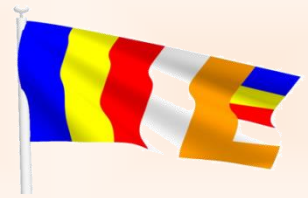


Buddhism

10 Key Questions Answered



1. What is the meaning of Buddha?

Buddhism started with Buddha. The word 'Buddha' is not a name but a title meaning 'the awoken one'. This is in the sense of 'waking up to reality'.

2. What are the origins of the Buddha?

The Buddha was born as Siddhartha Gautama in Nepal around 2,500 years ago, in 520 BCE. He did not claim to be a god or a prophet. He was a human being who became enlightened, understanding life in the deepest possible way. Siddhartha was from a privileged tribal Republic on the Indian-Nepalese border.

3. How big is the religion of Buddhism?

Buddhism is the fourth largest religion in the world with about 360 million adherents.

4. What is 'The Buddhist Path'?

Buddhism is based on a 'Middle Way' that navigates the extremes of asceticism and hedonism; a path of awakening that is available to everyone if they are prepared to put in the necessary effort. It is based on recognising the roots of what causes us distress and pain. To do this it uses a rigorous examination of conflictual emotions and attitudes; recognising their nature and thus their apparent reality. This is done by examining the teachings, reflection and meditative practice. This should lead to compassion for ourselves which we must then turn outward to others.

Ethics and 'right livelihood', generosity, simplicity, non-harm (to us and others), refraining from gossip, chatter and maintaining truthfulness, are essential to this. The Buddha never made claims of being the 'only way'. He called his teachings, the Ancient Path; one that is lost and is found again and again over millennia and is re-affirmed over the ages. Buddhists say that compassion and wisdom are the two wings that lead to awakening.

5. What are the different denominations of Buddhism?

- ✿ Theravada Buddhism: Recognises only the Pali Canon as the definitive teaching of the Buddha. Countries practicing Theravada Buddhism include Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand.
- ✿ Mahayana Buddhism: It accepts the Pali Cannon and subsequent texts (sutras) and has many different schools and philosophical perspectives. This form of Buddhism is mainly found in China, Japan, Taiwan, Korea and Vietnam. It varies significantly from culture to culture.
- ✿ Vajrayana (Tibetan) Buddhism: is part of that Mahayana Path and is now found mainly in Tibet. It accepts the Pali Cannon, Mahayana sutras and a huge range of Tantras and commentaries. There are four main Tibetan schools: Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya and Geluk. The Dalai Lama is the head of the Geluk School.

6. Do Buddhists fast?

Fasting is not common in Buddhism, although Theravadin monks do not eat after midday. Many Buddhists are vegetarians as an expression of the key principle of non-harm, although there are different practices with regard to the eating of meat.

7. Do Buddhists believe in God?

Buddhists do not believe in a Creator God, nor that they are able to offer salvation or enlightenment. If 'gods' exist are subject to the laws or karma as all non-awakened beings. Buddhism is a non-theistic spiritual path. However, some Buddhists honour gods as they can be seen to teach us about the universe and ourselves.

8. What are the main festivals & days of worship?

✿ Wesak or Buddha Day

The first day of the full moon in April/May. For many Buddhists this is the main festival of the year as it celebrates the Buddha's Enlightenment. In some traditions it is also seen as the day of both his birth and death and in other traditions, Buddha's enlightenment is marked in December.

✿ New Year

This is celebrated on different days throughout the world according to culture/calendar and the particular Buddhist tradition practiced.

✿ Other Festivals

Upostatha are full moon and new moon days of purification, particularly in Theravada countries.

Ancestors Day (when the gates of hell are supposed to open) is celebrated in some Mahayana countries.

Pavarana – end of the rainy seasons retreat is important many Buddhist countries

9. What are some common Buddhist ritual items?

The most common is the incense burner which is used in all Buddhist cultures. Other similar items are flowers, light and water.

10. What are the Buddhist ideals or The Three Jewels/Refuges?

These are the three things Buddhists take refuge in. They also seek guidance from them.

- ✿ The Buddha: the enlightened one who has achieved the state of perfect 'Enlightenment' by his own means.
- ✿ The Sangha: the community of those who have already attained enlightenment and who can help a novice being initiated.
- ✿ The Dharma: the teachings of the Buddha, the path to enlightenment.

There are a number of Buddhist spaces on campus – they can be found on the [Sacred Spaces Map \(www.stpeters.org.uk/get-involved/links-and-resources\)](http://www.stpeters.org.uk/get-involved/links-and-resources)

And a Buddhist Society:

Ketumati Buddhist Vihara, Venerable Piyatissa, Honorary Chaplain

Tel: 0161 678 9726 www.umsu.manchester.ac.uk/mubs

Details of other centres, spaces and a network of Buddhist lineages in Manchester can be found here:

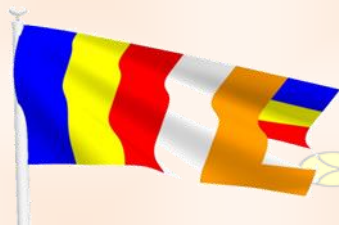
<https://manchesterbuddhistconvention>

For more information about this and other religions and beliefs, please visit:

www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/services/equality-and-diversity/

or:

www.studentnet.manchester.ac.uk/equality-and-diversity/



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