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Robekkah Ritchie: Lived religion as a hermeneutical lense

Buddhism is the fourth largest religion yet has no central deity. Instead, the faith venerates monks including the first and founder, the Buddha. Whilst the names often refers to the founder, 'Buddha' is actually a title and a state of being, referring to one who has grasped the teachings and reached a state of enlightenment. The Buddha left a life of riches and became a beggar in the streets in pursuit of inner peace, as he was unsatisfied with his life as a prince. He attained enlightenment after vigorous meditation in isolation, and his teachings were later compiled to form the core doctrine of Buddhism known as the Four Noble Truths. The Fourth and last Truth is broken down into eight steps, known as Eight Fold Path, which sets out the process to being enlightened. Similarly, with Christianity and Judaism, Buddhism is often viewed as a derivative of Hinduism, as it traces its roots in India. Nevertheless, the two have distinct doctrinal differences; and that Buddhism is growing rapidly in Africa and gaining traction in the global west.

Buddhists believes in living a minimalistic life. Followers, including monks, live on a vegetarian diet in the pursuit of protecting all life forms, as they too embrace the idea of reincarnation. As an ancient religion, monks have passed the minimalistic traits to the modern followers, some of whom even live without money. Meditation, through chants aids followers and monks to be at peace and even energise themselves. They extend this service to nature by sanctifying trees as a tribute to nature for sustaining life. Buddhism does not bow to modern trends, but does make use of modern technology to enhance its practise and live out its beliefs. Moreover, a glimpse of a sect of Buddhists who recycle plastic, one of leading modern pollutants, to make gowns for monks, which further minimises the faiths' already low carbon footprint

Eastern religions are considered philosophical movements than religions, sparking others to even gravitate to citing the movement 'Buddhisms' when appreciating the various elements of the belief systems. This manifest itself in the doctrine but even more when there is great need to nature conservation. Arguably, the most celebrated figure in modern Buddhism, the Dalai Lama is a global icon for pushing for global efforts towards peace and as the world needs more it, be conscious of consumerism that harms the planet. In closing, it is incredibly fascinating to see that a religion with no creation narrative is the most conscious of celebrating nature and goes to various merits to take care of it, both humanity and the rest of nature.