

World Religions

Art and the Spread of Buddhism

You and your group-mates will be conducting research into one aspect of the spread of Buddhism in Asia. You will be presenting your findings to the class using a Powerpoint presentation. Each presentation should include the following:

1. A map of the area where the images or places they researched were found;
2. Copies of the images or structures and a brief explanation of what their symbolism means;
3. Some general comparisons indicating the major similarities or differences among the images; and
4. Your hypotheses about the reasons for the differences. This should include information about the form of Buddhism practiced in the physical location of the art you researched and how it impacts the form that art takes.

Group 1: Compare the caves of Ajanta in India with the caves along the Silk Road routes in China and Seokguram in Korea. In what ways are these cave temples the same or different?

Group 2: Look for examples of stupas and pagodas in various Asian countries. Compare their examples with the Great Stupa at Sanchi, India. In what ways are they the same or different? Be sure to also include Borobudur on the island of Java in Indonesia. Might it be one great stupa? Why is there no image of the Buddha in the top stupa?

Group 3: Look online for examples of sculptures of the Buddha in different countries. Be sure to include marks and mudras of the Buddha. Consider the Gandharan Buddhas and the so-called laughing Buddha. How are the images similar or different?

Group 4: Look for images of the Buddhist deity Avalokitesvara (Kuan Yin, Kunon), "the one who hears the cries of the world," in different countries. What are the differences? What are possible reasons for the differences? Which images do you think people would find more appealing? If someone were in trouble or pain, which image might they pray to? Why?

Group 5: Research Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom of the Khmer Empire and Zen gardens in Japan. Why were they constructed? What Buddhist ideas do they symbolize? Both are replications of the universe. In what ways are they similar and different?

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Rubric for Art and the Spread of Buddhism

Map of the area where images, architecture or landforms are: <i>Clear representation of where these can be found</i>	/10
Images, architecture or landforms <i>Visual representation can be described</i>	/10
Comparisons of images, architecture or landforms <i>Similarities and differences covered</i>	/10
Topic Questions <i>Answered clearly</i>	/10
Hypothesis about reasons for differences <i>Reflects knowledge of Buddhist sects involved</i>	/10
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