

Buddha's Travels

A Case of East Asian Cultural Diffusion

One culture's religio-philosophical system spread and was eventually adapted by other cultures.



Debating the DOCUMENTS

Interpreting Alternative Viewpoints
in Primary Source Documents

Buddha's Travels

A Case of East Asian Cultural Diffusion

The 2017 World History Course and Exam Description of the College Board Advanced Placement Program* lists five themes that it urges teachers to use in organizing their teaching. Each World History *Debating the Documents* booklet focuses on one or two of these five themes.

The Five Themes

- 1. Interaction between humans and the environment.** (demography and disease; migration; patterns of settlement; technology)
- 2. Development and interaction of cultures.** (religions; belief systems, philosophies, and ideologies; science and technology; the arts and architecture)
- 3. State-building, expansion, and conflict.** (political structures and forms of governance; empires; nations and nationalism; revolts and revolutions; regional, transregional, and global structures and organizations)
- 4. Creation, expansion, and interaction of economic systems.** (agricultural and pastoral production; trade and commerce; labor systems; industrialization; capitalism and socialism)
- 5. Development and transformation of social structures.** (gender roles and relations; family and kinship; racial and ethnic constructions; social and economic classes)

This Booklet's Main Theme:

2 Development and interaction of cultures.

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Teacher Introduction

★ Using Primary Sources

Primary sources are called “primary” because they are first-hand records of a past era or historical event. They are the raw materials, or the evidence, on which historians base their “secondary” accounts of the past.

A rapidly growing number of history teachers today are using primary sources. Why? Perhaps it’s because primary sources give students a better sense of what history is and what historians do. Such sources also help students see the past from a variety of viewpoints. Moreover, primary sources make history vivid and bring it to life.

However, primary sources are not easy to use. They can be confusing. They can be biased. They rarely all agree. Primary sources must be interpreted and set in context. To do this, students need historical background knowledge. *Debating the Documents* helps students handle such challenges by giving them a useful framework for analyzing sources that conflict with one another.



*“Multiple,
conflicting
perspectives are
among the truths
of history.
No single
objective or
universal account
could ever put an
end to this endless
creative dialogue
within and
between the past
and the present.”*

From the 2011 Statement on Standards
of Professional Conduct of the Council of
the American Historical Association.

★ *The Debating the Documents Series*

Each *Debating the Documents* booklet includes the same sequence of reproducible worksheets. If students use several booklets over time, they will get regular practice at interpreting and comparing conflicting sources. In this way, they can learn the skills and habits needed to get the most out of primary sources.

Each *Debating the Documents* Booklet Includes

- **Suggestions for the Student and an Introductory Essay.** The student gets instructions and a one-page essay providing background on the booklet's topic. A time line on the topic is also included.
- **Two Groups of Contrasting Primary Source Documents.** In most of the booklets, students get one pair of visual sources and one pair of written sources. In some cases, more than two are provided for each. Background is provided on each source. *Within each group, the sources clash in a very clear way.* (The sources are not always exact opposites, but they do always differ in some obvious way.)
- **Three Worksheets for Each Document Group.** Students use the first two worksheets to take notes on the sources. The third worksheet asks which source the student thinks would be most useful to a historian.
- **One DBQ.** On page 20, a document-based question (DBQ) asks students to write an effective essay using all of the booklet's primary sources.

★ *How to Use This Booklet*

1. Have students read “Suggestions for the Student” and the Introductory Essay.

Give them copies of pages 5–7. Ask them to read the instructions and then read the introductory essay on the topic. The time line gives them additional information on that topic. This reading could be done in class or as a homework assignment.

2. Have students do the worksheets.

Make copies of the worksheets and the pages with the sources. Ask students to study the background information on each source and the source itself. Then have them take notes on the sources using the worksheets. If students have access to a computer, have them review the primary sources digitally.

NOTE: If you are using these materials with an AP world history class, an honors class, or some other group of advanced and/or more knowledgeable students, you may want to make more written sources available to them on this topic. Do a basic Internet search for sources that provide additional perspectives and then add to the sources provided here.

3. “Debate the documents” as a class.

Have students use their worksheet notes to debate the primary source documents as a class. Urge students to follow these ground rules:

- Use your worksheets as a guide for the discussion or debate.
- Try to reach agreement about the main ideas and the significance of each primary source document.
- Look for points of agreement as well as disagreement between the primary sources.
- Listen closely to all points of view about each primary source.
- Focus on the usefulness of each source to the historian, not merely on whether you agree or disagree with that source’s point of view.

4. Have students do the final DBQ.

A DBQ is an essay question about a set of primary source documents. To answer the DBQ, students write essays using evidence from the sources and their own background knowledge of the historical era. (See the next page for a DBQ scoring guide to use in evaluating these essays.)

The DBQ assignment on page 20 includes guidelines for writing a DBQ essay. Here are some additional points to make with students about preparing to write this kind of essay.

The DBQ for this Booklet (see page 20):

Buddhism began in India. However, it did not remain confined to India. It spread to many other, very different cultures in Asia and elsewhere. Why do you think it was able to do this?

- Analyze the question carefully.
- Use your background knowledge to set sources in their historical context.
- Question and interpret sources actively. Do not accept them at face value.
- Use sources meaningfully to support your essay’s thesis.
- Pay attention to the overall organization of your essay.

★ *Complete DBQ Scoring Guide*

Use this guide in evaluating the DBQ for this booklet. Use this scoring guide with students who are already familiar with using primary sources and writing DBQ essays.

Excellent Essay

- Offers a clear answer or thesis explicitly addressing all aspects of the essay question.
- Does a careful job of interpreting many or most of the documents and relating them clearly to the thesis and the DBQ. Deals with conflicting documents effectively.
- Uses details and examples effectively to support the thesis and other main ideas. Explains the significance of those details and examples well.
- Uses background knowledge and the documents in a balanced way.
- Is well written; clear transitions make the essay easy to follow from point to point. Only a few minor writing errors or errors of fact.

Good Essay

- Offers a reasonable thesis addressing the essential points of the essay question.
- Adequately interprets at least some of the documents and relates them to the thesis and the DBQ.
- Usually relates details and examples meaningfully to the thesis or other main ideas.
- Includes some relevant background knowledge.
- May have some writing errors or errors of fact, as long as these do not invalidate the essay's overall argument or point of view.

Fair Essay

- Offers at least a partly developed thesis addressing the essay question.
- Adequately interprets at least a few of the documents.
- Relates only a few of the details and examples to the thesis or other main ideas.
- Includes some background knowledge.
- Has several writing errors or errors of fact that make it harder to understand the essay's overall argument or point of view.

Poor Essay

- Offers no clear thesis or answer addressing the DBQ.
- Uses few documents effectively other than referring to them in “laundry list” style, with no meaningful relationship to a thesis or any main point.
- Uses details and examples unrelated to the thesis or other main ideas. Does not explain the significance of these details and examples.
- Is not clearly written, with some major writing errors or errors of fact.

Suggestions to the Student

★ *Using Primary Sources*

A primary source is any record of evidence from the past. Many things are primary sources: letters, diary entries, official documents, photos, cartoons, wills, maps, charts, etc. They are called “primary” because they are first-hand records of a past event or time period. This *Debating the Documents* lesson is based on two groups of primary source documents. Within each group, the sources conflict with one another. That is, they express different or even opposed points of view. You need to decide which source is more reliable, more useful, or more typical of the time period. This is what historians do all the time. Usually, you will be able to learn something about the past from each source, even when the sources clash with one another in dramatic ways.

★ *How to Use This Booklet*

1. Read the one-page introductory essay.

This gives you background information that will help you analyze the primary source documents and do the exercises for this *Debating the Documents* lesson. The time line gives you additional information you will find helpful.



2. Study the primary source documents for this lesson.

For this lesson, you get two groups of sources. The sources within each group conflict with one another. Some of these sources are visuals, others are written sources. With visual sources, pay attention not only to the image’s “content” (its subject matter) but also to its artistic style, shading, composition, camera angle, symbols, and other features that add to the image’s meaning. With written sources, notice the writing style, bias, even what the source leaves out or does not talk about. Think about each source’s author, that author’s reasons for writing, and the likely audience for the source. These considerations give you clues as to the source’s historical value.

3. Use the worksheets to analyze each group of primary source documents.

For each group of sources, you get three worksheets. Use the “Study the Document” worksheets to take notes on each source. Use the “Comparing the Documents” worksheet to decide which of the sources would be most useful to a historian.

4. As a class, debate the documents.

Use your worksheet notes to help you take part in this debate.

5. Do the final DBQ.

“DBQ” means “document-based question.” A DBQ is a question along with several primary source documents. To answer the DBQ, write an essay using evidence from the documents and your own background history knowledge.

Buddha's Travels

According to tradition, Buddhism began sometime in the fifth century BCE. That was when Siddhartha Gautama supposedly attained spiritual enlightenment and began to show others the way to the truth he had discovered. From that time on, he was called “the Buddha,” or “the enlightened one.”

Siddhartha Gautama was born to a princely family in a part of India that is now Nepal. He gave up his life of protected luxury to seek a deeper and more permanent liberation. To Buddha, the things of this world are illusions. Our desires trap us in powerful attachments to these things and to our own individual selves. Buddha taught that if we overcome desire and illusion, we can attain a higher happiness or enlightenment, a calmness free of suffering. This higher state Buddha called “nirvana.”

To reach this enlightenment, Buddha preached a life of wisdom, mental discipline, and moral living he called “the Middle Way.” As this name suggests, it was a path between extreme self-indulgence and sensual pleasure on the one hand, and strict self-denial on the other. The practice of this Middle Way was to guide Buddhists throughout their lives.

At least at first, Buddhism was not a “theocratic religion.” That is, Buddha was a teacher and a spiritual wise man, not a god. This did not remain the view of all Buddhists. Buddhism was to take many forms as it grew and spread. The sources in this booklet will give you just a start in understanding and appreciating the many forms Buddhism took.

Buddhism soon split into various schools, and it spread throughout India in the centuries following Buddha's death. Buddhist monks and others also carried it to many other lands outside of India. Some took it up into Central Asia and then to China along the “Silk Road” trade routes north of the Himalayan Mountains. It later found its way

into Korea and Japan as well. Buddhism was also carried to Burma and some parts of Southeast Asia. Later, one form of it moved from Sri Lanka to other parts of Southeast Asia.

Buddhism in India flowered during the reign of Ashoka in the third century BCE. Within India, Buddhism attracted people in part because of their discontent with Hindu priests and rituals and with the social divisions of India's caste system. Buddhism preached that all could attain enlightenment no matter how low their caste. In time, Hinduism itself reformed and even made Buddha one form of the Hindu god Vishnu. Buddhism itself tended to fade in importance in India. Later, Muslim invaders took over parts of India and further weakened Buddhism's hold there.

The movement of Buddhism into other societies is an example of what historians call “cultural diffusion.” Cultural diffusion is the transfer of ideas, art forms, goods, technology, etc., from one culture to another. It is a key theme of world history, and it is more complicated than it may seem. No item is simply taken from one culture to another. It must be adapted by the receiving culture. When this happens, it is often changed in major ways to fit with the receiving culture's overall patterns.

For example, when Buddhism entered China, it had to adapt to China's more centralized imperial system and to Confucianism, with its emphasis on family, respect for ancestors, and the stability of the social order. Certain forms of Buddhism did better in China than others—for instance, Pure Land Buddhism or Chan (Zen) Buddhism. The sources here include examples of Pure Land Buddhism. These sources and the others will help you begin to understand and discuss the cultural diffusion of Buddhism. The sources deal with this diffusion throughout Asia in the 1,500 years or so after the birth of Siddhartha Gautama.

The Spread of Buddhism Time Line

560 BCE



Possible date for Siddhartha Gautama's birth. (Some research suggests his actual birth date is about 70 years later than this.)

528 BCE



Traditional date for when Gautama attains enlightenment and, as Buddha, begins teaching the *Dharma*, the correct understanding of higher truths.

400–200 BCE



Around 383 BCE, a major Buddhist council deals with splits among Buddhists. In 325 BCE, Alexander the Great conquers northern India and leaves lasting Greek cultural influences there. Buddhism begins to spread into Central Asia. Emperor Ashoka rules much of India from 272–231 BCE. He converts to Buddhism and sends missionaries to spread its message outside of India. Ashoka inscribes several edicts in support of Buddhism on pillars and other objects in various places around India. Around 220 BCE, Ashoka's son Mahinda introduces Theravada Buddhism to Sri Lanka.

200 BCE–1 CE



An Indo-Greek kingdom extends Hellenic, or Greek, influence into India. It covers various parts of northern India from 180 BCE to around CE 10. Buddhism flourishes under some of its kings. Sometime in the first century BCE, the standard scriptures of Theravada Buddhism are completed and written down at a council in Sri Lanka. Inscriptions in Dunhuang along the Silk Road suggest that Chinese Emperor Han Wudi (156–87 BCE) had received some golden Buddhist statues.

1–200 CE



Liu Ying, as the Prince of Chu, sponsors Buddhism in CE 65, the first documented case of Buddhism being practiced in China. A Buddhist council is held in Kashmir in the first century CE. It is seen as the point at which the Mahayana tradition of Buddhism was systematized. Theravada, the other major Buddhist tradition, does not recognize the work of this council. In China in the second century, the Theravada and the Mahayana texts are translated into Chinese. In these centuries, Indian Buddhists settle in Southeast Asia.

200–600 CE



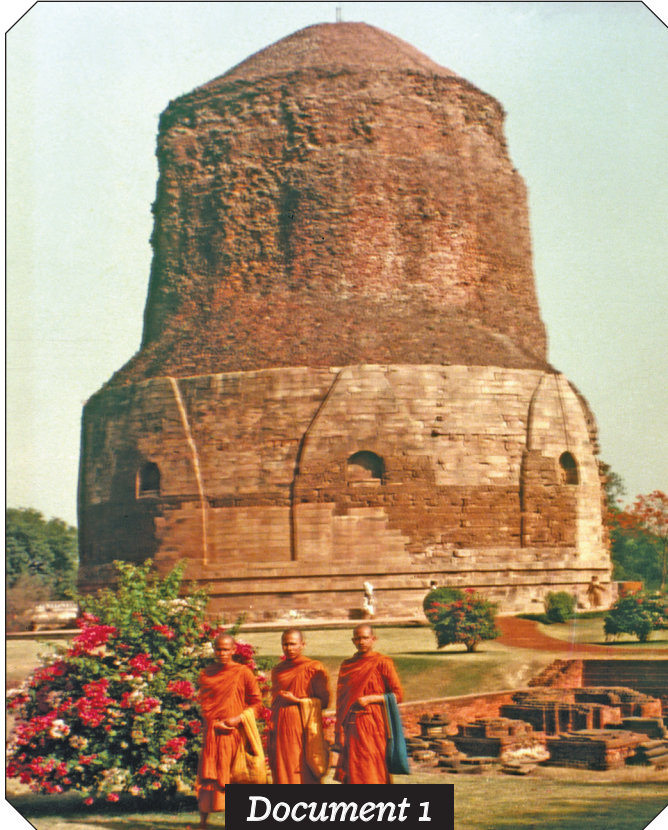
From around CE 320 to 600, the Gupta Empire in northern India thrives. This is often called a golden age for India, a time when science, mathematics, Buddhist philosophy, and art flourish. As commerce and trade grow, Buddhism takes root in many parts of Southeast Asia and Indonesia. In 372, Chinese monks bring Buddhism to Korea. In 552, Buddhism is brought to Japan from Korea. Various forms of Buddhism develop in China, including Tiantai in the sixth century. Many historians see Tiantai as the first truly Chinese form of Buddhism. The Pure Land sects and Chan (Zen) Buddhism also emerge in these centuries. In the seventh century, Buddhism is established in Tibet. Meanwhile, Buddhism will begin to fade in India itself.

600–900 CE



China's Tang Dynasty (618–907) is considered a golden age of Buddhism in China. In the eighth century, Buddhism becomes Japan's state religion. In 845, the Chinese emperor attempts to suppress Buddhism. This is a setback. Nevertheless, Buddhism will continue to thrive in China and throughout Asia for many centuries to come.

Visual Primary Source Documents 1 & 2



The Granger Collection, New York



The Granger Collection, New York

Information on Documents 1 & 2

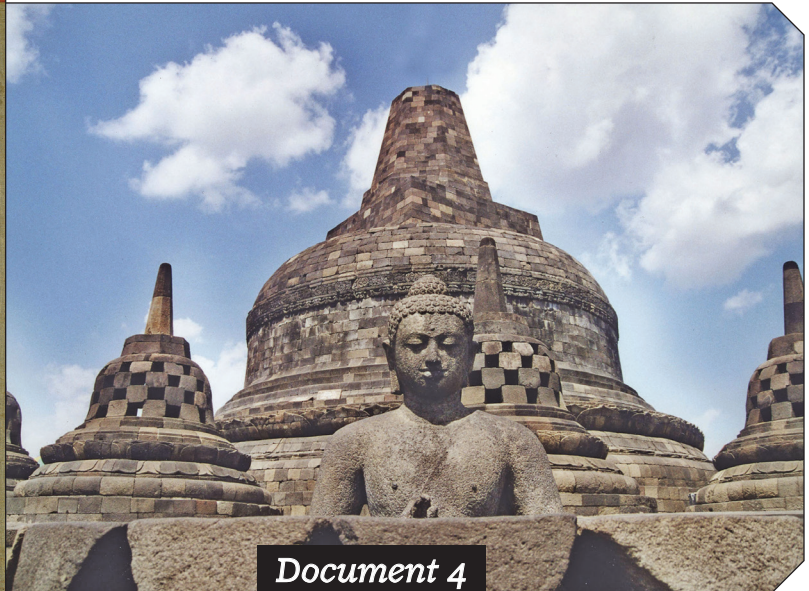
Document 1 shows a stupa built by Ashoka in 249 BCE in Benares, India. Ashoka ruled the Mauryan empire and ruthlessly expanded it to much of India. He later began to support Buddhism. He left stupas and pillars inscribed with edicts in many parts of India. These edicts are the first written evidence of Buddhism, though they stress moral and social issues more than religious matters. This stupa marks the spot where Buddha is said to have given his first sermon after attaining enlightenment.

Document 2 is a statue of Buddha from the first or second century CE in Gandhara (now northwestern Pakistan). This is an early depiction of Buddha as a man or a man-god. Following Alexander the Great's conquests in India (327–325 BCE), several Hellenistic kingdoms ruled in Central Asia and northern India. Buddhism also flourished in these regions, given a boost by Ashoka's missionary efforts. Gandhara was a Buddhist state. Hellenistic Greek and Roman contacts seem to have influenced Buddhism in this region, as this statue's artistic style suggests.

Visual Primary Source Documents 3 & 4



The Granger Collection, New York



The Granger Collection, New York

Information on Documents 3 & 4

Document 3. In this early tenth century CE Chinese work of art, bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara leads the soul of a female devotee to the halls of paradise. The aristocratic lady behind him wears a coat with decorative features common in the late Tang dynasty. A bodhisattva in Buddhism is one who is already enlightened, but remains in this world to help others reach enlightenment. A work like this was probably offered by a deceased person's family to ease the passage of the soul to paradise.

Document 4. Borobudur is a Buddhist shrine in central Java, Indonesia. It was built in the ninth century CE. It is designed as a kind of spiritual mountain. Those seeking enlightenment are to climb it level by level. On the lower levels, they pass many pagodas, stupas, and other features. At the top, they encounter one enormous stupa, shown here. In this way, their path leads symbolically from the multiplicity of this world to the oneness of the higher consciousness Buddhists strive to attain.

Study the Documents: Visual Sources 1 & 2

Instructions: Take notes on these questions. Use your notes to discuss the documents and answer the DBQ.

1 Main Idea or Topic _____

Using only these two visual images, describe what you can about Buddhism and what seems most important about Buddhism.

2 Visual Features — Doc. 1 _____

What key visual features of this stupa or of the monks in front of it give you the idea of Buddhism you stated above?

3 Visual Features — Doc. 2 _____

One historian says this statue of Buddha reminds him more of the Greek gods than of other images of Buddha. What features do you think make him feel this way?

4 Compare and Contrast _____

If you only had these two images to go by, how would you say Buddhism was changing from the time of Ashoka in India to the first century CE in Central Asia?

Study the Documents: Visual Sources 3 & 4

Instructions: Take notes on these questions. Use your notes to discuss the documents and answer the DBQ.

1 Visual Features—Doc. 3

What key visual features of the two figures in this illustration help tell you this is a Chinese work of art? Do you think it is still true to the real spirit of Buddhism? Why or why not?

2 Visual Features—Doc. 4

How does the design of this Borobudur temple help get across the key ideas of Buddhism? How does this temple's style differ from that of the stupa in Visual Source Document 1?

3 Compare and Contrast

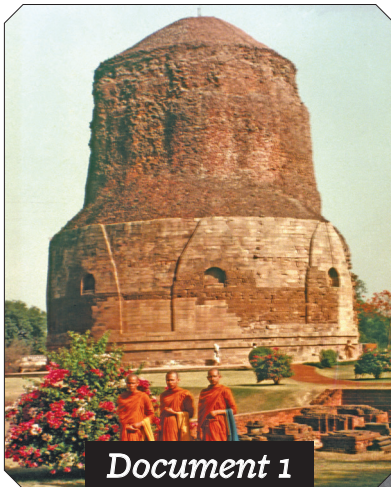
If you only had these four images to go by, how would you describe the development of Buddhism as it spread from India to Central Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia in the 1,500 years or so after Siddhartha Gautama lived?

Comparing the Documents

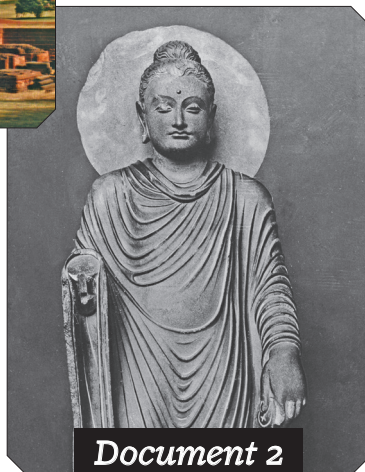
★ *The Visual Sources*

Answer the question by checking one box below. Then complete the statements on the Comparison Essay worksheet. Use all your notes to help you take part in an all-class debate about these documents—and to answer the final DBQ for the lesson.

Which of these primary source documents would be most useful to a historian trying to understand the diffusion of Buddhism throughout Central Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia?



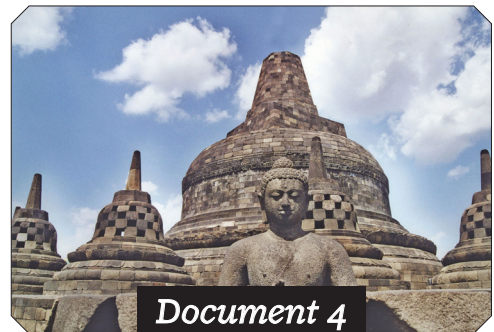
The Granger Collection, New York



The Granger Collection, New York



The Granger Collection, New York



The Granger Collection, New York

Documents 1 & 2 ☐

Documents 3 & 4 ☐

Comparison Essay

I chose Documents _____ because:

*I did **not** choose Documents _____.*

However, a historian still might use the documents in the following way:

Keep this in mind: Some sources are very biased. A biased source is one that shows you only one side of an issue. That is, it takes a clear stand or expresses a very strong opinion about something. A biased source may be one-sided, but it can still help you to understand its time period. For example, a biased editorial cartoon may show how people felt about an issue at the time. The usefulness of a source depends most of all on what questions you ask about that time in the past.

Written Primary Source Document 1

Information on Document 1

This passage is from Chapter 12 of *The Gospel of Buddha*, compiled from ancient records by Paul Carus, 1894. The key insight of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, was that all suffering was due to attachments and desires. Desires can only be satisfied temporarily. Yet ignorance and illusion lead human beings to focus on the self and to strive constantly after these false and fleeting satisfactions. Buddha's "Four Noble Truths" are meant to clarify this reality and offer a way out of it. Siddhartha Gautama never left a written account of his ideas. To grasp them, we must rely on later Buddhist writings, such as this passage based on various Buddhist records.

Document 1

The cause of all sorrow lies at the very beginning; it is hidden in the ignorance from which life grows. Remove ignorance and you will destroy the wrong appetences [longings or desires] that rise from ignorance; destroy these appetences and you will wipe out the wrong perception that rises from them. Destroy wrong perception and there is an end of errors in individualized beings. Destroy the error in individualized beings and [illusions] . . . will disappear. Destroy illusions and the contact with things will cease to beget misconception. Destroy misconception and you do away with thirst. Destroy thirst and you will be free of all morbid cleaving. Remove the cleaving and you destroy the selfishness of selfhood. If the selfishness of selfhood is destroyed you will be above birth, old age, disease, and death, and you will escape all suffering.

The enlightened One saw the four noble truths which point out the path that leads to Nirvana or the extinction of self:

The first noble truth is the existence of sorrow.

The second noble truth is the cause of suffering.

The third noble truth is cessation of sorrow.

The fourth noble truth is the eightfold path that leads to the cessation of sorrow.

This is the Dharma. This is the truth. This is religion. . . . There is self and there is truth. Where self is, truth is not. Where truth is, self is not. Self is the fleeting error of samsara; it is individual separateness and that egotism which begets envy and hatred. Self is the yearning for pleasure and the lust after vanity. Truth is the correct comprehension of things; it is the permanent and everlasting, the real in all existence, the bliss of righteousness. The existence of self is an illusion, and there is no wrong in this world, no vise, no evil, except what flows from the assertion of self.

Written Primary Source Document 2

Information on Document 2

Pure Land Buddhism stresses devotion to a monk who reached enlightenment and became the Buddha Amitayus (or Amitabha). This form of Buddhism preaches that through faith in Amitabha, one will be reborn in the Pure Land to live in peace until entering nirvana. Pure Land Buddhism is a branch of Mahayana Buddhism. It began in northern India and became one of the most popular schools of Buddhism in China. It also spread to Vietnam, Korea, and Japan. This passage is from the *Pure Land Sutra (smaller version)*. A sutra is a record of what is said to be an oral teaching of Buddha. In this passage, Buddha speaks about the Pure Land (or a land of “Utmost Bliss”) to Shariputra, one of his first disciples. (Based on a translation from Chinese by Hisao Inagaki.)

Document 2

2. The Bhagavat [Buddha] said to Shariputra: “Shariputra: Do you know that if you travel westward from here, passing [numberless] Buddha-lands, you come to the land called ‘Utmost Bliss,’ where there is a Bhagavat named Amitayus or Amitabha. . . . He is living there at this very moment, teaching the profound and wonderful Dharma to sentient beings to give them supreme benefit and bliss.

3. “Why, Shariputra, is that land called ‘Utmost Bliss’? Shariputra, beings in that land suffer no afflictions and pain but experience only pure immeasurable joy and happiness. For this reason, that land is called ‘Utmost Bliss.’

.....

5. . . . “Again, Shariputra, if good men or women of pure faith, having heard Amitayus Buddha’s name of innumerable, boundless and inconceivable merits and also heard of the glorious adornments of the Land of

Utmost Bliss, concentrate their thoughts on them with undistracted mind even for one day, two days, three, four, five, six or seven days, then, at the hour of death, Amitayus, surrounded by innumerable Sravaka disciples and bodhisattvas, will appear before those good men or women and give them compassionate protection to keep their minds from falling into confusion. Thus, after death, following the Buddha Amitayus and his retinue, they will be born in his Pure Land of Utmost Bliss.

“Shariputra, as I perceive that such blissful benefits are matters of great importance, I pronounce these words of truth: Good men and good women of pure faith who hear Amitayus Buddha’s name of inconceivable merits and also learn of the pure Buddha-land of Utmost Bliss should all receive [the teaching] in faith, arouse aspiration, practice the method as prescribed, and attain birth in that Buddha-land.”

Study the Document: Written Source 1

Instructions: Take notes on these questions. Use your notes to discuss the documents and answer the DBQ.

1 Main Idea or Topic _____

The first paragraph in this passage is basically about the second and third of Buddha's four noble truths. In your own words, sum up what this paragraph says about the "cause of suffering" and the "cessation of sorrow."

2 Background Knowledge _____

Buddha's fourth truth here is his "eightfold path." What do you know about this eightfold path? Explain as much of it as you can here.

3 Interpreting Meanings _____

At several points, this passage deals with the idea of the individual self and the need to overcome it in some way. At one point, it claims "Where truth is, self is not." Use other parts of this passage and your own words to explain what you think this means.

Study the Document: Written Source 2

Instructions: Take notes on these questions. Use your notes to discuss the documents and answer the DBQ.

1 Main Idea or Topic

In your own words, briefly explain what the land of “Utmost Bliss” is and who gets to go there.

2 Compare and Contrast

Compare this passage’s version of the goal of Buddhism to that expressed in Written Source Document 1. Choose one or two lines from each source that highlight the key differences.

3 What Else Can You Infer?

Some say Pure Land Buddhism appeals to more people because it stresses simple piety and obedience instead of more demanding forms of meditation and self-discipline. Can you infer this from this passage? Why or why not?

4 Background Knowledge

Based on what you know of China during the Tang and Song Dynasty, why do you think Pure Land Buddhism became so popular there?

Comparing the Documents

★ *The Written Sources*

Answer the question by checking one box below. Then complete the statements on the Comparison Essay worksheet. Use all your notes to help you take part in an all-class debate about these documents—and to answer the final DBQ for the lesson.

Which of these primary source documents would be most useful to a historian trying to understand the diffusion of Buddhism throughout Central Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia?

*A passage from
“The Gospel of Buddha,”
by Paul Carus,
summarizing
Buddha’s ideas about
suffering and his
“Four Noble Truths.”*

Document 1

☐

*A portion of the
“Pure Land Sutra
(smaller version)” in which
Buddha speaks about the
Pure Land to Shariputra,
one of his first disciples.*

Document 2

☐

Comparison Essay

I chose Documents _____ because:

*I did **not** choose Documents _____.*

However, a historian still might use the documents in the following way:

Keep this in mind: Some sources are very biased. A biased source is one that shows you only one side of an issue. That is, it takes a clear stand or expresses a very strong opinion about something. A biased source may be one-sided, but it can still help you to understand its time period. For example, a biased editorial cartoon may show how people felt about an issue at the time. The usefulness of a source depends most of all on what questions you ask about that time in the past.

Document-Based Question

Your task is to answer a document-based question (DBQ) on the diffusion of Buddhism throughout East Asia and beyond. In a DBQ, you use your analysis of primary source documents and your knowledge of history to write a brief essay answering the question. Using all four sets of documents, answer this question. Below are two DBQs. The first is somewhat less demanding than the second. Use whichever DBQ your teacher assigns.

Document-Based Question

1

Buddhism began in India. However, it did not remain confined to India. It spread to many other, very different cultures in Asia and elsewhere. Why do you think it was able to do this?

OR

2

“Buddhism spread from India to many other lands. Like any cultural tradition or set of beliefs, it could only do this by being adaptable to the traditions and beliefs of the societies accepting it.” Do the sources here illustrate this statement? Why or why not?

Below is a checklist of key suggestions for writing a DBQ essay. Next to each item, jot down a few notes to guide you in writing the DBQ. Use extra sheets to write a four- or five-paragraph essay.

- *Introductory Paragraph*
Does the paragraph clarify the DBQ itself? Does it present a clear thesis, or overall answer, to that DBQ?
- *The Internal Paragraphs—1*
Are these paragraphs organized around main points with details supporting those main ideas? Do all these main ideas support the thesis in the introductory paragraph?
- *The Internal Paragraphs—2*
Are all of your main ideas and key points linked in a logical way? That is, does each idea follow clearly from those that went before? Does it add something new and helpful in clarifying your thesis?
- *Use of Primary Source Documents*
Are they simply mentioned in a “laundry list” fashion? Or are they used thoughtfully to support main ideas and the thesis?
- *Concluding Paragraph*
Does it restate the DBQ and thesis in a way that sums up the main ideas without repeating old information or going into new details?

Worksheet Answers and Guidelines

Some worksheet questions call for specific answers to factual questions. In these cases, correct answers are provided here. Most worksheet questions are open-ended and call on students to offer their own interpretations and personal reactions. In those cases, we offer suggestions based on the purpose of the question and the sort of interpretive activity it calls for.

Worksheet 1

Visual Sources 1 & 2

1. This is a completely open-ended question of interpretation.
2. It is massive, solid, simple, as are the monks, etc.
3. The flowing garment revealing the natural human form. The Greeks depicted their gods as serious or solemn, but also as human-like in every way.
4. Answers could vary, but students might point out the plain, more abstract look of the stupa compared with Doc. 2's emphasis on Buddha as a figure, the impact of outside cultural forces in shaping ideas about Buddha, etc.

Worksheet 2

Visual Sources 3 & 4

1. The clothing on the figures, their facial features, the artistic style, etc.
2. The temple goes from more complex lower stages to higher and simpler ones, hinting at Buddhism's stress on letting go of many things in the attainment of a non-personal spiritual state of oneness, etc.
3. Answers can vary, but should be based on the images themselves and the background information provided.

Worksheet 3

Written Source 1

1. Answers should try to connect ignorance to attachment or desire as the source of suffering, and a selfless giving up of illusions and desires as the way to escape suffering.
2. Answers here will vary depending on background knowledge.
3. Answers will vary. Encourage students to stick closely to phrases and ways of describing self and selflessness in the text itself.

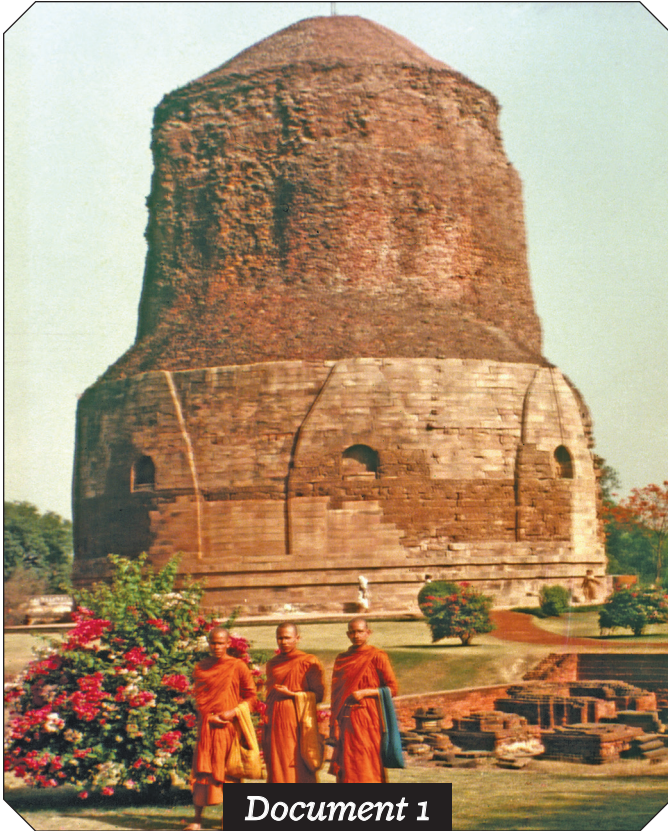
Worksheet 4

Written Source 2

1. A land of perfect joy where people go after death if they have meditated on the Amitayas Buddha's name and "merits."
2. Students simply choose passages to discuss.
3. Students should be encouraged to reach their own conclusion, but evaluate them based on the specific parts of the passage they cite.
4. Answers may vary, but could point out the greater emphasis on continued individual existence after death and its close connection with the Chinese stress on ancestors, ancestor worship, etc.

Visual Primary Sources

First Group—Documents 1 & 2



The Granger Collection, New York



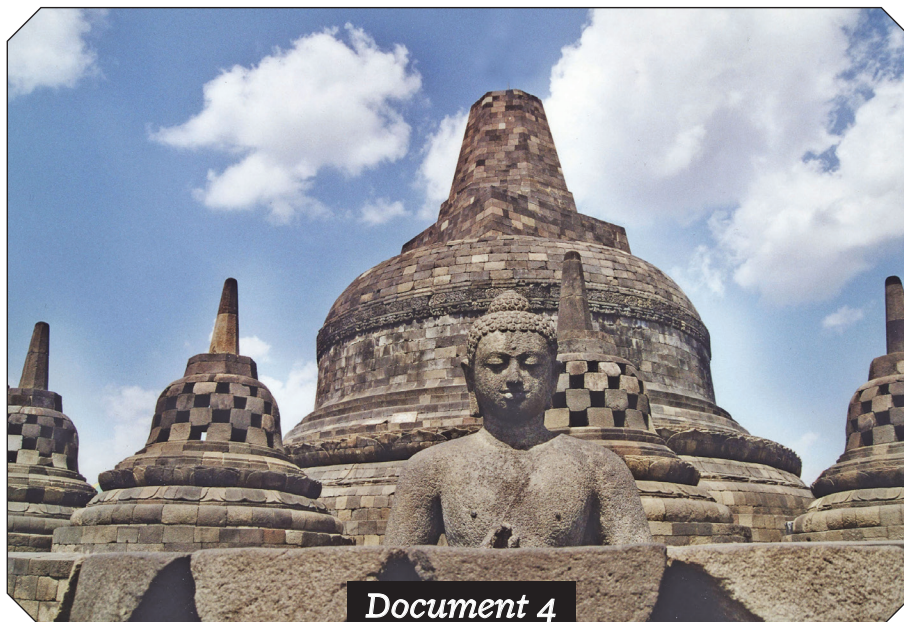
The Granger Collection, New York

First Group—Documents 3 & 4



Document 3

The Granger Collection, New York



Document 4

The Granger Collection, New York

