BUDDHISM

from the *Religions of the World* Series



Study Guide

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BUDDHISM

from the *Religions of the World* Series

Produced by
Delphi Productions

Program Design, Scripts, and Cinematography
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Published and Distributed by...

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<None>BUDDHISM
Grades 7-Adult
Viewing Time: 28 minutes

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

In the year 563 B.C., a prince was born in northern India. That child, born a Hindu and named Siddartha Gautama, was destined to found one of the world's major religions—Buddhism. Raised to wealth and power, he rejected his birthright to become a Hindu ascetic and later chose "the middle way" between the pleasures of the flesh and the extremes of self-denial.

Buddhism has been described as more a way of life than a religion. Today there are approximately 250 million Buddhists in the world. Buddhism has had a profound influence on the philosophical and political development of the nations of Asia and on the lives of a large percentage of the people living there. In recent years, Buddhism has been brought to the West and has influenced the thinking of many people here. With the increasing influence of Asia on the economics and politics of the world, it is important to understand how the religious and philosophical principles of Buddhism have contributed to its development.

This program, shot on location in India, Nepal, Thailand, and Japan, explores the history, the development, the art, and the influence of Buddhism in the world. Some of the topics included in this video program are…

• The life of Siddartha Gautama—the Buddha;
• The concept of karma—as defined by Zen Buddhist;
• The Noble Eightfold Way, the basis of the Buddha's teaching;
• Buddhist art;
• Theravada Buddhism—the orthodox form of Buddhism;
• Mahayana Buddhism—*The Large Vehicle*—a looser interpretation of the Buddha's teachings; and
• Relationship between Buddhism and Hinduism.

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The goal of this program is to give an overview of the Buddhist religion.

USES FOR THE PROGRAM

- Social Studies classes
- Comparative religion classes
- Religious groups
- Community groups

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTES

Before presenting this lesson to your students, we suggest that you preview the video and review this guide and accompanying blackline masters in order to familiarize yourself with their content.

As you review the materials presented in this guide, you may find it necessary to make some changes, additions, or deletions to meet the specific needs of your class. We encourage you to do so, for only by tailoring this program to your class will they obtain the maximum instructional benefits afforded by the materials.

It is also suggested that the video presentation take place before the entire group under your supervision. The lesson activities grow out of the context of the video; therefore, the presentation should be a common experience for all students.

You should also duplicate the selected materials from the blackline masters included with this guide. **Blackline Master 1, Pre-Test**, is an assessment tool designed to help you discern student comprehension of the Objectives before administering the lesson. The results may be contrasted with those of **Blackline Master 9, Post-Test**, which is designed to help you discern student comprehension of the Ojectives after watching the video and participating in the follow-up activities.

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STUDENT OBJECTIVES

After viewing ***Buddhism*** and participating in the lesson activities, students should be able to…

• Discuss and/or write about the early life of the Buddha; the concept of karma; the Noble Eightfold Way as an end to suffering; Theravada Buddhism; Mahayana Buddhism; Zen Buddhism, and Tantric Buddhism of Tibet.

• Describe the difference between the two main branches of Buddhism.

• Define vocabulary terminology on Buddhism.

• Locate on a map the countries where Buddhism is practiced.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

1. Using a map of the world or a large regional map would be very helpful both before and after viewing the video to visually understand the program and add interest. You may choose to distribute **Blackline Master 5, Asia Map**, to give students an idea of the areas discussed in the program, or you may use **Blackline Master 6, Asia Map Activity** (blank map) as a follow-up activity.

2. Distribute **Blackline Master 1, Pre-Test**. Allow time for students to answer the questions.

3. The program contains a large amount of information. It is recommended to present an outline of the events contained in the video in advance of the actual viewing. Distribute **Blackline Master 2, Program Outline**.

4. Distribute **Blackline Master 3, Viewer's Guide**. Give students time to read the questions and/or go over them orally together in order to prepare them to watch the video.

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5. Introduce or review with your students the meanings of any words from **Blackline Master 4, Vocabulary List**. The list contains key words which may be unfamiliar, but which are important to understanding the program.

6. Ask few leading questions. For example:
• What ideas do you have about the religion of Buddhism?
• What information have you seen or read about the religion or about people who are Budddhists?
• It is important to know something about Buddhism. Why or why not?

• **Present the video**. The viewing time is 28 minutes.

FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION

• Immediately after viewing *Buddhism*, ask for questions and comments.

• Initiate discussion by asking the following questions:
1. What similarities or differences do you see between Buddhism and Christianity? Judaism? Islam? Hinduism?

2. How might the religion of Buddhism affect the lives of people who are not Buddhist?

3. Can you think of any way that Buddhism affects your life?

4. What appeals to you about the religion of Buddhism?

• Have the students answer the questions on the **Blackline Master 3, Viewer's Guide**, then use the guide questions as a basis for discussion of the information presented in the video. If the discussion leads to details that were not covered, you might want to have the students, or groups of students, research the subjects and report back to the class.

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FOLLOW-UPACTIVITIES

• Distribute Blackline **Master 6, Asia Map Activitiy**, and have the students locate the indicated countries. They may need to refer to an atlas or their textbooks.

• Distribute **Blackline Master 7, Vocabulary Check**. Have the students match the definition in the left-hand column with the word it identifies from the column on the right.

• Distribute **Blackline Master 8, Websites**, for students to reference for more information on Buddhism.

• Distribute **Blackline Master 9, Buddhism Post-Test**. This is an assessment tool designed to help you gauge student comprehension of the Objectvies after administering the entire lesson.

EXTENDED LEARNING ACTIVITY

• Select a group of students and have them prepare a bulletin board on Buddhism.

ANSWER KEY

Blackline Master 1, Pre-Test
1. Buddha
2. compassion
3. nirvana
4. Tripitaca or “Three Baskets”
5. meditation

Blackline Master 2, Viewer’s Guide
1. Hinduism
2. He encountered a Hindu holy man (Sadhu).
3. Answers will vary but may include:
a. The totality of a person’s actions in one of the successive states of his/her existence, thought of as determining his/her fate in the next existence.

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b. The Law of Conservation of Energy.
4. In a collection called the “Tripitika” or “Three Baskets,” written on palm leaves.
5. a. Theravadists are orthodox Buddhists who claim to preserve the original interpretation of the Buddha’s teachings.

b. Mahayanists incorporate a much broader interpretation of the teachings into their faith. They believe that the Buddha was a god and worship many Buddha-like deities who came to earth in the form of men.

6. Answers will vary, but may include:
a. To make their parents happy
b. So they will go to heaven
c. To learn discipline
d. To go to school

7. By offerings from the people of the community
8. a. Religious education for the people
b. Examples of right conduct
9. A spiritual oasis
10. Answers will vary but may include:
a . A way to inner peace
b. Freedom from pain
c. Realization of the nature of the mind
d. Compassion for all living things

Blackline Master 7, Vocabulary Activity

1.	D	4. H	7. J	10. E	13. K
2.	F	5. B	8. A	11. C	
3.	G	6. M	9. I	12. L	

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Blackline Master 8, Asia Activity Map



Blackline Master 8, Buddhism Post-Test

Multiple Choice

1. b
2. c
3. c
4. b
5. b

True or False

1. F	6. T
2. F	7. T
3. T	8. T
4. T	9. F
5. T	10. T

Essay:

1. Answers will vary.
2. Answers will vary

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Script of Video Narration
BUDDHISM

NARRATOR: Buddhism, like the cultures associated with it, takes many forms and reaches many people. More than just a religion, for its followers, Buddhism is a way of life.

In the year 563 B.C., a prince was born in a town near the Himalayas, in Northern India. That town, Lumbini, is now in the country of Nepal. According to legend, the birth of this prince, know as Siddartha Gautama, was accompanied by miracles. A seer predicted that a parting of the ways lay ahead. Siddartha would either become a world ruler, or if he ever saw, together or separately, a decrepit old person, a diseased person, a corpse, and a monk, he would become a homeless seeker of the truth and a Buddha, an enlightened one. His father, the Rhjah, did not want his son to become a religious leader, so the prince was brought up in palatial luxury and protected from knowledge of the outside world. He married young and had a child. Finally, however, he went out into the streets among the people and for the first time, looked upon old age, illness, and death. He sought out the nature of old age, of sickness, of sorrow, and of death. Siddartha then came upon a Hindu holy man and was deeply impressed by the saddhu's calm and peaceful nature. As a result of this encounter, at the age of twenty-nine, Siddartha left his home, his wife and child, and the promise of earthly power and glory. He took to the roads of India in search of the truth about human existence.

The prevailing religion in India at that time was Hinduism, a religion that worshipped many deities and believed that living a life of extreme hardship was the way to gain spiritual merit. As he wandered, dressed in rags and penniless, Siddartha encountered more Hindu holy men, or saddhus, who deeply impressed him with their simple lives of prayer and meditation. They lived as ascetics, having devoted their lives totally to god. He spent five years practicing extreme austerities, sometimes eating only a single grain of rice in a day, and living without shelter. At the end of this time, he realized that he was no nearer to his goal of attaining knowledge and wisdom. He abandoned the austere path of the ascetic and sat down in the shade of a bo tree to meditate.

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He said, “Let my skin wither, my hands grow numb, my bones dissolve. Until I have attained understanding, I will not rise from here.”

It was his thirty-fifth birthday and for seven weeks he sat in meditation until, at last, his plea was answered. This is the story that is told of the beginnings of one person’s spiritual journey, a journey that gave rise to the religion of Buddhism, “The Middle Way,” a path rejecting self- denial on the one hand and self-indulgence on the other.

While meditating, Siddartha had a vision. He saw beings passing away and being reborn, some into happy, and others into miserable, circumstances, according to the universal law of karma by which, it is believed, every act of good or evil will be rewarded or punished in this life, or in some other reincarnation.

EIDO ROSHI: Karma is energy, the law of conservation of energy. The law of conservation of energy means no energy will be lost. So no karma will be erased, no karma will be disappeared. What I say now is eternally recorded, what I think now, eternally recorded, what I do now will be eternally recorded. This determines our tomorrow, as well as next year, as well as next life.

NARRATOR: Because he grew up as a Hindu, Siddartha accepted the doctrine of reincarnation. He saw this cycle of rebirth as a source of human suffering. He saw that all is suffering. Birth is suffering, death is suffering, life itself is suffering. The end of this suffering then was “Nirvana,” that is, escape from rebirth. To be sure, Nirvana could not be achieved in this world. But, by attaining a state of bliss, the contentment of no longer worrying about one’s self, a person could escape the pain of life.

PEMA CHODRON: I think the fundamental wisdom of the Buddha has to do with allowing things to be as they are, and trusting that you can let things be as they are, without overlaying them with your concepts. The Buddha’s discovery was that we don’t have to create our own world. There is a world that

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doesn’t exist in our minds, that just exists. And you can trust that. You don’t always have to be manipulating and editing, and doing all these things to keep yourself from being harmed. Or to keep yourself having a great time. He said, “If you are always trying to be comfortable, if you are always seeking pleasure, if you are always trying to avoid discomfort, if you are always trying to avoid pain, you’re never going to have profound happiness or joy. Because there is a sense that you just want to have things on your own terms and you'll manipulate it as much as you can so that it comes out your way.” Well, imagine, there’s billions of people on the earth. If each one is trying to manipulate it so that it comes out on their own terms. there’s no way. That ends up in wars. That ends up in all kinds of unhappiness.

NARRATOR: As the Buddha, “The Enlightened One,” Siddartha Gautama began his teaching. In his first sermon, here in the Deer Park, near Banaras, India, he taught that what he had discovered was the noble truth of the way that leads to the cessation of pain, “The Noble Eightfold Way.” Namely, right views, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

For the rest of his life, the Buddha traveled from village to village teaching his eightfold way. The Buddha died at the age of eighty in the home of a friend who had unknowingly served him a meal prepared with poisonous mushrooms. At the end, he uttered these comforting words: In all his lifetime, two meals stood out as supreme. One was the meal he ate before he sat beneath the bo tree, after which he received enlightenment. The other was the one he consumed at the home of his dear friend, after which he would receive Nirvana.

Long after the Buddha’s death, his teachings were assembled by his followers into a collection called the “Tripitika,” or “Three Baskets,” for the writings were made on palm leaves like those used in basket making. Following the Buddha’s death, his disciples continued his work, and this widespread religious fervor resulted in a creative outpouring of great works of art. Today, Thanka painting is a beautiful form of Buddhist art. These paintings depict events in the life of the Buddha and are used as

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objects of meditation. Some Thanka paintings are so detailed that they are painted with a brush of only a single hair. Thanka artists in Nepal begin painting at a very early age with simpler designs. Metal statues of the Buddha are also a popular form of art. These are cast from brass or bronze and then carefully finished by hand. Animals figure prominently in the Buddhist faith, reflecting the belief that all life is sacred. They are the subject of sculpture and are found at temples where they are fed and well cared for.

Sacred mounds, or stupas, such as this one at Katmandu, Nepal, were built to contain Buddhist relics and remains. Many of these stupas were built as Buddhist missionaries spread the faith to other lands. These missionaries carried Buddha's story and his teachings throughout the world. Today, more than 250 million people follow his path to enlightenment, The Middle Way.

Buddhists in Thailand, Sri Lanka, Burma, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam follow what is called "Thoravada Buddhism," "The Way of the Elders." This is an orthodox form of Buddhism, claiming to preserve the original interpretation of the Buddha's teachings, as taught by the senior monks of the Sangha, the monastic order founded by the Buddha. Thoravadists believe that the Buddha was a great teacher, rather than a god, and that they can bring about their own salvation by following the Buddha's example. Within Buddhist temples and monasteries throughout Thailand and Burma, nearly all young men spend a few months of their lives in intense training as monks.

MONK: Before Thai men marry, they will go in the temple. They become monks; it is the custom in Thailand. They believe here that the custom can make their parents happy and then when they die, they believe they can go to heaven.

NARRATOR: Called novices until they are ordained at the age of twenty, these young men learn discipline, in their lives and in their studies. While in school, they study the fundamentals of Buddhism as well as secular subjects such as English and math. The school is usually connected to a temple. In Thailand, Buddhist temple complexes are called "wats." Following their

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schooling, the young men then enter the monastery for several months of training in the Buddhist way of life, a life of monastic tasks, mediation, and study. The regular members of the monastery belong to the great brotherhood of monks known as the Sangha, which distinguishes Thoravada from the other main division of Buddhism. Their monastic life is spent in such disciplined activities as ceremony and prayer. In this ceremony, the monks chant while the people bring food as gifts for the monks. This is part of a great celebration marking the anniversary of the full moon when the Buddha preached his first sermon. After the ceremony, the novices collect the food and distribute it among themselves and the monks.

In Thailand, even the military participates in religious activities. On the night of the full moon, the soldiers come, along with many other people, to make offerings of flowers and incense and to hear the chief monk of the temple speak. Later, people come to light candles and incense and to chant and pray. Sworn to poverty, the monks receive their food, clothing, and other needs from the people, who gain religious merit through such offerings. Here, several monks return to the temple at sunrise after their early rounds to receive food. They do not beg. The food is offered gladly by the faithful. Solid food is forbidden the monks in the afternoon and evening, for Buddha warned that he who becomes fat is born into suffering again and again.

MONK: We take food two times as monks, in the morning and lunch. Other times, we do not eat, we do not take food because that is a rule of the Buddha. We can take water and coffee, but food, I cannot take food.

NARRATOR: In return for supporting the religious community, the people receive their religious education and examples of right conduct from the monks. Following these examples, the people lead lives of great simplicity, serenity, and dignity, and achieve happiness through gentleness and kindness toward others, characteristic of Buddhists everywhere.

Another great branch of Buddhism, known as “Mahayana,” or the “Large Vehicle,” is practiced in Japan, Korea, China,

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Mongolia, Korea, Tibet, and Nepal. It is called the "Large Vehicle" because it incorporates a much wider range of principles and teachings than Thoravada Buddhism. The path of Mahayana Buddhism teaches that the Buddha was a god and pays homage to a host of Buddha-like deities who came to earth in the form of men. Unlike the Thoravadists, Mahayanists believe they can be saved by their faith in these gods. Here at the great Swyambunath stupa in Katmandu, Nepal, people come to pray. Sometimes this takes the form of turning prayer wheels. These wheels are inscribed with hundreds of prayers. By turning them, it is believed that these prayers are sent to heaven. The path to the stupa, like that of life, is step and arduous. At the top, the faithful walk around the stupa turning prayer wheels and chanting.

In Nepal, Buddhism and Hinduism are almost indistinguishable. Hindus in Nepal believe that the Buddha was an incarnation of Vishnu, one of the principal deities of Hinduism. Here, at Swayambunath, a Hindu temple is built in the midst of the second most holy Buddhist site in Nepal. The two co-exist in perfect harmony. Mahayanists tell how the Buddha once took some leaves and told his disciples that, as these leaves were not all the leaves in the forest, neither were his teachings all of the truth. From the principles told by this story, Mahayanists allowed for a broader interpretation of the teachings of Buddhism than the Thoravadists.

In Japan, many Buddhists believe there is "a pure land in the west" where Buddha-like deities preside. The Buddha Amida is the chief god of this paradise. There are many Pure Land temples in Japan which house these Buddhist deities. On special days, chants and music are performed to honor these divine beings. On the Buddha's birthday, small shrines called "flower temples" are set up where the faithful can bathe the image of Buddha with water.

Yet another form of Japanese Buddhism is Zen, with its ideals of simplicity, harmony and tranquility. Zen Buddhism is reflected in a variety of ways, such as in this Japanese floral arrangement, a pure, simple expression of beauty. Zen monks lead a life of great discipline and simplicity. They believe that enlight-

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enment can come in a flash of revelation, but much spiritual work is done while waiting for that revelation. Zen monks frequently begin their training when they are quite young.

EIDO ROSHI: I was born into relatively materialistic family, but my parents are very faithful Buddhists, and I was watching their lives, when I was a child. And when I became a certain age I realized that for them it was very important to have religion-like the oasis in the desert. Otherwise you may work and make money and live comfortable civilized life, but still just traveling in a desert, an endless desert. But we do need an oasis and to me like my parents religion is an indispensable oasis.

NARRATOR: Zen monks live in temples and monasteries often surrounded by beautiful gardens designed specifically to quiet the mind and assist the monks in achieving deep meditation. Much of their lives is spent in prayer, meditation, chanting, and other rituals. Popular today in the Western world, Zen and other Buddhist writings and philosophies have found an enthusiastic following in areas of the United States.

PEMA CHODRON: If someone asked me, and actually people have asked me, why are we here. Particularly because they were feeling a lot of despair, I mean that can be just a philosophical, contemplative question, which it is, say among religious groups, traditions, and thoughtful people of any kind. But suppose someone asked that question out of despair. Particularly in that case, I would say that I have no idea why we are here. But I would encourage them to find out. And it like adds spice to life. And I would say from my own experience, I guarantee you that trying to find out the answer to that question will give meaning to your life. Particularly if you never find out why.

NARRATOR: Another Buddhist tradition to find favor in the West is the Tantric Buddhism of Tibet. This form of Buddhism developed after the teachings of the Buddha migrated from India into the mountainous regions of Tibet. The teachings of the Buddha combined with the nature worship of the native Tibetan people and formed a powerful synthesis of the two belief systems. Tantric Buddhists rely upon prayers and incan-

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tation to guide their religious life. There is a belief in magic formulas to ward off evil and bring good fortune. Since the Chinese Communists have taken over Tibet, many Tibetans have been forced to flee to Nepal and India for personal and religious freedom. At the Buddhanath stupa in Katmandu, Nepal, an entire Tibetan community has grown up around the stupa. The people here practice their religious rituals throughout the day. At a nearby Tibetan Buddhist Monastery, monks live, work, and worship. As in Hinduism, the guru, or spiritual teacher, plays a central role. That is why the lama, literally "the higher one," plays such an important part in Tibetan Buddhism.

Jongon Kontrol Rinpoche is a Tibetan Buddhist High Lama, or Tulku, one who has become master of his own fate and has escaped the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. The Rinpoche was asked what it means to be a Buddhist.

JONGON KONTROL RINPOCHE: Instead of relying on external things, outside material things as the source of happiness, the source of the mind becoming completely free from confusion, and from pain, Buddhism provides the opportunity to turn inwardly and simply realize the nature of the mind, which inherently, which in itself, is free from pain, free from confusion, and suffering. The opportunity to experience that freedom, which is provided through the Buddhist path, is what it means to be a Buddhist.

NARRATOR: As you have seen, there are many different paths trod by the Buddhist faithful and each one possesses characteristics of its own. Each is a reflection of those lands from which the faith took hold and developed. But all share faith in the Buddha, a belief in the virtues he taught, and hope for the bliss and perfect peace of Nirvana. In the words of the Buddha, "May we all be blessed with peace always. All creatures weak and strong, all creatures great and small, creatures seen and unseen, dwelling near or far, born or awaiting birth. May all be blessed with peace!"

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Buddhism
from the *Religions of the World Series*
Cat. No. 1714
ISBN No. 1-558443-456-2