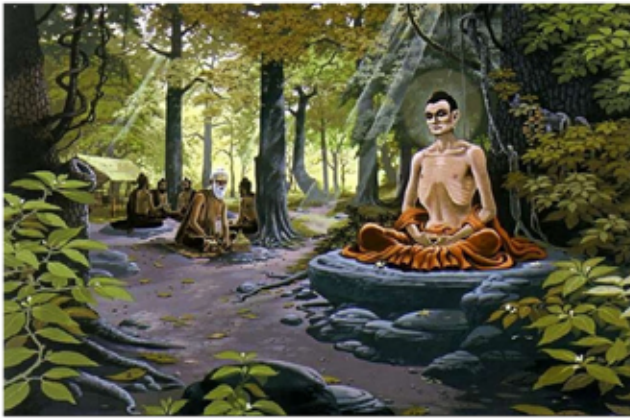


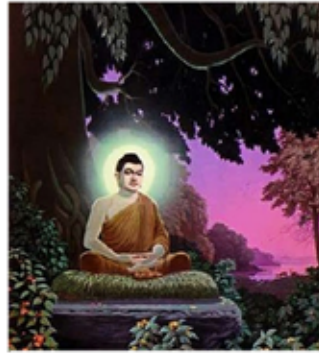
# LIFE OF THE BUDDHA (CONT'D)



## ENLIGHTENMENT

Gautama went to all the most famous religious teachers of his day and learned all they had to teach. In the process, he subjected his body to great hardship and torment. Despite subjecting himself to all these hardship, he could not find an answer to the cessation of suffering. Eventually, he realised that he had been going from one extreme to the other. As a prince he had lived a life of luxury while as an ascetic he went to the other extreme of deprivation. Thus, he decided on a path of Middle Way between luxury and austerity.

As a result, he began to take food much to the disgust of his fellow ascetics. Then, he sat under a Bodhi tree in Bodhgaya and made a vow not to leave until he attained enlightenment. Prince Gautama went into deep meditation. He realised the true nature of suffering and finally attained enlightenment at the age of 35.



## LIFE AS A TEACHER



At first, the Buddha was reluctant to teach about what he had realised as it was difficult to verbalise them in words. However, out of compassion, the Buddha decided to spread the Dhamma (teachings of Buddhism) to those who could benefit from it. Therefore, he went to his five fellow ascetics who had abandoned him earlier to give his first sermon. Thus, began a forty-five year teaching career. The Buddha taught the Dhamma to all classes and types of men and women, and, indeed, anyone who was ready. Soon, the Buddha was able to gather a group of followers who were willing to give up everything to practise Buddhism. Thus, the community of monks known as Sangha was born.

## Parinibbana

With the human body, the Buddha entered into Parinibbana, final perfect peace. His final words to the Sangha were: "All things are subjected to change. Strive on with diligence." His body was later cremated and his ashes were divided up into 8 portions. Each portion was brought to different places and was honoured in stupas till today. 🙏

