

Following the Buddha's Footsteps

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INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM

As a child, Siddhartha the Buddha, was troubled by some of the same thoughts that children today have. They wonder about birth and death. They wonder why they get sick and why grandfather died. They wonder why their wishes do not come true. Children also wonder about happiness and the beauty in nature.

Because the Buddha knew what was in the hearts of children and human kind, he taught everyone how to live a happy and peaceful life. Buddhism is not learning about strange beliefs from faraway lands. It is about looking at and thinking about our own lives. It shows us how to understand ourselves and how to cope with our daily problems.

UNIT 1 THE LIFE OF THE BUDDHA

Life in the Palace

Buddhism is one of the major religions in the world. It began around 2,500 years ago in India when Siddhartha Gautama discovered how to bring happiness into the world. He was born around 566 BC, in the small kingdom of Kapilavastu. His father was King Suddhodana and his mother was Queen Maya.

Soon after Prince Siddhartha was born, the wise men predicted that he would become a Buddha. When the king heard this, he was deeply disturbed, for he wanted his son to become a mighty ruler. He told Queen Maya, "I will make life in the palace so pleasant that our son will never want to leave."

At the age of sixteen, Prince Siddhartha married a beautiful princess, Yasodhara. The king built them three palaces, one for each season, and lavished them with luxuries. They passed their days in enjoyment and never thought about life outside the palace.

The Four Sights

Soon Siddhartha became disillusioned with the palace life and wanted to see the outside world. He made four trips outside the palace and saw four things that changed his life. On the first three trips, he saw sickness, old age and death. He asked himself, "How can I enjoy a life of pleasure when there is so much suffering in the world?"

On his fourth trip, he saw a wandering monk who had given up everything he owned to seek an end to suffering. "I shall be like him." Siddhartha thought.

Renunciation

Leaving his kingdom and loved ones behind, Siddhartha became a wandering monk. He cut off his hair to show that he had renounced the worldly lifestyle and called himself Gautama. He wore ragged robes and wandered from place to place. In his search for truth, he studied with the wisest teachers of his day. None of them knew how to end suffering, so he continued the search on his own.

For six years he practiced severe asceticism thinking this would lead him to enlightenment. He sat in meditation and ate only roots, leaves and fruit. At times he ate nothing. He could endure more hardships than anyone else, but this did not take him anywhere. He thought, "Neither my life of luxury in the palace nor my life as an ascetic in the forest is the way to freedom. Overdoing things can not lead to happiness. " He began to eat nourishing food again and regained his strength.

Enlightenment

On a full-moon day in May, he sat under the Bodhi tree in deep meditation and said. "I will not leave this spot until I find an end to suffering." During the night, he was visited by Mara, the evil one, who tried to tempt him away from his virtuous path. First he sent his beautiful daughters to lure Gautama into pleasure. Next he sent bolts of lightning, wind and heavy rain. Last he sent his demonic armies with weapons and flaming rocks. One by one, Gautama met the armies and defeated them with his virtue.

As the struggle ended, he realized the cause of suffering and how to remove it. He had gained the most supreme wisdom and understood things as they truly are. He became the **Buddha**, 'The Awakened One'. From then on, he was called **Shakyamuni Buddha**.

The Buddha Teaches

After his enlightenment, he went to the Deer Park near the holy city of Benares and shared his new understanding with five holy men. They understood immediately and became his disciples. This marked the beginning of the Buddhist community.

For the next forty-five years, the Buddha and his disciples went from place to place in India spreading the **Dharma**, his teachings. Their compassion knew no bounds, they helped everyone along the way, beggars, kings and slave girls. At night, they would sleep where they were; when hungry they would ask for a little food.

Whenever the Buddha went, he won the hearts of the people because he dealt with their true feelings. He advised them not to accept his words on blind faith, but to decide for themselves whether his teachings are right or wrong, then follow them. He encouraged everyone to have compassion for each other and develop their own virtue, "You should do your own work, for I can teach only the way."

He never became angry or impatient or spoke harshly to anyone, not even to those who opposed him. He always taught in such a way that everyone could understand. Each person thought the Buddha was speaking especially for him. The Buddha told his followers to help each other on the Way. Following is a story of the Buddha living as an example to his disciples.

Once the Buddha and Ananda visited a monastery where a monk was suffering from a contagious disease. The poor man lay in a mess with no one looking after him. The Buddha himself washed the sick monk and placed him on a new bed. Afterwards, he admonished the other monks. "Monks, you have neither mother nor father to look after you. If you do not look after each other, who will look after you? Whoever serves the sick and suffering, serves me."

The Last Years

Shakyamuni Buddha passed away around 486 BC at the age of eighty. Although he has left the world, the spirit of his kindness and compassion remains.

The Buddha realized that that he was not the first to become a Buddha. "There have been many Buddhas before me and will be many Buddhas in the future," The Buddha recalled to his disciples. "All living beings have the Buddha nature and can become Buddhas." For this reason, he taught the way to Buddhahood.

The two main goals of Buddhism are getting to know ourselves and learning the Buddha's teachings. To know who we are, we need to understand that we have two natures. One is called our *ordinary nature*, which is made up of unpleasant feelings such as fear, anger, and jealousy. The other is our *true nature*, the part of us that is pure, wise, and perfect. In Buddhism, it is called the **Buddha nature**. The only difference between us and the Buddha is that we have not awakened to our true nature.

Unit 2

BASIC TEACHINGS OF THE BUDDHA

Chapter 1

THE THREE UNIVERSAL TRUTHS

One day, the Buddha sat down in the shade of a tree and noticed how beautiful the countryside was. Flowers were blooming and trees were putting on bright new leaves, but among all this beauty, he saw much unhappiness. A farmer beat his ox in the field. A bird pecked at an earthworm, and then an eagle swooped down on the bird. Deeply troubled, he asked, "Why does the farmer beat his ox? Why must one creature eat another to live?"

During his enlightenment, the Buddha found the answer to these questions. He discovered three great truths. He explained these truths in a simple way so that everyone could understand them.

1. Nothing is lost in the universe

The first truth is that nothing is lost in the universe. Matter turns into energy, energy turns into matter. A dead leaf turns into soil. A seed sprouts and becomes a new plant. Old solar systems disintegrate and turn into cosmic rays. We are born of our parents, our children are born of us.

We are the same as plants, as trees, as other people, as the rain that falls. We consist of that which is around us, we are the same as everything. If we destroy something around us, we destroy ourselves. If we cheat another, we cheat

ourselves. Understanding this truth, the Buddha and his disciples never killed any animal.

2. Everything Changes

The second universal truth of the Buddha is that everything is continuously changing. Life is like a river flowing on and on, ever-changing. Sometimes it flows slowly and sometimes swiftly. It is smooth and gentle in some places, but later on snags and rocks crop up out of nowhere. As soon as we think we are safe, something unexpected happens.

Once dinosaurs, mammoths, and saber-toothed tigers roamed this earth. They all died out, yet this was not the end of life. Other life forms like smaller mammals appeared, and eventually humans, too. Now we can even see the Earth from space and understand the changes that have taken place on this planet. Our ideas about life also change. People once believed that the world was flat, but now we know that it is round.

3. Law of Cause and Effect

The third universal truth explained by the Buddha is that there is continuous changes due to the law of cause and effect. This is the same law of cause and effect found in every modern science textbook. In this way, science and Buddhism are alike.

The law of cause and effect is known as **karma**. Nothing ever happens to us unless we deserves it. We receive exactly what we earn, whether it is good or bad. We are the way we are now due to the things we have done in the past. Our thoughts and actions determine the kind of life we can have. If we do good things, in the future good things will happen to us. If we do bad things, in the future bad things will happen to us. Every moment we create new karma by what we say, do, and think. If we understand this, we do not need to fear karma. It becomes our friend. It teaches us to create a bright future.

The Buddha said,

"The kind of seed sown
will produce that kind of fruit.
Those who do good will reap good results.
Those who do evil will reap evil results.
If you carefully plant a good seed,

You will joyfully gather good fruit."
Dhammapada

Chapter 2 THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

Once there was a woman named Kisagotami, whose first-born son died. She was so stricken with grief that she roamed the streets carrying the dead body and asking for help to bring her son back to life. A kind and wise man took her to the Buddha.

The Buddha told her, "Fetch me a handful of mustard seeds and I will bring your child back to life." Joyfully Kisagotami started off to get them. Then the Buddha added, "But the seeds must come from a family that has not known death."

Kisagotami went from door to door in the whole village asking for the mustard seeds, but everyone said, "Oh, there have been many deaths here", "I lost my father", "I lost my sister". She could not find a single household that had not been visited by death. Finally Kisagotami returned to the Buddha and said, "There is death in every family. Everyone dies. Now I understand your teaching."

The Buddha said, "No one can escape death and unhappiness. If people expect only happiness in life, they will be disappointed."

Things are not always the way we want them to be, but we can learn to understand them. When we get sick, we go to a doctor and ask:

- What's wrong with me?
- Why am I sick?
- What will cure me?
- What do I have to do get well?

The Buddha is like a good doctor. First a good doctor diagnoses the illness. Next he finds out what has caused it. Then he decides what the cure is. Finally he prescribes the medicine or gives the treatment that will make the patient well again.

The Four Noble Truths

1. There is Suffering Suffering is common to all.
2. Cause of Suffering We are the cause of our suffering.
3. End of Suffering Stop doing what causes suffering.

4. Path to end Suffering Everyone can be enlightened.

1. Suffering: Everyone suffers from these things

Birth- When we are born, we cry.

Sickness- When we are sick, we are miserable.

Old age- When old, we will have ache and pains and find it hard to get around.

Death- None of us wants to die. We feel deep sorrow when someone dies.

Other things we suffer from are:

Being with those we dislike,

Being apart from those we love,

Not getting what we want,

All kinds of problems and disappointments that are unavoidable.

The Buddha did not deny that there is happiness in life, but he pointed out it does not last forever. Eventually everyone meets with some kind of suffering. He said:
"There is happiness in life,
happiness in friendship,
happiness of a family,
happiness in a healthy body and mind,
...but when one loses them, there is suffering."

Dhammapada

2. The cause of suffering

The Buddha explained that people live in a sea of suffering because of ignorance and greed. They are ignorant of the law of karma and are greedy for the wrong kind of pleasures. They do things that are harmful to their bodies and peace of mind, so they can not be satisfied or enjoy life.

For example, once children have had a taste of candy, they want more. When they can't have it, they get upset. Even if children get all the candy they want, they soon get tired of it and want something else. Although, they get a stomach-ache from eating too much candy, they still want more. The things people want most cause them the most suffering. Of course, there are basic things that all people should have, like adequate food, shelter, and clothing. Everyone deserves a good home,

loving parents, and good friends. They should enjoy life and cherish their possessions without becoming greedy.

3. The end of suffering

To end suffering, one must cut off greed and ignorance. This means changing one's views and living in a more natural and peaceful way. It is like blowing out a candle. The flame of suffering is put out for good. Buddhists call the state in which all suffering is ended **Nirvana**. Nirvana is an everlasting state of great joy and peace. The Buddha said, "The extinction of desire is Nirvana." This is the ultimate goal in Buddhism. Everyone can realize it with the help of the Buddha's teachings. It can be experienced in this very life.

4. The path to the end of suffering: The path to end suffering is known as the **Noble Eightfold Path**. It is also known as the **Middle Way**.

Chapter 3 THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

When the Buddha gave his first sermon in the Deer Park, he began the '**Turning of the Dharma Wheel**'. He chose the beautiful symbol of the wheel with its eight spokes to represent the Noble Eightfold Path. The Buddha's teaching goes round and round like a great wheel that never stops, leading to the central point of the wheel, the only point which is fixed, Nirvana. The eight spokes on the wheel represent the eight parts of the Noble Eightfold Path. Just as every spoke is needed for the wheel to keep turning, we need to follow each step of the path.

1. Right View. The right way to think about life is to see the world through the eyes of the Buddha--with wisdom and compassion.

2. Right Thought. We are what we think. Clear and kind thoughts build good, strong characters.

3. Right Speech. By speaking kind and helpful words, we are respected and trusted by everyone.

4. Right Conduct. No matter what we say, others know us from the way we behave. Before we criticize others, we should first see what we do ourselves.

5. Right Livelihood. This means choosing a job that does not hurt others. The Buddha said, "Do not earn your living by harming others. Do not seek happiness by making others unhappy."

6. Right Effort. A worthwhile life means doing our best at all times and having good will toward others. This also means not wasting effort on things that harm ourselves and others.

7. Right Mindfulness. This means being aware of our thoughts, words, and deeds.

8. Right Concentration. Focus on one thought or object at a time. By doing this, we can be quiet and attain true peace of mind.

Following the Noble Eightfold Path can be compared to cultivating a garden, but in Buddhism one cultivates one's wisdom. The mind is the ground and thoughts are seeds. Deeds are ways one cares for the garden. Our faults are weeds. Pulling them out is like weeding a garden. The harvest is real and lasting happiness.

UNIT 3

FOLLOWING THE BUDDHA'S TEACHINGS

The Buddha spoke the Four Noble Truths and many other teachings, but at the heart they all stress the same thing. An ancient story explains this well.

Once a very old king went to see an old hermit who lived in a bird's nest in the top of a tree, "What is the most important Buddhist teaching?" The hermit answered, "Do no evil, do only good. Purify your heart." The king had expected to hear a *very* long explanation. He protested, "But even a five-year old child can understand that!" "Yes," replied the wise sage, "but even an 80-year-old man cannot do it."

Chapter 1

THE TRIPLE JEWEL

The Buddha knew it would be difficult for people to follow his teachings on their own, so he established the **Three Refuges** for them to rely on. If a person wants to become Buddhists take refuge in and rely on the Buddha, the **Dharma**, and the **Sangha**. These are known as the **Triple Jewel**. The Sangha are the monks and nuns. They live in monasteries and carry on the Buddha's teaching. The word Sangha means 'harmonious community'. The Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha together possess qualities that are precious like jewels and can lead one to enlightenment.

A refuge is a place to go for safety and protection, like a shelter in a storm. Taking refuge does not mean running away from life. It means living life in a fuller, truer way.

Taking refuge is also like a man traveling for the first time to a distant city. He will need a guide to show him which path to follow and some traveling companions to help him along the way.

- **The Buddha** is the guide.
- **The Dharma** is the path.
- **The Sangha** are the teachers or companions along the way.

There is a special ceremony for taking refuge with the Triple Jewel. With a sincere mind, one recites the following verse in front of an ordained monk or nun.

I go to the Buddha for refuge.
I go to the Dharma for refuge.
I go to the Sangha for refuge.

For a Buddhist, taking refuge is the first step on the path to enlightenment. Even if enlightenment is not achieved in this life, one has a better chance to become enlightened in a future life. One who take the precepts is called a **lay person**.

Chapter 2 THE FIVE PRECEPTS

All religions have some basic rules that define what is good conduct and what kind of conduct should be avoided. In Buddhism, the most important rules are the **Five Precepts**. These have been passed down from the Buddha himself.

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|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. No killing | Respect for life |
| 2. No stealing | Respect for others' property |
| 3. No sexual misconduct | Respect for our pure nature |
| 4. No lying | Respect for honesty |
| 5. No intoxicants | Respect for a clear mind |

No killing

The Buddha said, "Life is dear to all beings. They have the right to live the same as we do." We should respect all life and not kill anything. Killing ants and mosquitoes is also breaking this precept. We should have an attitude of loving-kindness towards all beings, wishing them to be happy and free from harm. Taking care of the earth, its rivers and air is included. One way that many Buddhists follow this precept is by being vegetarian.

No stealing

If we steal from another, we steal from ourselves. Instead, we should learn to give and take care of things that belong to our family, to the school, or to the public.

No sexual misconduct

Proper conduct shows respect for oneself and others. Our bodies are gifts from our parents, so we should protect them from harm. Young people should especially keep their natures pure and develop their virtue. It is up to them to make the world a better place to live. In happy families, the husband and wife both respect each other.

No lying

Being honest brings peace into the world. When there is a misunderstanding, the best thing is to talk it over. This precept includes no gossip, no back-biting, no harsh words and no idle speech.

No intoxicants

The fifth precept is based on keeping a clear mind and a healthy body. One day, when the Buddha was speaking the Dharma for the assembly, a young drunkard staggered into the room. He tripped over some monks who were sitting on the floor and started cursing loudly. His breath reeked of alcohol and filled the air with a sickening stench. Mumbling to himself, he reeled out the door.

Everyone was astonished at his rude behavior, but the Buddha remained calm. "Great assembly!" he spoke, "Take a look at this man! He will certainly lose his wealth and good name. His body will grow weak and sickly. Day and night, he will quarrel with his family and friends until they abandon him. The worst thing is that he will lose his wisdom and become stupid."

Little by little, one can learn to follow these precepts. If one sometimes forgets them, one can start all over again. Following the precepts is a lifetime job. If one kills or hurts someone's feelings by mistake, that is breaking the precepts, but it was not done on purpose.

Chapter 3 **THE WHEEL OF LIFE**

Buddhists do not believe that death is the end of life. When one dies, one's consciousness leaves and enters one of the six paths of rebirth.

- **Heavenly Beings**
- **Humans**
- **Asuras** are beings who have many good things in life, but still like to fight. They appear in the heavens or on earth as people or animals.
- **Hungry ghosts** are beings who suffer from constant hunger.
- **Hell-beings**

These are the six states on the wheel of life. At the top are the heavens, where everyone is happy. Below are the hells where the suffering is unbearable. Beings can rise or fall from one path to another. If one does good deeds, one will be born into the paths of gods, humans, or **asuras**. If one does evil deeds, one will be born into the paths of animals, **hungry ghosts**, or **hell-beings**. From one life to the next one can suddenly change from an human to an animal or from a ghost to a hell-being, according to the things one has done.

How to Escape the Turning Wheel

The wheel of life and death is kept turning by the three poisons of **greed, hatred, and stupidity**. By cutting off the three poisons, we can escape the wheel and become enlightened. There are four stages of enlightenment.

- **Buddhas**- perfect in enlightenment.
- **Bodhisattvas**- enlighten themselves as well as others.
- **Pratyekabuddhas**- hermits who retreat from the world to enlighten themselves.
- **Arhats**- enlighten themselves.

Unit 4

THE BUDDHIST COMMUNITY

In Asia, it is considered the highest honor if a member of one's family leaves the home life. Westerners, however, may be shocked at the idea of anyone leaving their family to become a monk or nun. They may think this is selfish and turning one's back on the world. In fact, monks and nuns are not selfish at all. They dedicate themselves to helping others. They don't wish to own a lot of things, or to have money or power. They give these things up to gain something far more valuable--spiritual freedom. By living a pure simple life with others on the same path, they are able to lessen their greed, hatred, and ignorance.

Although monks and nuns live in a monastery, they do not entirely give up their families. They are allowed to visit and take care of them when they are ill.

Chapter 1

LIFE IN A MONASTERY

A day in a temple begins early for monks and nuns. Long before daybreak, they attend morning ceremony and chant praises to the Buddha. The ceremonies lift one's spirit and bring about harmony. Although the Sangha lead simple lives, they have many responsibilities to fulfill. Everyone works diligently and is content with his or her duties.

During the day, some monks and nuns go about teaching in schools or speaking the Buddha's teachings. Others may revise and translate Buddhist Sutras and books, make Buddha images, take care of the temple and gardens, prepare for ceremonies, give advice to laypeople, and care for the elders and those who are sick. The day ends with a final evening ceremony.

In the daily life of work and religious practice, the monks and nuns conduct themselves properly and are highly respected. By leading a pure, simple life, they gain

extraordinary insight into the nature of things. Although their life is hard and rigorous, the results are worth it. It also keeps them healthy and energetic. The laity, who live in the temple or visits, follows the same schedule as the Sangha and works along with them.

Chapter 2

THE SHAVEN HEAD, ROBE, AND OFFERING BOWL

Ideally, monks and nuns own only a few things, such as robes and an offering bowl. While most people spend lots of time and money on their hair, Buddhist monks and nuns shave their heads. They are no longer concerned with outward beauty, but with developing their spiritual lives. The shaven head is a reminder that the monks and nuns have renounced the home life and are a part of the Sangha.

Offering food to monks and nuns is a part of Buddhism. In Asia, it is not unusual to see monks walking towards the villages early in the morning carrying their offering bowls. They do not beg for food, but accept whatever is offered. This practice not only helps the monks and nuns to be humble, but gives laypeople an opportunity to give. In some countries laypeople go to the monastery to make offerings.

The robes of monks and nuns are simple and made from cotton or linen. Their color varies according to different countries. For instance, yellow robes are mostly worn in Thailand, while black robes are worn in Japan. In China and Korea, gray and brown robes are worn for work, while more elaborate robes are used for ceremonies. Dark red robes are worn in Tibet.

Robes and offering bowls are very important to monks and nuns. The Buddha said, "Just as a bird takes its wings with it wherever it flies, so the monk takes his robes and bowl with him wherever he goes."

Chapter 3

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LAITY IN BUDDHISM

The laity are very important in Buddhism, for they are the supporting members of the Buddhist community. They build the temples and monasteries and give offerings of food, robes, bedding, and medicine to the monks and nuns. This enables the Sangha to carry on the Buddha's work. In this way the Sangha and laity benefit each other and together keep the Dharma alive.

In Buddhism, it is also important to support the poor and needy. Giving to support religious people, however, is considered a very meritorious deed. The Buddha not only encouraged giving to Buddhists, but to any spiritual person who is sincere.

The Buddha taught his disciples to be tolerant of other religions. For example, when one lights a candle from the flame of another candle, the flame of the first candle does not lose its light. Instead, the two lights glow more brightly together. It is the same with the great religions of the world.

Whether one is a member of the Sangha or a lay person, the ideal is to practice Buddhism for the sake of all.

UNIT 5

DIFFERENT KINDS OF BUDDHISM

Chapter 1

TWO SCHOOLS OF BUDDHISM

In the centuries following the Buddha's lifetime, his followers faithfully preserved his teachings and spread them to many countries in Asia. Today, there are two main schools of Buddhism: **Theravada** and **Mahayana**. Theravada means 'the teaching of the Elders'. Theravada monks follow the practices that have been passed down by the senior monks from the Buddha's time, such as living in the forests and meditating. The goal in Theravada Buddhism is to become an **Arhat**, a person who is free of suffering. Theravada is practiced mainly in southern Asian countries such as Sri Lanka, Thailand and Myanmar (Burma).

Mahayana stresses following the Buddha's example of going out into the world and doing good. Mahayana means '**Great Vehicle**'. The goal in Mahayana Buddhism is to follow the **Bodhisattva Path**. A Bodhisattva is one who enlightens oneself as well as others. In Mahayana Buddhism, there are many Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. It mainly spread to northern Asian countries like China, Tibet, Korea, Vietnam and Japan. Recently, both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism have been introduced into the West.

Chapter 2

VISITING BUDDHIST TEMPLES

In this unit, we will pretend to visit different Buddhist temples. When visiting a temple, we should dress modestly and follow the rules and customs of the temple.

Buddhists pay their respects to the Triple Jewel by facing the altar and bowing when entering the temple. Visitors may join in the worship rituals or just watch quietly.

In Buddhism, the monks and nuns are treated with great respect. They sit or stand in front of everyone else and take their food first. When we talk to them, we should put our palms together and speak politely.

Theravada Buddhism

Our first visit is to a Theravada Buddhist monastery in the forest in Thailand where only the monks live. We sit in the quietness of a small bamboo temple built on stilts, surrounded by the sounds of chirping birds and rustling trees. A young monk who is our guide explains to us. "The monks live alone in huts called '**kutis**'. They are built on stilts to keep the animals and insects out. There they practice sitting and walking meditation, which is very important for their spiritual life. In front of each hut is a path for walking meditation. The monks sweep them clean to keep from stepping on insects and killing them."

The guide continues, "Early in the morning and in the evening, the monks meet together for meditation and recitation. After the ceremonies called **pujas**, they study the Dharma. Before entering the temple they wash their feet with water carried up to the monastery from a stream below. It is traditional for the monks and nuns to live in the forest as part of their early training. The older ones, however, are not required to do so. Some monks and nuns may live all their lives in the forest, while others live in the temples in towns and cities.

Someone asks, "Living in the jungle, aren't you afraid of tigers?"

The monk answers, "Sometimes, when the monks are walking in the jungle, they sense tigers following them. But since they hold the precept of no killing, they're not afraid and the tigers know they will not be harmed."

Tibetan Buddhism

Next we will visit a Tibetan temple. A young Tibetan boy named Lobsang is our guide. He smiles as he talks, "Our temple is very colorful. It is decorated with many kinds of Buddha images and wall hangings called **thankas**. On the altars are beautiful lamps and incense holders. Big prayer wheels are set into the walls of the temple. **Mantras**, written on strips of rice paper, are placed inside the wheels. They are symbolic phrases with deep spiritual meanings. We recite them over and

over as we turn the prayer wheels. There are also hand-held prayer wheels that people whirl as they walk about.

"To us Tibetans, Buddhism is a happy religion. My favorite days are the festivals. People in masks and costumes act out dramas about the life of the Buddha. Bright, new prayer flags are hung on these days. They blow in the wind along the hillsides and remind us to live in harmony with nature. Now that your visit is over, may you go with the spirit of the Buddha."

Japanese Buddhism

At a Japanese temple, we are met by Taro. She will tell us about her Sunday School: "We chant 'Namo Amida Butsu' to show our gratitude to Amida Buddha, the Buddha of Infinite Light. We believe that by reciting his name we will have a good life and be reborn in his Western Pure Land. You can see a statue of Amida in the front of the hall. On the altar you can see other beautiful things, but the most important is the offering of rice cakes.

"I will tell you why. Rice is very important to Asian people. If you were to ask a young Japanese boy or girl, 'What did you eat today?' He or she would probably say, 'Rice'" When we see rice offered, it reminds us to offer our best to the Buddha. In Sunday school, we sit in meditation on cushions called **zafus**. Japanese meditation is called **zen**.

Chinese Buddhism

Today we are visiting a Chinese-American monastery in California. It is called the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. There are over ten thousand small Buddha statues inside the main worship hall. Our guide is a young novice named Gwo Cheng from mainland China. She came to the United States when she was 10 years old and became a novice at age 11.

Gwo Cheng: "The City of Ten Thousand Buddhas is a Buddhist community where people from all over the world come to study Buddhism. The City has its own schools, but you do not have to be a Buddhist to attend our schools or to live here.

"A day at the temple begins at 4:00 a.m. with the morning ceremony. After that we bow, sit in meditation, and recite Sutras. These ceremonies lift everyone's spirits and help us live together in harmony. We do our ceremonies in both English and Chinese. There are many ceremonies throughout the day. We finish off the day with an evening ceremony and a Dharma talk.

"Everyone goes to work or school at 8:00 in the morning. In our school, we learn the way of truth and goodness We also learn both Chinese and English. We young novices attend school and are in training to become nuns. We can become fully ordained nuns when we are twenty-one, so we have time to make up our minds. We are not expected to do everything the nuns do, but we do our best. At first it was difficult to get up so early and to sit in meditation, but now we are used to it. It's a healthy life!

"After school, we help with the temple duties and do other chores. I really like gardening and planting. Many people ask me if the novices ever have any fun. We do! We are very good friends and enjoy studying together. We go on walks and picnics and sing Buddhist songs. The nuns are always thinking of fun things for us to do. We also like to see our families who live here and visit with us."

UNIT 6

BUDDHIST SCRIPTURES, SYMBOLS, AND FESTIVALS

Chapter 1

BUDDHIST SCRIPTURES

The Dharma reveals the Buddha's understanding of life. The Buddha instructed countless people, but he, himself, wrote nothing down, just as Jesus wrote nothing down. They both lived a complete life. His disciples remembered his talks and recited them regularly. These talks were collected into books called **Sutras**. There are many Sutras, so Buddhism does not have just a single holy book, like the Christian Bible or the Koran of Islam.

The first Sutras were written on palm leaves in **Pali** and **Sanskrit**, ancient Indian languages. They have been gathered together in a collection called the **Tripitaka**, which means 'three baskets'. It is divided into three parts.

- Sutra Pitaka~Sutras and their explanations
- Vinaya Pitaka~Rules for monks and nuns
- Abhidharma Pitaka~The psychology and philosophy of the Buddha's teachings

Buddhists treat Sutras with great respect and place them on the highest shelves in the most respected areas.

Chapter 2

BUDDHIST SYMBOLS

Buddhist symbols have special meanings that remind us of the Buddha's teachings. The main room or building is called a shrine or a Buddha Hall. In the front of this room, there is an altar. There are many beautiful things on the altar. Here are some of them.

- **Images of the Buddha**
- **Traditional offerings**
- **Dharma instruments**

Buddha Images

Some people believe that Buddhists worship idols, but this is not true. Buddhists bow or make offerings of flowers and incense in reverence to the Buddha, not to the image. When they do so they reflect on the virtues of the Buddha and are inspired to become like him. Buddha images are not necessary, but they are helpful. The most important thing is to follow the Buddha's teachings.

There are many different kinds of Buddha and Bodhisattva images that show different qualities. For example, a statue of the Buddha with his hand resting gently in his lap reminds us to develop peace within ourselves. A statue with the Buddha's right hand touching the ground shows determination.

Traditional Offerings

Traditional offerings are to show respect to the Buddha.

- **Flowers-** are offered as reminders of how quickly things change
- **Light from lamps or candles-** symbolizes wisdom
- **Incense-** reminds one to be peaceful
- **Water-** represents purity
- **Food-** reminds us to give our best to the Buddhas.

Dharma Instruments

The instruments used in ceremonies and meditation are called **Dharma instruments**. Each instrument has a specific use. For instance, the wooden fish is hit to keep rhythm

- **Bells**- gives signals in ceremonies and meditation
- **Drums**-announces ceremonies and keeps rhythm
- **Gongs**- announces ceremonies and activities
- **Wooden fish**-keeps rhythm while chanting

Lotus Flower

The lotus flower represents enlightenment described in the poem.

*The lotus has its roots in the mud,
Grows up through the deep water,
And rises to the surface.
It blooms into perfect beauty and purity in the sunlight.
It is like the mind unfolding to perfect joy and wisdom.*

The Bodhi Tree

The **Bodhi Tree** is a **pipal** tree, a kind of fig tree found in India. After the Buddha attained enlightenment under this tree, it became known as the Bodhi Tree, the *Tree of Enlightenment*. It is located in **Bodhgaya**, where people visit to pay their respects to the Buddha. Although the parent tree is no longer alive, its grandchildren are still there.

The Buddhist Flag

As the Buddha sat beneath the Bodhi Tree after his enlightenment, six rays of light came out from his body and spread for miles around. The colors were yellow, blue, white, red, orange and a mixture of all the colors. The Buddhist flag was designed after these colors.

Stupas and Pagodas

Stupas and **pagodas** are monuments where the relics of the Buddha and high monks and nuns are kept so that people can show their respects. These relics are jewels that remain after cremation.

Chapter 3

BUDDHIST FESTIVALS

Buddhists have many festivals throughout the year. These festivals celebrate events in the lives of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and famous teachers. During these occasions people can also take refuge and precepts, or leave the home life to become monks and nuns.

Buddha Day

For the Buddhist community, the most important event of the year is the celebration of the Birth of the Buddha, his Enlightenment and Nirvana. It falls on the full-moon day in May. On this day, Buddhists take part in the ceremonial bathing of the Buddha. They pour ladles of water scented with flowers over a statue of the baby Siddhartha. This symbolizes purifying one's thoughts and actions.

The temples are elaborately decorated with flowers and banners; the altars are laden with offerings; vegetarian meals are provided for all; and captive animals, such as birds and turtles are set free. This is a very joyous day for everyone.

Dharma Day

Asalha Puja, known as 'Dharma Day', is celebrated during full-moon in July. This holiday commemorates the first sermon of the Buddha to the five monks in the Deer Park at Benares.

Sangha Day

Sangha Day or Kathina Day is usually held in October. In the Theravada tradition, monks and nuns go on a three-month retreat during the rainy season. After the retreat, the laity offers robes and other necessities to them. This day symbolizes the close relationship between the Sangha and laity.

Ullambana

The observance of Ullambana is based on the story of Maudgalyayana, a disciple of the Buddha. When Maudgalyayana's mother died, he wanted to know where she was reborn. Using his spiritual powers, he traveled into the hells and found her suffering miserably from hunger. He brought her a bowl of food, but when she tried to swallow it, the food turned into hot coals.

The distressed Maudgalyayana asked the Buddha, "Why is my mother suffering in the hells?"

The Buddha replied, "In her life as a human, she was stingy and greedy. This is her retribution." He advised, "Make offerings to the Sangha. The merit and virtue from this act will release your mother and others from the hells." As a result of Maudgalyana's offering, his mother and thousands of others were released from their unhappy state. After this, making offerings to release departed relatives and others from the hells became popular in Mahayana countries. Usually, it takes place in September.

UNIT 7

HISTORY OF BUDDHISM

Chapter 1

BUDDHISM IN THE EAST

Buddhism was first introduced into Sri Lanka from India in the 3rd century BC by Mahinda, the son of King Asoka. There it achieved great popularity and is still flourishing today.

In the early centuries AD, Buddhism was introduced taken to Southeast Asia by merchants and missionaries. The great monuments like **Borobudur** in Indonesia and Angkor Thom in Cambodia are evidence of the splendor of Buddhism in these regions.

In the 1st century AD, Buddhism reached China where many Sutras were translated into classical Chinese.

In the 4th century AD, Buddhism found its way to Korea and on into Japan.

Chapter 2

BUDDHISM IN THE WEST

Even before the 17th century, people in the West heard of the Buddha and his teachings from early travelers such as Marco Polo and Christian missionaries.

By the early 20th century, many Europeans had traveled to the East to study Buddhism. Some of them became monks and inspired Buddhism in the West. In the 19th century, Chinese and Japanese immigrants brought many different

traditions of Buddhism to America. Today, there are numerous Buddhist centers spread across Europe and North and South America.

UNIT 8

JATAKA TALES AND OTHER BUDDHIST STORIES

The Buddha was a great storyteller and often told stories to get his message across. Stories were also told about the Buddha by his followers both to explain and understand the Dharma. These stories have been passed down to the present day and the most popular ones are the Jataka tales, a collection of hundreds of tales about the Buddha's past lives. They show the kind of life one should lead to become a Buddha one day. In many of these stories, the Buddha appears as an animal to teach the value of qualities such as kindness, compassion, and giving.

The Monkey King and the Mangoes

Once upon a time, the Buddha came into the world as a Monkey King and ruled over 80,000 monkeys. He was very tall and strong and had wisdom like the sun. In his kingdom on the banks of the Ganges River, there was a mango tree as big as the moon. The 80,000 monkeys jumped from branch to branch chattering and eating the lovely fruit that was big and sweet and delicious. Sometimes a ripe mango fell into the river.

One day, the Monkey King strolled downstream and came upon a river palace where a human king lived. "Soon danger will come if the mangoes float downstream," he told the monkeys. "Pick all the mangoes and flowers on the trees and take them deep into the forest."

But one mango, hidden by a bird's nest, was left unseen by the 80,000 monkeys. When it was large and ripe, it fell into the river and floated downstream where the human king was bathing.

The human king, who was very curious, tasted the beautiful mango. "This is delicious!" he exclaimed. "I must have more. Servants, find all the mangoes and bring them to me at once!"

Deep in the forest, the servants found hundreds of mango trees. In the trees were the 80,000 monkeys. When the human king heard about the monkeys, he was very

angry, "The monkeys are eating my mangoes. Kill them all!" he ordered his archers.

"Very well," said the archers and chased the monkeys to the edge of the forest where they came to a deep cliff. There was no way for the monkeys to escape. Shivering with fright, they ran to the Monkey King asked, "What shall we do?"

"Don't be afraid. I will save you," said their king. Quickly, he stretched his huge body as far as possible and made a bridge over the cliff to a bamboo grove on the other side.

"Come monkeys, run across my back to the bamboo grove," he called. And so the 80,000 monkeys escaped.

The human king watched all that happened. He was amazed, "This Monkey King has risked his life to save his whole troop! And all I'm doing is being selfish. I have learned a great lesson." Then he called to his archers, "Put down your bows. It isn't right to kill this King of Monkeys."

Forgetting about the mangoes, the human king went back to his palace by the river and ruled kindly and wisely for the rest of his life.

The Deer King

Long ago in a forgotten forest, lived a deer named Banyan. He was golden like the sun and his horns glistened like silver. His body was as large as a colt and his eyes sparkled like jewels-alight with wisdom. He was a King of Deer and watched over a herd of 500 deer.

Not far away, another herd of deer was watched over by another golden deer named Branch. In the tall grass and shadows of the deep forest, the two herds lived in peace.

One day, the King of Benares was out on a hunt and spied the beautiful green forest where the deer lived. "What a perfect hunting ground!" he declared and into the forests he dashed with his thousands of hunters and came upon the two herds of deer. Without a moment's hesitation, he notched an arrow in his bow. Suddenly he spotted the two golden deer. Never had he seen such beautiful creatures! "From this day on," he commanded, "No one is to harm or kill these golden deer."

Thereafter, he came to the forest everyday and killed more deer than was needed for his dinner table. As the weeks went by, many deer were wounded and died in great pain.

Finally Banyan Deer called the two herds together, "Friends, we know there is no escape from death, but this needless killing can be prevented. Let the deer take turns going to the chopping block, one day from my herd and the next day from Branch's herd."

All the deer agreed. Each day the deer whose turn it was went to the chopping block on the edge of the forest and laid its head upon the block.

One day, the turn fell to a pregnant doe from Branch's herd. She went to Branch Deer and begged, "Grant that I be passed over until after my fawn is born. Then I will gladly take my turn."

Branch Deer replied, "It is your turn. You must go."

In despair, the poor doe went to Banyan Deer and explained her plight. He gently said, "Go rest in peace. I will put your turn upon another." The deer king went and laid his golden head upon the chopping block. A deep silence fell in the forest.

When the king of Benares came and saw the golden deer ready for sacrifice, his heart skipped a beat, "You are the leader of the herd," he exclaimed, "You should be the last to die!" Banyan Deer explained how he had come to save the life of the doe.

A tear rolled down the cheek of the king. "Golden Deer King," he exclaimed. "Among men and beasts, I have not seen one with such compassion. Arise! I spare both your life and hers.

"So we will be safe. But what shall the rest of the deer do?" "Their lives I shall also spare." "So the deer will be safe, but what will the other four-footed animals do?" "From now on they too will be safe." "And what of the birds?" "I will spare their lives." "And the fish in the water?" "The fish shall be spared- all creatures of the land, sea, and sky will be free."

Having saved the lives of all creatures, the golden deer raised his head from the chopping block and returned to the forest.

The Wounded Swan

One day when Prince Siddhartha and his cousin Devadatta were walking in the woods, they saw a swan. Quickly, Devadatta drew his bow and shot the swan down. Siddhartha rushed to the wounded swan and pulled out the arrow. He held the bird in his arms and caressed it.

Devadatta angrily shouted at Prince Siddhartha, "Give me the swan. I shot it. It belongs to me!"

"I shall never give it to you, You will only kill it!" said the prince firmly. "Let's ask the ministers of the court and let them decide."

The ministers all had different views. Some said, "The swan should be given to Devadatta." Others said, "It should go to Prince Siddhartha." One wise minister stood up and said, "A life belongs to one who saves it, not to one who will destroy it. The swan goes to the prince."

Prince Siddhartha took care of the swan until it could fly again. Then he turned it loose so it could live freely with its own kind.

Aniruddha and the Golden Rabbit

Once there was a poor farmer who offered his only bowl of rice to a holy man who was even poorer than he. This meant he would have nothing to eat that day. He went back to his work and forgot all about having given his rice away. Suddenly a rabbit hopped alongside the farmer and jumped on his back. The surprised farmer tried to brush it off. He tried to shake it off, he tried to knock it off, but the rabbit would not bulge.

He ran home to his wife, crying, "Get this rabbit off my back!" By this time the rabbit had turned into solid gold! The wife flipped the rabbit into the air. It hit the floor with a "Crackkk!" One of its golden legs broke off and another one magically grew in its place.

From that day on, whenever the farmer and his wife needed money, they would break off a piece of the golden rabbit. And from that life onward, Aniruddha was never poor. This was his reward for giving.

A LESSON IN MEDITATION

Concentration on the Breath

A very simple way of meditating is concentrating on your breath. The breath is like a bridge between your body and mind. When you concentrate on your breath for a while, your body becomes relaxed and your mind becomes peaceful.

- Sit in a comfortable position with your back straight.
- Place your hands in your lap with the left hand on the bottom.
- Keep your eyes half-closed or closed.
- Concentrate on the tip of your nose. Notice your breath going in and out.

Lotus posture

Full lotus is the best sitting posture. Begin by sitting in half-lotus, then work your way up to full lotus.

- Full-lotus- Sit on the edge of a cushion. Place your left ankle on your right thigh. Then lift your right ankle onto your left thigh.
- Half-lotus- Lift your left ankle onto your right thigh.

Note: It is best to sit at the same time and place everyday. Increase your sitting time little by little. You may sit in a chair or stand if necessary.

GLOSSARY

asuras: Beings who like to fight.

Bodhi tree: A pipal tree that is known as the 'tree of enlightenment'. The tree under which Gautama achieved enlightenment and became a Buddha.

Bodhisattva: A compassionate being who enlightens himself and helps others to be enlightened.

Buddha: The Enlightened or Awakened One. The word 'Bodhi' means to awaken.

Buddha Hall: The main room inside a Buddhist temple.

Buddha nature:

Dharma: Teachings of the Buddha

enlightenment: Understanding the truth of life, freedom from ignorance.

Five Precepts: The five rules of conduct given by the Buddha to his disciples: no killing, no stealing, no sexual misconduct, no false speech, no intoxicants.

Four Noble Truths: The first teachings spoken by the Buddha: the truth of suffering, the cause of suffering, the end of suffering, and the Path leading to the end of suffering.

hungry ghosts: Ghosts that suffer a lot because they are greedy.

Jataka tales: stories about the past lives of the Buddha.

karma: 'Action' or the law of cause and effect. For every action there is a cause.

Kathina: A 'festival of giving' held in autumn, where people make offerings to the monks and nuns.

lamas: Tibetan religious leaders.

lotus posture: A meditation posture.

lotus: The lotus symbolizes the purity of the Buddha. It grows out of mud, yet it is not defiled by it.

Mahayana: The tradition of Northern Buddhism.

mantras: Symbolic phrases that Buddhists chant.

meditation: A method of calming and training the mind.

Middle Way: The path in life prescribed by the Buddha, the path between extremes.

Nirvana: An everlasting state of great joy and peace.

Noble Eightfold Path: The Buddha's prescription for ending suffering. It is made up of eight parts: right views, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

offering bowl: A bowl that nuns and monks receive offerings in.

Pali: An ancient language of India that the Buddhist Sutras were originally written in.

Pratyekabuddha: Hermits who become enlightened by themselves.

puja: A Pali word for Buddhist worship.

Sangha: The community of Buddhist nuns and monks.

Sanskrit: An ancient language of India that the Buddhist Sutras were written in.

Six Perfections: The six ideals that a Bodhisattva perfects: giving morality, patience, effort, concentration, and wisdom.

stupas: Monuments to the Buddha

Sutras: The Buddha's teachings in writing.

thankas: Wall hangings found in Tibetan temples.

Theravada: The tradition of Southern Buddhism.

Three Refuges: The Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

Tripitaka: The 'three baskets', a collection of the Buddha's written teachings.

Triple Jewel: The Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

Ullambana: A Buddhist festival when offerings are given to the Sangha..

Wheel of Life and Death: The six worldly states of rebirth: gods, asuras, humans, animals, hungry ghosts, and hell-beings.

zafu: A round meditation cushion used in Japanese Buddhism.

Zen: Japanese meditation.

Chronology

BCE

- c.566–486 Traditional dates for the life of the Buddha
- c.485–405 Life of the Buddha according to recent research
- c.405 The First Council at Rajagriha
- c.325 The 'Great Schism'
- c.321–184 Mauryan Dynasty
- c.268–231 Reign of Ashoka
- c.250 Buddhism brought to Sri Lanka by Mahinda
- c.25 Pali Canon written down

CE

- 0 Origins of the Mahayana
- c.65 First record of Buddhism in China
- c.100 Lotus Sutra
- 3rd Century First evidence for Buddhism in Cambodia and Vietnam
- 4th Century Buddhism arrives in Korea and Burma
- 500–600 Development of Tantric Buddhism (Vajrayana)
- 6th Century Buddhism arrives in Japan
- 600–700 First trace of Buddhism in Tibet
- 1200–1300 Buddhism virtually disappears from India
- 12th Century Zen arrives in Japan from China and Korea

- 1230 First record of Buddhism in Cambodia
- 13th Century Buddhism becomes official religion in Thailand
- c.1850 Beginning of Western interest in Buddhism
- 1881 Pali Text Society founded
- 1907 Buddhist Society of Great Britain and Ireland founded

- 1950 Invasion of Tibet by China
- 1959 Dalai Lama flees Tibet
- c.1960 Origins of 'Engaged Buddhism'
- 1987 American Buddhist Congress founded
- 1989 Dalai Lama awarded Nobel Peace Prize
- 1995 UK Association of Buddhist Studies founded

What Siddhartha Did

I am beyond being,
My knowledge undivided,
My mind unmarked,
All identifying with its objects fallen away.
I have crossed out of craving into freedom
By my own efforts, my own understanding.
I have no teacher,
No equal anywhere,
Alone, Enlightened . . .
I have vanquished the sleep of ignorance.
I am awake,
A Buddha.⁷

The Ten Worlds

hell
hunger
animality
anger
humanity
rapture
learning
absorption
bodhisattva
buddhahood

State of Life

extreme suffering
insatiable desire
brute instinct
conflict
calm
overwhelming joy
self-reflection
realization
caring for others
enlightenment

The Ten Worlds of Nichiren Buddhism

The Four Noble Truths

Finding the Path

And what have I declared?

‘This is suffering’ – I have declared.

‘This is the origin of suffering’ – I have declared.

‘This is the cessation of suffering’ – I have declared.

‘This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering’ – I have declared.²⁷

Clear, cogent and deceptively simple, the Buddha encapsulated his teaching in ‘Four Noble Truths’. He sometimes compared himself to a physician, and his diagnosis and prescription are set out much in the manner of a clinical assessment. The first Noble Truth examines the condition, the second explores its causes, the third concludes that a cure is possible, and the fourth prescribes the remedy.

Unlike many modern doctors, the Buddha wasn’t primarily interested in surface symptoms. For the cure to be effective it

must work from the inside out. The 'patient' must get at the underlying causes of their suffering and take responsibility for their recovery by adopting a new regime for daily life, a fundamental change in attitude and lifestyle.

In our age of international jet travel, lunchtime liposuction and Las Vegas marriages this may not be a fashionable message – but it is the truth. Quick 'fixes' rarely last. Changing karma is not a cosmetic process. It means understanding our hidden motives and most deeply entrenched patterns, seeing the way our unconscious conditioning affects how we think of ourselves, and getting to grips with the way we conduct our lives.

The **First Noble Truth**, the Truth of Suffering (*dukkha*), states that difficulty and disappointment are inescapable aspects of human experience. Birth can be a painful process; and so, more often, is the decline into death. No one is immune from illness, whatever the wonders of modern medicine. Suffering also includes emotional and psychological distress, which is no less real for being invisible. There isn't a person in the world, rich or poor, famous or unknown, who will not experience grief and sorrow at some point in their life, and conditions such as depression are often chronic and more difficult to treat than physical illnesses.

Beyond these obvious examples, the First Noble Truth refers to a more mundane kind of dis-ease: the day-to-day frustration of dashed hopes and expectations. At best these disappointments are annoying. At worst they may result in profound disenchantment and a corrosive feeling of failure and inadequacy. Even when suffering is not acute or dramatic there can be all sorts of lower-level unhappiness which are distressing and debilitating. One need look no further than the prodigious consumption of Valium and Prozac in the modern world for proof of its ubiquity.

If life is, by its very nature, difficult the **Second Noble Truth**, the Truth of Arising (*samudaya*), explains that suffering comes about from craving or 'thirst' (*trishna*) for things to be other than they are. Either we have something we don't want – a headache or an overdraft, for example – or we don't have something we *do* want – a fast car, say, or the 'perfect' partner. Craving is said to fuel suffering in the way that wood stokes a flame. In one teaching known as the Fire Sermon, the Buddha spoke of all human experience as being 'ablaze' with desire and infatuation. Fire spreads rapidly, always consuming what it feeds on. Craving is the same. It is never satisfied.

The Second Noble Truth states that craving manifests itself in three main forms. The first is thirst for sensual pleasure (*kama*): the constant desire to experience new tastes, sensations, smells, sights and sounds. The second is thirst for existence (*bhava*): the deep instinctual will to hang on to life at all costs. The third is the urge to negate, avoid, reject and even to destroy (*vibhava*) that which seems unpleasant or alien: a form of extreme 'denial' or aversion as a modern psychologist might say.

So does this mean that all desire is wrong? We are, after all, creatures with appetites. Many seem positively beneficial – wanting to feed one's family or to heal the sick for example . . . No: what the Buddha is speaking about here is desire that has become twisted or unbalanced in some way, either because it is excessive or because it is mis-directed. Above all, he is referring to the desires to which we find ourselves attached (which may even include the obsessive drive to do good for others while neglecting ourselves or those nearest us). We can't seem to shake these desires off. They have somehow – often subtly – become addictive. We are hooked.

Desire becomes negative the moment it takes on an addictive

aspect. It starts to cause pain to oneself and to others. And it begins to bind us ever more tightly to the very difficulty we are trying to escape. Like a greedy child who can only remove his hand from a sweet jar by letting go of the sweet, grasping will only make our situation worse. We need to know both when to hold on and when to let go. When Buddhism talks about 'non-attachment' it emphatically does not mean indifference.

The **Third Noble Truth**, the Truth of Cessation (*nirodha*), offers the possibility of hope. For if suffering has a cause, it follows logically that the means must also exist to stop, remove or transform the cause. If the root of suffering is attachment to false ideas, grasping onto things we can't have, or failing to come to terms with the way things really are, then the solution is to resolve that ignorance, let go, get real.

In order to be happy we need to understand that change is inherent in all things, abandon our fantasy of trying to control it or stop it happening, see it more clearly for what it really is – a natural process. We also need to root out the 'three poisons' – greed (*raga*), hatred (*dvesha*) and delusion (*moha*) – and replace them with something more valuable. Understanding how they operate is the key to transforming suffering.

Our experience of these poisons and the suffering they cause will be unique to each of us, wrapped up in our own particular bundle of personal relationships; but wherever there is suffering or the memory of unhappiness, evidence of one of the poisons will be close by. The fundamental task of Buddhism is to understand, undermine and neutralize these poisons. More than that, they need to be transformed into their opposites – generosity and non-attachment, compassion and loving kindness, wisdom and understanding – the 'three qualities' of the Buddha.

What is it to be non-attached? What is it to be compassionate? What is it to be wise? How do we cultivate these qualities?

By living in the right way, developing and constantly refining the necessary skills. These are the techniques set out in the **Fourth Noble Truth**. It describes the route from samsara to nirvana. It consists of eight factors divided into three categories: morality (*shila*), meditation (*samadhi*) and wisdom (*prajña*). This is the so-called Noble Eightfold Path. Lama Surya Das's publisher has renamed it the 'Eight Steps to Enlightenment'. This is, strictly speaking, an inaccurate title. Rather than stepping stones or rungs on a ladder which are stepped on and then left behind, the components of the path continuously inform each other every step of the way. But it is a wonderfully helpful and uplifting book and a great companion on any journey.

THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

Prajna

Right View means accepting the Four Noble Truths. Not blind acceptance or complete understanding, but rather receptiveness to the teachings and a willingness to examine them in the light of our own experience.

Right Resolve means making a serious commitment to develop the qualities of wisdom and compassion, together with a corresponding determination not to be distracted from the path.

Shila

Right Speech means telling the truth with sensitivity, speaking in a way which doesn't hurt or divide others, avoiding gossip and idle chatter.

Right Action means abstaining from harmful behaviour such as killing, stealing or abusing sensual pleasures.

Right Livelihood means not engaging in an occupation which causes hurt to others through the use of wrong speech or wrong action.

Samadhi

Right Effort means gaining control of one's thoughts, restraining negative states of mind and replacing them with positive ones.

Right Mindfulness means cultivating constant awareness of one's body, feelings, mental states and thoughts.

Right Meditation means developing deep levels of calm and insight through various techniques which concentrate the mind and integrate the personality.

I go to the Buddha for refuge, I go to the Dharma for refuge, I go to the Sangha for refuge.²⁸

We are what we think
Having become what we thought
Like the wheel that follows the cart-pulling ox
Sorrow follows an evil thought.

And joy follows a pure thought,
Like a shadow faithfully tailing a man
We are what we think,
Having become what we thought.³⁰

Observing the mind
Calming the mind
Clearing the mind
Focusing the mind

Three poisons – and five onenesses

No fire like passion,
No jailer like hate,
No snare like delusion,
No torrent like craving.

How easy to see the faults of others –
We winnow them like chaff.
How hard to see one's own! –
We hide them, like cheating at dice.³⁶

THE FIVE PRECEPTS

- 1 Not to take life intentionally
- 2 Not to take what has not been given
- 3 Not to indulge in sexual misconduct
- 4 Not to speak falsely
- 5 Not to cloud the mind with intoxicants

FIVE OF THE TEN ONENESSES⁴¹

- 1 Oneness of body and mind
- 2 Oneness of internal and external
- 3 Oneness of cause and effect
- 4 Oneness of life and its environment
- 5 Oneness of thought, word and deed

Glossary

(All dates are CE unless otherwise stated)

Abhidharma	systematised, analytical exposition of Buddhist doctrine – 21
ahimsa	moral principle of non-violence – 70
Alara Kalama	one of the Buddha's first two meditation teachers – 14
Ananda	the Buddha's cousin and long-time personal assistant – 20, 25
anatman	the doctrine of 'no (fixed) self' – 28, 29
anitya	the doctrine of impermanence – 27, 29
Ariyaratne, A. T.	founder of Sarvodaya Shramadana in Sri Lanka – 8, 66, 67
Asanga	co-founder with Vasubandhu of the Yogacara school – 49
Ashoka	the Indian subcontinent's greatest Buddhist ruler – xiv, 22, 23, 49
asura	demons – occupants of one of the six realms of possible rebirth – 31
Aung San Suu Kyi	Burmese Nobel Laureate and democracy advocate – 8
Avalokiteshvara	many-headed, many-armed, celestial bodhisattva – 51
bhava	existence/becoming – 41
bodhicitta	the 'thought of enlightenment', the desire to become a bodhisattva in order to help others – 51
bodhisattva	a being dedicated to attaining Buddhahood and to helping others – 49–51
Bimbisara	first king of Magadha (ruled c465 – 413 BCE) and a supporter of the Buddha – 46

cetana	volition or intention – 37
Chih-I	sixth-century Chinese Buddhist scholar – 24, 25
Daisaku Ikeda	current leader of Soka Gakkai International – 8, 69
Dalai Lama	religious and political leader of the Tibetan Buddhists – xv, 2, 8, 51, 70
dana	generosity – 50
Das, Lama Surya	American lama in the Tibetan tradition – 8, 43
Dengyo	see Saisho
deva	a god or being from a heavenly realm of rebirth – 31
Dhammapada	anthology of the Buddha's aphorisms – 21
Dharma	Buddhist teachings and the timeless truth they point to – 23, 45, 49, 80, 82
dharani	a mystical incantation – 52
duhkha	suffering, unsatisfactoriness – 29, 40
dvesha	hatred – 42
FWBO	Friends of the Western Buddhist Order – 8
grama swaraj	self-governing, self-sustaining village communities – 67
guru/Lama	revered teacher – 52
Guru Rinpoche	celebrated eighth century Tibetan adept, also known as Padmasambhava – 52
Hinayana	'lesser vehicle' – a pejorative term used by Mahayanists for earlier schools of Buddhism – 49
Josei Toda	second president (1945 – 58) of Soka Gakkai – 24, 25
kama	sensual pleasure – 41
karma	intentional action or moral habit which produces future results, beneficial or harmful – 30, 34–36, 40, 61, 73
karuna	compassion – 50
kshanti	patience – 50
Kumarajiva	prodigious translator of Buddhist scriptures into Chinese in the fourth century – 25
Lotus Sutra	one of the key Mahayana sutras – 49
Madhyamika	school of Mahayana Buddhism founded by Nagarjuna – 49
Mahakashyapa	a key disciple who presided at the Council of Rajagriha – 20, 49
Mahaprajapati	the Buddha's aunt and foster mother – 11
Mahasamghikas	one of the two factions to emerge from the 'great schism' – 48

Mahasiddha	great adept in the tantric tradition – 52
Mahavira	contemporary of the Buddha and founder of Jainism – 11
Mahayana	the ‘great vehicle’ of reformist Buddhism – 49, 51–52
Mahinda	son of Ashoka and early missionary to Sri Lanka – xiv, 23
maitri	loving kindness (Sanskrit) – 50
mandala	circular design illustrating Buddhist teachings – 52
mantra	a sound or formula having magic power – 52
Mara	personification of death, desire and temptation – 16
Maurya	early Indian dynasty, centred on the state of Magadha – 22
Maya	the Buddha’s mother – 11
metta	loving kindness (Pali) – 67
Miao-Lo	pupil of Chih-I in eighth century China – 25, 71
moha	delusion – 42, 77
mudita	appreciative joy, happiness at the success of others – 50
mudra	ritual hand movement – 52
Nagarajuna	great scholar and major figure in the rise of Mahayana (thought to have lived in the second century) – 25, 49
Nichiren	thirteenth century Japanese sage and self-proclaimed ‘votary of the Lotus Sutra’ – 24, 32–33, 49
nirodha	the cessation of suffering – third noble truth – 42
nirvana	the goal of the Buddhist path, the state of enlightenment – 36, 37, 43
Padmasambhava	also known as Guru Rinpoche – a great Tibetan adept (thought to have lived in the eighth century) – 52
Pali	language of the texts of Theravada Buddhism – xiv, xv, 49
paramita	one the six ‘perfections’ or virtues of a bodhisattva – 50
parinirvana	the attainment of nirvana, especially used to refer to its final attainment after death – 37
pipal	the tree (<i>ficus religiosa</i>) under which the Buddha attained enlightenment – 15, 17, 25
prajna	insight, discriminating knowledge, wisdom – 43, 50
pratitya	dependent origination, conditioned genesis – 34
samutpada	
preta	a ‘hungry ghost’ – 31
punya	merit, the power of good karma to bring benefits – 35

Pure Land	predominantly east Asian school of Mahayana Buddhism – 49
raga	attachment, greed – 42
Rahula	the Buddha's son – 14
Saisho	scholar monk (also known as Dengyo) who helped transmit the Lotus Sutra to Japan in the eighth century – 25
samadhi	meditative trance, concentration – 43, 50
samsara	the opposite of nirvana, cyclic existence, literally 'flowing on' – 31, 36, 37, 43
samudaya	the arising of suffering – the second noble truth – 41
sangha	the Buddhist community of monks and nuns (and sometimes including laymen and laywomen) – 45–48, 53, 60, 76
Sanghamitta	daughter of Ashoka and early missionary to Sri Lanka – 23
Sangharakshita	aka Denis Lingwood, founder of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order – 8
Sanskrit	primary language of classical Indian literature – 25, 27, 49
Sarvodaya	Sri Lankan social movement – 8, 66, 67
Shramadana	
Shakyamuni	a name for the Buddha, meaning 'Sage of the Shakyas' – 10, 17
shamatha	calming meditation – 57
Shakyas	the Buddha's clan – 10
shila	morality, self-restraint – 43, 50
shramana	wandering religious mendicants, renunciants – 13–14
Shuddhodana	the Buddha's father – 10, 12
Sogyal Rinpoche	Tibetan émigré, author and teacher – 8
Soka Gakkai	Japanese lay Buddhist organisation in the tradition of Nichiren – 8, 24
Sthaviras	one of the two great factions at the time of the great schism – 48
stupa	dome-shaped religious monument
Sujata	the girl who fed the starving Siddhartha, before his enlightenment – 15
Suluk Sivaraksa	Thai reform advocate – 8
sutra	a discourse of the Buddha in mixed prose and verse form – 20, 25

tantra	Vajrayana Buddhist literature – 51–53, 58
Tathagatagarbha	‘Buddha nature’ – 50
Tenzin Gyatsu	the name of the current Dalai Lama – 8
Theravada	‘doctrine of the Elders’, the only fully surviving early Buddhist school – 48
Tich Nhat Hanh	Vietnamese Zen monk and pioneer of ‘engaged Buddhism’ – 8
trishna	craving, demanding desire – 41, 77
trilakshana	the ‘three marks of existence’: anitya, anatman, dukkha – 29
tripitaka	the ‘three baskets’ of the Buddha’s teachings – 21
Tsunesaburo Makiguchi	educational reformer and founding president of Soka Gakkai (died 1944) – 24–25
Udraka	one of the Buddha’s first meditation teachers – 14
Ramaputra	
Upali	disciple primarily responsible for recalling the Buddha’s teachings on proper monastic conduct – 20
upaya	‘skilful means’, the doctrine that teachings and practice can be adapted to circumstances – 69
upeksa	equanimity and impartiality – 50
Vajrayana	‘diamond vehicle’, Tibetan form of tantric or esoteric Buddhism – 51–53
Vasubandhu	co-founder of the Yogacara school with Asanga – 49
vibhava	the urge to destroy – 41
vihara	Buddhist monastery – 46
vinaya	monastic code of conduct – 21
vipashyana	insight meditation – 57
virya	resilience, vigorous effort – 50
Yashodhara	the Buddha’s wife – 14
Yogacara	school of Mahayana Buddhism founded by Asanga and Vasubandhu – 49
Zen	Japanese Buddhist school based on the attainment of enlightenment through direct meditative experience – 49, 53

- From evil comes suffering. With justice they are gone. If neither are there you're so purified, nothing remains. Understand how to let go first, then you will have no attachments. Do this, and you can confront anything. ~If you have anger – let it go.

- We cause joy as we arrive - sorrow as we go. So we may wander for just a while amongst mankind. Why do we not come and go, causing no joy or sorrow?

- Well you can't stay, this isn't your home.

- A piece of gold or mud – which is more useful? ~But what if I gave you a seed...never undervalue yourself, everyone has a purpose.

- Life is about connections, if you have connections you'll live happy.

- The way is not in the sky. The way is in the heart.
Buddha
- Heart, Sky

- An insincere and evil friend is more to be feared than a wild beast; a wild beast may wound your body, but an evil friend will wound your mind.

Buddha

- Friendship, Mind, Evil
- The tongue like a sharp knife... Kills without drawing blood.

Buddha

- Without, Blood, Tongue

➤

- Health is the greatest gift, contentment the greatest wealth, faithfulness the best relationship.

Buddha

- Inspirational, Greatest, Gift
- Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one who gets burned.

Buddha

- Anger, Someone, Else
- To enjoy good health, to bring true happiness to one's family, to bring peace to all, one must first discipline and control one's own mind. If a man can control his mind he can find the way to Enlightenment, and all wisdom and virtue will naturally come to him.

Buddha

- Parenting, Mind, True
- We are shaped by our thoughts; we become what we think. When the mind is pure, joy follows like a shadow that never leaves.

Buddha

- Mind, Thoughts, Joy

- You can search throughout the entire universe for someone who is more deserving of your love and affection than you are yourself, and that person is not to be found anywhere. You yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe deserve your love and affection.

Buddha

- Yourself, Someone, Person
- Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared.

Buddha

- Inspirational, Single, Candle
- However many holy words you read, however many you speak, what good will they do you if you do not act on upon them?

Buddha

- Words, Speak, Read
- It is better to conquer yourself than to win a thousand battles. Then the victory is yours. It cannot be taken from you, not by angels or by demons, heaven or hell.

Buddha

- Yourself, Better, Win
- Three things cannot be long hidden: the sun, the moon, and the truth.

Buddha

- Truth, Long, Cannot
- In the sky, there is no distinction of east and west; people create distinctions out of their own minds and then believe them to be true.

Buddha

- Believe, True, Minds

- Do not overrate what you have received, nor envy others. He who envies others does not obtain peace of mind.

Buddha

- Peace, Mind, Envy
- To be idle is a short road to death and to be diligent is a way of life; foolish people are idle, wise people are diligent.

Buddha

- Death, Wise, Short
- Better than a thousand hollow words, is one word that brings peace.

Buddha

- Peace, Better, Words
- The whole secret of existence is to have no fear. Never fear what will become of you, depend on no one. Only the moment you reject all help are you freed.

Buddha

- Fear, Help, Become
- There is nothing more dreadful than the habit of doubt. Doubt separates people. It is a poison that disintegrates friendships and breaks up pleasant relations. It is a thorn that irritates and hurts; it is a sword that kills.

Buddha

- Nothing, Doubt, Hurts
- Hatred does not cease by hatred, but only by love; this is the eternal rule.

Buddha

- Hatred, Rule, Eternal
- There are only two mistakes one can make along the road to truth; not going all the way, and not starting.

Buddha

- Truth, Mistakes, Two
- Just as a candle cannot burn without fire, men cannot live without a spiritual life.
Buddha
- Religion, Live, Spiritual
- I never see what has been done; I only see what remains to be done.
Buddha
- Done, Remains
- No one saves us but ourselves. No one can and no one may. We ourselves must walk the path.
Buddha
- To keep the body in good health is a duty... otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clear.
Buddha
- **wu**
Awakening/Enlightenment

无量心 生福报 无极限

wu liang xin sheng fu bao wu ji xian

An unconditional heart brings great blessings with no boundary

无极限 生息息 爱相连

wu ji xian sheng xi xi ai xiang lian

Without boundaries, our fragile lives are all connected through love

为何君视而不见 规矩定方圆

wei he jun shi er bu jian gui ju ding fang yuan

Why do you turn a blind eye and let yourselves be restricted by the status quo?

(规矩定方圆: literal meaning, the law/rule/custom decides what is square and what is round)

悟性 悟觉 悟空 心甘情愿

wu xing wu jue wu kong xin gan qing yuan

Willingly, I finally come to my senses to realize my character and my emptiness

放下 颠倒梦想 放下云烟

fang xia dian dao meng xiang fang xia yun yan
Let go of your inverted dreams, let go of the things which will one day fade away

放下 空欲色 放下悬念
fang xia kong yu se fang xia xuan nian
Let go of your leisure, desire, pleasure, and let go of suspense

多一物 却添了 太多危险
duo yi wu que tian le tai duo wei xian
With one more thing in hand, more danger will follow

少一物 贪嗔痴 会少一点
shao yi wu tan chen chi hui shao yi dian
With less things, greed will lessen as well

若是缘 再苦味也是甜
ruo shi yuan zai ku wei ye shi tian
1 If this is fate, no matter how bitter life can
be you are always contented
(something like the saying, when life gives you lemons make lemonade out of it)

若无缘 藏爱 在心田
ruo wu yuan cang ai zai xin tian
Yet if it isn't, just bury this love in your heart

尘世 藕断还丝连 回首一瞬间
chen shi ou duan hai si lian hui shou yi shun jian
In this live of ours, everything's interconnected, and it takes only a split second to look back
(藕断丝连: literal meaning, when the lotus root breaks there are still a lot of silk threads
connecting the two broken pieces. When you want to get rid of something, in this case it's your
past, it's not that easy because there are evidences of your life before, just like those "silk
threads")

种颗善因 陪你走好每一天
zhong ke shan yin pei ni zou hao mei yi tian
Let me plant a seed of good will and walk down this road of life together with you

唯有 心无挂碍 成就大愿
wei you xin wu gua ai cheng jiu da yuan
Only someone whose heart is not bounded can accomplish great things

唯有 心无故 妙不可言
wei you xin wu gu miao bu ke yan

Only someone whose heart does not have a story is indigenous above all
(because, everyone has a story of their own, it's very rare for someone to not have a story)

算天算地 算尽了 从前
suan tian suan di suan jin liao cong qian
I've considered heaven and earth, and I've considered everything from my past
(算: literal meaning, count)

算不出 生死 会在哪一天
suan bu chu sheng si hui zai na yi tian
Yet I still cannot make out the days of life and death

勿生恨 点化虚空的眼
wu sheng hen dian hua xu kong de yan
Do not hate your eyes which deceive you

勿生怨 欢喜 不遥远
wu sheng yuan huan xi bu yao yuan
Do not resent, for happiness is not far away

缠绕 欲望的思念 善恶一瞬间
chan rao yu wang de si nian shan e yi shun jian
As thoughts are built around your desires, it only takes a split second to decide between good and evil

心怀忏悔 陪你走好每一天
xin huai can hui pei ni zou hao mei yi tian
With a heart of repentance, let me walk down this road of life together with you

再牢的谎言 却逃不过天眼
zai lao de huang yan que tao bu guo tian yan
No matter how firm your lies may be, they cannot escape the eyes of God

明日之前 心流离更远
ming ri zhi qian xin liu li geng yuan
Before dawn, your heart is being dragged further away

浮云霎那间 障眼 人心渐离间
fu yun sha na jian zhang yan ren xin jian li jian
As the clouds are able to blind our eyes in an instant, so do human hearts change

集苦连连 不断的出现
ji ku lian lian bu duan de chu xian
Bitterness have been accumulated since long before, and is bound to keep coming

无量心 生福报 无极限

wu liang xin sheng fu bao wu ji xian

An unconditional heart brings great blessings with no boundary

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fan ren que shi er bu jian gui ju ding fang yuan

Yet human beings turn a blind eye and let themselves be restricted by the status quo

悟性 悟觉 悟空 心甘情愿

wu xing wu jue wu kong xin gan qing yuan

Willingly, I finally come to my senses to realize my character and my emptiness

简简单单 陪你走好每一天

jian jian dan dan pei ni zou hao mei yi tian

In pure simplicity, let me walk down this road of life together with you



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