

Asalha Puja (Dharma Day)

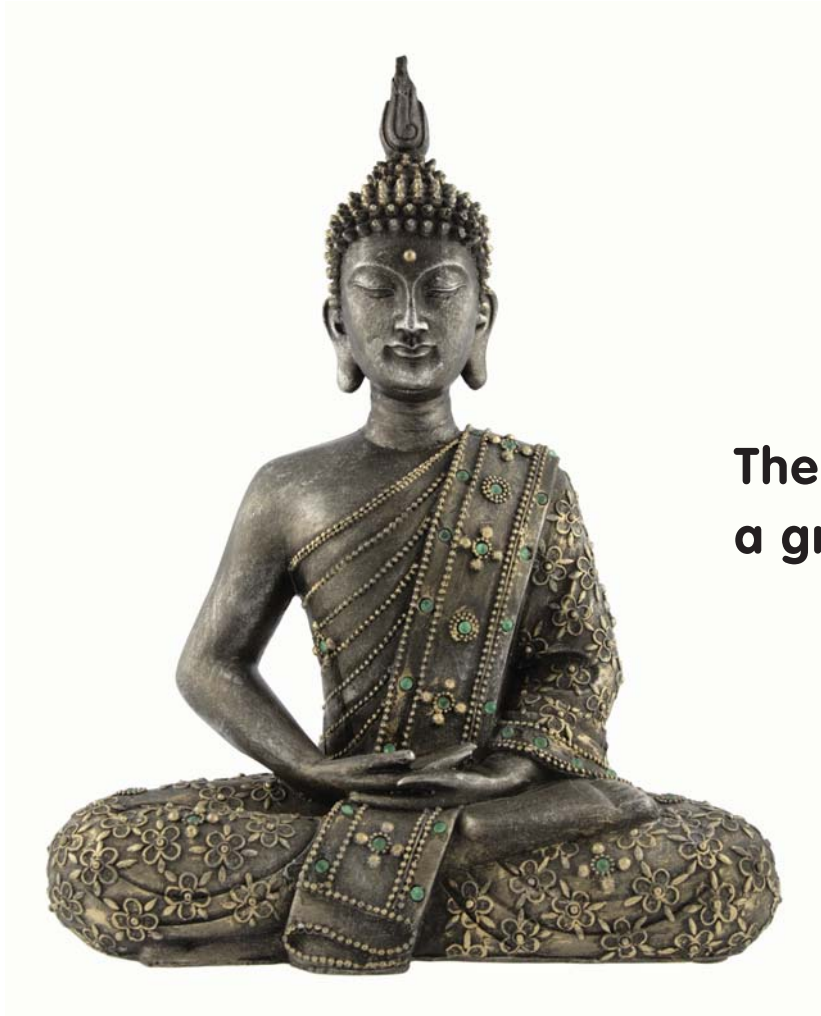
This day is also known as Dhammacakka Day (Dharma Day) or Turning of the Wheel of Teaching. This is a Theravada celebration of the first declaration by Gautama Buddha to a group of five ascetics in the Deer Park close to the city of Benares. He talked about the Middle Way, the Noble Eightfold Path and the Four Noble Truths of what became the Buddhist Faith.

Buddhists celebrate Dharma Day with readings from Buddhist scriptures. Buddhists who follow religious traditions on Dharma Day usually celebrate in a temple, Buddhist centre or monastery, in the presence of monks or nuns. This to help the concentration of the follower, to appreciate the importance of the Buddha's teaching in their own lives and in the lives of other Buddhists.



- ① Sit down with the children and show them the series of pictures overleaf. You may wish to lay the sheets out either on a table or the floor, and then read the story.
- ② Ask the children the following questions and discuss them:-
What part of the story did you like and why?
What part of the story didn't you like and why?
What do you like learning about?
- ③ Look at the teaching of the eightfold path ;
Which ones can you try to follow?
Which ones would you find difficulty in following?
Which one do you think is the most important?
- ④ Talk to the children about what they think it means to learn respect for life.
- ⑤ Talk about the pictures of the Buddha.

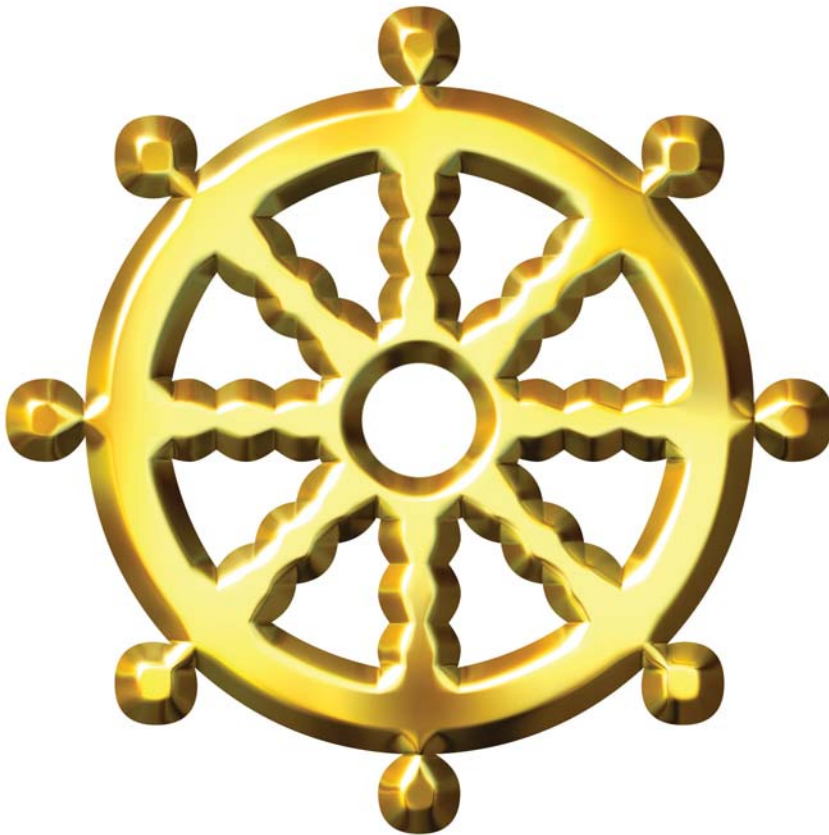
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**The Buddha was
a great teacher.**



**He taught people to follow
the Four Noble truths.**



**And the Eight Fold path,
which consists of:-**

- **Know the truth**
- **Say nothing to hurt others**
- **Practice meditation**
- **Control your thoughts**
- **Resist evil**
- **Free your mind of evil**
- **Work for the good of others**
- **Respect life**



Buddhists celebrate these teachings. Asalha Puja (or Dharma Day) is now seen as a chance to express gratitude that the Buddha and other enlightened teachers, have shared their knowledge with others.