

Buddhist Shrines

An image of the Buddha is usually the focus of Buddhist devotional practice. The image is meant as a reminder of the Buddha's enlightenment and his position as our teacher. You can see Buddha statues in many different styles. One feature common to all Buddha statues is the lump on top of the head. This is actually the shape of his skull. Another common feature is the swirl of hair between the eyebrows. Some people think this is a third eye, but it is just a white tuft of hair. Usually Buddha statues have very long earlobes, a reminder of the heavy jewellery he would have worn as a prince.

This statue represents the Buddha teaching his first sermon. We can tell by the position of his hands, both in the teaching sign, one under the other.

People will often make offerings to the shrine as a way to express gratitude to the Buddha. This can include flowers, candles, and fragrance. Sometimes people also offer food in the morning time or sweet drinks in the evening time. Of course the Buddha doesn't actually receive these gifts—he passed away long ago and was not reborn anywhere. Buddhists make these gifts as a way to express gratitude and devotion as well as an act of generosity.