

BUDDHA DHARMA

The Way of Enlightenment and Compassion
(Buddhism)



The Life of the Buddha

Siddhartha Gautama (563 – 483 B.C.E.)



The Early Years

- born as prince Gautama in Sakyas (north of Banaras, near the border of India and Nepal); the Buddha is sometimes referred to as Sakyamuni (the Sage of the Sakya)
- grew up inside his palaces, isolated from the outside world
- married Yashodhara, had a son Rahula



The Great Renunciation

- at 29, went out the palace four times and saw an old person, an ill person, a dead person and a wandering hermit
- left his family and the palace to search for the solution to human suffering
- wandered in northeastern India and tried various paths and once practiced asceticism
- The renunciation is an act of compassion—one cannot enjoy a princely life while people are suffering.



The Enlightenment



- at 35, meditated under a bodhi tree at Bodh Gaya, withstood the temptations and threats from Mara (the deity of desire and death), gained enlightenment and became a buddha (“enlightened one”, or “one who is awake”)



“

Buddha is not someone you pray to, or try to get something from. Nor is a buddha someone you bow down to. A buddha is simply a person who is awake—nothing more or less.”



The Founding of Buddhism

- went to Sarnath near Banaras and gave his first sermon, taught the Four Noble Truths and the Middle Way
- for 45 years, traveled through northeastern India and taught the Buddhist dharma, had sixty disciples and many followers, who later founded sangha (the Buddhist monastic order)



The Liberation of the Buddha

- passed into *nirvana* around the age of 80

- his last words:

“All composite things must pass away.
Strive onward vigilantly.”

