

# The Prince, Sakyamuni Buddha

(Volume 1)

## Chapter 1

### Birth of the Prince

Once upon a time, there was a kingdom called Sakya in India. The King was gentle and brave, and the people of the kingdom loved him very much. The Queen was very beautiful and kind. Of course, the people loved her as much as their king.

The King's name was Shuddhodana and the Queen's name was Maya. They did not have any children. For a very long time, the couple and their people wished to have a prince. Every day they prayed to their highest God, Brahmadeva: "Please Brahmadeva, may we be blessed with a child!" The King wished to have a wise and brave son, while the Queen wished to have a graceful and meek child.

One night, the Queen had a strange dream in which she saw a white elephant entering into her womb through the right side of her chest. Queen Maya was going to have a baby! As the delivery day approached, she tried to return to her parents' home for the baby's birth.

It was April 8. After a long rainy season, flowers were blooming everywhere. Queen Maya and her servants took a rest in the beautiful Lumibini Garden on their way to her hometown. Suddenly, she felt the baby coming! Everyone was in a panic because the Queen hadn't reached



her parents' home. She did not worry, but smiled instead. Sweet nectar rained upon them. Queen Maya reached out her right arm to try to pick one of the beautiful sweet tea flowers. At that moment, a baby like a shining jewel was born from her right underarm. Her attendants were surprised with the wondrous sight and fixed their eyes on the baby.



Surprise! The cute and solemn baby stood up, raising his right hand to point towards Heaven and lowering his left hand to point at the Earth. He walked seven steps and declared with a clear voice, “From heaven to the earth I am alone the most honored one.”

Of course, everyone was surprised because babies were supposed to be born with a cry. However, this baby of the King and Queen had said “From heaven to the earth I am alone the most honored one!” Actually, there was another phrase after that. I will tell you secretly. “The triple worlds (*the worlds of those who have feeling, those who do not have feeling, and those in the spiritual realm*) are full of suffering, but I am alone able to be free from these sufferings.” This means that the Buddha is the most respectable person from the heaven to the earth. It is true because the people on this earth are full of worries, and only the Buddha saves us all from agony.

The falling nectar of raindrops changed to red and white lotus flower petals. The rain clouds disappeared, and a ray of sun shone down on the infant. It looked like the baby had come from the Buddha's Pure Land. Everybody was so impressed with these mysteries. All the people of the kingdom rejoiced at the birth of the prince. The King and the Queen were so happy with the birth of their princely heir.

## Chapter 2

### A Great Prediction of Hermit Ashita

A hermit named Ashita, who lived in the mountains not far away from the kingdom, noticed a radiance about the heaven and earth. He mumbled to himself, “Something very important has happened! A Prince must have been born in the kingdom. I will go there immediately and see him.” He descended from the mountains in a hurry to visit the King and Queen at Kapilavastu Castle.

“Congratulations, King Shuddhodana and Queen Maya for the birth of a princely heir!” The hermit saw the baby and predicted, “This prince will be a mighty King who will rule the entire country. He will be the number one King in the world. However, if he denounces princedom and becomes a monk, he will become a Buddha to save people around the world.”

The King and the people of the kingdom were pleased to hear this prophecy. Queen Maya, however, seemed worried. Her eyes filled with tears while watching the newborn baby. Why didn't she rejoice in the famous hermit Ashita's prediction that the Prince will be a great King and rule the world? Why could she not stop the tears? It was very strange.



### Chapter 3 A SAD SEPARATION

No wonder! Even though she loved him very much, Queen Maya had to be separated from her newborn baby. She could devote her affection on her lovely son for only one week. The Queen suddenly died on April 15, a week after the birth of the prince. How sad she had to be separated from the newborn baby!

The infant was named Siddhartha, which means “every wish fulfilled.” Queen Maya’s younger sister, Mahaprajapati, became the child’s foster mother and brought him up with loving care.

Siddhartha’s father and foster mother raised the princely heir with lots of affection. He grew into a healthy boy. The Prince began his lessons in reading, writing and military arts. There was no one that could exceed him. He was wise and kind to everyone, so his friends and servants loved and adored him. He seemed to be happy and free to do anything. Actually, Prince Siddhartha had a spiritual wound. Once in a while, he felt lonesome and his eyes were suddenly wet.

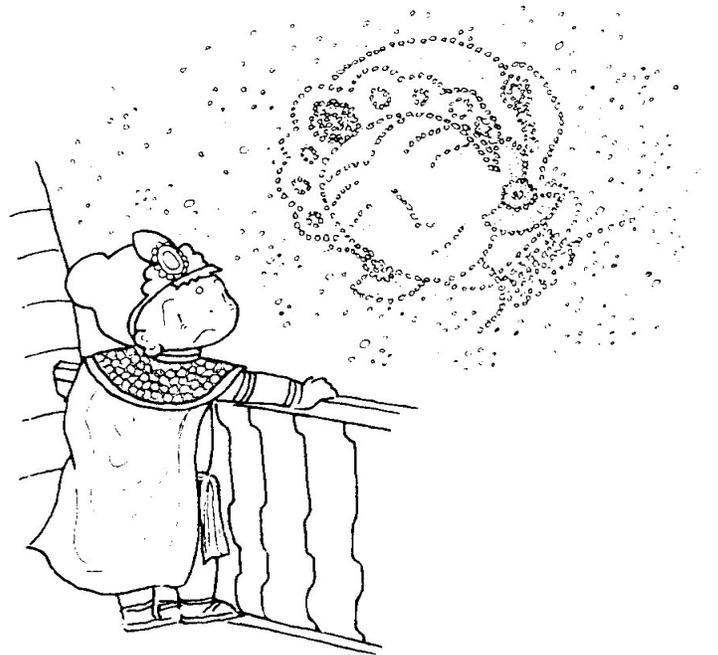


## Chapter 4 THE PRINCE'S WORRY

“Why did my mother die and leave me, a new born baby? My mother must have been so sad to leave me alone! Why do people have to die?” Prince Siddhartha often thought about his mother’s death for many hours and days.

The wise Prince, thinking about his father and foster mother feelings, never showed that he was lonesome and sad in front of them. But when he was alone, he thought about his dead mother. One spring day he saw a farmer plowing his field. He noticed a bird descending to the ground and carrying off a small worm which had been turned up from the earth by the farmer’s plough. He thought about it, whispering to himself, “Alas! Do all living creatures kill each other?” He, who had lost his mother so soon after his birth, was deeply affected by the tragedy of these little creatures.

“Why did you die? Why can I not be happy, while my parents and people of the kingdom are joyous about me becoming a great King? Why am I not excited to be a king? To become a king, I must fight with other countries and kill many people. The children of the killed and wounded people must feel lonesome and sad. I do not want to be a king who makes others suffer, defeats the weak, and gains their lands and estates. How can men be equal and happy? How can families live together and help each other live in peace and harmony?” Thus, Prince Siddhartha was talking to his dead mother.



## Chapter 5

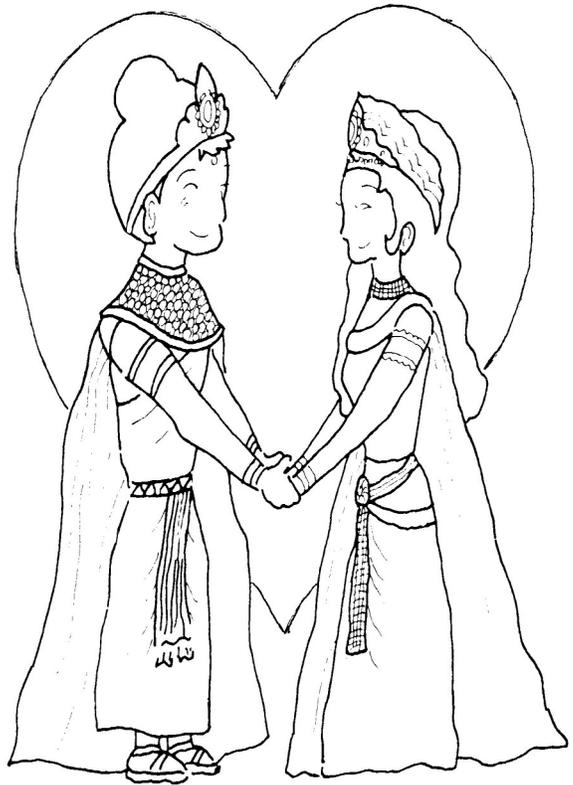
### The Prince's Wedding

The King was worried about the Prince's suffering because of his mother's death. He tried to cheer him up by turning his thoughts toward other directions. The Prince was already 18 years old.

"You should marry a princess soon," said the King.

Prince Siddhartha, however, had no intention of marrying. But because of his father's strong recommendation, he married Princess Yashodhara. Another reason he decided to marry the beautiful and warm-hearted Yashodhara was that she was Queen Maya's niece. The Prince felt peaceful and calm when he was with the Princess. He felt as if he was with his mother. Embraced with her beauty and tenderness, he was happy and forgot his loneliness. Yashodhara was an ideal princess. Soon they were expecting a baby.

They were so happy!



## Chapter 6

### Worry about Birth and Death

As the day of the baby's birth approached, the Prince thought more and more about his deceased mother and his appreciation of her. His eyes filled with tears while thinking about her devotion. His mother was only able to give her son her affection for one week before she died.

Soon, a baby was born and named Rahula. Prince Siddhartha, chuckling with delight, kissed his son's cheek. "Looking at my son makes me feel so happy! I could forget all my worries!"

His happiness, however, did not last for long. Prince Siddhartha looked up at the sky and wondered, "Why must a man become old? When he gets old, why does he become ill? When he becomes ill, why does he die? Why? Why did my mother pass away at such a young age? Why do people have to die? Does anything exist after one's death?" Thus, the Prince wondered the same things again and again, hour after hour.

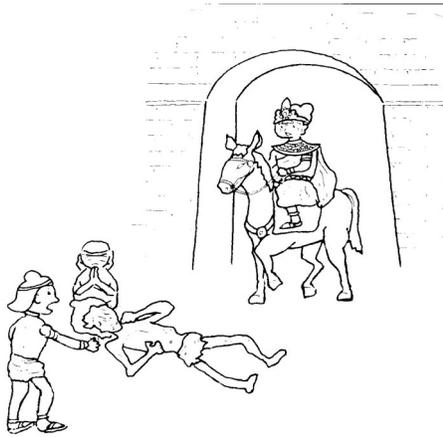
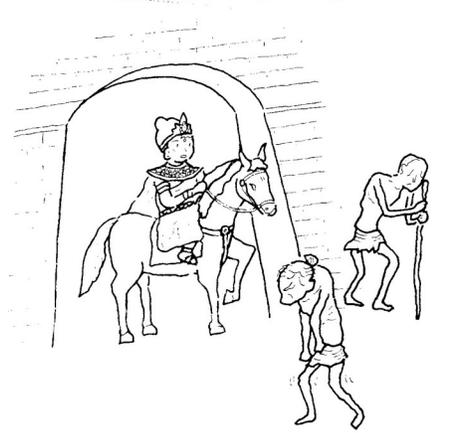


## Chapter 7

### Seeing the Reality of the World Outside the Four Gates

“Do I also die? If I was dead, Rahula and Princess Yashodhara would be lonesome just as I was when my mother died. Is there any way for a man to live forever? Is there any way to be free from birth, old age, sickness and death? How is it possible for a person to be free from these sufferings and to have peace of mind?”

One day he went out of the palace with several servants. At first, he went out of the east gate and saw an old man who looked lonesome. His back was bent and he was mumbling meaningless words. Although Siddhartha had no way to understand his mumbling, the Prince seemed to understand the old man might be worried about the uncertainty of his life. He was afraid of sickness and death.



The next day he went out of the castle from the south gate. He and his attendants saw a very sick man. The man said with a very weak voice, “I don’t want to die!”

On the third day, they went out of the west gate and saw a funeral procession. The people looked very sad. Some people were crying. The Prince saw these grieving people and thought his own heart would break. He thought, “Why must a man

die? A child grieves with the death of his parent. Parents are sad with the death of their child. A husband mourns the death of his wife. A wife laments her husband's death. Why is a man's life so uncertain?"



Lastly, Prince Siddhartha went out of the north gate. A pure hearted monk was waiting for the Prince. He bowed to the Prince respectfully. At that time, Siddhartha felt something strange. It felt like pure spring water had sprung up within him. He later made up his mind.



## Chapter 8 Seeking Truth

“Oh! Now I know where I should go! I should be like the pure monk. Then I will be able to save people who are suffering.” That was Prince Siddhartha’s decision. He would renounce the world to become a monk.

His decision caused serious trouble. The princely heir refused to take over his father’s throne and said, “I want to be a monk!” People of the palace and the kingdom were thrown into an upheaval.

Princess Yashodhara was so sad and cried. “What’s the matter with you? How could you leave your own newborn baby, Rahula and me? How can the baby and I live after you leave the castle?”

Prince Siddhartha answered her quietly, “Do not worry. The King will take care of you and his grandson. Rahula should succeed the King’s throne. I will tell him to do so. You don’t have to worry. It is not for my selfish desire to renounce the prince hood. It is for the sake of all people who suffer and worry. I will become a monk to search for the way of freedom from the suffering of birth and death. When I find the way, I will return to teach you and Rahula, and also my parents from whom I have received many favors. I will teach the people, too. At that time you and Rahula will clearly understand my feeling today.” Thus, he explained his strong decision.



The King realized Siddhartha’s decision was firm and called five of his servants, including Kaunidinya. He ordered them, “Listen well! You must follow after the Prince when he leaves the palace. Try to convince him to give up becoming a monk and bring him back as soon as possible.”

Of course all, of them opposed the Prince renouncing his pryncedom. They believed that they could easily convince the Prince to return to the castle. They promised the King they would bring back the Prince.



Prince Siddhartha was impatient to leave the castle. He whispered secretly into his charioteer, Chandaka. “I will leave the palace tonight. Be ready with my favorite horse, Kanthaka, at the north gate.”

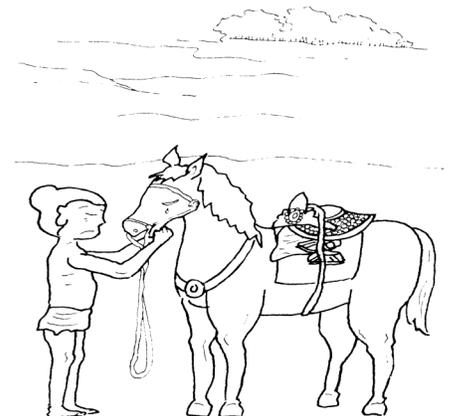
## **Chapter 9**

### **Casting Away Prince Hood and Traveling in Search of an Answer**

Later that night, Prince Siddhartha and Chandaka left the castle from the north gate. This was the same gate where the Prince had met the pure hearted monk a few days ago. With his favorite horse, the Prince and Chandaka traveled quickly away from the castle.

Once they were far away, the Prince took off all of his clothes and jewelry and changed into a simple monk’s robe. He then gave his clothes, jewelry and even his sword and crown to his charioteer, Chandaka. The Prince instructed the charioteer to return to the castle with his favorite horse and to give the King his best regards. After thanking the charioteer for his many years of service, the Prince finally said good-bye to his favorite horse, the snow-white Kanthaka, and to his charioteer, Chandaka. The Prince walked by himself and disappeared to where he thought no one would find him. He did not know that the King sent five servants to follow him.

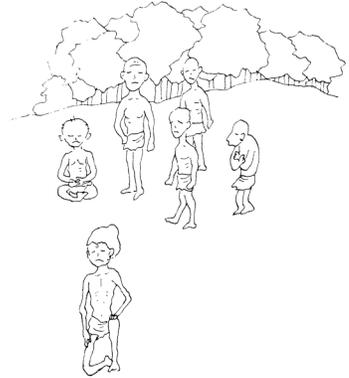
Prince Siddhartha’s main purpose for leaving the castle was to find the way to salvation. Salvation was a way to be free from the cycle of birth and death. He looked for scholars and wise men and asked them to teach him the way to salvation. However, he could not find a



teacher who could answer his question.

He decided to seek the answer by himself and to practice asceticism. Asceticism is the practice of self-denial, such as not eating or drinking, trying not to sleep, or standing on one foot for a long time. The Prince went into a forest where many monks practiced asceticism.

In the meantime, the five servants the King had sent followed the Prince into the same forest. They thought this was a good chance for them to convince the Prince to give up being a monk and to return home. They pretended to be monks and approached him. However, their attempts to convince the Prince to return to the palace failed. Instead, the five monks were convinced to practice together with the Prince. He and the five monks stayed there seeking the path to salvation for another twelve years.



## **Chapter 10**

### **What is the Way of Salvation from Birth and Death?**

The Prince's practice of asceticism was unbelievably harsh. Even though he practiced very hard for twelve years trying many types of asceticism, the Prince could not reach his goal of finding 'Salvation from the Cycle of Birth and Death.' "There is no way to find my goal with asceticism!" thought the Prince.

It was autumn in the twelfth year after he left the castle. He bathed in the Nairanjana River to cleanse himself of twelve years of dust and dirt. As he was bathing, a village girl with milk in a bowl happened to pass by. When she saw the weakened monk in the river, she gave him the milk. He accepted it without hesitation and recovered his strength.

"I could not attain Enlightenment with asceticism. I should go with the Middle Way!" the Prince thought. The Middle Way would avoid excessive hardship or excessive pleasure. The Middle Way should be the way to attain Enlightenment.

The five companions who had lived with the Prince during the twelve years of his harsh practice, saw Prince Siddhartha receiving milk from the hand of the village girl. They looked down on the Prince for accepting the milk and stopping the practice of self-

denial. They left him and continued their own practice of asceticism in the woods called Deer Park.

After recovering from his weakened body, the Prince went to a town called Gaya. He sat and meditated under a huge *bodhi* tree for forty-nine days. “What is the way to be free from the cycle of birth and death? What is the purpose of one’s life?” He asked these questions to the universe. He meditated in deep concentration.



## Chapter 11 The Prince Became the Buddha

It was early in the morning of December 8th. He had, at last, found the path to solve all worries and sufferings. He enlightened to the Only One Truth in the Universe. From this time on Prince Siddhartha was called by a different name: Buddha Sakyamuni, the Sage from the Sakya clan, or simply the Buddha.

Do you remember what happened when the Buddha was born? Soon after Siddhartha was born, he stood up and walked seven steps to the north, raised his right hand to point towards Heaven and lowered his left hand to point at the Earth and declared, “From heaven to the earth I alone am the most honored one.” Did you remember this story? In addition, the hermit Ashita predicted, “If he denounces prince hood and becomes a monk, he will become a Buddha to save people around the world.” His prediction came true.

Buddha Sakyamuni was now thirty years old. The Prince was very lonely because



his mother passed away a week after he was born. He tried not to show his feelings in front of his father and foster mother, so he acted cheerfully when he was with them. However, he had been longing for his mother, Queen Maya, deep in his mind for a long time. His mind had been filled with thoughts like, “Why did my mother die?” Now, he finally found the answer. What is the Only One Truth in the Universe?

## **Chapter 12**

### **Awakened in the Truth**



Sakyamuni Buddha opened his eyes halfway and said, “All beings live together in relationship with each other. Everything is constantly changing and does not stay in the same state forever. No soul will be newly born or disappear completely. All souls exist while changing their forms and appearances.” This may be hard to understand. In other words:

#### **1. All Beings Live Together**

All human beings, animals, and plants live while helping each other at the same time. Without animals and plants, human beings would starve to death. Without air, they could not breathe. Without water, humans could not live. Without the ocean, there wouldn't be salt or fish. People are able to live because of these and other things. If there weren't any trees, air and water would not exist. All life needs the air produced from the trees. Water comes from the forests and mountains. If there weren't rain in the mountains and forests, there would be no water in the dams.

Why rain falls? Who raises the animals? What do they eat? Who makes the food for the animals? Who eats the meat of the cows, pigs and chickens? Do you see? As the Buddha says, animals, plants, and human beings that live beside the mountains, forests, trees, and water are all helping each other to live. Everything grows with the blessing of the rays of the sun and water in nature. Everything lives together in the golden chain of the Universal Truth.

That is what Buddha Sakyamuni is saying. If everyone cuts the trees or pollutes the

rivers or kills other human beings as they want, they cannot live on the earth. We must help each other! People around the world must live in happiness and peace by helping each other with compassionate minds.

## 2. Everything Is Constantly Changing

There are examples of “Everything Is Constantly Changing.” Think about your father and mother. Have your parents looked the same for many years? I would guess your mother and father must have been younger many years ago. Your house, your parents’ cars or your T.V. set cannot be exactly the same for many years. They must have changed in some way. They cannot stay exactly the same forever. All shiny cars will become old eventually. Therefore, this teaching tells us that you should not look at only the appearance or surface of things. Everything changes.

## 3. Eternal Soul

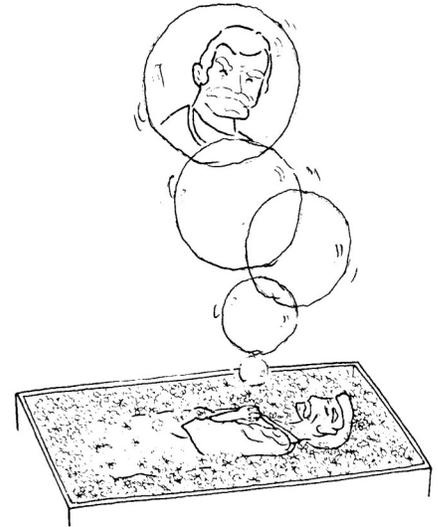
The Buddha continued with another important teaching: “No soul is in this *saha* world where we live will be newly born nor disappear completely.” He says that souls exist forever, even though its form and appearance change. This is very important. This is the answer to his thirty-year-question about his beloved mother, Queen Maya. “How can we be free from the cycle of birth and death?”



## Chapter 13

### Eternal Journey of Soul

Death is not final. One dies only to be born again. After one's death, the soul watches his or her funeral from above. The soul might say, "When I was alive, one of my children was always in trouble. He came to me for allowance many times, but he does not put his hands together for me at my funeral. He does not appreciate or love me. My other child is very kind and gentle. He was deeply devoted and takes good care of me even after I have passed away." Thus, when the soul leaves one's physical body, the soul is able to read other people's minds.

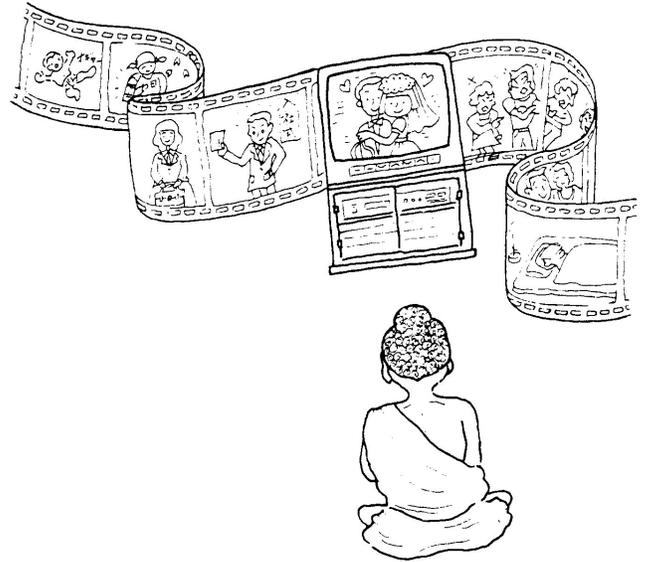


In the spiritual realm, there is no difference between the rich or the poor, the wise or the ignorant, the big or the small. Everyone is treated equally. On the seventh day after one's death, the soul will go to a courtyard of judgment. The soul contains all the good and bad thoughts and deeds through a person's lifetime. The Buddha is pleased when he sees the life of those who have worked hard in an honest manner and accumulated many good deeds. On the other hand, the souls of those who have killed animals and harmed others in cold blood must go to hell on the seventh day after death.

Seven days later, on the 14<sup>th</sup> day, those souls who did not kill living beings will go to the next courtyard. Stealing will be judged here. You should not steal anything even though you want it very much. If you stole anything, you have to go to hell on the 14<sup>th</sup> day. Among you, is there anyone who stole even a small amount of money from your mother's wallet? If so, you had better tell Buddha the reasons you did it and ask him to erase your mistake from your record of conduct.

Seven days after that, on the 21<sup>st</sup> day, lying will be judged. On the 28<sup>th</sup> day, faithfulness to one's spouse will be judged. On the 35<sup>th</sup> day, judgment will be made on whether or not one has taken harmful substances like alcohol, cigarettes, drugs or other damaging substances that injured his or her body.

On the 42<sup>nd</sup> day, the Buddha, who is the most Compassionate One, looks for something good the person has done while he or she was alive. He finds the good points of the person and tries to save him from falling into hell. However, most people who have committed bad behavior during their lifetime do not repent even after seeing their bad conduct. They may say, “I was not wrong! He or she was bad! Society was bad!” They always blame others, so the soul does not understand Buddha’s compassion.



On the 49<sup>th</sup> day after one’s death, in the seventh courtyard of judgment, it is not the Buddha who judges the dead person but the soul that judges where to go next: “the Realm of Hell,” “the Realm of Hungry Spirits,” “the Realm of Animals,” “the Realm of Fighting,” “the Realm of Ordinary Human Beings,” or “the Realm of Heaven.” There are six gates open for the soul to go through to one of these six realms. The Buddha says, “Please go to the realm where you feel most comfortable.” The soul never lies. It is always honest.

## Chapter 14

### You Create Your Own Life to Come

The soul is very honest by nature, so it naturally knows the difference between good and bad. Even if the soul wishes to come back to the realm of human beings, if the person has killed living beings in cold blood, the soul cannot be born as a human being. If he or she killed animals in cold blood, he or she has to be born as that animal again and again in the realm of hell. It is the law of balance.

If someone has acted often based on instinct and lived like a dog or a cat, the soul has to go to the realm of animals. “It’s mine!” “That is mine!” If you had strong attachments to money, status, fame, or others, you have to go to the realm of hungry spirits after your death. If you are hot-tempered and fight with others often, your soul has to go to the realm of fighting. Those who have behaved like a man and tried not to cause trouble for others in their lives will go through the gate of the realm of human beings once again.

Those who have always acted in a positive manner will be born in the realm of heaven, which is the highest of the Six Realms. Therefore, if you wish to be born in a better place, you had better behave in the right way. One should not cause trouble for others, not make your parents worry, perform your duties independently in a responsible manner, study hard, and build up a strong mind. Do not complain about the little things, but rather be calm and happy.

The Buddha is always watching you and will say, “Yes, that child always makes an effort!” “He is gentle!” “She is a good girl for listening to her parents so well.” If you live as Buddha Sakyamuni wants, you will have a happy life for sure.”



## Chapter 15

### Buddha Visits His Mother in the Realm of Heaven

The Buddha Sakyamuni surely wished to go to see his mother, Queen Maya, in the realm of heaven soon after he attained Enlightenment and became a Buddha. However, He could not do so because He had to save a lot of people from suffering and agony. He had to save them first at one place, then another.

After saving all these suffering people for six years, He wished to teach the truth to his mother in heaven. After Queen Maya bore her son, Siddhartha, her eternal soul stayed in the realm of heaven instead of the Buddha Land because she wanted to watch her son grow. When she saw her son, the Buddha Sakyamuni, in the heavenly realm, she recalled the great prediction of Hermit Ashita thirty-five years ago. “The Prince will become a Buddha to save people around the world,” said Ashita. That lovely prince has become a Buddha and is standing in front of her now as the hermit predicted. That holy baby who had walked seven steps toward the north and had said, ‘From heaven to the earth I alone am the most honored One! The triple worlds are full of suffering, but I alone am able to be free from these sufferings; had become the Buddha as Hermit Ashita had declared.

Queen Maya listened to her son, now the Buddha, preach to her “The One and Only Truth in the Universe.” She cleansed her attachment to her son and entered into the realm of the Buddha. She stays in the Buddha Land forever with her son, Buddha Sakyamuni, who joined her later after the Buddha’s Nirvana (Perfect Death). So Queen Maya and the Buddha Sakyamuni are together in the Buddha Land now and watching us always.



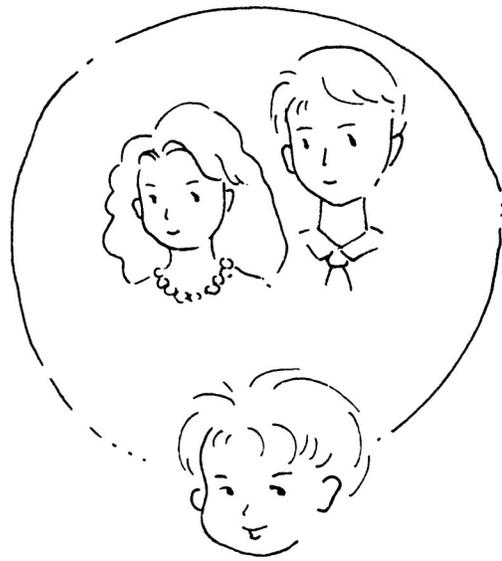
When you think about the Buddha, and wish to see him, say, “Oh the Buddha!” He will be with you together with Queen Maya because she is within the Buddha.

## Chapter 16

### Your Body Is From Your Parents

It is the same with you! Your father and mother are always within you. Even if they are separated for some reason, they both live together within you. Why? It is because half of your body is from your father, and the other half is from your mother. It is as if you rent your body from your parents. The only thing you own is your soul; that is your mind. Your mind is your own. So you have to take care of your mind. Be courageous and study hard. Even if it is difficult, accomplish your task. Help others and exchange knowledge with others for everyone's happiness on earth.

Take care of your body that comes from your parents and try not to bother others. Do not cause your parents to feel anxious. If you do not respect your parents, you can hardly be considered human.



By the way, you know that Sakyamuni Buddha went up to the Realm of Heaven, don't you? The Prince who became the Buddha met with His mother and taught her "The One and Only Truth in the Universe." He taught her the teaching of the Eternal Life and helped her enter Nirvana, the Realm of the Buddha. After that, He must have been relieved of the burden of constantly thinking about His dead mother. After spending one hundred days with her, the Buddha came back to earth again.

## Chapter 17

### First Sermon

After returning from the Realm of Heaven, the Buddha had to save the people on earth from their sufferings. Guess who He taught first? He taught the five monks, including Kaunidinya. Do you remember them? They were the original servants of Prince Siddhartha. When the Prince gave up the self-denial practice, they deserted Him and continued their own practice of asceticism in the woods called Deer Park in Varanasi, India. The Buddha went to see them first.

When the five monks saw the Prince from far away, they talked to each other, saying, “The Prince who could not handle the hard training and quit the self-denial practice is not worth serving any more. We have nothing to do with him. Let’s pretend not to see Him when He comes to us!”



So at first, they tried not to see Him, however a strange thing happened. Against their wills, their bodies automatically moved toward the Buddha. The five monks lined up in a file and welcomed Him. They were surprised that their bodies moved without intending to. They put their palms together in *gassho* and bowed to Him.



When they released their bows and looked at Him, the five monks were shocked to see the noble appearance of the Prince. He looked so different compared to the time of his self-denial practice. His whole body was dazzling with radiance. Once they worshipped Him, their angry minds and worries disappeared immediately and they felt peace.

Then Kaunidinya, representing the five monks, asked, “Prince, what kinds of training did you do to look so honorable after you left the place of the self-denial practice?”

The Buddha smiled gently and said, “The self-denial practice did not make me attain Enlightenment, but the Middle Way did!” He explained to them that as a result of deep meditation under a Bodhi tree, he attained the One and Only Truth in the Universe and became a Buddha. The five monks were impressed with Him and were so happy they shed tears of joy. They said, “How lucky we are! We deserted you, but we are able to see you again. You are not the Prince any more but the Buddha who attained perfect Enlightenment!”

One after another, each said, “Oh, Buddha, please excuse our wrongdoings and lead us with your honorable teachings.” They apologized and appreciated the Buddha coming back to them.

## Chapter 18

### The Three Treasures

The Buddha then expounded the teachings of “the Fourfold Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path.” That is to say, one must clearly understand the Fourfold Noble Truths in order to attain true Enlightenment.

First, one must know clearly that, “Life is full of all kinds of sufferings.”

Second, one should know that, “The cause of suffering is to cling.” One should not cling to money, fame, or even to a special person. Money changes hands. Don’t pester your parents about money too much. Don’t waste money. Resist the desire to have all sorts of things.

Third, “Destroy the desire to cling to things.” Then, your sufferings will end, and you will attain Enlightenment.

Fourth and finally, the Buddha revealed “The eight paths in order to enter a state of no suffering and not to cling.”

#### **The Eightfold Path is:**

1. Right View: to see things in the right way.
  2. Right Thought: to think matters in the right way.
  3. Right Speech: to talk using the right words.
  4. Right Behavior: to act in the right way.
  5. Right Livelihood: to make the best use of things and living beings.
  6. Right Effort: to practice Buddha’s teachings in the right way.
  7. Right Mindfulness: to pray in the right way.
- Right Concentration: to repent in the right way.



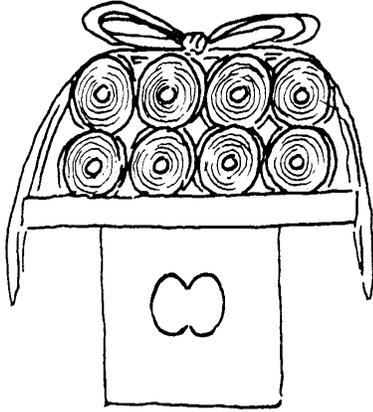
The Buddha said that if you can keep and practice the Eightfold Path, you can destroy sufferings and then attain Enlightenment.

Listening to the Buddha, the five monks rejoiced with tears and thanked Him. “Oh, Buddha, we would like to express our appreciation from the bottom of our hearts. Until now, we thought our way of practice was the best, but we understand that we were clinging to the self-denial practice and could not understand the right way to be free from suffering and distress. Please make us your first disciples. We would like to serve you and hear from you more. We sincerely beg of you, please feel pity for us and let us be your disciples!” Of course the Buddha delightedly accepted their requests. They remained always near the Buddha and listened to Him until his death at the age of 80.

The first sermon at Deer Park is called “The First Turning Wheel of the Dharma,” which means that as a wheel turns and goes from place to place, Buddha’s teachings spread from place to place. When the Buddha explained the teachings to the people, the Three Treasures were established. They are the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha.

The most important among the three is the Buddha, who is Buddha Sakyamuni. The second is the Buddha’s teachings such as the Fourfold Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. This is called Dharma, or Law. The third is the Sangha, who were the five monks but now includes all Buddha’s disciples, priests and followers.

The Three Treasures are the core of Buddhism.



妙法蓮華經  
MYŌ HŌ REN GE KYO

## Chapter 19 The Most Venerable Teaching

What is the most important teaching among all of the Buddha's teachings? It is "The Sutra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Dharma, or the Lotus Sutra, in short. I would like to explain the sutra, chapter by chapter for you to easily understand. However, I almost forgot to say some important things. I will tell you these things in the next two chapters.

## Chapter 20 The Compassionate Teaching to His Home Kingdom

Buddha Sakyamuni walked around India to preach various teachings to a lot of people in many different ways and in many places. One day, He stopped by His hometown, Kapilavastu Castle. He expounded the Dharma to His wife, Princess Yashodhara, His only child, Rahula, and His father, King Shuddhodana.

The people of the Sakya Clan in the kingdom had been very sad when they had heard that the princely heir had renounced the principedom and had started the homeless life of a monk. However, when the prince became the Buddha and returned to His hometown, the people around the kingdom gathered to see Him, even for just a glance.



The Buddha kept the promise made to

Princess Yashodhara at the time He had left the castle. The promise was that He would return to the palace after attaining Enlightenment. He talked to her at length about the following teachings: “Once we are born, we must die.” “Once we meet, we must be apart sooner or later.”

The soul is eternal. It exists while it is changing. Life on this earth is for everyone to repent the wrongdoings in their past lives. One must live through his or her life even if life is full of suffering, even if one is not blessed, or even if one is handicapped. You must live through it no matter what. When you live through this life, you are able to repent the wrongdoings in your previous lives. Your next life will match the karma in your present life.

It is useless to complain to others about your sufferings. If you suffer in this life, it may be caused by wrongdoings in your previous lives. In order not to carry on these sufferings and distresses in your next life, you must live the Eightfold Path. Thus, the Buddha expounded the Dharma to the people in the kingdom.

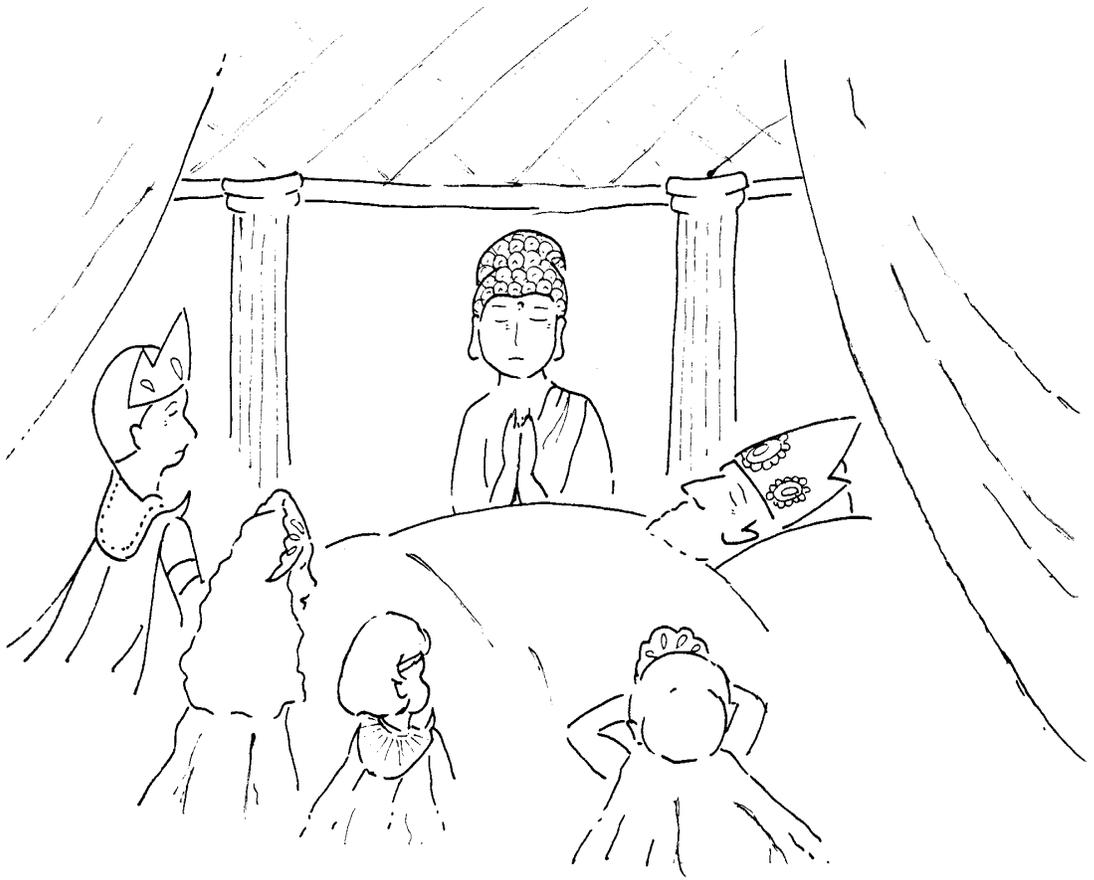
## **Chapter 21**

### **Real Happiness**

Listening to the Buddha’s stories, those who had been worried and distressed, slowly became courageous. The souls that were born as a human felt happier and courageously practiced Buddha’s teachings more often throughout their lives. When the time comes for a person to die, one thinks solemnly that it is time to say “Good-bye” to everyone on earth and to be born in the next life. One will not be afraid to die.

Live through this life in the right ways. When you get old and die, you need not be afraid. The Buddha will probably be proud of you and put His hand on your head and say, “You did well!” You will be very happy.

More details are revealed in the Lotus Sutra. Real happiness is to meet with the Lotus Sutra; therefore, I will introduce you to the Lotus Sutra next.



**The Time to be Reborn**