OUTLINE OF BUDDHISM – ESSENTIALS OF BUDDHIST SPIRITUALITY

Samsara
- The relative
- The world
- The starting-point
- The "illusory" and deceptive
- Buddhism does not look on the world as a theophany, but as an exile – under its negative aspect of corruption and temptation, and so of suffering (dukkha)
- Three conditions of existence:
  - The hopeless predicament of those who are swallowing each other, indicating the to which all others can be reduced.
  - Cock
- Three Poisons or Passions (Kleshas)
The three kleshas are the source of suffering (dukkha): 1. Ignorance or illusion (moha) – symbolized by a pig
  2. Greed or lust (lobha) – symbolized by a cock
  3. Anger or pride (dvesha) – symbolized by a snake
- The main hindrances to realizing Nirvana (Skt. Skandas):
  - Body (rupa)
  - Sensations (vedana)
  - Thoughts (samjna)
  - Desires (samskara)
  - Individual consciousness (vijnana)
The five skandhas cause man to be susceptible to the three kleshas ("poisons" or "passions").

Nirvana
- The Absolute
- The "Unconditioned"
- The "Divine State"
- The final goal of the Buddhist religion
- The Real, the True
- Nirvana literally means "extinction", and this refers to the extinction of all that is fallen, corrupt, finite, and impermanent.
- Nirvana is Reality: absolute, infinite, and perfect.
- Ultimate Reality is also called Shumyata ("Void") – that is, it is empty of the ephemeral (short-lived) pseudo-plenitude (not genuine completeness or fullness) of the world. Additionally, Ultimate Reality is referred to, in different contexts, as Dharma ("Law"), Bodhi ("Awakening"), "Enlightenment", "Knowledge"), and Atma ("Self").
- Ultimate or Divine Reality is also regarded as a Supreme Being (particularly in Mahayana Buddhism). In sum, Ultimate Reality may be viewed as a Supreme State (Nirvana) or a Supreme Being (Dharmakaya) – both transcendent categories.

Release from Suffering (Samsara)
- The only release is in the merciful Buddha (Buddha means "enlightened") and in the Way he taught, described as follows:
  - The Four Noble Truths: (1) suffering is universal; (2) the cause of suffering is craving or selfish desire; (3) the cure for suffering is the elimination of craving; (4) the way to achieve the elimination of craving is to follow the Middle Way, which is described in the Eightfold Path.
  - The Eightfold Path: (1) right views (understanding), (2) right intention, (3) right speech, (4) right conduct [The Five Precepts: To abstain from (a) taking of life, (b) taking of what is not given, (c) illicit sexual activity, (d) lying, and (e) intoxicants], (5) right livelihood, (6) right effort, (7) right mindfulness, (8) right concentration.
  - Three are sections: wisdom (prajna), morality (shila), realization (samatvam); that is, truth, virtue, and spiritual way.
  - The Four Brahmo-Viharas: (1) loving-kindness (maitri), (2) compassion (karuna), (3) joy (mudita), and (4) serenity (upeksha). Also referred to as the "Four Divine Dwellings" or "Cardinal Virtues" of Buddhism.
  - One may therefore transcend the skandhas (egoism) and overcome the kleshas (passions), and so the thralldom of samsara.
- The Bodhisattva
  - Bodhisattva means "one whose nature is enlightenment".
  - Paramita means literally "that which has reached the other shore".
  - In Mahayana Buddhism, the term bodhisattva has been understood to mean an "aspirant for Buddhahood" – one who seeks Buddhahood through transcending the five "attributes of individuality" (skandhas) and acquiring the six virtues (paramitas).
  - The six paramitas are the virtues of the Bodhisattva. These are: dana ("charity", generosity), shila ("abstention", virtue), kshanti ("patience"), virya ("virility", energy), dhyana ("contemplation", "discernment", meditation), and prajna ("wisdom", "union"). Note: These qualities are mentioned individually in the Sutras; however, they had not previously been formulated as part of a path to Buddhahood.
  - The Bodhisattva is said to be "one who renounces final entry into Nirvana until all beings are saved", and in this the element of compassion (karuna) is foremost.
  - The merciful means of redemption of creatures hopelessly afflicted with ignorance and suffering is by the saving power of Another – this is the role of the Bodhisattva.
  - The saving compassion of the Bodhisattva is contrasted with the pratýekabuddha, who is a "solitary" and who achieves enlightenment without the function or mission of communicating it to others. There are two kinds of Bodhisattvas: terrestrial and celestial.

Humankind's History
- Buddhism sees humankind's history as a gradual, but accelerating, decline and envisages a forthcoming "end of the world", at which time the Buddha will return as Maitreya Buddha.

Five Attributes of Individuality
- The main hindrances to realizing Nirvana (Skt. Skandas):
  - Body (rupa)
  - Sensations (vedana)
  - Thoughts (samjna)
  - Desires (samskara)
  - Individual consciousness (vijnana)
The five skandhas cause man to be susceptible to the three kleshas ("poisons" or "passions").

Three Poisons or Passions (Kleshas)
The three kleshas are the source of suffering (dukkha): 1. Ignorance or illusion (moha) – symbolized by a pig
  2. Greed or lust (lobha) – symbolized by a cock
  3. Anger or pride (dvesha) – symbolized by a snake
- Illusion, lust, pride ("the world, the flesh, the devil") are the basic moral evils to which all others can be reduced.
  - The three symbolic animals are depicted swallowing each other, indicating the hopeless predicament of those who are their dupes.
  - Three conditions of existence:
    - impermanence (anatma)
    - suffering (dukkha)
    - non-self (anatma)

The Bodhisattva
- Bodhisattva means "one whose nature is enlightenment".
- Paramita means literally "that which has reached the other shore".
- In Mahayana Buddhism, the term bodhisattva has been understood to mean an "aspirant for Buddhahood" – one who seeks Buddhahood through transcending the five "attributes of individuality" (skandhas) and acquiring the six virtues (paramitas).
- The six paramitas are the virtues of the Bodhisattva. These are: dana ("charity", generosity), shila ("abstention", virtue), kshanti ("patience"), virya ("virility", energy), dhyana ("contemplation", "discernment", meditation), and prajna ("wisdom", "union"). Note: These qualities are mentioned individually in the Sutras; however, they had not previously been formulated as part of a path to Buddhahood.
- The Bodhisattva is said to be "one who renounces final entry into Nirvana until all beings are saved", and in this the element of compassion (karuna) is foremost.
- The merciful means of redemption of creatures hopelessly afflicted with ignorance and suffering is by the saving power of Another – this is the role of the Bodhisattva.
- The saving compassion of the Bodhisattva is contrasted with the pratýekabuddha, who is a "solitary" and who achieves enlightenment without the function or mission of communicating it to others. There are two kinds of Bodhisattvas: terrestrial and celestial.

Salvation of Humankind
- The Supreme Buddha (Adi-Buddha) is said to have manifested Himself many times for the salvation of men. The Buddhavamsa (part of the Khuddaka Nikaya) lists ten manifestations of the Adi-Buddha who "turned the Wheel of the Law in a deer sanctuary", eight of them preceding, and the tenth one (Maitreya) following, Gautama. The Buddha’s life story provides the framework for the central doctrine of the Buddhist religion, which the Buddha expressed as: "I teach two things only, O disciples, suffering and release from suffering." (Samyutta-Nikaya, xxii, 86)
- Nirvana is as it were incarnated by the Buddha – Nirvana became samsara, so that samsara might become Nirvana. The Buddha not only teaches doctrine, but actually incarnates Nirvana. The image of Buddha – of supernatural origin – is of profound sacramental importance in Buddhist spirituality.