

Buddhism - The Middle Path

The Triple Gems:

1. The Buddha
2. The Dharma
3. The Sangha

The Three Poisons:

1. Greed
2. Anger
3. Ignorance

The Six Paramitas:

These are the six activities of the bodhisattva warrior:

Generosity. Giving as a path of learning to let go.

Discipline. Training in not causing harm in a way that is daring and flexible.

Patience. Training in abiding with the restlessness of our energy and letting things evolve at their own speed. If waking up takes forever, still we go moment by moment, giving up all hope of fruition and enjoying the process.

Joyful enthusiasm. Letting go of our perfectionism and connecting with the living quality of every moment.

Meditation. Training in coming back to being right here with gentleness and precision. Presentness.

Prajna. *Ultimate Wisdom*, cultivating an open, inquiring mind.

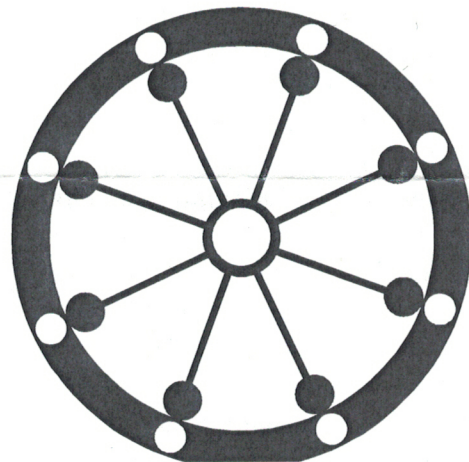
With these six activities of the bodhisattva, we learn how to travel to the other shore, and we do our best to take everyone we can find along with us.

The Four Noble Truths:

1. The Truth of Suffering,
2. The Truth of its Cause,
3. The Truth of its Cessation,
4. The Truth of the Path to Cessation.

The Noble Eight Fold Path:

1. Right View - Understanding
2. Right Intent - Thought
3. Right Speech
4. Right Action
5. Right Livelihood
6. Right Effort
7. Right Mindfulness
8. Right Concentration



“Om Māni Padmé Hūm Svaha”



“The jewel is in the Lotus”

In a mango grove near Kushinagara, India, the Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, declared that he was about to die and invited the local people to come say good-bye to him.

When they had finished, the monks crowded around where he lay, and he asked them if they had any remaining doubts about the dharma. When no one spoke, **he emphasized to them how all meeting ends in parting and that all conditioned things were subject to decay. (Impermanence) Telling them that they didn't need him to be there as a teacher if they truly applied themselves to practicing the dharma properly, he exhorted them to work diligently to achieve liberation for themselves.** Then, laying in the lion's posture, on his right side with his head on his arm, he died. The earth shook; lightning flashed and thunder resounded, and the Buddha passed into parinirvana, the ultimate state of enlightenment beyond birth and death.

The Buddha chose his birth to demonstrate how those of great attainment can have control over birth and death, but still he was born, despite many signs of being unusual, from a human woman, and **never claimed to be a god or anything other than a human being.** Though innately very talented, he still undertook to train himself in intellectual and physical disciplines, becoming skilled in many varieties of worldly knowledge, with a full understanding of the culture into which he was born. Knowing the positive attributes of the culture, he would then be fully capable of transmitting the dharma to it. By living in the palace, having a wife, and enjoying sensual pleasures, he showed that enlightened people can enjoy the pleasures of the world, but he also demonstrated the limitations of those pleasures. Going outside the palace walls to experience an old person, a sick one, and a corpse, he faced the unequivocal suffering of life, and being inspired by the wandering monk, he showed how the spiritual path was a way to confront that suffering.

Working hard at asceticism for many years, the Buddha demonstrated a complete lack of attachment toward worldly things and willingness to exert himself on the path to the utmost. He also showed the limitations of asceticism as a spiritual practice. Giving up those austerities, he placed the emphasis of spiritual practice ***squarely on the mind***, rather than on the body or other external issues. ***True practice is the "Middle Way" between harsh self-denial and heavy self-indulgence.***

Heroically, the Buddha faced Mara and ***"The Three Poisons" of greed, anger, and ignorance,*** winning the essential battle with the ego and its deceptions by remaining unwavering in his meditative awareness and compassion. By attaining enlightenment, ***the Buddha demonstrated how enlightenment is within one's own mind and not dependent on external things.*** Though popular religion was based on worshipping and offering to a god, acting in ways to please the god who would then save the worshippers or punish the worshippers with hell if the god was displeased, the Buddha instead turned the three wheels of dharma, showing the way to overcome suffering and confusion by developing one's own inherent wisdom.

The Buddha revealed the belief in a "self" to be an illusion, and giving his students the tools to affect their own liberation, he showed them how to overcome their self-deception and recognize the truth directly ***in their own experience.***

When the Buddha died, he had established his practice and teachings, and sown innumerable spiritual seeds in many places. He passed peacefully from this world just as he had lived his life, with dignity, gentleness, and compassion, and left behind a tradition of spiritual practice that remains vital, practical and liberating to this very day.



"No mud, no lotus" - Thich Nhat Hanh