

Faith Guides for Higher Education

A Guide to Buddhism

David Mossley and Simon Smith
Series editor: Gary R. Bunt



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Copy editor: Julie Closs

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PREFACE TO THE FAITH GUIDE SERIES

In the 2001 National Census, over 70% of the UK population identified themselves as belonging to a religious community; and the issue of religion is rarely out of the news, often being discussed in relation to highly-charged controversy and emotion. There is often a lack of understanding as to what a religion is, and what it means to be a member (or not) of a specific faith group. Confusion can result in all walks of life and higher education (HE) is not exempt from this. Indeed, institutions are increasingly, and with varying degrees and different levels of success, seeking to respond to and understand specific faith requirements, as they relate (or not) to particular areas of higher education, in continually changing contexts. This series of Faith Guides from the Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies will not necessarily solve all the controversies or confusion, but may bring some answers to some of these basic questions, through providing individuals, departments, and institutions with resource information on issues relating to teaching people of faith in a higher education environment.

The introduction of the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 suggested a broader social commitment in the UK to the creation of culturally inclusive places of work. Following their introduction, not only is there an ethical and moral duty to consciously avoid discrimination on the basis of religion and belief, but there is now a statutory duty. Both the Home Office and the Department for International Development have expressed their commitment towards working more closely with faith communities and encouraging interfaith dialogue. All these developments suggest a need for staff in UK higher education institutions to develop the skills and knowledge that reflect this growing concern for cultural and religious literacy in British society. This series offers an accessible route into this area of knowledge. By providing concise guides, all those involved in the higher education academic process have an opportunity to quickly acquire a basic awareness of issues, in a format as free from jargon as possible.

The Subject Centre has brought together a broad range of subject specialists who can draw upon their personal experiences of and interactions with specific faith groups and individuals, acquired through their own academic work, and in some cases utilising personal experiences as members of a particular tradition. The guides detail students' feelings about modern life on campus; information obtained through the authors' longstanding teaching experience and, in some cases, informal focus groups set up to garner student opinion.

The rich variety of issues contained in this series of guides acknowledges substantial diversity within and between faith groups, in particular in relation to identity issues and ideas about what it means to be religious. The format for each guide has some stress on a commonality of themes, but has allowed authors the opportunity to explore themes that are individual and specific to a particular world view. Editing this series has raised some interesting issues, and it is acknowledged that it is not possible to accommodate perspectives as varied as Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism in the same format—and that there are disparate (and occasionally conflicting) perspectives within diverse faiths, not all of which can be referred to within a series of concise guides. This series is not intended to be a 'politically correct' tool, but seeks instead to support the enrichment of the teaching and learning experience for all those engaged within the higher education sector. It is based on the idea of encouraging awareness and understanding of the cultural and religious dynamics of student

experience in higher education, with a view to supporting the development and sharing of good practice.

In tackling these concerns, the guides seek to provide a basic introduction to religious world views, before tackling some general issues associated with students and staff from specific faith backgrounds, and their interactions in the higher education sector. It also provides advice on where to go for further information. The series will thereby save the reader time and effort in locating significant source material and advice on higher education issues associated with faith communities and individuals.

This series will be expanded to accommodate further religious (and other) world views, including some of those related to the religions contained in the initial set of titles, and updates to the present volumes will also be provided in due course—so feedback to the present series would be particularly welcomed. The editor is grateful for the input of all the authors in the evolution of this series, and to members of the Subject Centre and its Advisory Board who provided significant contributions at every stage of the production process.

All web links listed in this guide were correct and verified at the time of publication.

Further information and resources on issues relating to diversity can be found on our website at:

<http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk/projects/diversity/index.html>

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NOTES ON THE AUTHORS

David Mossley is a Senior Adviser at the Higher Education Academy. Previously he was Centre Manager and Academic Coordinator at the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies and has taught philosophy at the University of Durham and Birkbeck College London. He has a long standing academic and practice-based interest in Buddhism as both philosophy and religion.

Simon Smith is the Director of the Higher Education Academy's Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies based at the University of Leeds where he has taught in a number of areas, most notably Buddhism. His main research interest lies at the intersection of Buddhism and social theory.

NOTE ON FOREIGN LANGUAGE TERMS

Buddhism uses a number of terms that are present in both Pali and Sanskrit. The different traditions and schools of Buddhism tend to favour one of these languages over the other; older traditions drawing on Pali. In writing this guide we have not attempted to use consistently either Pali or Sanskrit, but have used the terms we think the reader is most likely to encounter in practice and discussions with Buddhists. In a few places we have given both terms, where both are more likely to be encountered. Some Buddhist terms, such as *dharma*, have many wide and subtle meanings, which we have not explored: practical considerations are foremost in this omission. More scholarly explorations of foreign language terms in Buddhism can be found in the books in the Resources section. We hope that Buddhists and scholars of Buddhism will understand our decisions.

I. INTRODUCING BUDDHISM

Buddhism is extremely diverse and has been dynamically developing since its beginnings two and half thousand years ago. Some see it as a religion or spiritual path, others as a deep and well-developed philosophy and account of human psychology, and yet others as a way of life with particular practices designed to achieve peace and fulfilment. Buddhism is relatively new in the West when compared with other world faiths, but its origins in Asia stretch back millennia and it has a rich history and wide cultural significance there. Buddhists vary greatly in their outlook and behaviour and there are few specific practices and beliefs that all Buddhists would subscribe to. However, the core of Buddhism remains the same for all: the belief that one man, Gautama Buddha, achieved liberation from individual suffering – a state of enlightenment in which he experienced the connectedness and impermanence of all things and the non-existence of the ego self – through meditation and reflection. They also believe that he developed and taught a way for everyone to attain similar freedom and insight, which has been handed down from teacher to student ever since. Buddhists believe that they too can attain enlightenment and gain a direct experience of the true nature of reality and the self. There are significant differences in how this is to be achieved and in how other aspects of the Buddha's teaching should be interpreted, although the nature of this teaching has ensured that, historically, there has been little violent disagreement between different schools of thought.

This reflects a tendency in Buddhism to peacefully adopt aspects of, and adapt to, the cultures by which it has been absorbed. This is also the case in the West where it is undergoing a rapid transformation to fit into modern, more individualistic, post-industrial societies. Today there are around 376 million Buddhists worldwide and just over 150,000 practising Buddhists in the UK (according to the 2001 census) representing almost all the Buddhist traditions.

Buddhism's origins are monastic and it stresses peace and harmony in all aspects of life. It teaches tolerance and respect for other people, animals and the natural world. As such, Buddhist ethics can usually be regarded as a guide to the ways by which we can best reduce suffering in the world while causing the least harm. This is reflected in the fact that most Buddhists are vegetarians. There is no creator god in Buddhism, its cosmology being described in cyclic terms in ancient texts. Meditation is central to almost all Buddhist practice, but Buddhists also perform different ceremonies (*pujas*) and rituals in temples and at home to help them appreciate Buddhism beyond just an intellectual understanding.

Furthermore the stress on tolerance and respect means that people of other faiths use many Buddhist practices, such as meditation, without conflict.

'Buddha' means 'one who is awakened' and refers to the state of realisation the Buddha achieved. Anyone can achieve enlightenment and liberation, *nirvana*. Some Buddhists believe all can become buddhas.

ORIGINS AND HISTORY OF BUDDHISM

Dates and details of the Buddha's life were recorded by his followers some time after his death and their chief concerns were for precise capture of his thoughts and teaching rather than historical accuracy. Nevertheless, it is generally agreed by contemporary scholars that he was born into a royal household in Lumbini, a village in modern-day Nepal, sometime around 550 BCE (although some research now suggests it was closer to 400 BCE). His name was Siddhartha Gautama of the Shakya clan – he is often referred to as Shakyamuni, meaning 'sage of the Shakyas'. His life has been mythologised somewhat, but the key features are that Siddhartha Gautama was a fit, healthy and good looking young man who had a life of opulence and comfort in the palace of his father, lacking for nothing. He had a wife, Yasodhara, and child. However, he was aware of a deep dissatisfaction with this life and, on leaving the palace, was exposed to the suffering of others in the world beyond the court; in particular sickness, old age and death. Therefore, he decided to pursue an ascetic life of self-mortification, following a variety of yogic sects and practices present in India at the time, in order to understand suffering and how to resolve it. After six years of extreme self-denial he had failed to find what he sought. He renounced asceticism and determined to sit in meditation under a tree (now called the Bodhi tree) until a solution was found. At dawn he looked up from meditation and saw the morning star. At that moment he achieved enlightenment – a deep and, some suggest, entirely indescribable state, which revealed the cause and solution of all suffering in an experience of non-duality and oneness with all things.

All Buddhists believe that Gautama Buddha's enlightenment was of the most profound order. Some time later he began to teach to men and women a way to live and develop the same insight. This established a monastic order (the *Sangha*) and an oral tradition of transmission of the Buddha's insights (the *Dharma*). Gautama was thirty-five years old at his enlightenment. He lived and taught for a further forty-five years before his death.

SOME HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

Over the next few centuries several councils of leading monks met periodically to capture the Buddha's teachings. The earliest known texts are referred to as the Pali Canon, which records aspects of the Dharma, monastic rules for the Sangha and early development of Buddhist philosophy, although it is important to stress that oral transmission of the Dharma remained its chief mode of proliferation for centuries. Buddhism spread through India and South-east Asia, developing local cultural forms as it went. The principal verification of the authenticity of teachings has been ensured by recorded lineages of masters and students – although the method of verification varies from school to school.

As monastic communities diverged and grew, different stresses were given to different aspects of the Dharma, and further teachings were added to the materials handed on, although all were based on the Buddha's direct teachings. Key texts, which are largely regarded as the recorded oral teachings of the Buddha, are known as sutras (Sanskrit, lit. a thread or rope, line or guide, holding things together, and from the same root as the English word 'suture'; *suttas* in Pali). While many sutras are regarded as valuable in understanding Buddhism by a majority of Buddhists, canonicity is not an issue in quite the same way it is for other faiths, so that adherents of different branches of Buddhism today treasure different sutras.

Many different schools of Buddhism proliferated in its early years, and subsequently continued to evolve, split and, in some cases, die out completely. Some of these schools were ancestral forms of Buddhist schools that exist today. Unfortunately, the simple way this diversity is often portrayed (in guides such as this one) does not accurately reflect the richness of early Buddhist thought, practice and development. Nevertheless, it is appropriate to note that from the first century BCE a major division began to arise between a more traditional and analytical approach to Buddhism that stressed study of sutras, drawing on the Pali Canon, and a looser development that placed more emphasis on the role of the individual's experience of nirvana as a means to support enlightenment for other beings, drawing on other sutras. Over time this first approach became known as Theravada ('the ancient teaching') Buddhism, which is prevalent today in Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Laos, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam and parts of China, and the second approach Mahayana ('Great Vehicle') Buddhism. From Mahayana developed Vajrayana ('Diamond Vehicle') Buddhism, sometimes called Tantric Buddhism, and related schools that dominate in Tibet and Nepal. Other key developments from Mahayana include Zen Buddhism (in China, where it is called Chan, Japan and Korea), Pure Land Buddhism and Nichiren Buddhism – amongst many other schools. All these approaches have been transplanted to the West by different teachers. There is no real conflict between these overarching approaches. Because of its monastic history, Buddhism has developed sophisticated and subtle philosophical accounts of cosmology, metaphysics, logic, psychology and ethics.

Both Theravadin and Mahayana forms of Buddhism contain numerous schools that continued to explore different and appropriate ways to understand the Dharma. In the late nineteenth and throughout the twentieth century Buddhism began to be practised more consistently in the West, with an increasing traffic of ideas and teachers, first of leading Buddhists from Asia and later of westerners ordained in the East returning to Europe and the Americas. Important developments include the establishment of the Buddhist Society of Great Britain and Ireland in 1907, and later the Buddhist Society in London (1924), which remains one of the oldest Buddhist organisations in Europe. Although secular in nature, many of the currently practising groups in the UK owe their origins to the pioneering work that the Society carried out in translating and disseminating Buddhist ideas to those who would later seek more direct teaching from masters and practitioners elsewhere. His Holiness 14th Dalai Llama is patron of the Buddhist Society. The Buddhist scene in the UK is rapidly changing and some of the more popular groups are discussed in the later section on page 9.

Form is emptiness and
emptiness is form;

emptiness does not
differ from form, form
does not differ from
emptiness, whatever is
emptiness, that is
form,

the same is true of
feelings, perceptions,
impulses, and
consciousness ...

From the *Heart Sutra* –
a short, important
Mahayana sutra, which
is part of a larger text.

KEY IDEAS IN BUDDHISM

Some of the key ideas of Buddhism are set out below. Different schools give different weight in their practices and ceremonies to the use of sutras, conceptual discussion of the Dharma, meditation and other techniques: nevertheless, the ideas expressed below are commonly found in all schools.

THREE JEWELS OR TREASURES

These are regarded as core component parts of Buddhism.

Buddha: this can mean the historical (Gautama) Buddha; or the state of Buddha-hood, as it has occurred again and again in individuals over countless millennia; or Buddha-nature, the pure, conceptually ineffable wholeness of reality and our experience of it as our ultimate true nature.

Dharma: as well as the words and teachings of Gautama Buddha as passed on in sutras; it can also mean the wisdom of Buddhism from the Buddha's teachings more generally.

Sangha: originally meaning just the male ordained followers of the Buddha, this term is now understood more widely to include all members of a Buddhist order, all followers of a particular school whether ordained or lay practitioners or indeed all Buddhists and enlightened beings.

All Buddhists go for refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, and many schools use this as the formal entry point into Buddhism in a ceremony.



THE THREE MARKS OF EXISTENCE OR THE THREE DHARMA SEALS

These are three basic beliefs found in all Buddhist teaching. From these other ideas have been developed.

Impermanence (*anicca*): fundamentally everything that we encounter and experience is transitory. There are no fixed points that we can cling to.

Suffering (*dukkha*): because everything is impermanent, attachment to any thing, idea or experience will ultimately result in loss and, therefore, suffering. Because our ego-self does form attachments to these impermanent things we dwell in a world of suffering (*samsara*).

No-self (*annata*): ordinarily we experience the world from the point of view of our ego-self, which we believe to be permanent (and largely unchanging), but this ego-self, which is merely an idea, is not our true nature. Our ego-self is consumed by local attachments to things, people, thoughts, sensations and the avoidance of pain, which leads us into a false belief about our separateness from all other things. However, there is no fixed ego-self. Enlightenment is the experience of the true self (Buddha-nature).

DEPENDENT ORIGATION

This idea forms the backbone of reasoning that shows how we become deluded about the nature of the world and our self. We are ignorant of our true nature so we see the world as composed of independent, separate things. However, because of impermanence and no-self, we are in error: things are fundamentally dependent on a network of causes for their beginning, continuation and ending. This is conditioned existence. The network of cause and effect and the way that our actions result from past conditions and generate consequences for future ones is *Karma*. Karma reaches beyond this immediate life and includes past and future lives.

FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

All Buddhists believe these to be the core insights of the Buddha.

Suffering: the chief characteristic of conditioned existence is suffering.

The cause of suffering: our suffering arises from causes and conditions.

The cessation of suffering: liberation from this suffering is possible.

The path to cessation of suffering: there is a way to achieve this liberation, the Noble Eightfold Path.

NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

The parts of the Noble Eightfold Path provide guidance to Buddhists on the conduct of their lives and their relationships with other beings, together with instruction on how to understand the Dharma more generally and to put it into practice. The path is often grouped into the three divisions shown, wisdom, ethical conduct and concentration. In some ways the qualities described can be equated

with virtues in the Western philosophical tradition.

Wisdom (*prajna*)

1. *Right view* means correctly understanding reality and the self, nature and all things. Ignorance is considered to be one of the three poisons (the others being greed and anger). Right view is realisation of the Four Noble Truths.

2. *Right intention* refers to the aim of achieving actions that are free from harm to oneself and others and that are directed toward the Four Noble Truths. This implies right view.

Ethical conduct (*sila*)

It is an important feature of Buddhist ethics that there are no 'external' standards by which actions are to be judged, since there is no creator or personal god. Ethical conduct is conduct that helps purify the mind, cultivates the correct relationship with other sentient beings and reduces the negative causal impact of actions.

3. *Right speech* is the careful use of speech so that no harm is caused or bad consequences result from what is said; this includes avoidance of lying, verbal abuse and gossiping.

4. *Right action* describes the basic Buddhist moral position of not harming other beings or oneself. Most Buddhists are vegetarians as a consequence.

5. *Right livelihood* means avoidance of earning a living through trades that result in harm to others, such as weapons manufacture and sale, trade in human beings, butchery (including raising animals for meat), trade in drugs and alcohol as intoxicants, and the manufacture and sale of poisons.



Concentration (*samadhi*)

6. *Right effort* refers to the role of persistent endeavour in following the path.

7. *Right mindfulness* means the specific Buddhist goal of speaking, thinking and acting with an alert mind and body. Mindfulness is easily destroyed by ego-based emotions and intoxicants such as alcohol.

8. *Right concentration* basically means the cultivation of a meditation practice to achieve the enlightened state.

MEDITATION AND CEREMONY

As with other aspects of Buddhism there is great variety in meditation practice. However, all meditation involves a point of mental focus, whether through chanting, visualisation, following the breath or simply watching the mind. How and where meditation occurs is often a very individual choice for Western lay Buddhists. Some use special mats and cushions on the floor, but it can be done easily on a chair, walking or even lying down. It is also incorporated into everyday activities. Meditation is practiced at home and in places of ceremonial significance, such as temples and shrines.

Meditation is also part of Buddhist ceremonies and pujas that can include chanting, reciting sutras and making symbolic offerings of food, incense and other items to the Buddha, often represented in statue or picture form on a shrine. The Buddha, as the image of Buddha-nature, has many forms. In Mahayana traditions there are also representations of *bodhisattvas* – beings who have achieved an enlightened state, but have chosen not to leave the world of *samsara* in order that they can help all other beings to do so. Some Buddhists construct small shrines at home to help their meditation practice and to remind them of the Buddhist ideals and precepts used in their daily lives.



CALENDAR OF BUDDHIST EVENTS

The specific dates of Buddhist events and celebrations differ across schools and traditions: almost all traditions follow a lunar calendar. The following are only indicative of the kind of religious events Buddhists are likely to celebrate in any year and there is great variety dependent on the cultural origins of the form of Buddhism practiced.

BUDDHIST NEW YEAR

This is celebrated from the first full moon in April in Theravadin countries, and from the first full moon in January in many Mahayana countries. There is also local cultural variation, Tibetans celebrating the New Year in February, for example.

PARINIRVANA OR NIRVANA DAY

Some Buddhists celebrate Gautama Buddha's death and final enlightenment. It usually falls on 8th February or 15th February.

WESAK, VESAK OR VISAKAH PUJA ("BUDDHA DAY")

This is a major Buddhist festival and incorporates the birth, enlightenment and death of the Buddha. It is celebrated on the first full moon day in May (except in leap years, when it falls in June).

DHARMA DAY OR ASALA

This is a celebration of the Buddha's first teaching after his enlightenment, 'The Wheel of Truth'. It usually falls in July.

BODHI DAY (ENLIGHTENMENT DAY)

This is a celebration of Gautama Buddha's enlightenment and usually falls on 8th December.



BUDDHISM IN THE UK

Buddhism has had a significant presence in the UK for over a century. However, the growth of Buddhism in the UK cannot generally be traced to immigration patterns; rather through individuals already living in the UK taking up Buddhist ideas and practices. As such, in common with other parts of the world, the transmission of Buddhism into the UK has initially been an intellectual one. Early encounters with Buddhism were most likely to be with Theravadin groups, most notably from Thailand. This has, to some extent, persisted to the present day, where two of the most significant groups highlighted by Robert Bluck (2006) in his recent book on British Buddhism are of Thai Theravadin origin: the Forest Sangha and the Samatha Trust. These groups can be regarded as being two of the more 'orthodox' UK Buddhism organisations in that their rituals and practices are quite close to those practiced in monasteries in South East Asia. Where difference can be observed is in relative positions of the monastic community (the Sangha) and the laity. This is much less distinct than it would be in the South East Asian context.

This is typical of many groups in the UK that have often taken rituals and practices from existing Eastern traditions (there is a monastic element to most UK groups) but adapted them to a more 'Western' social and organisational structure. This is often quite informal and individualistic such as the Serene Reflection Meditation organisation, which is based around a form of Japanese Zen Buddhism known as Soto. Here the relationship between the teacher (or master) and student is again loose but legitimated through a transmission of teaching that can be traced through a series of Zen masters back to the historical Buddha. There are other Buddhist traditions that are strongly represented in the UK, including Tibetan. These appear in a number of different forms, including the Gelug School whose leaders include the Dalai Lama. Indeed, there are a number of Tibetan monasteries in the UK in which different forms of Buddhism is practised, perhaps the most well known being Samye Ling in southern Scotland. In addition there is a more 'Westernised' group which came out of the Gelug School known as the New Kampa Tradition (NKT). Again there is a greater emphasis on lay activity, with only the most committed members taking ordination.

Perhaps the most self-consciously Western Buddhist group is the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO). This organisation was set up by a former monk of the Forest Sangha, Sangharashita, in 1968. It has grown into a global organisation with many retreat centres around the world. It does not draw on any one particular Buddhist tradition, having a rather eclectic approach to its beliefs and practices. The FWBO has, usually single-sex, houses of ordained Western Buddhist Order members in most large cities in the UK; from which meditation classes and ethical businesses are run.

Most, if not all, of these groups, run meditation classes for the general public, many of whom will take them without really engaging with some the philosophy behind such practice. Indeed, many groups are particularly active around HE institutions since they have the sort of demographic that seem most attracted to Buddhism. However, although there have been some minor controversies, Buddhist groups do not have a reputation for fundamentalism or aggressively proselytising their beliefs.

2. SPECIFIC ISSUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

FACILITIES

The provision of a quiet room and appropriate meditation equipment, such as mats and sitting cushions, is welcomed by Buddhists. However, most Buddhist groups will share prayer accommodation with other faiths provided they can arrange the space to match their needs. The reverse may not be true, and care should be taken that Buddhist tolerance is not enforced on others in setting up a space for meditation.

It is likely that any medium to large sized university will have one or more Buddhist groups teaching meditation and other Buddhist ideas. These are usually very popular on campus and the officers will happily discuss their needs with university administrators if approached.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As already noted many Buddhists are vegetarians. Whether this extends to veganism is a personal choice that will need to be investigated. It is important that vegetarian options are available in the menus on campus and on field trips. Similarly, some Buddhists do not drink alcohol (or take other intoxicants) and there should be sensitivity to this in how social gatherings are arranged.

Many Buddhists will not take part in experimentation on animals, although this again will be an individual choice.

It is unlikely that Buddhist students will refuse to take part in any ethical discussion or have other religious sensitivities.

RECRUITMENT

There are no particular issues in recruitment, although it is possible that portrayal of the social life of an institution being only alcohol related could be potentially off-putting. An institution that promotes its green credentials and fosters an ethical approach to the environment will be more attractive to Buddhists.

TEACHING STYLE

Although the idea of the teacher/ student relationship is very strong in Buddhism this is unlikely to be an issue for most students given that the vast majority of Buddhists in the UK. It may be the case that students from Buddhist countries in Asia have a different attitude to teachers, which may be rooted in these sorts of relationship, although this should not be assumed.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

SUBJECT CENTRE FOR PHILOSOPHICAL AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES

This area of our website contains further information and resources on issues relating to diversity:

<http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk/projects/diversity/>

GENERAL READING

Carrithers, Michael, *The Buddha: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford Paperbacks, 2001), 120pp.

Gethin, Rupert, *The Foundations of Buddhism* (Oxford: Oxford Paperbacks, 1998), 352pp.

Harvey, Peter, *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 396pp.

Keown, Damien, *Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford Paperbacks, 2000), 152pp

Keown, Damien, *Buddhist Ethics: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford Paperbacks, 2005), 148pp

Peacock, John, *Buddhism: A Complete Introduction* (London: Continuum, 2010), 304pp.

Rahula, Walpola, *What the Buddha Taught* (London: Oneworld Publications, 1997), 168pp.

Tribe, Anthony J., & Williams, Paul, *Buddhist Thought: A Complete Introduction to the Indian Tradition* (London: Routledge, 2000), 336pp.

GENERAL WORKS ON SPECIFIC SCHOOLS OF BUDDHISM

Gombrich, Richard, *Theravada Buddhism* (London: Routledge, 2nd edition 2006), 256pp

Samuel, Geoffrey, *Introducing Tibetan Buddhism* (London: Routledge, 2010), 320pp

Suzuki, D.T., *An Introduction to Zen Buddhism* (London: Rider & Co., 1991), 136pp.

Williams, Paul, *Mahayana Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations* (London: Routledge, 2nd edition 2008), 444pp.

BOOKS ON BUDDHISM IN THE UK

Almond, Philip C., *The British Discovery of Buddhism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 200pp.

Bluck, Robert, *British Buddhism* (London: Routledge, 2008), 234pp.

UK BUDDHIST ORGANISATIONS

The Buddhist Society

From the Society's website: "The Object of the Society is to publish and make known the principles of the major Buddhist Schools and traditions and to encourage the study and practice of those principles. Today, still faithful to its Objects, the Buddhist Society provides classes and courses in the teachings of the major Buddhist traditions, as well as a general introduction to Buddhism and its historical development."

Website: <http://www.thebuddhistsociety.org>

Network of Buddhist Organisations

Umbrella organization for Buddhist groups in the UK. There is a useful list of links to the member groups, some of which are listed below.

Website: <http://www.nbo.org.uk/home.htm>

The Forest Sangha

Well-established Theravada group with a considerable network of monasteries and local groups. See the website for a complete list of Forest Sangha monasteries in the UK.

Website: <http://www.forestsangha.org>

The Samatha Trust

From the website: "The Samatha meditation technique has its roots in the Thai Theravadin tradition, and was introduced to England in 1962 by a Thai meditation teacher. Samatha means calm. Samatha meditation is an effective but gentle way of training the mind to develop inner strength and freedom from turmoil. This produces a happier and more unified state of mind, leading on to clarity and understanding. This path from calm to insight was followed by the Buddha himself and is a central tradition of Buddhist meditation."

Website: <http://www.samatha.org>

Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey

Promotes practice in the Soto Zen tradition of Buddhism.

Websites: <http://www.obcon.org/trad.html>

<http://www.throssel.org.uk/>

Kagyü Samye Ling Monastery and Tibetan Centre

Probably the largest and best-known Tibetan monastery in the UK. This is part of the Gelug tradition of Tibetan Buddhism.

Website: <http://www.samyeling.org>

New Kadampa Tradition

Organisation of Tibetan origin that places a great deal of emphasis on lay participation, probably one of the fastest growing Buddhist groups in the UK. Only the most committed members are likely to take monastic orders.

Website: <http://www.kadampa.org>

Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (FWBO)

The FWBO is arguably the most 'Western' established Buddhist organization. It is made up of a series of local centres populated by Western Buddhist Order members who run meditation classes and ethical businesses.

Website: <http://www.fwbo.org>

Addresses of local UK centres can be found at:

<http://www.fwbo.org/contacts/addresses-uk.html>

Soka Gakkai International UK

Part of an international organization with its roots in Japanese Buddhism. The Taplow Court centre includes a well-stocked library of Buddhist books.

Website: <http://www.sgi-uk.org>

USEFUL WEBSITES

Buddhanet

A huge resource for those interested in Buddhism, including a directory of UK Buddhist groups and centres searchable by area:

http://buddhanet.info/wbd/country.php?country_id=76

Metta.org

This site is a good starting place for Buddhist resources, including a list of Buddhist retreat centres in the UK, which can be found at:

<http://www.metta.org.uk/retreats.asp>

BBC Religions

The BBC Religions site is good for all religions. Here is the link to the Buddhism area, from where you can also click through to the Interfaith calendar.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/buddhism/>

Religioustolerance.org

Based in Canada this is another very good general site for finding out more about all religions. The resources on Buddhism can be found at:

<http://www.religioustolerance.org/buddhism.htm>

The Buddhist Society

This provides resources for schools and colleges:

<http://www.thebuddhistsociety.org/resources/Schools.html>

Tricycle: The Buddhist Review

A good publication, based in the US, covering a wide range of Buddhism-related topics. Can be viewed online at:

<http://www.tricycle.com>

Religionfacts

A great website with comprehensive coverage of many religions providing impartial views and links to many resources. The Buddhism section is comprehensive and can be found at:

<http://www.religionfacts.com/buddhism/index.htm>