

**Warm Up Activity:**

<b>What do you <b>KNOW</b> about Buddhism?</b>	<b>What do you <b>WANT</b> to know about Buddhism?</b>	<b>What have you <b>LEARNED</b> about Buddhism?</b>

## Introduction to Buddhism

*Adapted from the International Dunhuang Programme, 6/25/24*

**Essential Questions:** How did Buddhism develop and grow? What are the tenets of this faith?

Buddhism is a major universal religion that originated between the late 5th or 6th centuries BCE. It was founded by Siddhartha Gautama, who would come to be known as the historical 'Buddha'. Siddhartha was born in the north east region of South Asia which is presently along the Indian-Nepalese border.

According to legend, Siddhartha was a prince, who lived a sheltered life of luxury in his father's palace. At age 29, Siddhartha became curious about life outside the palace walls, and became aware of human suffering for the first time. From these experiences, he learnt that life is full of suffering, is impermanent and eventually comes to an end. As a result, he decided to renounce his lifestyle and embark on his own spiritual journey to understand human suffering and how it may be transcended.

Siddhartha attempted to practice an *ascetic* lifestyle, meaning that he gave up material possessions, fasted, and lived a life of abstinence. Through disciplining his body, he could pursue spiritual discipline. Siddhartha gave up this extreme lifestyle after six years, and pursued a 'middle path' between indulgence and deprivation. He sought shelter under a Bodhi tree to meditate, and eventually at the age of 35, he achieved enlightenment, subsequently becoming known as the Buddha, or the 'Awakened One'. The Buddha devoted the rest of his life to alleviating the suffering of others through teaching them how they also can reach enlightenment, thus starting the Buddhist religion.

Upon reaching enlightenment, the Buddha realized that life is full of suffering (*duhkha*) due to our attachments. Attachment causes suffering because everything, including oneself, is impermanent (*anitya*). All sentient beings are trapped in the cycle of suffering through rebirth after death (*samsara*). The actions in our previous lives determine the form we take in the next one (*karma*). In order to liberate ourselves from this cycle, we must achieve enlightenment (*nirvana*). The Buddha's teachings of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path offers his followers a path to enlightenment.

---

## School of Buddhism: Theravada

Buddhism diffused from its cultural hearth of the north eastern region of South Asia through a variety of means. Most notably, merchants and monks carried the faith along the Silk Roads on both land and sea. As Buddhism spread and encountered new cultures, it evolved into many new Buddhist schools. These schools all fall under one of three broad 'vehicles' or paths to enlightenment.

Theravada refers to 'the way of the elders'. It is considered by those in the Theravada tradition to be closest to the original teachings of the Buddha. The aim of Theravada practice is to become an *Arhat* (an enlightened being). As a 'monastic' practice, only monks and nuns can achieve this. Theravada practice involves meditation and self-discipline, leading to one's own enlightenment.

Theravada Buddhism was found predominantly in what is known today as India. Over time, Theravada Buddhism became a minority faith in India, but it can still be found in Southeast Asia in modern day countries of Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos.

### Mapping Activity:

1. Star the location of the cultural hearth of Buddhism.
2. Using arrows, trace the diffusion of Buddhism.
3. Shade the countries where this school of Buddhism is found today.
4. Create a legend.



## School of Buddhism: Mahayana

Buddhism diffused from its cultural hearth of the north eastern region of South Asia through a variety of means. Most notably, merchants and monks carried the faith along the Silk Roads on both land and sea. As Buddhism spread and encountered new cultures, it evolved into many new Buddhist schools. These schools all fall under one of three broad 'vehicles' or paths to enlightenment.

Mahayana Buddhists believe the Buddha is an eternal or near-eternal being that exists beyond our world. They also look to celestial *Bodhisattva* figures who represent the ideals of wisdom and compassion.

Mahayana monks practice a combination of study and meditation as well as selfless service. However, Mahayana also promoted the idea that anyone could also reach enlightenment, without having to be a monk or nun. One way a Mahayana Buddhist can attain enlightenment is by acts of merit which can include copying of sutras or creating likeness of the Buddha. Through these acts, Mahayana Buddhists can become a *Bodhisattva* (enlightened being).

Mahayana Buddhism became popular and spread north through the Silk Roads. Today, it is the most popular form of Buddhism, still practiced in China, Tibet, Japan, Korea and Mongolia.

### Mapping Activity:

1. Star the location of the cultural hearth of Buddhism.
2. Using arrows, trace the diffusion of Buddhism.
3. Shade the countries where this school of Buddhism is found today.
4. Create a legend.



## School of Buddhism: Vajrayana

Buddhism diffused from its cultural hearth of the north eastern region of South Asia through a variety of means. Most notably, merchants and monks carried the faith along the Silk Roads. As Buddhism spread and encountered new cultures, it evolved into many new Buddhist schools. These schools all fall under one of three broad 'vehicles' or paths to enlightenment.

Vajrayana Buddhism is based on scriptures known as *Tantras*. Vajrayana Buddhism is a way of life and set of religious practices rather than an alternative set of beliefs. Vajrayana is an extension of Mahayana Buddhism, but Vajrayana is unique in the belief that one can reach enlightenment in a single lifetime. Another belief of the Vajrayana is that it is not necessary to abandon objects of attachment. Vajrayana practice often involves rituals like reciting mantras and hand gestures called *mudras*.

After it dispersed from its cultural hearth, Vajrayana Buddhism quickly spread from India and took root in Tibet and the Himalayan region where it is still practiced today.

### Mapping Activity:

1. Star the location of the cultural hearth of Buddhism.
2. Using arrows, trace the diffusion of Buddhism.
3. Shade the countries where this school of Buddhism is found today.
4. Create a legend.



**Schools of Buddhism Group Activity:** Report to your team about your School of Buddhism. Complete the chart below.

	Cultural Hearth	Practices	Path to Enlightenment
Theravada Buddhism			
Mahayana Buddhism			
Vajrayana Buddhism			

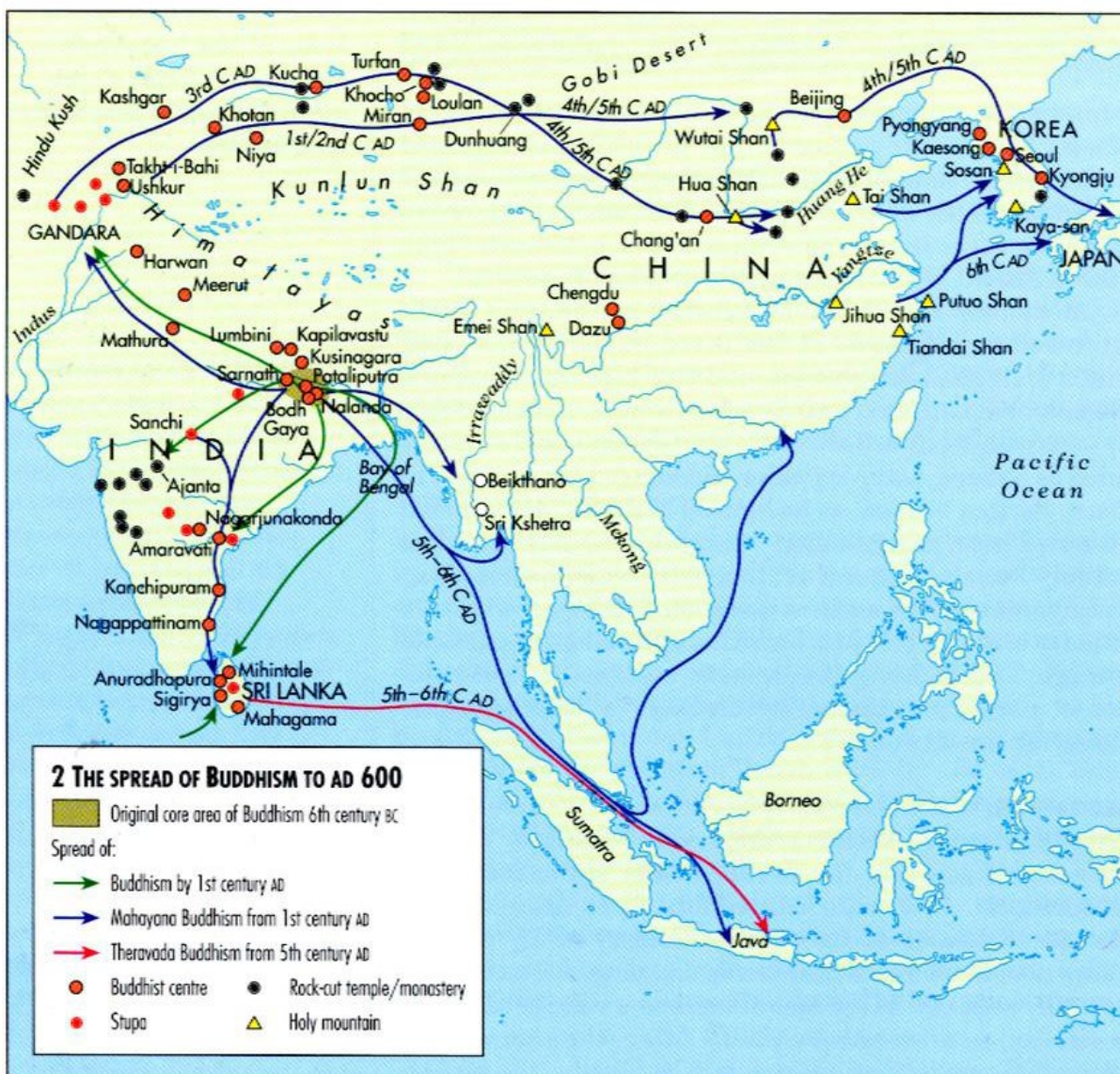
**Mapping Activity:**

1. Star the location of the cultural hearth of Buddhism.
2. Using arrows, trace the diffusion of each School of Buddhism.
3. Shade the countries where this School of Buddhism is found today.
4. Create a legend.



**Reflection MVPs:** What were your Most Valuable Points (*content and/or personal*) that you learned from this activity?

## Summative Assessment: FRQ



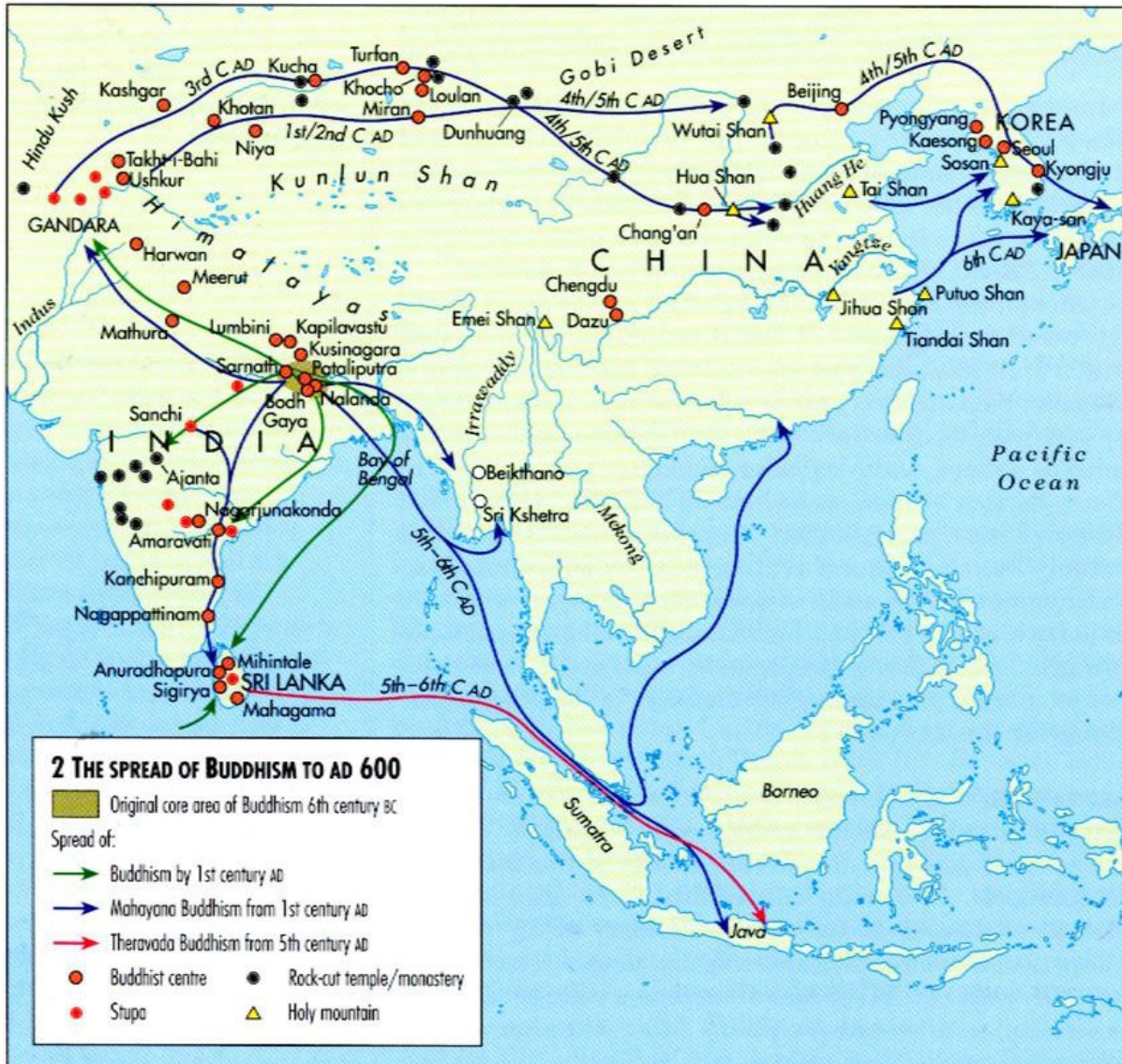
This map displays the spread of Buddhism from the 1st Century to 600 CE in southern Asia and the Pacific Islands. Sites of temples and holy places are marked throughout these regions.

Source: Oxford Atlas of World History, Oxford University Press, 1999

- Define** the term cultural hearth.
- Describe** the beliefs of Buddhism.
- Identify** a region where Buddhism has diffused.
- Compare** an ethnic religion and universal religion.
- Explain** the processes involved in the diffusion of Buddhism.
- Explain a limitation** of the map as a source of information on the diffusion of Buddhism.
- Analyze the extent to which**, Theravada Buddhism diffused to Central Asia.



## Summative Assessment: FRQ



This map displays the spread of Buddhism from the 1st Century to 600 CE in southern Asia and the Pacific Islands. Sites of temples and holy places are marked throughout these regions.

Source: Oxford Atlas of World History, Oxford University Press, 1999

- Define** the term cultural hearth.
- Describe** the beliefs of Buddhism.
- Identify** a region where Buddhism has diffused.
- Compare** an ethnic religion and universal religion.
- Explain** the processes involved in the diffusion of Buddhism.
- Explain a limitation** of the map as a source of information on the diffusion of Buddhism.
- Analyze the extent to which**, Theravada Buddhism diffused to Central Asia.



## Summer Institute 2024: Cross-Cultural Perspectives Along the Silk Road

Partnership with the British Library

### **Lesson Plan Template**

Please include the following sections in your lesson plans in the order printed. The standard format will help support the placement on the website to be shared with other teachers interested in the topic. This format may be used for unit design as well as a specific lesson. The preliminary lesson will be presented to peers at the end of our trip in July. The final plans are due by August 5, 2024, and may be submitted to Karen Williams, SMCOE, by August 5, 2024. The lesson plan will be uploaded to the Tang Center for Silk Road Studies website:

<https://ieas.berkeley.edu/centers/tang-center-silk-road-studies-tcsrs/k-12-connections/k-12-connections-lesson-plans>

#### **Name, School, Grade Level:**

- Leslie Alpert, Santiago High School, AP Human Geography Grade 9

#### **Title of Unit/Lesson**

- Threads of the Silk Road; An Introduction to Buddhism

#### **Organizing/Essential/Guiding Questions**

- How does the interaction of people contribute to the spread of cultural practices?
- How and why do cultural ideas, practices, and innovations change or disappear over time?
- How did Buddhism develop and grow? What are the tenets of this faith?
- How did Buddhism diffuse from its cultural hearth?

#### **Introduction/ Overview**

- In Unit 3 (Cultural Patterns and Processes) of AP Human Geography, the College Board Framework requires students to learn about the different religions of the world. This includes religions such as Hinduism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism. Based on my past experience teaching about world religions, there will be a wide range of knowledge of Buddhism with some being adherents to the faith and knowing a great deal while others having no knowledge of the religion whatsoever.

#### **Content Standards**

- Topic 3.7: Diffusion of Religion and Language
  - Imp-3.B: Explain what factors lead to the diffusion of universalizing and ethnic religions.
    - Imp-3.B.3: Religions have distinct places of origin from which they diffused to other locations through different processes. Practices and belief systems impacted how widespread the religion diffused.
    - Imp-3.B.4: Universalizing religions, including Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Sikhism, are spread through expansion and relocation diffusion.

## Objectives

- Students will be introduced to the Buddhist faith. Students will teach each other about the origins, tenets, practices and different schools within Buddhism by completing a jigsaw reading activity. Additionally, students will trace the origins and diffusion of Buddhism by completing a map activity. The lesson on Buddhism will culminate with a Buddhist stencil activity from the Stein Collection of the British Library and British Museum.

## Materials/Resources

- [Google Slides](#)
- [Reading: Buddhism](#)
- [Buddha stencil](#)
- Additional paper and markers/pastel/paint

## Special Equipment

- Access to a projector and document camera

## Teacher Preparation

- Handouts
  - Make copies of Introduction to Buddhism reading (page 1)
  - Make double sided copy sets of the School of Buddhism (pages 2, 3, 4) and the School of Buddhism Group Activity (page 5).
- Create holes in the Buddha Stencil (one to two per team).

## Time/Timeline:

- This lesson is estimated to take at least two 50 minute class periods. Adjust accordingly to your bell schedule.

## Procedures

- **Day One Agenda:**
  - **Complete Warm Up Activity:** KWL Chart of Buddhism. Students will add to the K and W section. Discuss with a partner and as a class.
  - **Image Analysis:** Complete and discuss questions to introduce Buddhism.
  - **Direct Instruction:** Read the text on the Introduction of Buddhism. Number the paragraphs, read, mark and annotate the text.
  - **Guided Practice:** In teams, assign expert groups to read one of the Schools of Buddhism. Ask expert groups to number the paragraphs, read, mark and annotate the text. Complete the map activity.
  - **Closure:** At the end of the period, have students add to the L section of their KWL Chart.
  
- **Day Two Agenda:**
  - **Complete Warm Up Activity:** Image analysis of the Cave 254.
  - **Guided Practice:** Direct students to review their School of Buddhism by annotating their notes. Then jigsaw students into teams so that each School of Buddhism is represented in their group. Assign each expert to teach their School of Buddhism to their team. Complete the accompanying chart and map handout.
  - **Culminating Activity:** Provide teams with a pre-punched Buddha stencil. Provide markers, chalk, etc. to the team and a piece of paper so that students can make their own Buddha stencil. Once the stencil is complete, students must design their own Buddha and write a museum style label for containing the materials and explanation of the art piece.
  - **Closure:** At the end of the period, have students add to the L section of their KWL Chart.

## Assessment – Performance Standards, Rubric, Project

- Formative Assessment:
  - Completion of KWL Chart
  - Annotated reading and EQ answered on the Introduction to Buddhism
  - Annotated reading of Schools of Buddhism and completed map activity

- Completed Schools of Buddhism chart, map activity, and reflection
- Creation of Thousand Buddha motif with museum style label containing an explanation of the piece
  
- Summative Assessment:
  - [Written FRQ Short Answer Test](#)