

AQA Religious Studies A - Buddhist beliefs



Key terms

Arhat A 'perfected person' who has overcome the main sources of suffering

Asceticism A lifestyle of strict selfdenial – rejected by Siddhartha for the Middle Way

Bodhisattva An enlightened person who chooses to remain in samsara to teach others

Dependent Arising The idea that everything is dependent on everything else

Dharma The Buddha's teachings – how to reach the state of enlightenment

Eightfold Path Eight aspects of life Buddhists live by to try and reach enlightenment

Enlightenment A state of spiritual wisdom which arises from understanding the nature of reality Four Noble Truths Four truths the Buddha taught about suffering and

how to overcome it

Four Sights Four things Siddhartha saw that inspired him to leave his life of luxury

Jakata A book of popular tales about the life of the Buddha

Meditation The practice of focusing or calming the mind and reflecting on teachings

Nirvana A state of complete enlightenment which lies outside the cycle of samsara

Samsara Cycle of life, death and rebirth

- **3 Marks of Existence** 3 Buddhist beliefs about the truth of existence
- **3 Watches** 3 realisations Siddhartha made in order to become enlightened

Buddha's Life + Four Sights

's Life + Buddha was born Siddhartha Gautama around 500BC in southern Nepal.

He grew up in a life of **luxury** as the son of a Queen. He was inspired to leave this life by the **Four Sights**.

After this he lived an **ascetic** life of self-denial and pain but wasn't able to become enlightened so left it for the Middle Way between pain and luxury.

The **Four Sights** Siddhartha saw on his trip outside the palace were:

- 1. An **old** man everyone ages
- 2. An ill man everyone becomes ill
- 3. A dead man all things die
- 4. A **holy** man the only answer to these problems



Enlightenment + 3 Watches



After the failure of Siddhartha's ascetic life to provide him with enlightenment Siddhartha chose to follow the **Middle Way**. He meditated under a tree and was tempted by **Mara** who tried to distract him, but he stayed focused on meditation and reaching enlightenment. Eventually he became enlightened during the **Three Watches of the Night** where he understood: knowledge of **all his previous lives**, the cycle of life, death and re-birth (**samsara**) and that all beings suffer due to **desire**. After this Siddhartha became enlightened and began to be known as Buddha.

Three Marks of Existence

The **Three Marks of Existence** are the fundamental Buddhist beliefs about the nature of human existence. They present a very different view of the world to Christianity. That **suffering** is inevitable, that everything is **impermanent** and that we have no fixed, immortal soul.

Dukkha

Suffering is a part of life that all people must face. Buddhists can try and overcome it.

Known as the 'lesser vehicle' as only male

Oldest form of Buddhism, found in southern

monks achieve enlightenment.

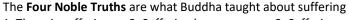
Anicca

The idea of **impermanence** – that everything constantly changes and we suffer when we resist it

Anatta

The idea that we **don't have a fixed soul** – there is no unchanging essence to us

Four Noble Truths + Eightfold Path





1. There is suffering >> 2. Suffering has a cause >> 3. Suffering can come to an end >> 4. There is a way to end suffering One of the main causes of suffering is **tanha** or craving. Other causes are known as the **Three Poisons** of greed, hatred and ignorance. Ultimately Buddha teaches that we can and must overcome these causes of suffering in order to become enlightened and reach **nirvana** – a state of freedom, happiness and peace

The **Eightfold Path** consists of eight aspects that Buddhists practise and live by in order to do this.

e.g. Right speech (speaking truthfully and kindly), right mindfulness (developing awareness of the world around you) and right understanding (developing an understanding of Buddha's teachings)

Types of Buddhism

Theravada

<u>Mahayana</u>

Known as the 'greater vehicle' as anyone can become enlightened.

Teaches **sunyata** or emptiness – nothing as a separate soul or self

Pure Land

Mostly found in **Japan** – a form of Mahayana Buddhism.

Based on faith in Amitabha Buddha and his paradise.

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Bodhisattva + Arhat

Bodhisattva

Asia

Mahayana Buddhists aim to become a Bodhisattva. Someone who reaches an enlightened state but chooses to remain in the cycle of samsara to help others reach enlightenment

Arhat

Theravada Buddhists aim to become an Arhat by following the Eightfold Path. An Arhat is a 'perfected person' who overcomes the main sources of suffering and reaches nirvana

