

Buddhism

- 📄 A complex system of beliefs developed around the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama who lived 2, 500 years ago in India.
- 📄 There is no one single “Bible” of Buddhism but all Buddhists share some basic beliefs.
- 📄 The religion is both a discipline and a body of beliefs.
- 📄 Buddha means “the Awakened or Enlightened One”.

Four Noble Truths

- ☞ All life is suffering, pain, and misery, or *dukkha*.
- ☞ This suffering has a cause *tanha* or selfish craving and personal desire.
- ☞ This selfish craving can be overcome.
- ☞ The way to overcome this misery is through the Eightfold Path.

Life's Goal

- 📄 The wheel of rebirth, known as *samsara*, condemns the individual to the suffering of being alive and striving.
- 📄 Life's goal is to escape from this cycle of rebirth. This release is called *Nirvana*, the highest bliss, the end of the self.
- 📄 The way to achieve *Nirvana* is to follow the path of the Middle Way.

The Eightfold Path

- 1) Right Knowledge
- 2) Right Aspiration
- 3) Right Speech
- 4) Right Behaviour
- 5) Right Livelihood
- 6) Right Effort
- 7) Right Mindfulness
- 8) Right Concentration

Two Vehicles

☞ The older tradition and more conservative is called Hinayana or the Lesser Vehicle.

☞ Theravada Buddhists see him as a man, a saint, who chose to give up all his wealth and comfort to achieve Nirvana.

☞ The more liberal tradition is called the Mahayana or the Greater Vehicle.

☞ Mahayana Buddhists stress the Buddha as a saviour who devoted his life to serving and teaching others.

The Three Jewels

- 1) Buddha the teacher
- 2) *Dharma* the teachings or laws
- 3) *Sangha* the community of believers

Buddhists believe that these three elements of their religion shelter and protect them in the world.

The Three Jewels form the centre of their daily life.

Holidays

- 📄 The Theravada tradition celebrates four days every month as *uposatha* days.
- 📄 Theravada Buddhists continue the practice of *vassa*, a three-month retreat.
- 📄 Three major points in the life of the Buddha are celebrated in all Buddhist countries: his birth, Enlightenment, and his death or final Nirvana.

Buddhism in the United States

- 📄 Henry Olcott of the Theosophical Society has aided the cause of Buddhism writing a Buddhist catechism. His spiritual associate, Helena Blavatsky, included Buddhist teaching in her metaphysical works.
- 📄 As early as the 1840s, Chinese immigrants appeared on the West Coast and brought their Buddhism with them.
- 📄 “Church” Buddhism among Japanese immigrants came to Hawaii in 1889 and to California a decade later. The carriers were Judo Shinshu missionaries of the Nishi Hongwanji movement.

Buddhism in the United States

- ☞ According to traditional account, at the time when he became a Buddha, Amida established the Western Kingdom, called the Pure Land.
- ☞ The second form of Buddhism in the United States, stressing meditation, became represented most notably in Japanese Zen and Tibetan varieties.
- ☞ The goal of Zen was to bring a person to enlightenment through the practice of mediation.

Buddhism in the United States

- ☰ One school, Rinzai Zen, taught that enlightenment was a sudden event. Hence, its practice centered on meditation using *koans*, riddles or verbal puzzles meant to baffle the ordinary working mind.
- ☰ The other school, Soto Zen, taught that enlightenment was gradual.