

# DEEPAK CHOPRA

*New York Times Bestselling Author*

# BUDDHA

*A Story of Enlightenment*



“The Buddha was as mortal as you and I, yet he attained enlightenment and was raised to the rank of an immortal. The miracle is that he got there following a heart as human as yours and mine, and just as vulnerable.”

—from the Author’s Note

Bestselling author Deepak Chopra brings the Buddha back to life in this gripping novel of the young prince who abandoned his inheritance to discover his true calling. This iconic journey changed the world forever, and the truths revealed continue to influence every corner of the globe today.

A young man in line for the throne is trapped in his father’s kingdom and yearns for the outside world. Betrayed by those closest to him, Siddhartha abandons his palace and princely title. Alone and face-to-face with his demons, he becomes a wandering monk and embarks on a spiritual fast that carries him to the brink of death. Ultimately recognizing his inability to conquer his body and mind by sheer will, Siddhartha transcends his physical pain and achieves enlightenment.

Although we recognize Buddha today as an icon of peace and serenity, his life story was a tumultuous and spellbinding affair filled with love and sex, murder and loss, struggle and surrender. From the rocky terrain of the material world to the summit of the spiritual one, *Buddha* captivates and inspires—ultimately leading us closer to understanding the true nature of life and our selves.



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Deepak Chopra

 HarperCollins e-books



# Contents

<a href="#">Author's Note</a>	v
<b><a href="#">PART ONE: SIDDHARTHA THE PRINCE</a></b>	<b>1</b>
<a href="#">1 One crisp spring day King Suddhodana turned in his saddle...</a>	3
<a href="#">2 The gray rain blanketed Suddhodana and his men as the...</a>	9
<a href="#">3 The silk curtains to Maya's chamber parted, and Kumbira rushed...</a>	17
<a href="#">4 The next morning Suddhodana rode his warhorse up the hillside...</a>	29
<a href="#">5 It took a moment before Siddhartha had enough presence of...</a>	43
<a href="#">6 It took Devadatta most of the night to figure out...</a>	55
<a href="#">7 You just might do. In a pinch."</a>	73
<a href="#">8 The day after the banquet everyone's attention shifted to the...</a>	97
<a href="#">9 The sky was divided between sun and clouds as the...</a>	117
<a href="#">10 Sujata's disappearance wasn't discovered for several days. The first day...</a>	129
<b><a href="#">PART TWO: GAUTAMA THE MONK</a></b>	<b>141</b>
<a href="#">11 The skies had given plenty of warning all day. Clouds...</a>	143
<a href="#">12 Gautama passed several travelers on the road who could have...</a>	155

13	The moment Gautama stepped into the small clearing, he knew...	169
14	Gautama wandered down the road, his whole being churning with...	179
15	One morning Ananda didn't find Gautama in his tent. Several...	197
	<b>PART THREE: BUDDHA</b>	213
16	While he lay motionless on the ground, Gautama became dimly...	215
17	The sun rose, and Gautama found himself sitting on the...	229
18	The five monks had retreated to a forest glade near...	239
19	Buddha didn't spend the night in Kapilavastu but took the...	251
	<b>Epilogue</b>	
	For a storyteller, it would be ideal if Buddha's life...	265
	<b>The Art of Non-Doing</b>	
	After being inspired by Buddha's life, the most important thing...	273
	<b>Acknowledgments</b>	
	<b>About the Author</b>	
	<b>Credits</b>	
	<b>Cover</b>	
	<b>Copyright</b>	
	<b>About the Publisher</b>	

## Author's Note



*Whoever sees me sees the teaching.*

— BUDDHA

In writing this book, I took a deep breath and created new characters and incidents in the life of one of the most famous people who ever lived. Famous, but still very obscure. I wanted to bring Buddha out of the mists of time, to fill him out in flesh and blood while still preserving his mystery. Fact blended into fantasy centuries ago in the story of the prince who became a living god. Or is "god" the very thing he didn't want to be? Was his deepest wish to disappear from the material world, remembered only as an inspiration of perfection?

The Buddha story, as it gathered momentum for two millennia, became chock-full of miracles and gods that got stuck onto its surface. Speaking about himself, Buddha never mentioned miracles or gods. He held a doubtful view of both. He showed no interest in being revered as a personality; none of his many sermons mentions his family life or gives much personal information at all. Unlike Christ in the New Testament, he certainly didn't see himself as divine.

Instead, he saw himself as "someone who is awake," which is what the word *Buddha* means. That's the person I've tried to capture in this book. Here in all his mystery is the principal human being who ever gained enlightenment, who spent his long life trying to wake up the rest of us. Everything he knew, he knew

from arduous, sometimes bitter experience. He went through extreme suffering—almost to the death—and emerged with something incredibly precious. Buddha literally became the truth. “Whoever sees me sees the teaching,” he said, “and whoever sees the teaching sees me.”

I wrote this book as a sacred journey, fictionalized in many of its externals but psychologically true, I hope, to what the seeker’s path feels like. In all three phases of his life—Siddhartha the prince, Gautama the monk, and Buddha the Compassionate One—he was as mortal as you and I, yet he attained enlightenment and was raised to the rank of an immortal. The miracle is that he got there following a heart as human as yours and mine, and just as vulnerable.

*Deepak Chopra*

PART ONE



SIDDHARTHA  
THE PRINCE