

# From prince to buddha siddhartha



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Siddhartha Gautama was born in the 6th century BC into the Shakya clan of modern day Nepal. Gautama's father was the king of the tribe and young Siddhartha enjoyed a lavish life despite his mother's death just seven days after his birth. As a child, Siddhartha lived in a palace built for him by his father and he hardly ever left the complex even after he married at sixteen.

One day at 29, he decided to go outside of the palace walls and saw an old man on the brink of death. Siddhartha had never seen an old person before and his chauffeur explained that aging is a part of human life. Siddhartha was intrigued and desired the answer to other existential questions.

Following that, he encountered a sick man and a corpse.

The charioteer explained that sickness and death are also a part of life. On his way back to the palace, Siddhartha witnessed an ascetic wearing simple clothes and looking at peace. These encounters prompted Gautama in his search for the ultimate release from suffering. Siddhartha began by listening to the philosophies of others but nothing resonated with him. However, he learned how to discipline and concentrate his mind. Next, he turned to poverty and wore meager clothes and ate next to nothing while traveling with 5 companions. Eventually, he decided that asceticism was ineffective as well and his companions abandoned him. Upon arriving at a village, a woman fed him milk and honey, and he bathed in the river.

Afterwards, he sat underneath a Bodhi tree and meditated there for six days. On the sixth, he finally opened his eyes and realized that what he desired was non-existent and the struggle to reach it was the root of suffering.

Afterwards, Gautama, now The Buddha or The Enlightened One, originally

intended to keep it to himself but allegedly, Brahma, a Hindu God, asked him to share it as some people needed guidance. The Buddha came up with 4 Noble Truths: suffering is a part of life, suffering is caused by desire, you must stop wanting to end suffering, and to remove desire, you must follow the Eightfold Path. The Buddha first told the 5 ascetics who he had traveled with of his knowledge and they formed the basis of his religious following of monks, or bhikshus.

Each monk lived a life of poverty, owning only a bowl, robe, a needle, and a razor, to shave their heads. Though his following started small, the Buddha's fame quickly grew throughout India and into Southeast Asia, China, Japan, Indonesia, and the Middle East through the Silk Road. Regardless of his notoriety, the Buddha continued his nomadic lifestyle. Everyday, he held a gathering for discussion in which he taught or answered spiritual questions, often using metaphors to convey his meaning in an easier to understand way. None of these meetings or the Buddha's teachings were recorded until after his death when 500 elders met and wrote down the Buddha's teaching and rules into three documents called the Three Baskets. The Buddha died at eighty years old in Kushinagara surrounded by several monks