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| Ananda | The Buddha’s cousin and close disciple. Ananda was present at the death of the Buddha and also recited the teachings of the Buddha at the First Council. |
| Ascetic | Someone who renounces family and community life to seek the path to liberation |
| Asita | The rishi, or ‘seer’, who prophesised that Siddhartha would become either a great ruler or a religious leader. |
| Banyan / bodhi tree | The type of tree that the Buddha became enlightened under was a Banyan, which is like a fig tree. After his enlightenment it became known as the bodhi tree. Temples all over the Buddhists world have leaves or cuttings from the descendents of this tree. There is a descendent of the original bodhi tree at Bodha Gaya and Buddhists often make pilgrimages to see it. |
| Brahman – | The creator god in Hinduism |
| Buddhacarita – | ‘The acts of the Buddha’ One of the biographies of the Buddha, written by Ashvagosha in the first century. |
| Channa – | Siddhartha’s charioteer; who accompanied him when he saw the four sights. |
| Enlightenment | The attainment of the Buddha under the bodhi tree. Buddhists say that the state defied description. The word nirvana is often used as an alternative term. |
| Jataka tales | Stories of the previous lives of Siddhartha. |
| Mara | A demon who attempted to distract Siddhartha from the quest for enlightenment. |
| Nirvana | The ‘blowing out’ of the three fires of greed, hatred and ignorance, and the cessation of Dukkha. Nirvana is often defined negatively, because it is beyond our unenlightened imaginations and our words cannot capture its meaning. It is not usually thought of as a ‘place’. Nor is it merely a ‘state of mind’ |
| Pali | An ancient Indian language and the language of the scriptures recognised by Theravada Buddhists |
| Rahula | The name of Siddhartha’s son. It means ‘chains’ or ‘fetters’ |
| Sangha | The community of Buddhists, or more strictly the community of Buddhist monks and nuns. |
| Shakyamuni – | ‘Sage of the Shakya clan’. One of the names often used for the Buddha. |
| Suddhodana | The Buddha’s father. |
| The middle way | The rejection of extreme such as luxury or of asceticism. The idea of the middle way becomes very important in Buddhism and is a philosophical concept as well as lifestyle |
| Yasodhara | Siddhartha’s wife |
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