

The Life of the Gautama, the Buddha

Context: Axial Age; Vedic Sacrificial Hinduism, dominated by Brahmins and high Aryan castes

Life Incidents

Dream of Queen Māya

Born as Kshatriya (warrior caste) to Shākya king Shuddhodana, in Lumbini garden*
mother's death

Asita's Prediction: Great leader or Spiritual teacher; named *Siddhārtha* ("One who will accomplish his aim") and *Gautama* (clan name)

worldly learning and martial training in the Shakya capital Kapilavastu

incident of trance meditation at plowing ceremony

marriage to Yashodharā/Gopā

Ventures to the outside world: "4 Passing Sights" [old, sick, dead, and ascetic]

birth of son Rāhula

"Great Renunciation" : cutting of Hair and wandering in forest

Meeting with King Bimbisara

Studies with two teachers, masters of trance meditation, fruitful but insufficient

Extreme Asceticism with five co-seekers

Breaking off practice near death and dream of mother's aid

Gift of Sujātā

Vow beneath a Bo Tree: enlightenment or death

Temptations of Mara [testing fear/lust], end as earth bears witness to his right to Buddhahood

Enlightenment under Bo Tree [Bodh Gaya*]

Names of Enlightened: Shākyamuni ("Shakya Sage"); Tathāgata ("Thus Come One")

7 Weeks under Tree [Memories of Former Lives (jātakas), Nāga Protection, Tree Veneration],

Gift of the Two Merchants: Trapusa and Bhallika

Decision to Teach, at the request of the gods

First Sermon [Sarnath, Deer Park in Benares*] and creation of *sangha*; missions begin

Conversion of Kashyapa, the fire-sacrificing ascetic, and his disciples

Miraculous displays and converts of humans, demons, gods

Preaching to Mother in Tushita Heaven

Visit to Home, conversion of Shakya countrymen: Ananda, Nanda, Devadatta

Visit with wife and son Rahula admitted to order

Conversion of Sariputra and Maudgalayana

Conversion of Anathapindika and Visākha, two great householder donors

Ananda becomes his attendant

Admission of women to the *sangha*

Challenge of Devadatta

Conversion of Angulimalla

Great Decease or *parinirvāna* [Kushinara*]

Collection of Relics and holding the First Conference

* 4 great pilgrimage sites