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World Civilization I

6 March 2023

The Buddha

1. What events led Siddhartha to leave the palace and seek answers to the "pain of existence"?

The events that led Siddhartha were his four journeys and signs, leading him to "true" aspects of life. As the future teller predicted, he saw an older man, unveiling that there was no escape from aging. The second sign was a sick man, twisted from disease. He learned that sickness has no bias. After seeing the third sign, a corpse wrapped in a lien. It was revealed to him that after death, they were reborn, and it would be an endless cycle of death. The last sign was a beggar, seen as confronting reality to seek answers. He saw pain and suffering dominating life and the urgency to do something about it. He had learned and saw the meaning of impermanence in everything, so he had to seek answers to the "pain of existence."

2. What challenges did he face in his quest to find enlightenment?

One of the challenges was that he was finally alone for the first time and faced an immense scale of suffering for the first time. A second challenge was cutting through the tradition of Brahmanism. Another challenge was learning meditation techniques to dive deeper into His mind. This involved placing himself "under various kinds of pressure by controlling your breathing or sometimes fasting undergoing other forms." Then he continued to try harsh asceticism.

3. Describe "the Middle Way" of peace and harmony he sought

The Middle Way was a form of "tuneful harmony," mindfulness of the body. This was described as not ignoring the body as a way of forcefully mastery but awareness, which was another form of enlightenment. He had been through agony and suffering and had pushed his mind to its limits for six years, but he still had not discovered the inner peace and harmony he was looking for in the state of the total.