

# DREAMS



Dreams are mental images that occur during sleep. There is widespread belief that dreams have some significance. Buddhist psychology recognizes several types of dreams. According to the Buddhists, these are (1) dreams caused by physical stress, (2) by psychological irritability, (3) by spirits, (4) because of mental clarity and (5) prophetic dreams. It also says that dreams mainly occur in the interval between falling asleep or waking up and deep sleep, a fact confirmed by modern research.

Before the Buddha was enlightened, he had seven dreams full of strange symbolism which did in fact foretell his enlightenment. However, he was skeptical of those who claimed that they could interpret other people's dreams and he forbade monks and nuns from doing this. He said that a person who does loving-kindness meditation will not be disturbed by nightmares and also that a monk who falls to sleep mindfully will not have a nocturnal emission, a physiological event usually accompanied by erotic dreams. The Buddha also said that dreaming of doing something, i.e. killing someone or stealing something, is not ethically significant and, therefore, has no karmic effect. Thus, he understood that dreams are beyond the power of the will.