

2009 NCTA Seminar

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TIP #3

Title: The Spread of Buddhism from India to Korea

Grade: 7th Grade

Ohio Standards: Describe the Silk Road and its Impact on World Cultures, Trace the route followed. Give examples of contacts among different cultures that led to the changes in belief systems. Also, some tie in with Buddhism/Christianity and forms of Government (Democracy, Dictator, Monarchy) standards.

Time: 2 class periods

Purpose: After our units on India and China, this activity will help students understand the role of the Silk Road in transporting ideas (Buddhism) not just goods. Students will discover how Buddhism traveled from India to Korea and its impact on Korea. We will then discuss how Christianity did not enjoy the same success in 16th -19th century Korea as Buddhism and Confucianism. Finally, students will understand the religious differences in modern day N. and S. Koreas and how that relates to the current forms of governments in those respective countries.

Lesson Sequence:

- Introductory activity
- Background notes on history of Buddhism in Korea
- Discussion questions
- Assessment-ISN notebook prompts
- Follow-up lessons

Introduction Activity: Have 2 12-15 ft sections of rope. Teacher stands in front of classroom with a sign on shirt saying "India." Choose 2 students to stand in different corners of the room. Teacher holds one end of one rope. Another student holds the other end wearing a sign that says "China." He also holds the end of the other rope. The 2nd student stands in another corner

holding the other end of the 2nd rope wearing a sign that says “Korea.” The teacher states that we have learned that Buddhism began in India. One of the beliefs of Buddhism was that teachers needed to travel and spread Buddhism. So Buddhist missionaries traveled to China along the Silk Road. Create waves in the rope to simulate the idea of Buddhism traveling along the road from India to China. Keep waving rope. Explain that Buddhism then made its way to Korea from China as Chinese merchants and later missionaries traveled to the borders of Ancient China. Have the 1st student wave his rope to simulate Buddhism traveling to Korea from China. This is how Buddhism initially spread to Korea from India. Tell students that wherever goods and merchants travel-ideas travel with them.

Project map on the overhead screen with the LCD projector from the following website:

http://go.hrw.com/ndNSAPI.nd/gohrw_rls1/pKeywordResults?ST9%20Buddhism

- Students can follow the path of Buddhism from its beginning in NE India along the Silk Road to China and eventually India. State that Buddhism entered Korea between the third and 8th Century B.C.

Background Notes:

- Ancient Koreans probably practiced a form of animism-belief that every object, like trees and mountains, had a spirit.
- Probably had shamans to communicate with spirits of dead. Practiced harvest and planting rituals.
- Although these traditions still remain alive today in parts of Korea, Buddhism became the dominant religious force in Korea.
- China controlled much of **northern Korea** and its merchants and missionaries preached Buddhism. The ruling classes in Korea embraced it as a political advantage but it soon became much more.
- Korea then sent its own monks to China to study Buddhism there.
- They came back with knowledge of Chinese govt systems and language. These became models for the Korean people to follow.
- They also brought with them the moral teachings of Confucius. Confucianism came to rival Buddhism for dominance in ancient Korea.
- Christian missionaries began to arrive in Korea from Europe in the 16th century C.E. Korean Buddhists and Confucianists rejected Christianity sighting its selfish priority placed on salvation of the

- individual, the concept of Heaven and Hell, and its preoccupation with life after death.
- Christian converts and missionaries were treated brutally in many cases exiled or executed.
 - During 1950-1953 a war was fought in Korea between Communists in the north and the Democratic Koreans in the south. The U.S. and NATO backed the south. The war ended in a stalemate and the country was divided into a Democratic S. Korea (Republic) and a Communist N. Korea controlled by a 1-man dictator Kim Jong-Il.
 - Today, **South Korea** is roughly 23% Buddhist, 26% Christian, the other 50% are Shamanists, Confucianists or no religion (Shamanists and Confucianists are usually not listed on surveys so the numbers are shady.) In **North Korea** most are Buddhist or Confucianist. However, this is misleading. Under dictator Kim Jong-Il, religious activity is nonexistent. Only government sponsored religion is permitted and only to give the illusion to the world of religious freedom. (**Source: CIA World factbook-www.cia.gov**)

Discussion: Why was Buddhism so welcomed in Ancient Korea while Christianity was not? About .7% of Americans are Buddhists today-How do you think Buddhism came to the U.S. (think back to rope activity at the beginning of the class)? Why do you think the number is so low? What factors explain the difference in religions of modern N. and S. Koreas? Review and wrap up.

Assessment: Students: In your ISN notebook, choose **two** of the following prompts and write a minimum response of 1 paragraph per prompt. Be prepared to share with the class. Students will be assessed based on ability to back up thoughts with info from the notes and discussion. 1-Where do you think Buddhism spread after Korea? Explain. 2-About .7% of Americans are Buddhists today-How do you think Buddhism came to the U.S.? Why do you think the number is so low? 3-Why do you think there is such a difference in how successful Christianity is currently in North Korea compared to South Korea. 4-Would you have volunteered to be a Christian missionary to Korea in the 16th Century? Today in N. Korea?

Follow-up Lessons:

- Following my Greece and Rome Units in which we cover democracy and republic forms of government, I will come back to Korea to compare a republic with a dictatorship (covered early in the year). This lesson will look at the current forms of government in N. and S. Korea and compare the current standards of living in both countries: Population, infant mortality, life expectancy, median incomes, GNP.
- We will view the film “Seoul Train” to look at some of the effects of dictatorship in N. Korea and discuss why people would risk so much for freedom? Writing Activity-what would you do?
- Finally, look at the current crisis between the world and N. Korea over its nuclear weapons and missile program. Look for connections from our previous lessons on Religion and Government in Korea to look for explanations for and possible solutions to the current crisis.