The Hero’s Journey of Siddhartha

“The Legend of Buddha”

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Summary

- The legend of Buddha is about a prince who leaves his kingdom in search of helping the poor and sick and finding enlightenment (pure and unqualified knowledge). He does find enlightenment at the end of the story and he preaches his knowledge.
Siddhartha's Transformation

Siddhartha transforms from a spoiled prince having a perfect life free of suffering to a knowledgeable preacher who is at one with himself, trying to lead others to enlightenment.
Known Life - Siddhartha's life is full of beauty and riches. He has never seen suffering or death before he goes to the outside world.

Call - "Everything in the world is changing and transitory...let me leave to follow the call of the truth seeker." Meaning of the quote: he wants to leave his palace to help the homeless, sick, and poor people and to find out what the world outside of the palace is really like.

Threshold - "The prince, dressed as a pauper, shaved his head and plunged into the forest in search for truth and enlightenment." He ran away from the palace to start his journey and new life.

Threshold Guardian - Siddhartha's father

Unknown Life - The entire outside world filled with death, poverty, and suffering.
Initiation

- **Challenges:** "...one day starving and her death..." and "The struggle was not easy, for he had to battle Mara, the Evil One, god of death, desire, and illusion."

- **Temptations:** Mara tempted Siddhartha by showing him his three beautiful daughters—Desire, Longing, and Lust.

- **Mentor:** Himself  
  **Helper:** the little village girl that gave Siddhartha rice when he was starving.

- **Talisman:** his wisdom and knowledge.

- **Abyss:** Mara told Buddha, "Why not leave mankind to the devil and slip at once into Nirvana? Buddha saw the truth in these words." After, Buddha considered this but eventually turned the suggestion down.
Return

- **Revelation**: Buddha discovers death and suffering in the real world.
- **Transformation**: Siddhartha transforms from a spoiled prince having a perfect life free of suffering to a knowledgeable preacher who is at one with himself, trying to lead others to enlightenment.
- **Atonement**: when he meditates under the tree and reaches enlightenment.
- **Return**: he comes back enlightened and preaches his knowledge to the people.
- **Gift**: his knowledge, wisdom, and ability to preach.
Observations

- Why do you suppose Siddhartha was unhappy, even though he had everything a person could want? A: Siddhartha was unhappy because he saw people suffering and did not want any person to be that way.

- What was the goal of Siddhartha's quest? A: His goal was to reach enlightenment, help the suffering, and help others by preaching his knowledge.
Observations (Cont.)

- After Siddhartha achieved enlightenment, Mara appealed to him one last time. What was Mara's argument? Why did Buddha almost agree with him? A: Mara's argument was that the other people wouldn't understand/comprehend his level of knowledge so what's the point of preaching it? He almost agrees because he knew humans were slow to understanding things but he still wanted to help them.

- What was Buddha's gift? How did his people benefit? A: Buddha's gift was his knowledge, wisdom, and ability to preach. His people benefitted from these gifts because they were able to gain knowledge from Buddha when he preached to them.
Final Words

How does Buddha fit and/or redefine our idea of a hero? A: The Buddha redefines our idea of a hero because he was motivated by helping others instead of motivated by awards and fame. Also he transforms from a spoiled prince into a enlightened preacher by heroic actions, which is what shapes a Hero's identity.
Sources:

- http://www.google.com/search?q=buddha&oe=UTF-8&hl=en&client=safari&um=1&ie=UTF-8&tbm=isch&source=og&sa=N&tab=wi&ei=5QtjUM27Bsfo0QHMjIDYBQ&biw=1024&bih=672&sei=5wtjUJXuNMi30AGwhYHIAQ#bv=i3;d1yxbyx2KUyV4yTGM: