

# [During represent the three jewels of buddhism: buddha,](https://assignbuster.com/during-represent-the-three-jewels-of-buddhism-buddha/)

During the reign of emperor Ashoka,   
the Great Stupa in Sanchi India was built. Being a country of great diversity,   
India has a high Buddhism rate. The purpose of the Great Stupa being created   
was for Buddhist to have a place for burial and receptacle in a religious tone.   
Emperor Ashoka was the first king to be emerged in the Buddhist religion and   
was responsible for creating over 84, 000 stupas and splitting the ashes of the   
Buddha between all. Ashoka built the Great Stupa in the birthplace of his wife,   
Devi, in the village of Sanchi, a place known for its market trading.  The Stupa serves as dirt and stone burial for   
Buddhist figures. Since the Stupa was used as a burial ground for religious   
figures, people began to affiliate the sacred space as a physical body of the   
Buddha, the ashes of the Buddha gave the Great Stupa its energy.

The   
Great Stupa in Sanchi, India

Built in 3rd century BCE,   
the Great Stupa in Sanchi started off as a modest mound of mud. Around the year   
150 BCE, it was restored and reconstructed to be double its original size. The   
architectural design of the building has a unique Buddhist Art and Architecture   
style. The sacred space consists of a torana, anda, harmika, medhi, chattra,   
and an enclosed wall. The anda is the domed shaped mound of dirt. Its purpose   
was to cover the Buddha's remains. Spiritually, the anda symbolizes the fact   
that the gods are the center of the universe. The chattra serves as a   
protection element. Its umbrella shape symbolizes the 'pivot of the universe'.   
The axis represents the divine descending from heaven and becoming one with   
humanity. The three disks serve to represent the three Jewels of Buddhism:   
Buddha, Dharma (religious laws), and Sangha (monastic). The harmika surrounds   
the chattra and serves as an important piece of the space because it marks the   
stupa as a sacred burial ground. The torana and medhi surround the structure and   
support the anda serving as a 'platform for ritual circumambulation'. The   
burial ground consists of a sandstone pillar that is inscribed with Schism   
Edict by emperor Ashoka.  Visitors are   
greeted by 4 gateways, one of which pictured above. Each gateway is on the 4   
sides of the site. The gateways have various designs and motifs representing   
the Buddha and the life they lived. The images give viewers insight on ancient   
India beliefs. The axis of the stupa symbolizes the cosmos dividing the world   
into 6 directions: south, east west, the nadir and the zenith.

The   
Great Stupa in Sanchi, India architecture

In regards to the Great Stupa's   
harmony with nature, cardinal directions play a significant role. Openings, or   
toranas, were placed at 4 sides of the stupa representing the directions:   
north, south, east, and west. The use of these cardinal directions suggests that   
they symbolize something more. Spiritual leaders believed that each gate   
represented the four greatest events in the life of the Buddha. East representing   
the Buddha's birth, south representing their enlightenment, west epitomizing   
the first sermon where he preached dharma, and the North symbolizing nirvana. In   
addition to its harmony with nature, natural elements from the earth, such as mud   
and dirt, were used in the creation of the stupa.

Symbolism plays a notable role in   
the Great Stupa in Sanchi. Although the burial site was made to represent the   
Buddha; he is not portrayed in human form. Four symbols are portrayed on the   
Stupa to represent the Buddha and other various things. The Lotus or the   
elephant symbolize the religious birth. The lotus is a symbol of spiritual   
growth and the elephant is a connection the Buddha's conception, his mother   
dreamt of a white elephant when pregnant and it tapped her on the belly with   
the lotus in its trunk. The tree symbolizes enlightenment. This event is one of   
the most important in the Buddha's life as it made him who he is, the   
Enlightened One. After seeing the four signs; an old man, a sick man, a corpse,   
and a wandering monk, the Buddha left home and began his journey of   
enlightenment. The wheel symbolizes the Buddha turning of the wheel of dharma   
or preaching his first sermon at Sarnath. The Stupa itself symbolizes   
parinirvana which is the death of someone who attained nirvana during their   
lifetime.

The funny thing about the Great   
Stupa is that one cannot actually enter it. It is a solid mound of dirt that   
has relics of the Buddha therefore elucidating the impression that this is the   
only sacred object within the site.

Considering the Great Stupa in   
Sanchi is not an actual place to enter, worshippers do things a different way: circumambulating.   
The belief is that if worshippers circumambulate three times clockwise around   
the stupa, all devas, dragons, yakshas, and ghosts will approach them and make   
offers. They follow the path of the sun to be in harmony with the universe. If   
one circled around counter-clockwise, they would generate negative karma. The   
purpose of this to " meditate on the lives and teachings of the Buddha, and to   
walk in the teacher's steps." Circumambulation was used by original worshippers   
in the BCE years and by current worshippers today.

The Great Stupa can be compared to   
many other sacred spaces such as the Chartres Cathedral. The Chartres Cathedral   
in France has many similarities and differences in comparison to the Great   
Stupa. Both the Great Stupa in Sanchi and the Chartres Cathedral in France   
contain relics of important religious figures. For the Great Stupa, relics from   
the Buddha are held in the mound of dirt within the center. In the Chartres   
Cathedral, relics such as the tunic Virgin Mary wore during the time of   
Christ's birth are a part of the sacred building. In addition to the   
similarities of both sacred spaces, both have art built into them that   
symbolizes religious themes. For the Great Stupa, the Buddha's life is   
represented through the placement of the gateways in the different cardinal   
directions and other images such the lotus flower or elephant which are used to   
symbolize the Buddha's conception and birth. In the Chartres Cathedral, symbolism is found in the rose   
windows. The stained glass is seen as a symbol for Virgin Mary's Immaculate   
Conception. The light passing through the window entering the space without   
breaking the glass represents Mary being impregnated with the Holy Spirit while   
preserving her virginity. In relation to differences, the Chartres Cathedral and   
the Great Stupa differ in terms of interior space. As stated before, the Great   
Stupa has no interior area, per say, because one cannot enter it. The center of   
the stupa is a big mound of dirt and in order for worshippers to use it, they   
must circumambulate around it. In   
contrast, the Chartres Cathedral has an   
open internal room that worshippers and visitors can enter. Another difference   
is the architectural type and style. The Great Stupa is a Buddhist stupa and   
has Buddhist styled architecture while the Chartres Cathedral is a church and   
has French Gothic styled architecture. Ultimately, both sacred spaces represent   
different religions in alluring ways.

The Chartres   
Cathedral exterior

The Great   
Stupa in Sanchi exterior

The   
Chartres Cathedral interior

The Great   
Stupa in Sanchi interior

Overall, it may be said that the Great   
Stupa is beautiful and unique in its own way. As a source for meditation and   
good karma, people of the Buddhist religion have a beneficial space to give in   
to the Buddha. The Great Stupa serves as an educational way to enlighten   
Buddhist and non-Buddhist folk so understanding of that religion is met.