

## Happy birthday Buddha

By: Jacob C.

Today we celebrated Buddha's 500-year birthday at the town square. Buddha is the father of Buddhism. Let's review the Buddhist religion. We remember Buddha, who was a prince, because one day he spotted a man in the park who seemed to be at peace with the world. The man was calm even though he was asking people for help in getting his next meal. Siddhartha (Buddha's other name) asked the driver who the man was and learned that the man was a monk. The prince was amazed that someone could be so peaceful in a world filled with sorrow and suffering. That day, Buddhist text state, the prince made a difficult decision. He chose to give up all he had and become a monk. After saying good-bye to his wife and newborn son, he left the palace. His journey to find the meaning of life had begun.

Buddha also figured out the four noble truths so people could end suffering. The first one is "life is filled with suffering". Next is "suffering is caused by peoples wants." People may want more pleasure, more power, or a longer life. The third is "Suffering can be ended if people stop wanting things." The fourth and last is to "stop wanting things." To do this, people must follow the eight basic laws.

Buddhists believe heaven and hell are right here on earth. Buddhists must figure out what the afterlife holds for themselves.

Buddhists have a meditation-based religion. For example, Zen Buddhism gets its name from a Japanese word “zazen,” meaning “seated meditation.” Meditation helps relieve suffering. Buddhists believe things like greed, hatred or fears are the root causes of suffering; meditation helps to let go of those things.



Picture of Buddha meditating.

[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/a/a5/Thai\\_buddha.jpg/180px-Thai\\_buddha.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/a/a5/Thai_buddha.jpg/180px-Thai_buddha.jpg)

Buddhism is the fourth largest religion in the world only being exceeded by Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism.

Buddhism has two types of religion: Theravada Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism. Theravada Buddhism “has been the dominant school of Buddhism in most of southern Asia since the thirteenth century, with the

establishment of the monarchies in Thailand, Burma, Cambodia and Laos.” (<http://www.religioustolerance.org/Buddhism.htm>)

Mahayana Buddhism is largely found in China, Japan, Korea, Tibet and Mongolia.

Buddhism is a very interesting religion and was fun to learn. I suggest you to go to a library and learn more about this religion.

### **Source**

1. World adventure in time and place, James A. banks, et.al, 2001
2. <http://www.religioustolerance.org/Buddhism.htm>
3. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/buddhism>
4. Buddhism, Friday, january 19, 2007, by eric Gordan, Newspaper article