

## BUDDHISM IS AN EDUCATION, *NOT* A RELIGION

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According to the Webster's Dictionary, the definition of religion is as follows, "*An organized system of beliefs, rites, and celebrations centered on a supernatural being power; belief pursued with devotion.*" Buddhism is not a religion because: First, the Buddha is not a 'supernatural being power'. The Buddha is simply a person who has reached Complete Understanding of the reality of life and the universe. Life refers to ourselves, and universe refers to our living environment. The Buddha taught that all beings possess the same ability within to reach Complete Understanding of themselves and their environment, and free themselves from all sufferings to attain utmost happiness. All beings can become Buddhas, and all beings and the Buddha

are equal by nature. The Buddha is not a God, but a teacher, who teaches us the way to restore Wisdom and Understanding by conquering the greed, hatred, and ignorance which blind us at the present moment. The word ‘Buddha’ is a Sanskrit word, when translated it means, “Wisdom, Awareness/Understanding”. We call the founder of Buddhism Shakyamuni ‘Buddha’ because He has attained Complete Understanding and Wisdom of life and the universe. Buddhism is His education to us, it is His teaching which shines the way to Buddhahood.

Second, Buddhism is not a religion because ‘belief’ in the Buddha’s teachings is not blind belief, blind faith, and far from superstition. Shakyamuni Buddha taught us not to blindly believe what he tells us, he wants us to try the teachings and prove them for ourselves. The Buddha wants us

to **know**, not merely believe. The Buddha's teachings flow from his own experience of the way to understand the true face of life and the universe, and show us a path of our own to taste the truth for ourselves. This is much like a good friend telling us of his trip to Europe, the sights he has seen, and the way to go there and see for ourselves. The Buddha uses a perfectly scientific way of showing us reality in its true form.

Third, Buddhism is not a religion because all the 'rites and celebrations' are not centered on a supernatural being, but rather the people attending the assemblies. The ceremonies and celebrations in Buddhism all serve an educational purpose, a reminder of the Buddha's teachings and encouragement to all students who practice it. For example, the Thousand Buddhas Repentance Ceremony practiced during

Chinese New Year is to help the participants cultivate a humble heart and respect for others. The point of all ‘ceremonies’ is to help others awaken from delusion and return to Wisdom and Understanding.

Finally, Buddhism is not a religion because the ‘devotion’ used in Buddhism is not one based on emotion, but one based on reason. Students of the Buddha are devoted to their practice of maintaining Purity of Mind because this practice brings true happiness. We are devoted to help others and the Society attain Complete Understanding and Wisdom. Only through Complete Understanding and Wisdom can we realize our true selves and living environment. The Buddha’s education is truly not a religion but an education, teaching us the way to break through ignorance and

arrive at a perfect understanding of ourselves and everything around us.

Our goal is True Happiness. *ℵ*