



Wesak celebrates the Buddha's birthday. It is also called **Buddha Day**.

When is Wesak? Wesak is the most important of the Buddhist festivals and is celebrated on the full moon in May. In 2021 Wesak takes place on **Thursday 8 May**.

Celebrations vary from one country to another. In Thailand and Indonesia, special **Wesak lanterns** are made of paper and wood. In China, dancing dragons are incorporated into the celebrations. Another popular custom in some countries is to release caged birds. This represents letting go of troubles and wishing that all beings are well and happy.



The '**Bathing the Buddha**' ceremony is also often included. Water is poured over the shoulders of the Buddha as a reminder to purify their own minds from greed, hatred and ignorance. Gifts are taken to an altar to be offered to the Buddha statues. This shows respect and gratitude to the Buddha for his life and teachings.

Giving to others is an important Buddhist tradition. Buddhists make a special effort to give to people in need at Wesak.



How is Wesak celebrated?

Wesak is a very colourful and happy celebration. Homes may be cleaned and decorated. In many countries, Buddhists will visit their local temple for services and teaching. They will give offerings to the monks of food, candles and flowers. Chanting and praying are an important part of Wesak.

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