

Buddhism





Vesak - The Festival of Light

Vesak - The Buddhist Festival of Light is the Sri Lankan word for the month of May. Vesak is the holiest day in Buddhism. Buddhists believe that it was in that month the most significant events of the Buddha's existence took place. On this day are celebrated the birth, the Enlightenment, and the death of the Buddha. This day is usually in the middle or last two weeks of May.



How Buddhists Celebrate Vesak

Buddhist festivals are a time for joy. This give Buddhists an opportunity to meet together and learn more about the Buddha's teachings. Families bring food, candles and flowers to the monks in the monasteries. In return, the monks chant the scriptures, lead a period of meditation and give teachings on the themes of the festival. There is a party feel to the whole occasion.



How Buddhists Celebrate Vesak

During the Vesak festival houses and streets are cleaned and decorated with Buddhist flags and flowers.

An image of the new-born Buddha - in the gesture of pointing to the Truth, is usually displayed in the shrine room.



How Buddhists Celebrate Vesak



During the celebration, in villages, Buddhists gather around statues of the Buddha when it is dark. They walk around the statue with candles till all is covered in light.



Buddhists use light (candles, butter lamps) to celebrate Vesak to recall that the Buddha showed people how to become enlightened.



Vesak - The Festival of Light

All around the world

Vesak is now celebrated in a variety of ways by Buddhists all over the world. In Sri Lanka the streets are decked with lanterns, in Thailand, there are processions and candles are lit as symbols of hope and wisdom while in Japan, statues of the Buddha are washed with scented water.



Enlightenment

Enlightenment - A Buddha, or fully enlightened one, is regarded as a sentient (the ability to feel or perceive) being who has developed all positive qualities, and has eradicated all negative qualities.

