



Through the various elements involved in the Buddhist practice of Temple Puja, this significant practice closely reflects the core beliefs of Buddhism. These beliefs include the 4 Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, the 3 marks of Existence, the 3 Jewels, and beliefs about enlightenment.

"Puja" is a Pali word, generally translated to mean "Honour, worship and personal Attention", and this practice of Temple Puja refers to the activities carried out within a temple, including offerings, chanting, meditation and bowing, all of which express the various beliefs of Buddhism.

A central element of Temple Puja is the offerings that are made to the Shrine. Light is often made as an offering in Temple Puja. These offerings of light can be either in the form of electrical lighting or candles, and closely reflect several core Buddhist beliefs. First and foremost, these light offerings



~~to~~ remind the individual of the enlightenment  
which they seek. ~~Gaining~~ Gaining Enlightenment is  
a central goal for all Buddhists, therefore this element  
reflects the beliefs of Buddhism. Light offerings are  
also representative of <sup>the</sup> Buddha's capacity ~~of~~ <sup>as</sup> the  
dispenser of light, hence, linking to the belief in  
the Buddha, the first of the 3 Jewels, ~~most~~

most importantly, the candles' transition  
from solid wax to flame and the fact that the candle  
slowly melts away reflects the 2nd mark of  
existence, "Anicca", a core Buddhist belief. "Anicca"  
refers to the impermanence ~~of~~ or changeability of  
life, making the individual appreciate each moment.  
Therefore, the offerings of light in Temple Puja reflect  
the beliefs of enlightenment, the Buddha, and "Anicca".

Similarly, the use of incense in Temple Puja reflects  
Buddhist beliefs. Incense is used to purify the air and  
drive out distracting ~~smells~~, smells, but most importantly,  
it also reflects the impermanence of life or "Anicca",



one of the 3 marks of existence

Flowers are also used in Temple Puja to express Buddhist beliefs. The use of blooming flowers is symbolic for the Buddha's attainment of enlightenment, something which the individuals show respect to. Flowers are also used as they are representative of the cycle of life and death, that is samsara, and reflect the impermanence of life "Ani Anicca", emphasising the quality and joy of life through the use of the 2nd mark of existence.

Chanting is an integral part of temple puja, and allows them to focus on the task at hand through chanting prayers, phrases from sacred texts, or traditional chants. This reflects the Buddhist belief in the Dharma, the 2nd jewel, which refers to the totality of the Buddha's teachings and texts.

Bowing, or other similar acts of humility are always



present in Temple Puja. The bowing is usually directed towards a statue of the Buddha, a senior monk or lay person present. This expresses the beliefs of Buddhists as it is showing ~~to~~ respect and acknowledgement to the compassion and knowledge of the Buddha.

Individually, bowing and chanting express several Buddhist beliefs, and combined, they reflect the belief in the noble Eightfold path as these two actions are considered to be right speech and right action, two areas of the noble Eightfold path, a central Buddhist belief and practice.

Temple Puja also involves the practice of meditation. meditation is a form of connecting with the self and with the other. meditation allows the individuals to become selfless, expressing ~~the~~ a belief in "Anatta", ~~the~~ a mark of existence which teaches that there is no such thing as self. This element of Temple



Puja also allows the individual to 3 steps of the Noble Eightfold path, Right mindfulness, Right Effort and Right Concentration, which will allow them, in turn, to work towards the overall goal and belief of Enlightenment.

In Temple Puja, the focus of the shrine is usually an image, icon or statue of the Buddha. This use of an image/statue of Buddha therefore reflects the belief in the Buddha, the first of the 3 jewels. However, this image/statue is not to be worshipped as polytheists believe that the Buddha did not wish to be worshipped as a God. Rather one humbly acknowledges and respects the wisdom and compassion of the Buddha.

Finally, Temple Puja involves a gathering of people. This ~~is~~ expresses the belief in the 3rd jewel, that ~~is~~ is, the Sangha - the ~~active~~ ~~and~~ entire Buddhist community, past, present and ~~future~~ future.



Temple Puja is considered to be the connection point between the individual and the community, and without this significant practice, the 3rd Jewell, the Sangha, would soon become non-existent. Therefore, the gathering of people in temple puja expresses the belief in the Sangha.

It is, in <sup>the</sup> fact, that temple puja expresses expresses the central beliefs of Buddhism, that this practice reaffirms the individual's commitment to the Buddhist path. This is because the adherents acknowledge these key beliefs, expressed through the elements of temple puja, practice them, and recognise the importance of them in their faith. This also leads to spiritual growth.

Conclusively, the <sup>many</sup> elements involved in Temple Puja including offerings of light, incense, flowers, chanting, bowing, meditation, an image or statue of the Buddha, and the gathering of people, that express the ✓



various core beliefs of Buddhism, including the 3 Jewels, the 3 marks of existence, the Noble Eightfold path (which is the 4th noble truth) and enlightenment. Furthermore, it is because ~~the~~ the significant practice of simple puja expresses the beliefs of Buddhism, that individuals can reaffirm their commitment to the Buddhist path, and experience spiritual growth, which will give them increased respect and compassion, two virtues which underpin all Buddhist teachings.