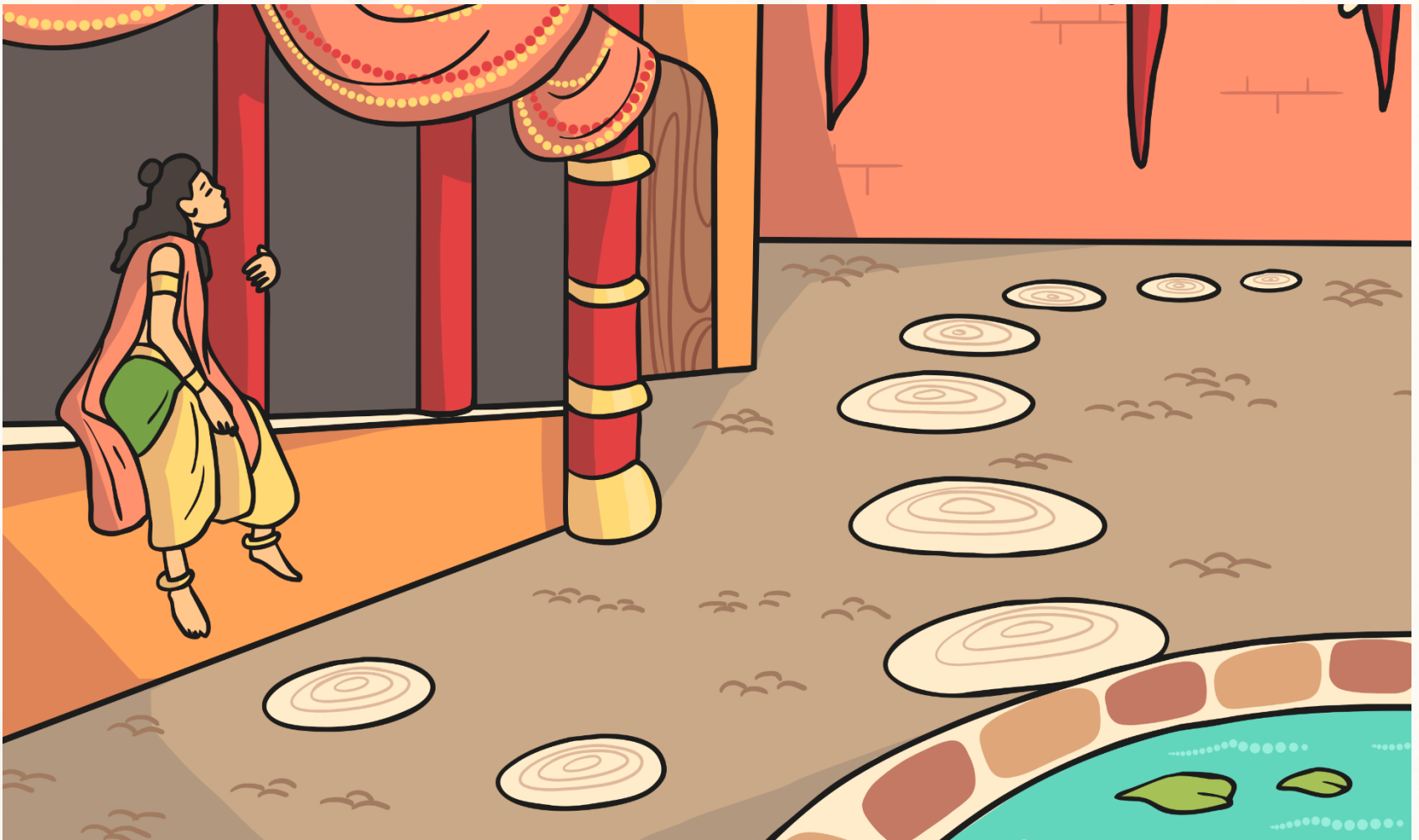


The Story of the Buddha





Siddhartha Gautama was born into a royal family in Nepal and for many years lived within the palace walls away from the sufferings of life such as old age, illness and death. Never having seen these things, he didn't know what they were.



Eventually he married, had children and decided it was time to go outside the palace to see what was on the other side. He witnessed an old man, a sick man and the corpse of a dead man. He was very worried by what he saw and learned that sickness, age and death comes to everyone, even if you are a wealthy person.



Next Siddhartha saw a holy man dressed in rags with only a begging bowl in his hand. Despite owning nothing but the bowl, he looked so calm and at peace. He pondered how a man with nothing could be so content.



These four sights were a turning point for Siddhartha. He wanted to know if there was more to life than sickness, old age and death so he decided to leave his riches behind and go and find out for himself.



Dressed as a monk, he went to meditate under a Bodhi tree and promised himself that he wouldn't rise again until he found the truth. As he sat, he thought carefully about the past, present, future and the four sights he saw when he left the palace. After some time, he realised there was a way for people to end their pain and sadness. Within this moment, he became wise and enlightened.



He began to teach people about what he had realised and people began to call him Buddha or 'teacher'. He taught them the Four Noble Truths.



The first Noble Truth was about the fact that suffering exists. Our lives are a struggle. The second was about the cause of suffering. We create some of our own difficulties in the way we think. The third was that it is possible to end suffering, by realising we cause some of our own difficulties. And the fourth explained the path (the Noble Eightfold Path) to be followed in order to end suffering.



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