

Comparing and contrasting hinduism and buddhism

[Religion](#), [Buddhism](#)



Hinduism and Buddhism, both ancient Indian major belief systems, were instrumental in shaping the everyday life as well as a life span of ancient Indians. More of progressive enlightened philosophy than a religion, Buddhism illuminated the path to righteousness, good heartedness, honor and virtue through the Eight Fold path and the Four Noble Truths. Hinduism emphasizes asceticism (refraining from the "wants of life and its worldly pleasure") and reincarnation, or rebirth of an individual in the hopes of the ascension of one's soul based on the results of the past lives and the attempt to be released of the "wheel of life" cycle. Buddhism was created, although perhaps not wantonly by the enlightened philosopher Siddhartha Gautama as an alternative to the affluent Hinduism. Son of a ruling Kshatriya family (or soldier class in the caste system), Gautama trained in martial arts. As he grew older, he toiled with the burden of death and sickness and dedicated his life to finding the cure for these ailments. He finally achieved enlightenment and discovered the meaning of life after a days' worth of meditation under an oak tree. From this he drew his philosophical views of the Eight Fold Path and the Four Noble Truths and spread his teachings to the world. Hinduism is a polytheistic religion centered on the four Vedas, or a collection of hymns and ceremonies. Some of the major Gods and Goddesses of the Hindu belief are Brahmin the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver and Shiva the destroyer. Hindu religion sprouted from the concept of Brahmanism or the traveling on the wheel of life until the individual soul is reunited with the Great World Soul. A caste system was created to group the people into sects and essentially, to keep track of how close an individual was to escaping the wheel of life. To do good in life would surely see you to the next step of the

caste system and to be bad, the opposite. Each step on the caste system held more rigged stipulations as to how "clean" you were supposed to keep your karma. Karma played a major role in the life of a Hindu. Karma, or actions, tallied up over a span of a lifetime would determine whether the soul would ascend or descend the chain that moved the individual closer or further away from the World Soul. Although the endgame is similar in design, the paths to Nirvana or Brahman differ completely. Hinduism encompasses the strict ideals of Asceticism or refraining from life pleasures. If an individual is acetic to the core, this will surely lead to a life time of suffering. Buddhism is more lax, although does have its own concept of suffering as laid out in the Four Noble Truths, in its views of a path to enlightenment. Gautama's Eight Fold Path laid out the steps to end life's suffering. Although the steps aren't linear, they do correlate and parallel each other. "It is a practical guideline to ethical and mental development with the goal of freeing the individual from attachments and delusions; and it finally leads to understanding the truth about all things. "(Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path.) Both Hinduism and Buddhism appealed to the "average man" in the sense that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. If suffering is the only thing an individual must go through during a life time, a just reward of Nirvana or Brahmin is the only plausible reward. Within the Caste System, ascension from one social class to the next would be another perk to living a good life, just as receding to a lower social class for bad karma is incentive. The Dharma says that each individual is born with a Varna and each individual must adhere to the guidelines set forth to each caste system member. "Every dharma had the king as its protector; and law could not, as

a set of practical requirements, effectively demand anything that was not at the same time morally and legally binding.' Unrighteous government, illustrated by the fall of the mythical king Vena, is understood, but the point of the myth is that miracles are needed to dissolve the obligation of obedience. "([http://www. publishyourarticles.](http://www.publishyourarticles.net/knowledge-hub/philosophy/what-was-dharmas-role-in-caste-system-of-ancient-indian-society.html)

[net/knowledge-hub/philosophy/what-was-dharmas-role-in-caste-system-of-ancient-indian-society. html](http://www.publishyourarticles.net/knowledge-hub/philosophy/what-was-dharmas-role-in-caste-system-of-ancient-indian-society.html)) Hinduism spread among India because of the power it gave to the aristocrats and the idea that after many lives of servitude, that one day you too could be a high ranking member of society. Hinduism gave strict, yet simple in most senses, guidelines to how life should be lived and the ends justifying the means. Contrastingly, Buddhism challenged Hinduism and spread because it did NOT give power to any one set of people. It claimed that all people, regardless of social standing could achieve Nirvana and enlightenment by following the simple rules set out by Gautama himself. Both Hinduism and Buddhism rival each other even to this day for the main religious belief in India. Though they differ, they both set the ground rules for being a good person and living a good, just life. Follow the ground rules within each and the path to Nirvana and Brahmin is unimpeded and rewarding.