



Key Question: Could the Buddha’s teachings make the world a better place?

Key Knowledge

General Facts about Buddhism

There are more than 500 million Buddhists in the world.

Buddhists don't kill animals, and they eat a vegetarian diet.

All living beings are being treated with equal respect.

Mahayana is the most practiced branch of Buddhism, and it's most common in China.



Buddhism started in India over 2,500 years ago. Buddhists follow the teachings of a man called **Siddhattha Gotama**. He became known as the **Buddha**, which means 'enlightened'.

What do Buddhists believe?

Siddhattha Gotama was a prince who lived a life of luxury. When he was 29, Siddhattha went outside his palace and saw people suffering for the first time.

He decided to leave his palace and live among holy men in search of truth. His search took him six years, but he became enlightened while meditating under a fig tree.

Following this, Siddhattha became known as the Buddha, which means the 'awakened' or 'enlightened' one. From then on, he dedicated his life to spreading his teachings.



Key Vocabulary

Buddhism - Buddhism is the main religion in many Asian countries. It is a religion about suffering and the need to get rid of it. A key concept of Buddhism is Nirvana, **the most enlightened**, and blissful state that one can achieve. A state without suffering.

Buddha - Buddha's teachings are known as “**dharma**.” He taught that wisdom, kindness, patience, generosity and compassion were important virtues. Specifically, all Buddhists live by five moral precepts, which prohibit: Killing living things.

Tipitaka - The Buddhist scriptures are known as the **Tipitaka** which means 'three baskets'. This is because the original writings were made on palm leaves and stored in baskets.

The Tipitaka contains the teachings of the Buddha and his companions, comments on those teachings, as well as rules for monks. Buddhists call the teachings of the Buddha **dharma** which means ‘truth’.

Temple – This is where Buddhists go to pray. When entering a temple, Buddhists will take off their shoes, put their hands together and bow to the image of the Buddha. They may also use prayer beads called **malas**.

