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Dr. Heaphy  
World History: Modern  
16 March 2021  
Due: 6 May 2021

## Final Project (Honors)

### Requirements:

- Choose a topic of interest, event, or concept that we haven't covered in class which can be found between the 1600s-the present day
- Form a project around this topic (artistically, professionally, etc.)
- Final Project is due by May 3rd at Midnight, last day of class!

### Topic:

- **How Buddhism grew to be amongst the most influential world religions / how it is prevalent and altered Eastern and Southeastern countries' histories (China, Japan, Taiwan, Macau, North Korea, Nepal, Vietnam, Singapore, Hong Kong and South Korea) ... as well as how this religion is spreading influence in the West**
- The World of the Ancient Maya

### Timeline:

~~February 20th - Submit topic idea for final project (doesn't have to be definite)~~  
~~March 27th - Submit bibliography and outline progress so far~~  
~~April 4th - Finish all research for the topic, take notes~~  
~~April 12th-18th - Complete final project during Spring Break~~  
~~— In-between complete summarization or explanation of project —~~  
~~May 3rd - Project is due on the last day of class, by Midnight!~~

### Project Planning - Outline:

- Display/Creation: Artistic representation → painting, collage, poem, or combination of them
- Complete during Spring Break to allow for creativity to flow
- Research beforehand extensively, add to this document
- After completion, be sure to add a summary or explanation of the importance of and what the artwork represents relating to the topic
- Create bibliography of sources

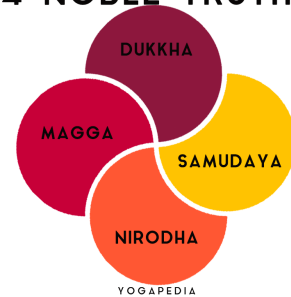
## Research Notes:

(mostly copied to be used as reference for description, summary, and artwork)

### - Basic Information

- “Buddhism is a faith that was founded by Siddhartha Gautama (“the Buddha”) more than 2,500 years ago in India. With about 470 million followers, scholars consider Buddhism one of the major world religions. Its practice has historically been most prominent in East and Southeast Asia, but its influence is growing in the West. Many Buddhist ideas and philosophies overlap with those of other faiths.”
- Achievement of Enlightenment, no specific god or deity (non-theistic) ... leads to nirvana
- Buddha means “enlightened one”, Buddha himself is not a god, more of an example of a state of higher being
- Key words: meditation, morality, truth, wisdom and compassion (two sides of the same coin vital to reaching enlightenment)
- Tolerant, evolving, “way of life” or “spiritual tradition”, some say not a religion but a practice
- The Four Noble Truths → essential to understanding Buddhism
  - Suffering exists (Dukkha)
  - Suffering arises from attachment to desires (Samudaya)
  - Suffering ceases when attachment to desire ceases (Nirodha)
  - Freedom from suffering is possible by practicing the Eightfold Path (Maggā)
- The Eightfold Path → Roads to end suffering and to enlightenment for the happiness of yourself and all others
  - Wisdom Section
    - Right View/Understanding
    - Right Thought/Intention
  - Morality Section
    - Right Speech
    - Right Action
    - Right Livelihood
  - Mental Development Section
    - Right Effort
    - Right Mindfulness
    - Right Concentration
- Karma (cause and effect) and reincarnation (cycle of rebirth)

### 4 NOBLE TRUTHS

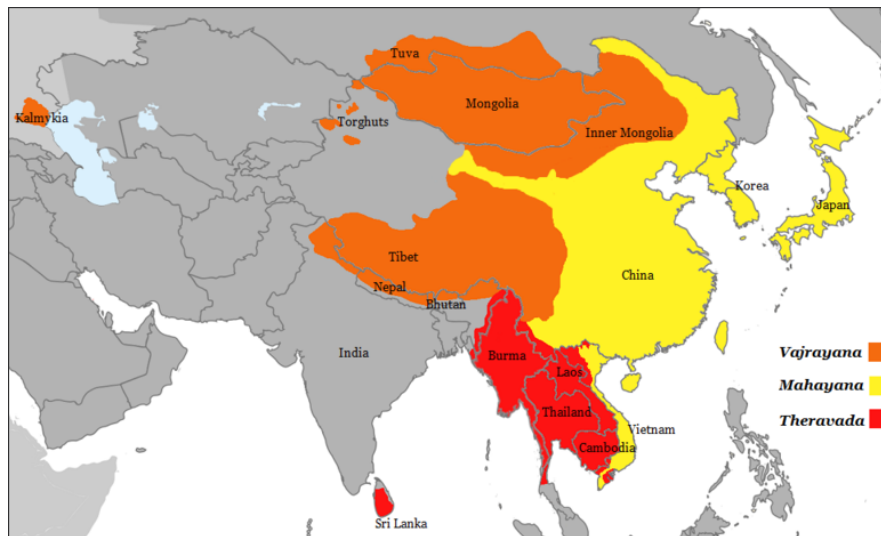


- Worship: Temples or home                      Devout Followers: monks, bhikkhus, follow strict codes (celibacy)
- Symbols of Religion: lotus flower, dharma wheel, Bodhi tree, swastika, outline of buddha statue
- Many links to humanism (science undertones)
  - “Emphasis on social justice and reason”
  - Rejection of central god or creator
  - “Deep respect for human rights”
  - There are what are considered Humanistic Buddhism and Buddhist Humanism (all branches of the same tree idea)
- Story of Siddhartha Guatama Buddha
  - Shakya clan prince in India born around 567 B.C.E. in Nepal(lived between 600 B.C. - 400 B.C.)
  - Prophesized to either become a universal monarch (king) or a great sage, a savior of humanity if he left the palace
  - Father, the king, wanted his son to follow in his footsteps
    - Kept him sheltered from the outside world
    - Grew up totally in the palace
    - Only kept young and healthy people around the boy, no sick or elderly
    - Only wanted him to know good, overwhelmed with riches, luxury, pleasures
  - Soon became restless and at about 29 years old demanded to leave the palace
  - Father gave in, tried to limit experiences to young and healthy people but
  - Siddhartha came across four things:
    - Shocked when came across an old man
    - Stumbled upon a very ill person (never seen before)
    - Funeral party by the side of a river, new and most shocking for him
    - Encountered a traveling monk (ascetic) who gave up all the pleasures of human life (serene face never forgotten) → cut off hair and wore simple robes of an ascetic
  - “Charioteer told him that all beings are subject to sickness, old age, and death”
  - Soon formulated idea of the Middle Way, between totally denial and total indulgence
  - Meditation for a long time brought him to enlightened understanding of life and total end to his pain and suffering
    - Age of 35
    - Shakyamuni, the sage of the Shakyas
    - After six weeks of sitting under Bodhi tree on a mat of kusha grass, his eye opened on the rising morning star to find there was no longer anything to obtain or struggle to

- Joined a whole class of men dropped out of Indian society to find liberation → investigated atheists, materialists, idealists, dialecticians ... many arguments and opinions
- Started on path to teach others about this wisdom and liberate them from the cycle of life and death, feared it was too complex for others to understand
- Left no writings, but rules of monastic life and teachings were passed down orally until written in about 200 B.C.
- Threatened hierarchical society by teaching anyone could reach “enlightenment”, before Hindu’s believed only the
- Image of the Buddha
  - Original Teachings: Buddha reached enlightenment after fasting, extremely skinny and gaunt
  - Central Asian Mahayana Buddhism: Strong god-like figure, healthy like a Greek god
  - China: Main goal of life is to be happy = fat, laughing, smiling Budai or “Laughing Buddha”
- Spread of Buddhism (initial) 6th century BCE - 2nd century BCE
  - Began in India, spread to Central Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asian cultures
  - CrashCourse Notes & others:
    - Ashoka the Great (leader from Mauryan Dynasty) came to power in 3rd century B.C.
    - Ruled over entire Indian subcontinent
    - Buddhist monks highly respected and revered class of individuals, state religion, encouraged missions to bring Buddhism around kingdom
    - Attempted to rule through quasi-Buddhist rules
    - Built stupas (monuments to Buddha) to show his devotion and expanded his grandfather’s empire
    - Tried to use Buddhism in his ruling methods to which the religion isn’t concerned with order, but rather the fulfillment of the self will lead to a right order of the world
    - Part of organization of Third Buddhist Council → rid comm. of corrupt monks
    - Buddhism declined drastically in India, almost to the point of extinction
    - Hinduism, since it is a polytheistic religion and very flexible, saw the Buddha as another god rather than an example and began to develop the religion as it gained more popularity in India
    - Hinduism dominated India, where Buddhism started and eventually migrated over to China in the Eastern subcontinent
- The Mauryan Empire & Role Buddhism Played in its Development
  - Ashoka the Great
  - “During the Maurya empire, the Indian culture and way of life were deeply influenced by Buddhism. Buddhism appealed to people of lower castes because it emphasized individuals’ path to enlightenment and salvation, which could be attained in this life.” (Khan Academy)

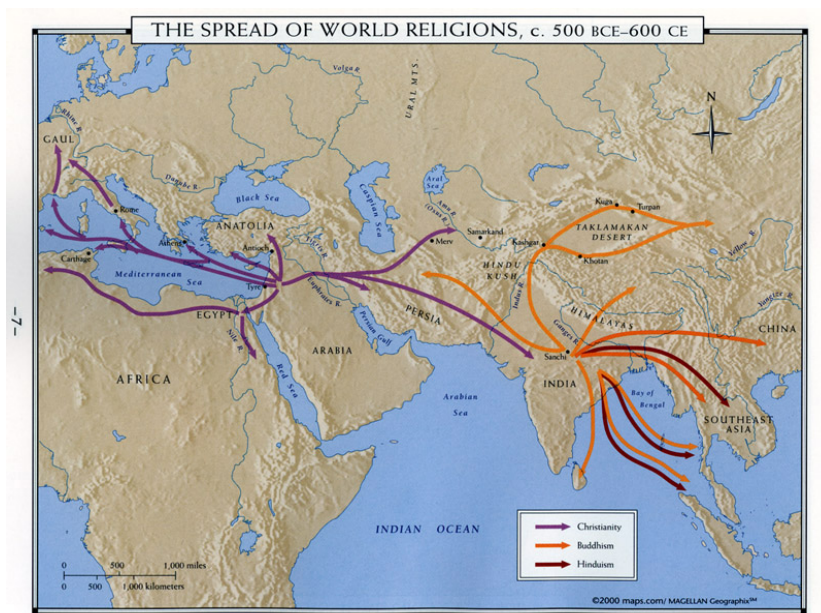
- Focused on love, equality, and nonviolence for the first time in a long time in societies used to class systems, violence=power, and traditional rituals including sacrifice
- Provided new ideas of a godless religion and one that was devoid of any elaborate ideas of their influence on the rest of the human population
- Great influence in Ceylon, where Ashoka's brother or son converted the King and 40,000 of his subjects to Buddhism ... his daughter carried a branch of the Buddha's Bodhi tree and planted it in Ceylonese soil where sapling grew (still there today). She converted many females to Buddhism.
- After Ashoka's death, Mauryan empire declined while Buddhism only grew in much strength (Hindu Wesbite)
- Spread of Buddhism (additional) 2nd century BCE - 3rd century CE
  - Mahayana Buddhism began to emerge 1st century CE
  - Silk road to China, Greece, parts of Southeast Asia
    - Vietnam shortly after China, major Mahayana center northeast of Hanoi
  - Indonesia (2nd century CE)
    - Trade between this country and India
    - Bangladesh as well ... didn't take hold until later but Buddhism was spreading and influencing cultures, traditions, and lands during this time
- Spread of Buddhism (middle) 3rd century CE - 18th century CE
  - Spread fueled by Silk Road and trade/missions, much popularity in China
  - Chinese Buddhism (one of the oldest forms of buddhism in the world)
    - Pray to the Buddha as a god, a savior
    - Combination of Buddhism and Taoism → Chan Buddhism
  - Korea (4th century CE)
    - Seon Buddhism = Korean variant of Chan Buddhism
  - Japan (3rd and 4th centuries ... 6th century CE)
    - Monk missions from Pakistan to Japan (strongest introduction)
    - Slowly, Seon mixed with Japanese culture and Zen Buddhism was formed in the 6th century ... variant of Chan
  - Tibet
    - Introduced as far back as 2nd century BC ... formally in 7th century CE
    - King Songtsen Gampo had wives from Nepal and China, taught him about Buddhism & he built temples, ordered translation of suttas to Tibetan Sanskrit
    - 8th century CE, Buddhism is official religion of Tibet
  - Laos
    - Buddhism reached Laos during 7th and 8th centuries from Thailand, Korea, China, and Indonesia

- Spread of Buddhism (present) 19th century CE - now
  - Reaches almost all the countries of the world ... population = approx. 500 million
  - Highest population = China (18%)
  - Highest proportion of population = Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar (88%-97%)
  - Newest practitioners: Americans, Australians, U.K. (Britains)
  - Different Cultural Traditions of Buddhism:
    - Chan (China), Zen & Nicheran (Japan), Tibetan Buddhism (Tibet), Seon (Korea), Thai Forest Tradition (Thailand)
  - Schools (Branches) of Buddhism:
    - Theravada Buddhism - individual enlightenment & experience, monastic life (original more traditionally following scriptures focused on becoming a saint) The School of the Elders
    - Mahayana Buddhism - collective freedom from suffering, teaching path to enlightenment (developed) ... highest ideal = *bodhisattva* The Great Vehicle
      - Vajrayana (Tibetan) Buddhism - traditional spiritual techniques to obtain enlightenment as fast as possible... “whatever works” → *upaya* The Way of the Diamond
    - Zen (& Tibetan) Buddhism - mostly western countries practice



- Europe
  - First contact 3rd century BCE Alexander the Great
  - Popularity hits in late 19th century CE
  - Philosophers: Friedrich Nietzsche and Arthur Schopenhauer showing interest, began to bring attention and practices to western thinkers and world

- More popular in 1920s and 1930s, increase of information, writers, philosophers, theologians wrote about Buddhism than ever before in the west
- Populism Buddhism Churches, translations of books, and societies
- United States
  - “often believed that the first Buddhists were Chinese railroad workers. Almost exclusively men, they established centers and temples across the country. Japanese laborers arrived in Hawaii and California in the late 1800’s and founded what is now known as the Buddhist Churches of America” (One Mind Dharma).
  - D.T. Suzuki, Japanese Buddhist author, met w/ American philosophers... may be one of the most influential pieces in spreading Zen Buddhism to the western world
  - Many meditation centers, zen centers, and practicing communities established in the mid-20th century as monastery missions were completed and teachers came over from Asian countries



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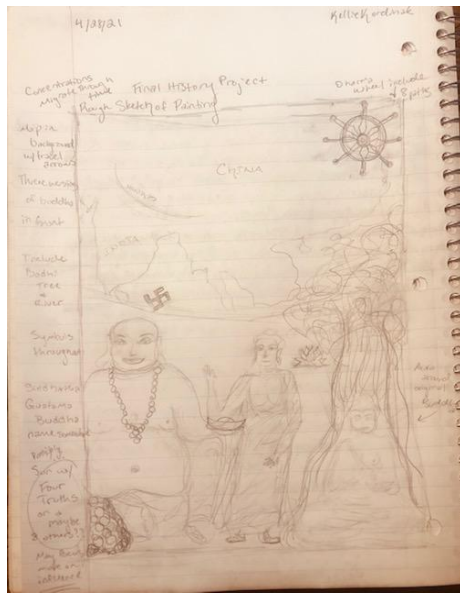
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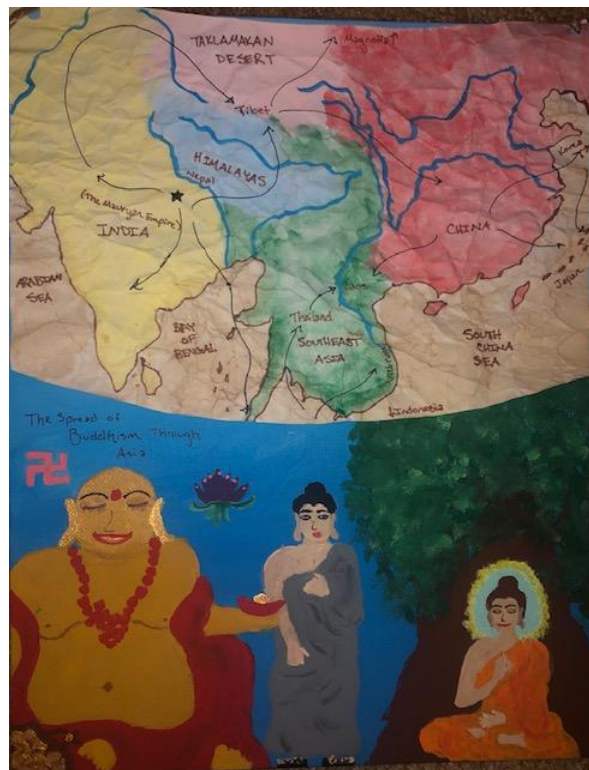
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Sketch of Painting &amp; Notes



*Final  
Artwork*



## **Artwork Description:**

My main goal with this piece was to capture both the essence of Buddhism as well as visually depict the spread of Buddhism across Asia to give you some idea of its timeline and geographical movement. Starting with the Buddhist symbols, we have the original version of the Buddha as well as the other two variations which come with time and cultural interpretation. The image on the far right shows Siddhartha Guatama, or the Enlightened One, the original Buddha from India. He is often depicted as lean, as he often fasted for days on end to rid himself of any pleasures on his path to nirvana. The Bodhi tree is a symbol of the tree under which he attained enlightenment after meditating for seven weeks. In the middle, the Central Asian Buddha presents itself as a god-like figure. Having more muscle and strength, he often appears in Greek-like clothing and remains amongst other deities. Finally on the far left, the Chinese Buddha embodies the symbol of good luck and happiness. Though there are many variations of the Chinese Buddha each with their own meaning in stance and material possessions they may be holding, all represent the fulfillment of whatever one desires or the goal they are wishing to achieve. Example in painting:

(Bowl = monk's life, renouncing material possessions and enlightenment)

(Sitting = balance of thoughts, love)

(Bag of Gold = prosperity)

Of course, the surrounding symbols such as the left-turned swastika and the lotus flower represent good luck, enlightenment, and rebirth. Finally, under the map the dharma wheel represents the Eightfold Path to Enlightenment. It is often found as a decoration in many temples and serves as a reminder of what one must do to reach nirvana.

The map shows the spread of Buddhism as a religion and practice through many centuries. Beginning in India, eventually becoming a significant part of the Mauryan Empire during Ashoka the Great's rule, we see it travel specifically because of the Silk Road between the 2nd century B.C.E. and 3rd century C.E. starting from India and moving to China, Greece, and other parts of Southeast Asia. North of Hanoi, Vietnam soon became a large hub for the Mahayana school of thought in Buddhism. Indonesia in the 2nd century C.E. were influenced by Buddhism, as well as Bangladesh. Then, between the 3rd and 18th centuries C.E. there is widespread adoption of Buddhism into pre-existing religions such as with the Chinese who perceive the Buddha as a god-like figure, a savior in the Chan Buddhism religion. In Korea, we see a variation of the Chinese Chan come to be known as Seon which soon travels to Japan. Here, Seon is mixed with Japanese tradition to form Zen Buddhism, another form of Chan Buddhism. Tibet was then introduced to Buddhism around the 7th century C.E. through the wives of King Songsten Gampo who built temples and ordered the translation of many sutras to Tibetan Sanskrit. Eventually, Buddhism reached Laos later on. The present large western popularity of Buddhism was originally introduced to Europe in the 3rd century by Alexander the Great, but took hold around the late 19th century and continues to grow today. It is estimated there are 500 million Buddhists today and over half of them reside in China alone.

### **Topics of Importance/Themes in Research (Summary):**

- More difficult topic than I had anticipated, especially with the complex history of many Asian countries, such as India and China, but I focused on these two rather than the rest of the countries. There has to be some sort of specification there or else you can get really confused with the topic.
- It is important to note that the full history of the spread of Buddhism throughout Asia has not filled in all of the blanks, but we know that “the trade routes that ran from northwestern India to northern China facilitated both the introduction of Buddhism to Central Asia and the maintenance, for many centuries, of a flourishing Buddhist culture” in Central Asia, at least (Britannica).

### **Themes Noticed in Research:**

- As ability and methods of travel increased, so did the spread of Buddhism especially considering the Silk Road and the teachers who were able to travel as technological, irrigational, and aerial advancements were made.
- Appeal of Buddhism was often introduced through existing religions and adopted as a combination religion. Very flexible certain aspects can be morphed to create a new focus of existing religion.
- Those countries who made Buddhism their state’s religion were completely captured by the essence of the religion and it affected a lot of their decisions as leaders, as well as their daily lives. Their beliefs affected many lives, no doubt, and only helped the spread of buddhism.
- Buddhism started in India, the nation now dominated by Hindu followers, but Hinduism allowed Buddhism to flourish and eventually move on to gain popularity in other countries. Helped it to grow and gain a following instead of becoming a competing religion.
- Based on an individual’s interpretation, lacks strict nature, but rather encourages self discipline and positive morality ... proven through popularity (4th most practiced) amongst the eastern world, now additionally the western world
  - Focuses on spirituality instead of religion, nontheism allows for contemplation, realization, and experience rather than praying to a deity or including institutions
- Westernization of the rest of the world after WWII, but emerging “countercurrent” is taking charge as powers in the East, like Japan, China, and other smaller Asian powers, are becoming extremely influential especially in American culture. (especially religions and philosophies)
  - Buddhists more likely to identify themselves as liberals and support both gay rights and abortion rights

- Religious groups growing the fastest in America: Buddhism and those with no religion

