

**Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad  
Summer Institute on China 2018**

**Buddhism and the Silk Road**  
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**Organizing Questions**

How did Buddhism spread its ideas on the Silk Road?

How did the spread of Buddhism manifest itself on the Silk Road and beyond in the art from India to Japan and Indonesia?

Did any other themes/motifs also manifest themselves and transform as artists used them in the art of the Silk Road regions?

**Introduction**

Art and religion can be a great interface when cultures meet for the first time. Buddhism is not site specific and therefore an easier religion and philosophy to transfer from place to place. When Buddhism was traveling on the Silk Road, its iconography, art and philosophy changed and transformed as it traveled from its site of origin, India, to Afghanistan, Central Asia, to China and to Japan. Buddhism as the new religion had to gain the support of the nobles and royalty in order to absorb or complement the older and more established religion of the area. Other themes and motifs also traveled with Buddhism on the Silk Road in the same manner adapting to the existing cultures.

This unit on the Buddhism and the Silk Road will directly follow both the Early Mediterranean Unit covering Mediterranean and Indigenous America Units. As an introduction to the unit we will watch the *Civilization's* fourth episode, *Encounters*, and watch the segment about Cortez and Montezuma. I will have already taught the West Asian Unit on the Middle East and covered Islam also. I will be leaving out one piece that works with the Silk Road unit. I will introduce the unit discussing the basics of Buddhism by teaching the Great Stupa found in Sanchi, India, and I will also teach about Hinduism and piece about Shiva. The next lesson will be connecting the Silk Road with Buddhism with the lesson's main protagonist, Xuanzang, the monk who left China to travel to India and back carrying sutras and manuscripts to China. Students will be assigned one piece on the Silk Road and the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang, China. Besides Buddhism, I will not tell them about the other themes but hope that they will see the transfer of the scarf, the crown and the hunting and boar motif as well as Buddhist transformations.

**Objectives**

1. Students will be able to take one of the following pieces having to do with Buddhism and/or the transfer themes/motifs and complete the basics needed for all AP Art History pieces: Materials, Techniques, Content, Form, Context, Function, Meaning, Themes. Most of these pieces are part of the 250 for Art History.

Bahram Gur Fighting the Kurg-Persia/Mongolia  
Gandhara Buddha-Afghanistan/Pakistan  
Longman Caves-China  
Bamiyan Buddhas -Afghanistan  
Todai-ji Buddha and Guardians-Japan  
Ryoanji-Japan  
Borobudur-Indonesia  
    Ardabil Carpet-Persia  
    Jowo Rinpoche-Tibet  
Pure Land Buddhism-Global Contemporary, Japan

2. Students will present their piece for the rest of the class and will be able to place it on their map of the Silk Road so they understand the geography of the region as well.
3. Students will be given a second piece from the caves at Mogao which will have one of the themes transformed on the Silk Road-Buddhism, the boar/hunting scenes, the diadem crown, the scarfs, and/or medallions. They will have to complete the AP Art History basics but will be looking for those themes found in the required pieces for AP Art History. I will not give them the theme found in their required piece as to make them look at the pieces more closely.
4. Students will then complete a gallery walk of the Silk Road pieces. I will place the art pieces on the walls of the classroom. Students will be given icon cards with the themes like encounters/syncretism, a Buddha, a scarf, a medallions/pearls, and boar/hunt. They will need to place each icon card under the piece that to them best represents that theme. We will discuss the pieces with the most cards under them for each theme, and students will need to express why they choose that piece for that theme. The students will use the Best of Themes worksheet to guide them.

### **Materials**

1. *Civilization* clip from PBS Episode 4, *Encounters*.
2. AP Art History Textbook
3. AP Art History Khan Academy piece backgrounds from those chosen pieces on Buddhism
4. Background Key Terms on Buddhism for each student from Asian Art Museum worksheet handout
5. Power Point Presentation for the lesson
6. Map of the Silk Road where the pieces are located
7. Background Basic Information for the pieces on Mogao Caves for student research from [Appreciation of Dunhuang](#) Grottoes and Khan Academy Art History website

8. Class Set of Icon Cards
9. Resources
  - a. Foreign Devils on the Silk Road, Peter Hopkirk
  - b. Appreciation of Dunhuang Grottoes, Fan Jinshi and Liu Yongzeng (You can find the book at the Getty in Los Angeles or at the library at UC Berkeley)
  - c. The Silk Road in Cartoons: Dunhuang in Focus, edited by Yu Zhongzheng and Cao Changguang (You can purchase this on purpleculture.net)
  - d. Life along the Silk Road, by Susan Whitfield

### Equipment

1. DVD Player and *Civilizations* Episode Four, Encounters
2. Computer with LCD Projector

### Teacher Preparation

1. Assign students in groups the required art pieces on Buddhism
2. Prepare to teach the basics about Buddhism through the Great Stupa

### Time

1. To teach the Buddhism Unit on the required AP Art History may take up to two to three weeks.
2. It will probably take one or two block periods for the Mogao Caves and themes analysis portion of the lesson.

### Procedures

1. Show the *Civilization Encounters* Episode 4 segment about Cortez and the Aztecs and about Maria Merian and Latin America. Discuss the different outcomes between the two different encounters.
2. Introduce the Silk Road and its background as a means to connect several pieces about Buddhism and Asia from the 250 required AP Art history pieces.
3. Teach the basics of Buddhism by using the Great Stupa Also discuss the icons/symbols found on Buddha and also teach the mudras. See the worksheet from the Asian Art Museum Fulbright workshop.
4. Assign each group one of the 250 art pieces found on the Silk Road. Students will complete the basics for art history-name, date, period, content, context, function, meaning, themes.
5. Have students especially pay close attention to the historical context as it relates to Buddhism and function when completing their homework.
6. Students will share their pieces with the class and teacher will point out the differences between the pieces as it relates to Buddhism. Students will also put the pieces on the map.
7. Teach the basics about the Mogao Caves to the students and assign them wall murals to analyze and to look for some of the same icons and themes in the 250 basic pieces.

Cave 275  
Cave 257  
Cave 249  
Cave 420  
Cave 61

8. Ask the students what they noticed about how Buddhism changed and any themes that were similar.
9. Give students icon cards to be placed under the piece they think best exemplifies that theme.
10. After students have placed their cards, discuss the pieces with the most cards for each them. Students will need to justify their choices.

### **Assessments**

1. Students will be asked to explain their pieces from the 250 on the Silk Road.
2. Students will be asked to notice any changes between the pieces as they traveled from place to place on the Silk Road.
3. Students will need to research and apply what they learned from the 250 pieces to the new pieces in the Mogao Caves.
4. Students will be asked to analyze their icon choices and then each student will be given an icon card to write a 6-8 sentence reflection about.

## Best Use of the Following Themes

Cross-Cultural

Color

Buddhism

Enlightenment

Light

Greek Influence

Persian Influence

Syncretism (merging of faiths)

Movement

Spirituality

Narrative

Choices

Great Stupa-India

Longman Caves-China

Bamiya Buddhas-Afghanistan

Gandhara Buddha-Pakistan

Todai-ji-Japan

Ryoanji-Japan

Barham Gar Fights the Karg-Pesia/Mongol

Ardabil Carpet-Persia

Borobudur-Indonesia

Pure Land Buddhism-Japan

Cave 275

Cave 257

Cave 249

Cave 420

Cave 61

Jowo Rinpoche-Tibet



Hola  
Hello  
Hallo  
Bonjour  
Ciao  
⋮







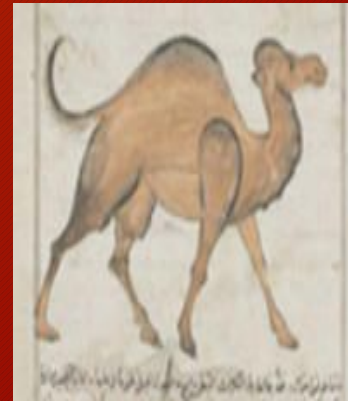
# Silk Road

Buddhism and the Silk Road



# Essential Questions

- How did Buddhism's main tenets change and why did they change as it traveled on the Silk Road?
- How did Buddhism adapt to the previously existing dominant religion?
- How were these changes manifested in the art?
- Were there other art motifs/themes which also transformed themselves on the Silk Road?



# Objectives

- Students will be able to take one of the following pieces having to do with Buddhism and complete the basics needed for all AP Art History pieces.
- Bahram Gur Fighting the Kurg-Persia/Mongolia
- Ardabil Carpet-Persia
- Gandhara Buddha-Afghanistan/Pakistan
- Longman Caves-China
- Bamiyan Buddhas -Afghanistan
- Jowo Rinpoche-Tibet
- Todai-ji Buddha and Guardians-Japan
- Ryoanji-Japan
- Pure Land Buddhism-Japan
- Borobudur-Indonesia

# Mogao Caves

- In the same groups, students will be assigned one of the cave frescos to complete the AP Art History basics.
- Students will number off one to five and be assigned one of the following resources to share with their group and then the class.
- Resource and number list
  - Person One-Life along the Silk Road by Susan Whitfield “The Artist’s Tale, Dong Baode’, 965-966. Name, Date, Materials, Techniques, Artist
  - Person Two -Art History Khan Academy. Content, Context, Function
  - Person Three- The Silk Road in Cartoons, Dunhuang in Focus, Content, Context, Function
  - Person Four-Appreciation of Dunhuang Grottoes
    - Group 1 Cave 275, pages 27-29, Content
    - Group 2 Cave 257, pages 30-31, Content
    - Group 3 Cave 249, pages 37-43, Content
    - Group 4 Cave 420, pages 58-59, Content
    - Group 5 Cave 61, pages 111-113,Content

- Person 5-e-dunhuang.com. This is a digital website for all but one of the caves. Caves 257, 249, 420 and 61 are on the website. Cave 275 is not on the website. This will mostly be content.

# Analysis

- All the ones who read the artist's story will share and then report back to the group. Every other number will do the same.
- After students share their part from the caves to their own group, they then will share with the class.
- The class as a whole will see the common themes running through the required pieces and those frescos from the caves.
- Students will also be see how Buddhism was transformed both artistically and philosophically.

# Summative Assessment

- Students in their groups will be asked to look all the pieces from the Silk Road placed around the room and complete the worksheet. They can only choose one piece for each category. Another way to complete this activity is to make icon cards for each theme and have students place the cards underneath each picture. Students in both scenarios will need to share to the class the reasons why they chose that theme for the piece.