

**"Awakened One" (Buddha):** Prince Siddhartha Gautama, who would one day be known as the Buddha, began his life as a prince in a kingdom in ancient India.

Prince Gautama (Buddha) was born about 553 BCE. He had parents who loved him, many servants to wait on him, the finest clothes, and a different palace for each season of the year. Yet, he found his world full of suffering. It upset him that painful old age, sickness, and death were all part of life in this world.

One day, he met an ascetic (a monk). He was amazed that this monk could find calm and peace in a world filled with such sufferings. That day he made a very difficult decision. He decided to leave his wealth, his comfort, his wife, and his newborn son, to become an ascetic.

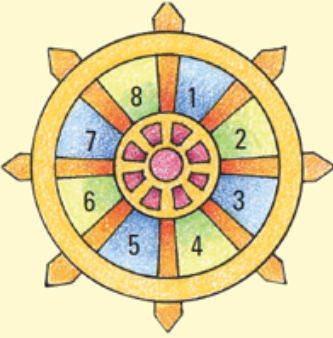
For the next six years he traveled throughout India. But the answers he found were not enough. Riches had not brought him peace, but neither had the life of poverty of an ascetic. One day, while sitting under a fig tree, an understanding came to him. This understanding was a way to end suffering. That was the day Prince Siddhartha Gautama began to earn a new title, the Buddha, which means "Awakened One". The way to end suffering was to understand the 'Four Noble Truths' and follow the 'Eightfold Path'.

### **The Four Noble Truths**

1. Suffering is present in all things, and nothing lasts forever.
2. Suffering is caused by cravings (desires and wants).

3. The way to end suffering is to give up all cravings.
4. The way to give up all cravings is to live life according to the **Eightfold Path**. This is also called the “Middle Way”. Not too strict or easy, but ‘just right’. As a prince, the Buddha had known riches. As an ascetic, he had known what it was like to have nothing. Neither brought him peace. So, the path to enlightenment has to be somewhere in the middle.

### The Eightfold Path



- 1. Right understanding**  
Develop a deep understanding of the Four Noble Truths.
- 2. Right purpose**  
Live a life of selflessness (not selfishness), love, and nonviolence.
- 3. Right speech**  
Be careful and truthful in what you say. Do not lie or gossip.
- 4. Right action**  
Do not kill, steal, or lie. Be honest.
- 5. Right way to earn a living**  
Do not work at a job that causes harm to people or living creatures.
- 6. Right effort**  
Promote good actions and prevent evil actions.
- 7. Right mindfulness**  
Be aware of but not attached to your emotions, thoughts, and feelings.
- 8. Right concentration**  
Focus your mind with such practices as meditation.

The Buddha said that one could end suffering and find enlightenment by following these eight teachings.

Assignment: In your notebook, make an acrostic summary of the major beliefs of Buddhism, using the word BUDDHA. An acrostic uses each letter of the word as the first letter of a five or more word phrase related to the topic. You should include info on the four noble truths.

For example, let's say I am studying Sock Monkeys, and I want to make an acrostic of the word Monkey summarizing my information about sock monkeys. It may look like something like this:

- Many people fear their power
- Obey all words of a sock monkey
- No creature on earth is greater
- Know true wisdom from the all knowing sock-primate
- Everyone should buy a sock monkey, even if it means going hungry
- You never know when you will need a sock monkey