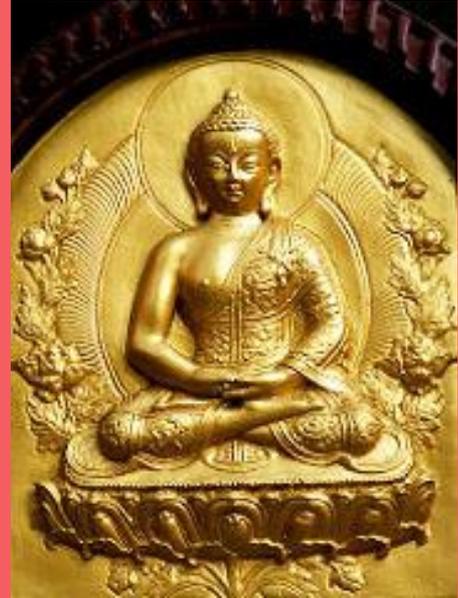


Stories of the Buddha



by FGS Buddha Memorial Center



Carrying His Father's Coffin

One day, while the Buddha was residing at Vulture Peak meditating, a messenger came from his father's palace to tell him that his father was seriously ill. The Buddha quickly settled matters in the monastery, and went to see his father.

When his father, who was ninety-three years old, saw that his son had returned to see him, tears filled his eyes as he stretched out his hand to greet him. Buddha stepped forward to grasp his father's hand. Around them, the ministers and officials of his father's kingdom all wept openly and with real feeling.

When King Suddhodana saw their grief, he said, "Don't feel sad for me. There is nothing to be sad about. All living things in this world must die. I am completely satisfied with my life, and now that my son is here I am ready to pass on. My son became the Buddha, and from that I have derived untold comfort and joy. Now that I am blessed with this one last sight of him before I die, I feel as if I already have seen the brilliant radiance and glory that follows upon death of the physical forms."

As soon as he stopped speaking, the king smiled slightly and pressed his palms together. Then he died.

That night, as surom dictated, a group of men sat beside the king's body as it lay in its coffin. The Buddha, Nanda, Ananda, and Rahula were among the men who were present in the room. At one point, Nanda, who was the Buddha's half-brother, said to the Buddha, "When the coffin is carried to the funeral pyre tomorrow, please let me be one of the bearers."

When Ananda and Rahula heard Nanda say that, they both asked if they could be pallbearers, too.

The Buddha assented to all their requests, adding, "I will be a pall bearer in the funeral, as well."

The next day, the king's funeral procession was exceptionally dignified and magnificent. People from all over the kingdom lined the roadsides on their knees, weeping openly. When they saw that the Buddha himself was acting as one of the pallbearers for his father's coffin as it proceeded slowly toward the pyre, they were moved beyond all words and beyond all expression. All they could do was bow in reverence and respect at the sight.

(Source: [FGS Buddha Memorial Center](#))