

STORYTELLER:
BUDDHIST STORIES



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Anita Ganeri

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Introduction



Buddhist Stories



In each of the world's six main religions - Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Sikhism - stories play a very important part. They have been used for many thousands of years to teach people about their faith in a way which makes difficult messages easier to understand. Many stories tell of times in the lives of religious teachers, leaders, gods and goddesses. Others explain mysterious events such as how the world was created or what happens when you die. Many have a strong moral or lesson to teach.



The collection of stories in this book comes from Buddhism. Buddhists follow the teachings of a man called Siddhartha Gautama, who lived in India about 2500 years ago. He saw that there was suffering in the world and tried to find a way to end it. When he found the answer, he became known as the Buddha, or 'one who is awake', because he was able to see things as they really are. Buddhists use his teachings as a guide through their lives. In this book, you can read some of the many stories about the Buddha's life.

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The Birth of the Buddha

Long ago, King Suddhodana and his wife Queen Maya ruled a small kingdom in the north of India. They lived in a magnificent palace in the beautiful city of Kapilavastu, the capital of the kingdom.

One night, Queen Maya had a dream. She dreamt that she saw a dazzling light shining down from the sky, and out of the light came a pure white elephant with a lotus blossom in its trunk. When Queen Maya woke up, she remembered her dream and was filled with joy. But what did her dream mean? The king summoned four wise men to the palace and asked them to explain.

"Oh, your majesties," the wise men said. "This is wonderful news indeed. For the Queen will soon have a baby son who will grow up to be very great and good. Rejoice, rejoice and be happy!"

When the time came for her baby to be born, Queen Maya set off for her father's home in the next-door kingdom. This was the custom at the time. On the way, she stopped to rest in the beautiful garden of Lumbini, which was filled with flowers, and fruit trees, birds and bees. There she gave birth to her son.

It was a clear May night and the Moon shone round and full in the sky. Angels wrapped the baby in a fine, soft shawl and showered him with sweet-smelling rose

