Facts about the Buddha

- Buddhism was founded by Gautama Buddha.
- Buddha was born as Prince Siddhartha at Lumbini near Kapilavastu (in present Nepal) in 566 BC.
- He was the son of Suddhodhana and Mahamaya. Suddhodhana was the chief of the Sakya clan. Due to this, Buddha was also known as ‘Sakyamuni’.
- His mother died either giving birth to him or after seven days. Siddhartha was brought up by his maternal aunt, Prajapati Gautami. This gave him the name ‘Gautama’.
- He was married to Yashodhara and had a son, Rahula.
- He left his home at the age of 29 to become an ascetic. This event is called Mahabhishkramana.
- The idea of renunciation occurred to the Buddha after he saw four different states of man – sick man, old man, corpse and ascetic.
- Buddha wandered for seven years and at the age of 35 attained enlightenment at Uruvela while meditating under a banyan tree on the banks of the river Niranjana. This tree came to be known as ‘Bodhi tree’ and the place became Bodh Gaya (in Bihar).
- He gave his first sermon at Sarnath near Varanasi. This event is called Dharmachakra Pravartana/ Dhammachakkappavattana.
- He died in 483 BC under a Sal tree in Kushinagar (in UP). This event is called Mahaparinirvana.
- The term ‘Buddha’ means ‘enlightened one’.
- Important contemporaries of Buddha were Mahavira Jaina, Kings Prasenjit, Bimbisara and Ajatasatru.

Buddhist Philosophy/Teachings of the Buddha

- It teaches the Middle Path renouncing extreme step like indulgence and strict abstinence.
- The four noble truths (Arya satya) in Buddhism are:
  1. *The world is full of sorrow.*
  2. *Desire is the root cause of all sorrow.*
  3. *Sorrow can be conquered by conquering desire.*
  4. *Desire can be conquered by following the eight-fold paths (Ashtangirka Marga).*

- Eight-fold path are:
  1. *Right understanding*
  2. *Right resolve*
  3. *Right speech*
  4. *Right action*
  5. *Right living*
  6. *Right efforts*
  7. *Right thought*

- The Tri Ratnas of Buddhism are: Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha.
  - *Buddha: highest spiritual potential in every one.*
  - *Dhamma: the teachings of Buddha (Pali for Sanskrit Dharma or righteousness)*
  - *Sangha: order of monks who follow Buddhism.*
Buddha did not believe in god or soul.
Stressed on karma and ahimsa.
He was against the varna system. Buddha taught in Pali.
Buddhism spread to several countries outside India. China adopted Buddhism in the 1st century AD.