

## 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 princedom. 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.”

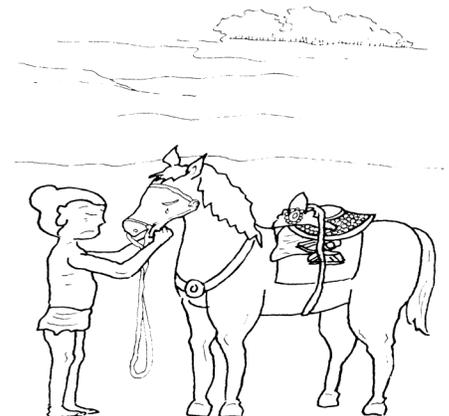
## **Chapter 9**

### **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.

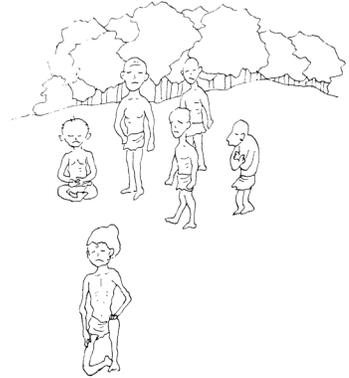
Prince Siddhartha’s main purpose for leaving the castle was to find the way to salvation. Salvation was a way to be free from the cycle of birth and death. He looked for scholars and wise men and asked them to teach him the way to salvation. However, he could not find a



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?”

