

## **Notes on Buddhism**

### Evolved within Hinduism

Buddha (the Enlightened one) - Gautama Siddhartha

Major branches: Theravada (“tradition of the elders”)  
Mahayana (“greater vehicle”)

### Gautama’s life and career

Privileged early life of sensual comfort and enjoyment  
Relinquishing early way of life and undertaking ascetic practices  
Relinquishing of asceticism and discovery of the Middle Way

### Four Noble Truths

- 1) Life is suffering, dissatisfaction
- 2) The cause of suffering is selfish craving
- 3) The cure of suffering is to abandon or renounce craving
- 4) The way that enables one to renounce craving is the eightfold path

### Eightfold path

Right views, intention, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness and concentration.

### Wheel of suffering, death, rebirth and suffering

Nirvana - end of craving, extinction of unsatisfied desire, liberation from the wheel

Original version (Theravada) is an example of non-theism. Theravada ascribes non-supernatural status of the Buddha.

Stress is on personal confirmation of the truth, avoidance of blind obedience or faith.

Treatment of doctrine as merely means to an end, not to be clung to for itself.

Caste distinctions irrelevant. Salvation possible for all in this life

### Divergence from original (Theravada) teachings in Mahayana tradition

Buddha as compassionate divine being  
Bodhisattvas  
Various local deities interpreted as buddhas  
Prayer and worship  
Salvation possible for all, not just monks.

