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Lord Gautama Buddha was a revered monk who brought about prosperity with his teachings. Read the history of Monk Buddha.

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Gautama Buddha

Gautama Buddha is considered to be the epitome of wisdom and knowledge. His life is an inspiration for many people who can't cope up with the increasing pressures of today's fast paced life. The teachings of Buddha talk about realizing your inner self and finally the attainment of Nirvana or total bliss. Lord Gautama Buddha was born roughly around 560 B.C. in Northern India. Gautam Buddha forms an important character in the history of ancient India.

King Suddhodana, the ruler of Sakhya clan was the father of Buddha. His mother's name was Maya. He was born in a small grove at a place called Lumbini while his mother was on her way to her maternal home for the delivery of the child. It is said that the birth of the Buddha took place among many auspicious signs. The Gods themselves made preparations for the birth of the child.

Flowers bloomed on the tree under which he was born, gentle rains calmed the weather, light music filled the air and calm smells filled the atmosphere. When Buddha was born, his body is said to have borne thirty two auspicious signs or birthmarks, which indicated that his future was going to be very bright. His mother died seven days after giving birth to him and he was brought up by her sister named Mahaprajapati who became his foster mother.

The king made preparations for an elaborate celebration after he was born. The baby was named Siddhartha, which means someone who accomplishes his aims. During the grand celebrations, great sages were called to predict the baby's future. The astrologers predicted that the child had a bright future and would be known throughout the world either as a powerful emperor or a revered monk who would leave his house and other worldly pleasures to become a holy and enlightened person.

The king was worried about the prediction about his son becoming a monk and asked what would make him turn into a monk. The astrologers predicted that four signs would prompt him to leave his worldly possessions and seek salvation. These would be an old crippled man, a diseased man, a corpse and a monk. The king grew worried about this prediction and made sure that his son never went out of the palace and brought him everything he wanted inside the palace premises.

Siddhartha got married at the age of sixteen to a girl named Yashodhara and had a son named Rahula. One day, he somehow managed to bribe a servant to take him out of the palace. As predicted by the astrologers, he saw a crippled old man, a diseased man, a corpse and finally a peaceful monk. The first three disturbed him to a great extent and made him realize that life and beauty were not permanent. However, when he saw the serene and calm on the face of the monk, he made a decision that he would leave all his worldly possessions and pursue a saintly life.

Siddhartha left his family, palace, power and all worldly possessions for pursuing a saintly life. He shaved his head, put on yellow robes and proceeded towards the capital of Magadha known as Rajgriha. He then went towards the hills located near this kingdom where hermits were supposed to live in caves. He requested a hermit named Alamo Kalamo to guide and instruct him. After some time Siddhartha decided to go to another hermit for the pursuit of spirituality. He was determined to practice extreme forms of Yogic austerities to attain inner bliss. He stopped taking food entirely and became very weak by this constant torture.

One day as he was trying to meditate, some dancing girls passed by the place where he was sitting. The song they were singing suddenly made Siddhartha realize that self torture is not going to help and staying away from food does not mean the attainment of true happiness. Thus, he began to eat again and gave up extreme forms of meditation and other practices. He realized that inner peace can be attained only if the body and mind is happy and free of any forms of pain or torture.

He sat in deep meditation under the shadow of a large peepal tree, which later came to be known as Bo-tree or tree of wisdom. He just wanted to attain full illumination and was even ready to give up his life for the sake of enlightenment. He was distracted by Maya (worldly pleasures) many times but he did not get allured and remained adamant in his position. Finally, he emerged victorious and attained full enlightenment. He was so ecstatic that he danced in a state of trance for seven days. When he gained his normal state of consciousness, his face shone with divine glow and his heart was filled with compassion and happiness.

Buddha (Enlightened One) traveled far and wide disseminating the knowledge he had gained. He preached the information and benefits he had gained from the enlightenment. He traveled to Varanasi once and gave a discourse to an audience that comprised of people from all walks of life. His preaching made an impact on everyone present there and a rich man known as Yasa converted to Buddhism. The next in line were Yasa's parents. Thousands followed

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thereafter and adopted Buddhism as not just their religion but a way of life. Lord Buddha is supposed to have died at the age of 80 due to some error in his diet.

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