**Orthodox' Buddhism**

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Hi one and all,

My first post on this forum.

I have had a curiousity about buddhism for a number of years - but my background as a secular humanist makes me see it in a different light maybe from many people. What seems to be the case is a guy called Sidartha [sic] came up with some good ideas about how to approach life, then in the time that followed his teachings were mystified and ritualised.

What kind of records exists for what the Buddha actually said. …?

Do you think there is a need for a more orthodox version of Buddhism, maybe with it's own label in order that it can be distinguished from the other schools. I think the Theravada school is most similar to what I am think of, but not quite.

I remember seeing on the news a couple of years ago a news story about Buddhists travelling across continents to climb a pyramid of steps and ring a 'sacred' bell at the top. To me, with my possibly naive understanding of what the Buddha was about, this seems absolutely crazy.

I have the feeling that these 'religious' Buddhists are not Buddhists at all, because so much of what they do seems to contravene the intent of the original guy who came up with these ideas. They kind of turn him into a God, especially the idea of the Buddha re-incarnated over and over. Did these ideas come from Siddartha himself, or added later by the usual channels of religious evolution?

I don't mean to offend, and I recognise my lack of experience in this subject.

I really feel a curiousity for getting to the core of what Siddartha actually said. He seems quite a visionary, and at the same time quite egoless (i.e. doesn't claim to be the son of God like Jesus Christ or David Ike), given my current understanding, but I need to get at some evidence...

[***federica***](http://newbuddhist.com/profile/federica) *seeker of the clear blue sky Somewhere in the UK, Central-Southern.... Moderator*[*May 2005*](http://newbuddhist.com/discussion/comment/1107/#Comment_1107) *edited May 2005*

hello gavinfo, and welcome!

Thank you for an interesting and thought provoking post! …

* Buddhism has often been described as both a Religion and a

Philosophy. There is no such thing as orthodox Buddhism, in my view;

Siddharta Gauthama wasn't Buddhist. Buddha merely means "awake"

in the sense of being conscious and in the present, with no illusions. …

Rituals which to some may seem futile and pointless, is a way to the practicant, of affirming their personal determination to "see things through" whatever form these "things" may take. Hence the practise as you mention of climbing hundreds of steps to ring a bell, and of giving things up for Lent, maybe.

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* [***Jason***](http://newbuddhist.com/profile/Jason) *God Emperor Arrakis Moderator*[*May 2005*](http://newbuddhist.com/discussion/comment/1116/#Comment_1116) *edited May 2005*
* I agree with federica that there is no real "orthodox buddhism". The
* people who I think live the closest to what the Buddha taught are the

Thai forest monks. …

The only thing they feel is authentic and of real use is anything that deals with dukkha and the way that leads to ceassation of dukkha. They focus on meditation and leave most of the rituals to others. The Buddha was not a big fan of rites and rituals. He understood that normal lay people need them but that in reality they were empty and did not help a person find truth. …

Meditation is used to examime all things in life, from the mind and it's movements, to the body and it's characteristics. Once you see how everything is impermanent, uncertain, and without self you begin to see the truth of all conditioned things. The Buddha tries to teach us how to see the ego and the sense of "I" and "me" for what it actually is.

* [***ZenLunatic***](http://newbuddhist.com/profile/ZenLunatic) *Veteran*[*May 2005*](http://newbuddhist.com/discussion/comment/1136/#Comment_1136) *edited May 2005*
* …

Theraveda … is probably closest to what Buddha taught.

* Remember, as any religion or school of thought passes through
* different cultures, it's bound to pick up the local beliefs/customs into
* its practice. That's why some flavors of buddhism have 'gods' while
* others are strictly non-theist.
* …
* [***gavinfo***](http://newbuddhist.com/profile/gavinfo)[*May 2005*](http://newbuddhist.com/discussion/comment/1138/#Comment_1138) *edited May 2005*
* Hi all, thanks for your replies.
* …