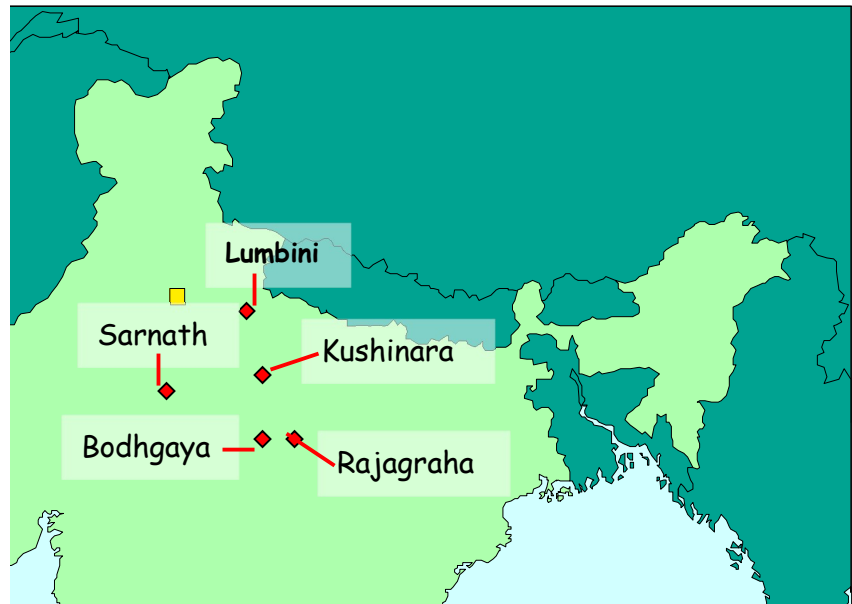


Siddhartha Gotama



Northern India showing the important places in Siddhartha Gotama's life

There are many legends about the early life of the man who became the Buddha. But what is generally held to be true is that he was called Siddhartha Gotama and was born in Lumbini in Nepal around 563BCE. His father Suddhohana, was the ruler of the country of Shakyas so Siddartha was raised as a Hindu Prince.



The first legend says that Siddhartha's father called for a wise man to tell Siddhartha's fortune when he was born. The man said, "He will either be a king of kings to govern all the lands of the Earth, or verily he will be the most holy man. He is born for the sake of everything that lives."

So the King decided to protect his son from all the worries of the world, so that he would not wonder about the meaning of life, hence he would not become a holy man, but would be a king like his father. Siddhartha grew up in luxury and splendour and never saw anything which was not perfect, He was protected from seeing anything which was ugly, and he was married at 16 to a beautiful princess.

All things that might cause the prince to wonder about misery or suffering were hidden from him. One of the stories is that his father employed many gardeners to remove any plants which were wilting so the prince would not know about death. He and his wife had a son which he called Rahula which means "chains" or "Ties".

1. Where did Siddhartha come from?
2. Which religion did Siddhartha belong to?
3. Why did his father try to protect Siddhartha from the world?
4. Was Siddhartha happy in his palace? Or was he suffering?
5. Why do you think Siddhartha called his son Rahula?