

# Buddhism: path, community and texts

The Noble Eightfold Path, the ordination of women in the Sangha and Pali Buddhist literature

## • Buddhist Teachings, Sangha & Texts

### ◆ Truths and the path

- The Four Noble Truths explain suffering (dukkha), its origin in craving (tanha), its cessation, and the path.
- The Noble Eightfold Path (Ashtangika Marga) is the middle way avoiding extreme austerity and indulgence.
- 'Right Devotion' (Samyak Bhakti) is not part of the Eightfold Path; the path stresses ethics and mindfulness.

### ○ Eight components, three groups

- Wisdom (Prajna): Right View (Samyak Drishti) and Right Intention/Resolve (Samyak Sankalpa).
- Ethical Conduct (Sila): Right Speech (Vak), Right Action (Karmanta) and Right Livelihood (Ajiva).
- Mental discipline: right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.

### ◇ The monastic community

- The Buddha established the monastic order (Sangha) initially for monks (bhikkhus) and later admitted women.
- Mahapajapati Gotami is traditionally recognised as the first bhikkhuni.
- Bhikkhu means monk; bhikkhuni means nun; both belong to the monastic community.

### □ Texts and chronicles

- Tripitaka = Three Baskets: Vinaya (rules), Sutta (discourses), Abhidhamma (systematic teachings).
- Dipavamsa literally means 'The Chronicle of the Island', an early Pali historical record from Sri Lanka.
- Mahavamsa literally means 'The Great Chronicle'; keep its title meaning distinct from Dipavamsa.

**REMEMBER** Eightfold Path = wisdom, ethical conduct and mental discipline; Dipavamsa = Chronicle of the Island.