

Example by StudyDriver

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Buddhism and Gautama Buddha Example

During the 5th century B.C.E, a new way of life developed and flourished in northeastern India, one of the three most major widespread religions. Buddhism was found and created by Siddhartha Gautama, a former Hindu, upon realizing the common struggles and sufferings in life. Also known as Buddha Shakyamuni, or The Buddha, he was born a royal prince in 624 B.C.E in Lumbini. He was referred to as the Buddha, not a god or a prophet. 'Buddha' essentially translates to 'The Awakened One' or 'Enlightened One'. Although Buddha came from a royal family, he left his sheltered life of riches after recognizing the frightening facts of life: aging, sickness, and death. He desired to discover and understand the true meaning of life and way of happiness. Buddha embraced a lifestyle of self-discipline and self-enlightenment through the act of meditating for 49 consecutive days, before teaching and spreading his message.

What is Buddhism

**Buddhism is not like any other religion per say, but a positive, simplistic way of living life. It's a spiritual journey to finding oneself and one's purpose of life in order to attain salvation. (focusing on personal development and

finding the purpose of life)**

Historical relevance/significance

The meaning behind the establishment and influence of Buddhism, is on its own, a captivating development in history. The influence of Buddhism on world history is significant, especially in the way that its teachings impacted art, culture, society, and politics in India, as well as other parts of South Asia. Its' expansion is a historical process that can be studied, analysed, and interpreted. The investigation of the extent to which Buddhism culturally and politically impacted India is truly essential because it can create a better understanding of how religions influence culture and society, even in different parts of the world. Understanding how Buddhism influenced India and the effects of it can also help one understand the nature of the mind. (help one understand oneself.)

*Somethin somethin , it is however, necessary to go further back in history

As many other South Asian countries, India's main religion was Hinduism in the blah blah century. Being divided into groups of society based on wealth, family, and something else does naturally have a major impact on a country, society???? majority of lower castes were angry, as well as SOME higher castes. In india, the Brahmin placed bad orders and lower castest felt inferior and unequal unfair. The research question to what extent did the development of Buddhism culturally and politically influence India prior to the Common Era, therefore arises.

In order to answer this question, the investigation will explore Hinduism, the main religion of India before Buddhism, the development of Buddhism, and the impacts Buddhism had on India. Some cultural/social and political impacts, such as the development of language and literature, increased respect for animal life, moral teachings practiced by society, and the policies adopted by the Mauryan Empire are also evaluated in order to determine to what extent Buddhism influenced Indian culture and politics before the Common Era.

Even though Buddhism was (more) widely accepted in the surrounding South Asian regions, there is no doubt that culture/social and politics in India were adjusted significantly with the new traditions, morals, and ethical

values introduced by Buddha Gautama. Buddhism remained a popular religion in India for centuries. (maybe u dont need to reword)>The author of this investigation will therefore argue that Buddhism prior to the Common Era, to a great extent, culturally and politically influenced India.

Investigation

India before Buddhism

In order to determine the significance of the cultural/social influence of Buddhism in India, the investigation will firstly examine India prior to the spread of Buddhism. (as buddhism is an offshoot of hinduism)

Before Indian culture, government and public affairs were shaped by Buddhism significantly, the country was dominated by the Hinduism religion, which originated in the third millenium B.C.E. ***** (hinduism greatly influenced buddhism) ***** Hinduism in India acquired diverse belief systems such as animism: the attribution of natural phenomena, living creatures, inanimate objects, and even plants to a soul or spirit. Hinduism created a powerful belief in many gods, deities, priests, and temples, which demonstrated one unity. People who followed Hinduism in India also believed in the universal law of 'karma' and reincarnation. Karma is essentially destiny through cause and effect. Major beliefs in Hinduism were also those in enlightenment, liberation, and release, referred to as 'moksha'. It was considered to be freedom from the endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth: 'samsara'.

Caste system

A fundamental aspect reinforced in Hinduism was the strict social hierarchical structure, the caste system. The caste system was a form of social stratification categorizing the members of India's society established by occupation and status. India's caste system was divided into four classes: the Brahmin varna were the highest (priests and scholars), the Kshatriya varna (kings, nobles, warriors), the third varna were Vaishyas (merchants,

artisans, farmers), and the fourth varna were Shudras (laborers, service providers). Below the four varnas, lying outside the caste system were the Harijans, the children of god. They were also widely known as the untouchables.

(maybe delete) Why buddha began his journey

At the age of 29, Buddha realized just how empty, unsatisfied, and unfulfilling life was. Buddha's realization ties with the belief that money and luxury can't buy happiness, and in his case, it obviously didn't, which is why he decided to abandon the wealthy, higher class life. In addition, Buddha witnessed suffering: old age, sickness, and even seeing a corpse. Encountering people suffering, Buddha was left with a deep impression in his mind, which led him to realize that all living things experience the sufferings of birth, sickness, ageing, and death. (These encounters left a deep impression on his mind and led him to realize that all living beings without exception have to experience the sufferings of birth, sickness, ageing and death) Buddha understood the laws of reincarnation, which is an endless cycle of sufferings in life and the afterlife. He began to feel deep compassion for all living beings that are trapped in this vicious cycle of sufferings, and developed a free wish to free all of them. (Seeing how all living beings are trapped in this vicious circle of suffering he felt deep compassion for them, and he developed a sincere wish to free all of them from their suffering) (Realizing that only a fully enlightened Buddha has the wisdom and the power to help all living beings in this way, he resolved to leave the palace and retire to the solitude of the forest where he would engage in profound meditation until he attained enlightenment) So, Buddha embarked on a journey searching for happiness and enlightenment, seeking liberation from the samsara, the cycle of birth. Buddha considers the endless cycle of samsara to be dukkha, painful and unsatisfactory. The only way to stop the cycle was to achieve liberation, release from sufferings, and eliminating desire. That's exactly what he did: Buddha sat in meditation under a tree and attained enlightenment.

**also talk about how people didn't like the way things were in India before Buddhism

Cultural/social impacts on India

Buddhism culturally/socially influenced India's beliefs, behaviors, and shared values significantly in various ways. To begin, Buddhism, in a way, saved Indian society and helped develop Indian culture between the 5th century BCE and the 12th century.

maybe delete The simplicity of the Buddhism religion made it easy to follow and allowed much more freedom for society. Buddhism has countless aspects, beliefs, teachings, traditions, scriptures, et c., which doesn't necessarily substantiate the simplicity of it. However, the 'simplicity' of Buddhism refers to the beliefs of radiating positivity, and abandoning negative energy that generally causes unhappiness and suffering such as materialism, anger, ignorance, and jealousy. Negativity causes hardship and agony which is quite the opposite of a 'simplistic' way to live. The 'simplicity' of the religion could also refer to? The Buddha's determination to obtain freedom from the common sufferings of life, greatly influenced people in India to convert to Buddhism, and therefore, achieve enlightenment: release from disturbance.

Rejection of vedic rituals and caste system

Buddha's standpoint of the caste system and vedic rituals considerably changed the way society operated. Not only did Buddha strongly oppose the Hindu caste system, society did as well. Buddhism, undoubtedly appealed to lower castes, especially, because it allowed people to be free of social structure, and injustice. Vedic rituals were practiced by the priests from the Brahmin social caste, and they involved ritual sacrifice of animals. Buddha renounced the caste system and animal sacrifices in favor of releasing the cycles of rebirth. Not long after, both brahmins and others, began to feel that ritual sacrifice no longer satisfied all their religious needs, and they started practising renunciation and self-denial. (Waterstone, 6) Buddhism mostly appealed to those of lower castes, however, Buddha and his followers were so influential that even the Brahmins were on board to achieve release from the material world, and practice towards non-violence. The lower castes felt inferior, so they were seeking justice and freedom. The higher castes surprisingly agreed with the abandonment of the Vedic rituals and

caste system. Usually, people in higher power that are superior, would not give up that power.

The book India, by Richard Waterstone, published in 1995 by Duncan Baird Publishers, purpose is to explain the key concepts of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, showing no specific perspective, just facts. It's a fairly clear book to read and understand because key concepts and definitions are explained within it, making it a valuable source. The information is applicable, verified, and reliable.

*The higher castes tend to feel superior, wealthier, and enjoy being at the top of a social standing. Most of the new followers of Buddhism, therefore, were lower castes, seeking justice and freedom perhaps.

*Not only did the poor castes of workers and servants have access to new opportunities, but women did too. Buddhism allowed women to have the ability to work outside of the house and become Buddhist monks, which is significantly important because they wouldn't have had access to an opportunity like it without the influential spread of Buddhism throughout India. Buddhism caused the first effort ever to eliminate discrimination and slavery in history, which is exceedingly momentous because slavery wasn't abolished in India until 1861. Slavery and discrimination should have ended then and there, but the worldwide mindset was superior and dominant.

-Buddhism's standpoint of the caste system considerably changed the way society operated, at least for those who converted. The strong opposition of the Hindu caste system, in order to attain enlightenment, majorly appealed to people in lower classes. Thus, establishing freedom and equality under a single unity. The majority of people in the higher social classes obviously would not agree to the idea of everyone sharing equal power because they were born into wealthy families, and that's all they knew.

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Development? Of Language and literature

Through a few languages, Buddhism expanded, and enriched language and literature in India. Buddha preached the core teachings of Buddhism in the Pali language

Moral teachings/ethical values

Art, architecture, sculpture, and painting

Political impacts

Maurya Empire & Ashoka

During the 3rd century BCE, Buddhism influenced the rise of a great empire. Buddha's teachings inspired the king of the Mauryan empire in India, Ashoka the Great, in which he established social justice as well as promoted the expansion of Buddhism along the way.

Ashoka was so horrified and remorseful for the violence and bloodshed during the conquest of Kalinga that he converted to Buddhism, and the foundation of his administration was appreciation for life, tolerance, compassion, and peaceful coexistence, which are essentially the basis of Buddhism. Therefore, For the rest of his reign, Ashoka used his powers as king to promote both the Buddhist movement and the welfare of his people.

The way of life must have really spoken to Ashoka the Great because it inspired the king to change his ways and

change his empire for the better. As a result, more people became vegetarian and people became much more compassionate towards others, probably due to the elimination of war in the Mauryan empire.

******At the time, Emperor Ashoka and the state supported Buddhism and converted in 260 BCE. The brutal war against the state of Kalinga led Ashoka to want to abandon violence, so he openly converted to Buddhism. By converting to Buddhism, Ashoka essentially brought people from each caste together as one under one religion. By uniting the castes, Ashoka's way of governing, without a doubt, became much easier. The monastic system was influenced by Buddhism in India. The Buddhist monks followed the same code of discipline and a common leader.

The significance of Buddhism's influence is immense because under Ashoka's rule, the earliest known ban on slavery and punishment was established, as well as environmental regulations.

The influence of Buddhism on Ashoka also influenced Buddhist monasteries to be built and the encouragement of missionary work.

Bimbisara, the King of Magadha, began following Buddhism and built schools for training in vocational subjects and hospitals for the treatment of humans and animals. (Mathur, 71) The religion of Buddhism brought happiness and sharing to the King, which positively affected the ones in need. Monasteries were accustomed for kind and enlightened people to achieve salvation through education, meditation, and experimentation. (Mathur, 71) Political and financial support of Buddhism from rulers over the time resulted in the progress of science and technology. Buddhism influenced political systems in India to have freedom of thought and life. Buddha encouraged monarchs to consider the elections, develop industries, obstruct poverty, punish criminals and wrong-doers, and to be kind. Buddhism encouraged education greatly through famous universities like Nalanda and Yalabhi.

Although Buddhism didn't replace Brahmanism, it influenced many changes in society in India. The worship of a peaceful lifestyle provided Indian society a stable political system which contributed to the development of science and technology. Brahmins realized Brahminism had weaknesses and Buddhism was actually a powerful

religion, so they converted to Buddhism. Once they converted, they contributed to the evolution of the religion in its entirety, including new technology and new ways of thinking in the country: that is why the impact of Buddhism on society, technology, and politics is overpowering.

Monastic system

*Ashoka promoted Buddhist expansion by sending monks to surrounding territories to share the teachings of the Buddha.

The monastic system was influenced by Buddhism in India. The Buddhist monks followed the same code of discipline and a common leader. Buddha taught the Pali language, the language of the common people. While Kanishka ruled, Buddhist monks followed Buddha and his teachings in the Sanskrit language. Buddhism spread through these languages and enhanced the language and literature along the way.

Meditation among indian buddhists

Meditation was practiced among Buddhists in India, which was revealed to be a way of positive thinking, clear mind, calmness, concentration, awareness, and friendliness. In other words, meditation helped to open the minds of the buddhists for positive thinking.

Buddha noticed all the hardship, agony, and unhappiness in the world and sought to find an antidote. Buddha achieved a happy, enlightened state of mind through meditation. Through meditation, Buddhists desired a stronger understanding of the individual self, their peers, and life. Buddha clarified that problems and suffering emerge from a negative and confused state of mind. He explained that happiness and blessings result from a positive and calm state of mind. Most of his teachings guided people to progressively overcome negative states of mind like anger, ignorance, and jealousy. His teachings taught people how to be positive-minded and develop the joyous emotions of love, wisdom, and compassion. He claimed that through overcoming the negative with the positive states of mind, the mind and body would experience everlasting peace and happiness.