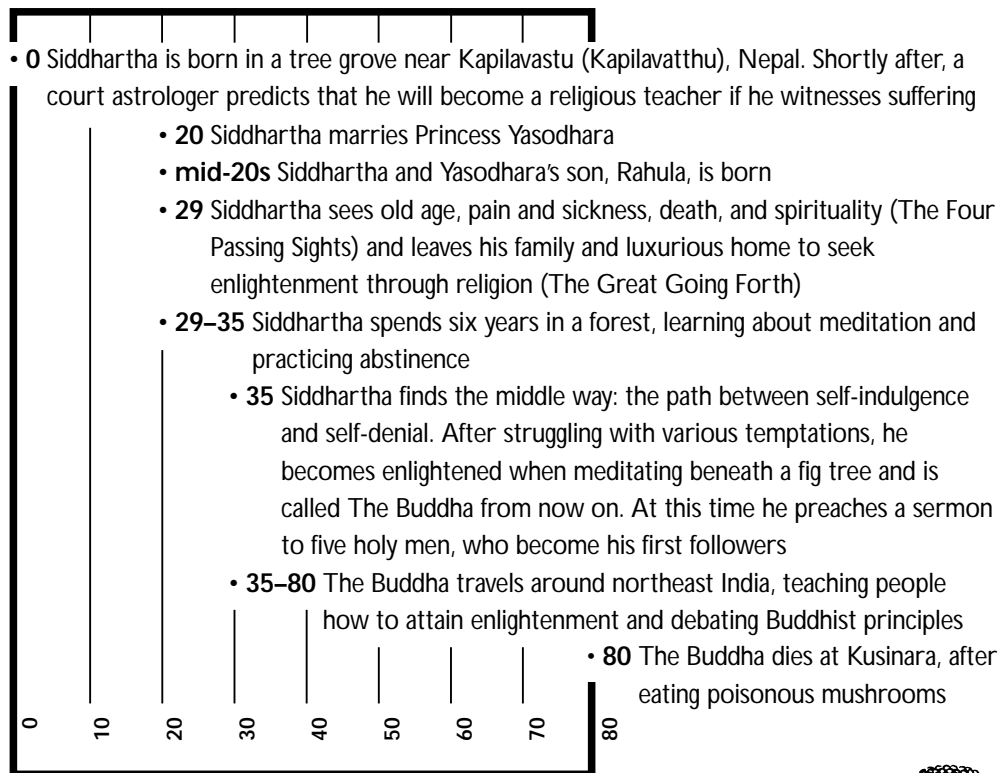**Buddhism: The Life of the Buddha**

The founder of Buddhism was a wealthy prince called Siddhartha Gautama (Siddhattha Gotama), who lived in northeast India over 2,000 years ago. After renouncing his luxurious lifestyle for spirituality, he was given the title Buddha, which means "The Enlightened One." It is not clear exactly when the Buddha lived: some say between 563 and 483 BCE; others say between 448 and 368 BCE. As a result of this uncertainty, we can indicate only how old he may have been during the main events of his life.

YEARS OF AGE

• **0** Siddhartha is born in a tree grove near Kapilavastu (Kapilavatthu), Nepal. Shortly after, a court astrologer predicts that he will become a religious teacher if he witnesses suffering

• **20** Siddhartha marries Princess Yasodhara

• **mid-20s** Siddhartha and Yasodhara's son, Rahula, is born

• **29** Siddhartha sees old age, pain and sickness, death, and spirituality (The Four Passing Sights) and leaves his family and luxurious home to seek enlightenment through religion (The Great Going Forth)

• **29–35** Siddhartha spends six years in a forest, learning about meditation and practicing abstinence

• **35** Siddhartha finds the middle way: the path between self-indulgence and self-denial. After struggling with various temptations, he becomes enlightened when meditating beneath a fig tree and is called The Buddha from now on. At this time he preaches a sermon to five holy men, who become his first followers

• **35–80** The Buddha travels around northeast India, teaching people how to attain enlightenment and debating Buddhist principles

• **80** The Buddha dies at Kusinara, after eating poisonous mushrooms

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Statue depicting Buddha