

# The Life of the Buddha

## *Unveiling the myth and the legend*

Born into a royal family in Nepal in the 6th Century BC, Siddhartha Gautama's early privileged existence insulated him from the sufferings of life. But the young prince abandoned his palace and set out on a journey through Northern India that took him to the verge of starvation and eventual enlightenment. His experiences became a philosophy that is now followed by over 400 million people around the world.

The Buddha (one who is awake) lived 2,500 years ago, 500 years before Christ, and the events of his life make up one of the greatest stories ever told. Using expert testimony, recent archaeological discoveries, computer-generated images and dramatic reconstructions, this film re-creates the Buddha's extraordinary life, from the luxuries of the palace where he was waited on hand and foot, to his dramatic escape from home, the path to enlightenment and beyond.

The film visits the locations associated with Siddhartha's remarkable journey – from Lumbini, where Buddha was first said to have touched the earth, to the descendant of the tree under which Buddha sat at Bodh Gaya. The film reconstructs the spiritual practices he tried and rejected, until he found enlightenment while meditating beneath the bodhi tree.

Until about 100 years ago, the secrets of the Buddha lay hidden in the dense jungles of India. But in the 1800s Western archaeologists and explorers stumbled upon the small village of Lumbini in Nepal, where they discovered the birthplace of the Buddha, enabling them to unlock the secrets of his life.

Six years after leaving home, the Buddha arrived at Bodh Gaya where he sat beneath a magnificent tree, vowing not to move until he had reached enlightenment. He then formulated his philosophy based upon four noble truths. Today, a descendant of that same tree stands upon the same site. A temple now stands next to it and Bodh Gaya has become the most sacred and important landmark along the Buddhist pilgrimage route. From here, the Buddha set out to teach for 40 years.

*The Life of the Buddha* includes interviews with English speaking Buddhists from various denominations. It looks at the key practices of Buddhism and investigates the life-changing solutions to the problem of human suffering that the Buddha formulated.

For someone who never wanted to be worshipped as a God, the Buddha changed the course of history for man, and the search for eternal peace and happiness.

"...a straightforward biography of the Buddha's life and teaching ... there are deeply felt and articulate contributions from Richard Gombrich, of Balliol College, Oxford; Peter Harvey, from the University of Sunderland, Kevin Trainor, of the University of Vermont, and the Dalai Lama." **The Times**

Producer/Director  
**Clive Maltby**

Executive Producer  
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### Documentary

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1 x 50 minutes