



Buddhism in Thailand

Note: This lesson plan is based upon the work of Worrasit Tantinipankul, PHD candidate in City and Regional Planning at Cornell University.

Topic: This lesson plan will examine Buddhism in Thailand. It will provide students with a basic understanding of Buddhist concepts, information about monks in Thailand and how most Thai people practice Buddhism.

Themes: A number of themes will be emphasized in this lesson. The themes include the following:

- Buddhism is an ancient religion whose principles stem from the life of the Buddha.
- Buddhism forms the backbone of Thai culture.
- Buddhist monks in Thailand live a simple life that is in contrast to much of modern life.
- Thai people practice Buddhism in a variety of ways.

Lesson Goals: The goals of this lesson plan are as follows:

- Students will understand general principles of Buddhism.
- Students will learn how Buddhism is practiced in Thailand.
- Students will understand how monks live in Thailand.
- Students will be able to write short letters to students in Thailand about their lives.

New York State Standards:

This lesson plan is designed to be part of an intermediate social studies class. As such, it applies to the following standard:

Standard 2: **World History.** *The study of World History requires an understanding of world cultures and civilizations, including an analysis of important ideas, social and cultural values, beliefs, and traditions. This study also examines the human condition and the connections and interactions between people across time and space and the ways different people view the same event or issue from a variety of perspectives.*

Students: know the social and economic characteristics such as customs, traditions, child-rearing practices, gender roles, foods and religious and spiritual beliefs that distinguish different cultures and civilizations.

Understanding Thai Buddhism is an essential component to understanding Thai culture. Thai *values, beliefs and traditions* stem from Buddhism. Students know something of *customs, traditions, gender roles, food* and especially *religious and spiritual beliefs* of Thailand by examining how Buddhism is practiced.

Organization and Timeline: This lesson plan will take three days. It can be used at the end of a unit on world religion in a social studies class. It may also work as part of a larger unit on Thailand or Southeast Asia.

Interdisciplinary component:

While this lesson plan designed to be used in a social studies setting, it may also be useful as part of a Language Arts curriculum. The extensive use of vocabulary, reading and writing make it easily adaptable to the language arts classroom or as part of a combined social studies and language arts program.

Resources Needed and Preparation

- Make copies of *Where is Thailand?* homework assignment.
- Make copies of all overheads. Have an overhead projector on hand.
- Have a classroom set of plain strips of paper for introductory activity.
- Have a garbage can on hand for introductory activity.
- Make student copies of Appendix D: *Teachings of Buddhism*
- Have a copy of the film, *I am a Monk* on hand. (This film is available for use through SEAP Outreach.)
- Have a copy of *Little Buddha* on hand. (This is an optional component.)
- Make copies of *I Was a Novice Monk* for students. (found on line at <http://www.thailandlife.com/1997-2001/i-was-a-novice-monk.html>)
- Have copies of chapters 27 and 36 of Kamala Tiyananich's book *Buddha in the Jungle* on hand for selected classroom reading.
- Have a copy of Kamala Tiyananich's book *The Life Story of Luang Ta Chi* on hand for selected classroom reading.
- Make copies of *Visiting a Thai Temple* for students. (found on line at <http://tdm.sas.upenn.edu/index.html>)
- Make copies of final assessment.

Teacher Resources

The teacher may find the following background resources helpful.

Aasen, Clarence T. *Architecture of Siam: a cultural history interpretation*. Kuala Lumpur; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Döhning, Karl. *Buddhist temples of Thailand: an architectonic introduction*. Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2000.

Kamala Tiyavanich. *The Buddha in the jungle*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books; Seattle : University of Washington Press, 2003.

Kamala Tiyanich. *Forest recollections: wandering monks in twentieth-century Thailand*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997.

Pallegoix, Jean Baptiste. *Description Du Royaume Thai Ou Siam*. Westmead: Gregg International, 1969.

Snodgrass, Adrian. *The Symbolism of the Stupa*. Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1985.

Sumet Chumsai Na Ayutthaya. *Naga: Cultural Origins in Siam and the West Pacific*. Singapore; New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Swearer, Donald K. *Buddhism and Society in Southeast Asia*. Chambersburg: Anima Books, 1981.

Wyatt, David K. *Thailand: a short history*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984.

Wyatt, David K. *Studies in Thai history*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1994.

Day 1

I. **Introductory Hook**

As Students enter the classroom have the journal on the overhead. (See Appendix B: *What do you Really Want?*) Give the students approximately 10 minutes to write their responses.

A. **Introductory Activity**: As the students are writing their responses pass out a strip of paper to each student.

1. Instruct the students to write down what they want most in one word on the piece of paper.
2. Tell students to fold their papers so that what they've written cannot be seen. Then tell the students to set the papers aside on their desks.
3. As the students continue to write, collect the papers.

B. Go over the homework assignment (See Appendix A: *Where is Thailand?*) with the students by asking them the following questions and have them turn in their assignment:

1. *Have you ever heard of the country of Thailand before you did the homework assignment? What do you know about Thailand?*
2. *What countries that border Thailand? Are you familiar with any of these countries? What do you know about them?*

3. Judging from your prior knowledge of Thailand and what you learned in your homework assignment, what similarities do you see between Thailand and the United States? What differences do you see between these two countries?

4. Why might it be important to learn about Thai culture?

- C. When the students are finished discussing the homework assignment take the white strips of paper on which the students wrote their desires and rip them up over the garbage can. Throw all of them away. Then wait for the students' reactions.
1. Ask the students to imagine that by ripping up the strips of paper, you have ensured that they will never get what it is that they most want.
 2. Ask the students to describe how not getting what they most want makes them feel.
 3. Then ask the students to think of things they don't really care about.
 4. Ask students about how they would feel about not getting things they don't really care about.
 5. Then ask students if it would be easier if they didn't care about getting what they most want.
- D. Explain to the students that learning to not want is part of the foundation of a religion called Buddhism. Remind the students that Buddhism is practiced in Thailand. Explain that you will be learning about Buddhism and how it is practiced in Thailand for the next couple of days.

II. Lesson Content:

A. The Story of the Buddha

1. Tell the students that you are going to read them a story.
2. Explain to them that this story is about the legendary life of Siddhartha Gautama, a great prince from India. (See Appendix C: *The Story of the Buddha*.)
 - a. **Note to Teacher:** There are a many different ways to tell the story of the Buddha and a variety of versions of the story. You may decide to let the students sit back and listen while you read or you may decide to show them images of the Buddha while you tell the story. The following website sponsored by a Buddhist monastery in Singapore has pictures that illustrate the life of the Buddha. They may be useful as you explain his life.

See: <http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/storybuddha.htm>

3. After you finish the story ask the students the following questions.
 - a. *If you had been Siddhartha, would you have chosen to leave the palace? Why or why not?*
 - b. *What do you think the word enlightenment means?*
 - c. *Judging by what you just heard in the story, what do you think a monk does?*
 - d. *If you came to know the answers to questions that concerned all of mankind, like the Buddha did would you share those answers with others? Why or why not?*
 - e. *What did you find interesting about this story? Explain.*

B. Put the overhead *Teachings of Buddhism*. (See Appendix D: *Teachings of Buddhism*)

1. Explain to the students that the path to enlightenment that was described in the story of Buddha's life became the basis of his teachings. The path also became the way in which others followed Buddhism.
2. Give each student a copy of *Teachings of Buddhism*.
3. Explain the four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path to the students.

Note to Teacher: At this point you may find it useful to show the film *The Little Buddha*. This is a fictional Hollywood movie about a young American boy who is thought to be the reincarnation of dead Buddhist teacher. The film stars Keanu Reeves as the Lord Buddha. It is approximately 2 hours long and can be found in most local video stores.

Day 2

- I. **Introductory "Hook":** As the students enter the classroom have the journal on the overhead. (See Appendix: E *The Spread of Buddhism*) Give them approximately ten minutes to write their responses.
 - A. Place a map of the spread of Buddhism on the overhead. See the following website for a map of the spread of Buddhism:
http://go.hrw.com/ndNSAPI.nd/gohrw_rls1/pKeywordResults?ST9%20Buddhism
 1. Explain to the students that Buddhism spread all over Asia.
 2. Explain that Buddhism became the religion of Thailand at the end of the 13th century.

- a. Tell the students that Buddhism gained the support of the Thai king at this time and that he invited Buddhist monks to teach in the capital Sukothai.

II. **Lesson Content:**

A. Important Terms: Place *Important Terms* (See Appendix: F *Important Terms*) on the overhead. Tell students that you'll need to define some important terms in Buddhism before going on to talk about Buddhism in Thailand.

1. Explain the terms and their definitions to the students.
2. Instruct the students to write down the terms and their definitions in their notebook.

B. **Monks in Thailand**

1. Tell the students that in Thailand, many young men become monks for a time because it is believed that one gives great honor to one's family by doing so.
 - a. If a son becomes a monk, the mother receives merit, which will help her in her life as a Buddhist.
 - b. Many people become monks because they are searching for answers to religious questions. (We'll talk more about that later.)

2. Pass out copies of *I Was A Novice Monk* to each student.

(Found online at <http://www.thailandlife.com/1997-2001/i-was-a-novice-monk.html>)

- a. Ask the students the following questions:
 - i. *What was Nattawud's ordination like?*
 - ii. *What did he learn as a monk?*
 - iii. *Why did he become a monk?*
 - iiii. *What did he do as a monk?*
 - iiiii. *Would you become a monk if you thought it would help your family? Why or why not?*

C. **I Am A Monk:**

Note to Teacher: Time may be getting short at this point. The entire documentary is 30 minutes long. Consider watching this film and choosing a short part of it to show to students.

1. Explain to the students that there are Americans who have been known to travel to Thailand to become monks. Tell the students that there was a film made in 1978 about a man named Michael who was from New England but had decided to move to a Wat in Bangkok, Thailand to become a monk.

2. Show the film to the students.
3. At the end of the film answer any questions they have.

Possible Homework Assignment: Chapters 27 and 36 in Kamala Tiyavanich's *Buddha in the Jungle* are short stories about monks in Thailand. It may be appropriate to have the students read the stories for homework. The reading level, however is fairly advanced. In addition, it may be appropriate to have students read about Chapter's 3, 4 and 5 in Kamala Tiyananich's book *The Life Story of Luang Ta Chi*. Again, the reading level is advanced.

Day 3

- I. **Introductory Hook:** When the students enter the classroom have the journal *Practicing Buddhism* (See Appendix G: *Practicing Buddhism*) on the overhead. Give the students approximately ten minutes to write their responses. Then discuss what the students wrote.
- II. **Lesson Content:**
 - A. The laity and the Practice of Buddhism
 1. Tell the students that there are ways to practice Buddhism in everyday life.
 2. Tell students that Buddhists in Thailand follow the five precepts. Review the five precepts with the class. (See Appendix D: *The teachings of Buddhism*.)
 3. Remind students that many laity support monks by giving alms. They will have noticed this in the film *I am a Monk*.
 4. Explain to the students that another way of practicing Buddhism is through celebrations that are often centered on the wat.
 - B. Visiting a Temple in Thailand
 1. Tell the students that a Thai temple, or a wat is an important place for the practice of Buddhism, both for monks and laity.
 2. Pass out copies of *Visiting a Thai Temple*. (See <http://tdm.sas.upenn.edu/index.html>)
 3. Have the students read the article then ask them:
 1. *Why does a person go to a temple if he or she is not a monk? What does the laity do at a temple?*

2. *What are the rules of a temple? How must someone dress and behave in a temple?*

III. Conclusion:

A. Ask students to think about what they have learned over the past couple of days.

1. *What have you learned about the life of Buddha?*
2. *Describe some of Buddha's teachings?*
3. *Where is Thailand? What religion do they practice in Thailand?*
4. *What is it like to be a monk in Thailand?*
5. *How do people practice Buddhism in Thailand?*

IV. **Final Evaluation**: Pass out a copy of the final assessment to each student. (See Appendix H: *A Letter to Thai Students*)

Tell the students that there is much more to learn about Buddhism in Thailand and that they should think about what more they would like to know. Ask the students to think of some questions they might ask a young Thai person about being a Buddhist.

1. Ask the students to share some of their questions with the class.
2. Tell the students that they will have an opportunity to write to a letter to a young Thai person.
3. Explain the final evaluation.

A Note to Teachers: The Project Thailand site at <http://www.thaistudents.com> encourages students to email questions to the students at questions@thaistudents.com. You might find it helpful to tell the students that their letters will be e-mailed to students in Thailand.

Where is Thailand?

Directions: Read the short passage below on Thailand and take a look at the map. Then answer the questions at the end of the reading in complete sentences. Use a separate sheet of paper for your answers. Be prepared to discuss your answers in class tomorrow.



Appendix A

Thailand is a 198,115 mile country in Southeast Asia with approximately 65 million people. It shares borders with Burma (west), Laos (east), Cambodia (west) and Malaysia (south). Thailand is divided into a mountainous region to the north, a region of rolling hills to the northeast, a lush fertile valley in the central region and a narrow *isthmus* to the south. The northeast is bordered by the Mekong River, which runs into the Gulf of Thailand. The central region of Thailand is known for the rice that is grown there. In fact, it is often called “Asia’s Rice Bowl”. Bangkok is the capital of Thailand and is located in the central region.

In the 12th century Thailand was first united in Sukhothai, the first capital. Then known as the kingdom of Siam, Thailand was ruled by a number of *dynasties*. After the armies from Burma attempted to invade for the second time, the capital was moved to Bangkok in 1782. In the 19th century all other countries in Southeast Asia were *colonized* by a foreign power except Siam. In 1932 a peaceful *coup* turned the country into a *constitutional monarchy* and in 1939 Siam became Thailand. Today, many Thai people continue to have great respect for their king and great pride in their country. However, there are those who have risked their lives in the hopes for greater *democracy* in Thailand. In a series of demonstrations in 1973, 1976 and 1992 pro-democracy activists, most of whom were students, fought against a military dictatorship. In all three cases the military injured and killed a large number of protesters. There have not been formal apologies or prosecutions for the deaths of the activists.

Thai culture is highly influenced by *Buddhism*. Over 90% of the people practice Buddhism. This religion can be found in many aspects of Thai culture such as art and architecture. You can find Buddhist temples all over Thailand. The way that people interact with one another and do daily activities are governed by Buddhist principles.

On December 26, 2004 an earthquake in the Indian Ocean caused a deadly *tsunami* that killed over 200,000 people in countries such as Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. In Thailand over 5,000 people were killed as a result of the tsunami. An early warning system is being *implemented* in order to avoid casualties in case of another tsunami.

Appendix A

Questions

1. Please define the following words: (you may use a dictionary, the internet or ask someone who might know)
isthmus, dynasty, colonize, coup, constitutional monarchy, democracy, Buddhism, tsunami, and implement
2. What countries border Thailand?
3. Why is the central region of Thailand also known as “Asia’s Rice Bowl”?
4. What armies attempt to invade Thailand in the 1700’s? What changed as a result of the invasion?
5. What religion do most Thai people practice? Where can one see the influence of that religion in Thai culture?
6. How was Thailand affected by the tsunami of December 2004?

What do You Really Want?

Directions: Please take some time to read and think about the following question. Then write a response that is at least one paragraph long in your journal. Be prepared to discuss what you have written.

What do you want more than anything else?
Why? How would you feel if you never got
what you wanted?

Appendix C: The Story of the Buddha

Adapted from the following web sites:

Buddha Net

<http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/060bio.htm>

Between Sundays: Answering Kids Questions

http://www.uua.org/clf/betweensundays/middlechildhood/Buddha_story.html

Carolina Buddhist Vihara

<http://carolinabuddhist.net/articles/bhikkhuniordination.html>

City of Ten Thousand Buddhas

<http://online.sfsu.edu/~rone/Buddhism/footsteps.htm>

The Story of the Buddha

Buddhism is one of the major religions in the world. It began around 2,500 years ago in India. Siddhartha Guatama founded this religion after a long search. This is the story of his search for enlightenment.

Siddhartha was born around 566 BC, in the small kingdom of Kapilavastu, which is in the foothills of the Himilayas. His father was King Suddhodana and his mother was Queen Maya. Before Siddhartha was born, Queen Maya had a dream that predicted his birth. She dreamt that a white elephant with six tusks came down from heaven and into her room carrying a lotus flower. He came to her bed touched her on her side. She told the king the story. King Suddhodana summoned the wise men of the land to interpret the Queen's dream.

The wise men listened to Queen Maya's dream and were delighted. They told the king and queen that they would have a special son. He would be a great leader of mankind. He would either be the greatest king that ever lived or the greatest saint who ever lived.

Queen Maya and King Suddhodana were happy at first because they wanted a son who would rule well. But they were also worried that their son would become a wondering holy man without any interest in ruling the kingdom.

When the time came for Queen Maya to give birth she was traveling with her attendants to her parents house for a visit. She stepped into a beautiful garden next to the road and gave birth to a son. The king and queen named him Siddhartha, which means, "the one who brings much good."

The king and queen were very worried about what had been predicted for their son. They wanted to keep him with them to rule over the kingdom. The king decided to make their palace into a paradise. He told Queen Maya, "I will make life in the palace so pleasant that our son will never want to leave." The palace was made beautiful with gardens, only the most delicious food was served, there were always games and entertainment, no one who was sick or old was allowed near the prince and he was forbidden to leave the palace grounds. The king and queen were determined to see that he not have a care in the world.

Appendix C: The Story of the Buddha

Adapted from the following web sites:

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<http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/060bio.htm>

Between Sundays: Answering Kids Questions

http://www.uua.org/clf/betweensundays/middlechildhood/Buddha_story.html

Carolina Buddhist Vihara

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City of Ten Thousand Buddhas

<http://online.sfsu.edu/~rone/Buddhism/footsteps.htm>

When Siddhartha was sixteen it was decided that he should marry. His father and mother invited princesses from various neighboring kingdoms to come and be introduced to their son. As each princess was introduced, Siddhartha gave her a present from a pile of special gifts his parents had provided for the occasion. The King and Queen watched their handsome son carefully, but he did not seem interested in any of the princesses as they came one by one before him.

Finally, the last princess, Yasodhara, stood before him. His eyes suddenly lit up, and he leaned forward to greet her with special attention. But all the gifts were gone! Yasodhara asked, "O Prince, where is the gift you have for me?" Siddhartha was startled as if awakened from a dream. The table was empty. He did something unheard of in those days. He took off his own royal ring and gave it to her. Siddhartha and Yasodhara were married after a series of contests sponsored by her father.

Even though his father had protected him from the world outside the palace, Siddhartha grew curious of what lay beyond the walls. Siddhartha became curious about the world beyond the palace walls and secretly arranged to ride outside with one of the royal charioteers. On the first trip, he saw an old person bent over in pain and walking with the support of a cane. He asked his charioteer about this, and the charioteer replied, "This is an old person, bent over by age. Everyone has to grow old some day."

On the second trip, Siddhartha saw a person crouched down on the ground, crying in agony. He asked why the person was crying, and the charioteer said, "This is a person suffering from a serious disease. Anyone may get ill at any time. All of us suffer some sicknesses during our lives." On the third trip, Siddhartha saw a funeral procession going by and asked what it meant. His charioteer answered, "Here is a person who has died and is being brought to the place of cremation. Everyone must die some day. We usually do not know when it will happen, but just as each of us is born, so each of us must die."

On the fourth trip outside the palace, Siddhartha saw a man sitting under a tree. He had a peaceful, radiant expression on his face, and Siddhartha was struck by it. The charioteer told him, "There is a saint who has given up the usual ways of living to wander from place to place searching for the meaning of existence."

Siddhartha was deeply moved by these four experiences. He thought for days about them, and somehow all the pleasures and riches of the palace lost their importance for him. Even the recent birth of a son did not alter his mood.

Appendix C: The Story of the Buddha

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Between Sundays: Answering Kids Questions

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Siddhartha couldn't forget what he saw. He wanted to understand why such great suffering took place in the world. After much thought, he decided to become a wandering monk, so that he may spend his life searching for the answer to the question that burned in his mind. He secretly left the palace before his family could prevent him from going.

Siddhartha joined a small group of holy men in the forest and began to experiment with various kinds of yoga and meditation. He heard that the strict control of one's eating might help one meditate, and he began to eat less and less food. At one point, he lived on one grain of rice a day for several weeks and lost so much weight that he looked like a living skeleton.

One day he fell to the ground unconscious. The other monks thought he had died, but later he awakened and continued his meditation. Just at that moment, a young herdsman found him while she was looking for one of her animals that had gone into the forest. She took pity on him and brought him a bowl of food. Siddhartha realized that he might die before finding the answer to his question, so he began to eat. The other monks rejected him because they thought he had given up his serious quest. Siddhartha told them that he was convinced that starving himself would not help him reach the truth.

Siddhartha's search continued for several years, but he still had not found the answer to his question about suffering. Finally, on his birthday, during the month of May when the moon was full, he resolved to sit under a great Bodhi tree until he found the answer or died trying.

During this time Siddhartha was challenged by the evil demon Mara. Mara did not want Siddhartha to succeed in his quest. Mara caused a great thunderstorm to crash down on Siddhartha, but he would not move. Mara then brought before him visions of beautiful dancers, gold and jewels, and delicious foods. He still kept to his meditation. Finally, Mara sent an army of monsters to attack Siddhartha from all sides with wild, blood-curdling screams. But when they came near him, they all magically turned into flower petals.

Mara realized his defeat and faded away like a bad dream. Soon a bright glow came from every part of Siddhartha's being. He arose to his feet and went to find the other monks with whom he had spent so much time. He found them camped in a deer park near the

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sacred river Ganges. When he walked up to them, they saw by the expression on his face that he had become enlightened. He then told them of the answer he had found, what are now called the Four Noble Truths:

- I. Everything and everyone in existence suffers.
- II. Suffering is caused by selfishness, greed, and desire.
- III. Selfishness, greed, and desire can be stopped.
- IV. They can be stopped by following eight steps:
 1. Believe only what is true, or right belief.
 2. Live in a loving, nonviolent way, or right purpose.
 3. Learn to speak well to others, or right speech.
 4. Treat yourself well but do not overindulge, or right conduct.
 5. Choose a good vocation, or right vocation.
 6. Be alert and sensitive about life, or right effort.
 7. Train your mind to think clearly, or right thought.
 8. Meditate regularly on the meaning of life, or right meditation.

Siddhartha's friends accepted him as their leader, and they resolved to follow the eight-fold path he recommended. They came to call him "Buddha" which means "the enlightened one."

Buddha accepted everyone into his new movement. In time, he returned to the palace of his family and taught them about his great discovery. They joined his movement, and his son became a monk under his guidance.

Buddha lived into old age and died after eating spoiled food that was unknowingly served to him when he was a guest in a person's home. It is written that he knew of the bad food and forbade his followers to eat it. He ate it to honor the hospitality extended to him and not offend his host. Before he died, he assured his host that he was not to blame because he did not realize the condition of the food.

After his death, the followers of Buddha came to be called Buddhists and their religion, Buddhism. At one time most of India was Buddhist, and the religion eventually spread to most other Asian countries. Today, Buddhism has almost totally disappeared in India but remains the major religion of many other countries of Asia.

The Teachings of Buddhism

The Four Noble Truths

1. Human life has a lot of suffering.
2. The cause of suffering is greed and desire.
3. To end suffering is to end greed and desire.
4. To end suffering one must follow the Middle Path.
(Also known as the Eightfold Path)

The Eightfold Path

1. Right Understanding. (Understand and live by the four Noble Truths.)
2. Right values and attitude. (Be selfless and help others.)
3. Right speech. (Don't tell lies, speak kindly to others.)
4. Right action. (Help others, live honestly, don't harm others, care for the environment.)
5. Right work. (Be useful.)
6. Right effort. (Encourage good thoughts.)
7. Right Mindfulness. (Be aware of how you think and feel.)
8. Right Meditation. (calm mind. Practice meditation)

Appendix D: The Teachings of Buddhism

Adapted from the website of United Religions Initiative
http://www.uri.org/kids/world_budd_basi.htm

The Five Precepts

Buddhists follow a set of guidelines for daily life called the Five Precepts. These are:

1. Do not harm or kill living things.
2. Do not take things unless they are freely given.
3. Lead a decent life.
4. Do not speak unkindly or tell lies.
5. Do not abuse drugs or drink alcohol.

The Spread of Buddhism

Directions: Please take some time to read and think about the following question. Then write a response that is at least one paragraph long in your journal. Be prepared to discuss what you have written.

We have so far discussed a little bit about Thailand and the life of the Buddha. We know that the Buddha lived and shared his teachings in India. We also know that most of the people who live in Thailand practice Buddhism.

How might Buddhism have gotten from India to Thailand?
What do you think?

Important Terms

Directions: *The following terms are important to the discussion of Buddhism and how people practice Buddhism in Thailand. Please copy down the terms and their definitions in your notebook.*

Theravada Buddhism: One of the schools of Buddhism that stresses personal enlightenment through one's own efforts. The dominant religion in Thailand.

Attachment: Greed, desire, wanting. These are simple beliefs that have become important in our mind. For example: without some particular person or thing, we can never be happy or the idea that we can't be happy as long as a particular person, condition, or object is in our lives. To experience negative attachment, just think of your least favorite food or person.

Awareness: Having knowledge of oneself, traits and behaviors.

Meditation: Meditation means focusing the mind to achieve an inner stillness that leads to a state of enlightenment. Meditation takes many forms such as sitting quietly while focusing on one's breathing, practicing a martial art like karate, focusing on a riddle, chanting, contemplating the beauty of the natural world and many other things.

Enlightenment: A blessed state in which the individual transcends desire and suffering and attains Nirvana.

Nirvana: freedom from needless suffering and being fully alive and present in one's life. It is not a state that can really be described in words, it goes beyond words

Appendix F: Important Terms

Monk: A man who is devoted to the practice of Buddhism, who lives with other monks in a Wat, and who is a student of Buddhism. (There are also monks in Christianity.)

Wat: A Buddhist temple found in Thailand. The places where monks live and lay people come to worship.

Laity (layperson): People who practice Buddhism but are not monks and are therefore not subject to the same rules as monks.

Practicing Buddhism

Directions: Please take some time to read and think about the following question. Then write a response that is at least one paragraph long in your journal. Be prepared to discuss what you have written.

We have spent the past couple of days learning about Buddhism. We've learned about Buddha's life and teachings. We've also learned about monks and their lives in Thailand. Yet, there are a lot of people in Thailand who aren't monks but who are Buddhists.

How does a person who is not a monk practice Buddhism?
What do you think?