

Example of essay on siddhartha

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



The Brahmin's Son

In India, during the sixth century B. C., the Buddha era, lived a little boy named Siddhartha. Being the son of a Brahmin priest, Siddhartha was expected to practice sacrificial rituals and be trained in the various Vedas and Upanishads. He perceived its principles at a young age. Siddhartha realized that his soul or the Atman and the universal spirit were the same and that meditation with chanting of the Om aided the union of these two. This insight urged Siddhartha to take on the path to experience enlightenment which could not be attained by mere education. With the consent of his father, Siddhartha left home to become a Samana, in search of the true core of Atman and Brahman and an enlightenment to be experienced every moment. His friend Govinda too joined him in this quest.

Among the samanas

With the Samanas, Siddhartha and Govinda learnt their ascetic practices. The Samanas believed in conquering the body by declining its desires. Siddhartha overcame pain, hunger, thirst and fatigue by experiencing them to extremities. He could also stop his breath through meditation. After undergoing through all the penance, Siddhartha realized that this path could never attain him the liberation as none of the Samanas had attained it either. Thus, after being with them for three years, he decided to depart. Siddhartha and Govinda were informed about Gotama, the Buddha who was said to have attained Nirvana. With the blessings of the senior Samana and with diverse views about the authenticity of another spiritual teacher, both the friends decided to meet Buddha.

Gotama

In the pursuit to meet the Buddha, both Siddhartha and Govinda reached the town of Savathi. Buddha's actual name was Gautama or Gotama and Buddha, which means, "The Enlightened One", this title was given to him upon attaining Nirvana. As a young boy, Gotama had renounced the world in search of cure for the human sufferings. He became an ascetic and searched for a spiritual guide. As none of the teachers could respond to Gotama's queries about awakening, he left the ascetic practices and started meditation. He achieved the Nirvana while meditating on the banks of river Neranjara, near Gaya. Both Siddhartha and Govinda listened to the Buddha's preaching about releasing self from suffering. They learnt about the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path of leading the right life. Having convinced Govinda joined the Buddha's community. Siddhartha decided to leave as he was doubtful about Buddha's justification of the chain of cause and effect in life as it opposed the possibility of self to rise above the world and gain salvation. He could not get the answer for Buddha's experience of enlightenment and this further frustrated Siddhartha to make a decision of finding his goal all by himself.

Awakening With a dual mind whether to continue the pursuit of liberation or return back to his past livelihood, Siddhartha left Buddha's community. With a diminishing belief in the spiritual teachers and a constant urge to seek the divine, Siddhartha found himself losing his own identity. He had believed that the ultimate reality of life lied ahead of human senses. But in the battle between the truth and illusion, he decided to believe what he witnessed. He decided to start his life over again, and this time with a different vision. He

started admiring the world and searched in it for the divine. Though he considered the world as an illusion, he believed that it was an expression of the divine. This expression of the divine was to be experienced by Siddhartha, which would further bring about his awakening.

Kamala Siddhartha had now started following his own inner voice. He appreciated the beauty of things around like never before. Buddha's Eightfold path required an ascetic to follow celibacy. But Siddhartha did not abide by those laws, and chose to accept life as it comes. In an attempt to prove his thoughts, he gets passionate with an unknown woman who passes him amorous gestures. Further, Siddhartha came across a courtesan called Kamala and was captivated by her beauty. Seeking Kamala's help, Siddhartha learnt the art of love. He learnt the importance of wearing the right attire and earning money to create an impression before a woman. With the influence of Kamala, he got into the service of a rich merchant called Kamaswami. Siddhartha's experience as a Samana helped him to focus on his goals more intensely. Amongst the People Siddhartha's proficiency in education and his experience of the Samana practices made him excel in his new venture as a businessman and a lover. Though Siddhartha was exposed to luxury, his ascetic experience helped him in staying detached from getting accustomed to the extravagant lifestyle. His visions were clear and he did not worry about the yield, unlike the merchant, Kamaswami. He continued his experimentation on love by paying frequent visits to

Kamala and spent his earnings on her. He further found that although their paths were different, Kamala and he had a thing in common that they were

not committed or attached to anyone.

Samsara As the years passed by, there was a drastic change in Siddhartha's lifestyle. He had to himself all the worldly possessions and had drifted apart from his spiritual goal. He had experienced all the positive and negative aspects of life. Lethargy, greed and obsession had invaded his mind. His constant accretion became a burden on him and to expel the wealth, Siddhartha started gambling with dice. This further made him frustrated of his life. At this point Siddhartha realized that in an effort to outdo his desires upon spirituality, he had overlooked the Truth of life. He learnt that he had fallen into a phase called Samsara, which meant uncertainty and ignorance in Sanskrit. Once again his spiritual character took over his mind and he decided to leave, unaware that Kamala was pregnant with his child.

The Ferryman

The river was an example of unity in diversity, its flowing nature determined non-stagnancy. As Siddhartha strolled on the river bank he met a ferryman, named Vasudeva. With no money to pay the ferryman, Siddhartha offered the ferryman his clothes and requested him to employ him as his student, for which Vasudeva gladly agreed. Siddhartha had found his righteous teacher in Vasudeva. Siddhartha quickly learnt ferrying and as they listened to the river and observed its vast presence, he realized that life too did not have a past or future. The present is what existed. This was the phase of preliminary awakening for him. Siddhartha's journey on the spiritual path began again. His emotions were put to test as he met Kamala in his hut. She had been bit by a snake and was breathing her last. She realized from his smile that he

had finally achieved what he yearned for and the peace on his face was well communicated.

The Son

Kamala left behind her son with Siddhartha. The eleven-year-old, who had an extravagant lifestyle, found it difficult to adjust with his father in a small hut. Vasudeva suggests Siddhartha to let the boy find his own future, but Siddhartha's affection towards his son does not permit him to part with the boy. Finally the boy condemned his father and ran away. This put Siddhartha into state of depression which proved that he was still far from his goal.

Om

The pain of losing his son made Siddhartha more empathetic towards needs of people. This act of his son reminded him of his past when he had revolted against his father to seek his destiny. Siddhartha suffered the same pain which his father must have suffered then. Vasudeva came to his rescue; they both listened to the river and sensed the unity in its diverse elements. He realized perfection in being united. Vasudeva realized that Siddhartha had reached the peak of attaining enlightenment and therefore decided to take his separate path ahead to experience the unity with the things. This revealed the exalted status of Vasudeva too, who helped Siddhartha gain the same experience. Siddhartha discovered that all individual were like the flowing waters, once their goal was reached they were reborn in some other form and this cycle repeated till the perfection was achieved. If this perfection is not achieved, the individual would accept the circumstance as it came by. Siddhartha had his own experience of enlightenment which showed him the world in perfect clarity which could be explained intellectually.

Govinda

The talk of the old ferryman had spread wide. Govinda was keen on meeting this wise man and came across Siddhartha. Having met over a long gap, both the friends discussed about their chosen paths. Siddhartha did not follow any principles but had an understanding that everything that is created had value. Totality of life was in accepting everything whether positive or negative. He was not worried about the reality and the illusion of the world unlike Govinda. Siddhartha valued Love as the most important thing in the world which contradicted with Govinda's perception of love as a desire. Govinda thought that Siddhartha was a strange man with strange thoughts, yet he accepted that Siddhartha radiated an aura of purity and peace just like the Buddha. Govinda requested Siddhartha to offer him a token of their meeting to which Siddhartha asked him to kiss him on the forehead. Just as he did this, Govinda experienced the unity of life amidst of all its diversity. He visualized Siddhartha's smiling face as a smile of unity that embraced all the changes. This smile of Siddhartha resembled smile of the Buddha. This became Govinda's moment of enlightenment. The final emphasis given here is that merely following the principles will not enlighten a person; even seeking a spiritual guide will not give the liberation. With a teacher of few words like Vasudeva and a constant belief to understand and accept the totality of life took Siddhartha to the pinnacle of enlightenment.