

Bodhi Day

Buddhism began over 2500 years ago.

There was once a wealthy prince called Siddhartha Gautama who lived in Nepal. One day, he left the palace and saw people suffering with old age and illness. This worried him a great deal. He did not understand how people could live with such things.

Siddhartha decided to give these problems a great deal of thought under a fig tree. This is called meditating. He meditated until he understood all there was to know about life and spirituality. Reaching that level of understanding is called reaching enlightenment.

After Siddhartha reached enlightenment, he became the Buddha and began teaching others how to look at the negative things they suffered in life.



Did You Know?

The fig tree is also known as a bodhi tree.



Celebrating Bodhi Day

The day Siddhartha reached enlightenment became known as Bodhi Day.

Bodhi Day is celebrated on different days according to the country in which it is being celebrated. Some Buddhists celebrate it in December while others will celebrate on the 24th January in 2018.

Bodhi Day is celebrated in a calm and quiet way. Buddhists will often spend time meditating and praying, thinking about the Noble Eightfold Path and the Four Noble Truths.

At home, Buddhists might decorate a bodhi tree with lights and statues of the Buddha may be displayed around the house.

Candles will be lit for 30 days and a traditional meal of rice and milk will be eaten. This was the first meal the Buddha ate after he reached enlightenment under the tree.

Questions

1. What worried Siddhartha Gautama when he left his palace? **Tick one.**

- seeing people laughing
- seeing people suffering
- seeing people going to work
- seeing people crying

2. Where did Siddhartha Gautama meditate? **Tick one.**

- by the river
- under a bodhi tree
- at the palace
- beside a bush

3. Describe what is meant by **enlightenment**.

4. Match up these statements.

Bodhi Day
Buddhists
Siddhartha Gautama

became the Buddha.
celebrates the day Siddhartha Gautama reached enlightenment.
celebrate Bodhi Day.

5. What will some Buddhists do on Bodhi Day? **Tick one.**

- go out for dinner
- meditate and pray
- go to sleep
- read the newspaper

6. Find and copy one adjective which describes the way in which Buddhists will celebrate on Bodhi Day.

7. What might you see in a Buddhist's house on Bodhi Day? **Tick two.**

- statues of elephants
- a bodhi tree with lights
- statues of old people
- statues of the Buddha

8. Why might some Buddhists eat rice and milk on Bodhi Day?

Answers

1. What worried Siddhartha Gautama when he left his palace? **Tick one.**

- seeing people laughing
- seeing people suffering**
- seeing people going to work
- seeing people crying

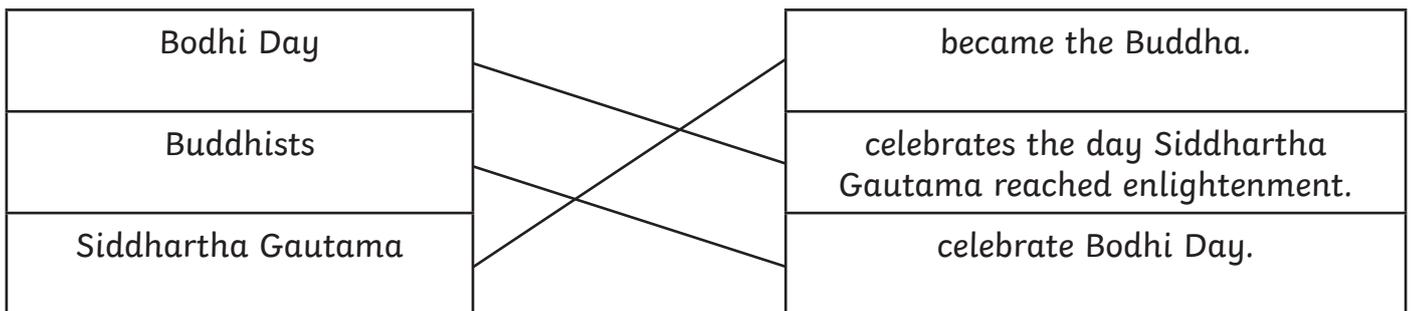
2. Where did Siddhartha Gautama meditate? **Tick one.**

- by the river
- under a bodhi tree**
- at the palace
- beside a bush

3. Describe what is meant by **enlightenment**.

Accept any suitable explanation of enlightenment, such as: Enlightenment is reaching understanding about life and spirituality.

4. Match up these statements.



5. What will some Buddhists do on Bodhi Day? **Tick one**

- go out for dinner
- meditate and pray**
- go to sleep
- read the newspaper

Answers

6. Find and copy one adjective which describes the way in which Buddhists will celebrate on Bodhi Day.

Accept any one of: calm, quiet

7. What might you see in a Buddhist's house on Bodhi Day? **Tick two.**

statues of elephants

a bodhi tree with lights

statues of old people

statues of the Buddha

8. Why might some Buddhists eat rice and milk on Bodhi Day?

Some Buddhists eat rice and milk on Bodhi Day because it is the same meal the Buddha ate after he reached enlightenment.

Bodhi Day

Over 2500 years ago, there lived a wealthy prince called Siddhartha Gautama. He lived in a beautiful palace in Nepal. Siddhartha married and had children but stayed within the palace walls.

One day, he decided to see what was outside the palace and immediately he saw people suffering with old age, illness and death. This caused him great concern, as he did not understand how people could live with such things.

He then saw a man who looked calm and content with nothing but a begging bowl. Siddhartha was puzzled by what he had seen.

It was then Siddhartha decided to give up all his wealth and meditate on these problems under a fig tree. He meditated for a long time until he understood all there was to know about life and how people can help themselves when they are suffering. He reached a high level of understanding and wisdom, which is known as reaching enlightenment.

After Siddhartha reached enlightenment, he became the Buddha and began teaching others how to meditate and understand how to change the way they view life and suffering to ease their minds.



Did You Know?

The fig tree is also known as a bodhi tree.



Celebrating Bodhi Day

The day Siddhartha reached enlightenment is recognised as Bodhi Day. It is celebrated on different days depending on the country in which the celebrations are taking place. Some Buddhists celebrate it in December while others will celebrate on 24th January in 2018.

Bodhi Day is celebrated in a calm, quiet and peaceful manner. Many Buddhists will spend the day meditating and praying with a focus on the Four Noble Truths.

At home, Buddhists might decorate a bodhi tree with lights and statues of Buddha may be displayed around the house. Candles, representing enlightenment, will be lit for 30 days. Some might eat a traditional meal of rice and milk as this was the first meal the Buddha ate after he reached enlightenment under the tree.

Questions

1. Where did Siddhartha Gautama come from? **Tick one.**

London

Nepal

Paris

Malaga

2. What shocked Siddhartha Gautama when he left the palace?

3. Which word is closest in meaning to **puzzled**?

worried

unsure

bemused

indifferent

4. What action did Siddhartha Gautama take as soon as he realised what happened in the outside world?

5. Complete these sentences.

Siddhartha Gautama meditated under _____

He stayed beneath the tree until _____

He reached _____

6. What happened after Siddhartha Gautama reached enlightenment?

7. What does Bodhi Day celebrate? Tick one.

- the day Siddhartha Gautama became the Buddha
- the day Siddhartha Gautama reached enlightenment
- the day Siddhartha Gautama left the palace
- the day Siddhartha Gautama saw the old people

8. Tick the true statements.

Some Buddhists celebrate Bodhi Day in February.	
Bodhi Day is celebrated with a big party.	
Bodhi Day is spent in prayer and meditation.	
Buddhists might decorate their homes with statues of the Buddha on Bodhi Day.	

9. Why might some Buddhists light candles for 30 days on Bodhi Day?

Answers

1. Where did Siddhartha Gautama come from? **Tick one.**

- London
- Nepal**
- Paris
- Malaga

2. What shocked Siddhartha Gautama when he left the palace?

Siddhartha Gautama was shocked when he saw people suffering with old age, illness and death.

3. Which word is closest in meaning to **puzzled**?

- worried
- unsure
- bemused**
- indifferent

4. What action did Siddhartha Gautama take as soon as he realised what happened in the outside world?

As soon as Siddhartha Gautama realised what happened in the outside world, he gave up his wealth.

5. Complete these sentences.

Siddhartha Gautama meditated under **the fig tree, also known as the bodhi tree.**

He stayed beneath the tree until **he understood all there was to know about life and how people can help themselves when suffering.**

He reached **enlightenment.**

6. What happened after Siddhartha Gautama reached enlightenment?

After Siddhartha Gautama reached enlightenment, he became the Buddha.

7. What does Bodhi Day celebrate? Tick one.

- the day Siddhartha Gautama became the Buddha
- the day Siddhartha Gautama reached enlightenment**
- the day Siddhartha Gautama left the palace
- the day Siddhartha Gautama saw the old people

8. Tick the true statements.

Some Buddhists celebrate Bodhi Day in February.	
Bodhi Day is celebrated with a big party.	
Bodhi Day is spent in prayer and meditation.	✓
Buddhists might decorate their homes with statues of the Buddha on Bodhi Day.	✓

9. Why might some Buddhists light candles for 30 days on Bodhi Day?

Some Buddhists light candles on Bodhi Day because they represent enlightenment.

Bodhi Day

Over 2500 years ago, there lived a wealthy prince called Siddhartha Gautama. He lived in an ornate palace in Nepal, which was part of India at the time. Siddhartha had a very privileged life, and married and had children but stayed within the palace walls. He never ventured out and saw what the real world was truly like.

One day, he decided to see what was outside the palace. He left the palace walls and was immediately confronted with the sight of an old and infirm man, a seriously ill man and a corpse. He had never seen such suffering and realised with horror that regardless of wealth, everyone would become ill, grow old and die. This caused him great concern as he did not understand how people could live with the knowledge that such discomfort existed.



He then caught sight of a man who seemed peaceful and content with nothing but a begging bowl. Siddhartha was puzzled by all that he had seen.

Siddhartha made a drastic decision. He decided to give up all his wealth and think deeply about these problems until he understood what they meant. He sat beneath a fig tree (also known as a bodhi tree) for a significant period of time. After his long period of meditation, he gained spiritual wisdom and a deep level of understanding about life and suffering. He had reached what is known as enlightenment.

After Siddhartha reached enlightenment, he became the Buddha and began teaching others how to meditate and understand how to change their perspective on life and suffering to make them more content and accepting of hardship.

Celebrating Bodhi Day

The day Siddhartha reached enlightenment is recognised as Bodhi Day. It is celebrated on different days depending on the country which is celebrating it. Some Buddhists celebrate it in December while others will celebrate on 24th January in 2018.

Bodhi Day is celebrated in a serene and peaceful manner. Many Buddhists will spend the day meditating and praying whilst focusing on the Four Noble Truths. At home, Buddhists might decorate a bodhi tree with lights and statues of the Buddha may be arranged around the house. Candles, which represent enlightenment, will be lit for 30 days. Some might eat a traditional meal of rice and milk in recognition of the first meal the Buddha ate after he reached enlightenment.

Questions

1. Find and copy one word which means Siddhartha Gautama enjoyed a good standard of living.

2. Why has the author described Siddhartha Gautama as being immediately confronted when he left the palace?

3. Explain how we know what Siddhartha Gautama felt when he saw what the real world was like outside the palace.

4. What was Siddhartha Gautama's drastic decision and why could it be considered drastic?

5. Order these events from 1 to 6.

	He mediated for a long time about the problems all humans endure.
	He became the Buddha.
	Siddhartha Gautama sat beneath the fig tree.
	Siddhartha Gautama realised that all people would one day suffer and die.
	Siddhartha Gautama reached the level of enlightenment.
	He saw how content a man was who had nothing.

6. Why do you think Bodhi Day was given that name?

7. Explain what reaching enlightenment means.

8. Why is it not clear which day Bodhi Day is celebrated?

9. How might a Buddhist prepare for Bodhi Day and what is the purpose of these activities?

10. What do you think could be the benefits of taking time to celebrate Bodhi Day?

Answers

1. Find and copy one word which means Siddhartha Gautama enjoyed a good standard of living.
privileged

2. Why has the author described Siddhartha Gautama as being immediately confronted when he left the palace?

The author has described Siddhartha Gautama as being 'immediately confronted' when he left the palace because he immediately saw an infirm man, a seriously ill man and a corpse. This would have been shocking and would have felt like a lot to see and take in all at the same time, for a man who had never seen such things before.

3. Explain how we know what Siddhartha Gautama felt when he saw what the real world was like outside the palace.

Siddhartha Gautama felt shocked and horrified at what he saw in the real world. We know this because the text says he 'realised with horror' and that what he saw 'caused him great concern'.

4. What was Siddhartha Gautama's drastic decision and why could it be considered drastic?
Siddhartha Gautama's 'drastic decision' was to give up his wealth. This could be considered drastic because he was a prince and was willing to give everything up to change and gain understanding.

5. Order these events from 1 to 6.

4	He meditated for a long time about the problems all humans endure.
6	He became the Buddha.
3	Siddhartha Gautama sat beneath the fig tree.
1	Siddhartha Gautama realised that all people would one day suffer and die.
5	Siddhartha Gautama reached the level of enlightenment.
2	He saw how content a man was who had nothing.

6. Why do you think Bodhi Day was given that name?

I think Bodhi Day is called this because Siddhartha Gautama sat beneath a fig tree. Fig trees are also called bodhi trees.

7. Explain what reaching enlightenment means.
Reaching enlightenment means gaining spiritual wisdom and a deep level of understanding about life and suffering.
8. Why is it not clear which day Bodhi Day is celebrated?
It is not clear when Bodhi Day is celebrated because different countries celebrate it at different times of the year.
9. How might a Buddhist prepare for Bodhi Day and what is the purpose of these activities?
A Buddhist might prepare for Bodhi Day by decorating their house with lights and statues of the Buddha. Then, on the day, they might light candles to represent enlightenment. Some might eat a traditional meal of rice and milk in recognition of the first meal the Buddha ate after he reached enlightenment. Also on the day, Buddhists might spend time meditating and praying and focusing on the Four Noble Truths.
10. What do you think could be the benefits of taking time to celebrate Bodhi Day?
Pupils' own responses, such as: I think the benefits of celebrating Bodhi Day could be that people become calmer and can deal with problems in their life more easily as a result of taking the time to think about all the suffering in the world.