

Ways in which Buddhism differs from Hinduism:

- 1) No need for priests (brahmins) or rituals.
- 2) Anyone can enter Nirvana, no matter how lowly, whereas in Hinduism only the brahmins could achieve moksha.
- 3) In Theravada Buddhism, there are no gods. The Buddha is not a god.
- 4) Karma is not earned by following the dharma of your caste. Instead you can move toward entry into Nirvana by following the dharma of the Buddha, which is the same for everyone.
- 5) As the "middle way" Buddhism rejects extreme asceticism as well as great wealth. The ideal in Hinduism is extreme asceticism.

Ways in which Buddhism and Hinduism are similar:

- 1) Both believe in reincarnation.
- 2) Both believe there are many different paths to enlightenment.
- 3) Both believe that our suffering is caused by excessive attachment to things and people in the physical world.
- 4) Both believe in an ultimate reality beyond the illusions of the physical world.
- 5) Both practice meditation and other forms of yoga.
- 6) Both believe that eventually all living spirits will achieve enlightenment and liberation, even if it takes many incarnations. Remember that in Mahayana Buddhism, the original teachings of the Buddha are assimilated to Hindu practices, including prayers, gods (even the Buddha as god in all his many incarnations). Mahayana Buddhism also introduces the idea of (temporary) heavens and hells.