

Buddhist Pilgrimage

an Indian spiritual journey

INTRODUCTION

A Buddhist Pilgrimage is a one-hour Clear Vision DVD telling the story of a group of western Buddhists as they journey around a number of Buddhist holy sites in India.

The footage is mainly from the pilgrims' own video diary.

The video, teacher's notes and photocopiable pupil information sheets provide information about the pilgrimage sites and their significance.

Story sections and extracts from sacred texts establish the sites' significance.

The activities and discussion topics invite young people to reflect on themes raised by the material. Many are interchangeable between video sections.

This resource is for a wide age range. It is expected that teachers will use the video sections very selectively, depending on syllabus and pupils' requirements.

Video material is presented on the DVD in two formats:

1. As a one-hour programme, playable on a DVD player. You can pause briefly for class discussion of the question at the end of each section, or for more in-depth work based on the handbook material, available on the disk as pdf files. To view pdfs you need a computer with or without interactive whiteboard and Adobe Reader software.

2. In six PowerPoint presentations, covering Preparation, Looking Back and the four main pilgrimage sites associated with the life of the Buddha. These consist of video clips and slides covering the main points and questions. You can edit these to make tailor-made presentations. More detailed information related to each video section can be found in this handbook, also available on the disk as pdf files.

To view the PowerPoint presentations you need a computer with or without interactive whiteboard, and Microsoft PowerPoint 2003 or an equivalent programme.

The Clear Vision Trust is a Buddhist charity working in the audio-visual media, producing teaching resources to support the presentation of Buddhism in the classroom. Clear Vision, the Manchester Buddhist Centre and the Indian and western pilgrims featured in this resource are all associated with the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO). (See p.2)

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO)

The Manchester Buddhist Centre (MBC) pilgrims featured in this resource are members of the western Buddhist movement known as the FWBO. In India, the FWBO is known as the Trailokya Bauddha Mahasangha Sahayak Gana (TBMSG).

The FWBO is a new Buddhist movement, founded in London in 1967 by the Venerable Uryen Sangharakshita, a Londoner newly returned from 20 years in India as a monk in the Theravada tradition.

Drawing on the Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions, the FWBO seeks to develop new ways of practising the Buddha's teachings in the modern world. It has no nuns or monks; ordination into the Western Buddhist Order itself is a recognition of deep commitment to the Three Jewels (the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha), which does not involve the adoption of any particular appearance or lifestyle. Women and men receive identical ordination; all are committed to living by the Buddhist ethical precepts to the best of their ability.

There are now more than 80 FWBO centres around the world and many more small groups. Twenty of these centres are in India, where at least 10 million people have converted to Buddhism since the 1950s. (See pp.10-13)

The re-discovery of India's Buddhist past

The presence of monuments set up by the Buddhist Emperor Ashoka (c. 304-232 BCE) shows that sites associated with the life of the Buddha were regarded as sacred within a couple of hundred years of the Buddha's death. They are also mentioned in the journals of Buddhist travellers from other lands. However, by the 13th century Indian Buddhism had been wiped out by Muslim invasions; without anyone to preserve the Buddha's teachings or life story, knowledge of Buddhism and its holy sites died out.

In India's British colonial era, a number of British and European amateur archaeologists and linguists set about the task of uncovering India's Buddhist past. This story is well covered by *The Buddha and the Sahibs*, Charles Allen (John Murray, 2002 ISBN 0 7195 5425)

The places associated with the Buddha's life have only become popular and officially preserved sites of pilgrimage since the mid-20th century, with growing ease

of travel, the re-birth of Indian Buddhism (see p.10-13) and the growth in western Buddhism. For a pilgrimage guide see *Middle Land, Middle Way*, Ven. S. Dhammika (Buddhist Publication Society 1999 ISBN 955 24 0197 6)

The Buddha speaks

He addresses his cousin and companion, Ananda:

"There are four places, Ananda, that a pious person should visit and look upon with feelings of reverence. What are the four?"

"Here the Tathagata was born!" This, Ananda, is a place that a pious person should visit and look upon with feelings of reverence.

"Here the Tathagata became fully Enlightened in unsurpassed, supreme Enlightenment!" This, Ananda... "Here the Tathagata set rolling the unexcelled Wheel of the Dhamma!" This, Ananda...

"Here the Tathagata passed away into the state of Nibbana in which no element of clinging remains!" This, Ananda...

"These, Ananda, are the four places that a pious person should visit and look upon with feelings of reverence. And truly there will come to these places, Ananda, pious bhikkhus and bhikkhunis, laymen and laywomen, reflecting: 'Here the Tathagata was born! Here the Tathagata became fully Enlightened in unsurpassed, supreme Enlightenment! Here the Tathagata set rolling the unexcelled Wheel of the Dhamma! Here the Tathagata passed away into the state of Nibbana...!'"

From the *Digha Nikaya*

Tathagata: literally the "thus-gone one"; the Buddha
Bhikkhu/ni: a wandering holy man/woman; a monk/nun
Dhamma (*dharma*, Sanskrit): the Truth
Nibbana (*nirvana*, Sanskrit): Enlightenment

Buddhism and pilgrimage

Buddhist pilgrimage is a choice, not an obligation. The traditional Indian term, in Sanskrit, is *dharma yatra*. *Dharma* (*Dhamma*, Pali) refers to the Buddha's teachings and *yatra* means a journey or expedition.

The scriptures show the Buddha recommending just four pilgrimage sites, connected with significant events in his own life and teaching. (See above.) However, Buddhists may also make pilgrimages from one place of worship to another; to sites associated with other events in the Buddha's life or those of revered teachers; or to the sites of historic Buddhist events.

Preparation

TEACHER'S NOTES I

QUESTIONS I

The pilgrims prepared for many months, led by Mokshapriya, the chair and spiritual leader of the Manchester Buddhist Centre, an experienced traveller in India.

He organised the group's travel, helped by Indian Buddhist friends. In their monthly meetings they strengthened their friendships, discussed practical matters, and learned about the history and geography of the holy sites and their spiritual significance.

The pilgrims describe a number of reasons for going. In particular, **Sattvadhika** refers to an experience in Bethlehem, *witnessing* the shared faith of the Christians there, and wanting to *experience* that as a Buddhist. In the Bodhgaya section of the video, she says she found this. (See p.26)

Ratnasagara says he wanted to take his mother, because Indians regard taking one's parents on pilgrimage as "one of the best karmas". *Karma* refers to the Buddhist teaching that kind, generous actions have beneficial results for oneself and others. (Negative actions will have corresponding results.) He also says that a pilgrimage is not a holiday. It requires preparation of mind and body.

"Spiritual"?

One Buddhist definition of spiritual life might be a life devoted to the cultivation of greater and greater awareness, ultimately leading to the perfection of wisdom and compassion.

Going on retreat

Once in India, a three-day retreat in the countryside gives them time to rest and acclimatise. Their retreat leader, Suvajra, is a Scottish FWBO Buddhist who teaches TBMSG Buddhists in India. The pilgrims meditate, worship and reflect on what they are about to do. He encourages them not to fall into unconscious habits of behaviour as they travel, but to use the journey as an opportunity for mindfulness.

Change and fixed self-view

This is because Buddhists believe that with mindfulness - awareness - we can all gradually give up unhelpful, limiting habits and become more confident and adaptable to everyday change. One of the conditions that stops us changing is having a fixed idea of the kind of people we, or other people, are. This relates to the teaching of *anatta* (*anatman*, Sanskrit): the Buddhist belief that there is no fixed self or unchanging soul.



Discuss before viewing

Think about a time when you travelled a long way.

- Why did you go?
- How did you feel before you left?

Discuss after viewing

- How would you prepare for an important journey?
- How might a pilgrimage be different from a holiday?
- What is a "spiritual" journey?

Finish the sentence

"If I were going on a long journey, I would take...
I would be worried about...
I would be looking forward to...
I would be happy to leave behind...
I would be sad about..."

Preparation

INFORMATION I

ACTIVITIES I



The pilgrims met for over a year before they went to India. They met once a month to talk about practical things like injections, mosquito nets and what to wear. They took turns to give presentations about the places they would visit. What would the places look like? What had happened there long ago that made them so important for Buddhists today?

Their meetings also helped them to become better friends. This was very important if they were going to spend several weeks together all the time, looking after each other.

The pilgrims went on their journey because they wanted to see where their hero, the Buddha, had lived. Some of them had always wanted to go, but waited till they had some friends to go with.

After they arrived in India they spent three days on *retreat*. A retreat is a chance to meditate, study and worship, on your own or with other people. It is usually held somewhere quiet where there's no traffic, television, newspapers or other distractions. It can last one day or several years! Usually it's a week or so.

Suvajra leads the pilgrims' retreat. He's a Scottish Buddhist who teaches Buddhists in India. The pilgrims already have all the clothes, tickets and passports they need for their journey. Suvajra helps them prepare their hearts.

He gives a talk encouraging them to be *mindful* - aware - as they travel. Of course they want to notice everything there is to see, but Suvajra suggests they also keep asking themselves what it means. He reminds them that the Buddha said that we can change. We are not stuck with our habits.

Instead of just following their habits, Suvajra suggests the pilgrims might like to try "reflecting on self" - or noticing how they feel and behave. Someone who is usually active might like to try being a bit more thoughtful and still sometimes. Someone who is generally quiet could sometimes try being more active.

Activities

- The pilgrims are travelling together, but each of them is having a personal journey. Write about or draw a cartoon strip about a trip you made with other pupils. Explain how you prepared, what happened, how you felt, and anything you learned from it. Compare your story with other people's. How are they similar and different?

- In pairs, talk about the kind of person you are most of the time. Maybe you are usually quiet, or loud; maybe you normally do things in groups, or on your own. Think about trying the opposite. As a class or in small groups, tell everyone what you've decided to try out for the week. At the end of the week discuss how it's gone.

Ancient caves

TEACHER'S NOTES 2

QUESTIONS 2

There is a long Buddhist tradition of rock-hewn caves in which Buddhist monks or nuns lived, studied, meditated and worshipped. Probably the most famous are at Dunhuang, on the Silk Road in China. Osama Bin Laden is thought to have hidden in ancient Buddhist caves in Afghanistan.

Bhaja

The 18 caves at Bhaja may originally have been a dwelling for nuns. They were cut from the rock in 200 BCE, 300 years after the Buddha's time.

Decorated with carvings, their central feature is a large stupa, a funeral monument shaped like an inverted bell. In the earliest phase of Buddhism, before Buddha figures were made, such monuments served to represent the Buddha.

The group sit, chant and light candles by the stupa. They chant *Namo tassa bhagavato arahato samma sambuddhasa* (Pali): "Homage to him, the blessed one, the worthy one, the perfectly Enlightened one" and *Om mani padme hum* (Sanskrit): "Homage to the jewel in the heart of the lotus" (the mantra of supreme compassion, associated with the mythical figure and bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara).

The caves are still used for meditation and worship, particularly by Buddhists from the nearby TBMSG retreat centre. (See pp.2 & 10)

Ellora

The 39 caves at Ellora are near the city of Aurangabad, in western India. They were cut in the 7th century CE, as a monastery for Buddhist monks. Hindus and Jains later added their temples to the complex (not shown).

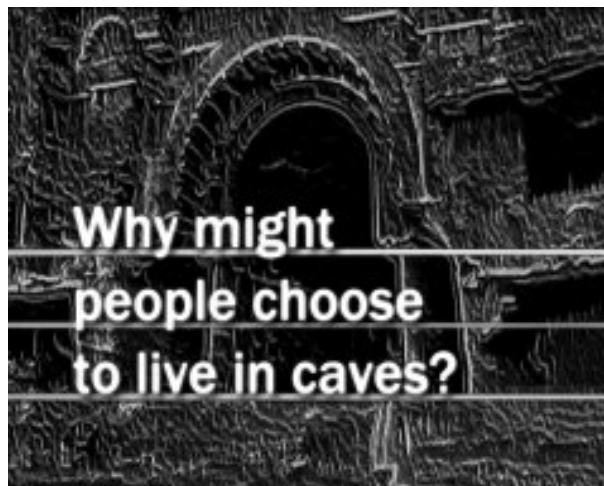
We hear chanting: *Buddham saranam gacchami* (Pali): "I go for refuge to the Buddha."

A life away from "the world"

These monks and nuns chose to live a secluded life. Away from the distractions of family life in village and town, they could study and meditate more easily.

Monastics vs. hunters

You might like to compare these cave decorations with those made by hunter-gather communities in places such as Lascaux in France. Both painted the things most important to them, maybe ritually to bring about an increase in those things in their lives; more food; more devotion and blessing.



Discuss before viewing

- What would it be like to live in a cave? How might it feel and look?
- How might you make it feel like home?

Discuss after viewing

- Why might people choose to live in caves?
- Why might they want to live far away from villages or towns?
- How do these cave decorations compare with those of hunters painting animals?
- Do these caves remind you of anywhere? (eg, cathedrals)

Ancient caves

INFORMATION 2

ACTIVITIES 2

The pilgrims go to look at some ancient caves. These caves were carved out of the rock hundreds of years after the Buddha's death, so the Buddha never came here, but the pilgrims want to see where other Buddhists - people a bit like them - lived long ago.

Perhaps it's hard to imagine people living in caves. However, India is a very hot country, so it might have been enjoyable living somewhere sheltered from the sun.

Monks and nuns often choose to live somewhere simple, away from the busy life of families in towns and cities. This gives them more time and peace for meditation and studying the Buddha's teachings.



The people who lived and worshipped here decorated their caves with carvings and statues of the things they loved most. Some of the carvings are of Buddha-figures; others are of animals. Before people began to make statues of the Buddha, they used other images as symbols of the Buddha: sometimes a pair of footprints - or a lion, or an elephant.

namo tassa bhagavato arahato samma sambuddhasa

Homage to him, the blessed one, the worthy one,
the perfectly Enlightened one.

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय
om ma ni pad me hum

Activity

● In groups or individually, make drawings from one or more 3-d Buddha rupas (figures). Using a grid, enlarge your drawings into paintings the height of the ceiling. Stick them up around the classroom for some time. How does it feel, living and working with them?

Travelling together

TEACHER'S NOTES 3

QUESTIONS 3

Transport

The pilgrims fly from Manchester to Mumbai (Bombay) and fly back from Delhi to London Heathrow, where they are met by a coach taking them to Manchester. During their time in India, they travel by train, coach, boat and bicycle rickshaw, and on foot.

Food

The majority of the world's Buddhists are not vegetarian. The Buddha himself, like many monks and nuns in the Theravada tradition today, was not vegetarian. Being dependent on what they are given by lay supporters, they practise complete renunciation of choice over what they eat.

However, many Buddhists choose to be vegetarian, as an expression of the First Precept: to abstain from harming living beings and cultivate loving-kindness.

The Manchester pilgrims are all vegetarian. They eat at roadside teahouses, at the homes of Indian friends and at Buddhist temples and guesthouses, or they picnic.

Hygiene

For hygiene reasons it is customary in India to eat only with the right hand, even if you are left-handed; Indian toilets are provided with a small tap and jug rather than toilet paper and the left hand is used for washing oneself.

Hotels

The pilgrims share rooms in cheap hotels; sometimes at guesthouses for pilgrims, run by Buddhists. (We see them outside a Chinese-run temple guesthouse.)

Looking after each other

The pilgrims felt they looked after each other very well. Ratnasagara describes them as a "mobile spiritual community", on a "quest", "plunging into inspiration".

Perhaps we could define a spiritual community as a group of people helping each other to develop greater and greater awareness; friends moving towards perfect wisdom and compassion.



Discuss before viewing

- Have you been on a long journey by road or train?
- What did you do as the time went by?
- How did you feel?

Discuss after viewing

- How do *you* look after each other?
- What is a spiritual community?
- Could your class be a spiritual community?
- What is a quest?
- Could a lesson be a quest?
- What is inspiration?

Travelling together

INFORMATION 3

ACTIVITIES 3

On their long journeys by train and coach, the pilgrims have lots of time to look out of the window, or sleep, talk, play cards, read or study the Dharma (the Buddha's teachings).

Some of them are very old friends. Some don't know each other at all, but make new friendships as they travel together. Things go wrong: people get ill, or there is sometimes not much food. Through it all, they look after each other and try to be as aware as possible: they try to notice how they are feeling and behaving, and how others are feeling.

On the video, Ratnasagara says they are a "mobile spiritual community". This means they are a group of friends, travelling while living by the teachings of the Buddha, helping each other to become wiser, kinder and more aware.



A journey usually means travelling by land, sea or air. However, we can also think about our journey through life, through time; through the things which happen to us and the way we feel.

Activities

● Imagine this lesson or day is a spiritual journey you are making together with the rest of your class. As class, brainstorm the following:

- Where are you going?
- What is your quest?
- How might you help each other?

- At the end of the lesson or day, look back.
- Did anything go wrong?
- What did you discover?
- How did you help each other?
- Did you reach your goal?

● Make a picture or a map showing your day as a road leading to your goal. The road may be straight, flat or windy and hilly, through all the events and discoveries of your day.

Meeting Indian Buddhists

TEACHER'S NOTES 4

QUESTIONS 4

Buddhists east and west

One of the objects of this pilgrimage was for these western Buddhists to visit fellow Buddhists in India.

Although part of the same worldwide movement known as the FWBO or TBMSG (see p.3), these Buddhists come from radically different backgrounds: while all these western pilgrims are white, and most of them middle class, most of their Indian friends converted to Buddhism to escape the prejudice associated with membership of the lowest caste in Indian Hindu society.

People formerly known as Untouchable now often refer to themselves as Dalit (literally, “crushed” or “oppressed”). Discrimination against Dalits became illegal under the constitution of the newly-independent and secular state of India in 1947. However, they still suffer prejudice and violence: they are expected to live in slums outside village boundaries, working as sweepers and toilet cleaners; they may be excluded from schools. Many high-caste Hindus believe they are spiritually polluted by the sight of a Dalit.

On the video, Ratnasagara says the very poor Dalit Buddhists feel proud to be associated with comparatively rich western Buddhists; it's morale-boosting that Buddhism is not just for the poor.

Dalits are members of other Buddhist groups too, and have converted to Islam and Christianity. (Dalit theology speaks of Christ as a Dalit.)

Dr Ambedkar

Dalit Buddhists in general are sometimes referred to as “Ambedkarite” Buddhists after the man who led the mass conversion movement of 1956, Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891-1956). (See picture on p.13.)

Born Untouchable, becoming a lawyer and architect of independent India's constitution, dying as its first law minister, Ambedkar is a spiritual and political hero for Dalit Buddhists. He is responsible for what is often termed the “Dhamma Revolution”. (*Dhamma*, Pali or *Dharma*, Sanskrit, both refer to the teachings of the Buddha.)

What's the link?

The FWBO was founded in London in 1967 by the Venerable Sangharakshita, an English Buddhist who had lived as a monk in India from the 1940s to 1960s. After the death of Dr Ambedkar in 1956,



Discuss before viewing

- How do you feel when other people have things you want but can't have?

Discuss after viewing

- The pilgrims have more money than their Indian friends. From the video, can you tell how the Indian Buddhists feel about them?

Sangharakshita taught many of the newly-converted Dalit Buddhists about the Dharma, so that they could transform their lives and their self-view as oppressed people.

(Although Dr Ambedkar had studied Buddhism and other religions in depth, for most of his followers conversion was a formal politico-spiritual gesture; as yet they knew very little of Buddhism, apart from its repudiation of caste.)

In the 1980s Sangharakshita asked some of his senior British students to help these new Buddhists establish an Indian wing of the FWBO: the TBMSG. TBMSG Buddhists regard Sangharakshita as second to Dr Ambedkar.

TBMSG and FWBO Buddhists share a devotion to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, and a high regard for Sangharakshita as their teacher and founder.

Social projects

TBMSG Buddhists run centres teaching meditation and Buddhism. Funded by UK Buddhist charity the Karuna Trust, they also run a range of social projects helping the poor of many faith backgrounds. In the aftermath of the tsunami of 2005, they ensured relief supplies reached Dalit communities denied aid because of their low social status.

www.karuna.org.uk

Seating

In India it is customary to sit on the floor, and, in places of worship, usually in single sex groups. Their visitors are much more used to sitting on chairs. Besides, they are honoured guests and more easily visible on chairs.

Dress

The western pilgrims dress modestly, as expected in India, and suitably for the heat. For the women this means wearing saris or the long blouse and trousers known as a *shalwar kameez*, with a scarf across the chest.

Committed Buddhists in the TBMSG often wear pale blue clothing at Buddhist gatherings. A number of the western pilgrims wore these too. On public occasions ordained

people in the TBMSG and FWBO wear *kesas*, or short knotted white stoles, embroidered with the symbol of the Three Jewels. Those who have chosen celibacy wear orange-yellow *kesas*.

Sensitivities

Care should be taken when discussing the question of the status of Dalit people. Many Hindus believe strongly in the traditional right ordering of society according to caste and may be offended by this topic; other Hindus are committed to reform.

There are small communities of Ambedkarite Buddhists in Britain, in particular in west London and the Midlands.

Meeting Indian Buddhists

INFORMATION 4

ACTIVITIES 4

The Manchester pilgrims and their Indian Buddhist friends are all members of the same Buddhist group (*sangha*) as the pilgrims. They all follow the Buddha, but they come from completely different countries.

Most of the pilgrims don't have a lot of money. They had to save up for their journey to India. However, their Indian Buddhist friends are some of the poorest people in the world. They couldn't possibly save up to go to

Britain. (When the Indian Buddhists come to Britain, the British Buddhists save up and pay for their plane tickets.) Most of them come from the lowest caste, or class, in India. They used to be called "Untouchables", but now they prefer to be known as "Dalits".

However different they are, all these people share a love for the Three Jewels: the Buddha, Dharma (his teachings) and Sangha (community of Buddhists).

Activities

- Imagine you are Indian Buddhists writing a report on the Manchester Buddhists' visit for your Buddhist centre newsletter. In words and pictures, describe what happened and how you felt meeting these Buddhists from a different country.
- Did you find anything strange or different about them?
- What was it like, showing them round the area where you live?
- How did you feel after giving the huge party to welcome them?
- What did you all have in common?
- Imagine you are one of the pilgrims, making a postcard to send to a Buddhist friend at home. On one side draw a picture of something interesting or beautiful you saw in India. On the other side, tell your friend about visiting the Indian Buddhists. Tell them about things like:
 - where the Indian Buddhists live
 - the most unusual or enjoyable thing you noticed
 - how you felt visiting people who live so differently
 - what you all have in common

Nagpur a new pilgrimage site

TEACHER'S NOTES 5

QUESTIONS 5

In Nagpur, on the morning of 14th October 1956, Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (see opposite) recited the Three Refuges and Five Precepts (see opposite), followed by a crowd of 380,000 Dalit women, children and men.

Many more did the same elsewhere; when Ambedkar died only seven weeks later, three quarters of a million Dalit people had become Buddhists.

Though hundreds of thousands more Dalit people have converted in other places, and continue to do so, Nagpur's *Diksha Bhumi*, or Conversion Ground, remains a holy site for the new Buddhists of India.

The traditional formula of words for becoming a Buddhist is to "take refuge" in the Three Jewels - the Buddha, his teachings and the community of Buddhists - particularly all those who have gained Enlightenment. It would not be appropriate for non-Buddhists to recite the Refuges.

Discuss before viewing

- Pilgrimage sites do not have to be old.
- Where might you go to remember a recent important event?
 - What is a "great" person?
 - Do you know anyone "great"?
 - Why do you think they are great?

Dr Ambedkar speaks

"Life should be great rather than long."

"Learn to live in this world with self-respect. You should always cherish some ambition of doing something in this world... All things are now possible because of your being able to participate in the politics and legislature of your country."

"My social philosophy may be said to be enshrined in three words: liberty, equality and fraternity... My philosophy has roots in religion and not in political science. I have derived them from the teachings of my master, the Buddha."

"The world cannot be reformed except by the reformation of the mind of man, and the mind of the world."



Although Buddhists believe the **Five Precepts** describe the natural behaviour of an Enlightened person, they express universal values. Non-Buddhists could try living by them, if they wished.

Discuss after viewing

- What's been the most important event in your life, or your family's life?
- What does it mean, to be "part of history"?
- Would you rather be called "Untouchable" or "Dalit"? What's the difference? (See p. 10)

Discuss the quotations

- What is a "great" life?
- Would you rather have a "great" life or a long one?
- What kinds of behaviour cause happiness?
- What kinds of qualities would you need if you wanted to help *other people* understand how to live kindly and truthfully?
- What is self-respect?
- Do you "cherish an ambition to do something in this world?"
- How could you take part in the "politics and legislature of your country"? Would it make any difference?

The Buddha speaks

"Great people do what leads to the welfare and happiness of many people.

They help many people to understand what is admirable and ethical.

They are aware of their thoughts: they can follow helpful thoughts and not follow unhelpful thoughts."

Adapted from the *Anguttara Nikaya*

Nagpur a new pilgrimage site

INFORMATION 5

ACTIVITIES 5

In Nagpur, on 14th October 1956, 380,000 Dalit children, women, and men gathered in a large field for a ceremony at which they became Buddhists. Their hero, Dr Ambedkar, declared that he was now a Buddhist. Then it was their turn. They chanted the Three Refuges and committed themselves to living by the Five Precepts.



Since then, hundreds of thousands more Dalits have converted to Buddhism in many places. The original field in Nagpur is known as the *Diksha Bhumi*, or Conversion Ground. It has become a holy place for the new Buddhists of India. They have built an enormous temple there, shaped like a stupa, or memorial.

The Three Refuges

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

The Five Precepts

Behaviour to avoid	Behaviour to develop
harming living beings	loving-kindness
taking the not-given	generosity
sexual misconduct	stillness and contentment
false speech	truthful speech
taking intoxicants that cloud the mind	mindfulness, or awareness

People becoming Buddhists recite the “Three Refuges”, to show that from now on they will place their trust in the Buddha, his teachings and the community of Buddhists.

Here are the Five Precepts.

- Could you live by them?
- Which would you find hardest to keep?

Activities

- Make up a play or give a presentation about someone you consider a “great” person. Explain what they have done and the personal qualities they have shown. They may be someone from your neighbourhood, or a famous person. You could look up information and pictures on the internet and make a PowerPoint presentation.
- Imagine you are your head teacher, advertising a job for a new teacher in your school. You are looking for someone who can help others learn to live well. Write and design an advert describing the kind of person you are looking for.

- Finish the sentences
“To live a “great” life I think people need to...”
“I think X is ‘great’ because...”

- In pairs or groups, each choose one of the Five Precepts and commit yourself to do your best to live by it for a week. (Remember, you can only do your best. Buddhists believe you would have to be a Buddha to get things right all the time!) At the end of the week, see how you got on. How did it feel? Did other people notice? What effect has it had on you or others?

Sravasti

TEACHER'S NOTES 6

QUESTIONS 6

The Buddha had been Enlightened for 20 years when he and his followers started visiting Sravasti (Savatthi, Pali) during the annual rainy season. They sheltered in a park later known as the *Jetavana*, or Jeta's Grove, after Prince Jeta, from whom it was bought as a gift for the Buddha, by a rich merchant named Anathapindika.

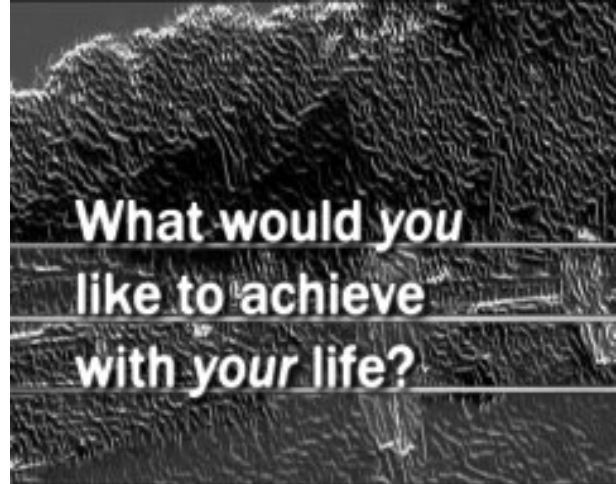
Among the ruins are those of shelters believed to have been occupied by the Buddha himself and by the reformed serial killer Angulimala. The Jeta Grove is the scene of many stories including the Buddha's meeting with the young mother Kisa, who could not accept that her baby son was dead. It is said that most of the Buddha's teachings in the scriptures collectively known as the *Tipitaka* or Pali Canon were first delivered here.

Sravasti is in the modern state of Uttar Pradesh. Knowledge of the whereabouts of this ancient city was lost until 1863.

The story of Angulimala (in the video) and the story of Anathapindika (opposite), both tell of people profoundly affected by a meeting, or the prospect of a meeting, with a person considered supremely wise.

Did the Buddha know everything?

See p. 16 for consideration of the nature of the Buddha's wisdom.



Discuss before viewing

- Do you know anyone wise?

Discuss after viewing

- What would you like to achieve with your life?
- Have you ever watched someone and thought, "I could do that!"?
- Have you ever stood where someone famous once stood?
- Where would you go to remember someone special?
- What is a wise person?
- What kind of things would they know?
- Would they know everything?
- If they knew the answers to all questions, would they tell?
- What would you ask a wise person?
- Do you know anyone you consider wise?

Guided visualisation

Get the class to sit comfortably or lie on the floor, eyes closed. In a gentle voice, guide them through a visualisation where all the pupils are Anathapindika or Angulimala. (See opposite.)

Anathapindika visualisation

Invite pupils to imagine how they would feel, looking forward to meeting this great person, and the fear of walking through the dark jungle. What would keep them going? What question would they ask when they got there? When they ask their question, encourage them to wait patiently. Does an answer occur to them?

Angulimala visualisation

Invite pupils to imagine how they would feel as Angulimala, finding that his usual violent ways of doing things don't work - meeting someone who is too strong, patient and fearless to be scared into doing what he wants.

Sravasti

INFORMATION 6

ACTIVITIES 6

Twenty years after his Enlightenment, the Buddha and his followers started visiting Sravasti during the rainy season. They sheltered in huts built for them in a park.



killing and become a monk. Many stories about the Buddha took place here.

The Buddha's friends included Angulimala, the fierce robber who had decided to give up

The park was later known as "Jeta's Grove" because it was bought from Prince Jeta as a present for the Buddha - by a rich businessman named Anathapindika.

The story of Anathapindika

Anathapindika, a rich merchant from Sravasti, went to visit his brother in Rajgir. Normally his brother would stop everything to welcome him, but this time he found his brother very busy preparing an enormous feast.

Was it a wedding, he wondered? Was the king visiting? "No", said his brother, "I've invited the Buddha and his followers to eat here tomorrow."

Anathapindika couldn't believe his ears. "Did you say, 'the Buddha?!'", he asked. "I did say 'the Buddha'", his brother replied. "What? The Buddha?!" "Yes, I told you", said his brother.

"Yes, but did you really mean the Buddha?!" "YES! The BUDDHA!!" His brother was fed up. "What?" said Anathapindika, "You mean, there is an Enlightened person - a completely wise person - right here, and I can actually meet him?"

"Look", said his brother, **really** fed up now. "He lives in the jungle. You can't meet him right now, but you can go and visit him first thing tomorrow morning. Now go to bed!"

Anathapindika was so excited at the idea of meeting an Enlightened person that he couldn't sleep. He woke up three times in the night, thinking it was already time to get up. Not to waste time, he left before dawn and hurried out of the city in to the jungle.

Suddenly he was very scared. It was dark in the jungle.

He summoned up all his courage. He really did want to meet the perfectly wise man.

Finally, he saw the Buddha in a clearing in the trees. The Buddha welcomed him and they sat down to talk. He taught Anathapindika all about the way to happiness and the Way Things Really Are: about how everything changes and nothing lasts for ever.

Anathapindika was so impressed, he asked the Buddha and his friends to come and spend part of every year near his town, Sravasti. The Buddha agreed and Anathapindika went home to look for a piece of land where the Buddha could live.

The best place he could find was a park, but it belonged to the local prince, Jeta. Prince Jeta didn't want to sell his park. Anathapindika kept offering him more and more money. The prince wasn't interested.

A while later, the prince was amazed to find Anathapindika's servants covering the land with gold coins. "This must be really important!" he thought. He gave in and sold the land.

Anathapindika and Prince Jeta set their servants to build shelters. The Buddha and his monks sheltered here during the rainy season for many years.

Adapted from the *Culavagga Sutta* and *Samyutta Nikaya*.

Activities

- Imagine you are Anathapindika. Tell your story in writing or a short one-person play. Why do you want to meet the Buddha? What is it you really want?
- Turn the story above into a play. meeting Angulimala.

- Imagine you are the Buddha. How do you feel about Angulimala as you see him coming towards you? Are you at all frightened, or not? If you are frightened, do you manage to stay calm anyway? Why? What do you want him to learn?

Kapilavastu

TEACHER'S NOTES 7

QUESTIONS 7

Kapilavastu (Kapilavatthu, Pali) was the capital of the land ruled by the Shakya clan, where Siddhartha spent his first twenty-five years, and where he saw the Four Sights.

At modern-day Piprahwa there is a broad stupa, or reliquary mound, first excavated by British amateur archeologists in 1897 and found to contain bones in a casket inscribed as being the bones of the Buddha. (This is the earliest decipherable writing ever found in India.) It was not until 1973 that it was established beyond doubt that Piprahwa was part of the ancient site of Kapilavastu.

The pilgrims express their devotion to the Buddha by lighting incense and chanting the Shakyamuni mantra, in Sanskrit. (*Shakyamuni* means the *muni* - sage or holy person - of the Shakyan clan.)

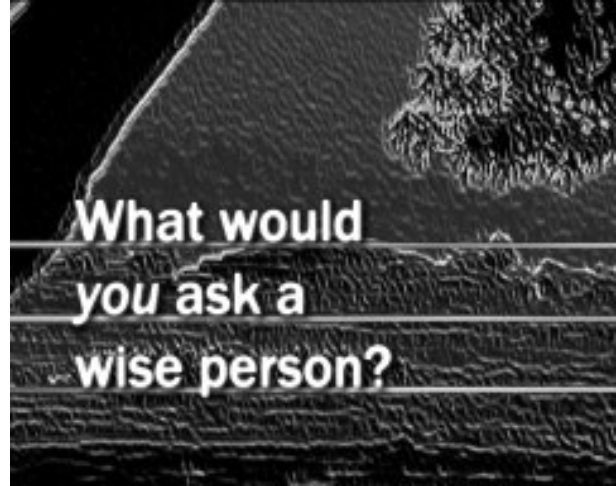
They circumambulate, or walk clockwise around, the stupa.

The Four Sights

This is the English term commonly given to the episode where Siddhartha goes out to see what life is like outside the palace walls.

According to the scriptural account, told here in illustrated form, Siddhartha sees an old person, a sick person, and a dead body. Seeing that every life contains such hardship, he wonders about life's purpose and the source of suffering.

Fourthly he sees a wandering holy man, radiant with well-being despite having given up everything most of us consider necessary for happiness. His curiosity as to the source of this man's contentment sets him upon his spiritual quest.



Discuss before viewing

- What is a wise person?

Discuss after viewing

- What would you ask a wise person?
- What kind of things would a wise person know?
- Would they know everything?
- If you knew the answers to all questions, would you tell?
- Do you know anyone you consider wise?
- What if Siddhartha had not seen the Four Sights?
- Have you ever seen anything that really made you stop and think?
- Think of a time when you felt very calm and content. What was the cause?
- Think of a time when you felt upset and dissatisfied. What led to this?
- Who is the happiest or most contented person you know?
- Why do you think they have such peace of mind?
- Were they always like this, or have they changed?

Did the Buddha know everything?

"I teach only two things: [the nature of] suffering and the end of suffering."

The Buddha

This is a topic of some debate among Buddhists. Some hold that the Buddha was so extraordinary, so magical, that he would have known everything; that he would know how to use a computer despite never having seen one before. Others say his wisdom consists in knowing what really matters: the nature of reality; and therefore the way leading towards freedom from suffering.

Kapilavastu

INFORMATION 7

ACTIVITIES 7



Kapilavastu was the capital of Siddhartha's father's kingdom. Siddhartha spent his first twenty-five years here, and this is where he saw the **Four Sights**.

The first three sights were **an old person, a sick person, and a dead body**. Realising that every life contains suffering like this, Siddhartha wondered what life was for, and what caused this suffering.

The fourth sight made him think some more: a **wandering holy man**, wise and content, even though he owned nothing but a robe and a bowl for gifts of food. Siddhartha decided to leave home to find out what this man knew.

Buddhists believe that Siddhartha went even further than the wandering holy man in his search for truth. Eventually he became a perfectly wise person. He reached Enlightenment. He became a Buddha - "One who understands the Way Life Really Is".

The pilgrims walk round and round the monument at Kapilavastu. As they walk, they remember the story of the Four Sights. They think about the old age, sickness and death in the world today. They are people who are doing their best to understand the Buddha's teachings about change, impermanence and the way out of suffering.

om muni muni mahamuni shakyamuni svaha
Praise to the sage, the great sage, the sage of the Shakyans!

Activity

● In small groups, brainstorm some important questions about life which you would like to ask a wise person.

As a class, sort all the groups' questions into sets of similar questions.

Which three kinds of questions interest most people in the class?

Now imagine you are the wisest person in the world.

Choose three of the questions or areas. What answers would you give?

Lumbini

TEACHER'S NOTES 8

QUESTIONS 8

The village of Rupandhei, in Nepal, is the site of the Buddha's birthplace, Lumbini.

The Mayadevi temple houses carvings telling the legend of how Siddhartha was born from Queen Mayadevi's side as she stood under a tree. The pond, or "tank" nearby is supposed to be where Queen Mayadevi took her bath before giving birth, and where the baby was first bathed.

The pilgrims are shown making offerings at the shrine. The prayer flags hanging from the tree are common in Himalayan Buddhism. They are wood-block printed on cotton cloth and bear blessings and mantras in Tibetan, as well as mythical animals and other symbols. When the wind blows, it is believed that, actually or symbolically, these blessings are carried on the wind for the benefit of all living beings.

Ashoka's pillar

The pillar is one of about 40 erected by the emperor Ashoka (also known as *Piyadasi*, or "Beloved of the gods") in 249 BCE, after he converted to the Buddha's way. It establishes Lumbini as the Buddha's birthplace and commemorates Ashoka's own pilgrimage to this place. The inscription on the pillar reads:

"Twenty years after his coronation, Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, visited this place and worshipped because here the Buddha, the sage of the Shakyans, was born. He had a stone figure and a pillar set up and because the Lord was born here, the village of Lumbini was exempted from tax and required to pay only one eighth of the produce."

Ashoka installed pillars like this across his kingdom. Most proclaimed his new laws based on Buddhist ethics. (See Sarnath, pp.22 & 23)

From the time of Ashoka's visit until about the 10th century CE, Lumbini was a popular pilgrimage site. It was then lost to the jungle until 1893, when a Nepalese government officer happened upon the pillar and pond during a hunting expedition.



Discuss before viewing

- How do people know when and where you were born?

Discuss after viewing

- Where would you go to show respect for someone you admire?
- Have you ever visited the birthplace of anyone famous?
- Where could people go to remember your birth?

Lumbini

INFORMATION 8

ACTIVITIES 8

Buddhists believe that taking time to think kind thoughts about others will help us feel happier and behave more kindly to others. Some Buddhists believe that other people actually feel better when we wish them well in our hearts.

One way of wishing others well is to make flags printed with blessings, like the ones you see hanging from the Bodhi tree at Lumbini, where the Buddha was born. They are printed on cotton cloth.

Here is an example. The writing is in Tibetan. The horse is a magical flying horse and he



Activities

- In pairs, think of what you are like when you are doing your best. Now imagine people want to come and remember you in a thousand years' time, at the place where you were born. Design a pillar or a plaque explaining that they have come here to remember you, and what was so good about you.

- Design your own prayer flag. On coloured paper or cloth, print or write/draw blessings for the world. Think of symbols of happiness

carries on his back the Three Jewels, the three most precious things in a Buddhist life. One is the Dharma jewel, representing the Buddha's teaching about the way leading to the end of suffering. When the wind blows through the flags, you can imagine the blessings being carried all over the world, bringing peace and happiness to all living beings.

Tibetans still use the alphabet you see on the flags. However, the writing on Ashoka's pillar is very ancient. It took the Victorians years to work out what it said, because nobody uses it any more.

བོད་ཀྱི་ལྷ་མོ་འཕེལ་བའི་ལྷ་མོ་
 ལྷ་མོ་འཕེལ་བའི་ལྷ་མོ་འཕེལ་བའི་
 ལྷ་མོ་འཕེལ་བའི་ལྷ་མོ་འཕེལ་བའི་
 ལྷ་མོ་འཕེལ་བའི་ལྷ་མོ་འཕེལ་བའི་
 ལྷ་མོ་འཕེལ་བའི་ལྷ་མོ་འཕེལ་བའི་

This is the ancient writing on the pillar. It says that

- Ashoka came to Lumbini and put up this pillar.
- he came here to worship because this was where the Buddha was born.
- because the Buddha was born here, the village of Lumbini did not have to pay tax!

and an animal to carry your blessings. String all the flags together and hang them up. You might like to imagine them spreading happiness to all living beings. How does this make you feel?

- If your family sometimes uses a different language from English, and/or an alphabet different from the one used for English, you might like to write your blessings in this language and alphabet.

Kusinara

TEACHER'S NOTES 9

QUESTIONS 9

Kusinara (or Kushinagar), the site of the Buddha's Mahaparinirvana, or final passing-away, is today the village of Kasia, in Uttar Pradesh.

Mahaparinirvana (*mahaparinibbana*, Pali) means "great, final, extinction". At his Enlightenment, the Buddha had attained *nirvana*. (Nirvana/nibbana means "extinction" - not of the physical body, but of the fires of greed, hatred and ignorance of the nature of Reality.) At the death of his body it is believed he passed on from physical existence, never to be reborn again.

Aged 80 and frail, the Buddha is said to have chosen to die here, though his cousin and faithful companion Ananda begged him to die somewhere grander, in a city where more people could come and pay their respects.

Knowing he had food-poisoning, he lay down under two Sal trees. He reminded them that all things pass away, and they should strive on with mindfulness towards Enlightenment. Entering a state of deep meditation, he passed away.

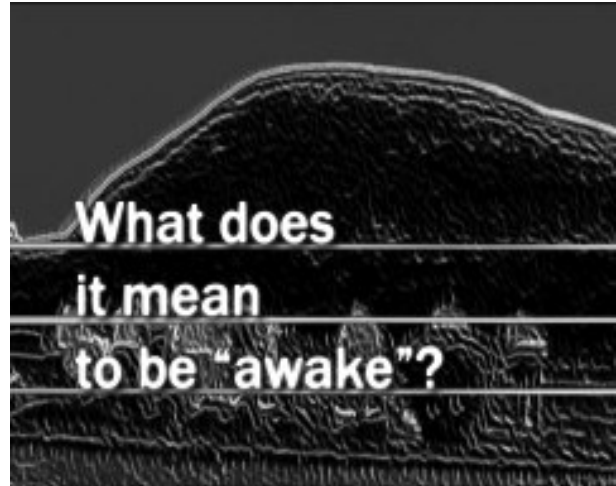
Over the next six days, his followers of all social backgrounds gathered to pay their respects. His body was cremated nearby and a stupa built there later. Here the pilgrims hold outdoor puja, or worship.

The scriptures describe the heavens raining down flowers and vast numbers of deities coming to pay homage. Some Buddhists take this literally; some symbolically. Either way, it indicates that Buddhists consider the passing away of an Enlightened being to be an event of cosmic importance. It is not merely the death of a wise teacher, but the passing away of someone utterly transformed by first-hand knowledge of the nature of Reality.

Many Buddhists mark the festival of Parinirvana Day on 15th February every year.

The presence of a reclining Buddha figure in Kusinara was recorded by the Chinese pilgrim Hsuan Tsang in the 7th century CE. Later lost, the site was rediscovered by British amateur archaeologists in the 1860s.

The temple here was built by the Indian government in 1956. It houses the reclining Buddha figure seen by Hsuan Tsang, which probably dates from the 5th century CE. The video shows south east Asian monks chanting here, followed by the Manchester pilgrims' puja. They chant the Shakyamuni mantra. (See opposite.)



Discuss before viewing

- What's the most wonderful place you have ever visited?

Discuss

- What does it mean, to be "awake"?
- Is there anything you have committed yourself to?

The death of the Buddha

"The Buddha was dying. Under two sal trees he lay down, with great mindfulness, on his right side, one foot overlapping the other..."

He said to Ananda: 'Ananda, these two sal trees are covered with blossoms though it is not the right time of year..."

And heavenly mandarava flowers and heavenly sandalwood powder fall from the sky and are scattered over my body in praise of me. And heavenly music is played and heavenly songs are sung in the sky in praise of me.

Yet this is not the best way to honour, respect and praise a Buddha. The highest praise is to live according to the Dharma."

Adapted from the *Digha Nikaya*

Kusinara

INFORMATION 9

ACTIVITIES 9

The Buddha was 80. He knew he was dying. He knew that this was normal: everything comes to an end eventually. He wasn't worried, but his cousin and friend Ananda was very upset and slipped away to be by himself.

The Buddha asked his friends where Ananda had gone. They told him that he was leaning against a nearby doorway in tears. "I am not Enlightened yet, and my master is dying - this man who was so kind."

He called Ananda back. "Ananda, haven't I told you that everything must come to an end one day? You have looked after me so well, for years. Of course you will gain Enlightenment eventually."

The Buddha reminded everyone to keep up their efforts to be more and more aware. Then he passed away.



The thing Ananda remembers most about the Buddha is his kindness. Buddhists believe that we can't be truly wise without being kind, and we can't be truly kind without being wise.



The pilgrims have come here to remember the Buddha's passing away. Sarah talks about making a commitment "to always be awake". She says it's a commitment that stays in her heart. It's not about falling asleep! Sometimes people use the word "awake" to mean alert, or aware.

Om muni muni mahamuni shakyamuni svaha
Praise to the sage, the great sage, the sage of the Shakyans!

Activity

● Think about the kind of person you are when you are doing your best. What kind of person you would like to be as you grow up. How would you like to be remembered at the end of your life?

Now imagine you are one of your friends. She or he is now very old and remembering what you were like before you died. Write, draw or give a presentation to the class about all the good and fun things they remember about you. What was the last thing you said to them?

Sarnath

TEACHER'S NOTES 10

QUESTIONS 10

Sarnath is about 6 miles from the city of Varanasi (formerly Benares).

After his Enlightenment experience, the Buddha walked the 155 miles from Bodhgaya to the deer park at Sarnath, to find his five companions in the ascetic life he had previously led, to share with them what he had learned.

It is to them that the Buddha is said to have first taught the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path leading to Enlightenment. This first teaching is called, in Sanskrit, the *dharmachakrapravartana*, or “the Turning of the Wheel of Truth”. It is here that the sangha began, as these five men gradually understood what he was telling them and gained Enlightenment.

As at Lumbini (p.18) there is a pillar here, put up by the emperor Ashoka. This one sets out his new guidelines, inspired by the Buddha’s teachings.

Ashokan citizenship

Ashoka’s guidelines cover actions of body, speech and mind, like the Five Precepts. However, Ashoka’s guidelines cover state morality and the conduct of the individual, rather than the spiritual transformation of the individual.

His law was intended to lead to a more just society, favourable to spiritual values; a society dedicated to peaceful co-existence with neighbours rather than empire-building.

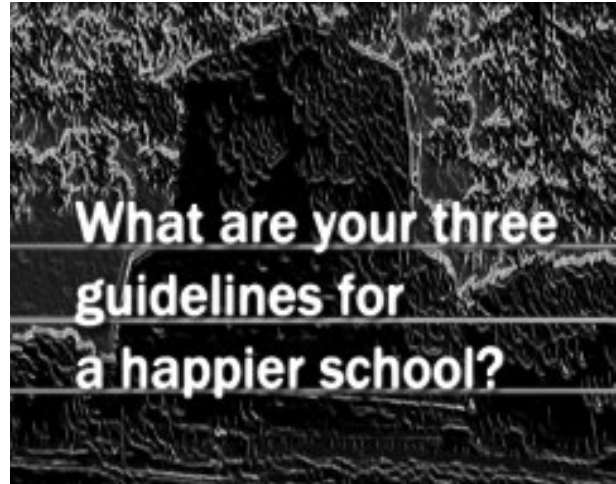
In personal conduct, he advocated compassion, kindness, loyalty, tolerance, truthfulness, gratitude, enthusiasm, respect and love of the Buddha’s teachings - as well as being informed about other religions.

The Four Noble Truths

- 1 We all suffer
- 2 Our suffering is caused by craving
- 3 There is a way to stop craving and suffering
- 4 That way is the **Noble Eightfold Path**.



- 1 Right vision, or understanding
- 2 Right emotion
- 3 Right speech
- 4 Right action
- 5 Right livelihood
- 6 Right effort
- 7 Right mindfulness
- 8 Right meditation, or concentration



Discuss before viewing

- How can you tell whether someone is telling the truth? Is it easy?
- Do you have school or class rules?
- What are they? Why do you have them?

Discuss after viewing

- What are your three guidelines for a happier school?
- What do you think convinced the Buddha’s friends that he was telling the truth?
- Why was the Buddha’s teaching sometimes described as a “lion’s roar”?
- Ashoka and the Buddha were both great leaders. How were they similar and different?

Younger pupils and the third precept

You may like to substitute “greedy behaviour” for “sexual misconduct” for younger pupils.

The Five Precepts

Behaviour to avoid	Behaviour to develop
harming living beings	loving-kindness
taking the not-given	generosity
sexual misconduct	stillness and contentment
false speech	truthful speech
taking intoxicants that cloud the mind	mindfulness, or awareness

Sarnath

INFORMATION 10

ACTIVITIES 10



Here at Sarnath, the Buddha found his five old friends. For the first time, he tried to explain what had happened to him under the tree at Bodhagaya. He taught them the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. One by one they understood. They too gained Enlightenment. They were free from suffering.

Inspired by the Buddha, the Emperor Ashoka visited much later and put up some guidelines for a happy life for his people.



Ashoka's pillar used to have four lions on top: the Buddha and he were both leaders, and the lion is the "king" of animals. The Buddhist scriptures sometimes describe the Buddha's teaching as being like a "lion's roar". Buddhists believe he taught the truth and the truth is as powerful as the sound of a lion.

Ashoka said that

- governments should make peace with other governments and not go to war.
- people should treat each other and animals with kindness and consideration.
- Here are some of the things he said people should show in their lives:
 - respect for the Buddha's teachings
 - interest in other religions
 - obedience to their parents
 - loyalty - standing up for their friends
 - honesty - being trustworthy
 - generosity - sharing and giving
 - tolerance - respecting different opinions and ways of doing things
 - gratitude - showing thankfulness
 - enthusiasm

Discuss

- Is it always right to stand up for a friend?
- Why should we show enthusiasm?

(The town hall in Manchester is decorated with bees. When the Victorians built it in the 19th century, their city was famous for its factories making cotton cloth to sell all over the world. They chose the bee as their symbolic animal because it's such a hard-working animal.)

Activities

● Each member of the class thinks of three guidelines for a happier school and writes them on sticky notes or paper. As a group, assemble all the guidelines on stickies, paper or interactive whiteboard and sort them into sets of similar guidelines. By yourself, choose the five you think will be most helpful to everyone.

Paint or make a pillar in cardboard. For the top, choose an animal which symbolises your

values and write your five guidelines large enough for all to see.

● Think about someone you admire. What are the best things about this person? What animal has qualities that remind you of this person? (For example, if someone is adaptable and easily fits in wherever they go, you might think of them as a chameleon-hero!)

● See p.33 for more activities

Rajgir Vulture's Peak

TEACHER'S NOTES II

QUESTIONS II

The Buddha regularly stayed up on Vulture's Peak, near Rajgir, in between his wanderings in the plains below. Several scriptures refer to his teaching up here, including one of the references to the Five Precepts. (See below.)

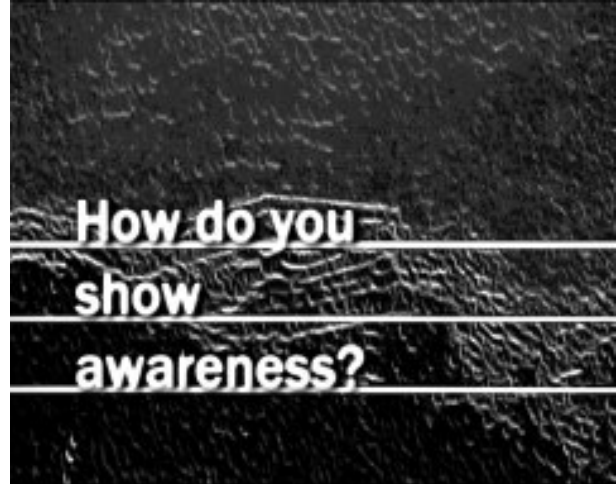
Why do Buddhists worship if they don't follow a creator God? The English word "worship" means "worthiness" or "of value". Buddhists acknowledge the supreme achievement and value of the Buddha's life and teaching. They worship him as an example of what they too can become.

Buddhists believe that worship has a good effect on the worshipper. Music, poetry, incense and collective practice engage our senses and emotions and help us feel moved to follow his teachings.

Mahasradda says this place inspires him to put his faith into practice in terms of body, speech and mind - the categories in which the Five Precepts group all human actions. (See opposite.) It's relatively easy to notice what we are doing; harder to be aware of what we say; hardest of all to learn to be aware of our fleeting thoughts.

When we don't act according to the precepts, it's not because we are "bad people", but because we have learned unhelpful habits; in particular, we lack awareness: of ourselves and others and the possible consequences of our actions. However, in the Buddhist view, there is nothing fixed about us: gradually, we can train ourselves in greater awareness and kindness.

The pilgrims circumambulate the shrine, chanting *om muni muni, maha muni, shakyamuni svaha* ("Praise to the sage, the great sage, the sage of the Shaky clan!") They chant in Pali, the language of the earliest scriptures, verses chanted by Buddhists of many different traditions, in Pali or other languages.



Discuss before viewing

- Do places affect how you feel?
- Which places make you feel happy/sad?
- How does it feel, up high, looking at a view?

Discuss after viewing

- How do you show awareness?
- What is "mindfulness"?
- What are "actions of body, speech and mind"?
- Have you ever heard yourself saying something before you've even thought about it?
- Why are we sometimes not kind, generous or considerate?
- What is "devotion"?
- What is "worship"?
- Is everyone in your class exactly the same?
- Do you all speak the same or different languages at home?
- How do you all communicate with each other at school?

Younger pupils and the third precept

You may like to substitute "greedy behaviour" for "sexual misconduct" for this age group.

Sacred text: the Five Precepts

"On one occasion, the Buddha [the "Blessed One"] was living on the Vulture's Peak near Rajgir..."

[Asked why it was that some people seemed not to welcome his teachings, the Buddha answered:]

"...Well, the Blessed One teaches the Dhamma to establish abstention from killing, from stealing, from sexual misconduct, from false speech, and from liquor that causes intoxication and negligence. To some people such teaching is unpleasant and unpalatable."

Adapted from the *Digha Nikaya*

Rajgir Vulture's Peak

INFORMATION II

ACTIVITIES II

Vulture's Peak is unusual because it's up high, away from the villages where the Buddha visited to teach most of the time.

The views are wonderful and it's cooler up here than on the flat land below.

Mahasraddha talks about wanting to live with more awareness, showing his faith "in body, speech and mind". This means that he would like to have more awareness, so that he can behave more kindly, in what he does, what he says and what he thinks.



Buddhists believe it is not always easy to notice what we are doing. It's even harder to notice what we are saying. The hardest thing of all is to notice what we are thinking,

The Five Precepts			
Behaviour to avoid		Behaviour to develop	
harming living beings	}	loving-kindness	
taking the not-given		body	generosity
sexual misconduct/greed	}	stillness and contentment	
false speech		speech	truthful speech
taking intoxicants that cloud the mind	—	mind	—
			mindfulness, or awareness

sabbe satta sukhi hontu

May all beings be well and happy!

Activity

● End your lesson with the ancient Pali chant, "May all beings be well and happy." In Pali it's *sabbe satta sukki hontu* (pronounced **sabbay sattah sookee hontoo**). You can chant it all on one note, or make up a tune for it. You don't have to be a Buddhist to chant it.

● Or write your own blessing and make up a tune for it.

Chant together for a minute or two. Close your eyes if you want. With mindfulness, listen to each other as you chant. You could imagine yourself and everyone you know feeling happy and safe.

● You could make your blessing into a kindness rap. The challenge is to rap with energy *and* kindness.

Bodhgaya

TEACHER'S NOTES 12

QUESTIONS 12

The 54-meter-high sandstone Mahabodhi temple has been restored and rebuilt a number of times and stands on the site of an original temple built by the Emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century BCE. The oldest part of today's temple is from 100 BCE.

From the 13th century CE the temple became increasingly ruined, and then flooded and buried under silt till it was restored in the 19th century. It has been a popular pilgrimage site since the mid-20th century.

The pilgrims spend a couple of days at Bodhgaya, on their own and meeting to worship in the evening.

Sattvadhika comments that she had *experienced* here what she'd only *witnessed* in Bethlehem, and been looking for all her life - a sense of faith shared with others. (See **Preparation** section of video and p.4.)

The Buddha speaks

The Buddha is held to have rediscovered the truth of the nature of reality; tradition holds that there were Buddhas in previous eras. Here he describes his spiritual journey: the rediscovery of an ancient path (the Noble Eightfold Path) leading to a beautiful city (Enlightenment).

"Suppose you were wandering in a forest wilderness and found an ancient path, travelled by others long ago.

Following it, you discovered an ancient and beautiful walled city where people had lived long ago, with parks and groves and lakes. In this way, I too have found the ancient path, travelled by the Enlightened ones long ago."

Adapted from the *Samyutta Nikaya*

Offering the whole world

The Mandala Offering meditation is practised by some Buddhists, particularly in Tibetan traditions. The hand position symbolises the world as viewed by traditional Buddhist cosmology, centred on the mythical Mount Meru. The Mahabodhi temple is an architectural representation of Mount Meru.



Discuss before viewing

- Do you ever bow? Why?
- Is there anything you would consider bowing to?
- What are you most grateful for in life?
- How might you show your gratitude?
- More people come to Bodhgaya now than ever before.
- Why might this be?

Discuss after viewing

- What's your most special place?
- Have you ever committed yourself to do something?
- How does it feel? Is it easy?
- How does it feel when you share an important experience with other people?
- What's the difference between making a personal decision and telling other people about it?
- What's the difference between witnessing something and experiencing it?

Puja and commitment

One evening the pilgrims hold puja or worship, during which two women make a particular commitment to the Buddhist way. They offer to the shrine a stick of incense, a candle and a flower. (Unusually, they have their backs to the shrine because it is customary to face the Mahabodhi temple, and the shrine is thus behind them.)

Different Buddhist traditions have varying rituals of commitment. These women are not becoming nuns or priests, but simply inviting others to witness their desire to live by the Buddha's teachings. This will add weight to a commitment they have already made in their hearts.

Bodhgaya

INFORMATION 12

ACTIVITIES 12



The pilgrims come to Bodhgaya, the place where the Buddha gained **Enlightenment**.

It was here that he sat down under a tree to meditate, to still his mind and body, until he understood the Way Things Really Are in life. Buddhists believe that when he understood this, he also realised how anyone could free themselves from suffering.

On the video, Dharmottara says Bodhgaya is the “most special place Buddhists have on earth”. Traditionally, the place where the Buddha gained Enlightenment is known as the *vajrasana*, or Diamond Seat. Buddhists imagine it as the centre of the world, because they believe this is where the Buddha discovered the Truth and nothing is more important than the Truth.

What happened to the Buddha here completely changed the way he saw life. On this spot, he realised that everything depends

on other things. Everything changes and nothing lasts for ever. Suffering ends when we learn to accept this and stop wanting things to be different. Once he knew this, he couldn't keep it to himself. He had to tell others the way they too could be free from suffering.

Buddhists have been coming here for 2,000 years, but more people come here today than ever before. Until the middle of the 20th century, pilgrims would have had very long journeys by sea, by horse or on foot. It's much easier to travel these days, and tourists come here as well as pilgrims.



Buddhists often **bow** to show their respect for the Buddha and his teachings. Some even “prostrate”, or lie face down on the ground, as a way of showing that they are completely committed to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. A few even travel some of the way from home like this, meter by meter.

Activities

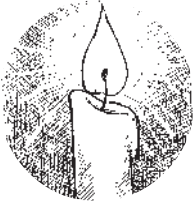
● Choose someone, girl or boy, to play the part of the Buddha. Hotseat this person: ask about their experience. Why did they set out on their quest for the truth about life? What was it like sitting there meditating all that time? Did they ever feel like giving up? What

made them carry on? And how do they feel now? What are they going to do for the rest of their life, and why? Why is truth the most important thing in life? How do they feel about all these people visiting the place where they once sat quietly under the Bodhi tree?

Bodhgaya

INFORMATION 12b

ACTIVITIES 12b



During their worship, the pilgrims offer three things to the shrine, to show how much they appreciate the Buddha's teachings.

The **candles** represent the light of the wisdom of the Buddha's teachings.

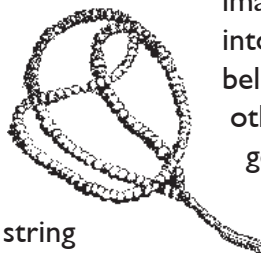
The **incense** represents karma, the teaching that our tiniest actions great and small, kind or selfish, have consequences, or results. Also, wisdom and compassion are like a beautiful fragrance spreading throughout the world.

The **flowers** remind Buddhists of the teaching of impermanence, that nothing lasts for ever. The world is full of beautiful things as well as



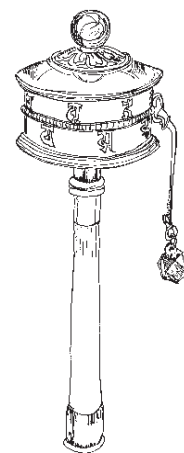
suffering, but, like flowers, they are all impermanent. We need to enjoy them and let them go.

A **mantra** is a symbol we can chant. It's a sound which reminds Buddhists of something about the Buddha's character which they want to develop too, such as fearlessness, or wisdom. The best-known mantra is *om mani padme hum* - the mantra of perfect compassion - or "feeling with" the suffering of others. When they chant the mantra, Buddhists may feel they encourage compassion in themselves, and send it out into the world.



A **mala** is an Indian word for a string of beads used to count mantras.

Prayer wheels usually have the mantra *om mani padme hum* written around the cylinder in Tibetan or Sanskrit writing. Inside, the same mantra is written thousands of times on a roll of paper. As the wheel turns, you can imagine blessings pouring out into the world. Buddhists believe that when we wish others happiness, it has a good effect on us as well as on other living beings.



Activity

● Write to someone you feel has helped you or given you something which has helped you - or give a presentation about them. Explain what they have done, what it means to you and how it has made a difference to your life.

You don't have to send your letter or email, but you might want to. You might think of a way of showing your gratitude without telling them what you have written or said about them. Notice how you feel about expressing your gratitude.

Looking back

TEACHER'S NOTES 13

QUESTIONS 13

Coming home, the pilgrims comment on how they felt. Ratnasagara and his mother, both Indian, noticed that **they had an effect on others**: their family talked more about about significant things - the Buddha and the holy sites.

The white British pilgrims found their **faith and practice strengthened**: they identified more with the Buddha now they could picture where he had lived. They had **gained confidence** through overcoming difficulty and their **friendships were stronger** through shared experience.

Life as a journey

Pilgrims reflect that any journey is full of ups and downs.

Similarly, life itself is a journey, through time and experience; good times and bad times. What makes it a **spiritual journey** is the degree of awareness with which you respond to life. At any moment, we can ask ourselves whether we are responding in the most constructive way. Without awareness we can become trapped in habits and assumptions about ourselves and others and what life is for.

A “Spiritual” life?

A Buddhist definition of spiritual life might be a life devoted to increasing awareness; responding more and more positively and spontaneously, making progress towards perfect wisdom and compassion. Buddhism denies the existence of a soul or unchanging essence or spirit, so the word “spiritual” is used in a poetic sense.

Sacred souvenirs

Mahasraddha’s **Buddha-rupa**, or figure, is seated in the lotus position, associated with meditation. The hands are also in meditation *mudra*, or gesture. He holds the alms bowl of a monk or nun. Mahasraddha says the figure seems to have qualities he would like to develop himself: stillness, calm, strength and vitality.

Dharmottara’s **book wrapper** is Tibetan-style. Outside the Tibetan tradition it is less usual to wrap scriptures, but many Buddhists would avoid putting scriptures on the floor.

Sarah’s **ring** has no formal Buddhist significance but reminds her of the Enlightenment under the full moon at Bodhgaya (p.26), and the commitment she made there.

Ratnasagara bought his **mala**, or prayer beads, in Sarnath (p.22). They remind him of the Four Noble Truths and the teaching that he too can gain Enlightenment.



Discuss before viewing

- Why do you think these people went on pilgrimage?
- What do you think they got out of it?

Discuss after viewing

- What do you think your life is for?
- What are you hoping for later in life?

Walking meditation

This is a common practice, in a circle with others or up and down, alone. It usually begins with a bell.

Everyone stands still in a circle. When the bell is rung they start walking, until the bell is rung again. You can give occasional instructions or encouragement to notice their spine or feet, what they are thinking or how they are feeling at this moment. When you ring the bell again, everyone stands still, noticing how it feels to be still.

Ring the bell again. Everyone returns to their seat.

The Buddha speaks

“The Venerable Ananda said to the Blessed One, “Lord, friendship with admirable people is half the holy life, isn’t it?”

“Oh, no, Ananda! Don’t say that. Spiritual friendship, is actually the whole of the holy life. With admirable people as friends and companions we can expect to follow and make progress on the Noble Eightfold Path.”

Adapted from the *Samyutta Nikaya*
Ananda was the Buddha’s cousin and his companion for many years.

- What is an “admirable” friend?
- How do you and your friends affect each other?
- What could you learn from each other?

Looking back

INFORMATION 13

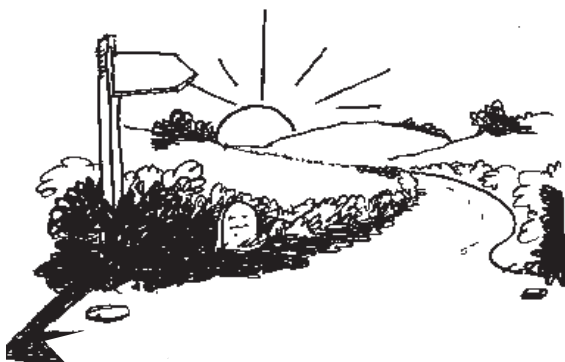
ACTIVITIES 13

Life as a journey

The pilgrims noticed that while they were on their journey through India, each of them was also on another kind of journey - a **spiritual journey** - through

- the things which happened to them
- the way they felt
- the things they learned

We can think of life as a journey, from birth to death. If you think about your life you will notice there have been sad times and happy times. Sometimes it feels like walking uphill. Other times it feels like speeding downhill on a bicycle on a sunny day.



We will all be happy, sad or bored at times. It's not always easy, but it is normal and, with awareness, we can learn from our experience.

Buddhism says that the more we realise that everyone feels like this, just like us, the more we will feel compassion for others - we will "feel with" their suffering.

Buddhism says that this is what life is *for*: changing, growing wiser and kinder, moving towards Enlightenment.

Finish the sentences

"A pilgrimage would be different from going on holiday because..."

"A holiday could be a spiritual journey if you..."



Walking stillness

● Go on a spiritual journey through the next 5 or 10 minutes. Form a circle round your classroom, gym or playground. Walk slowly, letting your arms swing loosely by your sides. Be aware of your body as you move - your feet touching the ground, how your weight moves from one side to the other. Notice the thoughts that go through your mind, and how you feel. Someone could ring a bell softly to start and end this walking stillness.



On your own or in pairs, record everything you noticed, thought and felt as you walked. Did anything change during these few minutes? You can do this as a poem, or in a thought bubble over a drawing of you walking.

Looking back

ACTIVITIES 13b

Lifeline

● On paper or interactive whiteboard, draw a graph. Along the baseline, mark off all the years since you were born. Along this line write in all the important events and places in your life since you can remember; for example, moving house, changing schools, anything you learned to do. Perhaps someone died or was born, or someone left or joined your family.

Now think about how each of these events made you feel.

Make a mark high up the graph above anything you felt really happy about.

Make a mark low on the graph above anything you found sad and painful.

Some things will need a mark somewhere in between. Join up the dots to make a line. Is it straight or zigzaggy?

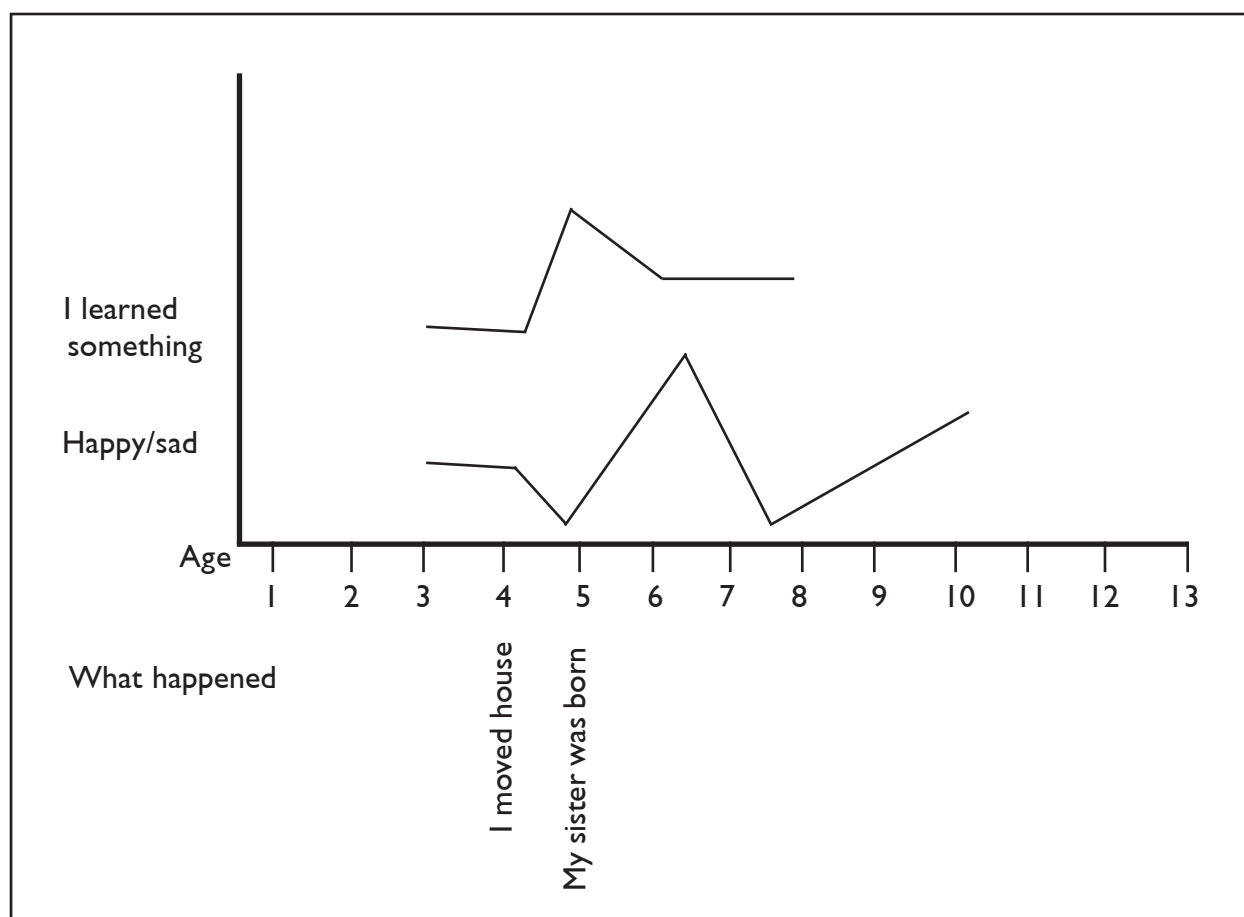
Think about how you responded to each of these events, and whether any of them helped you learn anything. (Perhaps you felt sad about something, and this made you kinder to others because you knew what it was like to suffer.) Mark points across the graph showing how much you learned from each thing that happened to you. Join them up.

Looking at the three lines, what do you notice?

Finish the sentences

“Looking at my lifeline, I can see that...”

“What was surprising was...”



General activities

ACTIVITIES 14

Sorting and matching

● Enlarge this section on the photocopier and cut up the cards. (Remove cards relating to video sections/topics you have not covered.)

In groups, pupils sort into places, people, teachings and events. Match the places with any related people, teachings and events.

Odd one out

● Choose any three places, people or events. Is there an odd one out? Explain why.

		The Parnirvana
Lumbini	Vulture's Peak	Buddhists long ago
Conversion to Buddhism	Sarnath	Nagpur
Kapilavastu	Sravasti	Ancient caves
Kusinara	Siddhartha is born	Bodhgaya
Dr Ambedkar	The Four Noble Truths & The Noble Eightfold Path	The Five Precepts
Angulimala	Anathapindika	Dalit people
Five old friends	The Four Sights	The Enlightenment

Which was most important?

● Take the cards for these five places in the life of the Buddha. In groups or individually, match them to the cards for what happened there.

Decide which you think were the most important for the future of Buddhism. Explain your reasons to the rest of the class. Is there any place that doesn't matter much or at all?

- Lumbini
- Kapilavastu
- Bodhgaya
- Sarnath
- Kusinara

Ashoka's guidelines & the Five Precepts

● Sort Ashoka's guidelines on p.23 under the headings Agree, Disagree and Not sure. Discuss!

● Can you match each guideline to one or more of the Buddha's Five Precepts?

Send a postcard

On one side draw a Buddhist symbol, or a picture from a pilgrimage site. On the other, tell your friend about the place, what happened there long ago and how you felt being there.

Glossary

Many Buddhist terms are commonly expressed in both Pali and Sanskrit, languages of ancient India. Where appropriate, both versions are given.

Sanskrit/English	Pali	
Bodhisattva	Bodhisatta	A being devoted to Enlightenment for the sake of all beings. A mythical figure, heroic ideal or archetype.
Buddha		"One who is awake to the Truth"; an Enlightened person
Dharma	Dhamma	The Truth; the teachings of the Buddha leading to that Truth
Dharmachakra		The "Wheel of the Truth"; often has eight spokes representing the Noble Eightfold Path
Five Precepts		Five ethical principles common to all Buddhists
Karma	Kamma	The teaching that actions have consequences
Mantra		A sacred sound symbol; verse of blessing
Noble Eightfold Path		The fourth Noble Truth: the way by which Buddhists move towards freedom from the suffering caused by craving
Pali Canon		The earliest body of Buddhist teachings, preserved by the Theravada tradition of south Asia in the ancient Indian language of Pali
Sangha		The community of those who follow the Buddha's way
Three Jewels		The Buddha, Dharma and Sangha

Acknowledgements

Video	Editor & director	Handbook
Scriptwriter & director		Text
Munisha	Upekshapriya	Munisha
Narrator	Special thanks to	Illustrations
Nagamudra	Dharmottara	Munisha
	Revd. Lisa Battye	Adiccabandhu
Cameras	Mokshapriya	
Balajit	Ratnasagara	
Mokshapriya	Sarah Allen	Layout
Mokshajyoti	Sattvadhika	Munisha
Priyadaka	Mahasraddha	Bodhiketu
Upekshapriya		
Musical composition & direction		Cover design
Olivia Moore	See dvd for full music credits	Pauline Minsky
		Aparajita

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First published in Great Britain in 2006 by

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Registered charity no. 1019669

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sabbe satta sukhi hontu
May all beings be happy!