Buddha Was Raised As A Hindu?
Appeared in the "Faith Section" on March 1, 2014

Question: "Please reflect upon the birth of the Buddha into a Hindu family"

Answer: It is true that the Buddha, Siddartha Gautama, was born into a royal family that practiced and studied the Vedic tradition (Hindu is a modern term). This is no different than the fact that Jesus was raised in the Jewish faith.

Upon the Buddha's enlightenment in 463 B.C.E. he began teaching something radically new that at the time had not yet been codified a new religion; similar to the founders of other great religions. The Buddha rejected features of the Vedic tradition including both the priestly system and the caste system.

After his enlightenment at the age of 35 the Buddha gave his first teaching, known as the Four Noble Truths, which became the foundation of Buddhism. This first teaching given at Sarnatha, India stated: 1. That life is characterized by suffering. 2. That suffering is caused by the clinging and grasping of our own mind. 3. That it is possible to permanently end suffering. 4. The path that leads to the cessation of suffering is meditation. It is through the practice of meditation that we are able to get in touch with our own enlightened nature known as Buddha-nature.

For forty years after his enlightenment he traveled extensively throughout India teaching about the importance of non-violence, compassion and loving-kindness. These teachings were transmitted orally for hundreds of years and it wasn't until the first century that these teachings were written down and codified into the religion that we know today as Buddhism.