

# *Buddha and Prince Siddhartha Buddha*



## Buddha

[Buddha is] “The Enlightened.” The highest degree of knowledge. To become a Buddha one has

- To break through the bondage of sense and personality;
- To acquire a complete perception of the REAL SELF and learn not to separate it from all other selves;
- To learn by experience the utter unreality of all phenomena of the visible Kosmos foremost of all;
- To reach a complete detachment from all that is evanescent and finite, and
- To live while yet on Earth in the immortal and the everlasting alone, in a supreme state of holiness.

## Prince Siddhartha Buddha

Buddha Siddhārtha [is] the name given to Gautama, the Prince of Kapilavastu, at his birth. It is an abbreviation of *Sarvārthassidha* and means, the “realization of all desires.” Gautama, which means, “on earth (*gau*) the most victorious (*tama*)” was the sacerdotal name of the Śākya family, the kingly patronymic of the dynasty to which the father of Gautama, the King Śuddhodhana of Kapilavastu, belonged. Kapilavastu was an ancient city, the birth-place of the Great Reformer and was destroyed during his life time. In the title Śākyamuni, the last component, *muni*, is rendered as meaning one “mighty in charity, isolation and silence,” and the former *Śākya* is the family name. Every Orientalist or Pundit knows by heart the story of Gautama, the Buddha, the most perfect of mortal men that the world has ever seen, but none of them seem to suspect the esoteric meaning underlying his *prenatal* biography, *i.e.*, the significance of the popular story. The *Lalitavistara* tells the tale, but abstains from hinting at the truth. The 5,000 *Jātakas*, or the events of former births (re-incarnations) are taken literally instead of esoterically. Gautama the Buddha, would not have been a

mortal man, had he not passed through hundreds and thousands of births previous to his last. Yet the detailed account of these, and the statement that during them he worked his way up through every stage of transmigration from the lowest animate and inanimate atom and insect, up to the highest — or *man*, contains simply the well-known occult aphorism: “a stone becomes a plant, a plant an animal, and an animal a man.” Every human being who has ever existed, has passed through the same evolution. But the hidden symbolism in the sequence of these re-births (*jātaka*) contains a perfect history of the evolution on this earth, *pre* and *post* human, and is a scientific exposition of natural facts.

One truth not veiled but bare and open is found in their nomenclature, *viz.*, that as soon as Gautama had reached the human form he began exhibiting in every personality the utmost unselfishness, self-sacrifice and charity. Buddha Gautama, the fourth of the Sapta (Seven) Buddhas and Sapta Tathāgatas, was born according to Chinese Chronology in 1024 B.C.; but according to the Singhalese chronicles, on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the second (or fourth) moon in the year 621 before our era. He fled from his father’s palace to become an ascetic on the night of the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the second moon, 597 B.C., and having passed six years in ascetic meditation at Gaya, and perceiving that physical self-torture was useless to bring enlightenment, he decided upon striking out a new path, until he reached the state of Bodhi. He became a full Buddha on the night of the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the twelfth moon, in the year 592, and finally entered Nirvāna in the year 543, according to Southern Buddhism. The Orientalists, however, have decided upon several other dates. All the rest is allegorical.

He attained the state of Bodhisattva on earth when in the personality called Prabhāpala. Tushita stands for a place on this globe, not for a paradise in the invisible regions. The selection of the Śākya family and his mother Māyā, as “the purest on earth,” is in accordance with the model of the nativity of every Saviour, God or deified Reformer. The tale about his entering his mother’s bosom in the shape of a white elephant is an allusion to his innate wisdom, the elephant of that colour being a symbol of every Bodhisattva. The statements that at Gautama’s birth, the newly born babe walked *seven steps* in four directions, that an Udumbara flower<sup>1</sup> bloomed in all its rare beauty, and that the Naga kings forthwith proceeded “*to baptise him*,” are all so many allegories in the phraseology of the Initiates and well-understood by every Eastern Occultist. The whole events of his noble life are given in occult numbers, and every so-called miraculous event — so deplored by Orientalists as confusing the narrative and making it impossible to extricate truth from fiction — is simply the allegorical veiling of the truth. It is as comprehensible to an Occultist learned in symbolism, as it is difficult to understand for a European scholar ignorant of Occultism. Every detail of the narrative after his death and before cremation is a chapter of *facts* written in a language which must be studied before it is understood, otherwise its dead letter will lead one into absurd contradictions. For instance, having reminded his disciples of the immortality of Dharmakāya, Buddha is said to have passed into Samadhi, and lost himself in Nirvāna — *from which none can return*. And yet, notwithstanding this, the Buddha is shown bursting open the lid of the coffin, and stepping out of it; saluting with folded hands his mother Māyā who had suddenly, appeared in

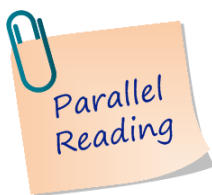
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<sup>1</sup> [*Ficus racemosa*; syn. *Ficus glomerata*.]

the air, though she had died seven days after his birth, &c., &c. As Buddha was a Chakravartin (he who turns the wheel of the Law), his body at its cremation could not be consumed by common fire. What happens? Suddenly a jet of flame burst *out of the Svastika on his breast*, and reduced his body to ashes. Space prevents giving more instances.

As to his being one of the true and undeniable SAVIOURS of the World, suffice it to say that the most rabid orthodox missionary, unless he is hopelessly insane, or has not the least regard even for historical truth, cannot find one smallest accusation against the life and personal character of Gautama, the “Buddha.” Without any claim to divinity, allowing his followers to fall into atheism, rather than into the degrading superstition of deva or idol-worship, his walk in life is from the beginning to the end, holy and divine. During the 45 years of his mission it is blameless and pure as that of a god — or as the latter should be. He is a perfect example of a divine, godly man. He reached Buddhahood — *i.e.*, complete enlightenment — entirely by his own merit and owing to his own individual exertions, no god being supposed to have any personal merit in the exercise of goodness and holiness.

Esoteric teachings claim that he renounced Nirvāna and gave up the Dharmakāya vesture to remain a “Buddha of compassion” within the reach of the miseries of this world. And the religious philosophy he left to it has produced for over 2,000 years generations of good and unselfish men. His is the only absolutely *bloodless* religion among all the existing religions: tolerant and liberal, teaching universal compassion and charity, love and self-sacrifice, poverty and contentment with one’s lot, whatever it may be. No persecutions, and enforcement of faith by fire and sword, have ever disgraced it. No thunder-and-lightning-vomiting god has interfered with its chaste commandments; and if the simple, humane and philosophical code of daily life left to us by the greatest Man-Reformer ever known, should ever come to be adopted by mankind at large, then indeed an era of bliss and peace would dawn on Humanity.<sup>2</sup>



“Buddhism is Inner Wisdom,” in the same series.

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<sup>2</sup> *Theosophical Glossary*: Buddha, Buddha Siddhārtha