

Buddhism on the Move

Trace ideas, leadership, and movement across Asia.

SS.6.W.4.4 "Explain the teachings of Buddha, the importance of Asoka, and how Buddhism spread in India, Ceylon, and other parts of Asia."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one teaching of the Buddha, circle two actions Asoka took, and number 1, 2, and 3 beside three details that show how Buddhism spread. Use your marks to connect Buddhist ideas, leaders, and travel.

Ideas That Traveled

- ① Buddhism began in northern India with Siddhartha Gautama, known as the Buddha, or Enlightened One. After seeking an answer to human suffering, he taught that people suffer because of craving and attachment. He said that suffering can end when people let go of harmful desires. The Buddha urged followers to live with compassion, self-control, and wisdom. His Eightfold Path included right speech, right action, and right effort. Buddhists also followed ahimsa, or nonviolence, and many sought enlightenment through meditation.
- ② Centuries later, Emperor Asoka ruled much of India. Early in his reign, his army conquered Kalinga in a bloody war. Asoka was troubled by the deaths and suffering caused by the fighting. He became a Buddhist and changed how he governed. Instead of seeking more conquests, he supported dhamma, a policy of moral behavior, kindness, and respect for living things. He ordered messages about these ideas carved on stone pillars and rocks. He also built stupas, supported Buddhist communities, and sent teachers beyond his empire.
- ③ Buddhism spread first through India as monks and nuns taught, traveled, and formed communities near trade routes. Merchants and travelers carried ideas from one place to another. According to Sri Lankan tradition, Asoka's son Mahinda helped bring Buddhism to Ceylon, now called Sri Lanka, where a king supported the faith. From India and Sri Lanka, Buddhist teachings reached Central Asia, China, Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia. As Buddhism entered new regions, people translated texts, built monasteries, and developed traditions that reflected local languages and customs.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What did the Buddha teach was a cause of human suffering, and how could suffering end?

2 How did Asoka change his rule after the Kalinga war?

3 Name two actions Asoka took to support Buddhism.

4 How did Buddhism reach Ceylon, and what helped it become established there?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a five-sentence explanation of how Buddhist teachings, Asoka's choices, and travel helped Buddhism spread. Include one teaching of the Buddha, one change Asoka made, and two ways Buddhism moved or changed in Asia.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline one teaching of the Buddha, circle two actions Asoka took, and number 1, 2, and 3 beside three details that show how Buddhism spread. Use your marks to connect Buddhist ideas, leaders, and travel. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What did the Buddha teach was a cause of human suffering, and how could suffering end?	Craving and attachment cause suffering. Suffering can end when people let go of harmful desires.
2	How did Asoka change his rule after the Kalinga war?	He stopped seeking more conquests and governed through dhamma, emphasizing moral behavior, kindness, and respect for living things.
3	Name two actions Asoka took to support Buddhism.	He had messages carved on stone pillars and rocks, built stupas, supported Buddhist communities, and sent teachers beyond his empire. Accept any two.
4	How did Buddhism reach Ceylon, and what helped it become established there?	According to Sri Lankan tradition, Mahinda helped bring Buddhism to Ceylon, and a king supported the faith.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Buddha taught that letting go of harmful desires could end suffering, and he urged compassion and self-control. After the Kalinga war, Asoka stopped seeking conquests and governed through dhamma. He spread Buddhist ideas by carving messages on stone and sending teachers beyond his empire. Monks, merchants, and travelers also carried Buddhism along trade routes in India. Mahinda helped bring the faith to Ceylon, while texts and teachings later reached places such as China.

Accept equivalent explanations that accurately connect Buddhist teachings, Asoka's support, and methods of spread. For the open response, look for all required parts and a clear connection between them.