



# WHO IS A BUDDHA ?

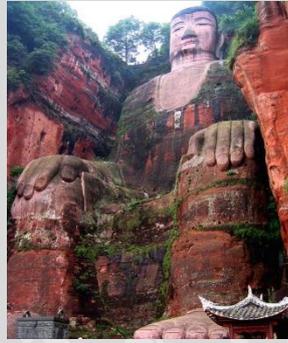
By Chandra B Varma

The 'Buddha', often used for Gautam Buddha (543–483 B.C.), as a matter of fact, is a generic and appellative term. Further, Gautam has not been the only Buddha born in this planet, e.g., **Dipankar Buddha, Kondanna Buddha, Kanakmuni Buddha (Pali Konagamana), Kassapa or Kasyhapa Buddha** and so on. **Maitreya (Pali: Metteya)** is the name of the **Future Buddha**.

Traditionally it is held that 'Buddha' signifies one who has attained enlightenment after perfecting the 10 *paramis*, viz., *dana* (charity), *sila* (right-conduct), *metta* (loving compassion), *panna* (wisdom) and so on. Before the attainment of such perfections one is called a '**Bodhisatta**'. (Dr Ambedkar sought to achieve the *perfection of wisdom* hence he showed special fascination for the epithet 'Bodhisatta').



Dipankar Buddha  
Pakistan



71 metres tall Maitreya or Future Buddha,  
Leshan, China



Bodhisattvas Vajrapani & Padmapani,  
Ajanta, India

There are 4 popular uses of the term Buddha:

1. **Sammāsambuddhas or Sabbannu Buddha (the Omniscient Buddha):**

has a mission to proclaim the truth to all beings for their Deliverence or Nirvana (Pali: Nibbana). He is therefore called '*Sattharo*' ('Teacher' or 'Master'). As he plays the predominant role in the world he is styled as the '*Bhagava*'. He is called a '*physician*' ('*bhisakko*') because he diagnoses the malady of suffering and prescribes its remedy. He is called '*Kinsman of the Sun*' ('*Adiccha-Bandhu*') as he dissipates the darkness of ignorance. He is a '*Buddha Vira*' as he gives refuge to all kinds of people. He is called '*Anuttara*' or Peerless as he excels all. He is called a true "*Brahmana*" - not by birth but by karma - as he excels in wisdom; self-control; and virtue. He is compared with the Universal Monarch (Raja Chakkavatti); and a lion (*siha*) for his extraordinary powers.

2. **Paccheka Buddha** is designative of the Enlightened ones who is not bound by the pledge to preach the Way of Deliverence to the world.

3. **Chatusaccha Buddha** is one, who has destroyed the mental defilements or *asavas*.

4. **Bahussuta Buddha** signifies any learned person in rather a loose sense.

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