



Buddhism at a glance

Buddhism is a spiritual tradition that focuses on personal spiritual development and the attainment of a deep insight into the true nature of life. There are 376 million followers worldwide.

Buddhists seek to reach a state of *nirvana*, following the path of the Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, who went on a quest for Enlightenment around the sixth century BC.

There is no belief in a personal god. Buddhists believe that nothing is fixed or permanent and that change is always possible. The path to Enlightenment is through the practice and development of morality, meditation and wisdom.

Buddhists believe that existence is endless because individuals are reincarnated over and over again, experiencing suffering throughout many lives.

Schools of Buddhism

There are numerous different schools or sects of Buddhism. The two largest are [Theravada Buddhism](#), which is most popular in Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Thailand, Laos and Burma (Myanmar), and [Mahayana Buddhism](#), which is strongest in Tibet, China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and Mongolia.

The majority of Buddhist sects do not seek to proselytise (preach and convert), with the notable exception of [Nichiren Buddhism](#).
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/religion/buddhism>

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All schools of Buddhism seek to aid followers on a path of enlightenment.

Key facts

- Buddhism is [2,500 years old](#)
- There are currently 376 million followers worldwide
- There are over 150,000 [Buddhists in Britain](#)
- Buddhism arose as a result of [Siddhartha Gautama's](#) quest for Enlightenment in around the 6th Century BC
- There is no belief in a personal God. It is not centred on the relationship between humanity and God
- Buddhists believe that nothing is fixed or permanent - change is always possible
- The two main Buddhist sects are [Theravada](#) Buddhism and [Mahayana](#) Buddhism, but there are many more
- Buddhists can [worship](#) both at home or at a temple