

Buddhism Intro

Explain Mahayana Buddhism and its relationship to Theravada Buddhism.

Mahayana Buddhists strive to stay in *samsara*, or constant reincarnation, in order to help others, whereas Theravada Buddhists strive to meditate to gain freedom from *samsara*. Theravada is older and more conservative than Mahayana.

Outline what we can and cannot say are definitive words/teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha.

We cannot say for certain whether Mahayana texts like the *Lotus Sutra*, *Diamond Sutra*, or *Heart Sutra* are definitely the words of the Buddha. However, we can say for certain that the Four Noble Truths are most likely the words of the Buddha.

Describe the Buddhist ideas of creation and the cosmos. Sketch it out (not by copying the drawing on p. 739, but using the text and your own English words)

- The universe is eternal in Buddhism. This is just the current type of world we live in; there will be worlds before and worlds after.
- In the Buddhist world, Earth is actually a mountain called Mount Meru, situated in a really big sea.
 - Gods and other beings live on the slopes, top, and above the mountain.
- The beings in Buddhism include:
 - God, demigod, human, animal, ghost, or denizen
- Above the mountain, there are the realms of humans, gods, demigods, etc.

Outline and compare and contrast the six major realms by drawing them, their inhabitants, way of life, relationship to Buddhism, etc. Evaluate and examine their importance and relationship to Buddhist ideas and beliefs.

- The Realm of form is the stepping-stone to the Formless Realm, where the beings residing there are kind of enlightened but not really; they only need to use sight, hearing, and touch. (Which, when you think about it, doesn't really change much)
- The Formless Realm is where enlightened beings reside; the beings here don't need to use any senses. You get here by meditating to enlightenment as a human.
- The Desire Realm is where beings are normally; constantly seeking material fulfillment with the five senses.
- The Animal Realm is lower than the Desire Realm; it is not desirable to be reborn here because Buddhists say that animals are killed for dumber reasons than why humans are killed; people are usually reborn here because they did something ignorant.
- The Ghost Realm is almost hell but not really. It's similar to purgatory for Christianity, and Buddhists are required to feed the ghosts.
- The Hell Realm (?) is -- guess what -- hell in Buddhism. As usual, the lower you go, the worst it gets.

Explain the ten negative actions and their relationship & reconciliation within the Four Noble Truths.

- Killing; this is related to the truth of suffering, and can be reconciled with the truth of cessation; pacification can pacify the suffering
- Stealing; same thing
- Raping; same thing
- Lying; this is related to the truth of origin, since karma, kleshas, and avidya are always existent in our mind, and can cause suffering. This can be reconciled with the truth of the path; being aware of the path can keep us from lying.
- Sowing discord with speech; same thing
- Being mean; same thing
- Being senseless; same thing
- Wanting what another guy has; same thing
- Hoping that someone gets hurt; same thing
- Having incorrect views (?); same thing