The Journey of Siddhartha and Buddhist Traditions

Learning objective: To understand the origins of Buddhism and key concepts such as the Eightfold Path and the importance of compassion.

Read the text carefully, then answer the questions that follow. Use evidence from the text to support your answers.

Long ago, a prince named Siddhartha Gautama lived in a palace filled with luxury. Despite his riches, he felt curious about the suffering he saw in the world outside. He decided to leave his life of comfort to search for a deeper meaning to life. After years of travel and deep meditation under a Bodhi tree, Siddhartha reached a state of perfect understanding known as Enlightenment. From then on, he was known as the Buddha, or the 'Awakened One'.

Buddhists believe that by following the Eightfold Path, which encourages kindness, honesty, and mindfulness, people can live peacefully and help others. Today, many Buddhists visit a temple or a quiet home shrine to reflect and meditate. They believe that showing compassion to all living things is essential. Unlike some religions that focus on a creator god, Buddhism focuses on the individual's journey to find inner peace and clarity. By training the mind through meditation, followers aim to let go of greed and anger, choosing instead to act with patience and generosity toward everyone they encounter in their daily lives.

Word bank: Siddhartha · Enlightenment · Compassion · Meditation · Shrine · Noble

1. What was Siddhartha Gautama’s life like before he left the palace, and what did he become known as after his experience under the Bodhi tree? (2 marks) (2 marks)

2. According to the text, what are three things that the Eightfold Path encourages people to do? (2 marks) (2 marks)

3. Why might a Buddhist choose to meditate at a home shrine instead of simply relaxing in a busy park? Explain your reasoning. (2 marks) (2 marks)

4. How does the passage suggest that Buddhism differs from religions that focus on a creator god? (2 marks) (2 marks)

5. Do you think that following the Eightfold Path would make a person a better friend? Justify your answer using examples from the text. (2 marks) (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a peaceful garden scene that might surround a Buddhist temple, including symbols of nature like a Bodhi tree, a calm pond, and lotus flowers.

Extension challenge: Nova the owl is curious about how 'mindfulness' helps people in their daily lives. Write a short paragraph explaining what mindfulness might look like in a primary school classroom and why it is beneficial for concentration.