

Contributions of siddhartha gautama to buddhism



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Ilinca Stingaciu

Siddhartha Gautama, later known as the Buddha, is considered the founder of Buddhist religion. Many buddhist beliefs and teachings are based on the Buddha's discoveries and teachings. One of the most important ways in which the Siddhartha Gautama influenced Buddhism is by actually spreading the religion, and spreading this teachings to people, which drew in followers who continued to further spread buddhism (Alldritt, 2004, p. 25). After reaching enlightenment, Buddha found the answer to suffering, which is also referred to as the dukkha in religious scripts. Based on his realizations, he founded the Four Noble truths of suffering, an important concept in Buddhist teachings. The first of the truths, known as the Truth of suffering, essentially states that everything in life leads to suffering. The second truth, that of where suffering comes from, explains the realization that suffering stems from selfishness and cravings. The third truth teaches of the cessation or elimination of suffering within one's life, and to let go of all cravings or desires that cause suffering (Gethin, 1998, p. 59). The fourth truth teaches what to do be able to eliminate suffering, essentially teaching followers how to come about attaining nirvana (Gethin, 1998, p. 80). The eightfold path, a common concept and symbol in Buddhism, was also established by the Buddha based on fourth of the Noble truths. This outlines eight concepts on how to live life, which guide a person to end suffering, and find fulfillment (Gethin, 1998, p. 82). Meditation is a key practice within Buddhist religion, one that like many, can be traced back the the Buddha. He taught followers how to meditate in order to separate themselves from their personal thoughts and emotions (Hope & Van Loon, 1999, p. 38). He encouraged

ideology that enlightenment and meditation is personal, so each person must find their way to enlightenment on their own (Ross, 1980, p. 4).

Born into royalty, Siddhartha Gautama was raised in a life of luxury, sheltered from the realities of pain and suffering (Ross, p. 5). After one day going against his Father's orders to stay within the palace walls, Siddhartha was given a tour of the city, where he learned of the three sufferings (Ross, 1980, p. 6). Outside, the prince saw the realities of illness, aging, and death. Siddhartha was scared of the fate of pain and death which awaited everyone, and no longer saw a purpose in anything after (Hope & Van Loon, 1999, p. 13). He found no more value in wealth he had and in the pleasures of life, as he realized that it would all go to waste in the inevitability of suffering and death (Gethin, 1998, p. 15). Siddhartha wanted to find out how to find happiness, regardless of inevitable suffering (Ross, 1980, p. 6). He isolated himself from everyone, and sat under the Bodhi tree, until he fully understood suffering (Hope & Van Loon, p. 19). Further inspiration came after Buddha's enlightenment. After discovering the true meaning of suffering, and how to accept it within one's life, he made it his mission to help others find this awakening, and understand the truth about suffering (Gethin, 1998, p. 15). Although Buddha had attained Nirvana, he chose to stay on earth to teach others how to reach enlightenment just as he had. He believed everyone should have equal right be followers and learn the teachings of their religion (Ross, 1980, p. 5). This was his inspiration to spread Buddhist teachings, rather than to keep his awakening to himself (Ross, 1980, pg. 18). He drew in followers who continued to further spread Buddhism (Alldritt, 2004, p. 25), and encouraged followers to question

everything he said in order to find a path to enlightenment on their own, in lieu of only following his word (Hope & Van Loon, 1999, p. 7). He did not want to be seen as their religious leader, but rather as a teacher on how to reach enlightenment (Ross, 1980, p. 4).

"`All created things perish,' he who knows and sees this becomes passive in pain; this is the way to purity." (The Dhammapada, verse 277). Through this quote are reflected many core buddhist teachings, as many teaching surround the idea of transience, from one life to the next. It exemplifies how in order to reach enlightenment, and to be free of pain and suffering, one must realize what suffering truly is, and why it is present within all life. Buddha saw that suffering stemmed from greed and desire. This belief was outlined through the second of the Four Noble truths, realizing where suffering comes from. He believed that in order to end suffering, one must give up materialistic and selfish desires. The quote can be translated back into the ideology of the Four Noble truths, as these truths outline the meaning of suffering within one's life, truths that must be realized in order to find enlightenment (Gethin, 1998, p. 59). The quote alludes to the need for this clarity and knowledge of suffering to achieve enlightenment. One of the many teachings of the Buddha are the three Marks of Existence. The first is dukkha, which is suffering. The second is the teaching of impermanence known as anitya, stating that nothing lasts, as everything is a transition into something else. The third, anatman teaches to be selfless, in the sense that a person does not live forever, so nothing considered to be part of one's personality will live on. Analyzing these teachings, they can be related to the idea set out in the quote, that of continuity and the inevitability of dukkha, or

suffering. Out of these, the anitya, the second teaching, provides the clearest link to the meaning of the quote. Anitya teaches that nothing lasts forever, just as the quote states that everything ends and this must be realized, which are in part done by understanding the Three Marks (Alldritt, 2004, p. 24).

References

Alldritt, L. (2004, October). *Buddhism*. Retrieved from ebooks.

infobaselearning.com/View.asp

x? ISBN= 9781438106380&InstID= 7469

The Dhammapada, (n. d.). *Full books*. Retrieved from www.fullbooks.

com/The-Dhammapada.

html

Gethin, R. (1998). *The Foundations of Buddhism*. Retrieved from search.

ebscohost.com/logi

n.aspx? direct= true&db= nlebk&AN= 12334&site= ehost-live&ebv=

EB&ppid= pp_59

Hope, J. & Van Loon, B. (1999). *Introducing Buddha*. Cambridge, UK: Icon Books.

Ross, N. (1980). *Buddhism: A Way of Life and Thought*. Location: Vintage Books.