Buddhism Today!

1/10/00
About Buddhism In General: I think that Buddhism is based on the worship of Buddha. Buddha is a statue that obviously must show something important in this religion. When I think of Buddhism, I think of meditation. I think that when people meditate, it shows something to a god or something. I wonder meditation has something to do with maybe cleaning the person of its wrong or just relaxing the person. On the internet, I found out that Buddhism effects the believers life and maybe more. I also saw a picture of a man that was surrounded by something. I think that it kind of showed Buddha taking away their wrongs. I also think that Buddhism isn't based on like Christianity in that God takes away the sins, so maybe what I said before is wrong. I think that they might worship in a shrine or another building.

About Buddhism Today: I think that Buddhism is being practiced today just like it has been for a while. Today, since in the United States people can worship freely, I think that Buddhists can keep their ways. I am not sure about that in other countries. The people worshipping Buddha in other countries could be able to do it, but they may have some limitations. They may have rules about worshipping in public, or the people who worship may be free to do whatever. In the world today, I have heard that there are a lot of Buddhists. I don't know an exact number, but I think that the main place that Buddhists live is in Asia. That may mainly mean that since Asia has such a great population, and some of them are Buddhists, that may increase the number of people who are Buddhists. I know that Buddhism is still around and still popular because there is a Buddhism Magazine and an online magazine.

1/11/00

1. Where is the main place that Buddhism is practiced today?
2. What is the main belief in Buddhism?
3. How do they worship Buddha?
4. Where do they worship?
5. Where did the religion originate?
6. Do people who practice Buddhism have a special name for themselves?

1/11/00

About My INTU's:
1. I think that Buddhism has spread through immigration of the Buddhists. I think that it is centered around the Southern parts of Asia.
2. I think that they mainly believe that Buddha does something for them, but I need to find out what.
3. I think that they worship Buddha by meditating.
4. I think that they might worship in shrines.
5. I think that the Buddhism religion started in the Southeastern parts of Asia and is still centered around there today.
6. I think that some people who practice Buddhism call themselves Buddhist monks. I know that if your a Lutheran or a Christian, those who deeply study their religion call
themselves monks, but maybe they can no matter what, or maybe they have to earn that title.

1/11/00
I have heard that Buddhism is practiced a lot in Thailand. Is this true?

1/13/00
I have learned that Buddha is not a god, but that he is a man who lived his life by striving to be almost like a perfectionist. He also left his family to bow down to the other higher people. He is worshipped as a leader, not as a god.

I have also learned that Buddhism has to do with encouraging its believers to continue to strive towards a greater intellectual capacity. In other words, the people try to achieve a higher mental capacity.

I have also learned that the name for Buddhism comes from the word buddhi which means to awaken.

I think that since buddhi means to awaken, that Buddhism means like a call to be the best that you can. From what I have read, it sounds like through Buddhism, you are called to come out of the lower life and achieve more than you think you can.

1. How does Buddha help them become greater people?
2. Is Buddhism really real, or made up?

1/14/00

1. It helps people to get a greater perspective on life. They learn from Buddha because Buddha led such a good life. They don't worship Buddha, they simply learn to live like him. Buddha also is a teacher because he teaches them to live by the Four Noble almost like rules. One is to live life, you must suffer. It kind of sounds different from what you'd think, but it just means that every life comes with pain.

At first, I thought that Buddhist people thought that they were better than everyone else. I thought that they were stuck up, and only thinking of themselves. Now, I understand that Buddhists don't think that they are better, they just know that they keep striving to be better and they know more about life. I read a story that was about different cultures concentrating on a cup. An Englishman might say that it is plainly a cup and that he can prove it by looking in his dictionary. A Frenchman might say that it is a tasse and that he also has proof of it. A Chinese man might say say that it is neither of those, but that it is called a pei and that his culture has been around a lot longer than theirs, so he is right. They also say that a Buddhist person might just say that it is used for drinking and that each one of those names for it mean the same. From this, I can say that I think that the other cultures are all concentrating on being right and other stuff like that, while the Buddhists are just living life, and forgetting about their differences. I also think that you could interpret these in different ways. Like I mentioned before, I think that Buddhists could come across as being stuck up and think that they're better than
everyone else. They might think that they are so much better educated and have such a better view of life. They say that they don't, but sometimes it is very hard to tell.

1/17/00
From researching on the internet, I have learned that there is an online magazine (it proves that it is up-to-date) that is based on Buddhism. It is called Buddhazine. I am beginning to read it and have learned where Buddhism is centered today. I learned that 93% of Japan worship Buddha. Since Japan has such a big population, the number of Buddhists there is really high. The main continents that are Buddhists are Asia, Australia, and some parts in Europe. Buddhism is such a popular religion that every continent has some Buddhists in it.

1. Why is Buddhism such a popular religion?
2. Is it the most popular?
3. What has been going on in this religion?
4. What is the most common trait that Buddhists have?
5. Is there any famous Buddhists?

1. I think that it is popular because it is centered around "being all that you can be."
2. I think that it is because of all of the Buddha worshippers in Japan and other major parts of the world, and because it is so greatly spread.
3. I have no idea what is really happening in Buddhism today.
4. I don't know that they have anything really special about them, but I think that they might have more abilities than others.
5. I have heard that many popular celebrities are Buddhists. The one that I have heard about is Richard Gere.

1/21/00
1. I have learned that there are many stories of Siddhartha Gautama's (Buddha) life. I heard that he was born a prince and had everything that money could buy. When he was out one day, he saw death. He saw a man. Then he saw the man sick, and then he saw the man die. He took this as a sign that he needed religious enlightenment. He went to a filthy place, full of poverty, and then he starved himself. Then he decided that that was no way to live. He went under a tree and meditated for several hours. He decided that you don't want to be extremely rich, nor do you want to be very poor. You want to live "The Middle Way," or right in the middle. I think that this would be a very good way to live because you would have some possessions, but not so many that you're over powered by wealth.
2. This story as well as many other stories focusing on Buddha's life are called jatakas.
3. Buddha's teachings are called dharmas.
4. People today meditate near a Buddha statue. I think that that is their way of worshipping, even though they don't admit that it is. They say that Buddha is not a God, but a role-model.
1/25/00
On The Face to Face
In the face to face meeting, we brought up a lot of information that we had learned over the past weeks in studying Buddhism. We also asked a lot of questions that we need to find the answers to.

1. I learned that there are many different kinds of statues of Buddha. I learned that he is seated differently in a lot of them, and they have different meanings.
2. I have also learned that Buddha is one of many people who call themselves Buddha. It turns out that anyone who has gone through religious enlightenment can call themselves Buddha.
3. I have also learned that Buddhism started like Christianity in that a special child was born, in a place that children would not usually be born at.

1. If Buddha is not a god, why do they worship him?

1. I know that Buddha is a spiritual being, and that he is not a god. I don't think that they exactly worship him. I think that they just look up to him like he's a role model. But then again, they don't believe in role models or idols. They do look up to him and try to be like him though. That leads me to ask more questions about this.

1. Do they really worship Buddha?
2. If others can call themselves Buddha, why is the real Buddha so important?

1. I think that what they do, is what we would call worship, but that in some ways they don't worship Buddha. There is probably something else behind it.
2. I think that the only importance that Buddha has is that he began this religion, otherwise anyone else could really take his place.

1/27/00
We had a speaker, Mrs. Carberry, come and talk to us about Buddhism. I learned more about the way that they worship.

I learned before that they don't really worship Buddha, but they didn't tell exactly what they did. I still have not come across a word that really describes what they do towards Buddha, but I would say that they just follow him and try to be more like them, so that they can find nirvana, or complete peace and happiness.

They way the worship is kind of different from what I am used to. They don't exactly have a place that they worship, except their own homes. In fact, the closest place of worship that they have is in Chicago, Illinois. Anyways, they worship every day. They worship in front of an altar every morning for 45 minutes and in the evening for 30
minutes. When they worship, they hold juju beads and rub them together. I kind of forget the importance of them, but I know that they show respect for Buddha. They also may burn incense, and offer rice and flowers also to show respect. Also, when the worship they chant words that are from their prayer book. Most people, if they worship everyday at both times, they begin to memorize the book word for word. When they chant the words in the prayer book, they have to chant the whole book from cover to cover. They repeat a saying over and over again. The saying is Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo meaning Devotion, Universal or Mystic Law, Cause and Effect, and Rhythm and Sound. Each sylliable means something different. This chant is from the Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism.

There are many forms of Buddhism. They all started at different times. They are called branches of Buddhism. They are named by the people that came up with the new forms.

1/28/00

on the Face to Face with the Job Alike Groups

Today, I had a face to face discussion with my Job Alike group, or all of the Journalists. We discussed what we are going to do with the Religion Newspaper. We tried to decide how we were going to get people to submit their articles and what subjects that they were to be on. We thought of a lot of ways and a lot of subjects. We never really went into depth on talking about the different religions. We thought of writing articles about comparing the religions. Our main job as journalists is to edit and to proof read all of the articles. Then we will sort them and put them in the newspaper. We mainly spent most of the time talking about what the community needs to know.

1/31/00

1. What is going on today with Buddhism all over the world?

I learned before that Buddhism is practiced all over the world, and that it has many different branches. I also know that the different branches are fairly recent compared to the beginning of this religion. I don't think that the original way of Buddhism is still commonly practiced, but each branch of Buddhism is just a little different than the others.

I also know the way that they worship today, from the speaker. I know that they have juju beads that they use and they chant the prayer book (like I mentioned before). I found out that they don't actually worship, but I haven't found another name for it.

I know that today, as well as before, monks live in monastaries. I think that every male who practices Buddhism goes to a monastary for at least 6 months in their life. Then from there, they have a decision to devote their lives to Buddhism, or not

2/1/00

1. I think that Buddhism is still continuing to grow all over the world. I need to find out more about this.
2/2/00
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1. I read in another book that Buddhism is not being practiced in India, where it started because of the change to Hinduism. I think that Buddhism is growing only in the United States and other parts of Asia. I heard that about a fourth of the population are Buddhists. I think that Buddhism is not commonly practiced in Iowa, because we have no shrines or other places of worship. The closest place is in Chicago. Then again, they might worship in their homes, so you couldn't tell because most Buddhists act just like anyone else. I thought that in Iowa, there were a lot of religions, but that most of the people were Christians. I need to find more information about that.

I think that Buddhism is more commonly practiced in Asia, but that there are many in the United States, just in other places.

2/4/00

1. Is the population of Buddhists growing or decreasing?
2. Is Buddhism really common in Iowa?

1. I think that it depends where you are in the world. I am guessing that the Buddhism population is mainly staying the same, but I really can say why I think that way. I thought that Buddhism in the U.S. was decreasing because the only religions that I really hear about is Christianity, or Islam. I thought that Buddhism in Asia was increasing because I thought people in Asia were converting to Buddhism. Now I am beginning to wonder, because there are 1/4 of the population that are Buddhists.
2. As I said before, I don't think that Buddhism in Iowa is very popular. One, because most (but not all) of the people in Iowa or just in our area have some of a Scandinavian background. That may not be true but that is kind of how it seems. The religion that people from Scandinavia practice is Christianity, so I think that that is like the most common around here. I may be wrong though, because so many people have moved here from other countries of the world. Another reason why I would think that Buddhism is not as common in Iowa is because there are no shrines in Iowa, but there is one in Chicago. As I said before, this might not be true either because I know that Buddhists do need a shrine or to be in a congregation to worship. Most Buddhists worship in their home and are like anyone else, with very few differences.

1. What are some differences between Buddhists and people of other religions?

1. As I proved in the story before, Buddhists don't care about money and other luxuries, but they care about reaching complete happiness, and doing that with other people. They go on with life, while others waste it arguing with people that are different than them.

2/10/00
1. Does Buddhism have any special symbols that stand or it?

I think that in one of our face-to-face meetings, I learned about a flower that is the main symbol. I am not sure exactly what it is called, but I think that it is the lotus. I have also seen a wheel that is supposed to symbolize the steps in Buddhism.

2/11/00
“the Buddhism wheel and its eight spokes, the wheel is the main symbol in buddhism and I'm not sure if you know what the eight spokes stand for, they stand for the eightfold path. Or in other words the eight steps to Nirvana or Enlightenment. The eightfold path has eight steps like right concentration and right understandings.”

From Megan's information on the Buddhism wheel, I have concluded that the wheel does represent the steps of the eightfold path in Buddhism. I also think that the wheel is basically a symbol to remind people to strive to Nirvana. It reminds them of the four noble truths, and how to reach the enlightenment.

2/14/00
1. Megan said that she wasn't sure whether the eight spokes were different colors. Are they?

2. Do the colors represent different things in the wheel?

1. I am not sure, but in the pictures hat I have seen, they seem do be different colors, but I need to learn more about this.

2. I would guess that the different colors represent something, because usually different colors mean different meanings.

2/15/00
1. I said before that the spokes were different colors, but now I saw something else with no colors, Which is it?

1. I think that there are different wheels, that people makes, that have different colors, but yet some have the same color.

2/25/00-
on the World Peace Conference-2/23
We went to a chruch and talked about our religions and striving towards world peace. We talked about human rights and what was happening in the world today that was not honoring human rights. When we talked about our religions, I learned that basically all of the religions have the same basic meaning, but different details. They are alike in
more ways that they are different. My group concluded that if we took time to study other religions, we could see that we really are not totally different, we have a lot of similarities between us.

2/29/00-
on the whole Knowledge Forum unit

I learned a lot about religions and world peace in this unit. I understand a lot more about the world and the ways that we could come closer to world peace. World peace could happen if people would concentrate on our similarities rather than our differences. I am still wondering if world peace is actually possible since people can be so mean to others. If we could get everyone to come closer to world peace, then we would have a better world.

Knowledge Builder: Amanda N.