



What are Buddhism Festivals About?



The most important Buddhist festivals celebrate events in the life of the Buddha, such as his birth and Enlightenment. They are held on full moon days, as tradition says this is when the events took place.



Festival of the Sacred Tooth

A tooth that is said to have belonged to the Buddha is kept in a temple in Sri Lanka. On the night of the August full moon, it is carried through the town inside a miniature golden temple on the back of an elephant. Fire eaters and dancers join the procession.



Kathina



In Thailand a festival is held in November to celebrate the end of the rainy season. People go to their local monastery and give gifts to the monks to thank them for their work throughout the year. New robes are especially important gifts.



Loi Kratong



Loi Kratong is the Thai festival of light. On the night of the November full moon, people place lamps made of leaves and candles in the rivers. The lamps are thought to carry away bad luck as they float away.



Hana Matsuri



Japanese Buddhists celebrate the birth of the Buddha on 8th April, at a festival called Hana Matsuri. Many people visit the temple. Once there, they will pour scented tea over a statue of the baby Buddha. This is a reminder of the two streams of water that were said to wash him when he was born.



The Ploughing Festival

In May, when the moon is half-full, two white oxen pull a gold painted plough. This is to celebrate the Buddha's first moment of enlightenment, when he had gone with his father to watch the ploughing.

