

Key Concepts of Buddhism

Cycle of rebirth (*samsāra*) -- the endless reincarnation of sentient beings.

The Four Noble Truths -- 1) Life in *samsāra* is suffering. 2) This has a cause, the craving for existence. 3) It may be ended. 4) There is a path for ending it.

The Eight-fold Path -- The path to end suffering. 1) Moral conduct (right speech, action, and livelihood); 2) Meditation (right effort, mindfulness, and concentration); 3) Wisdom (right views and right intentions).

Karma -- An intentional deed or act and the results which arise from it, in this life or the next.

The Five Aggregates -- The five elements which join to form the illusory identity of a human being: 1) material form; 2) feelings; 3) perceptions; 4) impulses; 5) consciousness.

The Five Paths of Existence -- 1) Deity; 2) human; 3) animal; 4) hungry ghost; 5) hell.

Dhyana ("trance," Zen) -- Religious discipline aimed at tranquilizing the mind so that one truly sees the illusory nature of existence.

Theravāda ("Hinayāna") Buddhism -- The group of Buddhist schools that take the Arhat as an ideal (now popular in Southeast Asia).

Arhat -- An enlightened being who has reached the state of Nirvāṇa.

Mahāyāna Buddhism -- The group of Buddhist schools that take the Bodhisattva as the ideal (the major form of Buddhism in China, Korea, and Japan).

Bodhisattva -- An enlightened being who works to become a Buddha through such deeds as his vows to ferry other beings to Nirvana, working for the salvation of his "buddha-field."