

World Religions

Buddhism Questions

(The World's Religions by Houston Smith)

The Man Who Woke Up (pp. 82-88)

1. Who are the only two people in history to provoke the question “What are you?” rather than the question “Who are you?”
2. What was the Buddha’s answer to the question?
3. What is the Sanskrit root of “Buddha,” and what two meanings does it have?
4. In what has the Buddha’s life become encased?
5. What was the Buddha’s full name?
6. Briefly describe him and give the facts of his early life.
7. According to what fortunetellers at his birth prophesied, what would he become if he remained with the world?
8. According to the second part of the prophecy, what would he become if he forsook the world?
9. Briefly recount the legend of The Four Passing Sights.
10. What was the Great Going Forth?
11. Briefly describe the first phase of his search.
12. Briefly describe the second phase.
13. Briefly describe the principle of the Middle Way.
14. Briefly describe the third phase of his search.
15. Why is the tree under which he sat called the Bo Tree? What was the location later called?
16. What was the first event that occurred the night of his meditation? Which two gods challenged him?
17. Briefly describe the Great Awakening. How did the natural world respond to it?
18. How many days was the Buddha lost in rapture?
19. What was the final temptation of Mara?
20. What was the Buddha’s answer to Mara?
21. How did the Buddha spend the rest of his life?
22. How did he divide his yearly schedule?
23. What did he do three times a day, every day?
24. How old was he when he died and around what year was his death? How did he die?
25. What two sentences from his valedictory have echoed through the ages?

The Silent Sage (pp. 88-92)

1. Briefly describe the general impact that the Buddha’s life had on those who knew him.
2. What was the most striking thing about the Buddha?
3. What did this combination of characteristics shield him from?
4. The Buddha’s tenderness was so strong that Buddhism has often been called a religion of what?
5. What kinds of people did the Buddha move amongst and what was their general reaction to him?

6. In what ways were the Buddha's physical needs simple?
7. What was the Buddha's reaction to those who wanted to turn him into a god in his lifetime?
8. What two things evidenced the Buddha's leadership?
9. In what was the Buddha gifted with preternatural insight?
10. The Buddha's entire life was saturated with what?
11. What is the translation of "Sakyamuni" and what does it mean?
12. What is the translation of "Tathagata" and what does it mean?

The Rebel Saint (pp. 92-99)

1. What must Buddhism be seen against the background of?
2. In what way was the emergence of Buddhism different from that of Hinduism?
3. List the six aspects of religion.
4. What two things did religion arise out of?
5. "Grace" is the belief that Reality is ultimately what? Briefly explain.
6. Though the six aspects contribute to religion, each can also do what?
7. What was the religious scene like in the Buddha's day?
8. What is so surprising about the emergence of Buddhism?
9. What were the two prongs of the Buddha's attack on authority?
10. What was Buddhism devoid of?
11. What was the Buddha's "noble silence" an attempt to avoid?
12. What did the Buddha ask his followers to slip free from? What language did Buddha stop using in an attempt to accomplish this?
13. Briefly describe the Buddhist view of reincarnation? According to the Buddha, can an individual reach enlightenment in a single lifetime?
14. Why did Buddha reject the supernatural?
15. When did all six aspects of religion come "tumbling into" Buddhism?
16. Why is original Buddhism so unique and historically invaluable?
17. List and give a brief explanation of the seven characteristic terms of Buddhism.