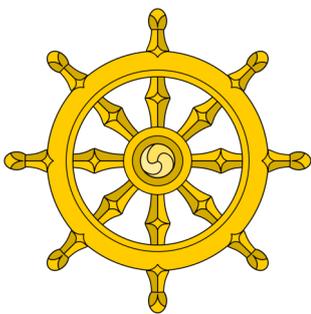


Key Concepts:

- **3 Jewels** refers to three important aspects of the Buddhist faith; the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha.
- **Buddha** means 'the awoken one'. The Buddha's birth name was Siddhartha Gautama. When he became enlightened, he became 'the Buddha'.
- **Dharma** refers to the Buddha's teaching, such as the 3 marks of existence, the 4 Noble truths and the eightfold path.
- **Sangha** is the community of Buddhists in the world. This could be the monks and nuns that have become ordained, and often live very simple or ascetic lives. This could also mean the laity, those that lead modern lives but give offerings to the monks and nuns.
- **Dukkha** means suffering, or unsatisfactoriness. The Buddha was very concerned with dukkha, which he believed was the reason why we cannot attain enlightenment. He believed dukkha was everywhere at all times.
- **Maya** is evil, a demon, that stops us attaining enlightenment by giving us cravings and clouding our minds. He tried to tempt the Buddha with the three poisons: greed, hatred and stupidity.



The Eightfold Path

- 1 Right View** (know the truth)
- 2 Right Intention** (free your mind of evil)
- 3 Right Speech** (say nothing that hurts anyone)
- 4 Right Action** (work for the good of others)
- 5 Right Livelihood** (respect life)
- 6 Right Effort** (resist evil)
- 7 Right Concentration** (practice meditation)
- 8 Right Mindfulness**

3 Jewels of Buddhism

The Life of the Buddha

Birth of the Buddha

Prince Siddhartha Gautama was born around the year 563 BCE in Lumbini, in modern day Nepal. Before he was born, his mother has a dream in which a white elephant holding a lotus flower danced around her three times, and entered her womb through her side. The dream was interpreted by priests, who said that she was going to give birth to a son who would either become a great leader or a spiritual holy man. His mother gave birth to him on a journey. A branch from a tree bent down to assist her while she gave birth. She had very little pains during the labor, despite Siddhartha being born very large. He had golden skin and could walk straight away. On each step a lotus flower would spring. The child said 'I will be the future enlightened one'.



Early Life of the Buddha

Siddhartha's father was a powerful king who listened to what the priests say his son would become. He wanted him to become a powerful leader like himself, not a holy man. Therefore his father protected him from suffering by not telling him about sickness, old age and death. The Buddha was kept in the palace and never went outside. He studied many subjects and had many servants. At the age of 29 he finally went outside the palace and saw the 4 sights:

1. Old man
2. Sick man
3. Dead man
4. Holy man

When Siddhartha realised that suffering (dukkha) existed, he decided to give his position up as a ruler and go out into the world to find truth about coping with suffering. He gave up all his power, wealth and pleasures—this is known as **The Great Renunciation**.

The Later Life of the Buddha

Siddhartha became a monk and lived an ascetic life. He studied meditation under two holy men for two years but in the end he didn't believe that either of them had the answer. Next, Siddhartha tried to give up all pleasures completely. He ate so little food that he nearly died (2 sesame seeds a day) and then realised this wasn't the answer either. This only increased suffering. One day he had a vision that made him decide the 'Middle Way' was the best way—a life between living the life of luxury and giving up all pleasures. It is a balanced approach to life—not living in luxury or poverty. One day while meditating underneath of Bodhi Tree, he finally became enlightened despite Maya (evil) attempting to distract him. This is when he became the 'awakened one', the Buddha. He saw all of his past lives and realised reality, how to overcome desire and other important teachings. He spent the rest of his life teaching the dharma, and finally died aged 80. Buddhists try to follow the example of the Buddha.

Dharma

The dharma is the teaching of the Buddha. Here are some important examples:

- ◆ **3 Poisons** Greed, hatred and stupidity stop us reaching enlightenment and are caused by Maya.
- ◆ **3 Marks of Existence** are anicca, anatta and dukkha.
- ◆ **Anicca** means impermanence - nothing stay the same, everything changes. This causes dukkha.
- ◆ **Anatta** is doctrine of 'no-self'. Because of anicca, every part of us is changing, nothing is stable, there cannot be an eternal soul.
- ◆ **Dukkha** is suffering and is everywhere. Enlightenment is the only end to dukkha.

◆ **4 Noble Truths** are often considered to be the Buddha's major teaching:

- 1) The truth of dukkha
- 2) The cause of dukkha
- 3) Dukkha can be stopped
- 4) The Eightfold Path

◆ **The Eightfold Path** is a list of 8 different things that Buddhists should try to achieve to achieve enlightenment (see the list ↩)

◆ **Compassion** is the belief that we should always act in kindness towards others and ourselves.

◆ **Ahimsa** is a Hindu-originated belief in non-violence, Buddhists also follow this teaching. The first precept is to not harm life.

◆ **5 Moral Precepts** is a list of 5 rules/commandments for all Buddhists

- 1) Not harm living things
- 2) Not to steal
- 3) Not to engage in sexual immorality
- 4) Not to lie or gossip
- 5) Not to intoxicate oneself (E.g. drugs, alcohol...)

◆ **Karma** is the belief that everything we do in this life stays with us in the next. Karma can be positive or negative.

◆ **Samsara** is the cycle of life, death and rebirth.



Buddhist Diversity

There is not just one type of Buddhism. Many countries have been influenced by Buddhism, both in the past and during modern times. Buddhism spread through India after the time of the Buddha, and was the official religion of India during the time of Emperor Ashoka. It spread to the Indian sub-continent, to China and then to Japan. In more modern times it has spread to European and North American countries. Buddhism has influenced the practices of mindfulness seen in the West today. The two main branches of Buddhism are below:

Buddhists do not believe in a creator God in the same way as other major religions do. Buddhism is more about personal development rather than interacting with a god or gods. This development includes meditating, gaining wisdom and becoming more moral. This helps Buddhists move along the path towards enlightenment, where there is no more suffering. The Buddha was not a god and Buddhists do not worship him. However, they do respect him and believe that following his teachings will help them on the path to enlightenment.

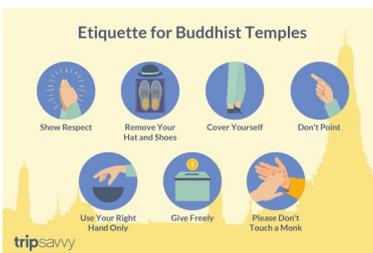
Theravada Buddhism	Mahayana Buddhism
⇒ Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Thailand, Laos and Myanmar	⇒ Tibet, China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea and Mongolia
⇒ 15% of all Buddhists in the world	⇒ 53% of all Buddhists in the world
⇒ Oldest branch, believe they are following the truest form of Buddhism as practiced by the Buddha	⇒ Many versions (e.g. Zen Buddhism in Japan)
⇒ Follows the 'traditions of the elders'	⇒ Compassion is the main teaching
⇒ Most Theravada Buddhists are monks or nuns	⇒ Became inseparable from the traditions already in each country (e.g. combined with Confucianism and Taoism in China)
⇒ They try to become 'Arhats' - people freed from the cycle of samsara.	⇒ They try to become 'Bodhisattvas' - people that have held off enlightenment to help others attain enlightenment.



Meditation

There are many types of meditation in Buddhism. Some forms of Buddhism prefer a set type, but more frequently Buddhists are preferring their own styles. Most forms of meditation include the following:

- ◇ Place—the place of meditation should be free from distraction, a place to relax but to stay alert, tidy, not too hot/cold etc... If it is too cozy (like your bed) you might fall asleep instead—this is not meditation! Zen Buddhists often meditate outside in Zen gardens.
- ◇ Breathing—one common method is to focus on your breathing. Taking deep breaths in through nostrils and slightly longer breaths out through your mouth. Focusing on breathing helps you to minimize other thoughts or distractions.
- ◇ Posture—again, there are many postures. Some Buddhists prefer to sit on a chair, other cross-legged on the floor. Some try to live their lives through meditation (e.g. mindfulness). To do this you just have to stop and think about activities you are doing (E.g. brushing teeth, having a shower). It is surprising how little we actually think about these activities.
- ◇ Objects—sometimes objects are used such as statues of the Buddha, flowers, bells, candles etc... These are often found on a shrine, whereby offerings can be given to the Buddha. Often when a Buddhist is meditating on the floor, they will use a meditation mat.
- ◇ Sound—some Buddhists prefer to meditate in silence, others prefer to chant mantras (parts of Buddhist sacred texts), some prefer listening to calming music or chanting from others, some prefer the sounds of nature.



Buddhist Worship

A Buddhist temple is a peaceful place for people to reflect, meditate and make offerings. There is no set day or time when Buddhists visit the temple—they go whenever they want. Often Buddhists visit the temple during the full moon, an important time as they believe the Buddha became enlightened during a full moon. They come in all shapes and sizes. One type of temple is a stupa, where the main body of the temple is a mound shape. A pagoda is a tiered tower commonly found in Japan and China. Temples often contain Buddhist relics (ancient artefacts, e.g. the ashes of a Buddhist monk or copies of the scriptures). Buddhists often worship by chanting religious texts, prayers or meditation. They remove their shoes before entering a temple as a mark of respect. They usually sit on the floor facing a statue or picture of the Buddha. They recite mantras—these are words or short phrases that are repeated over and over again. Many Buddhists use prayer beads to keep track of how many times they've recited a mantra. Buddhists might rotate a prayer wheel to show their prayers are in motion. This is similar with prayer flags that are often found in Buddhist shrines and trees.

