

6.2 How do Buddhists explain suffering in the world?

Key Vocabulary

Word	Definition
Samsara	The ongoing cycle of life including Buddhists belief of reincarnation – birth, death and rebirth
Nirvana	A state of blissful peace and harmony beyond the sufferings and cravings of individual existence
Reincarnation	Belief that human souls survive death to be reborn in the body of another – human, animal or insect form
Karma	The principle that one's actions determine one's future in this life or in other incarnations
Dukkha	First Noble Truth - The suffering, unhappiness, pain and stress experienced in life
Samudaya	Second Noble Truth – The causes of suffering: cravings and desire – greed, ignorance, hatred
Nirodha	Third Noble Truth – The cessation (stopping) of craving and desire and therefore suffering
Magga	Fourth Noble Truth – The pathway to ending suffering and the cycle of life and achieving enlightenment



KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER

Karma and Reincarnation

In Buddhism, **Karma** refers to the idea that our actions, whether good or bad, have consequences. If you do good things, like helping others or being kind, good things are more likely to happen to you. But if you do bad things, like hurting others, those actions can lead to negative outcomes. Karma isn't just about punishment or reward; it's about cause and effect—the way you act now influences your future. **Reincarnation** is the belief that when a person dies, their soul or consciousness is reborn in a new body. This cycle of birth, death, and rebirth continues until someone reaches **nirvana**, which is the ultimate state of peace and freedom from suffering. The way you live now impacts your future lives—if you live with kindness and wisdom, your next life might be better.

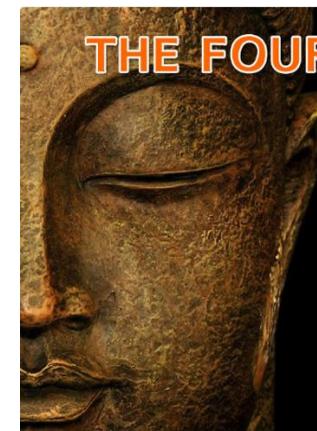
The Jataka Tales

The Jataka Tales are a collection of over 500 stories believed to relate to the past lives of the Buddha. The stories recount his experiences on the long cycle of samsara to enlightenment. Like fables, the Bodhisattva (Buddha-to-be) is often depicted as an animal (his previous forms). Each tale has an important message of morality which links to the Noble Truths and Eightfold Pathway which the Buddha taught his original disciples.

Key Questions to ask yourself

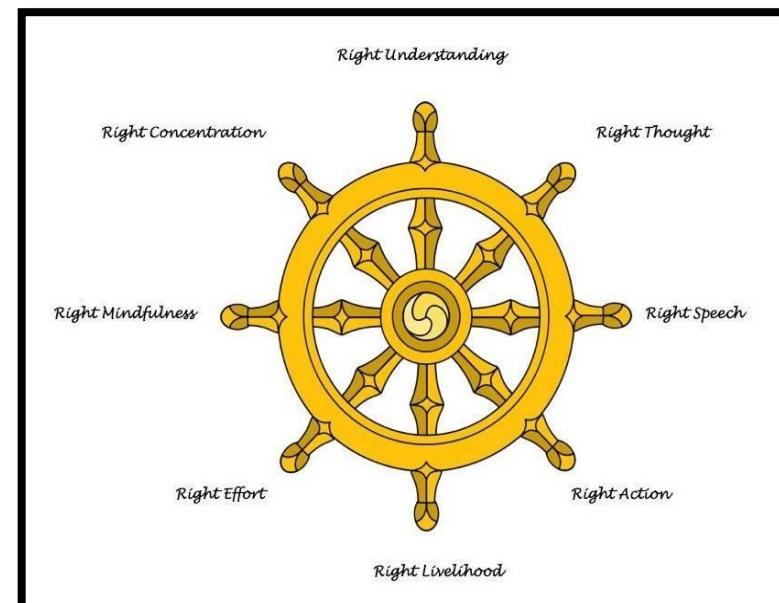
- What do you think happens when someone dies?
- How do the concepts of 'Karma' and 'reincarnation' also 'guide' Buddhists in their daily lives, and help them to end the eternal 'struggle'?

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS



Buddha's Four Noble Truths:

1. Life has inevitable suffering
2. There is a cause to our suffering
3. There is an end to suffering
4. The end to suffering is contained in the eight fold path



The Eightfold Path is a set of teachings in Buddhism that guides people toward a life of wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental discipline. It includes practices like right understanding, right speech, and right action, which help individuals lead a balanced and moral life. Following the Eightfold Path is believed to reduce suffering, leading to enlightenment and inner peace.