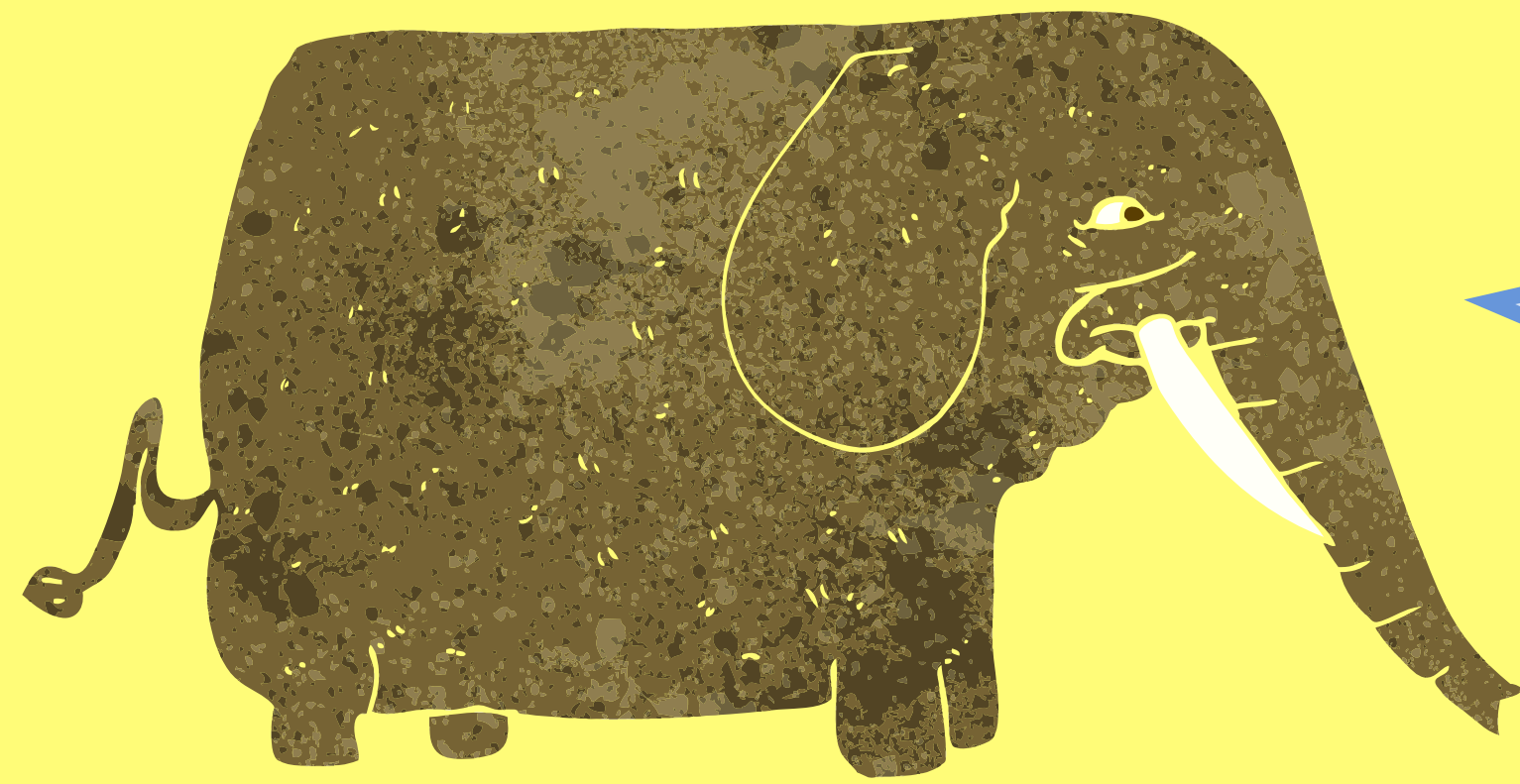


Buddhist Festivals:

The Ploughing Festival

Learning Objective:

To understand how and why significant moments in the life of the Buddha are celebrated.



What's happening in these pictures?

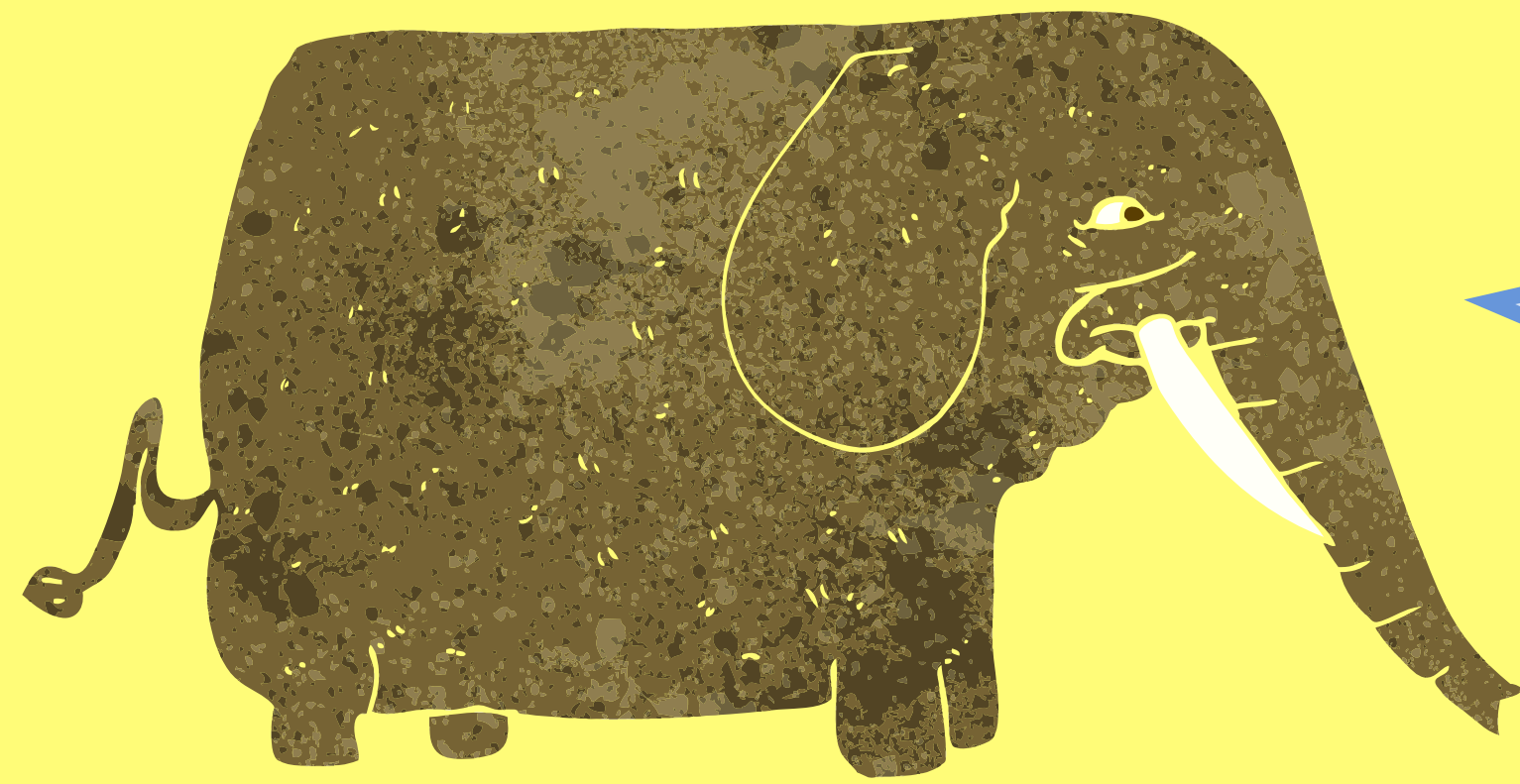


Discuss your ideas.

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What's happening in these pictures?



Discuss your ideas.

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These people in Thailand are celebrating the Ploughing festival. The festival celebrates the start of the rice growing season and an important moment in the life of the Buddha.

- Everyone gets dressed in special clothes – even the oxen pulling the plough are decorated with red flags and sashes!



- Everyone follows behind the oxen pulling ploughs in a long procession
- Women and girls carry offerings of rice and flowers

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- Sometimes, children are dressed in traditional costumes to look like royalty
- After the procession, there are ceremonies where furrows are ploughed and rice is sown
- Races and competitions are held to entertain people



Now let's read
the story of the
Buddha and the
Ploughing Festival...



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When he was very young, Siddhartha's father, the king, held a festival to celebrate the start of the growing season. Siddhartha was carried to a shady spot by the field where the festival took place.



As he sat watching, Siddhartha noticed that the oxen pulling the ploughs were working very hard and suffering, while the people watching relaxed and enjoyed themselves.

Siddhartha was very kind, and often thought about the suffering of animals. He looked around and noticed a lizard eating ants. A moment later, a bird swooped down and ate the lizard.

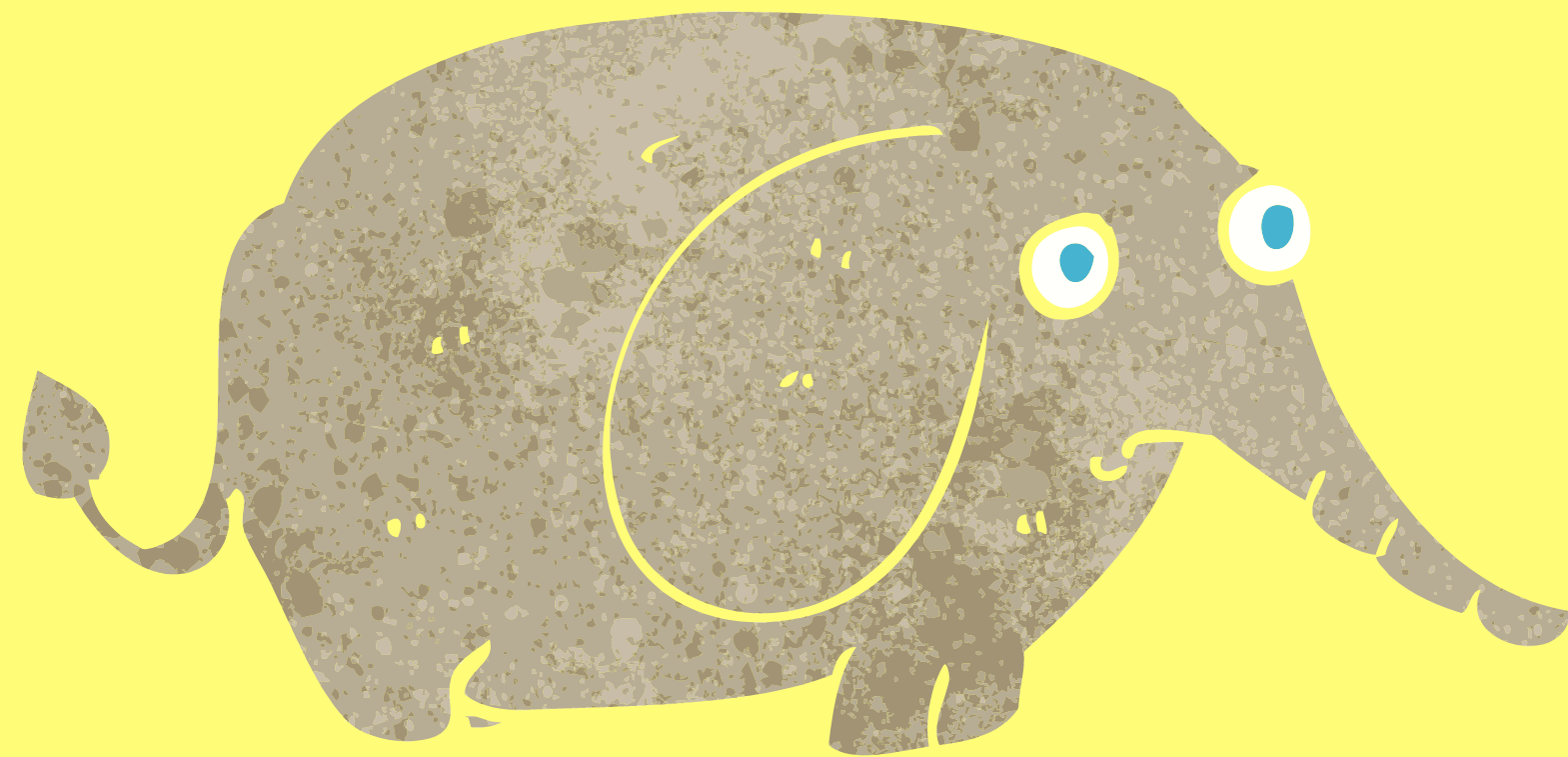


He was sad that, although he was happy and lived a life of luxury, those animals were suffering. He began to meditate...

While meditating, Siddhartha experienced his first moment of enlightenment. He realised that nothing in life is perfect. All living things suffer. This meant that even he, with his life of luxury, would eventually suffer too.



As he understood this, he also realised that he must spend his life searching for a way to overcome this suffering.



Why is this
moment in the Buddha's
life celebrated?

Discuss your ideas.

Stories about the Buddha and festivals celebrating moments in his life help Buddhists remember and understand important ideas contained in the Buddha's teachings.

The Four Noble Truths

1. **Dukkha**

Suffering exists, and it is a part of all life.

2. **Samudaya**

Suffering is caused by things like a desire for fame or wealth.

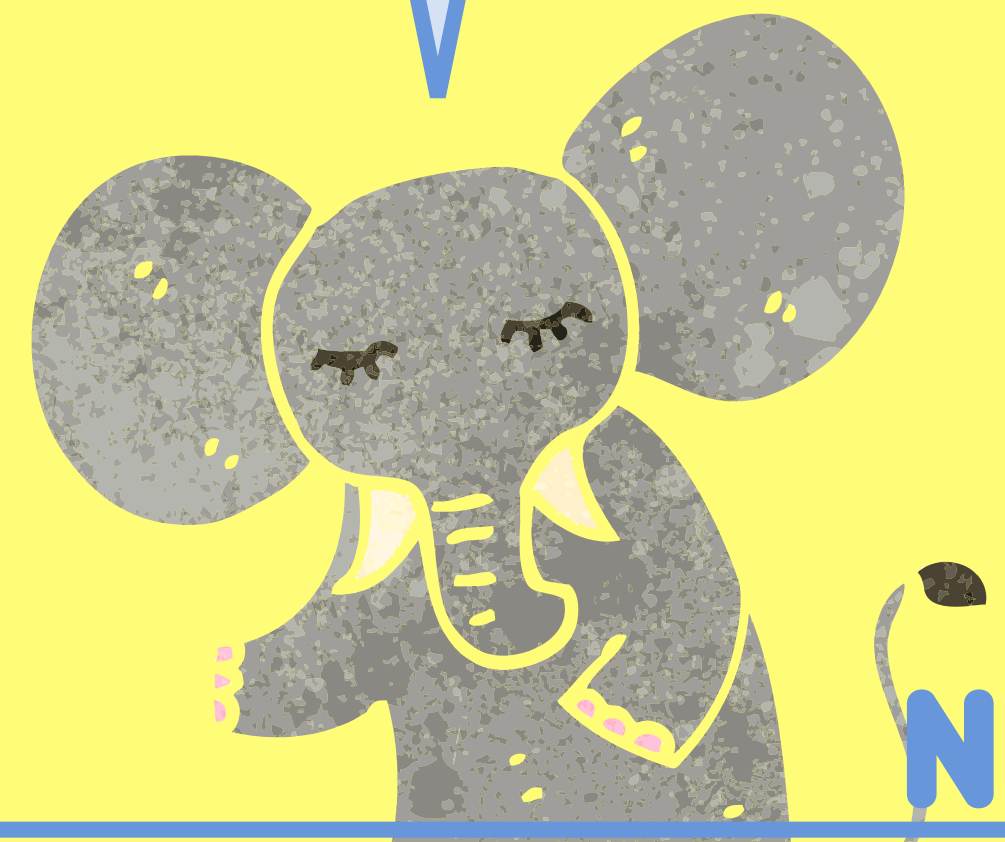
3. **Nirodha**

Suffering can be overcome and happiness can be attained.

4. **Magga**

To overcome suffering, Buddhists must follow the Noble Eightfold Path (rules for life taught by the Buddha).

How does the Ploughing Festival remind Buddhists of the Four Noble Truths?



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Today we will be
learning more about why
significant moments in the life of the
Buddha are celebrated.

