

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*
 8. *Right self-concentration.*
- 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.