



**Big Era Four**  
**Expanding Networks of Exchange and Encounter**  
**1200 BCE – 500 CE**



**Closeup Teaching Unit 4.4.1**  
**The Budding of Buddhism**  
**563 BCE – 150 CE**

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## Why this unit?

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Though Buddhism is popularly referred to as a religion, it is in fact a way of life. Siddhartha Gautama, or the Buddha, became enlightened with Four Noble Truths about life. From these truths, he developed the Eight-Fold Path to achieving Nirvana. This unit will aid students in distinguishing the religious changes that occurred in the development of Buddhism out of early Hinduism, often referred to by scholars as Brahmanism. Students will examine ancient Hindu traditions and beliefs and their influence on the Buddha's life. This knowledge will then help them empathize with Buddha and will assist them in understanding his search for a way to eliminate suffering, thereby establishing the Buddhist way of life.

This unit should be used after teaching the history, traditions, and influence of early Hinduism on ancient India. By comprehending Hinduism and its influence on early Buddhists, students will be able to evaluate the factors that contributed to the spread of ideas across Asia.

Today, many factors continue to affect the growth of Buddhism. It is interesting to note that, though Buddhism began in India, it diffused throughout the world. It is now only the fifth largest religion in India, Hinduism being the first. In the final portion of this unit, students will discuss practices that have arisen from Buddhism. These customs include the use of *stupas* and mandalas in the ancient and modern world and the spread of these sacred objects to areas around the world.

## Unit objectives

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*Upon completing this unit, students will be able to:*

1. Explain the major Hindu (Brahmanist) beliefs that aided in the evolution of Buddhism.
2. Describe the life of the Buddha and his moral teachings.
3. Explain the aesthetic, intellectual, and spiritual traditions of Buddhism.
4. Analyze the link between Buddhism and other world cultural traditions.

## Time and materials

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This unit will take approximately four class periods of one hour each. The unit requires poster-size paper, color pencils, pencils, color construction paper, and white letter-size paper.

## Author

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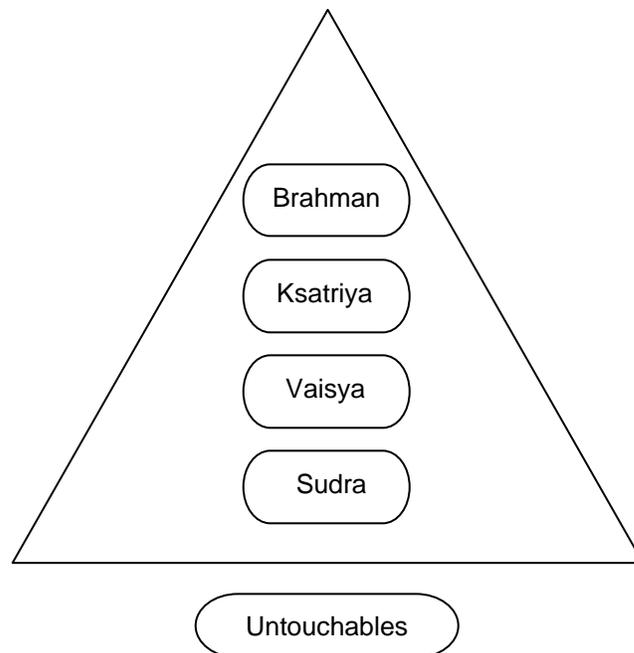
## The historical context

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By 2500 BCE, the population of Harappa, a city in the Indus river valley, had grown to about 35,000 inhabitants. This city gave its name to the **civilization** of the Indus river valley, the Harappan civilization, which included numerous cities. Around 2000 BCE, the Harappan civilization began to decline. Some scientists speculate that earthquakes caused the Saraswati river to dry up and the Indus river to flood. This may have caused droughts or, conversely, flooded crops and villages. Five-hundred years later, herding people who spoke a language, or a group of related languages, that scholars classify as Indo-Aryan, appeared in the Indus valley, subsequently influencing the organization of society in India.

We should be clear about some geographical concepts. Historically, India as a geographical expression is synonymous with the subcontinent we call South Asia and that in ancient times was known as “Hind.” Today, however, South Asia is made up of four **states**: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka (the island of Ceylon). Most of the ancient Indus valley civilization lay in territory that is today part of Pakistan.

As South Asian society developed over the centuries following the deterioration of the Harappan tradition, it came to be organized in a hierarchy of social classes, including warriors, priests, and commoners. Later, this hierarchy evolved into the caste system. The members of each caste were determined by their occupation, and taboos prevented them from intermarrying and associating socially in other ways.



The untouchables, the lowest members of society, dealt with human waste and the dead. This group did the jobs no one else wanted to do. They were regarded by the other groups as ritually impure and therefore outside the hierarchy of groups altogether. The Sudras had service jobs, and the Vaisya were herders, farmers, artisans, and merchants. The Ksatriyas, the second highest caste, were the warriors and rulers. At the top were the Brahmins, who were priests, scholars, and teachers. Because priests were part of this caste, the early religion is known as Brahmanism. Brahmanism evolved into the larger Hindu tradition.

The Hindus revered many gods. They believed that people had many lives (reincarnation). Also, they believed in *karma*. This meant that whatever a person did in this life would determine what he or she would be in the next life. Thus, reincarnation creates a cycle of birth, life, death, and rebirth. The cycle ends only when a person realizes that his or her soul and God's soul are one. To help achieve this goal, the Hindus had several spiritual practices, some of which are done in the western world today, including meditation and yoga.

The Hindus also believed in the *Purusharthas*: Four Goals of Life. These goals motivated people in their lives.

1. *dharma* – living a virtuous life
2. *kama* – pleasure of the senses
3. *artha* – achieving wealth and success lawfully
4. *moksha* – release from reincarnation

### **The Life of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha**

Siddhartha Gautama was born in South Asia (what is now Nepal) in 563 BCE, into a family of the Ksatriya class. When he was young, his father asked wise men what his son would become. They predicted that Siddhartha would become a great leader, unless he saw suffering. In that case he would become a wandering holy man. His father tried to prevent this prophecy and sheltered the prince from anyone who was sick or old. When he was 16, he married a girl named Yasodhara, and they had a son. Finally, Siddhartha went outside the palace and saw illness, poverty, and death, elements of life he had never seen before. He fled his home and began to search for peace. Along the way, he met an ascetic who revealed that his happiness stemmed from traveling around the world searching for ways to end suffering. For six years, Siddhartha starved himself, thinking that by forcing his body to suffer, life would become less important. However, he found that he was still unable to resolve the problems of suffering. One day, he sat under a Bodhi tree to meditate. While he meditated, he became enlightened, that is, he received a special understanding of the truth. This enlightenment awarded him the name of Buddha or the Enlightened One. The special insights he received were called the Four Noble Truths:

1. Life is suffering.
2. Suffering comes from wanting what you do not have (greed and selfishness).
3. People can stop suffering by ridding themselves of desire.
4. People can stop desire by following the Eight-Fold Path.

The Buddha taught that to reach Nirvana and stop the cycle of reincarnation, one had to follow the Eight-Fold Path. The first two complement each other. The next three deal with behavior and the last three deal with training the mind.

1. Right Viewpoint – People must look at life the right way and understand that life is not satisfactory.
2. Right Thought – People should care about others and not think only about themselves.
3. Right Speech – People should be kind and helpful, not spreading lies or gossip.
4. Right Action – People should not kill, steal, or be dishonest. They should not harm their bodies in any way, including drug or alcohol use. Also, spouses should be faithful.
5. Right Living – People should always put their best effort into their work, and their work should not be harmful to others in any way.
6. Right Effort – People should avoid bad situations and work hard.
7. Right Awareness – People should control their minds, thereby increasing their wisdom and good discernment.
8. Right Concentration – People should not let their mind wander. They should be peaceful and calm, and these qualities can be obtained through meditation.

After discovering these insights, the Buddha did not worship Hindu gods anymore, and today Buddhists still do not believe in a single, all-powerful deity. The Buddha also stopped believing that one caste was better than the others, and he followed *ahimsa* (nonviolence). Buddhism became a way of life, a way to reach enlightenment. When he reached enlightenment, it is said that he could have chosen to leave the earth, but he remained to teach others the path to Nirvana. Buddhists, however, do say that the Buddha did not die but rather “passed away” at the age of 80. He was cremated, and his ashes were placed in special burial mounds called *stupas*. His followers (*Sangha*), similar to Jesus’ “apostles,” were left on Earth to instruct other generations in the path to enlightenment. Today, the *Sangha* are the Buddhist monks and nuns.

### **The Spread of Buddhism**

In 273 BCE, Emperor Ashoka became ruler of India. He fought in many wars and became disheartened by the suffering he witnessed. As a result, he converted to Buddhism and encouraged the public to follow the teachings of the Buddha as well. He sent monks and nuns to travel from place to place teaching the way to enlightenment. Even Asoka’s son and daughter traveled to Sri Lanka to teach Buddhism. Emperor Asoka also placed pillars with Buddhist writings at the various places the Buddha had visited. He persuaded people to go on pilgrimages to those locations. As monks and nuns journeyed around Asia, different groups began to place an emphasis on different aspects of Buddhism: meditating, studying the Buddha’s life, performing acts of mercy, and loving one’s fellow humans. The Buddha even became worshipped as a divine being, though he did not believe himself to be more than human.

Today, there are approximately 334 million Buddhists in the world, though some estimates put the number closer to 600 million. Tyrannical governments in some Buddhist countries, however, prevent the true number of Buddhists from being publicized. There are about 590,000 Buddhists

in the United States, though most Buddhists live in Asia. These statistics make Buddhism the main religion in Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, and Burma, though not in India, where the teachings were first heard.

### **Buddhist Art**

Mandalas. These have various meanings: “magic circle,” “a circle which surrounds a square,” or “a symbol of the cosmic elements used as an aid to meditation.” Moreover, mandalas can also represent the palace home to the deities, which is comprised of the universe. Mandalas are thought to be a flat representation of a *stupa*, a structure that symbolizes the Buddha’s teachings and the Buddha himself.

For centuries, mandalas have been drawn by Buddhist monks. They begin with the center point and then draw eight lines (symbolizing the Eight-Fold Path). The lines are drawn in the eight directions of the world: North, South, East, West, Northwest, Northeast, Southeast, and Southwest. The monks enclose these lines within a circle, leaving space for outer circles. Then, they draw squares in the circle that connect the lines. Afterwards, they draw outer circles. Usually, the mandalas also consist of T-shapes in the North, East, West, and South sides of the squares to symbolize entrances into the palace of the deities. Symbols are also placed in the rings of the mandalas. Popular symbols include: a snake for hatred, a bird for greed, a pig for ignorance, and a lotus for perseverance. These pictures aid in meditation and instruct students of Buddhism on the vices and virtues of life. When the monks are finished, they pour water into a body of water to create a natural mandala in the ripples.

The circle was important to the people of India. They were the first to use the number zero and to identify the significance of *pi* in calculating the circumference of a circle. They viewed life as a cycle, humans going in a circle of life and death until they were able to stop this cycle, the achievement of Nirvana. In meditating with the use of mandalas, however, Buddhists believe they can reach a place outside this circle known as *Samsara*. It is a place of separation and protection from suffering on earth. Buddhists believe this is the closest to attaining Nirvana and freedom from the bonds of life here on earth.

Mandalas are often used to represent the universe. For this reason Indian mandalas often depict Mount Meru in the center because it was thought to be the center of the universe. Though mandalas most frequently occur in Buddhist art, their origin is unknown. Anthropologist Schuyler Cammann found that mandalas were already in use during the Chinese Han dynasty in 209 BCE. Because of this theory, some believe mandalas arose in Tibet, a region bordering China and India.

The psychological theorist Carl Jung (1875-1961) is credited with reviving the concept of the mandala within the Western world. For Jung, mandalas offered support for his theory on archetypes and the collective unconscious. He developed the concept of “archetype,” which refers to an original model from which all other similar persons, objects, or concepts are derived. He believed these patterns stemmed from a universal collective unconscious, that is, experiences that are common to humans as a species. He began to encourage the ideas of mandalas in the

Western world during the 1900s. He felt that mandalas referred to the “personal world” in which one lives, that is, the activities and interests in which one engages, the most important being at the center of the mandala (the center of that individual’s universe) and the least important being along the periphery. He felt that drawing one’s personal mandala in pictorial form could give a good indication of the state of one’s spiritual life.

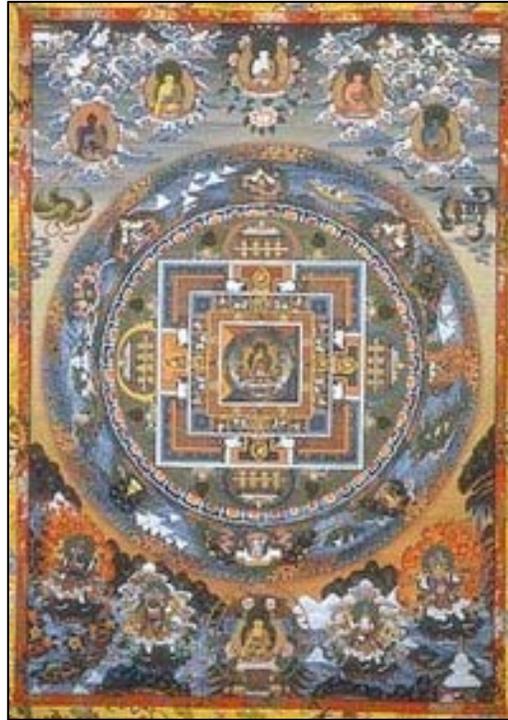
The following are mandalas from around the world that might lend support to Jung’s idea of a collective unconscious. They come from different places and time periods. Notice that all of the mandalas have a central focus, they incorporate circles (outer and inner rings), and they have designs that point to, or once pointed to, the eight directions of the earth.



**Native American Medicine Wheel  
Bighorn National Forest, Wyoming**

U.S. Forest Service Photo

Wikimedia Commons



**Buddhist Mandala**

Wikimedia Commons

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Mandala\\_gross.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Mandala_gross.jpg)



**St. Peter's Square, Vatican City**

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California State University

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**Medieval European Ecclesiastical Art**

Lenten Array at St Birinus' Catholic Church, Dorchester-on-Thames, England

[http://thenewliturgicalmovement.blogspot.com/2007\\_03\\_01\\_archive.html](http://thenewliturgicalmovement.blogspot.com/2007_03_01_archive.html)



**An English Brooch, seventh century CE**

Cornell University Library

[www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/disk.jpg](http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/disk.jpg)

**Buddhist Thought—Possible Contradictions?**

Mandalas are a means through which Buddhists are able to meditate on being less self-centered. Paradoxically, Carl Jung used mandalas to discover the “ego” of a person. However, even within Buddhist philosophy there is a thin line between being unselfish and being egocentric. For example, read the popular analogy below.

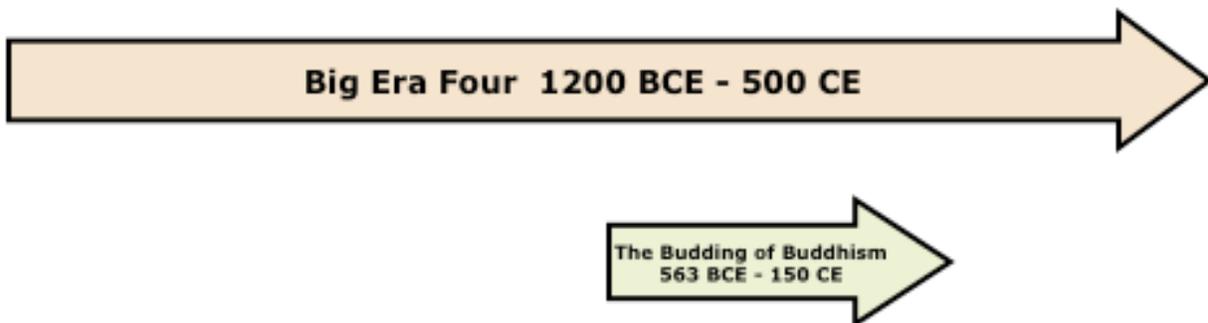
This analogy is used to show the difference between Buddhist and Western thought. “There is a goose in a large glass bottle. The goose is growing larger, and it must be released. How can it be freed without harming it or the bottle?” In Western thought, this may be seen as a problem to be answered by proposing ideas like making the goose smaller somehow or making the bottle larger. The Buddhist answer is to ask how the goose came to be in the bottle. The answer: “My thoughts put the goose in the bottle, therefore, my thoughts can release it”.

Source: Sue Penney, *Buddhism: Discovering Religions* (Austin, TX: Raintree Steck-Vaughn, 1997): 43.

While this demonstrates Right Awareness, one of the Eight-Fold Paths, it also seems to show egocentrism. The problem seems to be caused by oneself, not the environment. It suggests that only by concentrating on one’s own thoughts and self can the problem be solved. Buddhists assert that one must meditate to remain altruistic instead of falling into selfishness. But is it a contradiction to argue that to be selfless one must meditate on the self?

**This unit in the Big Era Timeline**

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## *Lesson 1*

### *The Life of the Buddha*

#### **Preparation**

Teachers should first arrange the class into groups and take note of the number of students in each group. Each group should then be assigned one Book of the *Buddha-carita* from either Student Handout 1.1 (*Buddha-carita* Adapted for High School Readers) or Student Handout 1.2 (*Buddha-carita* Adapted for Middle School Readers). Copies of the appropriate reading should be made for each group member. Teachers should consider copying each reading, then pasting it onto a piece of colored construction paper. For example, six copies of Book I should be cut out and pasted onto green pieces of paper so each group member has a copy. This aids in keeping the books in order for each class. Students will also need butcher paper (or other poster-size paper), white construction paper, scissors, a pencil, and color pencils.

Teachers may also wish to go over the vocabulary words in bold before beginning the lesson to facilitate comprehension. As an alternative, teachers might provide students with a dictionary to first look up vocabulary in bold, possibly as a homework assignment.

#### **Vocabulary**

abandoned	calamity	fickle	pleasure-party	solitary
absorbed	charioteer	groves	prohibited	wreaths
adorned	chariots	indulge	repelled	
affliction	decrepit	isolated	resolve	
ascetic	deities	mournful	salvation	

Teachers also should supply students with Student Handout 1.3 as a graphic organizer showing the Four Noble Truths that Buddha received as his enlightenment and the Eight-Fold Path based on these truths. Students should write the Four Noble Truths and the Eight-Fold Path with their definitions in the appropriate boxes.

#### **Introduction**

In the first lesson, students will use a primary source document, the *Buddha-carita*, to understand environmental influences Siddhartha encountered leading to his enlightenment.

The *Buddha-carita* is an Indian poem written in Sanskrit by the philosopher Asvavahosa in the second century CE. It is the earliest biographical account of the Buddha's life and is now considered a sacred Buddhist text. In the adapted versions, questions have been added to help

students focus their attention on information that is imperative to the activity in this and following lessons.

## Activities

At the beginning of this unit, teachers should confirm that students have a basic understanding of India's geography, social system, and Hindu beliefs.

To open the lesson, teachers should provide some background knowledge on Siddhartha Gautama. Inform the students that Siddhartha was a prince of the Ksatriya caste who had never left the palace because a seer told his father that Siddhartha would be a wandering holy man. He was, however, allowed to leave the palace three times for a pleasure-party. Give only general details during the commencement of the lesson, thereby allowing students to deduce the factors that led to the Buddha's ideology.

After reading their assigned section, students will create a pictorial representation with a short summary on the poster-size paper. Afterward, the students will share (in chronological order) their section depicting the Buddha's life, while the rest of the class follows along by creating a mini-book. This mini-book can then be used as a reference throughout the unit and as a review source.

## Assessment

Students will make a mini-book with seven pages of Siddhartha Gautama's life as was read in the *Buddha-carita*. Each student must title the pages with the given title that corresponds with the books of the *Buddha-carita*:

Cover page	Include student name and title of the mini-book
Page 1	Life in the palace
Page 2	Seeing old age
Page 3	Seeing sickness
Page 4	Seeing the dead
Page 5	Leaving the palace
Page 6	Enlightenment

Teachers may have the groups draw their section on the butcher paper and then share it aloud with the class, or the students can switch sections as they finish reading. In either case, students should have a completed mini-book with drawings and summaries of each section by the end of the lesson. This mini-book will then be used in subsequent lessons.

**Lesson 1*****Student Handout 1.1—Buddha-carita Adapted for High School Readers******Book II: Life in the Palace***

21. Then they brought him presents from the houses of his friends, costly strings of gems exactly like **wreaths** of plants, and little golden carriages yoked with deer; 22. Ornaments also suitable to his age, and elephants, deer, and horses made of gold, carriages and oxen decked with rich garments, and carts gay with silver and gold. 23. Thus **indulged** with all sorts of such objects to please the senses as were suitable to his years. 24. When he had passed the period of childhood and reached that of middle youth, the young prince learned in a few days the various sciences suitable to his race, which generally took many years to master. 25. But having heard before from the great seer Asita his destined future which was to embrace transcendental happiness, the anxious care of the king turned the prince to sensual pleasures. 26. Then he sought for him from a family of unblemished moral excellence a bride possessed of beauty, modesty, and gentle bearing, of wide-spread glory, Yaèodharà by name, having a name well worthy of her, a very goddess of good fortune. 29. Then he spent his time in those royal apartments, furnished with the delights proper for every season, decorated like heavenly **chariots** upon the earth, and bright like the clouds of autumn, amidst the splendid musical concerts of singing-women.

Question:

Siddhartha indulged his senses of sight and hearing. What did he see and hear in the palace?

***Book III: Seeing Old Age***

2. Having heard of the delightful appearance of the city **groves** beloved by the women, he resolved to go out of doors. 3. The king, having learned the character of the wish thus expressed by his son, ordered a **pleasure-party** to be prepared, worthy of his son's beauty and youth. 4. He **prohibited** the encounter of any afflicted common person in the highroad; 26. However, the gods, dwelling in pure abodes, having beheld that city thus rejoicing like heaven itself, created an old man to walk along on purpose to stir the heart of the king's son. 27. The prince having seen him overcome with decrepitude and different in form from other men, asked his driver. 28. "Who is this man that has come here, O **charioteer**, with white hair and his hand resting on a staff, his eyes hidden beneath his brows, his limbs bent down and hanging loose, is this a change produced in him or his natural state or an accident?" 29. Thus addressed, the charioteer revealed to the king's son the secret that should have been kept so carefully 30. "That is old age by which he is broken down, the ravisher of beauty, the ruin of vigor, the cause of sorrow, the destruction of delights." 32. Being thus addressed, the prince, startled, spoke these words to the charioteer, "What! will this evil come to me also?" and to him again spoke the charioteer: 33. "It will come without doubt by the force of time through multitude of years even to my long-lived lord; all the world knows that old age will destroy their comeliness and they are content to have it so." 34. Then he, the great-souled one, was deeply agitated when he heard of old age, like a bull who has heard the crash of a thunderbolt close by. 35. Drawing a long sigh and shaking his head, and fixing his eyes on that **decrepit** old man, and looking round he then uttered these distressed words: 37. "Since such is our condition, O charioteer, turn back the horses, go quickly home; how can I rejoice in the pleasure-garden, when the thoughts arising from old age overpower me?" 38. Then the charioteer at the command of the king's son turned the chariot back, and the prince lost in thought entered even that royal palace as if it were empty. 39. But when he found no happiness even there, as he continually kept reflecting, "old age, old age," then once more, with the permission of the king, he went out with the same arrangement as before.

Question:

What is the prince afraid will happen to him as he gets older? Describe what the prince sees that makes him think this.

***Book III (part 2): Seeing Sickness***

40. Then the same **deities** created another man with his body all afflicted by disease; and on seeing him the prince addressed the charioteer, having his gaze fixed on the man: 41. “Yonder man with a swollen belly, his whole body shaking as he breathes, his arms and shoulders hanging loose, his body all pale and thin, who, pray, is this?” 42. Then his charioteer answered, “Gentle Sir, it is a very great **affliction** called sickness, which has made even this strong man no longer master of himself.” 43. Then the prince again addressed him, looking upon the man compassionately, “Is this evil peculiar to him or are all beings alike threatened by sickness?” 44. Then the charioteer answered, “O prince, this evil is common to all.” 45. Having heard this account, his mind deeply distressed, he trembled like the moon reflected in the waves of water; and full of sorrow he uttered these words in a low voice: 46. “Even while they see all this calamity of diseases mankind can yet feel calm! 47. O charioteer, be turned back from going outside, let’s return straight to the king’s palace; having heard this alarm of disease, my mind shrinks into itself, **repelled** from pleasures.” 48. Then having turned back, with all joy departed, he entered his home, **absorbed** in thought; 50. Once more the king arranged for his son all kinds of worldly enjoyments to their highest point; 51. But when his son found no pleasure in the several objects of the senses, sweet sounds and the rest, he gave orders for another progress outside, thinking to himself, “It may create a diversion of sentiment.”

Questions:

What made the prince return to the palace?

What did the king do to try to stop his son’s suffering?

***Book III (part 3): Seeing the Dead***

53. Then the royal road being specially **adorned** and guarded, the king once more made the prince go out, having ordered the charioteer and chariot to proceed in the opposite direction (to the previous one). 54. But as the king's son was thus going on his way, the very same deities created a dead man, and only the charioteer and the prince, and none else, saw him as he was carried dead along the road. 55. Then spoke the prince to the charioteer, "Who is this carried by four men, followed by **mournful** companions, who is adorned but no longer breathing?" 56. Then the driver, himself knowing the truth, uttered to his lord this truth also which was not to be told: 57. "This is some poor man who, bereft of his intellect, senses, vital airs and qualities, lying asleep and unconscious, like mere wood or straw, is **abandoned** alike by friends and enemies after they have carefully swathed and guarded him." 58. Having heard these words of the charioteer he was somewhat startled and said to him, "Is this an accident peculiar to him alone, or is such the end of all living creatures?" 59. Then the charioteer replied to him, "This is the final end of all living creatures; be it a mean man, a man of middle state, or a noble, destruction is fixed to all in this world." 60. Then the king's son, as soon as he heard of death, immediately sank down overwhelmed, and pressing the end of the chariot pole with his shoulder spoke with a loud voice, 61. "Is this end appointed to all creatures, and yet the world throws off all fear! 62. Therefore, O charioteer, turn back our chariot, this is no time or place for a pleasure-excursion; how can a rational being, who knows what destruction is, stay here, in the hour of **calamity**?"

Question:

Why does the prince become distraught?

***Book V: Leaving the Palace***

2. Then one day accompanied by some sons of his father's ministers, friends full of conversation, with a desire to see the forest and longing for peace, he went out with the king's permission. 8. Then desiring to become perfectly lonely in his thoughts, having stopped those friends who were following him, he went to the root of a rose-apple in a **solitary** spot. 9. There he sat down on the ground covered with leaves; and, meditating on the origin and destruction of the world, he laid hold of the path that leads to firmness of mind. 16. Thus did this pure passionless meditation grow within the great-souled one; and unobserved by the other men, there crept up a man in a beggar's dress. 17. Then the king's son asked him a question, he said to him, "Tell me, who art thou?" and the other replied, "Oh, I, being terrified at birth and death, have become an **ascetic** for the sake of freedom. 18. Desiring liberation in a world subject to destruction, I seek that happy indestructible place, **isolated** from mankind, with my thoughts unlike those of others, and with my sinful passions turned away from all objects of the senses. 19. Living anywhere, at the root of a tree, or in an uninhabited house, a mountain or a forest, I wander without a family and without hope, a beggar ready for anything, seeking only the highest good." 21. When the beggar was gone like a bird to heaven, the foremost of men was rejoiced and astonished; and having comprehended the meaning of the term dharma, he set his mind on the manner of the accomplishment of [**salvation**]. 28. Later, prostrating himself, with folded hands, he addressed the king, "Grant me graciously thy permission, O lord of men, I wish to become a wandering mendicant for the sake of liberation, since separation is appointed for me." 29. Having heard his words, the king shook like a tree struck by an elephant, and having seized his folded hands which were like a lotus, he thus addressed him in a voice choked with tears: 30. "O my son, keep back this thought, it is not the time for thee to follow dharma; they say that the practice of religion is full of evils in the first period of life when the mind is still **fickle**." 82. However, the city-roads which were closed with heavy gates and bars, and which could be with difficulty opened even by elephants, flew open of their own accord without noise, as the prince went through. 83. Firm in his **resolve** and leaving behind without hesitation his father who turned ever towards him, and his young son, his affectionate people and his unparalleled magnificence, he then went forth out of his father's city.

Question:

What is the prince afraid will happen to him as he gets older? Describe what the prince sees that makes him think this.

***Book XIV: The Enlightenment***

30. If a man only knew that such was the consequence of selfishness, he would always give to others even pieces of his own body 31. Others rushing up filled with hope but held back by their former deeds, they try in vain to get anything large, however impure. 32. Others, having found a hell in an impure lake called the womb, are born amongst men and there suffer anguish.

Questions:

According to Book XIV, the penalty for being selfish is finding “hell in an impure lake called the womb” where people “are born amongst men and there suffer anguish.” What does the author mean by this statement?

The Buddha was looking for Nirvana. Based on his life, what was Nirvana for him?

Source for Student Handout 1.1: *The Sanskrit Buddha-carita* by Aèvaghòà, ed. by Edward B. Cowell, 1893, *Ancient Buddhist Texts*, <http://www.ancient-buddhist-texts.net/Buddhist-Texts/BT-index.htm>. Adapted.

**Lesson 1*****Student Handout 1.2—Buddha-carita for Middle School Readers******Book II: Life in the Palace***

21. Then they brought him presents from the houses of his friends, expensive strings of gems exactly like **wreaths** of plants, and little golden carriages 22. Also elephants, deer, and horses made of gold, and carts filled with silver and gold. 23. Thus **indulged** with all sorts of objects to please the senses as were suitable to his age. 24. When he had passed the period of childhood and reached that of middle youth, the young prince learned in a few days the various information, which usually took many years to master. 25. But having heard from the great seer, Asita, that in the future he would be a holy man, the anxious king showed the prince pleasures of the senses. 26. Then he sought for him from a family of great moral excellence a bride who was beautiful, modest, and gentle, Yaèodharà by name. 29. Then he spent his time in royal apartments that contained objects proper for every season, decorated like heavenly **chariots** upon the earth, and brightly lit like the clouds of autumn, filled with the splendid musical concerts of singing-women.

Question:

Siddhartha indulged his senses of sight and hearing. What did he see and hear in the palace?

***Book III: Seeing Old Age***

2. Having heard of the delightful appearance of the city **groves**, he decided to go out of doors. 3. The king, having learned of this wish, ordered a **pleasure-party** to be prepared, worthy of his son's beauty and youth. 4. He **prohibited** the encounter of any sick person in the road; 26. However, the gods saw that the city was rejoicing and created an old man to walk along to stir the heart of the king's son. 27. The prince saw the old man was shabby and different from other men, and he asked his driver. 28. "Who is this man that has come here, O **charioteer**, with white hair and his hand resting on a cane, his eyes hidden beneath his brows, his limbs bent down and hanging loose, did he become like this or is this how he was born or was it an accident?" 29. The charioteer told the king's son the secret that should have been kept so carefully 30. "That is old age by which he is broken down, the destroyer of beauty, the ruin of energy, the cause of sorrow. 32. The prince was startled and spoke these words to the charioteer, "What! Will this evil come to me also?" and the charioteer answered: 33. "It will come even to my long-lived lord; all the world knows that old age will destroy their beauty and they are happy to have it so." 34. Then the prince was deeply bothered when he heard of old age, like a bull who has heard the crash of a thunderbolt close by. 35. Drawing a long sigh and shaking his head, and fixing his eyes on that **decrepit** old man, and looking around he then uttered these words: 37. "O charioteer, turn back the horses, go quickly home; how can I be happy in the pleasure-garden, when thoughts about old age overpower me?" 38. Then the charioteer at the command of the king's son turned the chariot back, and the prince lost in thought entered even that royal palace as if it were empty. 39. But when he found no happiness even there because he continually kept thinking, "old age, old age," then once more, with the permission of the king, he went out with the same arrangement as before.

Question:

What is the prince afraid will happen to him as he gets older? Describe what the prince sees that makes him think this.

***Book III (part 2): Seeing Sickness***

40. Then the same **deities** created another man with his body covered by disease; and on seeing him the prince addressed the charioteer, having his gaze fixed on the man: 41. “That man with a swollen belly, his whole body shaking as he breathes, his arms and shoulders hanging loose, his body all pale and thin, who is this?” 42. Then his charioteer answered, “Gentle Sir, it is a very great **affliction** called sickness, which has made even this strong man, weak.” 43. Then the prince said, looking upon the man compassionately, “Is this evil only for him or are all beings alike threatened by sickness?” 44. Then the charioteer answered, “O prince, this evil is common to all.” 45. Having heard this, his mind deeply troubled, he trembled like the moon reflected in the waves of water; and full of sorrow he uttered these words in a low voice: 46. “Even while they see all this disaster of diseases humans can still feel calm! 47. O charioteer, turn back from going outside, let’s return straight to the king’s palace; having heard this alarm of disease, my mind shrinks into itself, **repelled** from pleasures.” 48. Then having sadly turned back, he entered his home, **absorbed** in thought; 50. Once more the king arranged for his son all kinds of worldly enjoyments to their highest point; 51. But when his son found no pleasure in the several objects of the senses, sweet sounds and the rest, he gave orders for another journey outside, thinking to himself, “It may distract him.”

Questions:

What made the prince return to the palace?

What did the king do to try to stop his son’s suffering?

***Book III (part 3): Seeing the Dead***

53. Then the royal road being specially **adorned** and guarded, the king once more made the prince go out, having ordered the charioteer and chariot to go in the opposite direction [to the previous one]. 54. But as the king's son was going on his way, the very same deities created a dead man, and only the charioteer and the prince, and no one else, saw him as he was carried dead along the road. 55. Then spoke the prince to the charioteer, "Who is this carried by four men, followed by **mournful** companions, who is adorned but no longer breathing?" 56. Then the driver truthfully uttered to his lord the truth which was not to be told: 57. "This is some poor man who, without intelligence, senses, breath, and lying asleep and unconscious, like mere wood or straw, is **abandoned** by friends and enemies after they have carefully wrapped and guarded him." 58. Having heard these words of the charioteer he was somewhat startled and said to him, "Is this an accident that happens to him alone, or is such the end of all living creatures?" 59. Then the charioteer replied to him, "This is the final end of all living creatures; be it a mean man, a man of middle state, or a noble, destruction is fixed to everything in this world." 60. Then the king's son, as soon as he heard of death, immediately sank down overwhelmed, and pressing the end of the chariot pole with his shoulder spoke with a loud voice, 61. "Is this end appointed to all creatures, and yet people are not afraid! 62. Therefore, O charioteer, turn back our chariot, this is no time or place for a pleasure-party; how can a wise being, who knows what destruction is, stay here, in the hour of **calamity**?"

Question:

Why does the prince become distraught?

***Book V: Leaving the Palace***

2. Then one day accompanied by some sons of his father's ministers, the prince went out with the king's permission. 8. Then desiring to become perfectly lonely in his thoughts, he stopped those friends who were following him, and he went to the root of a rose-apple in a **solitary** spot. 9. There he sat down on the ground covered with leaves and meditated on the beginning and destruction of the world. 16. Then, unseen by the other men, there crept up a man in a beggar's dress. 17. The king's son asked him a question, he said to him, "Tell me, who are you?" and the other replied, "Oh, I, being terrified at birth and death, have become an **ascetic** for the sake of freedom. 18. "Desiring freedom in a world subject to destruction, I seek that happy indestructible place, which is **isolated** from mankind, where I can be with my thoughts that are not like those of others, and where my sinful passions are turned away from all objects of the senses. 19. Living anywhere, at the root of a tree, or in an empty house, a mountain or a forest, I wander without a family and without hope, a beggar ready for anything, looking only for the highest good." 21. When the beggar was gone like a bird to heaven, the prince was rejoiced and astonished; and having understood the meaning of the word dharma, he set his mind on **salvation**. 28. Later, at the palace, he said to the king, "Grant me graciously thy permission, O lord of men, I wish to become an ascetic for the sake of freedom." 29. Having heard his words, the king shook like a tree struck by an elephant, and having seized his folded hands which were like a lotus, he thus addressed him in a voice choked with tears: 30. "O my son, don't think like this, it is not the time for you to follow dharma; they say that the practice of religion is full of evils in the first period of life when the mind is still **fickle**." 82. However, the city-roads which were closed with heavy gates and bars, and which were difficult to open, flew open by themselves without noise, as the prince went through. 83. Firm in his **resolve** and leaving behind his father, his wife, and his young son, his affectionate people and his supreme magnificence, he then went forth out of his father's city.

Question:

What is the prince afraid will happen to him as he gets older? Describe what the prince sees that makes him think this.

***Book XIV: The Enlightenment***

30. If a man only knew that such was the consequence of selfishness, he would always give to others even pieces of his own body 31. Others rushing up filled with hope but held back by their former deeds, they try in vain to get anything large, however impure. 32. Others, having found a hell in an impure lake called the womb, are born amongst men and there suffer anguish.

**Question:**

According to Book XIV, the penalty for being selfish is finding “hell in an impure lake called the womb” where people “are born amongst men and there suffer anguish.” What does the author mean by this statement?

Source for Student Handout 1.2: *The Sanskrit Buddha-carita* by Aèvaghòà, ed. by Edward B. Cowell, 1893, *Ancient Buddhist Texts*, <http://www.ancient-buddhist-texts.net/Buddhist-Texts/BT-index.htm>. Adapted.

**Lesson 1**

*Student Handout 1.3—The Path to Nirvana*

**NIRVANA**

**The Eight-Fold Path**

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**The Four Noble Truths**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

## *Lesson 2*

### *A Recipe for Buddhism*

#### **Preparation**

Students should have prior knowledge of Hindu beliefs (see World History for Us All Landscape Teaching Unit 4.1), including the ideas of *dharma*, *moksha*, *artha*, and *kama*. A class set of Student Handouts 2.1 (Four Goals of Life) and 2.2 (Similarities and Differences) will be needed to complete this lesson.

#### **Vocabulary**

Reincarnation

#### **Introduction**

This lesson will underscore the correlation between Hindu and Buddhist beliefs. Students will apply Hindu beliefs from ancient India to the Buddha's life before his enlightenment. In doing this, students will be able to identify causes and effects related to the origins of Buddhism.

#### **Activities**

Using Student Handout 2.1, students will review the Four Goals of Life based on Hindu beliefs. The definitions are listed, but students should work independently or in groups to write their own interpretations. These concepts will then serve students on Student Handout 2.2 as they explore the similarities and differences between the Hindu and Buddhist belief systems and how one led to the emergence of the other.

#### **Assessment**

Completion of the Student Handouts should show insightful analysis.

**Lesson 2*****Student Handout 2.1—Four Goals of Life***

<b>Hindu beliefs known as the Four Goals of Life</b>	<b>Meaning of the belief</b>	<b>Student interpretation</b>
<b>Dharma</b>	People should live a virtuous life.	
<b>Kama</b>	People should indulge their senses.	
<b>Artha</b>	People should achieve wealth and success lawfully.	
<b>Moksha</b>	Release from reincarnation.	

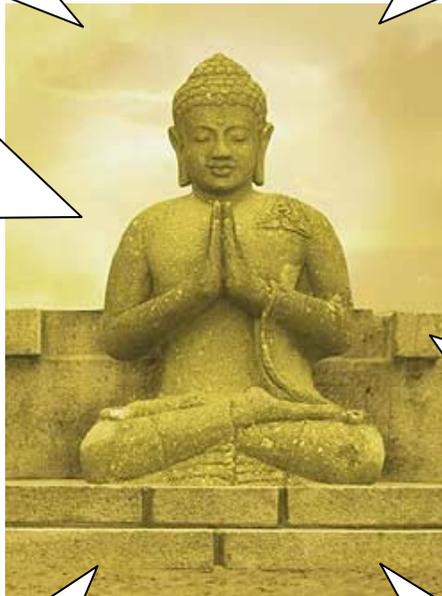
## Lesson 2

### *Student Handout 2.2—Similarities and Differences*

What were 3 types of suffering Siddhartha encountered outside the palace?

What does the Hindu belief of *dharma* have to do with the Buddha's beliefs?

How did the Buddha's life change after going outside the palace gates?



What did the Hindu belief of *moksha* have to do with the Buddha's beliefs?

What did the Hindu belief of *kama* have to do with the Buddha's beliefs before enlightenment?

What did the Hindu belief of *artha* have to do with the Buddha's beliefs before enlightenment?

## *Lesson 3*

## *Meditation Mandalas*

### **Preparation**

The teacher will need to provide students with a piece of paper at least 8 ½ by 11 inches, scissors, a compass, a ruler, color pencils, and a lead pencil. As an option, teachers may choose to provide a class set of an enlarged Student Handout 3 with color pencils.

### **Vocabulary**

*Stupa*                      Mandala

### **Introduction**

Buddhist mandalas were thought to have originated from the idea of the *stupa*. *Stupas* were built to house the remains of the Buddha, and they were and are also a place of veneration. The mandala is a flat representation of a *stupa*. By looking at the photo below of Borobudur, one can see that by hypothetically pressing the top of the central dome down so that it is level with the ground, a likeness of a mandala appears.

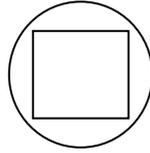
### **Activities**

Students will create their own mandala. Teachers may want to use an enlargement of Student Handout 3 (Mandala) or simply have students use compasses and rulers to create circles and squares. In having them draw their mandala independently, the integration of math skills is possible.

Steps for creating a mandala:

1. Give each student a piece of paper (at least 8 ½ by 11 inches, although bigger pieces are easier to use and help students create clearer drawings).
2. Have students cut the paper into a square.
3. Next, help students find the center of the paper by having them fold it once horizontally and once vertically. Then open the paper up and the center should be visible.
4. Now, have the students draw straight lines on the folds showing North, South, East, and West.
5. Then, have students draw in diagonal lines showing Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, and Southeast. These represent the Eight-Fold Path.
6. Next, have students put their compasses on the center point to make a few circles of varying sizes. Teachers may want to have them make four rings to represent the Four Noble Truths. This would then offer a means of review.

7. In the centermost ring, have students draw a square whose corners meet at the edge of the centermost ring. Corners should touch the ring.



8. Now, have students draw one or two more squares inside that one.
9. Students can now draw in the center that which is most important to them. In placing importance on the center, students are identifying with Buddhists who placed importance on the deities in the center of mandalas and are also identifying with Jung's interpretation that the center is that which we most highly value.
10. The outer-rings can be decorated with commonly-used Buddhist symbols: the snake, bird, pig, or lotus, or simple geometric shapes used in Buddhist art such as triangles, squares, and circles. Other shapes used in Buddhist art include leaves, the lotus, spirals, and crescents.
11. Mandalas were used to help people meditate on life goals to deal with suffering. For Buddhists these goals are related to the Eight-Fold Path. For students, teachers may want them to decorate the rings with symbols that represent goals they have for their life: graduation caps, hearts, smiley faces, and so on.

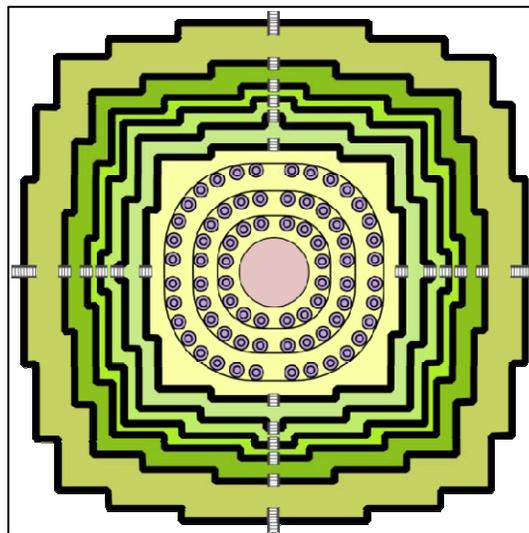
## Assessment

A completed mandala with historically-accurate mandala designs.



**Aerial View of Borobudur, the Enormous Buddhist Monument in Central Java**

<http://www.atmann.net/images/Borobudur/borobudur.jpg>



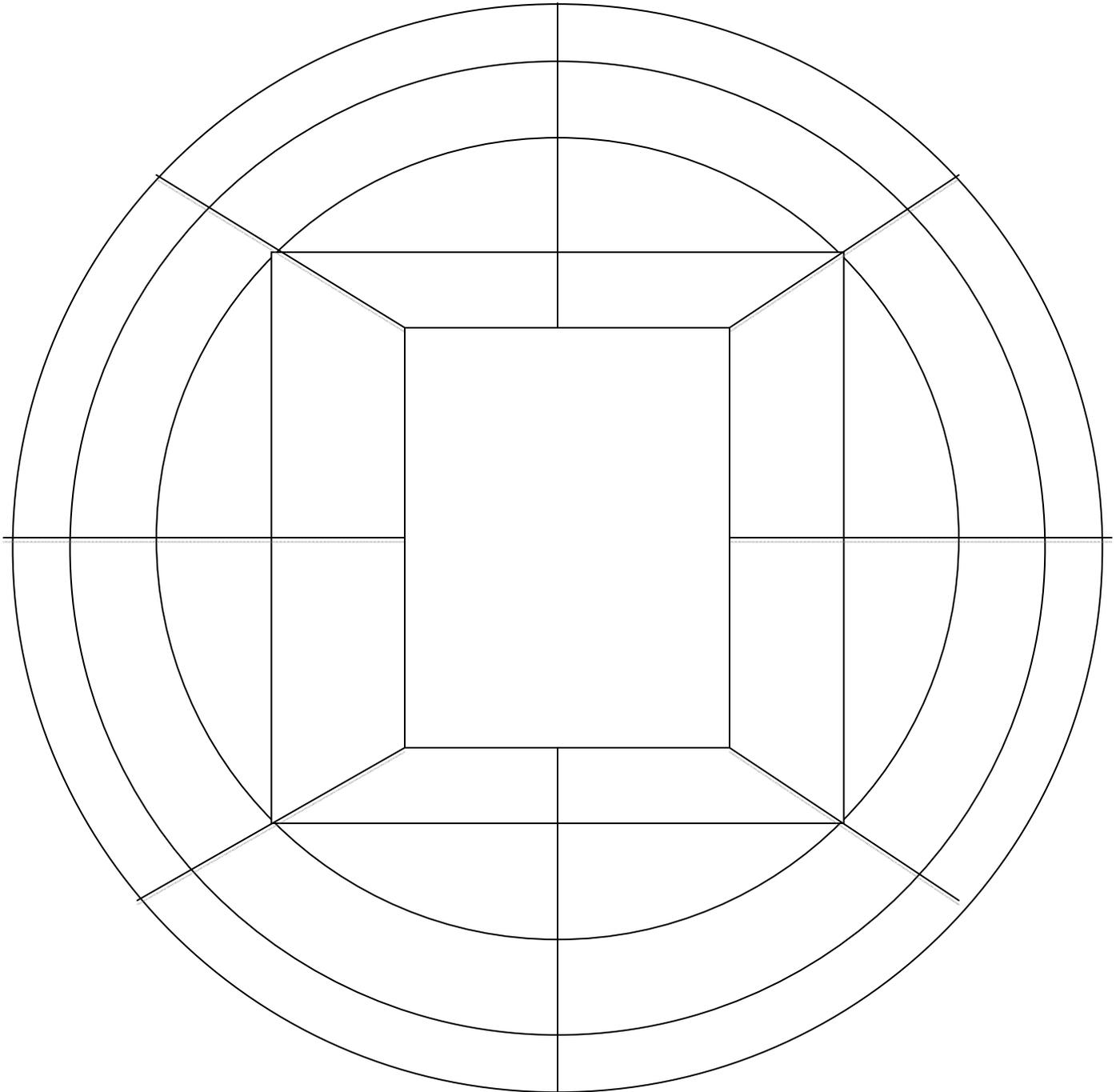
**Ground Plan of Borobudur**

Wikipedia Commons

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Bobobudur\\_Ground\\_Plan.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Bobobudur_Ground_Plan.png)

**Lesson 3**

*Student Handout 3—Mandala*



## **Final Assessment Buddhism ABCs**

### **Preparation**

Copy a class set of the Assessment Student Handout. Students can also make the assessment independently on a sheet of ruled paper.

### **Introduction**

This assessment first asks students to think of words corresponding to Buddhism. Thinking of words related to Buddhism is a low-cognitive skill and only requires students to listen during class, though they may not know the definition of the words. Many students will feel successful in this portion of the assessment and delight in trying to think of words that begin with each alphabet letter. However, the task becomes more rigorous when students are asked to develop a paragraph. In writing the paragraph, students must know the meaning of each word they choose, and they must also be able to put it into context, which is a high-level cognitive skill.

### **Activities**

If this is a more informal assessment, the first portion of it can be done in groups or with partners. This enables students to walk around the room (great for kinesthetic or intrapersonal learners) and enables them to share ideas about Buddhism-related words that start with a given letter. Teachers may also want to give them a few minutes to try to come up with words on their own, and then let them have a minute or two to work in groups. The paragraph must be done independently, but teachers may also want to modify the number of words students select for the paragraph.



## This unit and the Three Essential Questions

	<p>Research and construct a map of <a href="#">Afroeurasia</a> with arrows showing the directions of the spread of both Buddhism and Christianity up to 300 CE. Draw the arrows on a map showing physical relief, or compare your map to one that shows physical relief. What topographical and other geographical features do you think might have influenced the directions in which these two belief systems spread?</p>
	<p>Read selections from the rock and pillar edicts of Ashoka. Analyze what evidence they yield concerning Indian society, religion, and history in the period of the Maurya empire. The rock and pillar edicts are available on the <i>Internet Indian History Sourcebook</i>, ed. by Paul Halsall, <a href="http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/india/indiasbook.html">http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/india/indiasbook.html</a>. (Adapted from <i>Bring History Alive! A Sourcebook for Teaching World History</i> [Los Angeles: National Center for History in the Schools, UCLA, 1997]: 111.)</p>
	<p>Research how king Ashoka's support for Buddhism affected the spread of that belief system in India. Compare this with the effects of Roman emperors' tolerance for and support of Christianity on the spread of that faith in the empire. How important was imperial support? What other factors influence the spread of these two belief systems? (Adapted from <i>Bring History Alive! A Sourcebook for Teaching World History</i> [Los Angeles: National Center for History in the Schools, UCLA, 1997]: 112.)</p>

## This unit and the Seven Key Themes

This unit emphasizes:

Key Theme 5: Expressing Identity

Key Theme 7: Spiritual Life and Moral Codes

## This unit and the Standards in Historical Thinking

Historical Thinking Standard 1: Chronological Thinking

The student is able to (C) establish temporal order in constructing historical narratives of her own.

Historical Thinking Standard 2: Historical Comprehension

The student is able to (E) read historical narratives imaginatively, taking into account what the narrative reveals of the humanity of the individuals and groups involved—their probable values, outlook, motives, hopes, fears, strengths, and weaknesses.

**Historical Thinking Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation**

The student is able to (C) analyze cause-and-effect relationships bearing in mind multiple causation including (a) the importance of the individual in history; (b) the influence of ideas, human interests, and beliefs; and (c) the role of chance, the accidental and the irrational.

**Historical Thinking Standard 4: Historical Research Capabilities**

The student is able to (A) formulate historical questions from encounters with historical documents, eyewitness accounts, letters, diaries, artifacts, photos, historical sites, art, architecture, and other records from the past.

**Historical Thinking Standard 5: Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making**

The student is able to (A) identify issues and problems in the past and analyze the interests, values, perspectives, and points of view of those involved in the situation.

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**Resources*****Resources for teachers***

Brauen, Martin. *The Mandala*. Boston: Shambhala, 1997. This text informs readers about the significance of mandalas. It provides an interpretation for the inner and outer circles within the artwork. It provides pictures of art, diagrams, and rituals behind designing the art, and an explanation of how monks create one.

Erricker, Clive. *Buddhism*. London: Hodder Headline, 1995. Written in thesis-style, this work conveys how Buddhists live their lives and how Buddhism came about. It contains comprehensive information labeled by headings related to each chapter topic. This book is useful as an encyclopedia on Buddhism.

Hagen, Steve. *Buddhism: Plain and Simple*. New York: Broadway Books, 1997. This simply-written book explains central beliefs in Buddhism in layman's terms. The Four Noble Truths and the Eight-Fold Path are interpreted for easy application.

*World History: Ancient Civilizations*. Evanston, IL: McDougal-Littell, 2005.

Like other textbooks, this one provides a summary of Hinduism and Buddhism at a grade-appropriate level.

***Resources for students***

Demi. *Buddha Stories*. New York: Holt and Co., 1997. These stories allow students to learn about the Buddha's teachings through fables. This is a good book to demonstrate how the Buddha felt people should behave to reach Nirvana.

Ganeri, Anita. *Buddhist*. New York: Children's Press, 1997. This interactive book provides children with the history and teachings of Buddhism, while presenting them with activities related to Buddhist topics. Children from the third grade up will enjoy creating paper lotus flowers, cooking Indian food, and drawing simple mandalas.

Penney, Sue. *Buddhism: Discovering Religions*. Austin, TX: Raintree Steck-Vaughn, 1997. This is a thorough non-fiction text written at about third grade level, which illustrates the Buddha's life in accordance with other well-known world leaders of that time, as well as the emergence of other world religions. This source provides information on the Buddha, various sects of Buddhism, and the influence of Buddhism on the world today. This source also provides maps, timelines, and excellent photographs with easy-to-read paragraphs under headings.

Rockwell, Anne. *The Prince Who Ran Away*. New York: Knopf, 2001. This picture book gives a good overview of the Buddha's life. It integrates some relevant advanced vocabulary for an added educational experience. Some parts, however, are overly fantasized, such as the inclusion of demons and the Buddha's conversations with the gods. Also, his marriage to Yasodhara seems to be misplaced chronologically. Otherwise, the author chose events in Buddha's life that would be exciting for young elementary students to read.

Wilkinson, Philip. *Buddhism*. New York: DK Publishing, 2003. This book is part of the Eyewitness Books series. Each page contains photographs of Buddhist-related information with large captions next to each picture. Children will not only learn about the history of Buddhism but also about the different sects from around the world: Zen Japanese, Chinese, and Korean Buddhism.

Wood, Cavan. *Living Religions: Buddhism*. Chicago: Raintree, 2003. Many aspects of life and their relation to Buddhism are addressed in this book. It shows how Buddhists view birth, marriage, death, wealth, poverty, and racism. This book is also filled with pictures portraying Buddhist history, symbols, and meditation practices.

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## Correlations to National and State Standards

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### *National Standards for World History*

Era 3: Classical Traditions, Major Religions, and Giant Empires, 1000 BCE -300 CE. 3D: The student understands religious and cultural developments in India in the era of the Gangetic states and the Mauryan Empire.

### *California: History-Social Science Content Standard*

Grade Six, 6.5.5: Know the life and moral teachings of Buddha and how Buddhism spread in India, Ceylon, and Central Asia; 6.5.7: Discuss important aesthetic and intellectual traditions (e.g., Sanskrit literature, including the *Bhagavad Gita*; medicine; metallurgy; and mathematics, including Hindu-Arabic numerals and the zero).

***Michigan High School Content Expectations: Social Studies***

World History and Geography. Foundations. F3. Growth and Development of World Religions. Explain the way that the world religions or belief systems of Hinduism, Judaism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam grew.

***New York: Social Studies Resource Guide with Core Curriculum***

Unit One: Ancient World – Civilizations and Religions (4000 BC – 500 AD). E. The emergence and spread of belief systems.1.c: Buddhism.

***Virginia History and Social Science Standards of Learning***

WHI.4. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the civilizations of Persia, India, and China in terms of chronology, geography, social structures, government, economy, religion, and contributions to later civilizations by d) describing the origins, beliefs, traditions, customs, and spread of Buddhism.

**Conceptual links to other teaching units****Big Era Four Panorama Teaching Unit****Expanding Networks of Exchange and Encounter 1200 BCE-500 CE**

In this Big Era, Judaism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, and Christianity all established themselves and spread across linguistic and ethnic borders. Buddhism, originating in South Asia, spread from there generally eastward. It eventually declined in India, overshadowed by the Hindu tradition (which incorporated many elements of Buddhism) and after 700 CE by Islam.

**Big Era Four Landscape Teaching Unit 4.4****From the Mediterranean to India: An Age of Greek and Persian Power, 600-200 BCE**

Buddhism became popular in India in the three centuries after the Buddha lived. Its success was owing in part to the support of kings of the Maurya empire, a large state in South Asia which paralleled in time the three Hellenistic kingdoms that followed from the conquests of Alexander the Great.

**Big Era Four Closeup Teaching Unit 4.4.1****The Budding of Buddhism****563 BCE – 150 CE**

We associate the basic teachings of Buddhism with Siddhartha Gautama (583-463 BCE). Buddhism emerged in centuries when Brahmanism, a foundation of Hinduism later, was South Asia's leading belief system. Buddhism challenged some Brahmanist practices, but it continued to grow, especially when Ashoka, ruler of the Maurya empire, supported it.

