

BUDDHISM



Siddhartha Gautama

c. 563-483 B.C.

Prince Siddhartha Gautama-the thinker and teacher who would later be called the Buddha-was born into a wealthy family in Nepal. At about the age of 29, Siddhartha left the palace to explore the kingdom. As he traveled, he became very upset at what he saw in his kingdom. He saw beggars, people who were ill, and people with no home and nowhere to go. This is the first time Siddhartha became aware of suffering.

Siddhartha was deeply saddened by all of the suffering he saw in his kingdom and began to wonder how he could stop all of the suffering going on. He decided to leave his wife, son, and the family riches in search for the answer to end suffering. For 49 days, Siddhartha meditated under a tree, nearly starving to death. Finally, Siddhartha came up with the answer and spent the rest of his life wandering the countryside teaching people how to end their suffering and become enlightened. His teachings about life and the nature of suffering became known as Buddhism.



The heart of the Buddha's teachings is contained in the Four Noble Truths. The Four Noble Truths are:

1. *Life is full of suffering.*
2. *People suffer because they desire worldly things and self-satisfaction.*
3. *The way to end suffering is to stop desiring things.*
4. *The only way to stop desiring things is to follow the Eightfold Path.*

Buddha's Eightfold Path

1. *Know and understand the Four Noble Truths.*
2. *Give up worldly things and don't harm others.*
3. *Tell the truth, don't gossip, and don't speak badly of others.*
4. *Don't commit evil acts, like killing, stealing, or living an unclean life.*
5. *Do rewarding work.*
6. *Work for good and oppose evil.*
7. *Make sure your mind keeps your senses under control.*
8. *Practice meditation as a way of understanding reality.*

"Our life is shaped by our mind; we become what we think."
-The Buddha

This quote illustrates that we have the ability and power to change our lives by changing the way we think.