

ARRCC Ride to Worship week - Buddhist Council of NSW perspective

Buddhism originated in India more than 2500 year ago, with Gotama Buddha. Buddha is an honorific title meaning Awakened One, or one who is fully awake to the Universal Truth (Dharma). Gotama Buddha was not a deity and he never asked or encouraged others to worship, venerate or praise him. Instead he encouraged his followers in devotion to Truth (Dharma) and peaceful way of life.

“And the Blessed One spoke to the Venerable Ananda, saying: "Ananda, the twin sal trees are in full bloom, though it is not the season of flowering. And the blossoms rain upon the body of the Tathagata and drop and scatter and are strewn upon it in worship of the Tathagata. And celestial coral flowers and heavenly sandalwood powder from the sky rain down upon the body of the Tathagata, and drop and scatter and are strewn upon it in worship of the Tathagata. And the sound of heavenly voices and heavenly instruments makes music in the air out of reverence for the Tathagata.

Yet it is not thus, Ananda, that the Tathagata is respected, venerated, esteemed, worshipped, and honored in the highest degree. But, Ananda, whatever bhikkhu or bhikkhuni, layman or laywoman, abides by the Dhamma, lives uprightly in the Dhamma, walks in the way of the Dhamma, it is by such a one that the Tathagata is respected, venerated, esteemed, worshipped, and honored in the highest degree. Therefore, Ananda, thus should you train yourselves: "We shall abide by the Dhamma, live uprightly in the Dhamma, walk in the way of the Dhamma."

(Digha Nikaya 16: Maha-parinibbana Sutta - Last Days of the Buddha)

Through walking or living in the way of the Dharma, the Middle Way or the Noble Eight-fold Path, the Buddhists respect or honour their teacher in the best way they are capable of - by being kind and truthful, by living in an eco-friendly way for the benefit of all.

Most modern Buddhists go to their temples or meditation centres primarily for spiritual fellowship, to learn about the Buddha's teaching and to practice meditation. While they also show respect to the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dharma and Sangha) in a formal traditional way, they don't consider their community centres places of worship.

The Buddhist Council supports the ARRCC interfaith Ride to Worship week in solidarity with other religious communities, to encourage all participants to use eco-sustainable transport and to reflect on the meaning of worship and practice it in a more eco-friendly way - a way that really helps make this world a better place for everyone.