

# BUDDHISM

## Mark It on the Map

Hang a world map on the wall and have the students locate **Asia**, and then specifically **Nepal, Tibet, India, and China**. Ask whether students know someone who has lived in or visited any of these four countries. Invite volunteers to share a little about the person, and why the person happened to be there. Then ask what students know or have read about these countries. Encourage students to familiarize themselves with the maps on page 20. As they read through the issue, have them refer to the map and locate the sites mentioned.

## Vocabulary

a Buddha	Brahmins
ascetic	enlightenment
meditation	<i>dharma</i>
<i>karma</i>	<i>nirvana</i>
<i>parinirvana</i>	<i>mandala</i>
schism	<i>Arhants</i>
<i>Bodhisattva</i>	<i>bhikkhu</i>
<i>wat</i>	<i>stupa</i>
pagoda	

## Introduction

Have the students read the “Message From the Editors” on pages 2–3. Ask whether they have ever read about Buddhism, know someone who is Buddhist, or visited a Buddhist temple. Invite those who have to share their experiences with the class. As students browse through the issue on Buddhism, ask which illustration or passage really caught their attention and why.

## Questions for Discussion

- ➔ Who was Siddhartha Gautama?
- ➔ What were the four signs that Siddhartha saw on his one-day outing as a youth? What did each sign mean?
- ➔ How and when did Siddhartha find enlightenment?
- ➔ What is the significance of the Buddha’s first sermon, “Setting in Motion the Wheel of Truth”?
- ➔ What is the Buddhist view of reincarnation?
- ➔ What symbols do Buddhists use to represent the Buddha? What does each represent?
- ➔ What are the four chief pilgrimage sites for Buddhists, and what is the significance of each?
- ➔ What are the Sutras and the Vinaya?
- ➔ What caused the first schism (division) in the Buddhist community? Be sure to be specific in your answer.
- ➔ What is the significance of the white robe worn by a Buddhist monk on his day of ordination? What is the significance of his shaved head?
- ➔ How did Tenzin Gyatso become the fourteenth Dalai Lama?
- ➔ What are the chief responsibilities of the Dalai Lama?

## Writing Workout

Students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- ➔ Read the Buddhist prayer on page 2. Then write your interpretation of what a person saying these words might be thinking.

- The young prince Siddhartha told his driver on their one-day outing that he wished to become a seeker. Explain what is meant by a “seeker.” Then write an essay explaining what led Siddhartha to make this decision.
- Before he died, the Buddha said to his followers: “Impermanent are all created things. Diligently seek your own salvation.” Write about why these words give both advice and encouragement to Buddhists.
- Write an essay about why seekers and ascetics dress traditionally in plain garments.
- Imagine that you are a reporter. Make a list of the questions you would ask a novice monk and another set of questions for a full-fledged monk. After each question, write your reason for asking it.
- *Wat*, *stupa*, and *pagoda* are all words that refer to structures where objects considered sacred by Buddhists are enshrined and where Buddhists may worship. In an essay describe each structure and explain the differences among the three. If you wish, illustrate your essay.

## Viewpoints

Students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- Before Siddhartha, many people who saw the religious leaders of Brahminism as corrupt turned away from the world and society. Suggest reasons why these individuals chose peaceful rather than confrontational resistance.
- In his search for enlightenment, Siddhartha spent time with five other seekers. After almost starving himself to death, he realized that their practices were not what he was seeking. Why do you think Siddhartha chose to abandon the practices of the seekers?
- Discuss why you think Siddhartha, after his enlightenment, went back to the five ascetics who had abandoned him.
- Read “The Three Jewels and The Ten Precepts” on page 35. What do you see as the differences between the first five rules and the last five rules? Would it be difficult for all Buddhists to observe all ten precepts? Explain your answers.

## Get Into Art

Students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- Read Mara’s temptation of Siddhartha on page 11. Illustrate your interpretation of Mara’s temptation of Siddhartha under the Bodhi tree.
- Read the four Noble Truths and the eight Path steps on page 16. Choose one Truth or Path to illustrate on a poster to display in the classroom.
- Read the caption on page 38. Create an illustration that explains how the lotus blossom symbolizes enlightenment. Explain your drawing to the class and then display it in the classroom.

## “Play” Time

Have students read “The Prince Who Had Everything: The Legend of the Buddha,” on pages 4–7. Divide the class into two groups. Have one group make the story into a play and assign parts, including that of narrator, among themselves. Have the second group make or collect props for the play. Then have the class rehearse and perform the play for another class.

## Words With a Past

Divide the class into four groups. Have each group compose five sentences, one for each of the words explained in “Word Origins” and “Word Stories” on page 18. Have them recopy their sentences onto clean paper, leaving a blank where the term is. Then have the groups exchange papers and fill in the blank space with the proper word. To correct the papers, have groups return them to their authors.

## Host a Guest

Invite a well-informed person or a leader of the Buddhist community to speak to your class about Buddhism. Be sure to provide time for questions and answers.

## Research Projects

Students may complete one or both of the following activities:

- Research the life of Ashoka, especially his conversion to Buddhism and how he helped spread Buddhism abroad.
- Research some of the 227 precepts Theravada monks strive to observe. At the same time have them look for some of the 311 precepts Buddhist nuns strive to observe.
- Research the Theravada school of Buddhism - how it started, where most of its followers live, what it believes. Do the same for the Mahayana school of Buddhism. Present your findings in a poster.
- Research other languages which are no longer spoken, like Pali. Find out who spoke them, when they were spoken, and how we know about the language today.

## Class Projects

Students may complete one or more of the following activities:

- Celebrate a Buddhist festival mentioned on page 21. Divide the class into two groups. Have one group make a poster or a shrine to place in one area of the classroom. Have another group make something representative of the festival.
- Meditation is a key part of Buddhism. During the time you are studying Buddhism, have students spend a few moments each day practicing meditation. Begin by reading “Buddhism and Meditation” on pages 40-45. Then have the class sit quietly in their seats and practice samatha meditation, breathing deeply and slowly while focusing on one object or one thought. As students gain experience, you may add in sitting on the floor in the traditional meditation position found on pages 42-43, the symbolic hand positions found on page 33, and a mandala made from the directions on page 24. One or two minutes is plenty of time at the beginning; later you and your students may want to increase the time. Be sure to discuss with students how they feel about the meditation exercises they did, what benefit regular meditation might offer, and whether their brief introduction helped them better understand why meditation is a key part of Buddhism.
- Use the illustrations on page 33 to teach the class the three symbolic hand positions and their meaning.
- After students have read and discussed “The Life of a Buddhist Monk” on pages 30-35, divide the class into two groups. Assign one group to study a monk at ordination and

the other to study a day in the life of a Buddhist monk. Have each group prepare an illustration, a skit, or a diorama to show their findings. Allow time for groups to present their work.

## Map Enrichment

Have students read “Buddhism Today” on page 39. Have them use the map on page 20 and a world map to locate the countries where Buddhism spread after the Buddha’s death.

## Film Enrichment

Order the video *Buddhism: Footprint of the Buddha*, listed on page 47, and show it to the class. Afterward, discuss students’ reaction to how Buddhist monks live and think and to the segment on a young boy’s first days as a monk.

## Field Trip

If any of the “Places to Visit” on page 47 is close to your school, plan a field trip to see its collection of Buddhist artifacts. Prepare your students for what they will be seeing at the exhibit so they will get the most out of their visit.

## Just For Fun

Students may complete one or both of the following activities:

- ➔ Turn to “Fun With Words” on pages 18–19 and identify the illustrations. Discuss how each illustration relates to Buddhism.
- ➔ After reading “Mandala and Meditation,” follow the directions on page 24 to make a mandala.

## Follow These Footsteps

Siddhartha Gautama

Yasodhara

Mara

Ananda

Ashoka

Verason Sornmoonpin

Harin Sornmoonpin

Tenzin Gyatso, The Dalai Lama