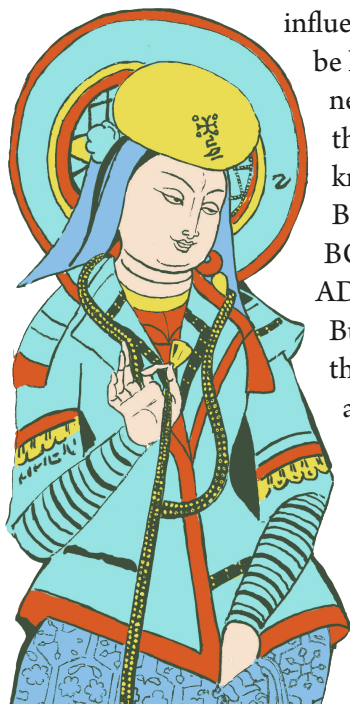




Buddhism originated in India during the fifth century BC, but its rapid spread and huge influence on world culture can be largely attributed to the network of trading routes through Asia that we now know as the Silk Road. Between the first century BC and the seventh century AD, different strands of Buddhism travelled across the Silk Road from India along several different routes through Central Asia to China.



The Silk Road linked Europe by land to all

the major Asian civilizations and as such acted as a conduit for the transmission of all sorts of ideas, traditions and beliefs. They were spread partly by missionaries and monks, partly by those expanding and invading empires that had adopted the religion, and partly by travelling merchants, artisans, pilgrims and nomadic people who travelled the Silk Roads to make their fortune.

From the fourth century AD, Chinese Buddhist monks had begun to travel in the other direction towards India to discover Buddhism first-hand. Buddhism quickly became the dominant religion of the Silk Road, and its decline there only came as Mongolian and Turkic influence in China increased towards the end of the first millennium AD, and Islam overtook it as the dominant faith. With the eventual fall of the Tangut Empire to Genghis Khan in 1227, Buddhism gradually disappeared from the Silk Road altogether.

Activity:

By looking at objects found on the Silk Road, we can learn much about the ways in which ideas and beliefs may have spread.

Look at the painting below from the British Museum. Can you guess who this character is or what he may be doing?

Look at the pack of scrolls on his back. What might these have been used for?



An itinerant storyteller or monk. 1919,0101,0.168
© The British Museum

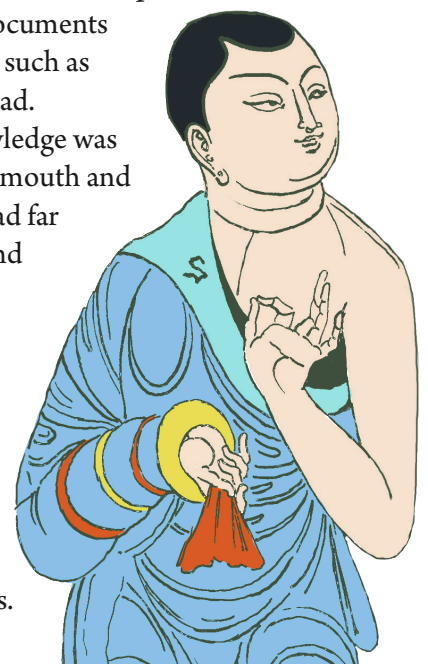
This painting shows a monk with a pack full of scrolls, a staff and a tiger. It is possible that the character could be a pilgrim monk like the famous Xuanzang who had a dream that convinced him to journey to India on a pilgrimage to the birthplace of Buddhism, preaching his

faith and collecting sutras as he went. The journey took him over seventeen years and was immortalized in the famous Chinese novel *Journey to the West* and the 1970s television series *Monkey*.

Alternatively the image could depict a travelling storyteller, carrying illustrations for his public recitals. Characters such as this would have travelled the Silk Road telling popular Buddhist tales, illustrated by painted scrolls.

After about the first century AD, the spread of Buddhism among learned people was helped by the practice of writing down and translating Buddhist Scriptures or Sutra into different languages. In fact, much of the knowledge we have today about the spread of Buddhism comes from documents that have survived at sites such as Dunhuang on the Silk Road. Originally however, knowledge was passed largely by word of mouth and this allowed ideas to spread far more easily to ordinary and illiterate people.

Both storytellers and travelling pilgrim monks such as these would therefore have played a vital part in spreading Buddhist ideas and imagery upon their travels.





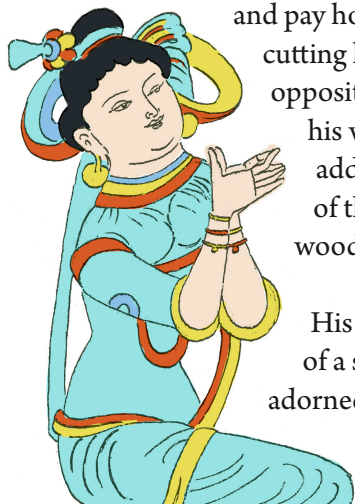
In Buddhism, the tradition of building temples in caves is common and can be seen all over Asia. The practice may have originated in India, the birthplace of Buddhism, but the caves pictured here are situated near Dunhuang, a Silk Road town in the northwest of China.

Today, there are some four hundred and ninety-two cave temples carved out of the sandstone cliff facing the Sanwei mountain at Dunhuang. The caves vary in size and in decoration. Some of the smallest caves are no more than tiny niches, while others are vast chambers containing Buddhist figures over 30 metres high. In total the temples contain over forty-five thousand square metres of paintings and two thousand four hundred sculptures. The caves vary in date but span a period from the early fifth to the fourteenth century AD.

The very first cave temple was excavated at Dunhuang in AD 366. The legend tells of a Buddhist monk Lezun, who stopped to drink and to water his donkey at the Great Spring Valley near Dunhuang before continuing on his way to the West. Resting awhile, he watched the sun set over the Sanwei mountain and was amazed to see a wondrous vision of a giant Maitreya Buddha surrounded by an aura of golden light, from which emerged the image of a thousand golden Buddhas.

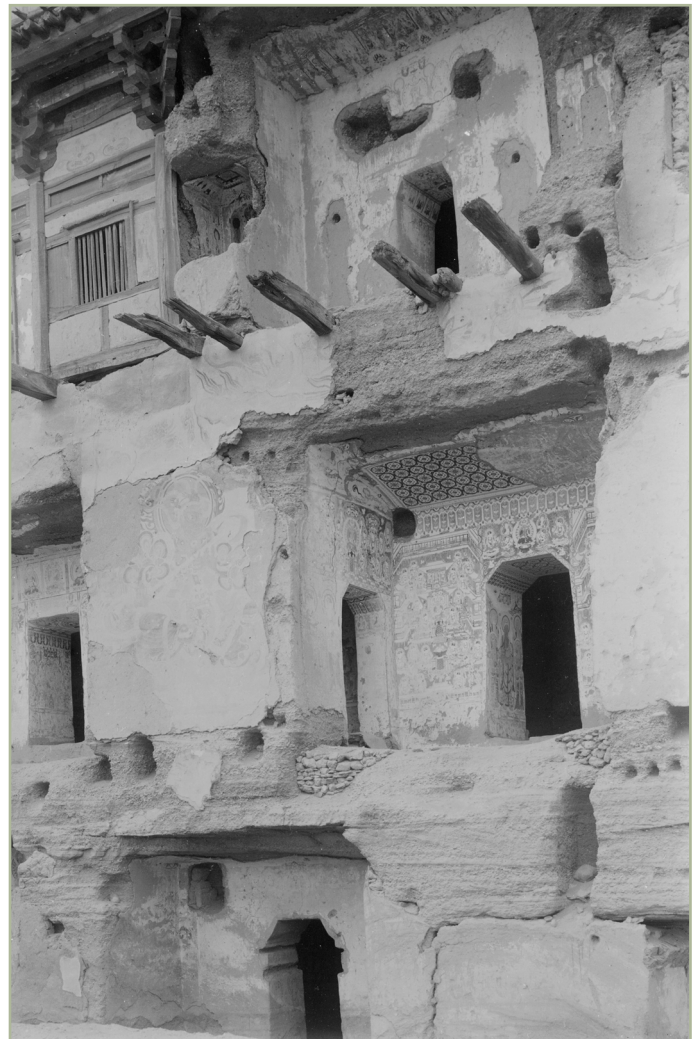
Lezun was astounded by this vision and took it as a sign that this was the holy place for which he had been searching. He abandoned his onward journey in order to settle here and build a cave in which he could meditate and pay homage to the Buddha. After cutting his cave by hand from the cliff-face opposite the mountain, Lezun painted his vision onto the walls of the cave, adding a three dimensional figure of the Buddha constructed around a wooden frame.

His cave was soon followed by that of a second monk, Faliang, who also adorned his niche with images and scenes



to focus his meditation. This pattern, of mural wall-painting along with carved or sculpted figures was to set a stylistic precedent in Dunhuang among pious Buddhists who, keen to demonstrate their faith and social standing, carved hundreds of beautifully decorated cave temples out of the cliff face over the next thousand years.

Many of the caves at Dunhuang contain images of the wealthy and pious patrons who commissioned their construction and decoration, and the wall murals tell us much about their belief as well as the society to which they belonged.

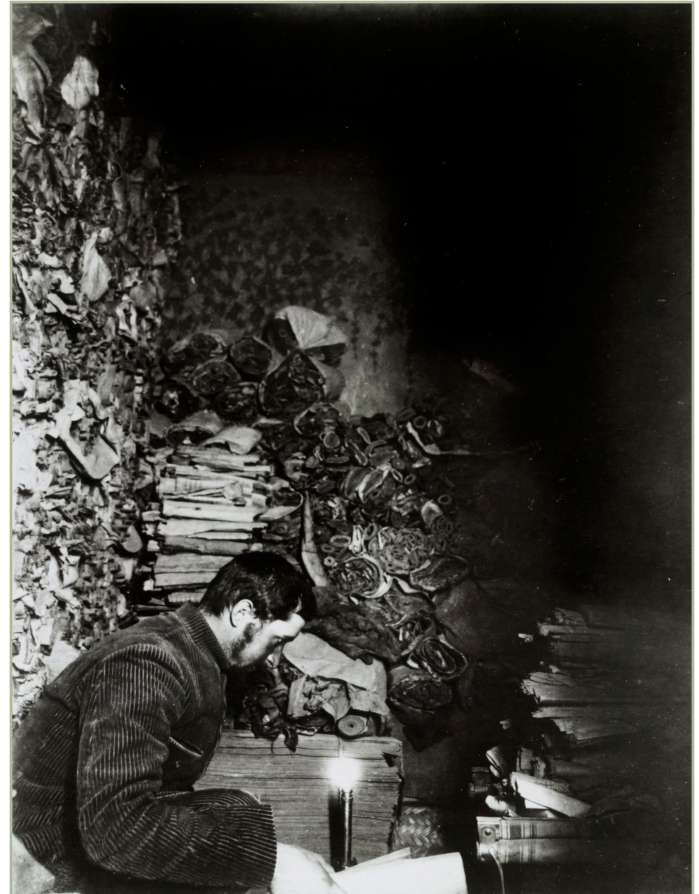


Mogao caves at Dunhuang. 3 April 1914. Photo 392/29(107)
Photographer: M. Aurel Stein. © The British Library Board

Archaeological Discovery at Dunhuang

Around the turn of the twentieth century a hidden cache of manuscripts was discovered at the Dunhuang caves. In a previously walled up chamber, now known as the Library Cave or cave 17, tens of thousands of manuscripts and hundreds of paintings were discovered. Many of the manuscripts were Buddhist texts while others were items related to everyday and official life on the Silk Road. No one is quite sure why the items were hidden here, but it was clear that they had been stored untouched for almost 1000 years. The contents of the cave were variously dispersed, and can now be seen in museum and library collections around the world.

Thanks to important archaeological discoveries such as these, today we know much about the Silk Road, its inhabitants and their beliefs. The Mogao caves are now protected as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and opened to the public as a tourist destination at certain times of the year. There are strict controls to protect this unique site for future generations and conservation work is ongoing.



Paul Pelliot in the Dunhuang Library Cave, 1908.
AP8187 © Le musée Guimet



Northern Caves at Dunhuang, 1999. Photo 1118/1(10)
Photographer: Colin Chinnery ©International Dunhuang Project



Discussion:

Why do you think the practice of building cave temples was so popular among lay-people as well as monks?

Caves were often richly decorated in the style of the period and depicted patrons as well as political and religious scenes in their murals. Do you think this kind of visual information is as valuable to historians as written accounts of the day?



The life of the Buddha is usually told as a mixture of historical fact and legend. The name of the historical Buddha is Siddhārtha Gautama. The exact date of his birth is not known. Many scholars say he was born in Kapilavastu on the present-day Indian-Nepalese border about 563 BC, and other sources indicate he may have been born up to a century later. As he belonged to a people called the Śākya, he became known as Śākya-muni, 'the sage of the Śākya'.

Legend tells that Queen Māyā, the mother of Śākyamuni, became pregnant after dreaming of an elephant appearing on a cloud. Śākyamuni was born from his mother's right side as she was reaching for a branch of a sāla tree in the Lumbinī grove. As a young prince, Śākyamuni lived a life of luxury in his father's palace.

At the age of 29, the young prince became curious about life outside the palace walls. In the outside world, Śākyamuni had four encounters which would change his life. He saw an old man, a sick man, a corpse, and a serene holy man. From these experiences he learnt that life is full of suffering, is impermanent and eventually comes to an end. He noted that the holy man seemed unaffected by these traumas, and decided to leave his father's palace to embark on his own spiritual journey to understand human suffering and how it may be endured and transcended.

After attempting various kinds of ascetic practices, Śākyamuni sought shelter under a bodhi tree to reflect on his life and the passing away of all living things. During this time, he was tormented by a demon called Māra but eventually, at the age of 35 he achieved enlightenment, subsequently becoming known as the

'Buddha', or the 'Awakened One'. From this moment, Buddha devoted the rest of his life to alleviating the suffering of other beings through teaching. This was effectively the birth of the Buddhist religion.



Buddha with a Begging Bowl . 1919,0101,0.193
© The British Museum



Detail from a Paper Prayer Sheet . Or.8210/P.14
© The British Library Board



Detail from the Frontispiece of the Diamond Sutra. Or.8210/P.2
© The British Library Board



Activity:

Look at the painting on silk from the British Museum on the right. Can you identify any of the key moments in Buddha's life in the scenes depicted?

Discussion:

What do the prince's encounters outside of the palace tell us about the kind of person Siddhārtha Gautama was?

How does the story of Buddha's life compare to our own ideas of ambition and success in life today? Do you think Buddha would place value on the same ideas?

Do you think there is value in Buddha's beliefs?



The Life of Śākyamuni. 1919,0101,0.96
© The British Museum



Book of Buddha's Names. Or.8210/S.253
© The British Library Board

As a religion Buddhism addresses the true nature of our existence and offers a means by which human suffering may be transcended. A number of basic tenets, or principles, offer guidance to help Buddhists make the right choices in their religious lives.

The reduction of Buddhist morals into a series of numbered lessons makes them easier both to remember and recite. This was a device which proved vital to the spread of Buddhism as a religion throughout ancient India and China during a time when an oral culture existed. The basic tenets of Buddhism are summarised below:

The Four Noble Truths

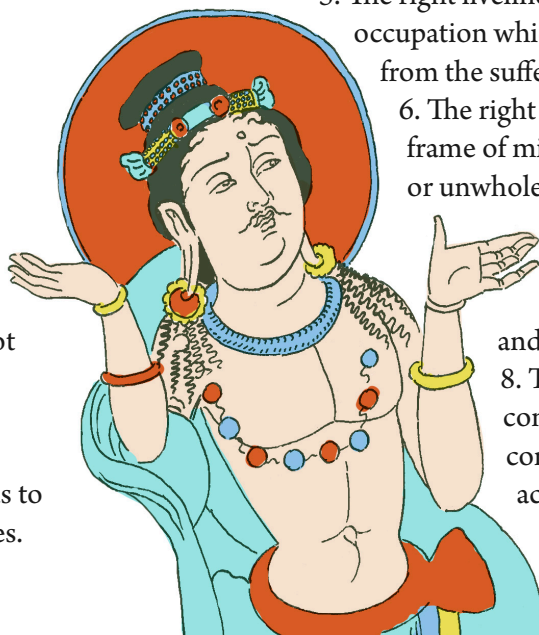
Buddha's teachings are summarised in The Four Noble Truths which were taught in his first sermon. Their origins lie in inherited Indian religious beliefs in rebirth, karma and liberation.

1. All life is suffering — pleasure is impermanent.
2. The origin of suffering is desire — we should not attach ourselves to impermanent things.
3. There exists Nirvana, an end to suffering — to achieve this we must end desire.
4. An 'eightfold' path, defined by the Buddha, leads to Nirvana — this is a middle path, avoiding extremes.

The Eightfold Path

The Eightfold Path describes choices for living a religious life:

1. The right knowledge — this relates to the right way of viewing the world, as outlined in the Four Noble Truths.
2. The right thought — or the right intention; to lead a good life.
3. The right speech — to be truthful, avoid harsh language, gossip or boasting.
4. The right action or conduct — to avoid unethical behaviour and to encourage wholesome conduct by following the five precepts.
5. The right livelihood — choosing an occupation which does not profit from the suffering of others.
6. The right effort — or the right frame of mind to overcome evil or unwholesome things.
7. The right mindfulness — being aware of oneself and one's emotions.
8. The right concentration — concentration of mind achieved through meditation.



The Three Treasures or Jewels

The Three Treasures or highest entities in Buddhism took root throughout Asia as Buddhism spread across the continent. Salutation to these three entities forms a basis of meditation for many Buddhists.

- The Buddha
- The Dharma (Buddhism Path)
- The Sangha (the community of Monks)

The Five Precepts

The Five Precepts outline a code of moral conduct for laypersons for everyday life. They focus on the most important moral issues and must be observed. There are also a number of higher precepts, not listed here, which may be observed once a month by those who wish to withdraw from normal life without making the full-time commitments of a monk. These include abstinence from more frivolous or luxurious activities. The five basic precepts however are:

1. Do not kill any living thing.
2. Do not steal or defraud.
3. Do not engage in sexual misconduct.
4. Avoid wrong speech. Do not lie, gossip or speak poorly of others.
5. Do not use intoxicating substances, alcohol or recreational drugs.



Discussion:

Think about some of the choices you make in your everyday life.

Do you follow similar values to those outlined above?

What actions or decisions in your own life would you have to change in order to follow the Eightfold Path or the Five Precepts?

Do you disagree with any of these principles? If so, why?



Buddha preaching the Dharma. Detail from the *Paradise of Śākyamuni*. 1919,0101,0.6
© The British Museum



'Iconography' is a word we use to talk about the use of images or symbols in art to represent a particular idea, movement, person or belief. Buddhist art has a very clear iconography and the image of the Buddha in particular is characterized by various recognisable motifs which developed out of a desire to share the teachings of Buddhism with a wider audience.

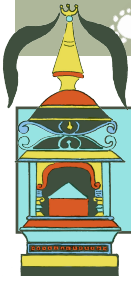
Some images of the Buddha are pictured below. It is interesting to note however that very early Buddhist art (before the first century BC) did not depict the Buddha as a human figure at all but instead used familiar symbols such as a stupa or a dharma wheel to represent him instead.



Top: Prints of Buddha. 1919,0101,0.254. Buddha with a Begging Bowl. 1919,0101,0.193. © The British Museum.
Detail from a Paper Prayer Sheet. Or.8210/P.14. © The British Library Board.
Bottom: Seated Bodhisattva. EO 1211a. Wooden Buddha. EO 1108. © Le musée Guimet.
Buddha Stencil. IOL Tib J 1361. © The British Library Board.



Look at the artefacts above which were found at different sites along the Silk Road. Can you see any recurring symbols or motifs on the figure of the Buddha? What do you think these motifs might represent?



What symbols or motifs did you notice?

Did you notice that all of these images picture the Buddha sitting cross-legged?

In Buddhist art there are a number of set postures for the Buddha called asanas. These can tell us about what Buddha is doing or thinking. The cross-legged 'lotus' position is one of meditation, but you may also see images of the Buddha standing upright with hands raised in a gesture (or mudrā) of reassurance, or reclining in a pose which refers to the end of his life before entering Parinirvāṇa.

Can you see any recurring physical characteristics in these images of the Buddha?

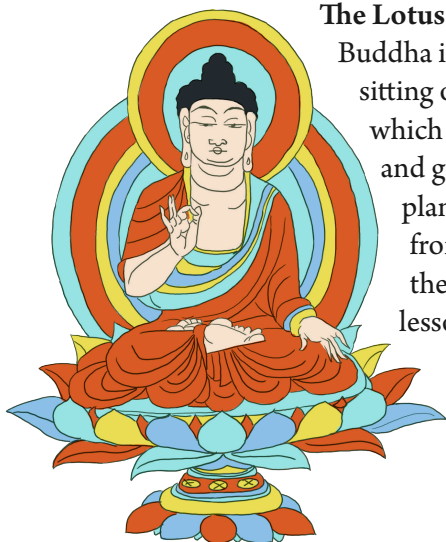


Replica figures at the Dunhuang Academy. Photographer: Abby Baker. © International Dunhuang Project

The Buddha has thirty-two lakṣaṇa or special physical characteristics which mark him out as a 'cosmic being'. The lakṣaṇa represent spiritual characteristics of the Buddha such as wisdom and enlightenment and also demonstrate the idea that Buddha's outer beauty is a reflection of his inner spiritual nature. In these images you may have noticed the tuft of hair or third eye between Buddha's eyebrows (ūrṇā) which symbolises spiritual insight or the bump on the top of the head (uṣṇiṣa) which symbolises wisdom and spirituality and his attainment of enlightenment.

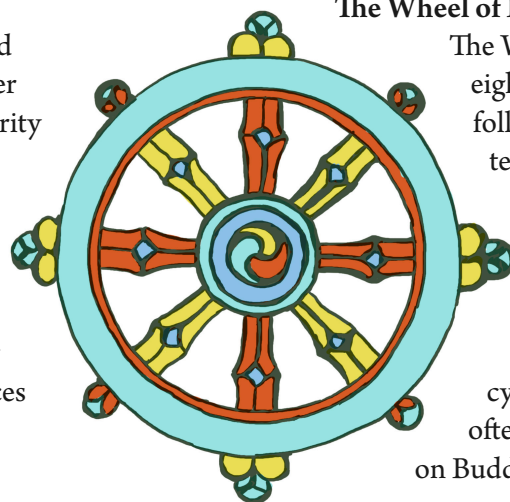
Other physical symbols such as his elongated ears (which remind us the Buddha was born a wealthy and privileged prince who wore heavy earrings but who sacrificed luxury to live a spiritual life) are not considered lakṣaṇa but are common in images of the Buddha making the meaning and message of Buddhist art clear and easy to recognize.

Other common motifs



The Lotus Flower

Buddha is often pictured sitting on a lotus flower which symbolizes purity and goodness. As a plant which rises from the mud, the lotus is a lesson that we can rise above our circumstances to achieve goodness.



The Wheel of Law

The Wheel of Law has eight spokes to remind followers of Buddha's teaching. The Noble Eightfold Path outlined eight rules of living. The Wheel itself is a reminder of the cycle of life and can often be found pictured on Buddha's hands and feet.



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國際敦煌項目



BUDDHISM

Worksheet 6

Object Focus: Buddhist Paintings

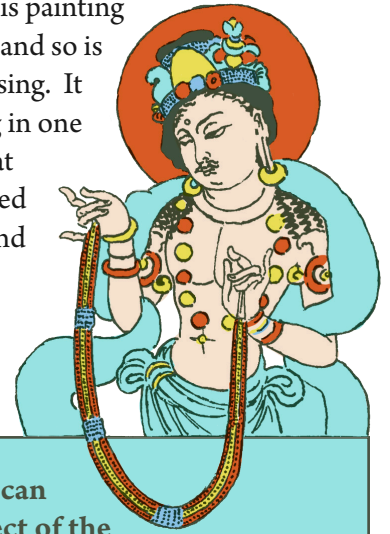


Buddha preaching the Dharma. Detail from the *Paradise of Śākyamuni*. 1919,0101,0.6
© The British Museum

This image is of a painting on silk from the Stein collection at the British Museum. These silk paintings were part of the cache of manuscripts and artefacts found in the early twentieth century in cave 17, the Library Cave, at the Mogao caves near Dunhuang, northwest China. The silk paintings found in the Library Cave mostly date from the eighth to tenth centuries.

Many of them were brought back to London by Sir Aurel Stein, who carried out four expeditions to Chinese Central Asia in the early twentieth century. Others, brought back to Europe by Paul Pelliot, can be seen in the Guimet museum in Paris.

This particular painting depicts the figure of Buddha preaching the Dharma. It dates from the early eighth century AD. In real life, this painting measures 139cm x 102cm and so is both impressive and imposing. It would probably have hung in one of the many cave temples at Dunhuang, which were used both for private worship and to demonstrate status and wealth in society.



Take a closer look at the larger image of this painting overleaf and see if you can recognise the following details which tell us something about both the subject of the painting and the people who commissioned it.

We can interpret the subject of this painting — ‘Buddha Preaching the Dharma’ — by looking at the central figure. Buddha adopts the vitarka mudrā, a hand gesture which represents intellectual discussion. The circle formed by his thumb and index finger is the sign of the wheel of Dharma and reminds us of the cycle of life.

Notice the uṣṇiṣa, or bump on Buddha’s head symbolising his wisdom and enlightenment.

Notice the elongated ears. These remind us of the heavy jewels Buddha would once have worn as a prince. He has sacrificed much to live a spiritual life.

Buddha is raised on a lotus petal platform. Around him float other figures on lotus flowers. This flower symbolises purity and goodness, and reminds us that, like the lotus, which grows from mud, we can rise above our circumstances to achieve goodness.

Buddha is surrounded by attendants and sits beneath a magnificent canopy. These visual aids help the faithful to picture the Pure Land they strive towards.

In the bottom left hand corner a smaller kneeling figure represents the female donor, or sponsor of this painting. A missing piece in the opposite corner would have contained her husband. Pious donors such as these were vital to the production of Buddhist art.

The fragile silk on which this image was painted has deteriorated in parts. When these paintings were discovered in the library cave, they were stored in rolls and many were in poor condition. Originally there would have been a complete painted border around the outside of this panel.

You can see a number of rectangular panels or cartouches in this scene. These may have contained instruction from a sutra, or inscriptions which we cannot now read. In some cases these were never completed. Why do you think this may have happened?



The Diamond Sūtra at the British Library is the world's earliest dated printed book, and was made in AD 868. It was discovered by accident in the early twentieth century along with tens of thousands of other scrolls in a hidden cave at the Buddhist Mogao cave site in Dunhuang, northwest China.



The Diamond Sūtra. Or.8210/P.2.
© The British Library Board

What is a sūtra?

The text printed on this scroll is one of the most important sūtras in Buddhism. ‘Sūtra’ is a Sanskrit (or ancient Indian) word meaning a ‘classic text’, and in Buddhism came to mean the words, sermons and lectures of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni. Buddhism originated in north India and spread all over Asia, and thus Buddhist sūtras were translated into many local languages so that people could understand the word of the Buddha more clearly. This copy of the *Diamond Sūtra* is in Chinese.

How and why was it made?

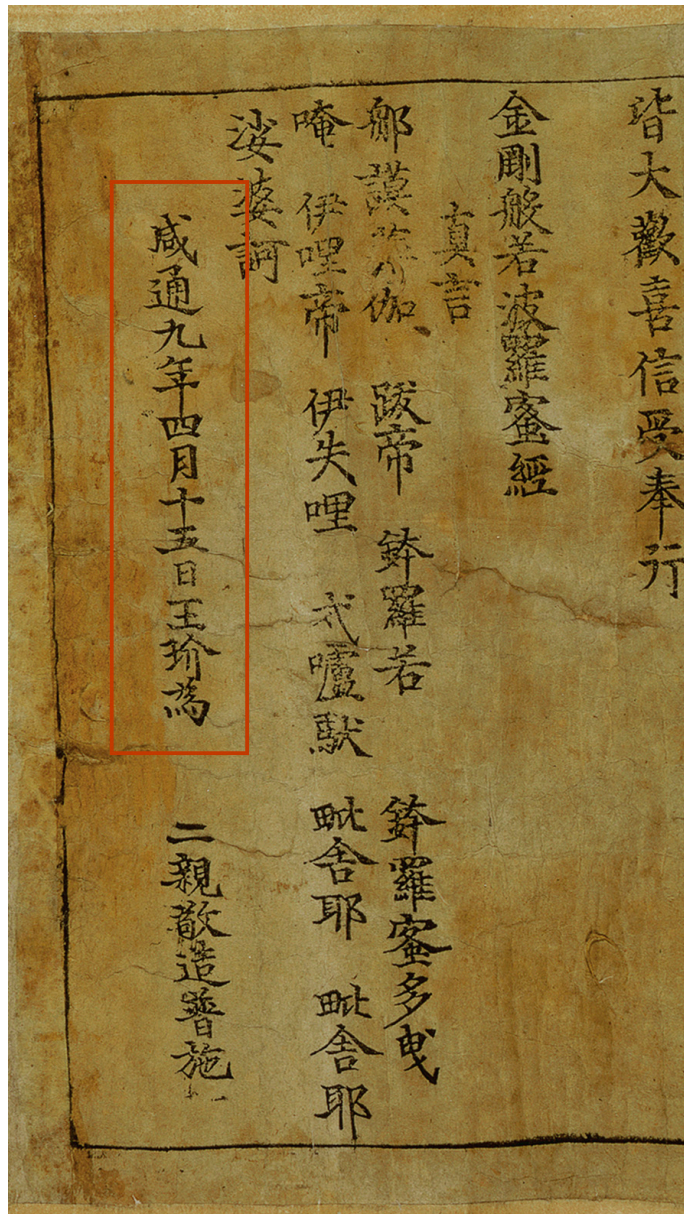
This copy of the *Diamond Sūtra* was printed using wood blocks. Buddhists in China began to use printing technology from the eighth century onwards. An

essential part of Buddhist teaching stresses the importance of doing good deeds and spreading the word of the Buddha. Printing was an ideal way to distribute Buddhist knowledge as widely as possible, benefiting society, and attaining merit for the sponsor of the work, diminishing his karmic debt in a bid to ensure a better rebirth in the next life.

This *Diamond Sūtra* was printed on seven sections of fine paper made from hemp and mulberry. Paper had first been invented in China in the second century BC, and so by AD 868 had become very refined and beautiful. It was often coloured yellow with a dye called huangbo, which repelled both insects and water. Yellow was the colour of the emperor in Imperial China, and was also taken on by the Buddhists as a sacred colour.

How do we know the date of this copy?

The date of this item is printed in a colophon. The colophon is a note printed at the end of the scroll, giving information about the date and the sponsor of the sūtra. The colophon here reads, 'Reverently made for universal distribution by Wang Jie on behalf of his two parents on the fifteenth day of the fourth month of the ninth year of the Xiantong reign.' This is the Chinese calendar equivalent of 11 May 868.



咸通九年四月十五日王玠為

二親歡造普施

咸通九年四月十五日
xiántōng jiù nián sì yuè shíwù rì
The fifteenth day of the fourth month of the ninth
year of the Xiantong reign.

What does the sūtra tell us?

Look at the image of the *Diamond Sūtra* shown overleaf. The picture before the main text of the *Diamond Sūtra* is called a frontispiece. It shows the Buddha preaching to his followers, and in particular to Subhuti, his elderly disciple who asks the Buddha questions throughout. Before the main text of the sūtra, there is an invocation to those who may chant the sūtra aloud advising them first to recite the mantra for purifying the karma of the mouth. Sūtras were often recited or chanted as another means of gaining merit, and the *Diamond Sūtra* was popular because it was relatively short and easy to remember for this purpose. The text encourages disciples to recognise and reject the material illusions of the world around them as human constructs. The recognition of this, along with the practice of the Buddhist path, leads to Enlightenment.



Take a closer look at this scroll and listen to a recording of the *Diamond Sūtra* being chanted by monks from a temple in Taiwan on the British Library website:
<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/ttp/ttpbooks.html>



In Buddhism, all beings are believed to have the potential to achieve Buddhahood. Buddhahood is achieved by entering Nirvāṇa (the end of the cycle of re-birth) through the attainment of enlightenment and is the result of a lifetime of meditation, study and good deeds. Enlightenment is not sought by most Buddhists, whose practice of the Buddhist path leads purely to better rebirth in the next life.

A bodhisattva is an 'enlightened being', or one destined to become a Buddha, who chooses to stay in the world of suffering to help other beings attain enlightenment. In order to achieve this end, the bodhisattva carries out unselfish acts and gives away the karmic merit that he gains from these good deeds to other beings.

Avalokiteśvara is a bodhisattva known in Chinese as 'Guanyin' 观音. In Indian sculptures this figure was originally male, but in China later became a beautiful female figure. Avalokiteśvara is the embodiment of compassion and the principal assistant of Amitābha. Amitābha Buddha is a Buddha who reigns over the Western Paradise or Pure Land, into which all may be reborn if they recite his name during their lifetimes on earth.



The name Avalokiteśvara can be translated as 'He who looks down on the World' or 'He who hears the cries of the World'. This bodhisattva is first mentioned in *The Lotus Sūtra* in which Avalokiteśvara is able to take any form in order to come to the aid of humans. He is often depicted helping those in trouble. His compassion, and his conviction and ability to help all sentient beings without prejudice is seen as an embodiment of the great compassion of Buddhahood itself.



Child's painting of Avalokiteśvara. 1919,0101,0.157*.
© The British Museum

This image of Avalokiteśvara was probably painted by a child between the 9th and 10th centuries AD, and was discovered in the hidden Library Cave at Dunhuang by Sir Aurel Stein at the beginning of the twentieth century.



Avalokiteśvara has a large following throughout Asia and has inspired the largest number of representations of all the Buddhist figures. The simplest is that of a bodhisattva holding a lotus. Avalokiteśvara is also commonly depicted with a red lotus symbolising love and compassion, and often wears the image of Amitābha in his headdress or crown. The hand gesture or mudrā most often associated with Avalokiteśvara is that of charity or gift giving (varada mudrā) where the Buddha's hand is lowered and extended downwards with the palm facing outwards.

In Tibet, Avalokiteśvara is often pictured with many arms and heads. This depiction relates to the Buddhist belief in Avalokiteśvara's ability to hear and reach out to all the suffering beings in the world. By the twelfth century, Avalokiteśvara was taken to be the patron deity of Tibet, known as Chenrezig. Since the seventeenth century, the Dalai Lama has been commonly recognised as the incarnation of Avalokiteśvara.

Which, if any, of these symbols did you notice in the child's painting of Avalokiteśvara from the British Museum overleaf and the image below?



The Thousand-armed, Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara. 1919,0101,0.35
© The British Museum



The Jātaka stories, or 'birth stories' are tales which originally came from local folklore and were adapted as teaching aids as Buddhism spread throughout Asia from India. The stories depict the Buddha in former lives or 'incarnations', both human and animal, and usually portray him showing great compassion, thus serving as moral fables in a similar way to the Parables used in Christianity. The Jātaka stories appeared frequently in Buddhist art as a way of teaching illiterate people the morals of Buddhism. Many such examples can be seen in wall paintings at Buddhist cave complexes such as at Mogao near Dunhuang on the Silk Road.

Look at the following images from cave number 257 at Dunhuang. The three images follow on from one another and depict 'The Ruru (or deer) Jātaka'.

Can you work out the story from the images?
See if you were right overleaf.



Deer Jātaka on a wall painting at Dunhuang, Cave 257. Courtesy of the Dunhuang Academy



The Ruru Jātaka, or the Tale of the Deer of Nine Colours

The Buddha once lived in a lush forest as a beautiful deer with a gleaming multicoloured coat which glimmered like jewels. Wary of hunters, the deer was careful to stay hidden from view and had never been seen by those who frequented the forest. One day the deer was alerted to the cries of a drowning man who had fallen into a fast flowing river flooded by rain. With no regard for his own safety, the deer plunged into the water and dragged the drowning man to the riverbank. The man was very grateful and he pledged to be forever in the service of his rescuer. The deer would hear none of it, but asked the man to protect him from hunters by continuing to keep his existence a secret. The man promised never to tell anyone about the deer.

One day the queen of the country dreamed of the multicoloured deer in the forest and demanded that he be found and brought to her. A reward was posted, promising riches and land to whoever should find and capture the deer. The man who had been rescued by the deer was good but very poor and eventually, overwhelmed with guilt, he went to the palace and offered to lead the king's hunters to the deer.

When the deer heard hunters approaching and saw the man he had rescued with them he called out in a human voice. Explaining who he was, and asking who had led the hunters to him, he explained that he had been betrayed by a man whose life he had saved. The king was angry and berated the man, but the deer explained

that the temptation of riches was too much for some people to resist and that such desire weakens integrity. The king, upon hearing such wisdom agreed to pay the man his reward and also granted the deer freedom to walk the forest without fear. In gratitude for this freedom the deer offered his services to the king. The king asked the deer to return with him to the palace and to become a teacher of the Dharma, or Buddhist path. He accepted and was welcomed as an honoured guest. At his welcome banquet the deer preached to the guests.

His teaching explained that despite all the complexities of the Dharma, its central message was clear and simple; have compassion and respect for all living beings. The king promised that from then on, all animals in his kingdom would be protected.

How might you apply the moral offered in this Jātaka story to situations in your own life?

Do you think the cave painting from Dunhuang illustrated this story clearly? Would you have been able to work out what was happening from the painting alone?





Note: Many Buddhist words come from the ancient Indian language Sanskrit. In these worksheets Sanskrit words have been written using the Roman alphabet. As with some other languages, Sanskrit words sometimes contain dashes, dots, or other symbols called diacritics which can change the sound, or the length, of the letter to which they are added. Sometimes, Sanskrit words are written without these marks, and the spelling may be changed to reflect the way the word is pronounced. You can see some examples of this in the glossary below. There are many different sounds in Sanskrit which are expressed by different symbols. Not all of these are explained here, but some common examples of diacritics in Sanskrit include:

ś (as in Avalokiteśvara), or ṣ (as in Lakṣaṇa) which both change the 's' sound to 'sh'.
ā or ī (as in Hīnayāna), or ū (as in Ūṛṇā) which all double the length of the vowel.

Amitābha Buddha: a celestial Buddha who reigns over the Western Paradise (Sukhāvātī) a Pure Land (Kṣetra), into which the all may be reborn if they recite his name during their lifetimes on earth.

Ānanda: the most junior of Buddha's immediate disciples. He often appears together with Kāśyapa, the most senior.

Arhat: a Buddhist who has attained nirvana.

Avalokiteśvara: a bodhisattva known in Chinese as Guanyin and in Tibetan as Chenrezig. Avalokiteśvara is the embodiment of compassion and the principal assistant of Amitābha. In Chinese tradition, Guanyin appears as both male and female, and is often appealed to in a female role as 'the giver of children.'

Bodhi tree: the tree under which Buddha achieved enlightenment (bodhi).

Bodhisattva: 'enlightened being' — the bodhisattva is ready for enlightenment and Buddhahood, but chooses to stay in the world of suffering until all attain enlightenment. In order to achieve this end, the bodhisattva carries out unselfish acts and gives away the karmic merit which accrues from these to others. He is therefore the epitome of compassion.

Buddha: the representation of the Buddhist principle of Enlightenment. The Dharma-body (dharmakāya), not to be understood as an individual, but as an essence immanent in all things at all times. The historical

Buddha, Śākyamuni, is only one in a succession of earthly buddhas (nirmāṇakāya). There are also celestial buddhas (sambhogakāya), such as Amitābha, whose buddha realms are beyond the snares of samsāra and therefore half-way houses for believers en route to buddhahood.

Dharma: Buddhist doctrine or path.

Hīnayāna: see Mahāyāna.

Jātaka tales: the 547 stories about the previous lives of Śākyamuni Buddha, some as an animal and some as a man, but always performing good deeds and therefore accumulating merit for rebirth at a higher level.

Lakṣaṇa (Lakshana): the 32 special physical characteristics which mark Buddha out as a 'cosmic being'. The lakṣaṇa demonstrate the idea that Buddha's outer beauty is a reflection of his inner spiritual nature.

Lotus flower: a symbol of purity in Buddhism because the plant is rooted in the mud yet the flower remains unsullied, just like earthly buddhas.

Mahāyāna: Mahāyāna ('Greater Vehicle') Buddhism is a development distinguished from Hīnayāna ('Lesser Vehicle', a name given it by Mahāyāna adherents) or Theravāda (lit. 'Way of the Elders') Buddhism by its promise of complete enlightenment — buddhahood — for all. It became the prominent form of Buddhism in China.



Maitreya: the Buddha of the future. He resides in the Tuṣita Heaven which, being both spiritually and physically close to earth, means that he is able to visit earth in various forms to teach and save others.

Mañjuśrī: the bodhisattva with the greatest wisdom who symbolizes the profoundness of dharma. He is often depicted riding on a lion. His home in China is Wutai Mountain in Shaanxi Province.

Māra: the personification of evil in one's own person. Māra sought to prevent Buddha reaching enlightenment by offering many temptations, but Buddha vanquished him.

Māyā: Śākyamuni's mother. Ten months after dreaming that a snowy silvery elephant entered her womb, a child issued from her right side. Extraordinary signs accompanied his birth and he bore certain physical marks so that a seer prophesized he would become a great religious leader. Māyā departed earth seven days after his birth to live in heaven and Buddha was raised by his aunt.

Mudrā: hand gesture — the most common are:

abhaya (assurance from fear): hand in front of chest with palm facing outwards.

añjali (adoration): palms together in front of chest.

dharmacakra ('turning the wheel of the dharma', i.e. preaching): hands together in front of the chest with a finger of one hand touching the other hand, of which the thumb and another finger are joined at their tips.

dhyāna (meditation): hands with fingers extended lie together on the lap of the seated figure, palms upwards. Generally one hand rests on top of the other, but sometimes the fingers are interlocked.

varada (bestowing): hand dropped with fingers extended and palm to the front

vitarka (inquiry): hand in front of chest with palm outwards and the tips of the thumb and index or third finger touching.

Nirvāṇa: the state of peace or 'highest happiness' achieved through enlightenment, rather than the happiness derived from impermanent things.

Parinirvāṇa: The Buddha's final passing away into Nirvāṇa.

Prabhūtaratna Buddha: the 'Many Jewelled' Buddha. He had promised to be present whenever the Lotus Sūtra was preached and is often depicted with Śākyamuni.

Samsāra: the eternal cycle of birth, suffering, death and rebirth.

Śākyamuni (Shakyamuni): the historical Buddha, that is Siddārtha Gautama. Born a prince and brought up in wealth, his encounter with suffering made him decide to leave home to seek spiritual enlightenment. After several years of searching he sat down under a bodhi tree to seek the truth. He withstood the temptations of Māra and came to realisation that only the elimination of ignorance can stop the cycle of rebirth and freedom from the bonds of samsāra. He gained this enlightenment at daybreak and thus became Buddha, vowing to enlighten the world.

Sūtra: A word literally meaning a thread which holds things together, and which in Buddhism, often refers to the written records of the oral teachings of the Buddha.

Ūṛṇā (Urna): the thirty-first physical characteristic or lakshana of Buddha. A tuft of hair, or third eye above the brow which marks Buddha out as a wise and great being.

Uṣṇīṣa (Ushnisha): the fleshy protuberance on the top of the Buddha's head, one of the distinguishing marks of the Buddha.

Vairocana Buddha: the cosmic Buddha. Vairocana became the focus of tantric Buddhism and is often recognisable by the symbols of sun and moon and seated Buddhas on his body.