

How Prince Siddhartha Gautama became the Buddha

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<p>Siddhartha Gautama was born around 2500 years ago in Nepal. Before his birth, his mother had dreams foretelling his importance. He was a Prince.</p>	<p>A wise man gave a prophecy that if the Prince was ever to see suffering, he would become a great spiritual leader and not a king. The king banned him from ever leaving the palace grounds.</p>	<p>His life at the palace was one of extreme luxury and comfort. He was never allowed to see the outside world and was protected from ever seeing any for suffering.</p>	<p>When he was 16 years old, he was married to a beautiful princess and soon started a family. At first he was happy but as time went on, he felt more and more trapped. One night, he left the palace.</p>
<p>Once outside the palace, he saw four things he had never seen before ~ a sick man, an old man, a holy man and a dead man. He started to wonder why there was so much suffering in the world.</p>	<p>He decided to leave behind his family, his life of comfort and fled the palace. He shaved his head and became a holy man. He spent time thinking about the cause of suffering in the world.</p>	<p>He met a group of monks who taught him that by only eating and drinking the absolute minimum, he would get closer to finding his answer. He became ill and decided that this was not the way.</p>	<p>He left the monks behind and found a fig tree. Here he sat and meditated for 46 days. He found the answer to his question and became 'The Buddha' (meaning the enlightened one).</p>

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Before his birth



The wise man and the king



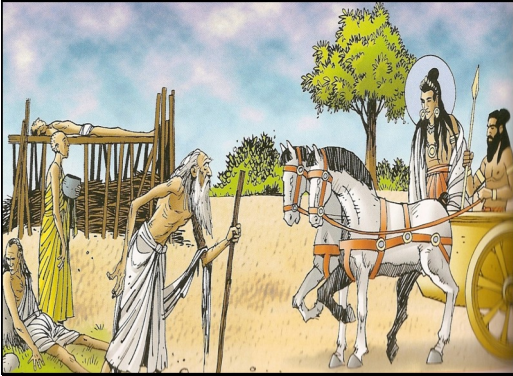
Life at the palace



Marriage and family life



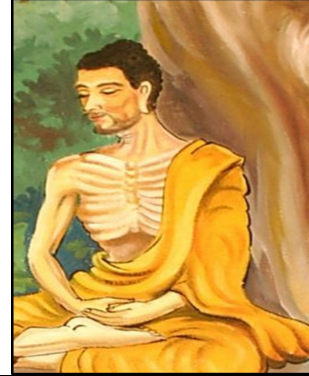
The four signs



Leaving his family



Being a holy man



Becoming the Buddha



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Before his birth	The wise man and the king	Life at the palace	Marriage and family life
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The four signs	Leaving his family	Being a holy man	Becoming the Buddha
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