

BUDDHISM. Siddhartha Gautama (563 - 483 BCE) was a spiritual teacher in India and the founder of Buddhism. He is recognized as the Supreme Buddha. However, the definition of Buddha extends to anyone who is awakened (enlightened); to disciples who have reached nirvana, a state of highest happiness. **B**ut this is not the sense-based happiness of everyday life; not the concept of happiness pursued in Western culture. Rather it is an enduring, transcendental happiness - which is induced by the calmness achieved through enlightenment. **O**ne concept in Buddhism is mindfulness, the process of keeping one's consciousness alive to the current reality ... on the path to nirvana, one abstains from pondering the past or the future. **N**irvana is a condition free from desire, expectation, anxiety or anger; once in nirvana, one lives in accordance with dharma. **M**indfulness meditation is an aid to attaining the state of nirvana.

see also MINDFULNESS



the Dharmachakra, or Dharma Wheel
denoting the Noble Eightfold Path

en-light-en-ment

Absence of greed, hatred & delusion; acceptance, detachment and understanding; recognition of reality, seeing the true nature of things.

dhar-ma

The truth about the way things are; the right way of living or religious living; the proper conduct or duty; the higher truth; the essential, characteristic nature of being. The word dharma literally means 'that which upholds - or supports - the cosmos'.

The term also refers to the Buddha's teachings, whose purpose is to alleviate suffering. Gautama Buddha's Four Noble Truths are: The Truth of suffering, the Truth of its causes, the Truth of the path to relief from suffering, the Truth of the end of suffering (nirvana).

see also DHARMA, MEDITATION 3, THE TRUTH 4

a-wa-ken

The Buddha said: "Awaken from the slumber of ignorance, delusion and unconsciousness. Awaken to truth, clarity and compassion."

In philosophical Buddhism, free-thinking was specifically encouraged by the Buddha: "It is proper to doubt. Do not go upon what is acquired by repeated hearing; nor upon tradition; nor upon an axiom; nor upon rumour; nor upon what is in a scripture."

non-self

Moreover, Gautama Buddha stated that our attachment to the existence of a concept of self/soul - or indeed God - was pointless. Instead he refers to the 'non-self'; however, it has been said that trying to intellectualize the non-self could make your head explode.

see also KNOW YOUR SELF

Robin Wright quotes monk Walpola Rahula in Why Buddhism Is True: "According to the teachings of the Buddha, the idea of self is imaginary, a false belief which has no corresponding reality. But the belief produces harmful thoughts of 'me' and 'mine', selfish desires, cravings, attachment, hatred, ill-will, conceit, pride, egoism etc. It is the source of all troubles and evils, from personal conflicts to wars between nations."

So adherence to the idea of a self is the root of attachments and desires. But Wright says about 'self', 'no self' or 'non-self': "Continue to entertain the proposition that within you there is an 'I'. Don't feel like you're committing a violation of Buddhist dogma because you think of yourself as being a self. However, be open to the possibility that - at the deepest level - your self is not what you have always thought of it as being."