Name: _____

Date: _____

Buddhism

More than 2,500 years ago, a prince who became the Buddha realized that everything changes, and suffering comes from clinging to things. He believed that people cannot control everything that happens to them, but they can train their minds to respond without being controlled by anger, fear, or craving. These ideas are at the heart of Buddhism.

Siddhartha Gautama

Buddhism began on the Indian subcontinent about 2,500 years ago. Its founder, Siddhartha Gautama, was born into the ruling family of the Shakya people near the foothills of the Himalayas in present-day Nepal. Buddhist tradition says Siddhartha grew up surrounded by wealth and privilege.

When he was about thirty years old, Prince Siddhartha realized that we all get old, sick, and eventually die. He wanted to understand why people suffer and how to escape it.

The Ascetics

Siddhartha left his privileged life in search of answers. He became an ascetic, giving up comforts and possessions. Siddhartha fasted until he became dangerously thin, but eventually concluded that extreme self-denial would not lead him to enlightenment.

Enlightenment

According to Buddhist tradition, Siddhartha sat under a fig tree to meditate on what he had learned. To meditate is to calm your mind. As he meditated, the prince reached a state of heightened wisdom Buddhists call enlightenment.

Under the fig tree, Siddhartha believed he finally understood the problem that had troubled him since leaving home. Aging, sickness, death, and change cannot be avoided. He now understood that much of what people suffer from comes from holding on to what was never going to last. His philosophy can be explained by the expression, "Holding on to anger is like drinking poison and expecting someone else to die." Someone can ruin your day, but only if you let them after they are gone.

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

1. There will always be suffering in life.
2. Suffering is caused by craving and clinging.
3. Suffering can end when craving and clinging end.
4. The way to end craving and clinging is to follow the Eightfold Path.

THE EIGHTFOLD PATH

Right View—Accept the world as it is and not as you want it to be.

Right Intention—Be motivated by goodwill, kindness, and compassion rather than anger, resentment, or greed.

Right Speech— Speak helpfully; do not lie or gossip.

Right Conduct—Watch what you do; notice when you fall short; improve.

Right Livelihood— Earn a living without causing harm to others.

Right Effort—Work to overcome anger, jealousy, and other negative thoughts.

Right Mindfulness—Be aware of your thoughts and emotions so they do not control you.

Right Concentration—Learn to quiet your thoughts and keep your attention on what matters.

The Middle Way

Siddhartha returned to the ascetic community where he once fasted. He explained that the path to enlightenment is neither through indulgence nor denial, but a Middle Way. He taught the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path (see box) as a route to Nirvana, or liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth.

Some ascetics accepted his teachings and formed the first sangha, or community. In time, people began referring to Siddhartha as the Buddha, or "Enlightened One," and the sangha and other followers became known as Buddhists.

Buddhism Spreads

Today, more than three hundred million people worldwide adhere to the Buddha's philosophy. Buddhism gradually declined in India over many centuries but spread to China, Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia.

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Name: _____

Date: _____

Fill in the Blanks

More than _____ years ago, Siddhartha Gautama was born into a w__a__t__y ruling family near the H__m__l__y__s. As a young man, he became t__o__b__ed by a__i__g, sickness, s__f__e__i__g, and d__a__h. Siddhartha left his p__i__i__e__ed life to search for a__s__e__s. He became an a__c__t__c but decided that extreme self-d__n__al was not the answer. After m__d__t__t__ng under a f__g tree, Siddhartha reached a state of w__s__om called e__l__g__t__n__e__t. His followers called him the B__d__ha, or "E__l__g__t__n__d One."

The Buddha taught a M__d__le W__y between i__d__l__e__ce and d__n__al. His Four N__b__e T__u__hs state that s__f__e__i__g is part of life, suffering is caused by c__a__i__g and c__i__g__ng, suffering can end when c__a__i__g and c__i__g__ng end, and people can overcome suffering by following the E__g__t__o__d Path. Buddhists seek N__r__a__a, liberation from the c__c__e of d__a__h and r__b__r__h. Buddhism eventually spread from the ★s__b__o__t__ne__t to C__i__a, Korea, J__p__n, Southeast Asia, and other parts of the world.

Answer in Complete Sentences

★1. What is an ascetic? Why do you think Siddhartha did not find enlightenment with the ascetics?

_____

_____

_____

2. Explain the "Middle Way."

_____

_____

_____

The Eightfold Path

In your own words, explain each of the elements of the Eightfold Path in three to five descriptive words.

Right View	
Right Intention	
Right Speech	
Right Conduct	
Right Livelihood	
Right Effort	
Right Mindfulness	
Right Concentration	

★ This is a higher order learning question. You must answer the question to the best of your ability, but any reasonable answer will be graded as correct.

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