



## 4. Religions Along The Silk Roads

### Unit N

CENTRAL IDEAS OF BUDDHISM

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## Unit N

# THE CENTRAL IDEAS OF BUDDHISM

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This unit consists of three lessons. Students will (1) read about the life of the Buddha and reflect on some very different ways of defining success; (2) learn about the Bodhisattva ideal and the Bodhisattva Guanyin, the Buddhist “Goddess of Mercy”; and (3), look at the Buddhist view of morality.

*Carved Out of a Hillside in the Early Eighth Century,  
the Leshan Buddha near Chengdu (Sichuan province),  
Is over Two Hundred Feet High*



(Source: Photograph courtesy of Renqiu Yu, 2002)

## LESSON 1

### THE STORY OF THE BUDDHA AND THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

**Essential Question:** How might the story of the Buddha’s life make us reconsider our understanding of success?

**Learning Experience:** Students will see how the Buddha’s life story embodies two contrasting views of success. They will also think about how the Four Noble Truths might change our perspective concerning worldly goals.

**Anticipatory Set:** Students will read “The Story of the Buddha” as a success story. The Buddha’s life begins with one kind of success: He is born a prince—wealthy, handsome, and of high social status. It ends with another kind of success—religious enlightenment, and freedom from suffering, old age, and death.



In the course of their reading, students will consider the essential question: How might the story of the Buddha's early life make us reconsider our own understanding of success?

**Context:** The story of Buddhism begins in the sixth and fifth centuries BCE with Siddhartha Gautama (Siddhartha was his first name, Gautama his family name), a prince whose father ruled a kingdom located in what is today Nepal. At the age of twenty-nine, Siddhartha left the palace to become a wandering religious ascetic. He wanted to find the source of human suffering—and the way to become free from it. At the age of thirty-five, he achieved enlightenment and became known as the “Buddha,” the “Enlightened One.” This was the beginning of the Buddhist religion. Buddhism is the first world religion, a universal system of beliefs that spread to Sri Lanka, Central Asia, China, Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia.

The Buddha's teachings drew on fundamental concepts shared by practically all his contemporaries. Early Indian thought had evolved a view of humankind's place in the universe based on some of the following ideas:

Rebirth: “. . . upon death a person is neither annihilated nor transported to some other world in perpetuity, but rather returns to worldly life, to live and die again in a new mortal form. This continuing succession of life, death, and rebirth is termed *samsara* (circling, wandering) . . .”<sup>1</sup>

Karma: “What determines a person's form of rebirth? Is there anything other than eternal rebirth?” Karma “means action in a very broad sense . . . the moral character of one's actions in this lifetime determines the status of one's rebirth in the next.”

Liberation (or deliverance, *moksha*): “. . . individuals may attain liberation through lack of desire, since desire is what engenders *samsara* in the first place.”

Liberation is achieved by doing away with involvement in the world: “. . . the renouncer . . . would leave home and family to live in relatively isolated and austere circumstances, sleeping on the ground, restricting the diet, practicing control of the breath, and bringing the senses under control . . . withdrawing from all that might bind one to the world, with the ultimate goal of escaping from rebirth itself” (Davis 1999: 16, 17).

The goal of every Buddhist is “Nirvana.” Nirvana literally means “a blowing out” (like a candle) or “extinction.” Buddhism offers salvation from rebirth, and Nirvana is the end of rebirth. The path to freedom is expressed in the Four Noble Truths:

1. The Noble Truth of . . . suffering is this: Birth is suffering; aging is suffering; sickness is suffering; death is suffering; sorrow and lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are suffering; association with the unpleasant is suffering; dissociation from the pleasant is suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering . . . <sup>2</sup>
2. The Noble Truth of the origin of suffering is this: It is this thirst (craving) which produces re-existence and re-becoming, bound up with passionate greed, it finds fresh delight now here and now there . . .
3. The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering is this: It is the complete cessation of that very thirst, giving it up, renouncing it, emancipating oneself from it, detaching oneself from it.

<sup>1</sup> “Reincarnation” and “transmigration” are also commonly used instead of “rebirth.” But since Buddhists do not believe in the existence of a self, it is better to translate *samsara* as “rebirth.”





4. The Noble Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of suffering is this: It is simply the Eightfold Path, namely right view; right thought; right speech; right action; right livelihood; right effort; right mindfulness; right concentration (Rahula 1959: 93).

Although realizing Nirvana is the goal of every Buddhist, few people can withdraw from the world and devote themselves entirely to a religious life. The Five Precepts are the minimal obligations that make a person a Buddhist:

1. Do not take life.
2. Do not steal or take anything that belongs to others. Prevent others from profiting from human suffering or the suffering of other species on Earth.
3. Do not engage in sexual misconduct.
4. Do not lie, speak poorly of others, or gossip. Practice loving speech and active listening.
5. Do not use alcohol and recreational drugs.

These obligations apply to both monks and laypeople (“householders”). Although Buddhism warns against attachment to things, it is neither a pessimistic faith nor does it deny people success or the enjoyment of worldly pleasures. It does, however, emphasize to lay followers that worldly goals are never pursued without a concern for morality:

If you want honor, wealth, or, after death, a blissful life among the gods, Then take good care that you observe the precepts of a moral life (*Dharmapada*, 4b.; Conze 1959: 84).

**Rationale:** This lesson introduces basic concepts of Buddhism through the life of Siddhartha Gautama. It asks students to compare conventional notions of success with the success embodied in the Buddha’s life story.

### The British Museum—Illuminating World Cultures

The British Museum’s website has a section on ancient India that tells the life story of the Buddha in simple words and pictures. The visuals consist of Buddhist art from the museum’s collection.  
[http://www.ancientindia.co.uk/buddha/story/sto\\_set.html](http://www.ancientindia.co.uk/buddha/story/sto_set.html)

**Time:** One class period.

**Instructional Resources:** “Story of the Buddha” (Handout for Lesson 1, pp. 234-235); Story Map and Note Taking Guide (pp. 236-237).

Some documents are primary sources and some are secondary materials selected from various books and articles. Primary sources are marked with an asterisk. \*

**Procedure:** Have students read the story of the Buddha (pp. 234-235). As they read, they will:

- Use the Story Map on p. 236 to map the structure of the story.

<sup>2</sup> The Sanskrit word “*dukha*” is usually translated as “suffering.” This is probably too strong. “Unsatisfactory” or “unsatisfactoriness” is more accurate.





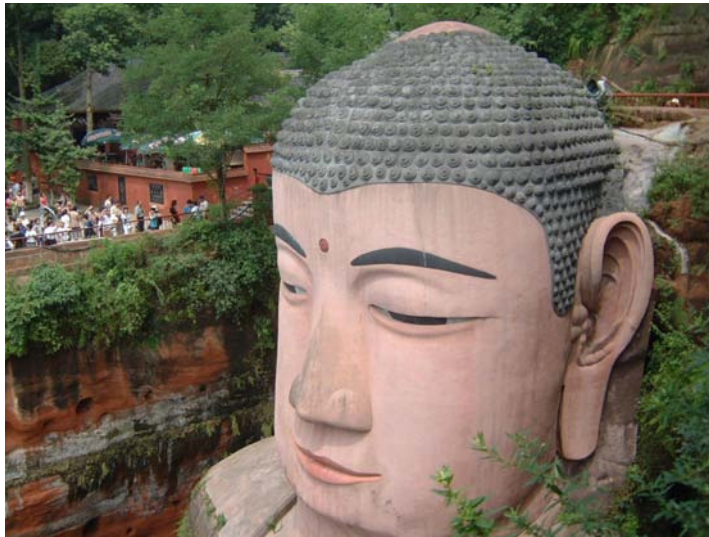
- Use the Note Taking Guide to detail the two types of success the story embodies. Make sure students refer to specific passages in the story as part of their responses.
- Go over the Four Noble Truths at the end.

**Whole Group Reflection:** What do the Four Noble truths have to say about success?

**Instructional Modification:** Read the story of the Buddha out loud for auditory learners. Write the following question on the board for visual learners: How would the Buddha respond to our lists?

**Application:** Students create a T-chart entitled “Success,” and make a list of five things that Americans regard as success. How would the Buddha respond to our lists?

### *Head of the Leshan Buddha*



(Source: Photograph courtesy of Renqiu Yu, 2004)

## LESSON 2

### MAHAYANA BUDDHISM AND THE BODHISATTVA GUANYIN

**Essential Question:** Who is Guanyin and what does she tell us about how people find solutions to the problems of life?

**Learning Experience:** In reading two brief texts about Guanyin, the most beloved figure in East Asian Buddhism, students will learn about both the Bodhisattva ideal and the devotional side of Buddhism.<sup>3</sup>

In learning about Guanyin, students will gain insight into “self-power” and “other-power,” two basic aspects of religious practice.

**Context:** In the Mahayana tradition, there is a belief in beings who delay their entrance into nirvana in order to help others reach enlightenment. These beings, called bodhisattvas (*bodhi* is “wisdom,” *sattva* is “being”), take on god-like qualities.

<sup>3</sup> To enrich students’ understanding of Guanyin, the following video, filmed on location in China, is an excellent resource: *Kuan-yin Pilgrimage* (R.C. Video, 56 minutes, 1988).





One of the most beloved bodhisattvas in East Asia is the deity Guanyin, the Goddess of Mercy. In Indian scriptures, Guanyin was originally male. In China, however, Guanyin becomes a female figure. She listens to the sounds of the world and hears the cries of suffering. Her goal is to help all sentient beings. She is the epitome of compassion and represents some of the new religious ideas that Mahayana Buddhism brought to China:

The idea of Guanyin—a compassionate universal savior who responds to anyone’s cry for help regardless of class, gender, or even moral qualifications—was an idea unfamiliar to the Chinese. This was a new deity who could not only bring spiritual enlightenment, but also save one from worldly difficulties and grant one material satisfactions as well as a “good death” and postmortem salvation. No native god or goddess in China prior to Guanyin possessed all these abilities (Yu 2001: 5).

**Rationale:** Students will compare two ways of coping with the problems of life, what Buddhism refers to as “self-power” and “other-power.”

“Other-power” is when we entrust ourselves to bodhisattvas, saints, or other spiritual beings through prayer, making vows, etc. “Self-power” involves personal effort—in Buddhist terms, this refers to following the Five Precepts (p. 242) or to meditation and other practices that lead to enlightenment.

Modern society has its own types of self-power and other-power. Hundreds of self-help books are published every year; people also consult counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, and so forth. As for other-power, many people still turn to traditional religion or seek out psychics, astrologers, and the like.

**Time:** One class period.

**Instructional Resources:** This lesson consists of two brief texts:

- A passage about Guanyin’s powers from the *Lotus Sutra*, one of the central texts of East Asian Mahayana Buddhism.
- A Chinese miracle story: Guanyin saves a condemned criminal (fifth to sixth century CE).

Some documents are primary sources and some are secondary materials selected from various books and articles. Primary sources are marked with an asterisk. \*

**Anticipatory Set:** What is the difference between solving problems by “self-power” and “other-power?” Ask students: Why do people pray or make vows to bodhisattvas, saints, and other religious figures? Why do people go to social workers or family counseling? What is the saint’s role? What is the counselor’s role?

**Procedure:** Define bodhisattva as a being who delays entering nirvana in order to help others achieve it. One important bodhisattva is Guanyin, the Goddess of Mercy.

Make two columns on the board: label the first “self-power”; the second “other-power.” Tell students that in reading about Guanyin, they will learn about “other-power.”

Read the two texts and answer the questions.

**Whole Group Reflection:** After reading the two selections, have students define “other- power” and give additional examples (saints in Catholicism, for example) for the blackboard.

What is the difference between entrusting ourselves to Guanyin (“other-power”) and seeking the help of a guidance counselor or psychologist (“self-power”)?





Have students give examples of “self-power” for the blackboard list.

**Instructional Modification:** The teacher can read the two passages out loud to students, or split students into groups and have them read only one excerpt. One group can read Section 1 and answer questions 1, 2, and 4, the other group can read Section 2 and answer questions 2, 3, and 4.

**Application:** Write your own story about a miracle of Guanyin.

## LESSON 3

### BUDDHIST MORAL TEACHINGS

**Essential Questions:** How do Buddhists define right and wrong, good and evil, and moral behavior? For Buddhists, what is a moral life?

**Learning Experience:** Students will learn about basic Buddhist ethical and moral concepts—the Eightfold Path, the Four Noble Truths, and the Five Precepts.

**Anticipatory Set:** Is Buddhist morality universal, applicable to all times and cultures?

**Context:** Buddhism offers salvation from rebirth through Nirvana, the end of rebirth. This is accomplished by realizing the true nature of existence, what Buddhists call “Wisdom.” The key to achieving Wisdom is meditation, part of the Eightfold Path. The goal of meditation is

. . . cleansing the mind of impurities and disturbances, such as lustful desires, hatred, ill-will, indolence, worries and restlessness, skeptical doubts, and cultivating such qualities as concentration, awareness, intelligence, will, energy, the analytical faculty, confidence, joy, tranquility, leading finally to the attainment of the highest wisdom which sees the nature of things as they are, and realizes . . . Nirvana (Rahula 1974: 67, 68).

These goals are difficult to achieve, particularly for lay followers unable to become monks or nuns. Consequently, Buddhism is also concerned with life in the world. The Eightfold Path, the Four Noble Truths, and the Five Precepts give the fundamental concepts of Buddhist thought and their relation to living a good life:

- The Four Noble Truths explain why people should devote themselves to a religious life.
- The Eightfold Path describes this religious life in detail.
- The Five Precepts outline the minimum conduct required of Buddhists.

These ideas are based on three important concepts that Buddhism inherited from Indian religious thought:

- **Rebirth:** When a person dies, he or she returns to life to live and then to die again.
- **Karma:** A person’s form of rebirth depends on how moral a life he or she has previously lived. This is called “karma,” Sanskrit for “action.”
- **Liberation:** People can be freed from being continually born and reborn by learning to be without desires (Davis 1999: 16, 17).

Since the concepts of karma, rebirth, and liberation inform the moral and religious lives of Buddhists throughout the world, the Buddhist answers to questions such as “Why do I do the things I do?” and





“What should I do to lead a good life?” (see the Handout, p. 243) attempt to place everyday conduct and morality within a universal and cosmic scheme.

**Rationale:** Students will examine the foundations of Buddhist morality—the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, and the Five Precepts. They will explore their own moral beliefs and compare them with the reasons that Buddhism gives for living morally.

**Time:** One or two class periods.

**Instructional Resources:** Two handouts, “Basic Buddhism and Buddhist Morality” (The Four Noble Truths, the Eight Fold Path, and the Five Precepts), and “Buddhist Moral Behavior—Student Questionnaire.”

Some documents are primary sources and some are secondary materials selected from various books and articles. Primary sources are marked with an asterisk. \*

**Procedure:** Working in pairs or small groups, students read “Basic Buddhism and Buddhist Morality” and fill in the questionnaire. They should discuss and compare answers.

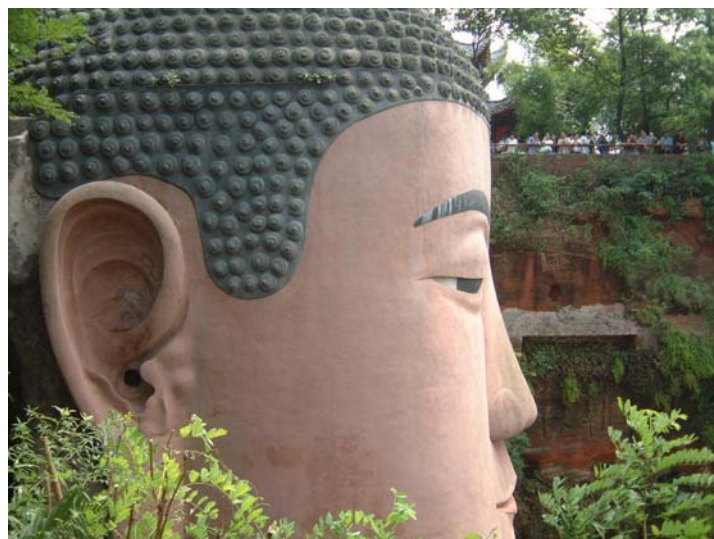
In answering the question in Column 4, “Why do I do it or not do it?,” students should be encouraged to look at personal experience, family life, religion, their community, American culture as a whole, and so forth.

The class should then go over the questionnaire together and finally ask “Why would Buddhists do it or not do it?,” using the Four Noble Truths, the Eight Fold Path, and the Five Precepts as a guide.

**Whole Group Reflection:** Does Buddhist morality differ from your own (or your community’s) understanding of morality? Where does it agree or disagree? Do Buddhist reasons for behaving well differ from your or your community’s reasons?

**Application(s):** Write a letter to yourself from a Buddhist monk giving you advice based on the Eightfold Path or have students develop a television series teaching Buddhist morality.

***Side view of the Leshan Buddha’s head***



(Source: Photograph courtesy of Renqiu Yu, 2004)



## LESSON 1: HANDOUT

### THE STORY OF THE BUDDHA<sup>1</sup>

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1. A young prince of the Shakya clan named Siddhartha was born in Northern India in the sixth century BCE. Shortly after he was born, a fortuneteller visited the palace and told the king, his father, that Siddhartha would either be a great ruler, or a man devoted to seeking religious truth. His father was worried that Siddhartha might leave the kingdom. He decided to make him so happy that he would never have reason to leave.

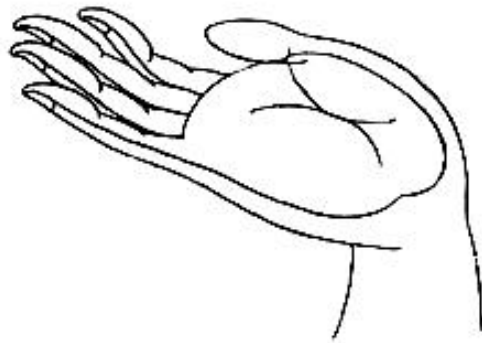
The King surrounded him with beautiful women to tempt and entertain him. He thought that Siddhartha would never want to go anywhere outside the palace. The King also arranged for Siddhartha to be married. In time, Siddhartha's wife had a son named Rahula.

2. But Siddhartha became curious about the world outside the palace. He set his heart on journeying beyond its walls. Hearing about his son's plan, the king arranged a pleasure trip. He commanded that all common folk with any type of affliction should be kept away from the royal road in order to protect his son. At the beginning, Siddhartha was greeted by all the king's joyful subjects. It seemed to him that the whole world was as content as he was.

As Siddhartha continued, however, he came upon three people. First he encountered a very old man. The man was wrinkled, decrepit, and bent with age. Siddhartha asked his charioteer about the man. The charioteer explained that old age will come to everyone and that it cannot be stopped. The young prince shuddered at the idea and contemplated its meaning.

Siddhartha next encountered someone who was ill. The man was burning and trembling with fever, coughing so uncontrollably that he could scarcely catch his breath. Again, Siddhartha was dismayed at suffering in the midst of a world that seemed so full of joy to him. He was amazed that people continued living at a leisurely pace when the threat of illness was so near.

#### ***The Mudra Symbolizing "Beyond Misery"***



**BUDDHASHRAMANA MUDRĀ**

(Source: Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc.)

*Mudras* are hand gestures used in Buddhist sculpture and painting to symbolize various ideas and actions.

(To learn more about *mudras*, visit <http://www.buddhanet.net/mudras.htm>)

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<sup>1</sup> Loosely based on passages in "The Legend of the Shakyamuni Buddha." In Edward Conze (tr.), *Buddhist Scriptures*. London: Penguin Books, 1958, pp. 35-56.





Then Siddhartha came upon a funeral procession with family members wailing in mourning. He was so touched by this display of emotion that it became difficult to go on. He kept asking himself, “How can people continue in their everyday lives when they are surrounded by such suffering? How can I enjoy the pleasures of the palace knowing that we cannot escape illness, old age and death? These pleasures that we seek are truly impermanent.”

Finally he met a wandering beggar, a man who had given up his family, home, and possessions in order to seek enlightenment.

3. After leaving the palace, Siddhartha joined a group of men who called themselves “ascetics.” They practiced meditation, fasted, and denied themselves all the comforts of life that ordinary people loved. After a time, Siddhartha realized that this path of self-denial was not the answer. It was just an extreme—as extreme as seeking pleasure by doing everything one wanted to do. Siddhartha was looking for a Middle Path between these two extremes.

4. After leaving the ascetics, he had to nurse himself back to health as a result of their practices. He sought shelter under a Bodhi (“wisdom”) tree.

While meditating under the Bodhi tree, Siddhartha recalled all of his past lives. He reflected on the passing away of all living things, and “in the supreme nobility of his mind, he performed an act of supreme pity.”

It was then that he attained nirvana and became the Buddha, or “Enlightened One.” While meditating, the Buddha realized the Four Noble Truths:

1. All life is full of suffering. It is imperfect, impermanent. Suffering can occur at any moment without warning.
2. Suffering is caused by desire, something Buddhists call “thirst” or “craving.” This thirst can be not only for long life, pleasure, wealth, and power, but also for ideas, opinions, and beliefs. Being attached to these things makes us unhappy, because none of them last forever. For example, we are attached to looking young and will do anything to stay young, even though everyone must age.
3. To end suffering, we must end desire. We must truly realize that the world is impermanent.
4. To end desire, we must follow the Eightfold Path. This is the “Middle Path” that avoids extremes. It consists of right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.





## THE STORY OF THE BUDDHA

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*(continued from the previous page.)*

UNIT  
4 – N

### STORY MAP

The setting: Where and when does the story take place?

Who are the main characters?

Statement of the problem:

Event 1

Event 2

Event 3

Event 4

Event 5

Statement of the solution:

Values brought out in the story:





### Note-Taking Guide: The Story of the Buddha

*As you read, use the following chart to record information regarding the different types of success the story discusses.*

The Buddha's "Old Life"	The Buddha's "New Life"





## LESSON 2: HANDOUT

### DOCUMENT 1: A PASSAGE FROM THE *LOTUS SUTRA*\*

The Lotus Sutra is one of the most widely read Buddhist texts in East Asia. Notice that in the second paragraph, Guanyin is referred to as “he.” This is because Guanyin was originally a male deity in India. Later, over a period of centuries in China, Guanyin became a female.

A bodhisattva asked the Buddha, “Why is Guanyin called the Perceiver of the World’s Sounds?”

The Buddha said to him, “Good man, suppose there are immeasurable hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, millions of living beings who are undergoing various trials and suffering. If they hear of this Bodhisattva Perceiver of the World’s Sounds and single-mindedly call his name, then at once he will perceive the sound of their voices and they will all gain deliverance from their trials . . .

#### *The Mudra for “Compassion”*



**VARADA MUDRĀ**

(Source: Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc. <http://www.buddhanet.net>)

If there should be living beings beset by numerous lusts and cravings, let them think with constant reverence of Guanyin Perceiver of the World’s Sounds, and then they can shed their rage. If they have great ignorance and stupidity, let them think with constant reverence of the Bodhisattva Guanyin, and they can rid themselves of stupidity . . .

. . . “Guanyin has succeeded in acquiring benefits such as these and, taking on a variety of different forms, goes about among the lands saving living beings . . .” (Adapted from de Bary 1999: 455).

#### **1. What do people need to do to be saved from suffering by Guanyin?**

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## DOCUMENT 2: A GUANYIN MIRACLE STORY\*

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Gao Xun of Rongyang was arrested at the age of fifty for murder. He was locked up in a dungeon and had resigned himself to death. Another prisoner, however, urged that they together strive to concentrate on Guanyin. Xun answered, “My crime is extremely heavy and I have made up my mind to die. How could I possibly be saved?” His fellow prisoner instructed him, saying he should begin by making a mental oath: He would abandon evil and do good, and he would concentrate his thoughts on Guanyin without a single lapse. If he received pardon and release, he vowed, he would erect a five-story pagoda . . . and would make donations to the sangha [the community of monks].

Then he applied his mind for a week, after which time his shackles fell loose. The warden was startled and afraid. He told Xun: “If the Buddha and the gods are indeed taking pity on you, then let them stop your execution.” On the day of his execution, the blade of the [executioner’s] sword broke (de Bary 1999: 531-532).

**1. Why does Gao Xun think he can’t be saved?**

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**2. What does his fellow prisoner tell Gao Xun to do?**

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**3. Write down four adjectives to describe Guanyin.**

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## LESSON 3: HANDOUT

### BASIC BUDDHISM AND BUDDHIST MORALITY

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The basic beliefs of Buddhism and the Buddhist view of morality are contained in the “The Four Noble Truths,” “The Eightfold Path,” “The Three Treasures,” and “The Five Precepts.” In pre-modern India and China, people frequently classified things using numbers. Since very few were able to read, numbering things made them easier to memorize and recite.

“Morality” can be defined as “doing what is right.” Buddhism attempts to answer important questions that come from this simple definition:

- “Why do I do the things I do?”
- “What should I do to lead a good life?” In Buddhist terms, this question would be, “What should I do to lead a good life and achieve liberation from rebirth?”

#### **The Four Noble Truths: Why Do I Do the Things I Do?**

The Buddhist answer to this question is based on three important concepts that Buddhism inherited from Indian religious thought:

Rebirth: When a person dies, he or she returns to life to live and die again.

Karma: A person’s form of rebirth depends on how moral a life he or she has previously lived. This is called “karma,” Sanskrit for “action.”

Liberation: People can be freed from being continually born and reborn by learning to be without desires (Davis 1999: 16, 17).

The Four Noble Truths were preached by the Buddha in his first sermon. They are the heart of Buddhist teaching and explain why people should devote themselves to a religious life.

1. All life is full of suffering. It is imperfect, impermanent and empty. Suffering can occur at any moment without warning.

Buddhism isn’t a pessimistic faith because it doesn’t deny that life contains happiness. What it emphasizes, however, is that pleasures aren’t permanent.

2. Suffering is caused by desire, something Buddhists call “thirst” or “craving.” This thirst can be not only for long life, pleasure, wealth, and power, but also for ideas, opinions, beliefs, etc. Being attached to these things makes us unhappy, because none of them last forever. For example, we are attached to looking young and will do anything to stay young, even though everyone ages.
3. To end suffering, we must end desire. We must truly realize that the world is impermanent.
4. To end desire, we must follow the Eightfold Path. This is the “Middle Path” that avoids extremes. It consists of right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.





### The Mudra for “Fearlessness”



**ABHAYA MUDRĀ**

(Source: Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc. <http://www.buddhanet.net>)

- The Eightfold Path describes what Buddhists regard as a religious life. It answers the question “What should I do to lead a good life and to achieve liberation from rebirth?”

#### The Eightfold Path— “What Should I Do to Lead a Good Life and Achieve Liberation From Rebirth?”

The Eightfold Path can be divided into three parts:

##### Wisdom

1. Right knowledge—the Four Noble Truths (p. 240)
2. Right thinking—Be compassionate and dedicated to love and non-violence.

##### Morality

3. Right speech—Do not slander, be verbally abusive, gossip or lie.
4. Right conduct—Follow the Five Precepts (p. 242).
5. Right livelihood—Work at something that doesn’t harm other living things and doesn’t profit from the suffering of others.

##### Meditation

6. Right effort—Be positive and avoid negative thinking
7. Right mindfulness—Be aware of your body, your feelings, and your thoughts.
8. Right concentration—Practice meditation in order to reach various stages of mental concentration and, ultimately, enlightenment.

Some Buddhist writings compare the mind to a wild horse. Meditation aims at taming this wild horse. It removes hatred and laziness, worries and doubts. It replaces them with “concentration, awareness, intelligence, will, energy, confidence, joy, tranquility, leading finally to the attainment of the highest wisdom which sees the nature of things as they are, and realizes . . . Nirvana” (Rahula 1974: 67, 68).

Buddhism offers salvation from rebirth, and Nirvana is the end of rebirth. For Buddhists, this is the path to freedom.



## BASIC BUDDHISM AND BUDDHIST MORALITY

(continued from the previous page.)

- Following the Eightfold Path requires relying on the Three Treasures. These are the three divisions of the Buddhist faith.

### The Three Treasures

The Three Treasures took root everywhere that Buddhism spread in Asia.

- The Buddha—The historical Buddha whose personal name was Siddhartha Gautama.
- The Sangha—The community of monks.
- The Dharma—The Buddhist Law.

The Buddha is the doctor, the Dharma is the medicine, and the Sangha are the nurses. It is the Buddha who finds the path to liberation and shows it to others. The Dharma is the path itself, and the Sangha are one's companions who offer assistance along the way (Lopez 1999: 64).

In order to become a Buddhist, a person declares their faith through a ritual called "Taking Refuge in the Three Treasures." He or she says:

I take refuge in the Buddha;  
I take refuge in the Dharma;  
I take refuge in the Sangha.

After this, the person will then accept the Five Precepts, the basic beliefs observed by all Buddhists.

- The Five Precepts outline the basics of moral conduct.

### The Five Precepts

Not everyone can become a monk or nun, devoting their life to study and meditation. The Five Precepts were the minimum obligations for monks and laypeople. They also answer the question "What should I do to lead a good life and to achieve liberation from rebirth?"

1. Do not kill anything (human, beast, or bug). It is worse to kill larger animals because more force is involved.
2. Do not steal or take anything that belongs to others. Prevent others from profiting from human suffering or the suffering of other species on Earth.
3. Do not engage in sexual misconduct.
4. Do not lie, speak poorly of others, or gossip. Practice loving speech and active listening.
5. Do not use alcohol and recreational drugs.





## LESSON 3 : ACTIVITY

### BUDDHIST MORALITY—STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

After studying “Basic Buddhism and Buddhist Morality” (pp. 240-242), fill in the following questionnaire.

- Column 1 lists twelve things that people might or might not do.
- Column 2 asks you to answer “yes” or “no” to whether these actions are right or wrong from a Buddhist point of view.
- Column 3 asks you to say whether these actions are related to the Four Noble Truths (FNT), the Eightfold Path (EP), or the Five Precepts (FP). (Some actions can fall into more than one category.)
- Column 4 asks: Why do I do this or not do it?

<b>Actions</b> <b>What do I do?</b>	<b>Yes</b> <hr/> <b>No</b>	<b>FNT</b> <hr/> <b>EP</b> <hr/> <b>FP</b>	<b>Why do I do it or not do it?</b> Your answer can draw on personal experience, family, religion, your community, or American culture as a whole.
1. Talking about people behind their backs.			
2. Forcing opinions on others, insisting you are right.			
3. Deciding not to buy a new jacket.			
4. Setting traps for mice.			
5. Practicing abstinence (“Just say no.”).			
6. Taking things that don’t belong to you.			
7. Volunteer work at a home for the elderly.			
8. Exercising instead of taking diet pills.			
9. Killing a spider.			
10. Never lying.			

- After finishing this questionnaire, the whole class will try to answer the following question: “Why would Buddhists do it or not do it?”



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## Unit O

# THE CENTRAL IDEAS OF ISLAM

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This unit consists of two lessons. Students will learn about (1) the life of the Prophet Muhammad (c. 570-632) and the establishment of the Muslim community, and (2) the “Five Pillars” which comprise the basic religious practices of Islam.<sup>1</sup>

UNIT  
4 – O

## LESSON 1

### MUHAMMAD AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MUSLIM RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

**Essential Question:** What role did the Prophet Muhammad play in the rise of Islam?

**Learning Experience:** Students will learn about the life of the Prophet Muhammad and his role in the establishment of the early Muslim community.

**Context:** Although most of the Arabian peninsula is a desert, in pre-modern times its people were very much connected to the rest of the Middle East (see **Map F** and **Map I**). Mecca, the city of the Prophet Muhammad’s birth, was a trading center connecting Arabia with the homelands of ancient Near Eastern civilization, today modern Syria, Iraq, and Egypt. In Muhammad’s time, with the exception of Iraq, these areas were provinces of the Byzantine Empire. As middlemen, the merchants of Mecca traded in goods from as far away as China and India.

In terms of religion, the people of pre-Islamic Arabia were polytheists—they worshipped many gods. The Ka’aba in Mecca was the center of Arabia’s pre-Islamic faith. Believed to have been built by the Prophet Abraham, the Ka’aba housed hundreds of idols worshiped by the various Arab tribes. At the time of Muhammad’s birth (c. 570), the tribe his clan belonged to had the important task of guarding and overseeing the idols in the Ka’aba.

Today, the Ka’aba is the most sacred place in Islam. Every Muslim who makes the pilgrimage to Mecca walks around the Ka’aba seven times. He or she is also required to kiss and touch the Black Stone of Mecca in the eastern corner of the Ka’aba. It is believed that the stone was once white, but turned black from absorbing the sins of pilgrims.

In cities such as Mecca, Arabs would have contact with small populations of monotheistic Christians and Jews. In addition, Arab merchants were in touch not only with neighboring regions where Jews and Christians had been living for centuries, but also with Persia, whose pre-Islamic faith, Zoroastrianism, influenced both Judaism and Christianity.

Although the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula were desert nomads, Islam was born in an urban, mercantile setting. By the early seventh century—about a hundred years after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, Arab armies had established an empire stretching from Spain to Central Asia.

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<sup>1</sup> Some teachers might be interested in using: Denny, Frederick M., and Abdulaziz A. Sachedina. *Islamic Ritual Practices: A Slide Set and Teacher’s Guide*. Asian Religions Media Resources, Vol. 7. New Haven: Paul Vieth Christian Education Service of the Yale Divinity School, 1983.



Lacking an organized, official clergy, Muslims understand their faith as

. . . part of God’s merciful providence, present from all eternity but revealed at various moments in history through the agency of His Chosen Prophets. Muhammad was one of these latter, a mere man singled out by God—the divine name in Arabic, *Allah*, may obscure the fact that this is in truth the same universal God that spoke to Abraham, Moses, and Jesus—to communicate His final message to His creation. These revealed messages, warnings, and signs for all mankind were communicated verbatim and in Arabic to Muhammad over the course of some twenty-two years and are collectively called in Arabic *al-Qur’an* or “The Recitation.”

. . . The essence of the message is simple. It is a warning to submit (*aslama*, whence the noun “submission,” *islam*) to the will of God . . . For him who does submit, the muslim, there awaits eternal reward in Paradise; for the disbeliever or infidel (*kafir*), eternal damnation in Hell (Peters 1994: 3).

### The Words “Islam” and “Muslim”

“Islam” is Arabic for surrender or submission. A Muslim is “one who has surrendered” to God (Denny 1994: 390, 392).

**Rationale:** This lesson introduces students to the story of Muhammad and the beginnings of Islam in the Arabian peninsula.

**Time:** One or two forty-minute sessions.

**Instructional Resources:** Reading selections and questions on “Muhammad and the Muslim Religious Community.”

Some documents are primary sources and some are secondary materials selected from various books and articles. Primary sources are marked with an asterisk. \*

**Anticipatory Set:** Show students the *Shahada* or “Testimony” (p. 251). Explain that the writing is Arabic calligraphy. Read the translation:

There is no god but God. Muhammad is the messenger of God.

Ask students what this means. Have the class define “monotheism” in the context of the first sentence. What religions are monotheistic in addition to Islam?

What does “messenger” mean here? Discuss the word “prophet” as a synonym of “messenger” (the word “prophet” comes from Greek; it means “before”). What does “revelation” mean?

**Procedure:** Divide the class into pairs and have each pair read and discuss “Muhammad and the Muslim Religious Community” (pp. 248-250). The pairs should then answer the questions.

At the end of the activity, look at the *Shahada* once more. Has the interpretation of key terms and concepts changed or been further refined?

**Whole Group Reflection:** Compare the life and mission of Muhammad to that of the Buddha (see



Unit N, “Story of the Buddha,” pp. 234-235). Draw a Venn diagram to illustrate the areas of similarity and differences. Make a timeline for each leader and compare results.

**Instructional Modification:** The teacher may read the passages from the *Qur’an* aloud. Where necessary, the language of the reading may be simplified or adapted. The reading may also be assigned for homework.

**Application:** Almost one out of every five people in the world today is Muslim. Have students identify the various countries around the world that have significant Muslim populations.<sup>2</sup> Have them choose two to compare and contrast geographically, economically, politically, and so forth.



## LESSON 2

### WHAT ARE THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM?

**Essential Question:** What does a person have to do in order to be considered a Muslim?

**Learning Experience:** What are the Five Pillars of Islam?

**Context:** The Five Pillars are the basic obligations for all Muslims:

#### 1. The Declaration of Faith (*Shahada*)

*There is no god but God. Muhammad is the messenger of God.*

This “testimony” . . . is the closest thing to a creed in Islam. It is sufficient simply to utter it once in one’s life, freely and as a believer, to become a Muslim (Denny 1994: 107).

#### 2. The Worship Service (*Salat*)

The foundation of Muslim devotion is the ritual prayer service known as *salat* . . . Although in English the term is often simply translated as “prayer,” that is a little misleading if it means the personal type of prayers of petition, intercession, or invocation associated with private Christian devotion . . . The *salat* is an intense, highly regulated, formal observance that features cycles of bodily postures climaxing in complete prostration in an orientation toward the Kaa’ba in Mecca (Denny 1994: 119).

#### 3. Legal Almsgiving (*Zakat*)

The *zakat* is a legal, obligatory act and considered part of one’s service to God . . . *Zakat* is not to be confused with charity . . . Muslims are commanded to give charity often and freely . . . *Zakat*, however, is more like a tax payable once a year and computed as a percentage of one’s various forms of wealth . . . The Arabic word *zakat* has as one of its meanings “purity” . . . That is, the wealth is purified for the use of its owner. If no *zakat* has been paid on it during the year in which, according to Islamic law, it was due, then the property is considered to be illicitly held and “unclean.” This . . . is a powerful symbol of Islam’s sense of community (Denny 1994: 125).

<sup>2</sup> One place to start might be <http://islam.about.com/library/weekly/aa120298.htm>



#### 4. Fasting During the Holy Month of Ramadan (Sawm)

One of the Muslim's best-known religious acts is the month-long daytime fast during the ninth lunar month of Ramadan. From before dawn until sunset, those who are observing the fast are forbidden from eating, drinking, smoking, and marital relations.

Fasting in Ramadan is a demanding spiritual discipline and enhances one's awareness of one's dependence on God and essential similarity with other human beings, especially the poor and the hungry.

Ramadan is the most sacred month in the Muslim calendar. In addition to being the time when the Qur'an first descended, it was also the month during which the fateful Battle of Badr took place [624, a decisive victory for the Muslims against their foes from Mecca] (Denny 1994: 126, 127).

#### 5. Pilgrimage to Mecca (Haj)

The pilgrimage to Mecca during the holy pilgrimage month of *Dhu al-Hijja* is held annually. It is required in each Muslim's lifetime, but only if he or she is legally an adult, as well as both physically and financially capable (Denny 1994: 130).

**Rationale:** Students are introduced to the core practices of Islam.

**Time:** One to two forty-minute lessons.

**Instructional Resources:** Readings on the "Five Pillars," two student activities. The class can also refer to the reading in the first lesson, "Muhammad and the Muslim Religious Community," and look at the following two websites for further discussion of the Five Pillars:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/index.shtml>

<http://www.islamicity.com/education/understandingislamandmuslims/>

Some documents are primary sources and some are secondary materials selected from various books and articles. Primary sources are marked with an asterisk. \*

**Anticipatory Set:** Tell the class that being a Muslim involves a relationship with God and a relationship with the *umma*, or community of Muslims. In studying the Five Pillars, which things can be described as personal, relating to God? Which things can be described as social, connecting the individual to the religious community?

**Procedure:** Divide the class into pairs and have each pair read the material on the Five Pillars and do the two activities. The class will then discuss the questions and answers as a group.

**Whole Group Reflection:** The Five Pillars are a practice connecting Muslims both to God and to a worldwide religious community. Discuss which of the Pillars relate to each of these two goals. Do any of the five relate to more than a single goal?

**Instructional Modification:** Printed handouts from the indicated web sites can be used. Depending on the level of the class, additional web materials may be added. This assignment can also be done as homework.

**Application:** There are more than one billion Muslims worldwide. How do the Five Pillars connect Muslims from widely different societies and cultures into a single religious community?



## Student Handout: Reading for Lesson 1

### MUHAMMAD AND THE MUSLIM RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY\*

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1. Muhammad (c. 570-632) was born in Mecca. Muslims regard him as the last in a line of prophets that began with Adam and includes Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. To Muslims, Muhammad is only a messenger of God, not an object of worship:

Muhammad is only a messenger, and many a Messenger has gone before him. So what if he dies or is killed? Will you turn back and go away in haste? (*Qur'an* 5: 144; Peters 1994: 159)

2. Little is known of Muhammad's early life. It is believed that he helped guard the caravan routes, ensuring the safe passage of cargo from Mecca to other locations. The earliest biography of Muhammad has the following story:

3. When my mother was carrying me she saw a light proceeding from her, which showed her the castles of Syria, . . . and while I was with a (foster) brother of mine behind our tents shepherding the lambs, two men in white clothing came to me with a gold basin full of snow. Then they seized me and opened my bosom, extracted my heart and split it; then they extracted a black drop from it and threw it away; then they washed my heart and my bosom with the snow until they had thoroughly cleansed them (Adapted from Peters 1994: 45-46).

4. Around the year 610, Muhammad received his first revelation.

When it was the night on which God honored him with his mission and showed mercy on his Servants thereby, Gabriel brought him the command of God. "He came to me," said the apostle of God, "while I was asleep, with a coverlet of brocade on which there was some writing, and said, "Recite!" I said, "What shall I recite?" He pressed me with it so tightly that I thought it was death; then he let me go and said, "Recite!" I said, "What shall I recite?" He pressed me with it again so that I thought it was death; then he let me go and said, "Recite!" I said, "What shall I recite?" He pressed me with it a third time so that I thought it was death and said, "Recite." I said, "What then shall I recite"—and this I said only to deliver myself from him, lest he should do the same again. He said:

Recite in the name of thy Lord who created,  
Who created man of blood coagulated.  
Read! Thy Lord is most beneficent,  
Who taught by the pen,  
Taught that which they knew not to men  
(*Qur'an* 96: 1-5; Peters 1994: 51)

5. Muhammad spread his message first to his wife and then to his closest friends. He began to gather a small group of followers in Mecca.
6. Over the next twenty years, Muhammad received further divine messages from Gabriel and recited them to his followers. They would memorize them and write them down.
7. Muslims believe that the messages delivered by the angel Gabriel in the *Qur'an* are the uncreated words of God. This is what distinguishes it from the Old and New Testaments. For Muslims, the message of these earlier books had been corrupted and changed by the many hands that had





touched the original word of God and his prophets.

8. Many in Mecca felt Muhammad and his followers were a threat to them and the idols they worshiped in the Ka'aba. At first, Muhammad and his followers were persecuted. But more and more people started listening.
9. It is believed that some of the Prophet's earliest teachings in Mecca are contained in words such as these from the *Qur'an*.

Say: O you unbelievers,  
I do not worship what you worship,  
Nor do you worship Who I worship  
Nor will I worship what you worship,  
Nor will you worship Who I worship.  
To you your way; to me my way  
(*Qur'an* 109; Peters 1994: 56, 57)

10. As it grew, Islam had to reject passive resistance in the face of persecution by its rivals. This was an important event in the life of the early Muslim community.

Permission is granted those who (take up arms) to fight because they are oppressed. God is certainly able to give help to those who were driven away unjustly from their homes for no other reason than they said, "Our Lord is God." And if God had not restrained some men through some others, monasteries, churches, synagogues and mosques, where the name of God is honored most, would have been destroyed (*Qur'an* 22: 39-41; Peters 1994: 71).

11. In 622, Muhammad and his followers left Mecca for Medina, a city to the north. This event is referred to as the *Hijra* (Arabic for "Migration"), and it marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar and the Muslim religious community (*umma*).

At a crucial time in his own life Muhammad made his first converts in Medina, and after a long set of negotiations was invited to come to the troubled city.

Behind these agreements lay both acceptance of the *Qur'an* and its revelation . . . In a society with no common law or government and no authority higher than the chiefs of individual clans, feuding clans often selected someone reputed to have religious vision . . . (Lapidus 1988: 26-27).



(continued from the previous page.)



**Questions**

(The numbers in parentheses refer to the numbers before the sections of the readings.)

**1. What other religions were essential to Muslim beliefs? (1)**

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**2. What does Muhammad’s work as a caravan guard imply about the economic life of Arab society? (2)**

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**3. What does the black drop symbolize? (3)**

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**4. What “mission” is Muhammad being prepared for? (4)**

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**5. According to this passage, is becoming a prophet an easy thing? Indicate the words in the text supporting your answer. (4)**

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**6. What does the term “uncreated” mean with respect to the *Qur’an*? (7)**

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**7. There is a message of religious tolerance in this passage. Identify and describe it. (9)**

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**8. How did Arab society differ from modern states and governments? (11)**

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## Student Handout: Reading for Lesson 2

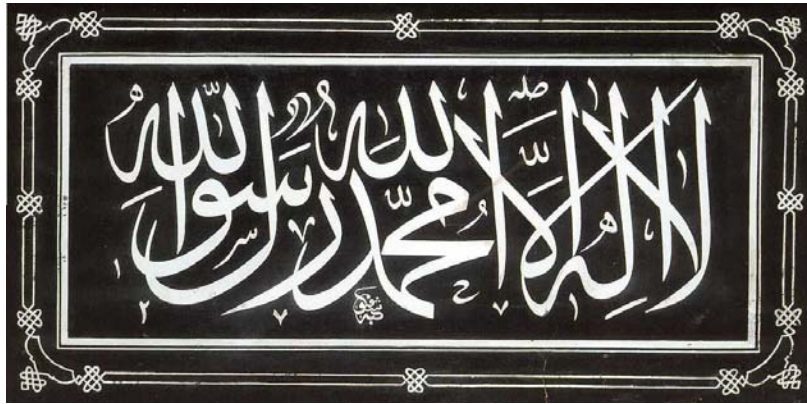
### THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM\*

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*The “Five Pillars” are the minimal obligations required of every Muslim.*

#### 1. The Declaration of Faith (Shahada)

***There is no god but God. Muhammad is the messenger of God***



(Source: Islamic Paths)

[http://www.islamic-paths.org/Home/English/Discover/Pillars/Shahada/Calligraphy\\_Main.htm](http://www.islamic-paths.org/Home/English/Discover/Pillars/Shahada/Calligraphy_Main.htm)

The Arabic calligraphy above gives the words of the *shahada* (“testimony”). A declaration of faith, “It is sufficient simply to utter it once in one’s life, freely and as a believer, to become a Muslim” (Denny 1994: 107; *Shahada* written by the Turkish calligrapher Shekif, c. 1860.)

Before Muhammad and the birth of Islam, the Arabs were polytheists. They worshipped many gods, including ancestors and spirits associated with nature and the stars and planets. Monotheism (belief in one God) was known in Arabia through contacts with the rest of the Middle East and the presence of small Jewish and Christian settlements. For Muslims, God is One and unique—nothing can be associated with him. Ideas such as the Christian Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—are unacceptable to Muslims (Denny 1994: 107).

Since Muslims don’t approve of using the human figure in religious art, religious ideas and convictions are expressed through beautiful writing. Calligraphy is not only used to decorate mosques and other buildings, but also everyday objects. This use of calligraphy emphasizes the importance of Islam as a literary culture and the belief in the *Qur’an* as the uncreated word of God:

Read in the name of your Lord who created,  
Created man from an embryo;  
Read, for your Lord is most beneficent,  
Who taught by the pen,  
Taught man what he did not know  
(*Qur’an* 96: 1-5)



UNIT  
4 – O



(continued from the previous page.)

### 2. The Worship Service (Salat)

***The Mihrab from the Mosque of Sinan Pasha in Syria  
(16th Century).  
The Mihrab Is a Niche in a Wall Pointing toward Mecca.  
It Shows Worshippers Where to Face for Prayer***



(Source: Creswell Archive, Ashmolean Museum. Image courtesy of Fine Arts Library, Harvard College Library)

Muslims are supposed to pray five times a day at fixed times: (1) dawn, before sunrise; (2) midday, after the sun passes its highest; (3) the late part of the afternoon; (4) just after sunset; (5) between sunset and midnight.

Through *salat* Muslims communicate with God:

Recite what has been revealed to you of this Book,  
and be constant in devotion  
(*Qur'an* 29: 45)

*Salat* is more than just voices raised in prayer, it also “features cycles of bodily postures climaxing in complete prostration in an orientation toward the Kaa’ba in Mecca” (Denny 1994: 119). The mihrab in a mosque (photo, above) showed people the proper direction in which to pray. They are called to prayer by the chanting of a man called a muezzin. The beginning of his chant goes as follows:

God is most great,  
I testify that there is no god but God,  
I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of God,  
Hurry to prayer,  
Hurry to salvation . . .  
(Denny 1994: 120).

Modern technology has provided Muslims not near a mosque with ways of knowing the correct time for *salat*: through notifications on cell phones or pagers, and through computer programs, for instance.



### 3. Legal Almsgiving (Zakat)

The *zakat* is a legal, obligatory act and considered part of one's service to God . . . *Zakat* is not to be confused with charity . . . Muslims are commanded to give charity often and freely . . . *Zakat*, however, is more like a tax payable once a year and computed as a percentage of one's various forms of wealth . . . The Arabic word *zakat* has as one of its meanings "purity" . . . That is, the wealth is purified for the use of its owner. If no *zakat* has been paid on it during the year in which, according to Islamic law, it was due, then the property is considered to be illicitly held and "unclean." This is a powerful symbol of Islam's sense of community (Denny 1994: 25).

Some of the reasons for *zakat* are to obey God, help people to become less attached to money and other material things, and to assist others:

Those who believe and do good deeds,  
and fulfill their devotional obligations and pay the zakat,  
have their reward with their Lord,  
and will have neither fear nor regret  
(*Qur'an* 2: 277).

### 4. Fasting During the Holy Month of Ramadan (Sawn)

Ramadan is the month in which the Qur'an was revealed as guidance to man and clear proof of the guidance, and criterion (of falsehood and truth). So when you see the new moon you should fast the whole month (*Qur'an* 2: 185).

One of the Muslim's best-known religious acts is the month-long daytime fast during the ninth lunar month of Ramadan. From before dawn until sunset, those who are observing the fast are forbidden from eating, drinking, smoking, and marital relations.

Fasting in Ramadan is a demanding spiritual discipline and enhances one's awareness of one's dependence on God and essential similarity with other human beings, especially the poor and the hungry.

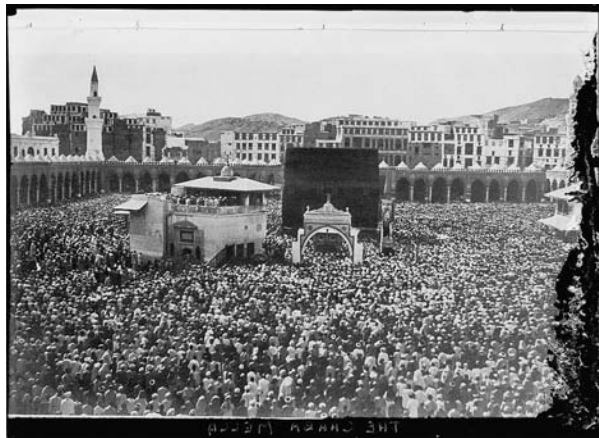
Ramadan is the most sacred month in the Muslim calendar. In addition to being the time when the Qur'an first descended, it was also the month during which the fateful Battle of Badr took place [624 CE, a decisive victory for the Muslims against their foes from Mecca] (Denny 1994: 126, 127).



(continued from the previous page.)

## 5. Pilgrimage to Mecca (*Haj*)

### *The Kaa'ba*



(Source: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-DIG-matpc-04656)

Pilgrimages are common to all the major world religions. In Judaism, Christianity, and Islam . . . pilgrimage is a journey to a holy city. In Judaism, pilgrimage was a central ritual act defining a person as a Jew. The Old Testament specified that every male was required to go to the Temple in Jerusalem three times a year (Naquin 1992: 1).

The pilgrimage to Mecca during the holy pilgrimage month of *Dhu al-Hijja* is held annually. It is required in each Muslim's lifetime, but only if he or she is legally an adult, as well as both physically and financially capable (Denny 1994: 130).

The *Haj* is a powerful symbol of the worldwide unity of the Muslim community. . . The unity of the Muslims is . . . seen in the white ihram garb that the male pilgrims are required to wear. [Women either wear clothes of their native countries or a similar, less revealing, white garment.] This two-piece seamless garment reduces its wearers to an essential oneness of status, erasing their distinctions based on wealth, education, class, language, and ethnicity (Denny 1994: 131).

Pilgrims on the *Haj* perform a number of ritual acts. One of the central rituals is circumambulation (walking around) of the Kaa'ba. The Kaa'ba is a cube-shaped stone structure covered by a black cloth. It is located within the Great Mosque in Mecca. Islamic tradition says that it was built by Adam and rebuilt by Abraham; Abraham and his son Ishmael used to circle the Ka'aba, and so did the Prophet Muhammad. In one corner is a black stone that the Prophet used to touch. Pilgrims attempt to do the same.

When we chose the site of the House for Abraham  
 (We said:) "Associate no one with Me,  
 and clean My House for those who will circumambulate it,  
 stand (in reverence) and bow in homage  
 (*Qur'an*: 22: 26)



## Activity 1: Matching Terms/Concepts

A. Match each of the following terms or concepts with one of the Five Pillars in the table below.

Five times a day Purity and wealth The Messenger Mihrab	Ka'aba Muezzin Wealth and community Circumambulation	Ramadan Calligraphy Monotheism
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Pillar	Terms/Concepts
1. <i>Shahada</i>	
2. Worship	
3. <i>Zakat</i>	
4. Fasting	
5. Pilgrimage	

## Activity 2: Questions

- What is a pillar? Why are the Five Pillars called “pillars”?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- The *shahada* is sometimes called a “creed.” Look up “creed” in the dictionary and explain the *shahada* in terms of your definition.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- In Islam there are no priests to lead people in the *zakat*. What does this say about the Muslim view of the relation between God and the faithful?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Explain why one of the meanings of “*zakat*” is “purity.”  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What is the significance of the month of Ramadan?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What does fasting teach?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Is Islam the only faith that places importance on pilgrimage? Give one reason for going on a pilgrimage.  
\_\_\_\_\_



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## Unit P

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# DUNHUANG AND ITS BUDDHIST COMMUNITIES

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**Essential Questions:** What is the geographical and cultural importance of Dunhuang? What role did Buddhist monasteries play in the social and economic life of Dunhuang?

**Learning Experience:** Students will determine the geographical importance of Dunhuang and examine the influence of Buddhism on society by looking at documents and wall paintings found in the Mogao caves.

**Anticipatory Set:** How does religion involve itself with the community? In examining the relation between Buddhism and society in Dunhuang, students will see how Buddhist monasteries were closely connected to daily life.

**Context:** Dunhuang is located in the far west of China's Gansu province, where the two branches of the Silk Roads that circled the Tarim Basin come together (see **Maps A** and **Map D**). In addition to being an important commercial town, Dunhuang was a center of Buddhism from 366 CE. It was one of the main points of entry from Central Asia into China for Buddhist missionaries and monks. The name "Dunhuang" means "blazing beacon." This refers to the signal fires set in watchtowers by Chinese troops.

Twelve miles outside of Dunhuang is a half-mile-long cliff that, over a thousand years, became studded with caves. Many of them are decorated with Buddhist murals. They are called the Mogao ("Peerless" or "None Loftier") Caves or "The Caves of the Thousand Buddhas."

Legend says that a traveling monk named Le Zong came there and saw golden lights on top of a mountain. They looked like a thousand Buddhas. He recognized this as a holy place, carved out a cave in the mountain, and adorned it with murals. Later, another monk saw the cave and the murals. He carved out a second cave. Today, there are more than a thousand caves, but many have not survived because of the harsh climate. The earliest surviving one dates from 366 CE. The earliest painting and sculpture dates from about the fifth century CE and continues on for almost a thousand years. Individuals among the Buddhist faithful frequently commissioned painting and sculpture for the caves.

The townspeople of Dunhuang maintained close relations with the Buddhist monastic community. Monks provided services for the lay world: They recited sutras for the dead, practiced divination, provided medical treatment, and made use of magic spells. All of these things assisted people in coping with the uncertainties of everyday life. In return, the monks received donations of cloth or cash gifts to provide vegetarian feasts during holidays and other occasions throughout the year.

Dunhuang's monasteries earned money from industrial enterprises as well. The renting out of flour-mills set up on monastery land was an important source of income. Monasteries also ran the presses used to make oil for both cooking and for use in lamps. It is believed that such mills and oil presses provided all of Dunhuang's flour and oil (Gernet 1995: 142, 150, 152).

Why is Buddhism, with its emphasis on freedom from worldly desires, so deeply involved in the world of commerce and money? The establishment of Buddhism in medieval China meant

. . . the maintenance of an abundant monastic community and the construction of often sumptuous buildings [that] could only have been assured by a sizeable levy imposed on the





available wealth . . . its arrival also led to an increase in commercial and manufacturing activity at the expense of agriculture. The needs of the Buddhist community and laity favored certain businesses—especially those related to construction, the timber trade, dyeing products and others . . . the success of Buddhism in China had the effect of developing consumption and distribution . . . The monks themselves were a luxury (Gernet 1995: 14-15).

Economic interaction between monks and townspeople can be seen in many of the manuscripts found in the Dunhuang caves. These caves, sealed up in the eleventh century CE and discovered by accident in 1900, are one of the great archaeological finds of the twentieth century. In addition to religious texts, there are contracts, tax registers, and other secular documents.

The Dunhuang manuscripts are written in more than a dozen languages and scripts, something that shows the diversity of cultural exchange along the Silk Roads. Part A, Document 2 (pp. 260-261) shows students three Dunhuang manuscripts:

- (A) is a page from a paper book (dated 930) that has writing in both Chinese characters (left half) and an alphabet used by the early Turks (right half).

The Turkic writing is a fortune-telling manual. People would throw dice or specially shaped bones and use this book to interpret the results. The text is written from right to left. The Chinese consists of verses on the life of the Buddha. Notice how Chinese characters are written over the Turkic text in the area within the computer-generated rectangle.

- (B) is Tibetan writing. After Chinese, Tibetan is the most widely used language in the Dunhuang manuscripts. This is because Dunhuang was under Tibetan rule between 755 and 851.

Tibetan writing was invented in the seventh century CE, based on writing used in India. This paper scroll is a Buddhist religious text.

(A) and (B) are from a time when Dunhuang was controlled by the Tibetans and cut off from China. Consequently, high quality paper, not to mention books themselves, couldn't be imported from China. Both of these documents were probably made and written in Dunhuang.<sup>1</sup>

- (C) is another Buddhist text using Uyghur script with some Chinese. The Uyghurs are a Turkic people who established a Central Asian empire in the eighth and ninth centuries CE. They played an important role in the history of China's Tang dynasty (618-907 CE). Uyghur writing was in use for more than a thousand years. The Chinese explains points in the Uyghur text.

Life in ancient Dunhuang is also preserved in the Mogao cave murals, which were commissioned by lay Buddhists. The donors are often depicted in the paintings. Primarily Buddhist in content, the paintings also provide a portrait of life in medieval China. Three Dunhuang cave paintings are included in Documents 4, 5, and 6 of Part A (pp. 263-265):

- **Document 4:** Plowing scene illustrating a passage from a Buddhist Sutra.
- **Document 5:** After the Buddha enters Nirvana, princes from various Central Asian states come to mourn.
- **Document 6:** A painting of Mt. Wutai in Shanxi province, about nine hundred miles east of Dunhuang. Wutai is one of the most sacred Buddhist sites in China.

<sup>1</sup> The International Dunhuang Project website has a special feature on books and bookbinding: <http://idp.bl.uk/chapters/topics/bookbinding/CHOOSE-FRAMESET.html>



Most of the paintings date from the end of the fifth to the beginning of the eighth century CE. The murals were painted using a complicated technique that began with a base layer of clay. The mineral-based colors have remained bright for centuries (Bonavia 1988: 167).

**Rationale:** As religious beliefs take root in societies, they give birth to social and economic institutions that affect the daily lives of the faithful. In Dunhuang, Buddhism was central to the daily lives of the people until the advent of Islam.

In this lesson, students will examine everyday life in Dunhuang as it was shaped by relations with the Buddhist community. Students will describe this relationship through primary sources, and determine how and why Buddhism was necessary for Dunhuang to be successful.

**Time:** One to two class periods.

**Instructional Resources:** Dunhuang documents and paintings from the Mogao caves.

Some documents are primary sources and some are secondary materials selected from various books and articles. Primary sources are marked with an asterisk. \*

**Procedure:**

- Tell the story of why the caves were built.
- Divide the class into groups of five. Instruct students that they are going to be historians and anthropologists. They will look at the documents and cave paintings to determine what life was like in ancient Dunhuang and what role Buddhism played. Each group will get a painting or document and will answer the questions.
- Make three columns and label them “political,” “social,” and “economic” on the board. Based on student findings, fill in each column. What was life like in Dunhuang? Why would patrons want these scenes included in their murals?

**Whole Group Reflection:** Could Dunhuang have existed without Buddhism? Could the Buddhist monasteries have existed without the people of Dunhuang? How do these roles (political/economic/social) relate to the ideas of Buddhism?

**Instructional Modification:** Since the documents contain sophisticated language, teachers might choose students with better reading comprehension to examine them. Alternatively, the documents can be edited and adapted.

**Application:** As homework, students will write the essay outlined in Part B. Alternatively, they may

- Research relations between Buddhism and the imperial government during different periods in Chinese history.
- Create a document or drawing that would show today’s society in political, economic, or social terms.



# DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTIONS

## PART A

This question is based on the accompanying documents. It is designed to test your ability to work with historical documents. Some of these have been edited for the purposes of this question. As you analyze them, take into account both the source of each and any point of view that may be presented.

**Historical Context:** Throughout history, religious beliefs and the social and economic institutions they give birth to have played important roles in many cultures. In Dunhuang, Buddhism deeply influenced the daily life of the community for over a thousand years. The relationship between the Buddhist clergy and the common people was an important aspect of life in Dunhuang.

**Task:** Using information from the documents below and your knowledge of global history, answer the questions that follow each document in Part A. Your answers to the questions will help you write the Part B essay.

### DOCUMENT 1: A WEALTHY MONK\*

Chinese farmers often had to borrow in order to survive until harvest time. Buddhist monks in powerful positions could become rich by lending money at high interest rates. Although a monk could lend money, the power to collect debts lay with the government. Here, a wealthy monk visits an official to ask for assistance.

The monk Daoyan was controller of the Buddhist clergy . . . His wealth was immense and yielded a great deal of interest . . . He frequently called upon high officials in the local government to help him collect his debts [money he had lent to the poor farmers of the area]. Each time he came to see one particular high official, the man, knowing what he wanted, fell to talking about difficult points of religious doctrine with the monk. Daoyan, who had come to talk about debts and figures, could not get a word in edgewise. When his disciples asked him the reason, Daoyan replied, “Whenever I pay the prefect a visit, he leads me directly into the blue clouds—how can I discuss down-to-earth matters?” (Adapted from Gernet 1995: 181).

**1. What role does Buddhism play here (social/political/economic) and why?**

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**2. Does the idea of a money-lending monk contradict his role as a man of religion? Why or why not?**

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## DOCUMENT 2: MULTICULTURAL DUNHUANG MANUSCRIPTS\*

Centuries-old written documents were preserved in Dunhuang's dry climate. The Dunhuang manuscripts are written in more than a dozen languages and scripts, many of them now extinct.

- (A) is a book written in both Turkic script and Chinese characters.
- (B) is a scroll written in Tibetan
- (C) is a book written in the Uyghur script.

### A. Turkic and Chinese Writing

The people of modern Turkey are only one of many Turkic peoples. The first Turkic empire was established in the sixth century and stretched from Mongolia to Central Asia.



(Source: TB Stein: 4.0339)

Dated 930, this page from a paper book has writing in both Chinese characters (left half) and an alphabet used by the early Turks (right half).

The Turkic writing is a fortune-telling manual. People would throw dice or specially shaped bones and then use this book to interpret the results. The text is written from right to left. The Chinese consists of verses on the life of the Buddha. Notice how Chinese characters are written over the Turkic text in the area within the computer-generated rectangle.

### B. Tibetan Writing

After Chinese, Tibetan is the most widely used language in the Dunhuang manuscripts. This is because the Tibetan empire controlled Dunhuang between 755 and 851. Tibetan writing was invented in the seventh century CE, based on writing used in India. This paper scroll is a Buddhist religious text.



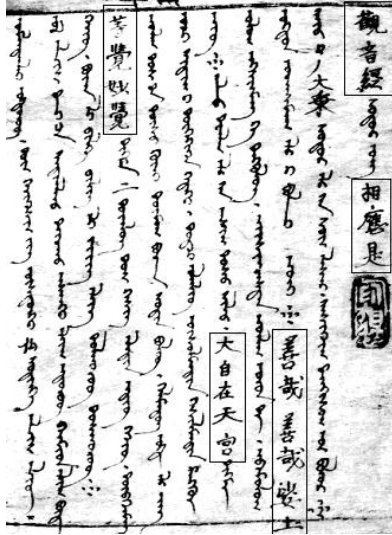
(Source: TB Stein: 4.0365)



### C. Uyghur Writing

The Uyghurs are a Turkic people who established a Central Asian empire in the eighth and ninth centuries. They played an important role in the history of China's Tang dynasty (618-907).

The Uyghur alphabet was abandoned in favor of Arabic when Central Asia became Muslim beginning in the eighth century. It was, however, revived under Mongol rule in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This was because the Mongols had never had a written language, so they adopted Uyghur writing for use in Mongolian documents.



(Source: TB Stein: 4.0345)

This book dates from the mid-fourteenth century, the period of Mongol rule. It's also a Buddhist text. The Chinese writing within the computer-generated rectangles comments on the Uyghur writing. The columns are read from top to bottom and from left to right.

1. Both (A) and (C) have Chinese writing along with writing in another language. How do (A) and (C) differ in the way Chinese is used?

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2. Which document, (A) or (C), is more likely to have been written by a single person? Why?

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3. Give two examples of places where you've seen two or more languages and/or kinds of writing in use. It can be in your town or city, in a book, on the internet, etc. Why is more than one kind of language used? Do any of your examples express cultural exchange. If so, why?

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## DOCUMENT 3: A CONTRACT FOR THE LOAN OF SOME CLOTH\*

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On the eighteenth day of the eighth month of the year 874, Deng Shanzi, [requiring] a quantity of cloth, went to the monastery dean. Deng borrowed from him a roll of satin measuring ten yards long and thirty inches wide. He further borrowed a roll of ten yards of satin of the same width. The date of reimbursement was fixed as the eleventh month. Should that date be exceeded without reimbursement, interest will be charged on the full amount [due at that time]. Lest there be a breach of faith, this contract was drawn up to serve as proof later:

The borrower of the satin, Deng Shanzi (signature);  
The witness, Guard Administrator Zhang Congjin;  
The witness, Dean Zongfu (Gernet 1995: 184).

### 1. What kind of document is this?

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### 2. What role do the Buddhist clergy play here (social/political/economic) and why?

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### 3. Who plays a similar role in today's society?

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## DOCUMENT 4: A PAINTING FROM DUNHUANG (CAVE 25)\*

The Mogao cave murals preserve a portrait of life in ancient Dunhuang. These paintings were commissioned by Buddhists in the community, well-to-do people who donated the money to have these murals done. These donors are often depicted in the paintings. Primarily Buddhist in content, the paintings also provide a portrait of life in medieval China. They date from the end of the fifth to the beginning of the eighth century CE.

Look at this painting from the Mogao Caves and answer the questions that follow.



(Source: *People's Daily Online*)  
<http://english.people.com.cn/features/dunhuang/pages/cave25-5.htm>

**1. What are the people doing?**

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**2. Does everyone in the painting seem to be of the same ethnic background?**

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**3. What can it tell us about life in that time period?**

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**4. How are people interacting with the geography?**

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**5. Why do you suppose this subject was included in the paintings? (Hint: Reread Document 1.)**

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UNIT  
4 - P



## DOCUMENT 5: A PAINTING FROM DUNHUANG (CAVE 158)\*

Look at this painting from the Mogao Caves and answer the questions that follow. The scene occurs immediately after the death of the Buddha.



(Source: Footprints Tours, LTD)  
<http://www.greenkiwi.co.nz/footprints/>

**1. What are the people doing? (Hint: Look at the expressions on their faces.)**

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**2. Who are the people: Do they all belong to the same ethnic group?**

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**3. What can it tell us about ancient life?**

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**4. What would a tourist traveling to Dunhuang today conclude about Buddhism from this mural?**

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## DOCUMENT 6: A PAINTING FROM DUNHUANG (CAVE 61)\*

Look at this painting from the Mogao Caves and answer the questions that follow.



(Source: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts and Dunhuang Academy)

**1. List the animals and describe what they are doing.**

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**2. List the actions of the people.**

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**3. Describe the scenery in all parts of the painting.**

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**4. What is this scene depicting?**

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**5. What would a tourist traveling to Dunhuang today conclude about life in Dunhuang from this mural?**

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UNIT  
4 - P



## DOCUMENT 7: A GREAT BUDDHIST FESTIVAL IN DUNHUANG\*

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This is a description of a festival organized by the lay Buddhist associations in Dunhuang city.

The streets and alleys are swept and watered. The banners of the Buddhist associations are suspended in formation. The city gates are decorated. The Buddhas are placed on their precious thrones. Monks of renown are invited. Rich incense burners of a hundred fragrances are set out. In the preparation of such acts of piety, one's first concern should indeed be the ornamentation. From the administrator and secretary of our association down to the remainder of our honorable member, we all form the intention that our sins and the numerous obstacles [to enlightenment] be obliterated this very day and that immeasurable blessing gather at this moment. May the riches of the [Buddhist] Law accumulate and the lives of the good be prolonged. May disasters and misfortunes be prevented from crossing the thresholds of our gates and trouble from entering our neighborhoods and alleyways. Happiness and joy in each family! Contentment in each dwelling! (Adapted from Gernet 1995: 269)

### 1. What is the purpose of this Buddhist feast?

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## PART B

### ESSAY

**Directions:** Write a well-organized essay that includes an introduction, several paragraphs, and a conclusion. Use evidence from at least two documents to support your response. Include additional related information.

**Historical Context:** Throughout history, religious beliefs and the social and economic institutions they give birth to have played important roles in many cultures. In Dunhuang, Buddhism deeply influenced the daily life of the community for over a thousand years. The relationship between the Buddhist clergy and the common people was an important aspect of life in Dunhuang.

**Task:** Using information from the documents and your knowledge of global history, write an essay in which you

- Explain how Dunhuang’s location influenced its development as a center of Buddhism.
- Evaluate the role of Buddhism in Dunhuang.



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## Unit Q

### XUANZANG’S PILGRIMAGE TO INDIA

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**Essential Question:** What did Xuanzang’s pilgrimage accomplish and what were the obstacles to completing his journey?

**Learning Experience:** Students will travel with the pilgrim-monk Xuanzang (c. 596-664) and share some of the hardships of his journey. They will learn about religious pilgrimage from a Buddhist point of view.

**Anticipatory Set:** People can travel for fun or for a purpose (for example, business, or to visit family). Religion was, and still is, an important reason to travel. In pre-modern times, the religious pilgrimage from China to India was long and dangerous. This lesson discusses the Tang dynasty (618-907) monk Xuanzang and his pilgrimage to India.

**Context:** Perhaps the Silk Roads’ most important historical role was as a conduit for the entry of Buddhism into China. First mentioned in mid-first century Chinese sources, Buddhism gradually became part of Chinese society in the centuries after the fall of the Han dynasty (202 BCE-220 CE). During this so-called Period of Disunion (220-589 CE), non-Chinese peoples ruled North China, and refugees who had fled the north in the early fourth century governed south China. Mahayana Buddhism’s promise of release from worldly suffering offered hope and refuge to those living in these violent and uncertain times.

During this period, Buddhist pilgrims from China also braved the deserts and mountains of Central Asia to make the long trip to India:

As in other religions with identifiable founders, later followers of the Sakyamuni Buddha (sixth to fifth century BCE) wanted to travel to the sites in India commemorated by his life, specifically his birth, enlightenment, first sermon, and death (Naquin and Yu 1992: 5).

When China was again united under the Sui (589-618 CE) and Tang (618-907 CE) dynasties, the number of Buddhist pilgrims greatly increased.

Xuanzang is the most famous of all Buddhist pilgrims. He entered a monastery at the age of twelve, following in the footsteps of his older brother. He was a charismatic figure deeply immersed in Buddhist thought and practice. His unshakeable determination to go to India would, even in his lifetime, make his story the stuff of legend.

Before he set out, an old traveler gave Xuanzang this advice:

“The road to the West is dangerous and one has to cross the desert where there are demons and hot wind. Whoever encounters them cannot be spared from death. Even if you travel together with a large number of companions, you might go astray or be lost. How can you, reverend teacher, try to go all alone?”

But the Master replied: “I started on my journey to the West for the purpose of seeking the great Law. I will not return to the East before I reach India. Even if I die on the way, I won’t regret it” (Adapted from *Life* 1959: 17).



Xuanzang's pilgrimage took him west through the Gansu corridor along a northern Silk Roads route. During the Tang dynasty, the oasis kingdoms of this region were frequently pawns in the rivalry between Chinese, Tibetans, and Turks.<sup>1</sup> He then went beyond what is today China's westernmost border into Central Asia, visiting the cities of Samarkand and Tashkent in modern Uzbekistan. He finally reached India by going south through parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan (**Maps D** and **Map I**).

Once in India, Xuanzang visited sacred sites connected to the past lives and the historical life of the Buddha. He debated with learned monks and devoted himself to study. In all, his pilgrimage took sixteen years (629-645).

After his return to China, Xuanzang dedicated himself to making translations of the texts he had collected. The earliest Buddhist scripture in Chinese is believed to date from the late first or early second century. By Xuanzang's time, although many texts had been translated, it was still felt that significant gaps existed in Chinese understanding of Buddhist doctrine. Since Xuanzang knew both Sanskrit and Chinese, his translations set new standards of precision and readability. Moreover, he brought the insights of a profound Buddhist thinker to this project (Ch'en 1964: 368-369). In addition, Xuanzang's detailed travel record provided a wealth of accurate information about Central Asia and India.

Xuanzang eventually became a folk hero. In the sixteenth century, many of the legends that had accumulated about him went into the making of China's most popular novel, *Journey to the West*.

**Rationale:** Buddhism is the first world religion, a universal system of beliefs that spread from India to Sri Lanka, Central Asia, China, Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia. In learning about Xuanzang's pilgrimage, students will gain understanding of the difficult journey that brought Buddhism to East Asia over the Silk Roads.

**Time:** One or two class sessions.

**Instructional Resources:** Map of Xuanzang's journey—download a copy of a map created by the S.P.I.C.E Project at Stanford University:

[http://www.askasia.org/teachers/Instructional\\_Resources/Lesson\\_Plans/Central\\_Asia/LP\\_central\\_2a.htm](http://www.askasia.org/teachers/Instructional_Resources/Lesson_Plans/Central_Asia/LP_central_2a.htm)  
“Student Handout: Xuanzang's Itinerary” (p. 277); thirteen documents.

Some documents are primary sources and some are secondary materials selected from various books and articles. Primary sources are marked with an asterisk. \*

**Procedure:** The class should be divided into groups, with every student getting a copy of the Map of Xuanzang's journey, “Student Handout: Xuanzang's Itinerary,” and Document 1. The remaining documents are divided two to a group. If this isn't numerically possible, some students can work alone.

**Whole Class Discussion:** Using the Map of Xuanzang's journey, “Student Handout: Xuanzang's Itinerary,” along with a large map of Asia, the whole class will try to get a general picture of the places Xuanzang traveled through to reach India.

The groups then read Document 1 plus their assigned documents. They take notes on the following points:

- Reasons for Xuanzang's journey;
- Geography: mention of places or regions;
- References to Buddhism or the Buddha;

<sup>1</sup> The people of modern Turkey are only one of many Turkic peoples. The first known Turkic state was founded in the sixth century and stretched from Mongolia to Central Asia.



- Obstacles to travel: Geographical, human, supernatural;
- Religious sites visited;
- Role of dreams and miracles in Xuanzang's story.

On an 8 1/2 x 11 sheet of paper, each group creates an illustration depicting one key aspect of its reading selections' content.

**Whole Group Reflection:** After each group reports its results and explain their illustrations to the rest of the class, students should review the reasons why Xuanzang went to India. Also, ask students to create a title for this Xuanzang project. For example: "Xuanzang, a Buddhist Pilgrim," "Xuanzang, a Chinese Explorer." See who can be the most creative.

**Instructional Modification:** Less advanced students (or more visual learners) should be assigned to the cartography group.

**Application:** Students can write an essay creating their own pilgrimage story. This needn't be religious in content: a pilgrimage can be any journey that causes a person to change in some way. Nor does it have to be a long-distance journey or, for that matter, involve actual travel at all.

***A View of The Big Goose Pagoda in Xi'an,  
Built to Store The Buddhist Texts Xuanzang Brought Back from India.  
The Statue of Xuanzang Is a Modern One***



(Source: Photograph by Marleen Kassel, 2001, Xi'an)



## DOCUMENT 1: WHY PILGRIMAGE?

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Pilgrimages are common to all the major world religions. In Judaism, Christianity, and Islam ... pilgrimage is a journey to a holy city. In Judaism, pilgrimage was a central ritual act defining a person as a Jew. The Old Testament specified that every male was required to go to the Temple in Jerusalem three times a year . . .

In Islam, pilgrimage was (and remains) obligatory for both men and women. The *Qur'an* stipulated a journey to the holy city of Mecca at least once in one's lifetime . . .

Although never obligatory, pilgrimages have likewise been made by Christians since the formative period of their religion. Journeys to Jerusalem began as early as the fourth century.

As in other religions with identifiable founders, later followers of the Sakyamuni Buddha (sixth to fifth century BCE) wanted to travel to the sites in India commemorated by his life, specifically his birth, enlightenment, first sermon, and death (Naquin 1992: 1, 5).

## DOCUMENT 2: SETTING OUT FOR THE WESTERN REGIONS\*

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Xuanzang had to leave secretly because the government didn't want people traveling beyond China to the "Western Regions"—Central Asia and India. Someone introduced him to an "old foreigner" experienced in traveling through these areas. The man offered him some advice.

The old man said: "The road to the West is dangerous and one has to cross the desert where there are demons and hot wind. Whoever encounters them cannot be spared from death. Even if you travel together with a large number of companions, you might get lost. How can you, reverend teacher, try to go all alone?"

But the Master replied: "I started on my journey to the West for the purpose of seeking the great Law. I will not return to the East before I reach India. Even if I die on the way, I won't regret it."

The old man said: "If you insist on going, you had better change your horse for mine. My horse has traveled this country fifteen times. Yours is too young to travel so long a distance."

Before he had left the capital, Xuanzang had asked a fortuneteller to predict what would happen on the journey. He told him that "You shall be able to go and it seems that you will be riding on an old, skinny horse of a reddish color.

Now this old man's horse was skinny and reddish in color . . . the Master thought it was a good idea to make the change. The old man was quite pleased (Adapted from *Life* 1959: 17).



## DOCUMENT 3: THE GOBI DESERT\*

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Early in his journey, Xuanzang's guide left, afraid of the government's travel ban. Alone, the monk journeyed west along the northern Silk Roads, crossing part of the Gobi desert. He accidentally lost his supply of water and he and his horse almost died of thirst.

He looked all around him, but there was no living creature to be seen. In the night, spirits hovered around him. They sparkled as brightly as stars in the sky. During the day, surprise dust storms blew sand that fell on him like a rain shower, but he had no fear. His only trouble was that he had no water. At last he could go no further—for four nights and five days he hadn't had a single drop of water. His mouth and stomach were all dried up. Almost dead, he was unable to move. He lay down on the sand and repeated the name of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva [the Bodhisattva of Compassion], saying: "My journey isn't for gaining wealth or personal reputation, but simply for the purpose of obtaining the Buddhist Law . . . I am now in great distress. Can you hear my prayers?"

At midnight of the fifth day came a cool breeze. It made him feel as if he were taking a cold bath. He was able to open his eyes. His horse got to its feet. He then dozed off and dreamt of a giant spirit holding a spear. The spirit said: "Why are you sleeping here instead of going forward?"

Xuanzang woke up and started his journey. Suddenly his horse moved off in another direction. Xuanzang pulled at the reins but the animal wouldn't respond. After awhile, they came to a patch of green pasture. Ten paces beyond that was a pond of fresh water (Adapted from *Life* 1959: 24-25).

## DOCUMENT 4: THE TURFAN OASIS\*

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After Xuanzang's month-long stay at the Turfan oasis, the king equipped him in truly grand style for his pilgrimage.

He had various articles of clothing made suitable for such a climate, such as face-coverings, gloves, leather boots and so on. Moreover he gave him a hundred gold ounces, and thousands of silver pieces, with five hundred rolls of satin and taffeta, enough for the outward and home journey of the Master during twenty years. He gave him also thirty horses and twenty-four servants (Beal 1969: 30).

The gold, silver, satin, and silk cloth would be for the kings and khans whom he would visit on his journey. Most important of all, the king gave him twenty-four royal letters to be presented to the twenty-four different kingdoms (Adapted from Wriggins 1996: 24-25).

## DOCUMENT 5: THE TIANSHAN RANGE\*

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The Tianshan mountain range is one of the most important in Central Asia. It extends for almost 1500 miles across Kyrgyzstan and Xinjiang province in China. Xuanzang crossed the Tianshan on his way to India. Upon going around one of its highest peaks, Khan Tengri ("Lord of the Sky," 23,620 ft.), he had the following to say.

This mountain is steep and dangerous, and reaches up to the clouds. From the beginning of time the perpetual snow has collected here in piles, and has been changed into glaciers which melt neither in winter nor summer . . . looking at them the eye is blinded with glare, so that it cannot long gaze at them (Wriggins 1996: 29-30).





## DOCUMENT 6: XUANZANG MEETS THE GREAT KHAN

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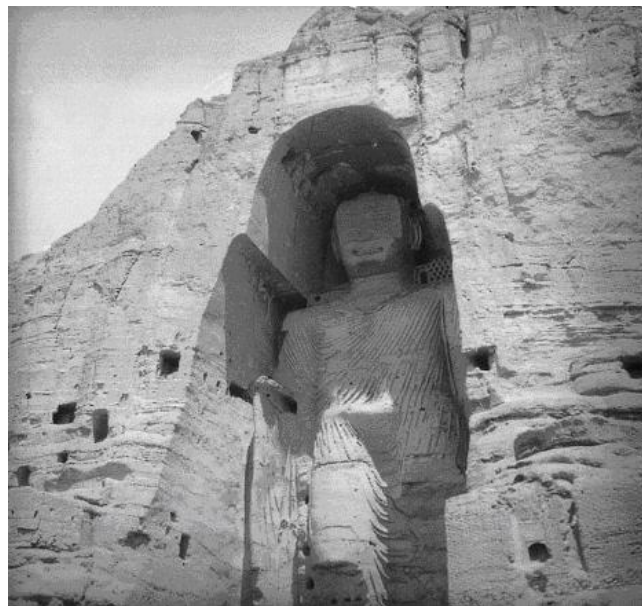
Xuanzang met the Great Khan of the West Turks at Tokmak, today in Kyrgyzstan. The Khan gave Xuanzang a warm welcome and the pilgrim handed over a letter and gifts from the king of Turfan. Their party was treated to a feast in the Khan's yurt, a large pavilion.

Large pieces of mutton and boiled veal were piled high in front of the guests. Everyone but Xuanzang drank a lot of wine, and all enjoyed the clashing chords of their [the Turk's] music. Special rice cakes, cream, mares' milk, crystallized sugar, honey, and raisins were provided for the pilgrim, whose religious beliefs did not allow him to eat meat. At the end . . . the Khan asked him to "improve the occasion" by lecturing on the Buddhist doctrine . . . The pilgrim spoke on the need for love of all living creatures and the religious life that led to final deliverance. Apparently the Khan was impressed (Adapted from Wriggins 1996: 31).

## DOCUMENT 7: XUANZANG SEES THE BUDDHAS AT BAMIYAN\*

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### ***The Colossal Statue of the Buddha at Bamiyan (175 ft. high), Central Afghanistan. Destroyed by the Taliban in March 2001***



(Source: Conway Library, Courtauld Institute of Art)

[http://www.courtauld.ac.uk/sub\\_index/photographic/conway/bamiyan\\_buddahs/bamiyan-subs/bamiyan\\_detail\\_01.html](http://www.courtauld.ac.uk/sub_index/photographic/conway/bamiyan_buddahs/bamiyan-subs/bamiyan_detail_01.html)

The colossal Buddha played an important role in the diffusion of the Buddha image throughout East Asia. Its huge size impressed travelers. Some probably took home small "souvenir" replicas of the statue. Because of this, its appearance and style influenced Buddhist sculpture in China and Japan.

To the northeast of the royal city there is a mountain, on the side of which is placed the stone figure of Buddha standing, in height one hundred or one hundred and fifty feet. Its golden colors sparkle on every side and its precious ornaments dazzle the eyes with their brightness.

To the east of this spot there is a convent, which was built by the former king of this country. To the east of the convent there is a standing figure of the Buddha made of metal, in one hundred feet. It has been cast in different parts, joined together, and placed in completed form as it stands (Wriggins 1996: 44).



UNIT  
4 – Q



## DOCUMENT 8: GUEST AT A MONASTERY\*

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After passing through mountainous territory in what is today northeastern Pakistan and Kashmir, Xuanzang stayed at a local monastery.

The king sent his uncle to welcome him with carriages and horses. He passed by many monasteries and worshipped the images of the Buddha. Finally he reached a monastery where he spent the night.

That night the monks all dreamed of seeing a god who spoke to them, saying: “This guest monk has come from the great country of China. He desires to study the scriptures in India, to visit the holy places, and to learn what he did not know before . . . You should recite the scriptures with diligence in order to win his praise. Why are you sleeping?” (Adapted from *Life* 1959: 69).

## DOCUMENT 9: A BANDIT ATTACK\*

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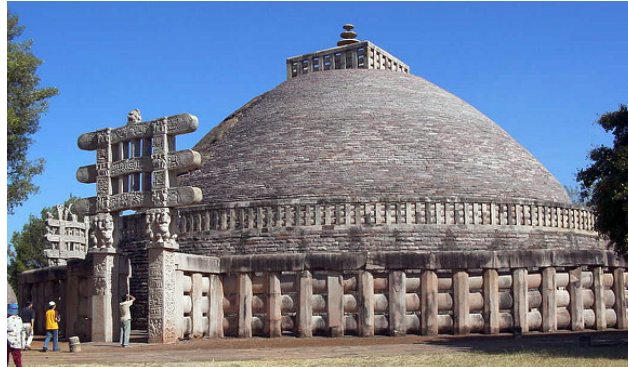
In India, bandits attacked Xuanzang and his fellow travelers. The bandits intended to kill everyone. Xuanzang and a companion escaped and ran for help to a nearby village. The villagers chased away the bandit gang.

The Master came back . . . and released the others from the ropes that the bandits had tied them up with. He went together with them to the village to spend the night. Everybody cried sorrowfully, but the Master alone smiled happily. His companions asked him, saying: “Our clothes and money have all been stolen. We have only our lives left . . . How is it that you do not share our feeling of misery, but smile with an easy mind?”

The Master replied: “Life is the most precious thing there is. Since we have our lives, why should we worry? . . . There is no need to grieve over the unimportant loss of clothes and money!” (Adapted from *Life* 1959: 74-75).



***The Great Stupa at Sanchi, in Central India. Built in the Mid-third Century BCE, It Was Rediscovered in 1818***



(Source: Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc.)  
<http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/history/buddhist-art/sanchi01.htm>

Stupas are shrines housing relics associated with the Buddha or other sacred figures. They have a circular base supporting a large dome. This is surrounded by a railing and four gateways decorated with scenes from the life of the Buddha or from mythology. The dome is topped off with an umbrella.

Why are stupas shaped this way? The parts represent different aspects of Buddhist teaching, and also symbolize the whole universe in the form of the Four Elements. In Indian thought and religion, there are Four Elements, basic substances that make up everything in the world. Thus, stupas symbolize the universe.

Symbolism of the Stupa	
The square base =	EARTH
The dome =	WATER
The stone fence =	FIRE
The pole of the umbrella =	AIR

Pilgrims worshipped a stupa by walking around it a prescribed number of times. This is called “circumambulation.”

Xuanzang visited many stupas in India, including this miraculous one:

This stupa often shone with a bright light. Beside it was a dragon’s pool,<sup>2</sup> and the dragon often transformed itself into a man and circled around the stupa. Wild elephants always came with flowers to offer to the stupa.

Near it was a monastery. Once a group of monks came from far away to worship the stupa. They saw that the elephants brought flowers to put in front of the stupa. They also cleared the weeds with their tusks and sprinkled water on the ground with their trunks. The head monk said: “The elephants are animals and yet they know to pay homage to the stupa by offering flowers to it and keeping it clean” (Adapted from *Life* 1959: 93-94).

<sup>2</sup> What Xuanzang’s biographer describes as “dragons” are nagas (“Sanskrit for “snake”). In Hindu and Buddhist mythology, nagas are half-human/half-serpent. They live in water and sometimes can be found guarding treasure.



## DOCUMENT 11: THE RETURN TO CHINA

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In 645 Xuanzang returned to the capital at Chang'an where he was given a huge government-arranged reception.

A body of high officials clears the way to bring Xuanzang to the capital. They arrange for a huge group of monks to parade his books, relics, gold, silver, and sandalwood images through Chang'an. The procession the next day begins at the Street of the Red Bird and ends at the main gate of the Monastery of Great Happiness. All the monasteries send monks and nuns in their ceremonial robes for the occasion. The people compete with one another in preparing their best banners, tapestries, umbrellas, precious tables, and carriages. When they reach the Street of the Red Bird, they march forward with the sound of pearls and jade hanging from their belts tinkling in the air, amidst golden flowers scattered on the road (Adapted from *Life* 1959: 209).

## DOCUMENT 12: INTERVIEW WITH THE EMPEROR\*

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Xuanzang left China without government permission. The emperor brought up the subject when the monk arrived at court on his return.

Having sat down, the emperor asked: "Why did you go to India without telling me?"

The Master replied: "When I was preparing for my journey, I had sent petitions to Your Majesty several times, but as my project was unworthy, I did not enjoy the favor of being granted with an official permission . . . I went away privately for which offense I beg the pardon of Your Majesty."

The emperor said: "Since you are a monk, you are different from lay people in this matter. I am delighted that you went to seek for the [Buddhist] Law at the risk of your life for the benefit of all the people. There is no need to ask my pardon." (Adapted from *Life* 1959: 210)

## DOCUMENT 13: THE TRANSLATOR OF BUDDHIST SCRIPTURES

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After returning to China in 645, Xuanzang devoted the rest of his life to translating the writings he brought back from India into Chinese.

In 660 CE, Xuanzang began the translation of an extremely long Buddhist sutra.<sup>3</sup> His disciples suggested that he should make an abridgement of it. Xuanzang agreed. That night he dreamt he was climbing up a high peak with some wild animal at his back trying to catch him. He trembled and was soaked with perspiration, but eventually managed to escape. After waking up, he decided to translate the entire sutra. That night he dreamt he saw the Buddha. A light shined from the middle of his eyebrows. It shined over Xuanzang's body and made him feel comfortable and happy. He awoke and felt contented. Xuanzang never again thought of making an abridged translation (Adapted from *Life* 1959: 260-261).

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<sup>3</sup> "Sutras" are sacred texts believed to contain the words of the Buddha.



## Student Handout: Xuanzang's Itinerary

<p><i>Listed below are the modern countries that exist today in the regions Xuanzang traveled through before reaching India.</i></p>
<p><b>CHINA</b> Shaanxi province (also spelled Shensi) Gansu province (Kansu) Xinjiang province (Sinkiang)</p>
<p><b>KYRGYZSTAN</b></p>
<p><b>UZBEKISTAN</b></p>
<p><b>AFGHANISTAN</b></p>
<p><b>PAKISTAN</b></p>



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## Unit R

# MAGICAL PILGRIMS ON THE SILK ROADS: THE ADVENTURE IN THE CART-SLOW KINGDOM FROM *JOURNEY TO THE WEST*

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**Essential Questions:** How do Monkey and his companions overcome the Three Immortals? Does *Journey to the West's* mixture of deep religious belief with magic and (often crude) comedy go against your idea of the word “religious”?

**Learning Experience:** In reading part of *Journey to the West*, students will encounter some of the most famous and beloved characters in traditional Chinese fiction. Behind the pilgrims’ riotous world, they will get a sense of Ming dynasty (1368-1644) culture, a period when thinkers and writers attempted to balance society’s conformist demands with the individual’s need for personal autonomy.

**Anticipatory Set:** Can you see this chapter from a Chinese novel as a television sitcom that takes a serious issue or idea and makes it funny?

**Context:** Since it was first published in the sixteenth century, *Journey to the West* has been one of the best-loved works of Chinese fiction. It also became widely popular in the rest of East Asia—Korea, Japan, and Vietnam. Arthur Waley’s *Monkey* (1943), a translation of about a third of the book, has made the adventures of Monkey, Tripitaka, Pigsy, and Sandy into an English language classic. Today, *Journey to the West* lives on in cartoons, comics, actions figures, and on the Internet.

The novel is loosely based on the travels of the Tang dynasty monk Xuanzang (596-664). In 627 Xuanzang set out for India to study the Buddhist law, visit sacred sites, and acquire Buddhist texts. He returned to China sixteen years later and spent the rest of his life translating the books he had brought back. Although Xuanzang (or Tripitaka,<sup>1</sup> his honorary name) was not the only Chinese monk-pilgrim who went to India, he is the most famous. His story gradually became legend.

In nearly a millennium of evolution, the story of Tang Sanzang [“Tripitaka of the Tang dynasty”] . . . and his acquisition of scriptures in the West has been told by both pen and mouth and through a variety of literary forms which have included the short poetic tale, the drama, and finally the fully developed narrative using both prose and verse. In this long process of development, the theme of the pilgrimage for scriptures is never muted, but added to this basic constituent of the story are numerous features which have more in common with folktales and popular legends than with history. The account of a courageous monk’s undertaking, motivated by profound religious zeal and commitment, is thus eventually transformed into a tale of supernatural deeds and fantastic adventures, of mythic beings and animal spirits, of fearsome battles with monsters and miraculous deliverance from dreadful calamities (Yu 1977: 5-6).

*Journey to the West* tells its colorful story in the course of a hundred chapters:

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<sup>3</sup> *Tripitaka* is Sanskrit for “Three Baskets,” which refers to the three-part division of the Buddhist canon. In Chinese, *Tripitaka* is Sanzang or “Three Storehouses.”



Ch. 1-7	The birth of Sun Wukong [Monkey], his acquisition of immortality and magic powers . . . his invasion and disturbance of Heaven, and his final subjugation by Buddha.
8	The Heavenly Council in which Buddha declares his intention to impart the Buddhist canon to the Chinese, the journey of Guanyin [Goddess of Mercy] to the land of the East to find the appropriate scripture pilgrim, and her preparatory encounters with all of Xuanzang's future disciples [Monkey, Pigsy, Sandy].
9-12	The background and birth of Xuanzang, his vengeance on his father's murderers.
13-97	The journey itself, developed primarily through a long series of captures and releases of the pilgrims by monsters, demons, animal spirits, and gods in disguise.
98-100	The successful completion of the journey, the audience with Buddha, the return with scriptures to Chang'an, and the final canonization of the five pilgrims in the West.

(Adapted from Yu 1977: 15)

Authorship of *Journey to the West* is attributed to a minor scholar-official named Wu Cheng'en (c. 1506-1582). The publication of this and other major novels during the Ming dynasty (1369-1644) reflects the growth of a small reading public<sup>3</sup> and the availability of relatively inexpensive printed books. Combining a wide variety of preexisting materials into long works of fiction satisfied the tastes of this cultivated audience (Bryant 2001: 399).

Although for modern readers *Journey to the West* is primarily a work of adventure and comic fantasy, it nevertheless reflects important aspects of the pre-modern Chinese worldview. It presents a universe peopled by gods, ghosts, and monsters, a world where the supernatural and the everyday are inseparable, where magic works wonders, where dreams foretell the future, and where all life is subject to the Buddhist law of karma and rebirth.

In addition, the novel's physical journey is an allegory of the mind's journey from worldly attachments to the realm of freedom from desire. The demons that populate the book symbolize the excesses of the mind and the senses. The author makes this clear in chapters where the pilgrims subdue the "bandits of the four senses" or a temptress is referred to as the "seven passions" (Plaks 1994: 279).

Although Tripitaka is a Buddhist priest, these spiritual concerns echo the "union of the three teachings" (Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism) characteristic of the Ming period (1369-1644). This union "brought together the Confucian cultivation of moral perfection, the Buddhist cultivation of transcendent enlightenment, and the Daoist cultivation of physical immortality" (Plaks 1994: 279).

*Journey to the West* combines piety with slapstick, Buddhist compassion with martial arts-style combat, and the world of the supernatural with the world of the everyday.

That violence and often coarse humor frame its religious message is a message in itself: The "Way" (*Dao*) is all-embracing. Since, in the words of an ancient saying, "Heaven covers everything and Earth carries everything," there is nothing, no matter how humble or filthy, that is outside the Way.

<sup>3</sup> Small, that is, when compared to China's total population, which in 1600 was about 160 million.



## Tripitaka and His Companions

The Buddhist Goddess of Mercy, Guanyin, visits China at the Buddha's request to find a "scripture pilgrim," someone who will travel to India and bring knowledge of the true Buddhist law back to China. On her way, she meets each of the creatures that will become Tripitaka's guardians on the journey west. All of them—Piggy, Sandy, and Monkey—are being punished for having committed crimes against the Jade Emperor in Heaven.<sup>3</sup> She hears their stories and tells them to await Tripitaka's coming. By accompanying him to India, they will gain their freedom.

Sandy, having broken a crystal dish at a banquet in the Jade Emperor's court, is condemned to become a water monster. He eats any human that comes near his home, the River of Floating Sands.

Piggy was beaten and sent back to earth for getting drunk and "misbehaving" with the Goddess of the Moon. After he died, he was reborn as a pig monster and spends his time eating people. An ugly, foul smelling creature, he uses a dung-rake to attack Guanyin.

Monkey (called Sun Wukong—"Monkey Aware of Emptiness,"<sup>4</sup> and the "Great Sage Equal to Heaven") has committed many crimes: eating the peaches in the Jade Emperor's garden, and erasing his name from the register of karma and rebirth to make himself immortal, to name just two. He neither can be killed nor defeated in battle. The Buddha eventually imprisons him under a mountain. Monkey is the main character in *Journey to the West*. His spontaneous nature and his awesome magical skills dominate the novel.



After the Monkey King began to challenge heaven, the supreme Jade Emperor gave him the task of managing the heavenly stables under the title "Bimawen," which initially pleased him. Later, he asked about the "rank" of his Bimawen appointment, but was told it had no rank. The Monkey King asked, "Is that because it is too high?" but was told, "On the contrary, it's too low!" Monkey then created havoc, demanding a higher position, and then was reappointed to manage the heavenly peach orchard, where he stole the legendary peaches of immortality.

(Source: Early twentieth century traditional print, courtesy of James Flath.)

<http://www.ssc.uwo.ca/history/nianhua/>

<sup>3</sup> Just as earthly China had its emperor and bureaucracy, so did Heaven.

<sup>4</sup> "Emptiness" is the ultimate reality in Mahayana Buddhism. It means that everything is devoid of self-nature and thus transcends duality. Seen in this light, nirvana is not different from *samsara*. Enlightenment is the realization of this truth.





Pigsy, Sandy, and Monkey are all supernatural beings who have achieved immortality. Tripitaka is the only mortal human being among the pilgrims:

Joyless and humorless . . . Tripitaka is dull of mind and peevish in spirit . . . he is singularly attached to bodily comforts, complaining more than once about the cold and hunger inflicted by the journey. The slightest foreboding of ill or danger terrifies him . . .

. . . Tripitaka's frail and fallible character is deliberately magnified by the author in order to stress his absolute need for his supernatural companions . . . (Yu 1977: 44).

### **Excerpts from Chapters 44-46 of *Journey to the West*: "The Cart-Slow Kingdom"**

This unit uses excerpts from the pilgrims' adventures in the Cart-Slow Kingdom. Because the Buddhists once lost a rainmaking contest to the Daoists, they have become their slaves. Monkey and the others free them after a series of trials, including the dramatic rainmaking competition described here.

This episode gives the reader a glimpse, albeit a prejudiced Buddhist glimpse, into the world of Daoist religion. Daoist religion, China's indigenous faith, became widespread at the same time Buddhism was establishing itself in China. This took place during the Period of Disunion (c. 200-600), a violent time when various non-Chinese peoples ruled north China and there was no strong, centralized imperial state. Daoism is a

. . . nearly two thousand-year-old tradition of ordained priesthood; the accumulation of an enormous "Bible" of esoteric texts comprehensible only to those with special competence; a grand liturgical tradition based on the ritual texts; a well-defined eremitic<sup>3</sup> tradition; and many distinctive techniques conducive to the ultimate goal of transformation to transcendent immortality (Thompson 1996: 81).

The author makes the Daoist priests—the "Three Immortals"—the villains. He paints them as pretentious, power-hungry, and more than willing to use their power to oppress the unfortunate Buddhists.

In real life, the rainmaking that ends this selection from *Journey to the West* was, of course, serious business. One of the main functions of the Daoist clergy was "performance of rituals on behalf of clients and the community" (Thompson 1996: 99). Here, both sides show their magical ability to summon the gods that control clouds, wind, and rain. The outcome demonstrates Monkey's superior powers.

Although Buddhist-Daoist rivalry was a fact and, over the centuries, religious persecution existed in China, the enslavement of the Buddhists is a satirical device springing from the author's imagination.

#### **There are two complete English translations of *Journey to the West*:**

William Jenner, *The Journey to the West*. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1983.

Anthony C. Yu, *The Journey to the West*, 4 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977-1983.

Anthony Yu's multi-volume translation contains extensive commentary and notes.

<sup>3</sup> Ermitic: Having to do with hermits or religious recluses.



**Rationale:** In reading this adventure, students will be exposed to all the elements in *Journey to the West* that have captivated readers since the sixteenth century: Monkey's martial arts and magical skills, the human frailties of the pilgrims, and the vivid theatricality of their encounters with human and supernatural beings.

**Time:** Two forty-minute sessions.

**Instructional Resources:** Abridged and adapted text of chapters 44-46 of *Monkey*, Arthur Waley's translation of *Journey to the West*; three graphic organizers.

Some documents are primary sources and some are secondary materials selected from various books and articles. Primary sources are marked with an asterisk. \*

**Procedure:** The class should be divided into groups. Each group receives one of the graphic organizers:

- Story Map
- Story Structure
- Character Map

Members of the group receiving the character map also need to be assigned individual characters.

After completing the tasks based on the organizers, a spokesperson for each group reports to the whole class. The class will then attempt to answer the essential questions: How do Monkey and his companions overcome the Three Immortals? Does *Journey to the West's* mixture of deep religious belief with magic and (often crude) comedy go against your idea of the word "religious"?

**Whole Group Reflection:** What other tales featuring animals acting like human beings can you compare with this episode from *Journey to the West*?

**Instructional Modification:** Retell a section of the story visually, in the form of a cartoon or story board.

**Application:** Bring Monkey and his fellow pilgrims into the twenty-first century by creating a contemporary problem for them to overcome.

### **The Pilgrims in the Cart-Slow Kingdom (Ch. 44-46 of Journey to the West)\***

1. The Master and his three disciples traveled westward, going slowly the better to enjoy the scenery, when suddenly they heard what sounded like the hubbub of a hundred thousand voices. Tripitaka, much alarmed, reined in his horse and, turning to Monkey said, "Where does that strange noise come from?" "It sounds to me like a landslide," broke in Pigsy. "I should say it was a thunderstorm," said Sandy. "I'm certain it is men shouting and horses neighing," said Tripitaka. "You're all wrong," laughed Monkey. "Wait while I go and look." Dear Monkey! He gave himself a shake, sprang straight up into the clouds and looked down. Below him he saw a moated city . . . Monkey thought to himself, "Where can all that noise come from? I see no banners or halberds, no artillery. Yet certainly there is a din of horses and men."

Monkey sees a crowd of Buddhist monks dragging a cart loaded with bricks and other construction materials. They are pushing it on a path going up an almost perpendicular cliff. Two Daoist priests come out of the city. When the monks see them, they start working harder, as if out of fear. Monkey changes himself into a Daoist priest and questions the two. They tell him that in this, the Cart-Slow kingdom, everyone from the king on down honors the Daoists. They explain:



2. “Twenty years ago there was a famine here. The whole court and all the people purified themselves and prayed fervently for rain. Their prayers were not answered; but just when all seemed lost, three Immortals suddenly came from the sky and saved us. Today they are our masters, and we are their disciples.” “What are their names?” asked Monkey. “Their leader,” said the Daoists, “is called the Tiger Strength Immortal, and the two others are called Deer Strength Immortal and Ram Strength Immortal.” “And what powers of magic have they?” asked Monkey. “They can summon the wind or bring rain,” said the Daoists, “by a mere turn of the hand. They can point at water, and it becomes oil; prick stones and it becomes gold, as easily as one turns in bed. Small wonder that the king and his ministers fell down before them and are eager to count us Daoists as their kin.” “Your king is a lucky man,” said Monkey. “And if your masters have such arts there must be few who would be sorry to claim kinship with them. Indeed, if it isn’t making too bold, I should take it as a great kindness if I might be allowed to meet them for a moment myself.”

The two Daoists agree to introduce Monkey. But first:

3. “You must wait a few minutes,” they said. “We have some business to attend to.” “I don’t quite understand,” said Monkey. “Those who have left the world are bound by no ties. How can you speak of having business to conduct?” “Those people over there,” they said, pointing to the priests by the cliff, “are working for us. We have to go and check them off by the list, in case some should be playing truant.” “You must be mistaken,” said Monkey. “Those are Buddhists, they are priests just as we are. What rights have you to set them to work or check them off on a list?”

The Daoists explain that once there was a great drought and both Buddhists and Daoists prayed for rain. The Buddhists had no success. But, when the three Daoist Immortals appeared on the scene to pray, rain fell. The Immortals demanded that the Buddhists be made their slaves:

4. . . . It is they who light our fires, they who sweep our floors, they who are the porters at our gate. At the back of our temple there is a building which is not yet finished; so we set them to bring tiles and bricks and logs up the cliff. It was feared they might be shirking their work or not pulling hard enough at the cart. So we two were sent to see what was happening.” “This is all most unfortunate,” said Monkey, bursting into tears. “It is quite impossible for me to meet your Masters.” “How is that?” they asked. “I must tell you,” said Monkey, “that the purpose of my wanderings is in part to discover a lost relation.” “What relation?” they asked. “I have an uncle,” said Monkey, “who when he was young became a Buddhist priest. During the famine he went to distant parts to beg alms and has not been seen since. It is very possible that he is detained here and cannot get home. I cannot go with you to the city till I have found out whether he is here.” “That can easily be done,” they said. “We’ll sit here, and you can go to the cliff and do our business for us. There are five hundred names on the list. You have only to check over the list and see that they are all there. If you find your uncle among them, in consideration of the fact that you are a Daoist yourself we should gladly release him.”

The Buddhists fear Monkey until he says he’s looking for a lost relative. They crowd around and tell him about their hard life. The Cart Slow kingdom is full of police and people are rewarded if they turn in a runaway Buddhist. They are fed the cheapest food. They find relief only in sleep:

5. “. . . the moment we close our eyes, spirits come to keep watch over us . . . They tell us in our dreams,” the Buddhists said, “that we must hold out a little longer, despite our torments. For soon, they said, a pilgrim will come, who is on his way to India to get scriptures. With him is a disciple named the Great Sage Equal of Heaven [Monkey], who has great magic powers, which he uses to right the wrongs of the oppressed. He will destroy the Daoists and bring the followers of Buddhism once more into respect.” Monkey said to himself. “That really makes me feel quite important,” he smiled to himself. “Fancy having spirits announcing one’s arrival beforehand.”



He turned his heel on them and . . . strode on toward the city gate. “Did you find your kinsman?” the two Daoists asked. “They are all my kinsmen,” said Monkey. “What, the whole five hundred?” they asked . . . “If you will release the whole lot of them, I’ll go back with you.” “You must be mad,” they said . . . “So you won’t let them go?” cried Monkey. “Very well then!” And taking his cudgel from behind his ear he rushed at them and gave them such a blow upon the head that their brains gushed out and they fell dead where they had stood.

The monks rush up in horror, telling him that he’s killed two of the king’s favorites. They insist that he go back to the city and confess his crime. Monkey then reveals that he is the savior they dream about. With his magic powers he destroys the carts and gives the Buddhists a magical way to protect themselves:

7. Dear Monkey! He plucked out a handful of his hairs, chewed them into small pieces and gave a piece to each Buddhist, saying “Put it under the nail of your thumb and clench your fist. Then you can go where you will, and no one will dare touch you. You have only to press the thumb into the palm of your hand and cry “Great Sage!” I will come at once to help you.” “But father,” they said, “suppose we were a long way off and you could not hear us, what then?” “That is all right,” said Monkey. “If I were ten thousand miles away, it would make no difference; you would still come to no harm.”

Some of the bolder among them experimented, murmuring “Great Sage!” while they pressed their thumbs. At once a thunder god armed with an iron cudgel hovered before the face of each, ready to protect him against a whole army of attackers.

Meanwhile, Tripitaka and the others have set off for the city. On the way, they meet Monkey and some of the priests. The priests invite the pilgrims to stay at their temple. Because it contained a picture of the king’s ancestor, it was the only Buddhist building not destroyed. Monkey is recognized by an old priest:

8. “I know you are the Great Sage Equal of Heaven,” he said. “Again and again I have dreamed of you. The Spirit of the Planet Venus came to me in my sleep and described you to me, telling me you would come soon and save our lives. It is well you have come now; for if you had waited another day we should have been ghosts, not living men!”

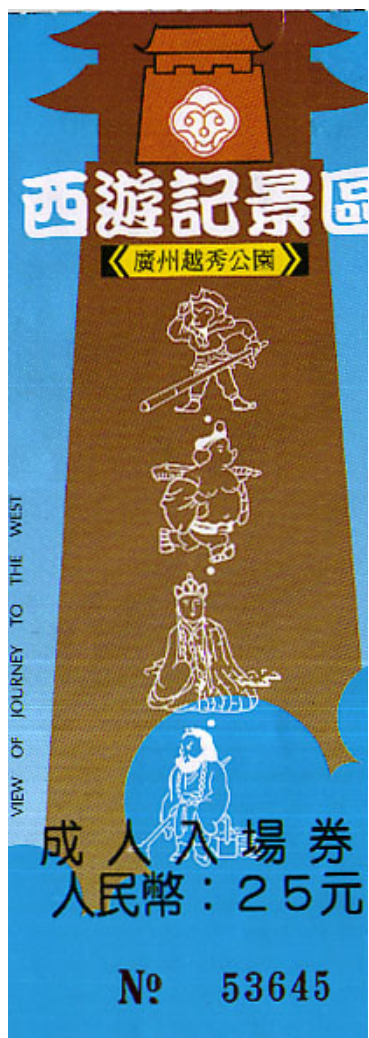
In the middle of the night Monkey wakes up. He hears the sound of a great Daoist service. He leaps into the air and observes the scene in the Daoist temple.

9. In front of the gate was an inscription made of letters embroidered in yellow silk: “Wind and rain in due season; for our lord, ten thousand years of happy reign!” Conspicuous were three venerable Daoists in full sacramental robes, whom Monkey took to be the Tiger Strength, Deer Strength, and Ram Strength Immortals. Before them was ranged a crowd of some eight hundred worshippers, beating drums and gongs, offering incense and confessing their sins.

“I would go down and mingle with the crowd,” said Monkey to himself. “But a ‘single strand does not make a thread nor can one hand clap.’ I will go and get Pigsy and Sandy and share the fun.” He found the two sleeping huddled together. “Why aren’t you asleep?” Sandy asked when Monkey woke him. “Get up and come with me,” said Monkey. “We’re all going to have a treat.” “Who wants a treat in the middle of the night, when one’s mouth is dry and one’s eyes won’t stay open?” “The Daoists are celebrating a Mass in their great temple,” said Monkey, “and the whole place is littered with offerings. There are dumplings that must weigh a quart, and cakes weighing fifty pounds, and all kinds of dainties and fruits. Come and enjoy yourself.” Pigsy, hearing in his sleep something about things to eat, at once woke with a start. “Brother, you’re not going to leave me out of it?” he cried. “If you like the idea of something to eat,” said Monkey, “don’t make a fuss and wake up the Master [the monk Tripitaka], but both of you come quietly with me.”



**Entrance Ticket to a Journey to the West  
Attraction in Guangzhou's Yuexiu Park.  
From Top to Bottom: Monkey, Pigsy, Tripitaka, and Sandy**



(Source: Kirby A. Bartlett-Sloan) <http://www.bartlett-sloan.net/Journey.htm>

Monkey, Pigsy, and Sandy go to the temple. Monkey causes a great wind to rise up. It knocks over all the lamps, leaving the temple in darkness. The congregation is terrified. The Tiger Strength Immortal stops the service and has everyone go home. The pilgrims go inside. In order to sit and eat in peace, they remove the statues of the three highest gods from the altar. Monkey has Pigsy throw the statues down the privy.<sup>6</sup> The three take the place of the statues on the altar and start gobbling the food. After a while, they are interrupted:

10. There was a little Daoist who suddenly woke up and remembered that he had left his handbell in the temple. “If I lose it,” he said to himself, “I shall get into trouble with the Master tomorrow.” So he said to his bed-fellow, “You go on sleeping, I must go and look for my bell.” He . . . rushed to the temple. After fumbling about for some time, he succeeded in finding it, and was just turning to go when he heard the sound of breathing. Very much alarmed, he ran toward the door, and in his hurry slipped . . . and fell with a bang, smashing his bell into a thousand pieces. Pigsy could not stop himself from breaking into loud guffaws of laughter, which frightened the little Daoist out of his wits.

<sup>3</sup> A pre-modern bathroom, usually just a bench with a hole in it suspended over a pit.



The boy races back to the sleeping quarters and bangs on his Master's door. He tells his story to the Three Immortals. The Masters, along with a crowd of Daoists, return to the temple. The Daoists enter as Monkey, Pigsy, and Sandy sit frozen and silent on the high altar.

11. "Some rascal must have been here," said the Tiger Strength Immortal. "All the offerings have been eaten up." "It looks as though ordinary human beings have been at work," said the Deer Strength Immortal. "They've spat out the fruit stones and skins. It's strange that there is no one to be seen." "It's my idea," said the Ram Strength Immortal, "that the Three Blessed Ones have been so deeply moved by our prayers and recitations that they have decided to come down and accept our offerings. They may easily be hovering about somewhere on their cranes,<sup>7</sup> and it would be a good plan to take advantage of their presence. I suggest that we beg for some holy water and a little Elixir.<sup>8</sup> We should get a lot of credit at court if we could use them to the king's advantage."

The Tiger Strength Immortal performs a ritual dance addressed to the three divinities. He requests that the gods bestow some Elixir and holy water. His efforts are not in vain:

12. . . . Monkey called out in a loud, impressive voice, "My children," he said, "I must ask you to defer this request. My colleagues and I have come on straight from a peach banquet in Heaven, and we haven't got any holy water or Elixir with us." Hearing the deity condescend to address them, the Daoists trembled with religious awe. "Father," they said, "you surely realize that this is too good an opportunity to be lost. Do not, we beseech you, go back to Heaven without leaving us some sort of magical receipt."

From the altar, Monkey agrees to give them some holy water. He then orders them to leave the temple:

13. "Now go outside the building, close the shutters, and stay there," said Monkey. "For no one is permitted to witness our holy mysteries." When all was ready, Monkey got up, lifted his tiger-skin, and pissed into the flower-pot. "Brother," said Pigsy, highly delighted. "We've had some rare games together since I've joined you, but this beats all. And that fool Pigsy, lifting his dress, let fall such a cascade as would have made the Lüliang Falls seem a mere trickle. Left with the big jug, Sandy could do no more than half fill it. Then they adjusted their clothes, and sat down decorously as before. "Little ones," Monkey called out, "you can come and fetch your holy water."
14. The Daoists returned, full of gratitude and awe. "Bring me a cup," said the Tiger Strength Immortal to one of his disciples. "I should like to taste it." The moment he tasted . . . the Immortal's lip curled wryly. "Does it taste good?" asked the Deer Strength Immortal. "It's rather too full-flavored for my liking," said the Tiger Strength Immortal. "Let me taste it," said the Ram Strength Immortal. "It smells rather like pig's urine," he said doubtfully, when the cup touched his lips. Monkey saw the game was up. "We've played our trick," he said to the others, "and now we'd better take the credit for it." "How could you be such fools," he called out to the Daoists, "as to believe that the Deities had come down to earth? We're no Blessed Trinity, but priests, from China. And what you have been drinking is not the Water of Life, but just our piss!"

No sooner did the Daoists hear these words when they rushed out, seized pitchforks, brooms, tiles, stones, and whatever else they could lay hands on, and with one accord rushed at the imposters. In the nick of time Monkey grabbed Sandy with one hand and Pigsy with the other, and rushed them to the door. Riding with him on his shining cloud they were soon back at the temple where Tripitaka was lodged.

The next morning, Tripitaka, who had been asleep when the three were in the temple, decides to go to the palace and have the group's passports put in order. A minister urges the king to let the pilgrims

<sup>7</sup> A beautiful, tall wading bird. Daoist gods and immortals were often pictured riding on them.

<sup>8</sup> A liquid that could make you live forever.



go on their way. He argues that since they were able to travel from far away China, they must have mysterious powers. It would be best, he claims, to let them go. The Daoists enter and tell the king about Monkey's deeds of the previous day and night. The king is furious and wants to execute the pilgrims. Just then, a group of village elders enters and asks the king to do something about the lack of rain.

15. “Your Majesty,” they said . . .” there has been no rain all spring, and we hope you will ask the Immortals to bring us rain and save the people from drought.” “You may retire,” said the King. “You shall have your rain.” “If you want to know,” said he, turning to Tripitaka, “why I suppressed Buddhism here, it was because some years ago the Buddhists were unable to bring rain, not a drop of it. Fortunately these Immortals arrived and saved us in the nick of time. You have come from a distant land and have attacked the Daoists and their institutions. I ought to deal severely with you, but I am willing to give you one more chance. You shall have a rainmaking competition with the Immortals. If you can produce rain, I will pardon you, sign your passports, and let you go. But if you lose, I shall execute you on the spot.” Monkey laughed. “I don’t know about the others,” he said, “but if it’s a matter of praying I can claim to understand something about it, I assure you.”

An altar is built for the Daoist rainmaking ritual. The ceremony begins.

16. The Immortal strode up to the altar, where an assistant handed to him a yellow paper inscribed with diagrams and a sword. Sword in hand he recited some spells and burned a diagram. Then several Daoists came forward with images and a written text, which they burned. A stinging sound came from the tablet which the Immortal was carrying, and at the same moment there was a rush of wind in the air above. “That’s bad,” said Pigsy. “His tablet sounded and he has got as far as producing a gust of wind.” “Be quiet, brother,” said Monkey. “You’ll have enough to do looking after the Master. You may leave the rest to me.”

Dear Monkey! He leapt into the air and cried, “Who’s supposed to be in charge of the wind?” At once the Old Woman of the Wind appeared, hugging her bag . . .” I am protecting Tripitaka on his way to India,” said Monkey, “and we are having a competition in rainmaking with the Immortals here. Why are you helping them instead of us? I’ll let you off lightly if you call in the wind. But if there is a breeze enough to stir those Daoists’ whiskers, you will each get twenty with this iron cudgel.” “We shouldn’t dare,” said the Old Woman. And immediately the wind ceased. Pigsy could not refrain from bawling out, “Those Daoists must step down. There is not a breath of wind. They must make way for us at once.” Again the Immortal grasped his tablet, burnt magic slips and struck the altar with a resounding crash. At once the sky became full of clouds and mist. “Who’s supposed to be in charge of the clouds?” Monkey cried, looking up into the sky; and the Cloud Boy and Mist Lad appeared before him, bowing low. When Monkey had explained the situation to them, they immediately cleared the sky, and not a cloud or wreath of mist was left. “You’ve been swindling your Emperor,” jeered Pigsy, “and all your magic is worthless . . .”

16. Now extremely perturbed, the Immortal leant on his long sword and loosed his hair. Then he burned more slips and recited more spells, banging once more with his tablet. All that happened was in a moment or two the Thunder God and Mother of Lightning appeared in the sky, bowing toward Monkey. “What brings you here?” he said. “The magic of this Immortal,” they said, “is perfectly correct and valid. The spells that he burnt reached the Jade Emperor, and he ordered us to come and make a storm.” “The storm is all right,” said Monkey, “provided that it happens when I want it. But you must hold it up for a bit.” They bowed assent, and no thunder rolled, no lightning flashed.



17. The Immortal, in a perfect frenzy, was burning strips, reciting spells, and striking again and again with his tablet. Nothing happened. “Now it’s my turn,” said Monkey. “I’m not going to burn any magic writings or bang with a tablet. I rely on you two divinities to help me out.” “Tell us what you want done,” said the Thunder God, “and we will do it. Otherwise rain and thunder and lightning will come all mixed up together, and you won’t get proper credit.” “I intend to direct the proceedings with my cudgel.” “Father,” said the God of Thunder, “you’re surely not going to cudgel us?” “Not at all,” said Monkey. “I merely ask you to watch my cudgel. When I point it upward, you’re to send a blast of wind.” “We’re standing by, ready with our wind-bag,” said the Old Woman of the Wind. “The second time I point it upward,” said Monkey, “there are to be clouds, and the third time, thunder and lightning. The fourth time, rain; and the fifth time, the whole storm must cease.”

Monkey begins. With Tripitaka reciting Buddhist scripture, he attempts to bring rain.

18. . . . Monkey took out his cudgel and . . . pointed toward the sky. The Old Woman of the Wind at once brought out her bag . . . and with a great roar the wind rushed out. All through the city, tiles were lifted through the air, bricks hurtled, sand and stones flew. When the wind was at its height, Monkey again pointed with his stick, and such black clouds covered the sky that the whole town was dark and even the neighboring palace utterly disappeared.

Presently Monkey pointed again, and deafening peals of thunder shook the earth. It was as though a hundred thousand chariots were rolling by. The inhabitants of the town were frightened out of their wits and one and all began burning incense and saying their prayers. “Now Thunder God,” screamed Monkey, “do your work! Strike down all greedy and corrupt officials, all disobedient and surly sons, as a warning to the people!” The din grew louder than ever. The Monkey pointed again, and such a rain fell that it seemed as if the whole Yellow River had suddenly fallen out of the sky. This rain fell from early morning till noon. The town was already one vast swamp, when the king sent a message saying, “That’s enough rain. If there is much more it will ruin the crops and we shall be worse off than ever.”

Monkey at once pointed with his cudgel, and in an instant the storm completely ceased, and there was not a cloud in the sky. The king was delighted . . .” In the past we have seen our Immortals bring rain successfully. But even they could not stop the rain all in a moment . . .”

19. Monkey came forward and cried, “Your Majesty, this was after all a trifling and commonplace performance, and it is not worthwhile disputing who should get credit for it. The four dragon kings, who came at our bidding, are however still waiting, invisible, not far off in the sky. If these Immortals can induce them to show themselves, I will admit that they should be given the credit.” “I’ve been king for twenty-three years,” said the king. “But no one has ever been able to show me a dragon, and I hardly know what one looks like. I am prepared to reward anyone who can do this, and I shall certainly punish anyone who claims to be able to do so, and fails.”

The Daoists knew quite well that such a thing was beyond their powers. All the same, they called; but no dragon answered the summons, with Monkey standing there. Now it was Monkey’s turn. “Dragon Aoguang,” he called, “are you there? Let’s have a look at you and your brothers.” The four dragons at once appeared, surging through the clouds . . . (Waley 1958: 211-233, *passim*).





## Graphic Organizers

### STORY MAP

The setting: Where and when does the story take place?
Point of view: Who is the narrator or person telling the story?
Who are the main characters?
Statement of the problem:
Event 1
Event 2
Event 3
Event 4
Event 5
Statement of the solution:
Theme of the story (what is the story <i>really</i> about?):
Values brought out in the story:



## STORY STRUCTURE

### 1. BEGINNING

What are the first events that happen in the story?

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### 2. PROBLEM:

What is the complication?

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Rising Actions: *Events that lead to the climax.*

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

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### 3. CLIMAX:

High point of the story. Will the problem be solved?

Falling Actions: *Events that lead from the climax to the end of the story.*

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

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### 4. RESOLUTION:

How is the problem handled?

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### 5. END:

What is the final outcome?

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## CHARACTER MAP

Character: \_\_\_\_\_

*Use relevant words and phrases to describe the following things about the character.*

### LOOKS

(Physical appearance, gestures, clothing, etc.)

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### ACTS

(How does he or she behave?)

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### FEELS

(His or her emotions)

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### SAYS

(Important things that effect the other characters)

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