

Gautama Buddha

It all started with the Buddha, originally Siddhartha Gautama son of the King Suddhodana who ruled a small kingdom namely Shakya's now located in Nepal. He lived his life as per the customs and traditions of that time, got married at an early age to Princess Yasodahara, and had a son. The young prince lived in his palace with every luxury at his command however, when confronted with the reality of life, hardships, sufferings, impermanence, discontent, and existential uncertainty he left all the luxury and set out his life as an ascetic in search of a solution.



For next six years, he continued wandering the plains of Ganges in search of the answers he sought, learning from famous teachers, submitting himself to rigorous ascetic and traditional practices which did not happen to satisfy him. So he abandoned all traditional religions and their methods and went his own way.

Sitting beneath a tree which now referred as the Bodhi Tree which basically means the wisdom tree by the river Niranjara near Gaya in modern Bihar, He attained the wisdom, the answer's he was seeking around the age of 35-36 and the ascetic Gautama became Buddha, the Enlightened one.

After enlightenment, Buddha spent 45 years to teach all kinds of people, from kings to peasants, Brahmins to outcasts, rich ones to beggars, and holy men to robbers, without ever differentiating between them, for him everyone equal caste and social barriers meant nothing to him; his preached path welcomed all men and women eager to learn and follow.

According to our country's first Prime minister, "the message of Buddha was the message of peace and goodwill, ahimsa or nonviolence and cooperation and doing good even to the doer of evil."

The center of Buddha's lies in the Four Noble Truths (Cattari Ariyasaccani) and the Eightfold Path (Ariya Ashtanga Marga), if we look into the Four Noble Truths, a blueprint for grasping and transcending suffering (dukkha). The first truth affirms suffering as life's unavoidable reality. The second pins it on craving (tanha). The third promises its cessation (nirodha), and the fourth offers the Eightfold Path (Ariya Ashtanga Marga) as the route to freedom. This path encompasses right understanding (Sammā Ditthi), right intention (Sammā Sankappa), right speech (Sammā Vācā), and right action (Sammā Kammanta), guiding individuals toward ethical living, wisdom, and mental discipline.

According to Walpola Rahula, "Buddhism is neither pessimistic nor optimistic." It is realistic to its core, it views life and the world as they truly are, which is with objective and clarity. It neither deceives you into a fantasy of bliss nor does it frighten and agonize you with all kinds of imaginary fears and sins. It observes the true nature of the world and yourself guiding you towards ultimate freedom, peace, calm, and fulfillment.

The quote following from the Dhammapada "Hatred does not cease by hatred, but only by love; this is the eternal rule." Emphasizes Buddhism's commitment to compassion over vengeance. Facing hate with more hate fuels endless suffering but the true resolution comes through kindness. The Buddha advocated empathy and forgiveness to uproot resentment, fostering inner calm and social harmony. This universal principle can guide everything from personal disputes to worldwide conflicts.

The Buddhism principle helped foster social harmony for years and years and influenced many prominent historical figures to do same such as Emperor Ashoka, who was not only a devoted follower of Buddhism he didn't just embrace it but also propagated it across his empire to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar who believed and wrote accordingly in his book The Buddha and His Dhamma "The religion of the Buddha is the only religion which teaches liberty, equality and fraternity."

Buddha and his teachings are not a mere religion, it's the way of life that teaches compassion, wisdom, self-discipline, and freedom from suffering. It addresses universal human concerns and leads a path towards peace, harmony, and inner transformation.

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References:

What the Buddha Taught by Walpola Rahula

