

Buddhism – Living as a Buddhist



What should I already know?

- Prince Siddhartha Gautama later become known as the Buddha.
- Buddhism is the main religion in many Asian countries - it is a religion about suffering and the **need** to get rid of it.
- A key concept of **Buddhism** is Nirvana, the most enlightened, and blissful state that one can achieve.
- There is no God in Buddhism.

Images



The Buddha image is usually shown meditating in the lotus position with a calm kindly expression on his face. They have long earlobes and sit on a lotus flower, which symbolises enlightenment.

A Buddhist shrine is found in Buddhist homes and in places of worship such as Buddhist centres, temples and monasteries.



Vocabulary



The Eight-Spoked Dharma Wheel



The eight-spoked dharma wheel (the wheel of the law) which reinforces the idea of journeying through life.

Quick facts



Buddhism began in India about 2,500 years ago.

563 BC - Siddhartha Gautama, who became known as the Buddha, was probably born at around this time in an area of northern India (modern-day Nepal).



The Noble Eightfold Path is how practising Buddhists try to live their lives:

Buddhists try to live a good life by following the Buddha's teachings, helping them to avoid suffering and bad feelings. They believe nothing in life is perfect and the way to avoid suffering is to follow a set of important guidelines

The Buddha was a man who achieved enlightenment, and then taught others the way to achieve it for themselves.

The position of the hands of the Buddha is highly significant. The symbolic gestures are called mudras and each one has a specific meaning,

- right hand reaching down to touch the ground: the moment of enlightenment
- right hand raised with palm facing outwards: gesture of reassurance and protection
- hands raised, thumbs and forefingers forming circles: the Buddha teaching
- hands resting palm upwards in the lap: the Buddha meditating

Mantra



A mantra is a short sacred phrase, which is repeated over and over again (to aid concentration in meditation).

Meditation



Meditation is central to Buddhist practice. It is seen as a means of developing a state of calm, focused awareness.

Incense



An incense stick is an aromatic material that releases fragrant smoke when burned.

