

THE LIFE OF BUDDHA

The picture on each card is taken from "*The Life Of The Buddha*" with Thai Temple paintings published by the United States Information Service in 1957.

Publisher : Asia Buddhist Friendship
Association, Nichiren-shū

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3-2, Kodenmacho, Chūō-ku,
Tokyo, 103, Japan
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(Siddhartha leaving the royal palace to be a monk
on the back of his favorite horse Kanthaka.)

The Life Of Buddha

Buddha was born as a prince of Śākya to King Suddhodana and Queen Māyā at Lumbini Park near Kapilavastu in 463 B.C.. The Prince was named as Siddhartha. He grew up the princely way—but at the age of 29, he decided to renounce the world to become a monk. Finding this world transient, he determined firmly to search for peace and the universal truth called “Dharma.”

Following 6 years of many forms of extreme asceticism, he finally attained Enlightenment and became Buddha at the age of 35.

At Deer Park near Varanasi, Buddha delivered his first sermon to the five ascetics who had lived with him during 6 years of his ascetic life.

They believed in Buddha and became his first followers. Here, for the first time the Saṃgha (group of Buddhist monks) appeared in the world.

Then Buddha went to Rājagriha and won over King Bimbisāra. After that the King became a faithful follower. From there Buddha went about the country persuading men to accept his teaching.

Thus two great disciples; Sariputra and Maudgalyayana and their two thousand disciples, became Buddha's followers.

Also, beginning with Buddha's father Suddhodana, Buddha's stepmother Mahaprajapati, his wife Princess Yashodhara, and his son, Rahula, all members of the Śākya clan became his devotees and faithful followers.

For 45 years Buddha continued to preach and persuade men to believe his teaching, but at the age of 80, he realized the time of his passing.

It was at the forest of Sala trees in Kushinagar where Buddha laid himself between two large Sala trees.

There he delivered his last sermon to the disciples gathered around him. After that Buddha calmly entered into Parinirvāṇa. At that time Buddha was 80 years old (B.C. 383).



Famous Buddhist Sites

(1) Lumbini (Nepal)

Birth place of Gotama Buddha.

He was born at Lumbini Park in the suburbs of Kapilavastu in 463 B.C.

(2) Bodh Gaya (Gaya, Bihar)

The place where Gotama became spiritually enlightened under the Bodhi-tree through 6 years of extreme asceticism at the age of 35.

(3) Sarnath (Uttar Pradesh)

The place where the first sermon was made by Buddha after his attaining enlightenment.

(4) Rajgir (Nalanda, Bihar)

The capital of ancient kingdom of Magadha.

The principal Buddhist sites are following :

Ḡḍhrakūṭa parvata — The hill where Buddha preached the Saddharmapundārika-sūtra.

Veṇuvana vihāra — The first vihāra of Buddha contributed by Kalandaka.

Ajātasattu's prison — The site of the prison where Ajātasattu imprisoned his father King Bimbisāra.

(5) Saheth Maheth (Sravastī, Uttar Pradesh)

Saheth : The site of Jetavana vihāra Sudatta contributed to Buddha.

Maheth : The site of Śrāvastī, the capital of ancient kingdom of Kosala.

(6) Kushinagar (Kasia, Uttar Pradesh)

The place of the Buddha's Parinirvāṇa.

He passed away after preaching over 45 years at the age of 80 (383 B.C.).

Buddha's saying

“This world of change and suffering is my world ; these ignorant, heedless people are my children ; I am the only one who can save them from their delusion and misery”

(The Teaching Of Buddha)

The explanation of the picture

Buddha was born as a prince of Śākya to King Sudhodana and Queen Māyā at Lumbini Park near Kapilavastu in 463 B.C.. When he was born, he began immediately to perform the miracle of walking seven steps and thereafter pronounced the words “I am the most honourable above and below the heaven”. Afterwards he was named as “Siddhartha.”



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Buddha's saying

“Long is the night to the wakeful, long is the road to him who is weary, long is Saṃsāra to the foolish who know not the Sublime Truth”.

(Dhammapāda)

The explanation of the picture

Prince Siddhartha was born with a silver spoon in his mouth and grew up the princely way—but at the age of 29, he decided to renounce the world and even abandoned his wife and son besides the entire wealth and Princehood. Leaving his family and Palace, he came to the banks of River Niranjara where he got his head cut off in order to initiate the life of a monk. Finding this world transient, he determined firmly to search for peace and the universal truth called “Dharma.”



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Buddha's saying

"I will cause all living being to cross the ocean of birth and death if they have not yet done it.

I will cause them to emancipate themselves from suffering if they have not yet done it.

I will cause them to have peace of mind if they have not yet done it.

I will cause them to attain Nirvāṇa if they have not yet done it".

(The Lotus Sutra)

The explanation of the picture

Following his renunciation of the world and leading the life of a monk, Siddhartha by virtue of extreme asceticism and his constant search which lasted over six years to find the real ways leading to *Enlightenment* made him very lean and weak physically. During the course of the search, he fainted too several times.

Gotama Accepts The Mess Of Rice And
Milk From Sujātā

8-4



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Buddha's saying

I always think :

'How shall I cause all living beings
To enter into the unsurpassed way
And to become Buddhas quickly?'

(The Lotus Sutra)

The explanation of the picture

Gotama practiced various hard asceticism to attain Enlightenment. However, his efforts proved to be of no avail because self-mortification was truly not the right path to Enlightenment.

As a result, he realised that one must not enter upon both the paths, neither the sensuous nor the ascetic one, but he must tread the Middle Path.

The scene shows Sujātā, daughter of a wealthy cattle owner, approaching Gotama, bowed low to present her offerings. It was the mess of rice and milk. Taking food from her, Gotama recovered his physical strength.



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Buddha's saying

"To avoid any evil, to seek the good, to keep the mind pure : this is the essence of Buddha's teaching"

(The Teaching Of Buddha)

The explanation of the picture

After regaining his health, Gotama was lost deeply in meditation, sitting under the Bodhi-tree in order to attain the enlightenment.

The picture illustrates Gotama's struggle against Māra and his army just prior to his Enlightenment. It is a symbolic representation of what was happening in the mind of Gotama.

He was fighting against the assault of his own desires and passions, that is against covetousness, ill-will, delusion, passions, and aversion.

Defeating these Māras, Gotama could attain Enlightenment and became Buddha — "an awakened one."



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Buddha's saying

Blossoms come about because of a series of conditions that lead up to their blooming ; leaves are blown away because a series of conditions lead up to it. Blossoms do not appear unconditioned, nor does a leaf fall of itself.

So everything has its coming forth and passing away ; nothing can be independent without any change.

(The Teaching Of Buddha)

The explanation of the picture

Defeating Māras in his own mind, Gotama finally became Buddha. He attained the Dharma and realized the eternal truth. For five weeks sitting under the tree, he enjoyed his experience of the Dharma. After that Buddha decided to preach the Dharma, went to Varanasi and there met the five ascetics he had known before.

In the Deer Park (Mrigadaya) near Varanasi, Buddha delivered his first sermon to the five.

To them Buddha recommended the Middle Path and expounded the Four Noble Truths.

Published by Asia Buddhist Friendship Association
Nichiren-shū, Japan

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Buddha's saying

The Spirit of Buddha is that of great compassion and loving kindness. The great compassion is the spirit to save all people by any and all means.

The great loving kindness is the spirit that prompts it to be ill with the illness of people, to suffer with their suffering.

(The Teaching Of Buddha)

The explanation of the picture

The picture shows the inside of Jetavana Vihāra Sudatta contributed to the Saṃgha headed by the Buddha.

Sudatta was a rich man in Sravasti.

He was very generous and benevolent to the poor.

Not only food, he also provided shelter to the poor.

He also purchased Jetavana (bare land of bushes) and built the Jetavana Vihāra (place of worship) for Buddha.



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Buddha's saying

“Make of yourself a light. Rely upon yourself ; do not depend upon anyone else.

Make my teachings your light. Rely upon them ; do not depend upon any other teaching.”

(The Teaching Of Buddha)

The explanation of the picture

After 45 years of preaching the Dharma, Buddha came to Kushinagar with his disciple namely Ānanda. Now Buddha was badly ill, ordered Cunda who was one of his disciples to prepare a couch between two Sala trees in the forest. He laid himself down with his head to the north, delivered his last sermon to his disciples.

After that Buddha calmly entered into Parinirvāṇa. At that time Buddha was 80 years old (B.C. 383).