

REL-110

Natalie Jauch

3/7/17

Buddhism Writing Assignment, Due 3/7/17

**1. Explain Buddhism's perspective on why human life is dukkha (suffering) and how we can overcome it.**

The Buddha didn't speak English, so he never used the word "suffering". What The Buddha stated was, life is *dukkha*. "Dukkha" is Prakrit word, also known as Pali, and it has a variety of different meanings. An example of these different meanings is anything that can be considered temporary, this includes happiness. But, to understand the word "dukkha", it is very important to understand the foundation of Buddhism, the Four Noble Truths.

The best way to overcome Buddhism's perspective on "dukkha" is to stop trying to translate it. Throw away the words, "suffering", "stress", "dissatisfaction", etc. and just focus on "dukkha". Focusing on the meaning of one word will send you running around in circles and that is not what the Buddha intended us to do. Think of the word "dukkha" as something you are trying to solve or discover.

There are three main categories of "dukkha". The Buddha teaches us that these categories include: Suffering (*dukkha-dukkha*), impermanence or change

(*viparinama-dukkha*), conditioned states (*samkhara-dukkha*). Dukkha-dukkha is just defined as ordinary suffering; this includes physical, emotional, and mental pain.

Viparinama-dukkha is described as anything that is not permanent has the ability to change. Which goes to show that happiness is dukkha because it is not permanent. This does not mean that it is wrong to enjoy happiness and success. It just means don't always expect it. Samkhara-dukkha is defined as everything affects everything else. This is considered the most difficult dukkha to understand, but it is also the most important.

So how can we overcome dukkha? We can overcome dukkha by learning and understanding the Four Noble Truths.

**2. Once, when Buddha was asked whether God existed, he replied that he did not know, but that he considered such questions fruitless. Given what you know about Buddhism, why do you think he would claim this?**

I think Buddha said these type of questions were fruitless because he believed that pondering on things is what filled the mind with negativity and suffering. Buddha believed in acknowledging these things, but to never dwell on them. Buddhists are not close minded, they just choose not to dwell on questions that cannot be answered.

Anyone who understands the Buddha's teachings never claims that other religions are wrong. Buddhism No one makes a genuine effort to examine other religions with an open mind. The first thing everyone notices when studying the different religions is how

much all they have in common. Every religion acknowledges that mankind's present state is unsatisfactory. Each religion believe that a change of attitude and behavior is needed to reach a point of earthly and spiritual satisfactory. All religions teach an ethics that includes love, kindness, patience, generosity and social responsibility and all accept an existence of some sort of higher power. Each religion uses different languages, different names and different symbols to describe and explain their moral stories.