



## Buddha's Relevance to the Modern Youth

**For Prelims:** [Dharma Chakra Pravartana Divas](#), [Lord Buddha](#), [Maha Bodhi Temple](#), Four Noble Truths, Noble Eightfold Path, Four Sublime States.

**For Mains:** Major Teachings of Lord Buddha, Buddha's Relevance to the Modern Youth.

### Why in News?

The [President of India](#), urged the **youth to draw inspiration from the teachings of [Lord Buddha](#)**, on the occasion of [Dharma Chakra Pravartana Divas](#) (3<sup>rd</sup> July 2023).

- The President reflected on how **Lord Buddha's first sermon on Asadha Purnima** planted the **seeds of the middle path of the Dhamma**.

### Lord Buddha

- **About:**

- Lord Buddha (Siddhartha Gautam) was **born into royal family of Sakya clan who ruled from Kapilvastu, in [Lumbini](#)** located in the **Terai plains of southern Nepal**.
- At the age of **29**, Gautama left home and rejected his life of riches and embraced a lifestyle of asceticism, or extreme self-discipline.
- After **49 consecutive days of meditation**, Gautama attained **Bodhi (enlightenment) under a pipal tree at [Bodhgaya](#)**, a village in Bihar.
- Buddha gave his first sermon in the **village of Sarnath, near Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh on Asadha Purnima**. This event is known as **Dharma Chakra Pravartana (turning of the wheel of law)**.
  - The day is also observed **as Guru Poornima by both Buddhists and Hindus** as a day to mark reverence to their Gurus.

# GAUTAM BUDDHA

Believed to be 8<sup>th</sup> of the 10 incarnations of Lord Vishnu (Dashavatar)

## BIRTH

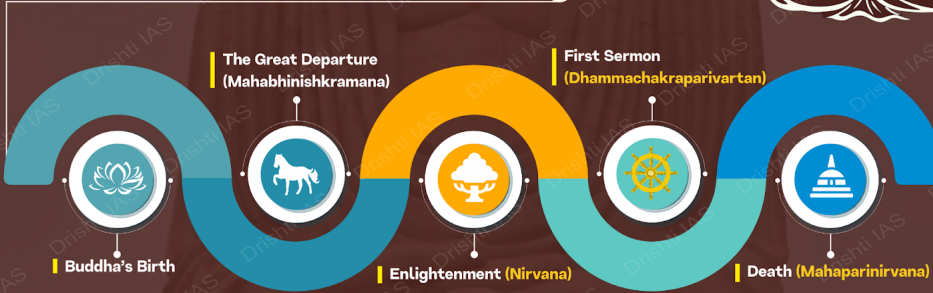
- Born as Siddhartha (563 BC)
- Birthplace - Lumbini (Nepal) near Kapilavastu

## PARENTS

- Father - elected ruler of Kapilvastu; headed Shakya republican clan
- Mother - princess from Koshalan dynasty



## IMPORTANT EVENTS



Buddha referred to himself as *Tathagata* (one who has thus come/gone) and has been addressed as *Bhagavat* (in Buddhist texts)


## CONTEMPORARIES

- Vardhaman Mahavira
- Bimbisara
- Ajatshatru

## OTHER IMPORTANT PLACES ASSOCIATED WITH BUDDHA

- Bodh Gaya (Enlightenment) (named Buddha after attaining enlightenment)
- Sarnath (first sermon)
- Vaishali (last sermon)
- Kushinagara (death place (487 BC))

### Major Teachings of Lord Buddha:

- **The Three Marks of Existence:** These are the characteristics of all phenomena that one should understand and accept. They are **impermanence (anicca)**, **unsatisfactoriness (dukkha)**, and **non-self (anatta)**.
- **The Four Noble Truths:** These are the truths about the nature of suffering, its cause, its cessation, and the path to its cessation. The cause of suffering is **ignorance, attachment, and aversion**.
  - The cessation of suffering is possible by following the Noble Eightfold Path:
- **The Four Sublime States:** These are the positive mental qualities that one should cultivate and radiate to all beings. They are **loving-kindness (metta)**, **compassion (karuna)**, **sympathetic joy (mudita)**, and **equanimity (upekkha)**.
  - By developing these states, one can foster **harmony, empathy, altruism, and peace**.
- **The Five Precepts:** These are the basic ethical principles that Buddha laid down for his lay followers.
  - They are: **to abstain from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and intoxication**.
  - They help us to avoid harming ourselves and others, to respect life and property, to **maintain purity and honesty and to preserve clarity and awareness**.

**How can Youth Draw Inspiration from Buddha to Navigate Life's Challenges?**

- **Mindfulness as a Foundation:** One of the central tenets of Buddha's teachings is the practice of mindfulness.
  - Mindfulness encourages individuals to **cultivate a deep awareness of the present moment**, fostering an enhanced understanding of their thoughts, emotions, and actions.
  - In a world saturated with distractions, **young people can draw inspiration from Buddha's emphasis on being fully present and engaged.**
  - By practicing mindfulness, **youth can learn to manage stress, improve focus and concentration**, and nurture a greater sense of self-awareness, leading to improved mental well-being and personal growth.
- **Impermanence and Non-Attachment:** Buddha's teachings emphasize the **impermanence (the state or fact of lasting for only a limited period of time)** of all phenomena and the futility of attachment.
  - In a materialistic **society driven by instant gratification**, youth can find **solace and inspiration in the understanding that everything is transient.**
  - By recognizing the impermanence of **both joy and suffering, young individuals can cultivate a mindset that is adaptable, resilient, and open to change.**
  - Learning to let go of attachment to outcomes, possessions, and even relationships can free the youth from unnecessary suffering and allow them to embrace life with greater equanimity.
- **Compassion and Empathy:** In a world **where divisions and conflicts persist, young people can find inspiration in Buddha's teachings** on loving-kindness and compassion.
  - By cultivating empathy, youth can develop a **deeper understanding of others' struggles**, fostering a sense of unity and connection.
- **Self-Discovery and Inner Transformation:** Young people, **often grappling with questions of identity and purpose**, can draw inspiration from Buddha's teachings on self-exploration.
  - By engaging in introspection and self-reflection, youth can gain insights into their **true nature, passions, and aspirations.**
- **Engaging in Social and Environmental Responsibility:** Buddha's teachings emphasize the **interconnectedness of all beings and advocate for responsible action.**
  - The youth can actively engage in **social and environmental responsibility by working towards equality, justice, and sustainable practices.**
  - They can participate in community initiatives, advocate for marginalized groups, and **champion [environmental conservation](#).**
  - By embodying these teachings, they contribute to building a **more equitable, harmonious, and environmentally conscious society.**

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### Prelims

**Q. With reference to the religious history of India, consider the following statements: (2020)**

1. Sthaviravadins belong to Mahayana Buddhism.
2. Lokottaravadin sect was an offshoot of Mahasanghika sect of Buddhism.
3. The deification of Buddha by Mahasanghikas fostered the Mahayana Buddhism.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: (b)**

**Q. With reference to the religious history of India, consider the following statements: (2016)**

1. The concept of Bodhisattva is central to Hinayana sect of Buddhism.

2. Bodhisattva is a compassionate one on his way to Enlightenment.
3. Bodhisattva delays achieving his own salvation to help all sentient beings on their path to it.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 2 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: (b)**

### **Mains**

**Q.** Pala period is the most significant phase in the history of Buddhism in India. Enumerate. **(2020)**

**Source: PIB**

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/buddha-relevance-to-the-modern-youth>

