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HIS 113: World Civilization

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

First, as a young man, Siddhartha was shielded from the realities of suffering and death outside the palace walls. However, one day he ventured out and saw a sick person, an old person, and a corpse. These experiences shocked him and made him aware of the suffering that exists in the world. He also encountered a wandering ascetic who had renounced the world and was seeking spiritual enlightenment. The sight of this wandering ascetic made Siddhartha realize that there might be a way out of the suffering that he saw around him. Siddhartha was dissatisfied with the luxurious life he led in the palace. He felt that material wealth and pleasure could not provide lasting happiness and that there must be more to life than what he had experienced so far. These events combined to create a sense of an existential crisis in Siddhartha. He was consumed by questions about the nature of life and the causes of suffering. Eventually, he made the decision to leave his palace, renounce his wealth, and seek answers to these questions through spiritual practice and meditation.

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

Siddhartha Gautama faced several challenges in his quest for enlightenment. Siddhartha came from a wealthy and powerful family, and leaving behind his life of luxury was not an easy decision. He had to give up everything he had known and become a wandering ascetic, depending on others for his basic needs. After leaving his palace, Siddhartha sought out various spiritual teachers to learn from, but none of them satisfied his urge for knowledge and an understanding of the nature of suffering. Siddhartha faced various forms of temptation during his spiritual practices, including the temptation of

wealth and power. He had to learn to resist these distractions and maintain his focus on his goal.

Siddhartha devoted himself to intense meditation but did not find the answers he was looking for. He faced physical pain and mental fatigue during his meditation practice and had to learn to overcome these challenges to continue his quest. One of the biggest challenges Siddhartha faced was understanding the root cause of suffering. He had to explore his own mind and confront his deepest fears and desires.

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

The Middle Way in Buddhism refers to a path of moderation and balance, which Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, sought in his quest for enlightenment. The Middle Way teaches that we should avoid the extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification and instead find a balanced approach to life that leads to peace and harmony. According to the Buddha, the path to enlightenment lies in finding a middle ground between the two extremes of sensual indulgence and extreme asceticism. The Buddha had initially practiced extreme asceticism, but he later realized that it was not an effective path to enlightenment. Instead, he advocated for a balanced approach that involved taking care of the body and mind while avoiding excess and extremes. The Middle Way is based on the Four Noble Truths, which state that suffering exists, suffering arises from craving and attachment, suffering can be overcome, and the path to the cessation of suffering is the Eightfold Path. The Eightfold Path consists of “right understanding, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration." By following the Eightfold Path, one can develop moral and ethical behavior, mental discipline, and insight into the nature of reality.