

# Women in early buddhism and christian gnosticism

[History](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Number: Women in early Buddhism and Christian Gnosticism In “ the images of women in early Buddhism and Christian Gnosticism ” the author argues that though people tend to think of eastern and western religions as separate and distinct traditions, their ancient scriptures exhibit some remarkable similarities. The writer shows how the authors of early Buddhists and Christianity depicted women as being inferior, dirty, less rational, susceptible to weakness of the flesh and do not command any respect (Gutschow 95).

The Buddhist and Gnostic myths explain how the current degenerate state of humanity came about and the fall of humanity from perfection, bringing about distinctions such as male and female, heaven and earth. Women associates with the deficiencies of this earth described being black, corporeality and contaminated, characteristics attributed to them. The writers condemned the female bodies but according to Nagarjuna the construct of male bodies is no better than female. The author has a conflicting opinion about the negative attitude towards women by citing Buddhist scriptures showing the participation of women in spiritual matter and likewise the Christian writers Tertullian and Irenaeus admitting to women occupying positions in the Gnostic community (Fischer 84).

The human suffering is. As a result, eating the earthly fruit. This act ripped the humans of their happiness and joy; humans lost their luminous body thus sexual intercourse bringing about the generation of beasts. In both traditions, the fall of mankind started with eating the earthly food (Gutschow 95).

The only way to attain spirituality is by abstaining from sexual acts so as to weaken the ties with the worldly. Sex is associated with suffering by both

traditions as it considered impure and defiles the body. The scripture recommends celibacy, Buddha left his family so did Jesus urge his disciples to destroy the work of femaleness (Fischer 84).

Human beings male and female can achieve the transformation by abstaining from sexual intercourse. Women must cultivate a male mind in order to enter heaven as Mahayana literature puts it. It is not a physical transformation, but a mental transition to spirituality by acquiring insight so as to transform their mentality focused on spiritual attainment (Cabezón 103).

In the opening of the article, the woman is depicted as an inferior being associated with a lot of negativities but in the conclusion she emerges with a lot of praise from both Buddhist and Gnostic writers as a creative nurturing mother. Thus, men and women in equal measure can achieve spiritual power.

#### Work cited

Gutschow, Kim. *Being a Buddhist Nun: The Struggle for Enlightenment in the Himalayas*.

Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004, pp. 84-98

Cabezón, José I. *Buddhism, Sexuality, and Gender*. Albany, NY: State University of New

York Press, 1992. Print, pp. 90-105

Fischer, Gayle V. *Journal of Womens History Guide to Periodical Literature*. Bloomington:

Indiana University Press, 1992. Print, pp. 94-105

*Buddhist-Christian Studies*, Vol. 2 (1982): University of Hawaii Press, pp. 94-105