

## **Buddhism and Ultimate Reality**

Many people – if they do not carefully read the teachings of the Buddha – have the idea that the Buddha (Sanskrit for “Enlightened” or “Awakened”) did *not* believe or teach about a transcendent Ultimate Reality.

However, Siddhartha Gautama (The Buddha’s family name was Gautama, and his given name was Siddhartha) speaks of the Supramundane or Unconditioned. He refers to the Ultimate Reality as being the known, but unknowable. Any attempt to label the transcendent Ultimate Reality would be insufficient to define the Absolute.

Below is the Buddha’s description of the Absolute, in the *Udana* passage of the *Kuddaka-Nikaya*:

*There is an Unborn, Unoriginated, Uncreated, Unconditioned. If that Unborn, Unoriginated, Uncreated, Unconditioned were not, there could be no escape from this that is born, originated, created, conditioned. But because there is That which is Unborn, Unoriginated, Uncreated, Unconditioned, an escape from this that is born, originated, created, conditioned can be proclaimed. (Khuddaka-Nikaya, Udana, 80ff.)*

**Source:** The following reference was used in part. Stoddart, William. *An Illustrated Outline of Buddhism: The Essentials of Buddhist Spirituality*. With a foreword by Joseph A. Fitzgerald. Bloomington, Indiana: World Wisdom, 2013.