE

## **WHAT HAPPENS AFTER DEATH?**

REINCARNATION

PEOPLE DO NOT HAVE THEIR OWN INDIVIDUAL SOULS OR SPIRITS, BUT ONE'S DESIRES AND FEELINGS MAY BE REINCARNATED INTO ANOTHER PERSON

## **OTHER FACTS, BELIEFS, OR PRACTICES**

EIGHTFOLD PATH RECOMMENDS RIGHT KNOWLEDGE, INTENTIONS, SPEECH, CONDUCT, LIVELIHOOD, RIGHT EFFORT, MINDFULNESS, AND MEDITATION

SOME BUDDHIST GROUPS TALK ABOUT AN "ETERNAL BUDDHA" (LIFE-FORCE)

THROUGH THE "DOCTRINE OF ASSIMILATION" THE BELIEF SYSTEMS OF OTHER RELIGIONS ARE BLENDED INTO THEIR FORM OF BUDDHISM