[Template:Redirect](/wiki/Template:Redirect" \o "Template:Redirect) [Template:Infobox Buddhism](/wiki/Template:Infobox_Buddhism) [Template:Buddhism](/wiki/Template:Buddhism) [thumb|alt=standing Buddha statue with draped garmet and halo|](/wiki/File:Gandhara_Buddha_(tnm).jpeg)[Standing Buddha](/wiki/Standing_Buddha) statue at the [Tokyo National Museum](/wiki/Tokyo_National_Museum). One of the earliest known representations of the [Buddha](/wiki/Gautama_Buddha), 1st–2nd century CE. **Buddhism** [Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en)[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) is a [religion](/wiki/Religion)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) and [dharma](/wiki/Dharma) that encompasses a variety of [traditions](/wiki/Tradition), [beliefs](/wiki/Belief) and [spiritual practices](/wiki/Spiritual_practice) largely based on [teachings](/wiki/Original_Teachings_of_the_Buddha) attributed to [the Buddha](/wiki/Gautama_Buddha). Buddhism originated in India, from where it spread through much of Asia, whereafter it [declined in India](/wiki/Decline_of_Buddhism_in_India) during the middle ages. Two major extant branches of Buddhism are generally recognized by scholars: [Theravada](/wiki/Theravada) ([Pali](/wiki/Pali): "The School of the Elders") and [Mahayana](/wiki/Mahayana) ([Sanskrit](/wiki/Sanskrit): "The Great Vehicle").

[Buddhist schools](/wiki/Schools_of_Buddhism) vary on the exact nature of the path to liberation, the importance and [canonicity of various teachings and scriptures](/wiki/Buddhist_texts), and especially their respective practices.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Practices of Buddhism include [Refuge](/wiki/Refuge_(Buddhism)), [Samatha](/wiki/Samatha), [Vipassanā](/wiki/Vipassanā), the Mahayana practice of [Bodhicitta](/wiki/Bodhicitta) and the Vajrayana practices of [Generation stage](/wiki/Generation_stage) and [Completion stage](/wiki/Completion_stage).

In Theravada the ultimate goal is the attainment of the sublime state of [nirvana](/wiki/Nirvana_(Buddhism)), achieved by practicing the [Noble Eightfold Path](/wiki/Noble_Eightfold_Path) (also known as the [Middle Way](/wiki/Middle_Way)), thus escaping what is seen as a [cycle](/wiki/Saṃsāra_(Buddhism)) of suffering and [rebirth](/wiki/Rebirth_(Buddhism)).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Theravada has a widespread following in [Sri Lanka](/wiki/Buddhism_in_Sri_Lanka) and [Southeast Asia](/wiki/Buddhism_in_Southeast_Asia).

Mahayana, which includes the traditions of [Pure Land](/wiki/Pure_Land_Buddhism), [Zen](/wiki/Zen), [Nichiren Buddhism](/wiki/Nichiren_Buddhism), [Shingon](/wiki/Shingon_Buddhism) and [Tiantai](/wiki/Tiantai) ([Tendai](/wiki/Tendai)), is found throughout [East Asia](/wiki/East_Asian_Buddhism). Rather than Nirvana, Mahayana instead aspires to [Buddhahood](/wiki/Buddhahood) via the [bodhisattva](/wiki/Bodhisattva) path,[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) a state wherein one remains in the cycle of rebirth to help other beings reach awakening. [Vajrayana](/wiki/Vajrayana), a body of teachings attributed to [Indian siddhas](/wiki/Mahasiddha), may be viewed as a third branch or merely a part of Mahayana. [Tibetan Buddhism](/wiki/Tibetan_Buddhism), which preserves the Vajrayana teachings of eighth century India,[[1]](#cite_note-1) is practiced in regions surrounding the [Himalayas](/wiki/Himalayas), [Mongolia](/wiki/Buddhism_in_Mongolia)[[2]](#cite_note-2) and [Kalmykia](/wiki/Kalmykia).[[3]](#cite_note-3) Tibetan Buddhism aspires to Buddhahood or [rainbow body](/wiki/Rainbow_body).[[4]](#cite_note-4) Buddhists number between an estimated 488 million[[web 1]](#cite_note-5) and 535 million,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) making it one of the world's [major religions](/wiki/Major_religious_groups). [Template:TOC limit](/wiki/Template:TOC_limit)

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## Life of the Buddha[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

[thumb|left|alt=stone relief sculpture of horse and men |"The Great Departure", relic depicting Gautama leaving home, first or second century (](/wiki/File:Le_grand_départ.jpg)[Musée Guimet](/wiki/Guimet_Museum)). [Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

Buddhism is an Indian religion attributed to the teachings of Buddha.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The details of Buddha's life are mentioned in many early Buddhist texts but are inconsistent, his social background and life details are difficult to prove, the precise dates uncertain.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

The evidence of the early texts suggests that he was born as Siddhārtha Gautama in Kapilavatthu, a town in the plains region of modern Nepal-India border, and that he spent his life in what is now modern [Bihar](/wiki/Bihar)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) and [Uttar Pradesh](/wiki/Uttar_Pradesh).[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Some hagiographic legends state that his father was a king named Suddhodana, his mother queen Maya, and he was born in Lumbini gardens.[[5]](#cite_note-6) However, scholars such as Richard Gombrich consider this a dubious claim because a combination of evidence suggests he was born in the *Shakyas* community – one that later gave him the title *Shakyamuni*, and the *Shakya* community was governed by a small oligarchy or republic-like council where there were no ranks but where seniority mattered instead.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) Some of the stories about Buddha, his life, his teachings, and claims about the society he grew up in may have been invented and interpolated at a later time into the Buddhist texts.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[6]](#cite_note-7) [thumb|alt=Dhamek Stupa shrine in Sarnath, India, built by Ashoka where the Buddha gave his first sermon|](/wiki/File:Monastery_around_Dhamek_stupa,_Sarnath.jpg)[Dhamek Stupa](/wiki/Dhamek_Stupa) in [Sarnath](/wiki/Sarnath), [India](/wiki/India), where the Buddha gave his first sermon. It was built by [Ashoka](/wiki/Ashoka). Early Buddhist canonical texts and early biographies of Buddha state that Gautama studied under [Vedic](/wiki/Vedas) teachers, such as Alara Kalama (Sanskrit: Arada Kalama) and Uddaka Ramaputta (Sanskrit: Udraka Ramaputra), learning meditation and ancient philosophies, particularly the concept of "nothingness, emptiness" from former, and "what is neither seen nor unseen" from latter.[[7]](#cite_note-8)[[8]](#cite_note-9)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) [thumb|left|alt=Gold colored statue of Buddha reclining on his right side|Buddha statue depicting](/wiki/File:Mahaparinirvana.jpg) [Parinirvana](/wiki/Parinirvana) (Mahaparinirvana Temple, [Kushinagar](/wiki/Kushinagar), Uttar Pradesh, [India](/wiki/India)).

Buddha was moved by the innate suffering of humanity. He meditated on this alone for an extended period of time, in various ways including [asceticism](/wiki/Asceticism), on the nature of suffering and means to overcome suffering. He famously sat in [meditation](/wiki/Meditation) under a [*Ficus religiosa*](/wiki/Ficus_religiosa) tree now called the [Bodhi Tree](/wiki/Bodhi_Tree) in the town of [Bodh Gaya](/wiki/Bodh_Gaya) in Gangetic plains region of South Asia. He reached [enlightenment](/wiki/Bodhi), discovering what Buddhists call the [Middle Way](/wiki/Middle_Way) (Skt. *madhyamā-pratipad*),[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) a path of spiritual practice to end suffering ([*dukkha*](/wiki/Dukkha)) from rebirths in [Saṃsāra](/wiki/Saṃsāra).[[9]](#cite_note-10) As an [enlightened being](/wiki/Buddhahood#Samyaksambuddha) (Skt. [*Template:IAST*](/wiki/Template:IAST)), he attracted followers and founded a [*Sangha*](/wiki/Sangha_(Buddhism)) (monastic order).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Now, as the Buddha, he spent the rest of his life teaching the [Dharma](/wiki/Dharma) he had discovered, and died at the age of 80 in [Kushinagar](/wiki/Kushinagar), India.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Buddha's teachings were propagated by his followers, which in the last centuries of the 1st millennium BCE became over 18 Buddhist sub-schools of thought, each with its own [basket of texts](/wiki/Tripiṭaka) containing different interpretations and authentic teachings of the Buddha;[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[10]](#cite_note-11)<ref name=britannicatipitaka/> these over time evolved into many traditions of which the more well known and widespread in the modern era are [Theravada](/wiki/Theravada), [Mahayana](/wiki/Mahayana) and [Vajrayana](/wiki/Vajrayana) Buddhism.[[11]](#cite_note-12)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

## Buddhist concepts[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

### ''Dukkha''[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|alt=color manuscript illustration of Buddha teaching the](/wiki/File:Astasahasrika_Prajnaparamita_Dharmacakra_Discourse.jpeg) [Four Noble Truths](/wiki/Four_Noble_Truths), Nalanda, Bihar, India|The Buddha teaching the Four Noble Truths. [Sanskrit](/wiki/Sanskrit) manuscript. [Nalanda](/wiki/Nalanda), Bihar, India.

*Dukkha* is a central concept of Buddhism and part of its [Four Noble Truths](/wiki/Four_Noble_Truths) doctrine, and a central characteristic of life in this world. It can be translated as "incapable of satisfying,"[[web 2]](#cite_note-13) "the unsatisfactory nature and the general insecurity of all [conditioned phenomena](/wiki/Saṅkhāra#Conditioned_things)"; "painful."[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) *Dukkha* is most commonly translated as "suffering," which is an incorrect translation, since it refers not to literal suffering, but to the ultimately unsatisfactory nature of temporary states and things, including pleasant but temporary experiences.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

The Four Truths express the basic orientation of Buddhism: we crave and cling to [impermanent states and things](/wiki/Saṅkhāra#Conditioned_things), which is dukkha,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) "incapable of satisfying"[[web 2]](#cite_note-13) and painful.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) This keeps us caught in [saṃsāra](/wiki/Saṃsāra_(Buddhism)), the endless cycle of repeated [rebirth](/wiki/Rebirth_(Buddhism)), dukkha and dying again.[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) But there is a way to [liberation](/wiki/Moksha) from this endless cycle[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) to the state of [nirvana](/wiki/Nirvana), namely following the [Noble Eightfold Path](/wiki/Noble_Eightfold_Path). [Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

The truth of [*dukkha*](/wiki/Dukkha) is the basic insight that life in this "mundane world," with its clinging and craving to [impermanent states and things](/wiki/Saṅkhāra#Conditioned_things)"[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) is *dukkha*, and unsatisfactoy.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[web 3]](#cite_note-14) We expect happines from states and things which are impermanent, and therefore cannot attain real happiness.

*Dukkha* [arises](/wiki/Samudaya_sacca) when we crave (Pali: [*tanha*](/wiki/Tanha)) and cling to these changing phenomena. The clinging and craving produces [karma](/wiki/Karma_in_Buddhism), which ties us to samsara, the round of death and rebirth.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)<ref group=web name=bodhi1>[*The Four Noble Truths* - By Bhikkhu Bodhi](http://www.beyondthenet.net/dhamma/fourNoble.htm)</ref>[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) Craving includes *kama-tanha*, craving for sense-pleasures; [*bhava*](/wiki/Bhava)*-tanha*, craving to continue the cycle of life and death, including rebirth; and *vibhava-tanha*, craving to not experience the world and painful feelings.[Template:SfnTemplate:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

*Dukkha* ceases, or can be confined,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) when craving and clinging cease or are confined. This also means that no more karma is being produced, and rebirth ends.[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) Cessation is [*nirvana*](/wiki/Nirvana_(Buddhism)), "blowing out," and peace of mind.[Template:SfnTemplate:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

By following the Buddhist path to [*moksha*](/wiki/Moksha), liberation,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) one starts to disengage from craving and clinging to impernanent states and things. The term "path" is usually taken to mean the [Noble Eightfold Path](/wiki/Noble_Eightfold_Path), but [other versions](/wiki/Buddhist_Paths_to_liberation) of "the path" can also be found in the Nikayas.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The Theravada tradition regards insight into the four truths as liberating in itself.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

In Buddhism, dukkha is one of the [three marks of existence](/wiki/Three_marks_of_existence), along with [impermanence](/wiki/Impermanence) and [anattā](/wiki/Anattā) (non-self).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Buddhism, like other major Indian religions, asserts that everything is impermanent (anicca), but, unlike them, also asserts that there is no permanent self or soul in living beings (*anattā*).<ref name=britannicaanatta>[Anatta Buddhism](http://www.britannica.com/topic/anatta), Encyclopedia Britannica (2013)</ref>[[12]](#cite_note-15)<ref name=5sourcesanatta>**[a]** [Anatta](http://www.britannica.com/topic/anatta), Encyclopedia Britannica (2013), Quote: "Anatta in Buddhism, the doctrine that there is in humans no permanent, underlying soul. The concept of anatta, or anatman, is a departure from the Hindu belief in atman ("the self").";  
**[b]** Steven Collins (1994), Religion and Practical Reason (Editors: Frank Reynolds, David Tracy), State Univ of New York Press, ISBN 978-0791422175, page 64; "Central to Buddhist soteriology is the doctrine of not-self (Pali: anattā, Sanskrit: anātman, the opposed doctrine of ātman is central to Brahmanical thought). Put very briefly, this is the [Buddhist] doctrine that human beings have no soul, no self, no unchanging essence.";  
**[c]** John C. Plott et al (2000), Global History of Philosophy: The Axial Age, Volume 1, Motilal Banarsidass, ISBN 978-8120801585, page 63, Quote: "The Buddhist schools reject any Ātman concept. As we have already observed, this is the basic and ineradicable distinction between Hinduism and Buddhism";  
**[d]** Katie Javanaud (2013), [Is The Buddhist 'No-Self' Doctrine Compatible With Pursuing Nirvana?](https://philosophynow.org/issues/97/Is_The_Buddhist_No-Self_Doctrine_Compatible_With_Pursuing_Nirvana), Philosophy Now;  
**[e]** David Loy (1982), Enlightenment in Buddhism and Advaita Vedanta: Are Nirvana and Moksha the Same?, International Philosophical Quarterly, Volume 23, Issue 1, pages 65-74</ref> The ignorance or misperception ([*avijjā*](/wiki/Avidyā_(Buddhism))) that anything is permanent or that there is self in any being is considered a wrong understanding, and the primary source of clinging and dukkha.[[13]](#cite_note-16)[[14]](#cite_note-17)[[15]](#cite_note-18)

### Rebirth[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

[left|thumb|alt=Traditional Tibetan Buddhist Thangka depicting the Wheel of Life|Traditional](/wiki/File:Bhavachakra.jpg) [Tibetan Buddhist](/wiki/Tibetan_Buddhism) [Thangka](/wiki/Thangka) depicting the [Wheel of Life](/wiki/Bhavacakra) with its six realms

#### Saṃsāra[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) *Saṃsāra* means "wandering" or "world", with the connotation of cyclic, circuitous change.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) It refers to the theory of rebirth and "cyclicality of all life, matter, existence", a fundamental assumption of Buddhism, as with all major Indian religions.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Samsara in Buddhism is considered to be [*dukkha*](/wiki/Dukkha), unsatisfactory and painful,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) perpetuated by desire and [*avidya*](/wiki/Avidyā_(Buddhism)) (ignorance), and the resulting [karma](/wiki/Karma).[Template:SfnTemplate:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The theory of rebirths, and realms in which these rebirths can occur, is extensively developed in Buddhism, in particular Tibetan Buddhism with its wheel of existence (*Bhavacakra*) doctrine.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Liberation from this cycle of existence, *Nirvana*, has been the foundation and the most important historical justification of Buddhism.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The later Buddhist texts assert that rebirth can occur in six realms of existence, namely three good realms (heavenly, demi-god, human) and three evil realms (animal, hungry ghosts, hellish).[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) Samsara ends if a person attains [nirvana](/wiki/Nirvana), the "blowing out" of the desires and the gaining of true insight into [impermanence](/wiki/Impermanence) and [non-self](/wiki/Anatta) reality.[Template:SfnTemplate:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

#### Rebirth[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[thumb|alt=A very large hill behind two palm trees and a boulevard, people walking are about one fifth the hill's height|Gautama's cremation site, Ramabhar Stupa in](/wiki/File:Kushinara1.jpg) [Kushinagar](/wiki/Kushinagar), [Uttar Pradesh](/wiki/Uttar_Pradesh), [India](/wiki/India) [Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) Rebirth refers to a process whereby beings go through a succession of lifetimes as one of many possible forms of [sentient life](/wiki/Sentient_beings_(Buddhism)), each running from conception to death.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In Buddhist thought, this rebirth does not involve any soul, because of its doctrine of [anattā](/wiki/Anatta) (Sanskrit: *anātman*, no-self doctrine) which rejects the concepts of a permanent self or an unchanging, eternal soul, as it is called in [Hinduism](/wiki/Hinduism) and [Christianity](/wiki/Christianity).[[16]](#cite_note-19) According to Buddhism there ultimately is no such thing as a self in any being or any essence in any thing.[[17]](#cite_note-20) The Buddhist traditions have traditionally disagreed on what is it in a person that is reborn, as well as how quickly the rebirth occurs after each death.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[18]](#cite_note-21) Some Buddhist traditions assert that "no self" doctrine means that there is no perduring self, but there is *avacya* (inexpressible) self which migrates from one life to another.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The majority of Buddhist traditions, in contrast, assert that [vijñāna](/wiki/Vijñāna) (a person's consciousness) though evolving, exists as a continuum and is the mechanistic basis of what undergoes rebirth, rebecoming and redeath.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The rebirth depends on the merit or demerit gained by one's karma, as well as those accrued on one's behalf by a family member.[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

Each rebirth takes place within one of five realms according to Theravadins, or six according to other schools – heavenly, demi-gods, humans, animals, hungry ghosts and hellish.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

In East Asian and [Tibetan Buddhism](/wiki/Tibetan_Buddhism), rebirth is not instantaneous, and there is an intermediate state (Tibetan "[bardo](/wiki/Bardo)") between one life and the next.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[19]](#cite_note-22) The orthodox Theravada position rejects the wait, and asserts that rebirth of a being is immediate.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) However there are passages in the [*Samyutta Nikaya*](/wiki/Samyutta_Nikaya) of the Pali Canon that seem to lend support to the idea that the Buddha taught of an intermediate stage between one life and the next.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Page needed](/wiki/Template:Page_needed)

#### Karma[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [In Buddhism](/wiki/Karma_in_Buddhism), [Karma](/wiki/Karma) (from [Sanskrit](/wiki/Sanskrit): "action, work") drives [saṃsāra](/wiki/Saṃsāra)—the endless cycle of suffering and rebirth for each being. Good, skillful deeds (Pali: "kusala") and bad, unskillful deed (Pāli: "akusala") produce "seeds" in the unconscious receptacle (*ālaya*) that mature later either in this life or in a subsequent [rebirth](/wiki/Rebirth_(Buddhism)).[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The existence of Karma is a core belief in Buddhism, as with all major Indian religions, it implies neither fatalism nor that everything that happens to a person is caused by Karma.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

A central aspect of Buddhist theory of karma is that intent ([cetanā](/wiki/Cetanā)) matters and essential to bring about a consequence or [*phala*](/wiki/Phala) "fruit" or [vipāka](/wiki/Vipāka) "result".[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) However, good or bad karma accumulates even if there is no physical action, and just having ill or good thoughts create karmic seeds; thus, actions of body, speech or mind all lead to karmic seeds.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In the Buddhist traditions, life aspects affected by the law of karma in past and current births of a being include form of rebirth, realm of rebirth, social class, character and major circumstances of a lifetime.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[20]](#cite_note-23) It operates like the laws of physics, without external intervention, on every being in all [six realms](/wiki/Samsara_(Buddhism)) of existence including human beings and gods.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

A notable aspect of the karma theory in Buddhism is merit transfer.<ref name=appletonp129>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) A person accumulates merit not only through intentions and ethical living, but also is able to gain merit from others by exchanging goods and services, such as through *dāna* (charity to monks or nuns).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Further, a person can transfer one's own good karma to living family members and ancestors.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

### Liberation[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[thumb|right|alt=stone Mahabodhi temple in Bodh Gaya, India, where Gautama Buddha attained Nirvana under the Bodhi Tree|](/wiki/File:Mahabodhitemple.jpg)[Mahabodhi Temple](/wiki/Mahabodhi_Temple) in [Bodh Gaya](/wiki/Bodh_Gaya), India, where Gautama Buddha attained [nirvana](/wiki/Nirvana_(Buddhism)) under the [Bodhi Tree](/wiki/Bodhi_Tree) (left) [Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

[Nirvana](/wiki/Nirvana) (*nibbana*) has been the primary and the soteriological goal of the Buddhist path for monastic life, since the time of the Buddha.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[21]](#cite_note-24) The term "path" is usually taken to mean the [Noble Eightfold Path](/wiki/Noble_Eightfold_Path), but [other versions](/wiki/Buddhist_Paths_to_liberation) of "the path" can also be found in the Nikayas.[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) For example, in some Pali Canons, the Buddha explains that the cultivation of the noble eightfold path by a learner monk leads to the development of two further paths of the [Arhats](/wiki/Arhat), which are right knowledge or insight (*sammā-ñāṇa*), and right liberation or release (*sammā-vimutti*).[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Nirvana literally means "blowing out, quenching, becoming extinguished".[[22]](#cite_note-25)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In early Buddhist texts, it is the state of awakening that leads to the "blowing out" and the ending of the cycles of sufferings associated with rebirths and redeaths.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[23]](#cite_note-26) Many later Buddhist texts describe nirvana as identical with [*Anatta*](/wiki/Anatta) with complete "Emptiness, Nothingness".[[24]](#cite_note-27)[[25]](#cite_note-28)[[26]](#cite_note-29)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) In some texts, the state is described with greater detail, such as passing through the gate of Emptiness (*sunyata*) – realizing that there is no soul or self in any living being, then passing through the gate of signlessness (*animitta*) – realizing that nirvana cannot be perceived, and finally passing through the gate of wishlessness (*apranihita*) – realizing that nirvana is the state of not even wishing for nirvana.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[27]](#cite_note-30)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

The nirvana state has been described in Buddhist texts partly in a manner similar to other Indian religions, as the state of complete liberation, enlightenment, highest happiness, bliss, fearless, freedom, permanence, non-dependent origination, unfathomable, indescribable.[[28]](#cite_note-31)[[29]](#cite_note-32) It has also been described in part differently, as a state of spiritual release marked by "emptiness" and realization of [*non-Self*](/wiki/Anatta).[[30]](#cite_note-33)[[31]](#cite_note-34)[[32]](#cite_note-35)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

While Buddhism considers the liberation from [Saṃsāra](/wiki/Saṃsāra_(Buddhism)) as the ultimate spiritual goal, in traditional practice, the primary focus of a vast majority of lay Buddhists has been to seek and accumulate merit through good deeds, donations to monks and various Buddhist rituals in order to gain better rebirths rather than nirvana.[[33]](#cite_note-36)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

## ''Bhavana'' (practice, cultivation)[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

Basic practices include *sila* (ethics), *samadhi* (meditation, *dhyana*) and *prajna* (insight, knowledge), as described in the Noble Eightfold Path. An important additional practice is a kind and compassionate attitude toward every living being and the world. Devotion is also important in some Buddhist traditions, and in the Tibetan traditions visualisations of deities and and mandalas are important. The value of textual study is regarded differently in the various Buddhist traditions. It is central to Theravada and highly important ot Tibetan Buddhism, while the Zen tradition takes an ambiguous stance.

### The Buddhist path[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

While the Noble Eightfold Path is best-known in the west, a wide variety of practices and stages have been used and described in the Buddhist traditions. Even in the Theravada canon, the Pali-suttas, various often irreconcilable sequences can be found. According to Carol Anderson, the Theravada-canon lacks "an overriding and comprehensive structure of the path to *nibbana*."[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

#### Middle Way[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) An important guiding principle of Buddhist practice is the [Middle Way](/wiki/Middle_Way) (*madhyamapratipad*). It was a part of Buddha's first sermon, where he presented the [Noble Eightfold Path](/wiki/Noble_Eightfold_Path) that was a 'middle way' between the extremes of asceticism and hedonistic sense pleasures.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In Buddhism, states Harvey, the doctrine of "dependent arising" (conditioned arising, *pratītyasamutpāda*) to explain rebirth is viewed as the 'middle way' between the doctrines that a being has a "permanent soul" involved in rebirth (eternalism) and "death is final and there is no rebirth" (annihilationism).[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

#### Theravada[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[thumb|160px|alt=ships wheel with eight spokes represents the Noble Eightfold Path|The](/wiki/File:Dharma_Wheel.svg) [*Dharmachakra*](/wiki/Dharmachakra) represents the [Noble Eightfold Path](/wiki/Noble_Eightfold_Path)

##### Noble Eightfold Path[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

The [Noble Eightfold Path](/wiki/Noble_Eightfold_Path), or "Eightfold Path of the Noble Ones", consists of a set of eight interconnected factors or conditions, that when developed together, lead to the cessation of [dukkha](/wiki/Dukkha).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) These eight factors are: Right View (or Right Understanding), Right Intention (or Right Thought), Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.

This Eightfold Path is the fourth of the Buddha's [Four Noble Truths](/wiki/Four_Noble_Truths), and asserts the path to the cessation of *dukkha* (suffering, pain, unsatisfactoriness).[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The path teaches that the way of the enlightened ones which stopped their craving, clinging and [karmic](/wiki/Karma) accumulations, and thus ended their endless cycles of rebirth and suffering.[Template:SfnTemplate:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The Noble Eightfold Path is grouped into [three basic divisions](/wiki/Three_disciplines_of_Buddhism), as follows:[Template:SfnTemplate:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Division** | **Eightfold factor** | ***Sanskrit, Pali*** | **Description** |
| Wisdom (Sanskrit: [*prajñā*](/wiki/Wisdom_in_Buddhism), Pāli: *paññā*) | 1. Right view | *samyag dṛṣṭi, sammā ditthi* | the belief that there is an afterlife and not everything ends with death, that Buddha taught and followed a successful path to nirvana;[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) According to Peter Harvey, the right view is held in Buddhism as a belief in the Buddhist principles of [karma](/wiki/Karma) and [rebirth](/wiki/Rebirth_(Buddhism)), and the importance of the [Four Noble Truths](/wiki/Four_Noble_Truths) and the True Realities.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) |
| 2. Right resolve | *samyag saṃkalpa, sammā sankappa* | the giving up home and adopting the life of a religious mendicant in order to follow the path;[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) this concept, states Harvey, aims at peaceful renunciation, into an environment of non-sensuality, non-ill-will (to lovingkindness), away from cruelty (to compassion).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) |
| Moral virtues[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) (Sanskrit: [*śīla*](/wiki/Śīla), Pāli: *sīla*) | 3. Right speech | *samyag vāc, sammā vāca* | no lying, no rude speech, no telling one person what another says about him, speaking that which leads to salvation;[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) |
| 4. Right action | *samyag karman, sammā kammanta* | no killing or injurying, no taking what is not given; no sexual acts in monastic pursuit,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) for lay Buddhists no sensual misconduct such as sexual involvement with someone married, or with an unmarried woman protected by her parents or relatives.[[34]](#cite_note-37)[[35]](#cite_note-38)[[36]](#cite_note-39) |
| 5. Right livelihood | *samyag ājīvana, sammā ājīva* | For monks, beg to feed, only possessing what is essential to sustain life.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) For lay Buddhists, the canonical texts state right livelihood as abstaining from wrong livelihood, explained as not becoming a source or means of suffering to sentient beings by cheating them, or harming or killing them in any way.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[37]](#cite_note-40) |
| Meditation[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) (Sanskrit and Pāli: [*samādhi*](/wiki/Samādhi)) | 6. Right effort | *samyag vyāyāma, sammā vāyāma* | guard against sensual thoughts; this concept, states Harvey, aims at preventing unwholesome states that disrupt meditation.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) |
| 7. Right mindfulness | *samyag smṛti, sammā sati* | never be absent minded, conscious of what one is doing; this, states Harvey, encourages the mindfulness about impermanence of body, feeling and mind, as well as to experience the five [skandhas](/wiki/Skandha), the five hindrances, the four True Realities and seven factors of awakening.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) |
| 8. Right concentration | *samyag samādhi, sammā samādhi* | Correct meditation or concentration, explained as the four jhānas.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)<ref name=bucknellkangp12>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> |

#### Mahayana[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

##### Six paramitas[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Novices_alms_bowls_2.jpg)[Dāna](/wiki/Dāna) or charitable giving to monks is a virtue in Buddhism, leading to merit accumulation and better rebirths.[[38]](#cite_note-41) [Mahāyāna](/wiki/Mahayana) Buddhism is based principally upon the path of a [Bodhisattva](/wiki/Bodhisattva).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) A *Bodhisattva* refers to one who is on the path to buddhahood.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The term *Mahāyāna* was originally a synonym for *Bodhisattvayāna* or "Bodhisattva Vehicle."[Template:SfnTemplate:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

In the earliest texts of Mahayana Buddhism, the path of a bodhisattva was to awaken the *bodhicitta*.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Between 1st and 3rd century CE, this tradition introduced the *Ten Bhumi* doctrine, which means ten levels or stages of awakening.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) This development was followed by the acceptance that it is impossible to achieve Buddhahood in one (current) lifetime, and the best goal is not nirvana for oneself, but Buddhahood after climbing through the ten levels during multiple rebirths.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Mahayana scholars then outlined an elaborate path, for monks and laypeople, and the path includes the vow to help teach Buddhist knowledge to other beings, so as to help them cross samsara and liberate themselves, once one reaches the Buddhahood in a future rebirth.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) One part of this path are the [*Pāramitā*](/wiki/Pāramitā) (perfections, to cross over), derived from the *Jatakas* tales of Buddha's numerous rebirths.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The Mahayana texts are inconsistent in their discussion of the *Paramitas*, and some texts include lists of two, others four, six, ten and fifty two.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[39]](#cite_note-42) The six paramitas have been most studied, and these are:[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[39]](#cite_note-42)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

1. [*Dāna*](/wiki/Dāna) *pāramitā*: perfection of giving; primarily to monks, nuns and the Buddhist monastic establishment dependent on the alms and gifts of the lay householders, in return for generating religious merit;[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) some texts recommend ritually transferring the merit so accumulated for better rebirth to someone else
2. [*Śīla*](/wiki/Śīla) *pāramitā* : perfection of morality; it outlines ethical behavior for both the laity and the Mahayana monastic community; this list is similar to Śīla in the Eightfold Path (i.e. Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood)[[40]](#cite_note-43)# [*Template:IAST*](/wiki/Template:IAST) *pāramitā* : perfection of patience, willingness to endure hardship
3. [*Vīrya*](/wiki/Vīrya) *pāramitā* : perfection of vigor; this is similar to Right Effort in the Eightfold Path[[40]](#cite_note-43)# [*Dhyāna*](/wiki/Dhyāna_in_Buddhism) *pāramitā* : perfection of meditation; this is similar to Right Concentration in the Eightfold Path
4. [*Prajñā*](/wiki/Prajñā_(Buddhism)) *pāramitā* : perfection of insight (wisdom), awakening to the characteristics of existence such as karma, rebirths, impermanence, no-self, dependent origination and emptiness;[[39]](#cite_note-42)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) this is complete acceptance of the Buddha teaching, then conviction, followed by ultimate realization that "dharmas are non-arising".[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

In Mahayana Sutras that include ten *Paramitas*, the additional four perfections are "skillful means, vow, power and knowledge".[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The most discussed *Paramita* and the highest rated perfection in Mahayana texts is the "Prajna-paramita", or the "perfection of insight".[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) This insight in the Mahayana tradition, states Shōhei Ichimura, has been the "insight of non-duality or the absence of reality in all things".[[41]](#cite_note-44)[[42]](#cite_note-45)

### Refuge in the Three Jewels[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

[thumb|alt=stone footprint Gautama Buddha with Dharmachakra and Three Jewels|Relic depicting footprint of](/wiki/File:Buddha-Footprint.jpeg) [the Buddha](/wiki/Gautama_Buddha) with [Dharmachakra](/wiki/Dharmachakra) and [triratna](/wiki/Three_Jewels), 1st century CE, [Gandhāra](/wiki/Gandhara). [Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

Traditionally, the first step in most Buddhist schools requires taking Three Refuges, also called the Three Jewels ([Sanskrit](/wiki/Sanskrit): *triratna*, [Pali](/wiki/Pali): *tiratana*) as the foundation of one's religious practice.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Pali texts employ the [Brahmanical](/wiki/Hinduism) motif of the triple refuge, found in the [*Rigveda*](/wiki/Rigveda) 9.97.47, *Rigveda* 6.46.9 and [*Chandogya Upanishad*](/wiki/Chandogya_Upanishad) 2.22.3-4.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Tibetan Buddhism sometimes adds a fourth refuge, in the [*lama*](/wiki/Lama). The three refuges are believed by Buddhists to be protective and a form of reverence.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The Three Jewels are:[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

* The [Buddha](/wiki/Buddha), the Gotama, the Blessed One, the Awakened with true knowledge
* The [Dharma](/wiki/Dharma), the precepts, the practice, the Four Truths, the Eightfold Path
* The [Sangha](/wiki/Sangha_(Buddhism)), order of monks, the community of Buddha's disciples

Reciting the three refuges is considered in Buddhism not as a place to hide, rather a thought that purifies, uplifts and strengthens.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### ''Śīla'' – Buddhist ethics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|alt=stone statue of Gautama Buddha, 1st century CE, Gandhara|Statue of](/wiki/File:StandingBuddha.jpg) [Gautama Buddha](/wiki/Gautama_Buddha), first century CE, [Gandhara](/wiki/Gandhara), present-day [Pakistan](/wiki/Pakistan). ([Guimet Museum](/wiki/Guimet_Museum)) *Śīla* (Sanskrit) or *sīla* (Pāli) is the concept of "moral virtues", that is the second group and an integral part of the Noble Eightfold Path.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) It consists of right speech, right action and right livelihood.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

*Śīla* appear as ethical precepts for both lay and ordained Buddhist devotees. It includes the Five Precepts for laypeople, Eight or Ten Precepts for monastic life, as well as rules of Dhamma (*Vinaya* or *Patimokkha*) adopted by a monastery.[[43]](#cite_note-46)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

#### Precepts[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

The five precepts (*panca-sila*) are moral behavioral and ritual guidelines for lay devotee in Buddhism, while those following a monastic life have rules of conduct (*patimokkha*).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The five precepts apply to both male and female devotee, and these are:[[43]](#cite_note-46)[[44]](#cite_note-47)# Abstain from killing ([Ahimsa](/wiki/Ahimsa#Buddhism));

1. Abstain from stealing;
2. Abstain from sensual (including sexual) misconduct;
3. Abstain from lying;
4. Abstain from intoxicants.

These precepts are not commandments and transgressions did not invite religious sanctions, but their power has been in the Buddhist belief in karmic consequences and their impact in afterlife during rebirth.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Killing in Buddhist belief leads to rebirth in the hellish realm, and for a longer time in more severe conditions if the murder victim was a monk.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Adultery, similarly, invites a rebirth as prostitute or in hell, depending on whether the partner was unmarried or married.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Saving animals from slaughter for meat, is believed to be a way to acquire merit for better rebirth. These moral precepts have been voluntarily self-enforced in lay Buddhist culture through the associated belief in karma and rebirth.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The monastic life in Buddhism have additional precepts as part of *patimokkha*, and unlike lay people, transgressions by monks do invite sanctions.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Full expulsion from *sangha* follows any instance of killing, engaging in sexual intercourse, theft or false claims about one's knowledge.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Temporary expulsion follows a lesser offense.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The sanctions vary by the monastic fraternity (*nikaya*).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The precepts for monks in many Buddhist fraternities are eight (*asta shila*) or ten (*das shila*). Four of these are same as for the lay devotee: no killing, no stealing, no lying, and no intoxicants.<ref name=gombrichpreceptsp76/> The other four precepts are:[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)<ref name=gombrichpreceptsp76>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

1. No sexual activity;
2. Abstain from eating at wrong time (e.g. only eat solid food before 12 noon);
3. Abstain from jewelry, perfume, adornment, entertainment;
4. Abstain from sleeping on high beds;[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

Some *sangha* add two more precepts: abstain from dancing and singing, abstain from accepting money. In addition to these precepts, Buddhist monasteries have hundreds of rules of dhamma conduct, which are a part of its *patimokkha*.[[45]](#cite_note-48)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

#### Vinaya[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

[thumb|alt=Buddhist monks in saffron robes standing performing a ceremony in Hangzhou, China|Monks performing a ceremony in](/wiki/File:Chinese_Buddhist_Monks_Ceremony_Hangzhou.jpeg) [Hangzhou](/wiki/Hangzhou), China

[Vinaya](/wiki/Vinaya) is the specific code of conduct for a *sangha* of monks or nuns. It includes the [Patimokkha](/wiki/Patimokkha), a set of 227 offenses including 75 rules of decorum for monks, along with penalties for transgression, in the Theravadin tradition.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The precise content of the [*Vinaya Pitaka*](/wiki/Vinaya_Pitaka) (scriptures on the Vinaya) differs in different schools and tradition, and different monasteries set their own standards on its implementation. The list of *pattimokkha* is recited every fortnight in a ritual gathering of all monks.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Buddhist text with vinaya rules for monasteries have been traced in all Buddhist traditions, with the oldest surviving being the ancient Chinese translations.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Monastic communities in the Buddhist tradition, cut normal social ties to family and community, and live as "islands unto themselves".[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Within a monastic fraternity, a *sangha* has its own rules.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) A monk abides by these institutionalized rules, and living life as the vinaya prescribes it is not merely a means, but very nearly the end in itself.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Transgressions by a monk on *Sangha* vinaya rules invites enforcement, which can include temporary or permanent expulsion.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### Meditation and insight[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

[thumb|right|alt=bronze Statue of the Buddha in meditation position, Haw Phra Kaew, Vientiane Laos|Statue of the Buddha in meditation position,](/wiki/File:Buddha_in_Haw_Phra_Kaew.jpg) [Haw Phra Kaew](/wiki/Haw_Phra_Kaew), [Vientiane](/wiki/Vientiane), [Laos](/wiki/Buddhism_in_Laos) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

The Buddhist tradition has incorporated two traditions regarding the use of [dhyāna](/wiki/Dhyāna_in_Buddhism) (meditation, Pali *jhāna*).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) There is a tradition that stresses attaining [prajñā](/wiki/Prajñā_(Buddhism)) (insight, [bodhi](/wiki/Bodhi), [kenshō](/wiki/Kenshō), [vipassana](/wiki/Vipassana)) as the means to awakening and liberation. But it has also incorporated the [yogic tradition](/wiki/Yoga), as reflected in the use of jhana, which is rejected in other sutras as not resulting in the final result of liberation.[Template:SfnTemplate:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) Schmithausen discerns three possible roads to liberation as described in the suttas,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) to which Vetter adds the sole practice of *dhyana* itself, which he sees as the original "liberating practice":[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

1. The four Rupa Jhanas themselves constituted the core liberating practice of early buddhism, c.q. the Buddha;[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)
2. Mastering the four Rupa Jhanas, where-after "liberating insight" is attained;
3. Mastering the four Rupa Jhanas and the four Arupa Jhanas, where-after "liberating insight" is attained;
4. Liberating insight itself suffices.

### ''Dhyana'' – meditation[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

[left|thumb|alt=Bhikkhus in saffron robes kneeling in Thailand|](/wiki/File:Rank_celebration_of_Thai_Buddhist_monk_1.jpg)[Bhikkhus](/wiki/Bhikkhu) in Thailand [Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

A wide range of meditation practices has developed in the Buddhist traditions, but "meditation" primarily refers to the practice of *dhyana* c.q. *jhana*. It is a practice in which the attention of the mind is first narrowed to the focus on one specific object, such as the breath, a concrete object, or a specific thought, mental image or mantra. After this initial focussing of the mind, the focus is coupled to mindfulness, maintaining a calm mind while being aware of one's surroundings.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The practice of *dhyana* aids in maintaining a calm mind, and avoiding disturbance of this calm mind by mindfulness of disturbing thoughts and feelings.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

#### Origins[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

The earliest evidence of yogis and their meditative tradition, states Karel Werner, is found in the [Keśin](/wiki/Keśin) hymn 10.136 of the [Rigveda](/wiki/Rigveda).<ref name=karelwernerkesinrv>[Template:Cite journal](/wiki/Template:Cite_journal)</ref> While evidence suggests [meditation](/wiki/Meditation) was practiced in the centuries preceding the Buddha,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) the meditative methodologies described in the Buddhist texts are some of the earliest among texts that have survived into the modern era.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) These methodologies likely incorporate what existed before the Buddha as well as those first developed within Buddhism.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

According to Bronkhorst, the *Four Dhyanas* was a Buddhist invention.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Bronkhorst notes that the Buddhist canon has a mass of contradictory statements, little is known about their relative chronology, and "there can be no doubt that the canon – including the older parts, the Sutra and Vinaya Pitaka – was composed over a long period of time".[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Meditative practices were incorporated from other sramanic movements;[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) the Buddhist texts describe Buddha learnt the practice of the formless dhyana from Brahmanical practices, in the Nikayas ascribed to Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The Buddhist canon also describes and criticizes alternative dhyana practices, which likely mean the pre-existing mainstream meditation practices of Jainism and Hinduism.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Buddha added a new focus and interpretation, particularly through the Four Dhyanas methodology,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) in which mindfulness is maintained.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Further, the focus of meditation and the underlying theory of liberation guiding the meditation has been different in Buddhism.[Template:SfnTemplate:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) For example, states Bronkhorst, the verse 4.4.23 of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad with its "become calm, subdued, quiet, patiently enduring, concentrated, one sees soul in oneself" is most probably a meditative state.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The Buddhist discussion of meditation is without the concept of soul and the discussion criticizes both the ascetic meditation of Jainism and the "real self, soul" meditation of Hinduism.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

#### Four ''rupa-jhāna'' and four ''arupa-jhāna''[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

For Nirvana, Buddhist texts teach various meditation methodologies, of which *rupa-jhana* (four meditations in the realm of form) and *arupa-jhana* (four meditations in the formless realm) have been the most studied.[[46]](#cite_note-49) These are described in the Pali Canon as trance-like states in the world of desirelessness.[[47]](#cite_note-50) The four dhyanas under *rupa-jhanas* are:[[47]](#cite_note-50)#First dhyana: detach from all sensory desires and sinful states that are a source of unwholesome karma. Success here is described in Buddhist texts as leading to discursive thinking, deliberation, detachment, *sukha* (pleasure) and *priti* (rapture).[[46]](#cite_note-49)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

1. Second dhyana: cease deliberation and all discursive thoughts.[[47]](#cite_note-50) Success leads to one-pointed thinking, serenity, pleasure and rapture.[[46]](#cite_note-49)#Third dhyana: loose feeling of rapture. Success leads to equanimity, mindfulness and pleasure, without rapture.[[46]](#cite_note-49)#Fourth dhyana: cease all affects, lose all happiness and sadness. Success in the fourth meditation stage leads to pure equanimity and mindfulness, without any pleasure or pain.[[46]](#cite_note-49)[[47]](#cite_note-50)

The *arupa-jhanas* (formless realm meditation) are also four, which are entered by those who have mastered the *rupa-jhanas* ([Arhats](/wiki/Arhat)).[[47]](#cite_note-50)[[48]](#cite_note-51) The first formless dhyana gets to infinite space without form or color or shape, the second to infinity of perception base of the infinite space, the third formless dhyana transcends object-subject perception base, while the fourth is where he dwells in nothing-at-all where there are no feelings, no ideas, nor are there non-ideas, unto total cessation.[[48]](#cite_note-51) The four *rupa-dhyanas* in Buddhist practice leads to rebirth in successfully better *rupa* Brahma heavenly realms, while *arupa-dhyanas* into arupa heavens.[[49]](#cite_note-52)[[50]](#cite_note-53) Richard Gombrich notes that the sequence of the four *rupa-jhanas* describes two different cognitive states. The first two describe a narrowing of attention, while in the third and fourth jhana attention is expanded again.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)[[51]](#cite_note-54) Alexander Wynne further explains that the *dhyana*-scheme is poorly understood.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) According to Wynne, words expressing the inculcation of awareness, such as *sati*, *sampajāno*, and *upekkhā*, are mistranslated or understood as particular factors of meditative states,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) whereas they refer to a particular way of perceiving the sense objects.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:RefnTemplate:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

#### The ''Brahma-vihara''[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

[thumb|alt=gilded statue of Buddha in Wat Phra Si Rattana Mahathat, Thailand|Statue of Buddha in](/wiki/File:Phra_Buddha_Jinaraj_-_Phitsanulok.jpg) [Wat Phra Si Rattana Mahathat](/wiki/Wat_Phra_Si_Rattana_Mahathat), [Phitsanulok](/wiki/Phitsanulok), Thailand [Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) The four immeasurables or four abodes, also called *Brahma-viharas*, are virtues or directions for meditation in Buddhist traditions, which helps a person be reborn in the heavenly (Brahma) realm.[[52]](#cite_note-55)<ref name=peterharvey2012p154>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>[[53]](#cite_note-56) These are traditionally believed to be a characteristic of the deity Brahma and the heavenly abode he resides in.[[54]](#cite_note-57) The four *Brahma-vihara* are:

1. Loving-kindness (Pāli: [*mettā*](/wiki/Mettā), Sanskrit: *maitrī*) is active good will towards all;[[55]](#cite_note-58)# Compassion (Pāli and Sanskrit: [*karuṇā*](/wiki/Karuṇā)) results from *metta*, it is identifying the suffering of others as one's own;[[55]](#cite_note-58)# Empathetic joy (Pāli and Sanskrit: [*muditā*](/wiki/Mudita)): is the feeling of joy because others are happy, even if one did not contribute to it, it is a form of sympathetic joy;[[55]](#cite_note-58)# Equanimity (Pāli: [*upekkhā*](/wiki/Upekkha), Sanskrit: *upekṣā*): is even-mindedness and serenity, treating everyone impartially.[[55]](#cite_note-58)

According to Peter Harvey, the Buddhist scriptures acknowledge that the four *Brahmavihara* meditation practices "did not originate within the Buddhist tradition".[[56]](#cite_note-59)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) The Brahmavihara (sometimes as Brahmaloka), along with the tradition of meditation and the above four immeasurables are found in pre-Buddha and post-Buddha Vedic and Sramanic literature.[[57]](#cite_note-60)[[58]](#cite_note-61) Aspects of the Brahmavihara practice for rebirths into heavenly realm has been an important part of Buddhist meditation tradition.[[59]](#cite_note-62)[[60]](#cite_note-63) According to Gombrich, the Buddhist usage of the *brahma-vihāra* originally referred to an awakened state of mind, and a concrete attitude toward other beings which was equal to "living with Brahman" here and now. The later tradition took those descriptions too literal, linking them to cosmology and understanding them as "living with Brahman" by rebirth in the Brahma-world.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) According to Gombrich, "the Buddha taught that kindness - what Christians tend to call love - was a way to salvation.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

#### Visualisations: deities, mandalas[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

[thumb|Mandala are used in Buddhism for initiation ceremonies and visualization.](/wiki/File:Mandala_zel-tary.jpg)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Idols of deity and icons have been a part of the historic practice, and Buddhist texts such as the 11th-century *Sadanamala*, wherein a devotee visualizes and identifies himself or herself with the imagined deity as part of meditation.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[61]](#cite_note-64) This has been particularly popular in Vajrayana meditative traditions, but also found in Mahayana and Theravada traditions, particularly in temples and with Buddha image.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

In Tibetan Buddhism tradition, mandala are mystical maps for the visualization process with cosmic symbolism.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) There are numerous deities, each with a mandala, and they are used during initiation ceremonies and meditation.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The mandalas are concentric geometric shapes symbolizing layers of external world, gates and sacred space. The meditation deity is in the center, sometimes surrounded by protective gods and goddesses.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Visualizations with deities and mandalas in Buddhism is a tradition traceable to ancient times, and likely well established by the time the 5th-century text *Visuddhimagga* was composed.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[62]](#cite_note-65)

#### Practice: monks, laity[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

According to Peter Harvey, whenever Buddhism has been healthy, not only ordained but also more committed lay people have practiced formal meditation.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Loud devotional chanting however, adds Harvey, has been the most prevalent Buddhist practice and considered a form of meditation that produces "energy, joy, lovingkindness and calm", purifies mind and benefits the chanter.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Throughout most of Buddhist history, meditation has been primarily practiced in Buddhist monastic tradition, and historical evidence suggests that serious meditation by lay people has been an exception.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[63]](#cite_note-66)[[64]](#cite_note-67) In recent history, sustained meditation has been pursued by a minority of monks in Buddhist monasteries.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Western interest in meditation has led to a revival where ancient Buddhist ideas and precepts are adapted to Western mores and interpreted liberally, presenting Buddhism as a meditation-based form of spirituality.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### ''Prajñā'' – insight[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

[thumb|alt=monks wearing crimson robes debating at Sera Monastery, Tibet|](/wiki/File:Debating_Monks.JPG)[Monks](/wiki/Bhikku) debating at [Sera Monastery](/wiki/Sera_Monastery), Tibet [Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

*Prajñā* (Sanskrit) or *paññā* (Pāli) is insight or knowledge of the true nature of existence. The Buddhist tradition regards ignorance ([avidyā](/wiki/Avidyā_(Buddhism))), a fundamental ignorance, misunderstanding or mis-perception of the nature of reality, as one of the basic causes of *dukkha* and *samsara*. By overcoming ignorance or misunderstanding one is enlightened and liberated. This overcoming includes awakening to impermanence and non-self nature of reality,[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) and this develops dispassion for the objects of [clinging](/wiki/Upādāna), and liberates a being from *dukkha* and *saṃsāra*.[[65]](#cite_note-68)[[66]](#cite_note-69)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) *Prajñā* is important in all Buddhist traditions, and is the wisdom about the dharmas, functioning of karma and rebirths, realms of samsara, impermanence of everything, no-self in anyone or anything, and dependent origination.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

#### Origins[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

The origins of "liberating insight" is unclear. Buddhist texts, states Bronkhorst, do not describe it explicitly, and the content of "liberating insight" is likely not original to Buddhism and was "added under the influence of mainstream meditation".[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Bronkhorst suggests that the conception of what exactly constituted "liberating insight" for Buddhists developed over time. Whereas originally it may not have been specified as an insight, later on the Four Noble Truths served as such, to be superseded by *pratityasamutpada*, and still later, in the Hinayana schools, by the doctrine of the non-existence of a substantial self or person.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

In the Pali Canon liberating insight is attained in the fourth dhyana.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) However, states Vetter, modern scholarship on the Pali Canon has uncovered a "whole series of inconsistencies in the transmission of the Buddha's word", and there are many conflicting versions of what constitutes higher knowledge and samadhi that leads to the liberation from rebirth and suffering.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Even within the Four Dhyana methodology of meditation, Vetter notes that "penetrating abstract truths and penetrating them successively does not seem possible in a state of mind which is without contemplation and reflection."[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) According to Vetter, *dhyāna* itself constituted the original "liberating practice".[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

Carol Anderson notes that insight is often depicted in the Vinaya as the opening of the Dhamma eye, which sets one on the Buddhist path to liberation.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

#### Theravada[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

[thumb|alt=color monument of Buddha in lotus position, Shwezigon Paya near Bagan, Myanmar|](/wiki/File:Monywa-shwezigon-paya-d01.jpg)[Shwezigon Pagoda](/wiki/Shwezigon_Pagoda) near [Bagan](/wiki/Bagan), [Myanmar](/wiki/Myanmar)

##### Vipassanā[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]

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In Theravada Buddhism, but also in Tibetan Buddhism, two types of meditation Buddhist practices are being followed, namely [samatha](/wiki/Samatha) (Pāli; Sanskrit: *śamatha*; "calm") and vipassana (insight).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[67]](#cite_note-70) Samatha is also called "calming meditation", and was adopted into Buddhism from pre-Buddha Indian traditions. *Vipassanā* meditation was added by Buddha, and refers to "insight meditation". Vipassana does not aim at peace and tranquillity, states Damien Keown, but "the generation of penetrating and critical insight (panna)".[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The focus of Vipassana meditation is to continuously and throughly know [impermanence](/wiki/Impermanence) of everything (*annica*), [no-Self](/wiki/Anatta) in anything (*anatta*) and *dukkha* teachings of Buddhism.[[68]](#cite_note-71)[[69]](#cite_note-72) Contemporary Theravada orthodoxy regards samatha as a preparation for vipassanā, pacifying the mind and strengthening the concentration in order to allow the work of insight, which leads to liberation. In contrast, the Vipassana Movement argues that insight levels can be discerned without the need for developing samatha further due to the risks of going out of course when strong samatha is developed.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

##### Dependent arising[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) *Pratityasamutpada*, also called "dependent arising, or dependent origination", is the Buddhist theory to explain the nature and relations of being, becoming, existence and ultimate reality. Buddhism asserts that there is nothing independent, except the state of nirvana.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) All physical and mental states depend on and arise from other pre-existing states, and in turn from them arise other dependent states while they cease.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The 'dependent arisings' have a causal conditioning, and thus *Pratityasamutpada* is the Buddhist belief that causality is the basis of [ontology](/wiki/Ontology), not a creator God nor the ontological Vedic concept called universal Self ([Brahman](/wiki/Brahman)) nor any other 'transcendent creative principle'.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[70]](#cite_note-73) However, the Buddhist thought does not understand causality in terms of Newtonian mechanics, rather it understands it as conditioned arising.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[71]](#cite_note-74) In Buddhism, dependent arising is referring to conditions created by a plurality of causes that necessarily co-originate a phenomena within and across lifetimes, such as karma in one life creating conditions that lead to rebirth in one of realms of existence for another lifetime.[[72]](#cite_note-75)[[73]](#cite_note-76)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Buddhism applies the dependent arising theory to explain origination of endless cycles of *dukkha* and rebirth, through its [Twelve Nidānas](/wiki/Twelve_Nidānas) or "twelve links" doctrine. It states that because [Avidyā](/wiki/Avidyā_(Buddhism)) (ignorance) exists [Saṃskāras](/wiki/Saṅkhāra) (karmic formations) exists, because Saṃskāras exists therefore [Vijñāna](/wiki/Vijñāna) (consciousness) exists, and in a similar manner it links [Nāmarūpa](/wiki/Nāmarūpa) (sentient body), [Ṣaḍāyatana](/wiki/Ṣaḍāyatana) (six senses), [Sparśa](/wiki/Sparśa) (sensory stimulation), [Vedanā](/wiki/Vedanā) (feeling), [Taṇhā](/wiki/Taṇhā) (craving), [Upādāna](/wiki/Upādāna) (grasping), [Bhava](/wiki/Bhava) (becoming), [Jāti](/wiki/Jāti_(Buddhism)) (birth), [Jarāmaraṇa](/wiki/Jarāmaraṇa) (old age, death, sorrow, pain).[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

By breaking the circuitous links of Twelve Nidanas, Buddhism asserts that a liberation from this endless cycles of rebirth and dukkha can be attained.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

#### Mahayana[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=32)]

[left|thumb|alt=bronze Great Statue of Amitābha in Kamakura, Japan|The Great Statue of](/wiki/File:Kamakura-buddha-2.jpg) [Amitābha](/wiki/Amitābha) in [Kamakura](/wiki/Kamakura), Japan

##### Emptiness[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

[Śūnyatā](/wiki/Śūnyatā), or "emptiness", is a central concept in [Nagarjuna's](/wiki/Nagarjuna) [Madhyamaka](/wiki/Madhyamaka) school, and widely attested in the [Prajñāpāramitā](/wiki/Prajnaparamita) sutras. It brings together key Buddhist doctrines, particularly anatta and [dependent origination](/wiki/Pratītyasamutpāda), to refute the metaphysics of [Sarvastivada](/wiki/Sarvastivada) and [Sautrāntika](/wiki/Sautrāntika) (extinct non-Mahayana schools). Not only sentient beings are empty of [ātman](/wiki/Ātman_(Buddhism)); all phenomena ([dharmas](/wiki/Dharma#Dharmas_in_Buddhist_phenomenology)) are without any [svabhava](/wiki/Svabhava) (literally "own-nature" or "self-nature"), and thus without any underlying essence, and "empty" of being independent; thus the heterodox theories of svabhava circulating at the time were refuted on the basis of the doctrines of early Buddhism.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

##### Mind-only[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) Sarvastivada teachings, which were criticized by Nāgārjuna, —were reformulated by scholars such as [Vasubandhu](/wiki/Vasubandhu) and [Asanga](/wiki/Asanga) and were adapted into the [Yogachara](/wiki/Yogachara) school. While the Mādhyamaka school held that asserting the existence or non-existence of any ultimately real thing was inappropriate, some exponents of Yogachara asserted that the mind and only the mind is ultimately real (a doctrine known as *cittamatra*). Not all Yogacharins asserted that mind was truly existent; Vasubandhu and Asanga in particular did not.<ref group=web>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> These two schools of thought, in opposition or synthesis, form the basis of subsequent Mahayana metaphysics in the Indo-Tibetan tradition.

##### Buddha-nature[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=35)]

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Buddha-nature is a concept found in some 1st-millennium CE Buddhist texts, such as the [*Tathāgatagarbha sūtras*](/wiki/Tathāgatagarbha_sūtras). This concept has been controversial in Buddhism, but has a following in the East Asian Buddhism.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) These [Sutras](/wiki/Sutra) suggest, states Paul Williams, that 'all sentient beings contain a Tathagata' as their 'essence, core inner nature, Self'.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) The *Tathagatagarbha* doctrine, at its earliest probably appeared about the later part of the 3rd century CE, and it contradicts the Anatta doctrine (non-Self) in a vast majority of Buddhist texts, leading scholars to posit that the *Tathagatagarbha Sutras* were written to promote Buddhism to non-Buddhists.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[74]](#cite_note-77) However, the Buddhist text *Ratnagotravibhāga* states that the "Self" implied in *Tathagatagarbha* doctrine is actually "not-Self".[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### Devotion[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=36)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|*Bhatti* (devotion) at a Buddhist temple, Tibet. Chanting during](/wiki/File:Prayers_in_front_of_Jokhang_temple.jpg) [*Bhatti Puja*](/wiki/Buddhānusmṛti) (devotional worship) is often a part of the Theravada Buddhist tradition. Devotion is an important part of the practice of most Buddhists.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Devotional practices include ritual prayer, prostration, offerings, pilgrimage, and chanting.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In Pure Land Buddhism, devotion to the Buddha Amitabha is the main practice. In Nichiren Buddhism, devotion to the Lotus Sutra is the main practice. Bhakti (called *Bhatti* in Pali) has been a common practice in Theravada Buddhism, where offerings and group prayers are made to deities and particularly images of Buddha.[[75]](#cite_note-78) According to Karel Werner and other scholars, devotional worship has been a significant practice in [Theravada](/wiki/Theravada) Buddhism, and deep devotion is part of Buddhist traditions starting from the earliest days.[[76]](#cite_note-79)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Guru devotion is a central practice of Tibetan Buddhism.[[77]](#cite_note-80)[[78]](#cite_note-81) The guru is considered essential and to the Buddhist devotee, the guru is the "enlightened teacher and ritual master" in Vajrayana spiritual pursuits.[[77]](#cite_note-80)<ref name=berkwitz130>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

For someone seeking Buddhahood, the guru is the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, wrote the 12th-century Buddhist scholar Sadhanamala.<ref name=berkwitz130/> The venerance of and obedience to teachers is also important in Theravada and Zen Buddhism.[[79]](#cite_note-82)

## Buddhist texts[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=37)]

[thumb|alt=Buddhist monk Geshe Konchog Wangdu in red robe reads Mahayana sutras on stand|Buddhist monk Geshe Konchog Wangdu reads Mahayana sutras from an old woodblock copy of the Tibetan Kanjur.](/wiki/File:Konchog-wangdu.jpeg) [Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

Buddhism, like all Indian religions, was an oral tradition in the ancient times.[[80]](#cite_note-83) The Buddha's words, the early doctrines and concepts, the interpretations were transmitted from one generation to the next by the word of mouth in monasteries, and not through written texts. The first Buddhist canonical texts, were likely written down in Sri Lanka, about 400 years after the Buddha died.[[80]](#cite_note-83) The texts were part of the *Tripitakas*, and many versions appeared thereafter claiming to be the words of the Buddha. Scholarly Buddhist commentary texts, with named authors, appeared in India, around the 2nd century CE.[[80]](#cite_note-83) These texts were written in Pali or Sanskrit, sometimes regional languages, as [palm-leaf manuscripts](/wiki/Palm-leaf_manuscript), birch bark, painted scrolls, carved into temple walls, and later on paper.[[80]](#cite_note-83) Unlike what the Bible is to Christianity and Quran is to Islam, but like all major ancient Indian religions, there is no consensus among the different Buddhist traditions as to what constitutes the scriptures or a common canon in Buddhism.[[80]](#cite_note-83) The general belief among Buddhists is that the canonical corpus is vast.[[81]](#cite_note-84)[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) This corpus includes the ancient *Sutras* organized into *Nikayas*, itself the part of three basket of texts called the *Tripitakas*.[[82]](#cite_note-85) Each Buddhist tradition has its own collection of texts, much of which is translation of ancient Pali and Sanskrit Buddhist texts of India. The Chinese Buddhist canon, for example, includes 2184 texts in 55 volumes, while the Tibetan canon comprises of 1108 texts – all claimed to have been spoken by the Buddha – and another 3461 texts composed by Indian scholars revered in the Tibetan tradition.<ref name=lopez2004busc2>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> The Buddhist textual history has been vast; over 40,000 manuscripts mostly Buddhist, some non-Buddhist, were discovered in 1900 in the Dunhuang Chinese cave alone.<ref name=lopez2004busc2/>

### Pāli Tipitaka[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=38)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Template:PaliCanon](/wiki/Template:PaliCanon)

The Pāli Tipitaka (Sanskrit: *Tripiṭaka*, three pitakas), which means "three baskets", refers to the *Vinaya Pitaka*, the *Sutta Pitaka*, and the *Abhidhamma Pitaka*. These constitute the oldest known canonical works of Buddhism. The [*Vinaya Pitaka*](/wiki/Vinaya) contains disciplinary rules for the Buddhist monasteries. The [*Sutta Pitaka*](/wiki/Sutta_Pitaka) contains words attributed to the Buddha. The [*Abhidhamma Pitaka*](/wiki/Abhidhamma) contain expositions and commentaries on the Sutta, and these vary significantly between Buddhist schools.

The Pāli Tipitaka is the only surviving early Tipitaka. According to some sources, some early schools of Buddhism had five or seven pitakas.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Much of the material in the Canon is not specifically "Theravadin", but is instead the collection of teachings that this school preserved from the early, non-sectarian body of teachings. According to Peter Harvey, it contains material at odds with later Theravadin orthodoxy. He states: "The Theravadins, then, may have *added* texts to the Canon for some time, but they do not appear to have tampered with what they already had from an earlier period."[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### Theravada texts[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=39)]

In addition to the Pali Canon, the important commentary texts of the Theravada tradition include the 5th-century [*Visuddhimagga*](/wiki/Visuddhimagga) by [Buddhaghosa](/wiki/Buddhaghosa) of the Mahavihara school. It includes sections on shila (virtues), samadhi (concentration), panna (wisdom) as well as Theravada tradition's meditation methodology.[[83]](#cite_note-86)

### Mahayana sutras[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=40)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|alt=Tripiṭaka Koreana in South Korea, over 81,000 wood printing blocks stored in racks|The](/wiki/File:Korea-Haeinsa-Tripitaka_Koreana-01.jpg) [Tripiṭaka Koreana](/wiki/Tripitaka_Koreana) in South Korea, an edition of the [Chinese Buddhist canon](/wiki/Chinese_Buddhist_canon) carved and preserved in over 81,000 wood printing blocks.

The [Mahayana sutras](/wiki/Mahayana_sutras) are a very broad genre of Buddhist scriptures that the [Mahayana](/wiki/Mahayana) Buddhist tradition holds are original teachings of [the Buddha](/wiki/Gautama_Buddha). Some adherents of Mahayana accept both the early teachings (including in this the Sarvastivada Abhidharma, which was criticized by Nagarjuna and is in fact opposed to early Buddhist thought)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) and the Mahayana sutras as authentic teachings of Gautama Buddha, and claim they were designed for different types of persons and different levels of spiritual understanding.

The Mahayana sutras often claim to articulate the Buddha's deeper, more advanced doctrines, reserved for those who follow the [bodhisattva](/wiki/Bodhisattva) path. That path is explained as being built upon the motivation to liberate all living beings from unhappiness. Hence the name *Mahāyāna* (lit., *the Great Vehicle*). The Theravada school does not treat the Mahayana Sutras as authoritative or authentic teachings of the Buddha.<ref name=karlpotter1996p26/>[[84]](#cite_note-87) Generally, scholars conclude that the Mahayana scriptures were composed from the 1st century CE onwards: "Large numbers of Mahayana sutras were being composed in the period between the beginning of the common era and the fifth century".[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### Tibetan texts: Śālistamba Sutra[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=41)]

Many ancient Indian texts have not survived into the modern era, creating a challenge in establishing the historic commonalities between Theravada and Mahayana. The texts preserved in the Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, with parallel Chinese translations, have provided a breakthrough. Among these is the Mahayana text *Śālistamba Sutra* which no longer exists in Sanskrit version, but does in Tibetan and Chinese versions. This Mahayana text contains numerous sections which are remarkably same as the Theravada Pali Canon and Nikaya Buddhism.<ref name=karlpotter1996p26/>[[85]](#cite_note-88) The *Śālistamba Sutra* was cited by Mahayana scholars such as the 8th-century Yasomitra to be authoritative.[[86]](#cite_note-89) This suggests that Buddhist literature of different traditions shared a common core of Buddhist texts in the early centuries of its history, until Mahayana literature diverged about and after the 1st century CE.<ref name=karlpotter1996p26/>

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=42)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

### Historical roots[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=43)]

[thumb|alt=people sitting before stone shrine the Buddhist "Carpenter's Cave" at Ellora in Maharashtra, India|The Buddhist "Carpenter's Cave" at](/wiki/File:ElloraPuja.jpg) [Ellora](/wiki/Ellora) in Maharashtra, India Historically, the roots of Buddhism lie in the religious thought of [Iron Age India](/wiki/Iron_Age_India) around the middle of the first millennium BCE.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) That was a period, states Abraham Eraly, of great intellectual ferment, when the Upanishads were composed marking a change in the [historical Vedic religion](/wiki/Historical_Vedic_religion), as well as the emergence of great Sramanic traditions.[[87]](#cite_note-90) According to Richard Gombrich, this was not only a period of intellectual ferment but also socio-cultural change quite distinct from the early Vedic period.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

New ideas developed both in the Vedic tradition in the form of the Upanishads, and outside of the Vedic tradition through the Śramaṇa movements.[[88]](#cite_note-91)[[89]](#cite_note-92)[[90]](#cite_note-93) The term Śramaṇa refers to several Indian religious movements parallel to but separate from the [historical Vedic religion](/wiki/Historical_Vedic_religion), including Buddhism, [Jainism](/wiki/Jainism) and others such as [Ājīvika](/wiki/Ājīvika).[[91]](#cite_note-94) Several Śramaṇa movements are known to have existed in India before the 6th century BCE (pre-Buddha, pre-Mahavira), and these influenced both the [āstika and nāstika](/wiki/Āstika_and_nāstika) traditions of Indian philosophy.<ref name=reginaldray247>Reginald Ray (1999), Buddhist Saints in India, Oxford University Press, ISBN 978-0195134834, pages 237-240, 247-249</ref> According to Martin Wilshire, the Sramana tradition evolved in India over two phases, namely Paccekabuddha and Savaka phases, the former being the tradition of individual ascetic and latter of disciples, and that Buddhism and Jainism ultimately emerged from these.<ref name=wiltshire293>Martin Wiltshire (1990), Ascetic Figures Before and in Early Buddhism, De Gruyter, ISBN 978-3110098969, page 293</ref> Brahmanical and non-Brahmanical ascetic groups shared and used several similar ideas,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) but the Śramaṇa traditions also drew upon already established Brahmanical concepts and philosophical roots, states Wiltshire, to formulate their own doctrines.<ref name=reginaldray247/><ref name=wiltshire226>Martin Wiltshire (1990), Ascetic Figures Before and in Early Buddhism, De Gruyter, ISBN 978-3110098969, pages 226-227</ref> Brahmanical motifs can be found in the oldest Buddhist texts, using them to introduce and explain Buddhist ideas.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) For example, prior to Buddhist developments, the Brahmanical tradition internalized and variously reinterpreted the [three Vedic sacrificial fires](/wiki/Srauta) as concepts such as Truth, Rite, Tranquility or Restraint.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Buddhist texts also refer to the three Vedic sacrificial fires, reinterpreting and explaining them as ethical conduct.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The Sramanic religions challenged and broke with the Brahmanic tradition on core assumptions such as [Atman](/wiki/Atman_(Hinduism)) (soul, self), [Brahman](/wiki/Brahman), the nature of afterlife, and they rejected the authority of the [Vedas](/wiki/Vedas) and [Upanishads](/wiki/Upanishad).[[92]](#cite_note-95)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[93]](#cite_note-96) Buddhism was one among several Indian religions that did so.[[93]](#cite_note-96) [thumb|alt=Rock-cut Lord Buddha statue at Bojjanakonda near Anakapalle India|Rock-cut Lord Buddha statue at Bojjanakonda near](/wiki/File:Rock-cut_Lord_--Buddha--_Statue_at_Bojjanakonda_near_Anakapalle_of_Visakhapatnam_dist_in_AP.jpg) [Anakapalle](/wiki/Anakapalle) in the [Visakhapatnam](/wiki/Visakhapatnam) district of [Andhra Pradesh](/wiki/Andhra_Pradesh), India

### Indian Buddhism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=44)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

The history of Indian Buddhism may be divided into five periods:[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Early Buddhism (occasionally called [pre-sectarian Buddhism](/wiki/Pre-sectarian_Buddhism)), [Nikaya Buddhism](/wiki/Nikaya_Buddhism) or Sectarian Buddhism: The period of the early Buddhist schools, Early Mahayana Buddhism, later Mahayana Buddhism, and Vajrayana Buddhism.

#### Pre-sectarian Buddhism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=45)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

Pre-sectarian Buddhism is the earliest phase of Buddhism, recognized by nearly all scholars. Its main scriptures are the [*Vinaya Pitaka*](/wiki/Vinaya_Pitaka) and the four principal Nikāyas or Agamas.

##### Tracing the oldest teachings[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=46)]

Information of the oldest teachings may be obtained by analysis of the oldest texts. One method to obtain information on the oldest core of Buddhism is to compare the oldest extant versions of the Theravadin Pāli Canon and other texts.[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) The reliability of these sources, and the possibility to draw out a core of oldest teachings, is a matter of dispute.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Page needed](/wiki/Template:Page_needed)[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Page needed](/wiki/Template:Page_needed)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Page needed](/wiki/Template:Page_needed) According to Vetter, inconsistencies remain, and other methods must be applied to resolve those inconsistencies.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

According to Schmithausen, three positions held by scholars of Buddhism can be distinguished:[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

1. "Stress on the fundamental homogeneity and substantial authenticity of at least a considerable part of the Nikayic materials;"[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)
2. "Scepticism with regard to the possibility of retrieving the doctrine of earliest Buddhism;"[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)
3. "Cautious optimism in this respect."[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

##### Core teachings[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=47)]

According to Mitchell, certain basic teachings appear in many places throughout the early texts, which has led most scholars to conclude that Gautama Buddha must have taught something similar to the [three marks of existence](/wiki/Three_marks_of_existence), the [Five Aggregates](/wiki/Skandha), [dependent origination](/wiki/Pratītyasamutpāda), [karma](/wiki/Karma_in_Buddhism) and [rebirth](/wiki/Rebirth_(Buddhism)), the [Four Noble Truths](/wiki/Four_Noble_Truths), the [Noble Eightfold Path](/wiki/Noble_Eightfold_Path), and nirvana.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Yet critical analysis reveals discrepancies, which point to alternative possibilities.[Template:SfnTemplate:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Bruce Matthews notes that there is no cohesive presentation of karma in the Sutta Pitaka,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) which may mean that the doctrine was incidental to the main perspective of early Buddhist soteriology.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Schmithausen has questioned whether karma already played a role in the theory of rebirth of earliest Buddhism.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Page needed](/wiki/Template:Page_needed)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) According to Vetter, "the Buddha at first sought "the deathless" (*amata/amrta*), which is concerned with the here and now. Only later did he become acquainted with the doctrine of rebirth."[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Bronkhorst disagrees, and concludes that the Buddha "introduced a concept of karma that differed considerably from the commonly held views of his time."[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) According to Bronkhorst, not physical and mental activities as such were seen as responsible for rebirth, but intentions and desire.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Another core problem in the study of early Buddhism is the relation between *dhyana* and insight.[Template:SfnTemplate:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Schmithausen, states that the four noble truths as "liberating insight", may be a later addition to texts such as Majjhima Nikaya 36.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Page needed](/wiki/Template:Page_needed)[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

According to both Bronkhorst and Anderson, the [Four Noble Truths](/wiki/Four_Noble_Truths) became a substitution for prajna, or "liberating insight", in the suttas[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) in those texts where "liberating insight" was preceded by the four jhānas.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The four truths may not have been formulated in earliest Buddhism, and did not serve in earliest Buddhism as a description of "liberating insight".[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Gotama's teachings may have been personal, "adjusted to the need of each person."[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The [three marks of existence](/wiki/Three_marks_of_existence) – Dukkha, Annica, Anatta – may reflect Upanishadic or other influences. K.R. Norman supposes that these terms were already in use at the Buddha's time, and were familiar to his hearers.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) According to Vetter, the description of the Buddhist path may initially have been as simple as the term "the middle way".[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In time, this short description was elaborated, resulting in the description of the eightfold path.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Similarly nibbāna is the common term for the desired goal of this practice, yet many other terms can be found throughout the Nikāyas, which are not specified.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

#### Early Buddhist schools[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=48)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|Buddha at](/wiki/File:固原须弥山石窟第5窟大佛楼.JPG) [Xumishan Grottoes](/wiki/Xumishan_Grottoes), ca. 6th century CE.[[94]](#cite_note-97) According to the scriptures, soon after the [Template:IAST](/wiki/Template:IAST) (from Sanskrit: "highest extinguishment") of Gautama Buddha, the [first Buddhist council](/wiki/First_Buddhist_council) was held. As with any ancient Indian tradition, transmission of teaching was done orally. The primary purpose of the assembly was to collectively recite the teachings to ensure that no errors occurred in oral transmission. Richard Gombrich states that the monastic assembly recitations of the Buddha's teaching likely began during Buddha's lifetime, similar to the First Council, that helped compose Buddhist scriptures.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The [Second Buddhist council](/wiki/Second_Buddhist_council) resulted in the first schism in the [Sangha](/wiki/Sangha_(Buddhism)), probably caused by a group of reformists called Sthaviras who split from the conservative majority [Mahāsāṃghikas](/wiki/Mahāsāṃghika).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) After unsuccessfully trying to modify the [Vinaya](/wiki/Vinaya), a small group of "elderly members", i.e. *sthaviras*, broke away from the majority [Mahāsāṃghika](/wiki/Mahāsāṃghika) during the Second Buddhist council, giving rise to the Sthavira sect.[[95]](#cite_note-98) The Sthaviras gave rise to several schools, one of which was the Theravada school. Originally, these schisms were caused by disputes over monastic disciplinary codes of various fraternities, but eventually, by about 100 CE if not earlier, schisms were being caused by doctrinal disagreements too.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Buddhist monks of different fraternities became distinct schools, stopped doing official Sangha business together, but continued to study each other's doctrines.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Following (or leading up to) the schisms, each Saṅgha started to accumulate their own version of [Tripiṭaka](/wiki/Tripiṭaka) (Pali Canons, triple basket of texts).<ref name=britannicatipitaka>[Tipitaka](http://www.britannica.com/topic/Tipitaka) Encyclopedia Britannica (2015)</ref>[[96]](#cite_note-99) In their Tripiṭaka, each school included the Suttas of the Buddha, a Vinaya basket (disciplinary code) and added an [Abhidharma](/wiki/Abhidharma) basket which were texts on detailed scholastic classification, summary and interpretation of the Suttas.<ref name=britannicatipitaka/>[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The doctrine details in the Abhidharmas of various Buddhist schools differ significantly, and these were composed starting about 3th century BCE and through the 1st millennium CE.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Eighteen early Buddhist schools are known, each with its own Tripitaka, but only one collection from Sri Lanka has survived, in nearly complete state, into the modern era.<ref name=berkwitz2009p60>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

#### Early Mahayana Buddhism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=49)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|alt=stone statue group, a Buddhist triad depicting, left to right, a Kushan, the future buddha Maitreya, Gautama Buddha, the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, and a Buddhist monk. 2nd—3rd century. Guimet Museum|A Buddhist triad depicting, left to right, a](/wiki/File:BuddhistTriad.JPG) [Kushan](/wiki/Kushan_Empire), the future buddha [Maitreya](/wiki/Maitreya), [Gautama Buddha](/wiki/Gautama_Buddha), the bodhisattva [Avalokiteśvara](/wiki/Avalokiteśvara), and a [monk](/wiki/Bhikkhu). Second—third century. [Guimet Museum](/wiki/Guimet_Museum) Several scholars have suggested that the Mahayana Buddhism tradition started in south India (modern [Andhra Pradesh](/wiki/Andhra_Pradesh)), and it is there that [Prajnaparamita](/wiki/Prajnaparamita) sutras, among the earliest [Mahayana sutras](/wiki/Mahayana_sutras),[[97]](#cite_note-100)[[98]](#cite_note-101) developed among the [Mahāsāṃghika](/wiki/Mahāsāṃghika) along the [Kṛṣṇa River](/wiki/Krishna_River) region about the 1st century BCE.[[99]](#cite_note-102)[[100]](#cite_note-103)[[101]](#cite_note-104)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

There is no evidence that Mahayana ever referred to a separate formal school or sect of Buddhism, but rather that it existed as a certain set of ideals, and later doctrines, for bodhisattvas.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Initially it was known as *Bodhisattvayāna* (the "Vehicle of the Bodhisattvas").[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Paul Williams states that the Mahāyāna never had nor ever attempted to have a separate [Vinaya](/wiki/Vinaya) or ordination codes from the early schools of Buddhism.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Records written by Chinese monks visiting India indicate that both Mahāyāna and non-Mahāyāna monks could be found in the same monasteries, with the difference that Mahayana monks worshipped figures of Bodhisattvas, while non-Mahayana monks did not.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Much of the early extant evidence for the origins of Mahāyāna comes from early Chinese translations of Mahāyāna texts. These Mahayana teachings were first propagated into China by [Lokakṣema](/wiki/Lokaksema_(Buddhist_monk)), the first translator of Mahayana sutras into Chinese during the 2nd century CE.[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) Some scholars have traditionally considered the earliest Mahāyāna sūtras to include the very first versions of the Prajnaparamita series, along with texts concerning Akṣobhya, which were probably composed in the 1st century BCE in the south of India.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

#### Late Mahayana Buddhism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=50)]

During the period of Late Mahayana Buddhism, four major types of thought developed: Madhyamaka, Yogachara, Tathagatagarbha, and [Buddhist logic](/wiki/Indian_logic#Buddhist_logic) as the last and most recent.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In India, the two main philosophical schools of the Mahayana were the Madhyamaka and the later Yogachara.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) According to Dan Lusthaus, Madhyamaka and Yogachara have a great deal in common, and the commonality stems from early Buddhism.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) There were no great Indian teachers associated with tathagatagarbha thought.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

#### Vajrayana (Esoteric Buddhism)[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=51)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) Scholarly research concerning [Esoteric Buddhism](/wiki/Vajrayana) is still in its early stages and has a number of problems that make research difficult:[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

1. Vajrayana Buddhism was influenced by [Hinduism](/wiki/Hinduism), and therefore research must include exploring Hinduism as well.
2. The scriptures of Vajrayana have not yet been put in any kind of order.
3. Ritual must be examined as well, not just doctrine.

### Spread of Buddhism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=52)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|left|alt=map showing diffusion of Buddhism at the time of emperor Ashoka from India|The spread of Buddhism at the time of emperor](/wiki/File:Asoka_Kaart.gif) [Ashoka](/wiki/Ashoka) (260–218 BCE).

Buddhism may have spread only slowly in India until the time of the [Mauryan](/wiki/Maurya_Empire) emperor [Ashoka](/wiki/Ashoka), who was a public supporter of the religion. The support of Aśoka and his descendants led to the construction of more [stūpas](/wiki/Stupa) (Buddhist religious memorials) and to efforts to spread Buddhism throughout the enlarged Maurya empire and into neighboring lands such as Central Asia, beyond the Mauryas' northwest border, and to the island of [Sri Lanka](/wiki/Sri_Lanka) south of India. These two missions, in opposite directions, would ultimately lead, in the first case to the spread of Buddhism into China, and in the second case, to the emergence of Theravāda Buddhism and its spread from Sri Lanka to the coastal lands of Southeast Asia.

This period marks the first known spread of Buddhism beyond India. According to the [edicts of Aśoka](/wiki/Edicts_of_Ashoka), emissaries were sent to various countries west of India to spread Buddhism (Dharma), particularly in eastern provinces of the neighboring [Seleucid Empire](/wiki/Seleucid_Empire), and even farther to [Hellenistic](/wiki/Hellenistic_civilization) kingdoms of the Mediterranean. It is a matter of disagreement among scholars whether or not these emissaries were accompanied by Buddhist missionaries.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [thumb|alt=Coin depicting Indo-Greek king Menander facing right with headband|Coin depicting](/wiki/File:MenandrosCoin.jpg) [Indo-Greek](/wiki/Indo-Greek) king [Menander](/wiki/Menander_I), who, according to Buddhist tradition records in the [Milinda Panha](/wiki/Milinda_Panha), converted to the Buddhist faith and became an [arhat](/wiki/Arhat) in the 2nd century BCE . ([British Museum](/wiki/British_Museum)) In central and west Asia, Buddhist influence grew, through Greek-speaking Buddhist monarchs and ancient Asian trade routes. An example of this is evidenced in Chinese and Pali Buddhist records, such as *Milindapanha* and the [Greco-Buddhist art](/wiki/Greco-Buddhist_art) of [Gandhāra](/wiki/Gandhara). The *Milindapanha* describes a conversation between a Buddhist monk and 2nd-century BCE Greek king, [Menander](/wiki/Menander_I), after which Menander abdicates and himself goes into monastic life in the pursuit of nirvana.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[102]](#cite_note-105) Modern scholarship has questioned the *Milindapanha* version, expressing doubts whether Menander was Buddhist or just favorably disposed to Buddhist monks.[[103]](#cite_note-106) The Theravada school spread south from India in the 3rd century BCE, to Sri Lanka, later to southeast Asia ([Myanmar](/wiki/Myanmar), [Malaysia](/wiki/Malaysia), [Indonesia](/wiki/Indonesia), [Thailand](/wiki/Thailand), [Cambodia](/wiki/Cambodia) and coastal [Vietnam](/wiki/Vietnam)).[[104]](#cite_note-107) The Dharmagupta school spread (also in 3rd century BCE) north to [Kashmir](/wiki/Kashmir), Gandhara and Bactria (Afghanistan).

The [Silk Road transmission of Buddhism](/wiki/Silk_Road_transmission_of_Buddhism) to China is most commonly thought to have started in the late 2nd or the 1st century CE, though the literary sources are all open to question.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) The first documented translation efforts by foreign [Buddhist monks](/wiki/Buddhist_monk) in China were in the 2nd century CE, probably as a consequence of the expansion of the [Kushan Empire](/wiki/Kushan_Empire) into the Chinese territory of the [Tarim Basin](/wiki/Tarim_Basin).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

In the 2nd century CE, Mahayana Sutras spread to China, and then to Korea and Japan, and were translated into Chinese. During the Indian period of Esoteric Buddhism (from the 8th century onwards), Buddhism spread from India to Tibet and [Mongolia](/wiki/Mongolia). Johannes Bronkhorst states that esoteric form was attractive because it allowed both a secluded monastic community as well as the social rites and rituals important to laypersons and to kings for the maintenance of a political state during succession and wars to resist invasion.[[105]](#cite_note-108) During the middle ages, Buddhism slowly declined in India,[[106]](#cite_note-109) while it vanished from Persia and Central Asia as Islam became the state religion.<ref name=larsfogelin6>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>[[107]](#cite_note-110)

## Schools and traditions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=53)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|alt=color map showing Buddhism is a major religion worldwide|300px|Distribution of major Buddhist traditions](/wiki/File:Buddhist_sects.png) Buddhists generally classify themselves as either [Theravada](/wiki/Theravada) or [Mahayana](/wiki/Mahayana).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) This classification is also used by some scholars[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) and is the one ordinarily used in the English language.<ref group=web>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> An alternative scheme used by some scholars[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) divides Buddhism into the following three traditions or geographical or cultural areas: [Theravada](/wiki/Theravada), [East Asian Buddhism](/wiki/East_Asian_Buddhism) and [Tibetan Buddhism](/wiki/Tibetan_Buddhism). [thumb|alt=monks in orange robes on stone steps in Cambodia|Young monks in](/wiki/File:Preah_Pithu_T_Monks_-_Siem_Reap.jpg) [Cambodia](/wiki/Cambodia)

Some scholars[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) use other schemes. Buddhists themselves have a variety of other schemes. [Hinayana](/wiki/Hinayana) (literally "lesser or inferior vehicle") is used by Mahayana followers to name the family of early philosophical schools and traditions from which contemporary Theravada emerged, but as the Hinayana term is considered derogatory, a variety of other terms are used instead, including [Śrāvakayāna](/wiki/Shravakayana), Nikaya Buddhism, early Buddhist schools, sectarian Buddhism and conservative Buddhism.<ref name=kwmorganp410>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>[[108]](#cite_note-111) Not all traditions of Buddhism share the same philosophical outlook, or treat the same concepts as central. Each tradition, however, does have its own core concepts, and some comparisons can be drawn between them:[[109]](#cite_note-112)[[110]](#cite_note-113)\*Both Theravada and Mahayana traditions accept [the Buddha](/wiki/Gautama_Buddha) as the founder, Theravada considers him unique, but Mahayana considers him one of many Buddhas

* Both accept the [Middle way](/wiki/Middle_way), [dependent origination](/wiki/Pratītyasamutpāda), the [Four Noble Truths](/wiki/Four_Noble_Truths), the [Noble Eightfold Path](/wiki/Noble_Eightfold_Path) and the [Three marks of existence](/wiki/Three_marks_of_existence)
* Nirvana is attainable by the monks in Theravada tradition, while Mahayana considers it broadly attainable; Arhat state is aimed for in the Theravada, while Buddhahood is aimed for in the Mahayana
* Religious practice consists of meditation for monks and prayer for laypersons in Theravada, while Mahayana includes prayer, chanting and meditation for both
* Theravada has been a more rationalist, historical form of Buddhism; while Mahayana has included more rituals, mysticism and worldly flexibility in its scope.[[111]](#cite_note-114)

### Timeline[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=54)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) This is a rough timeline of the development of the different schools/traditions: [Template:Buddhist traditions timeline](/wiki/Template:Buddhist_traditions_timeline)

### Theravada school[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=55)]

[thumb|alt=A young monk in saffron robes standing in Sri Lanka temple|A young](/wiki/File:A_young_monk_against_the_background_of_Big_Buddha_statue_in_Weherahena_Temple._Matara,_Southern_Province,_Sri_Lanka.jpg) [bhikkhu](/wiki/Bhikkhu) in [Sri Lanka](/wiki/Sri_Lanka) [Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) The Theravada tradition traces its roots to the words of the Buddha preserved in the Pali Canon, and considers itself to be the more orthodox form of Buddhism.[[112]](#cite_note-115)[[113]](#cite_note-116) Theravada flourished in south India and Sri Lanka in ancient times, from there it spread for the first time into mainland southeast Asia about the 11th century into its elite urban centers.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) By the 13th-century, Theravada had widely spread into the rural areas of mainland southeast Asia,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) displacing Mahayana Buddhism and some traditions of Hinduism which had arrived in places such as Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia and Malaysia around mid 1st millennium CE. The later traditions were well established in south Thailand and Java by the 7th-century, under the sponsorship of Srivijaya dynasty.[[114]](#cite_note-117)[[115]](#cite_note-118) The political separation between Khmer and Sukhothai, led the Sukhothai king to welcome Sri Lankan emissaries, helping them establish the first Theravada Buddhist *sangha* in the 13th-century, in contrast to the Mahayana tradition of Khmer earlier.[[116]](#cite_note-119) Sinhalese Buddhist reformers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries portrayed the [Pali Canon](/wiki/Pali_Canon) as the original version of scripture.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) They also emphasized Theravada being rational and scientific.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Theravāda is primarily practiced today in [Sri Lanka](/wiki/Buddhism_in_Sri_Lanka), [Burma](/wiki/Buddhism_in_Burma), [Laos](/wiki/Buddhism_in_Laos), [Thailand](/wiki/Buddhism_in_Thailand), [Cambodia](/wiki/Buddhism_in_Cambodia) as well as small portions of China, [Vietnam](/wiki/Buddhism_in_Vietnam), [Malaysia](/wiki/Buddhism_in_Malaysia) and [Bangladesh](/wiki/Buddhism_in_Bangladesh). It has a growing presence in the west.

### Mahayana traditions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=56)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|left|alt=Nagarjuna, a Mahayana scholar|The ideas of the 2nd century scholar Nagarjuna helped shape the Mahayana traditions.](/wiki/File:Tsapa_Namgyal_-_The_Teacher_and_Philosopher_Nagarjuna_-_Walters_543008.jpg) Mahayana schools consider the [Mahayana Sutras](/wiki/Mahayana_Sutras) as authoritative scriptures and accurate rendering of Buddha's words.<ref name=karlpotter1996p26>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> These traditions have been the more liberal form of Buddhism allowing different and new interpretations that emerged over time.[[117]](#cite_note-120) Mahayana flourished in India from the time of Ashoka,<ref name=karlpotter1996p26/> through to the dynasty of the [Guptas](/wiki/Gupta_Empire) (4th to 6th-century). Mahāyāna monastic foundations and centres of learning were established by the Buddhist kings, and the Hindu kings of the Gupta dynasty as evidenced by records left by three Chinese visitors to India.<ref name=scharfe2002p144>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>[[118]](#cite_note-121) The Gupta dynasty, for example, helped establish the famed [Nālandā University](/wiki/Nalanda_University) in Bihar.<ref name=scharfe2002p144/>[[119]](#cite_note-122) These monasteries and foundations helped Buddhist scholarship, as well as studies into non-Buddhist traditions and secular subjects such as medicine, host visitors and spread Buddhism into East and Central Asia.<ref name=scharfe2002p144/><ref name=higham2014p121>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

Native Mahayana Buddhism is practiced today in China, Japan, [Korea](/wiki/Buddhism_in_Korea), [Singapore](/wiki/Buddhism_in_Singapore), parts of Russia and most of [Vietnam](/wiki/Vietnam) (also commonly referred to as "Eastern Buddhism"). The Buddhism practiced in Tibet, the Himalayan regions, and Mongolia is also Mahayana in origin, but is discussed below under the heading of Vajrayana (also commonly referred to as "Northern Buddhism"). There are a variety of strands in Eastern Buddhism, of which "the Pure Land school of Mahayana is the most widely practised today.".[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In most of this area however, they are fused into a single unified form of Buddhism. [In Japan in particular](/wiki/Buddhism_in_Japan), they form separate denominations with the five major ones being: [Nichiren](/wiki/Nichiren_Buddhism), peculiar to Japan; [Pure Land](/wiki/Pure_Land_Buddhism); [Shingon](/wiki/Shingon), a form of Vajrayana; [Tendai](/wiki/Tendai), and [Zen](/wiki/Zen). In Korea, nearly all Buddhists belong to the [Chogye school](/wiki/Jogye_Order), which is officially Son (Zen), but with substantial elements from other traditions.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

#### Vajrayana traditions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=57)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|alt=7th century Buddhist monastery|7th-century](/wiki/File:Potala_palace21.jpg) [Potala Palace](/wiki/Potala_Palace) in Lhasa valley symbolizes Tibetan Buddhism and is a UNESCO world heritage site.[[120]](#cite_note-123) The goal and philosophy of the Vajrayāna remains Mahāyānist, but its methods are seen as far more powerful, so as to lead to Buddhahood in just one lifetime.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The practice of using [mantras](/wiki/Mantras) was adopted from [Hinduism](/wiki/Hinduism), where they were first used in the [Vedas](/wiki/Vedas).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Tantric Buddhism is largely concerned with ritual and meditative practices.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Various classes of Vajrayana literature developed as a result of royal courts sponsoring both Buddhism and [Saivism](/wiki/Shaivism).[[121]](#cite_note-124) The [Mañjusrimulakalpa](/wiki/Mañjuśrī-mūla-kalpa), which later came to classified under [Kriyatantra](/wiki/Outer_Tantras#Kriyatantra), states that mantras taught in the Saiva, Garuda and Vaisnava tantras will be effective if applied by Buddhists since they were all taught originally by [Manjushri](/wiki/Manjushri).[[122]](#cite_note-125) The Guhyasiddhi of Padmavajra, a work associated with the [Guhyasamaja tradition](/wiki/Guhyasamāja_tantra), prescribes acting as a Saiva guru and initiating members into [Saiva Siddhanta](/wiki/Shaiva_Siddhanta) scriptures and mandalas.[[123]](#cite_note-126) The [Samvara tantra](/wiki/Cakrasaṃvara_Tantra) texts adopted the [pitha](/wiki/Hindu_pilgrimage_sites) list from the Saiva text *Tantrasadbhava*, introducing a copying error where a deity was mistaken for a place.[[124]](#cite_note-127) [Tibetan Buddhism](/wiki/Tibetan_Buddhism) preserves the Vajrayana teachings of eighth century India.[[1]](#cite_note-1) In the Tibetan tradition, practices can include [sexual yoga](/wiki/Sexual_yoga), though only for some very advanced practitioners.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

#### Zen[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=58)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|alt=Ginkaku-ji, a Zen temple in Kyoto, Japan with stone slab bridge over stream|](/wiki/File:Ginkakuji_Temple_Togudo_2009_059.jpg)[Ginkaku-ji](/wiki/Ginkaku-ji), a Zen temple in [Kyoto](/wiki/Kyoto), Japan Zen Buddhism (禅), pronounced [*Chán*](/wiki/Chinese_Chán) in Chinese, *seon* in Korean or *zen* in Japanese (derived from the Sanskrit term *dhyāna*, meaning "meditation") is a form of Mahayana Buddhism found in China, Korea and Japan. It lays special emphasis on meditation, and direct discovery of the Buddha-nature.[[117]](#cite_note-120)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

Zen Buddhism is divided into two main schools: [Rinzai](/wiki/Rinzai) (臨済宗) and [Sōtō](/wiki/Sōtō) (曹洞宗), the former greatly favouring the use in meditation on the [koan](/wiki/Koan) (公案, a meditative riddle or puzzle) as a device for spiritual break-through, and the latter (while certainly employing koans) focusing more on [*shikantaza*](/wiki/Shikantaza) or "just sitting".[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn)

Zen Buddhism is primarily found in Japan, with some presence in South Korea and Vietnam. The scholars of Japanese Soto Zen tradition in recent times have critiqued the mainstream Japanese Buddhism for *dhatu-vada*, that is assuming things have substantiality, a view they assert to be non-Buddhist and "out of tune with the teachings of non-Self and conditioned arising", states Peter Harvey.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

## Buddhism today[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=59)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|alt=Buddhist monk in Siberia in robes leaning on railing looking at temple|left|](/wiki/File:Хуварак.JPG)[Buryat](/wiki/Buryats) Buddhist monk in Siberia There is growing worldwide interest in Buddhism.[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Buddhism has spread across the world, and Buddhist texts are increasingly translated into local languages. While in the [West](/wiki/Buddhism_in_the_West) Buddhism is often seen as exotic and progressive, in the East it is regarded as familiar and traditional. In countries such as [Cambodia](/wiki/Cambodia) and [Bhutan](/wiki/Bhutan), it is recognized as the [state religion](/wiki/State_religion) and receives government support. In certain regions such as Afghanistan and Pakistan, Buddhist monuments have been targets of violence and destruction.[[125]](#cite_note-128)[[126]](#cite_note-129) [Template:Multiple image](/wiki/Template:Multiple_image) Modern influences increasingly lead to [new forms of Buddhism](/wiki/Buddhist_modernism) that are diverse and that significantly depart from traditional beliefs and practices.[[127]](#cite_note-130) A number of modern movements or tendencies in Buddhism emerged during the second half of the 20th Century, including the [Dalit Buddhist movement](/wiki/Dalit_Buddhist_movement),[Template:SfnTemplate:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Engaged Buddhism](/wiki/Engaged_Buddhism), and the further development of various [Western Buddhist](/wiki/Western_Buddhism) traditions.

Modern Buddhist movements include [Won Buddhism](/wiki/Won_Buddhism) in Korea, the [Dhammakaya movement](/wiki/Dhammakaya_movement) in Thailand and several Japanese organizations, such as [Shinnyo-en](/wiki/Shinnyo-en), [Risshō Kōsei-kai](/wiki/Risshō_Kōsei-kai) or [Soka Gakkai](/wiki/Soka_Gakkai).

### Demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=60)]

Buddhism is practiced by an estimated 488 million,[[web 1]](#cite_note-5) 495 million,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) or 535 million[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) people as of the 2010s, representing 7% to 8% of the world's total population.

[thumb|340px|alt=purple Percentage of Buddhists by country, showing high in Burma to low in United States|Percentage of Buddhists by country, according to the](/wiki/File:Buddhism_percent_population_in_each_nation_World_Map_Buddhist_data_by_Pew_Research.svg) [Pew Research Center](/wiki/Pew_Research_Center), as of 2010. [China](/wiki/China) is the country with the largest population of Buddhists, approximately 244 million or 18.2% of its total population.[[web 1]](#cite_note-5)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) They are mostly followers of [Chinese schools](/wiki/Chinese_Buddhism) of [*Mahayana*](/wiki/Mahayana), making this the largest body of Buddhist traditions. Mahayana, also practiced in broader [East Asia](/wiki/East_Asia), is followed by over half of world Buddhists.[[web 1]](#cite_note-5) According to a demographic analysis reported by Peter Harvey (2013):[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) *Mahayana* has 360 million adherents; [*Theravada*](/wiki/Theravada) has 150 million adherents; and [*Vajrayana*](/wiki/Vajrayana) has 18,2 million adherents.

According to Johnson and Grim (2013), Buddhism has grown from a total of 138 million adherents in 1910, of which 137 million were in [Asia](/wiki/Asia), to 495 million in 2010, of which 487 million are in Asia.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Over 98% of all Buddhists live in Asia-Pacific and South Asia region.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) North America had about 3.9 million Buddhists, Europe 1.3 million, while the South America, Africa and the Middle East had an estimated combined total of about 1 million Buddhists in 2010.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

After China where nearly half of the worldwide Buddhists live, the 10 countries with the largest Buddhist population densities are:[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Buddhism by percentage as of 2010[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) | | |
| **Country** | **Estimated Buddhist population** | **Buddhists as % of total population** |
| [Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 13,701,660 | 96.90% |
| [Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 64,419,840 | 93.20% |
| [Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 38,415,960 | 80.10% |
| [Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 563,000 | 74.70% |
| [Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 14,455,980 | 69.30% |
| [Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 4,092,000 | 66.00% |
| [Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 1,520,760 | 55.10% |
| [Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 45,807,480 or 84,653,000 | 36.20% or 67%[[128]](#cite_note-131) |
| [Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 1,725,510 | 33.90% |
| [Template:Flag](/wiki/Template:Flag) | 4,945,600 or 8,000,000 | 21.10% or 35%[[129]](#cite_note-132) |

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=61)]

[Template:Wikipedia books](/wiki/Template:Wikipedia_books) [Template:Portal](/wiki/Template:Portal)

* [Outline of Buddhism](/wiki/Outline_of_Buddhism)
* [Buddhism by country](/wiki/Buddhism_by_country)
* [Buddhism and science](/wiki/Buddhism_and_science)
* [Chinese folk religion](/wiki/Chinese_folk_religion)
* [Easily confused Buddhist representations](/wiki/Easily_confused_Buddhist_representations)
* [Iconography of Gautama Buddha in Laos and Thailand](/wiki/Iconography_of_Gautama_Buddha_in_Laos_and_Thailand)
* [Index of Buddhism-related articles](/wiki/Index_of_Buddhism-related_articles)
* [Indian religions](/wiki/Indian_religions)
* [List of books related to Buddhism](/wiki/List_of_books_related_to_Buddhism)
* [List of Buddhist temples](/wiki/List_of_Buddhist_temples)
* [Nonviolence](/wiki/Nonviolence)
* [Criticism of Buddhism](/wiki/Criticism_of_Buddhism)

## Notes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=62)]

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*Subnotes* [Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist)

## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=63)]

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## Sources[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=64)]

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* [Template:Citation](/wiki/Template:Citation)
* [Template:Citation](/wiki/Template:Citation)
* [Template:Citation](/wiki/Template:Citation); reprinted in Williams, *Buddhism*, volume I; NB in the online transcript a little text has been accidentally omitted: in section 4, between "... none of the other contributions in this section envisage a date before 420 B.C." and "to 350 B.C." insert "Akira Hirakawa defends the short chronology and Heinz Bechert himself sets a range from 400 B.C."
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* [Goleman, Daniel](/wiki/Daniel_Goleman) (2008). *Destructive Emotions: A Scientific Dialogue with the Dalai Lama*. Bantam. Kindle Edition.
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