

Key Points from Introductory Unit

1. TBL supports exploration of primary sources in two stages:
 - (a) orientation to readings, leading to TRA; and
 - (b) application of key concepts (see #2-3) to SAME reading.
2. Religion can be studied objectively, neutrally & empathically, which requires viewing belief as dynamic rather than static.
3. Asians & Americans exhibit different perspectives on Buddhist thought & practice; understanding the common way of thinking that informs both groups requires patient investigation.

& one thing to put at the top of your “To Do” list:

look over the list of ****local worship sites**** to visit

Essential Lesson from Trial Application Exercise

Studying religion requires

BOTH

(a) observing what is visible
(practice in community)

AND

(b) gathering clues about the unseen
(thoughts & feelings about invisible beings & cosmic forces)

& most importantly,
investigating the way the two **shape one another**.

Content Objectives for Unit 1: Solitary Bhikshus & Early Buddhist India (5th BCE - 1st CE)

By the end of this unit you should be able to describe, for an interested peer unfamiliar with these topics:

1. the key events in the traditional biography of Shakyamuni Buddha (explicit in legends, but also reflected in sutras).
2. the most important teachings attributed to Shakyamuni Buddha (explicit in sutras, but also reflected in legends).
3. the diverse communities that preserved records of Shakyamuni's life and teachings, especially the **distinctive role of wandering ascetics** hinted at in sources that were preserved primarily by settled monks.

→ in preparation for considering all later historical evolution.

Overview of Readings

1. Primary Sources:

"The Great Departure and Enlightenment" (RDR, 1-8)

"Buddha: The Quest for Awakening" (RDR, 8-12)

"Frames of Reference" (RDR, 13-15 + 15-18)

"The Fruits of the Contemplative Life (RDR, 19-23 + 23-30)

"The Great Discourse on The Total Unbinding," chapters 5 & 6
(RDR, 31-36 + 37-38; 39-40 + 40-49)

2. *Explorer's Guide* (locate **terms marked with an *** on the pages below):

life of the Buddha & influential sources: p.3-10, 67-68

duhkha, nirvana & the four noble truths: p.12-16

people, places & objects: p.21-24, 61-62, 64

the three councils & expanding stories: p.27-31, 33

3. "Essential Elements of Culture" (sections IV & V)

Focus Questions for “Little Buddha”

- * What practices are shown IN the story?
- * What thoughts & feelings do those practices seem to inspire?

- * What practices is the story WOVEN INTO?
- * What thoughts & feelings do those story-related practices seem intended to inspire?

Thinking As You Read (part 1)

What you think about when you read should go beyond summarizing.
Consider an analogy that symbolically describes this thinking.

When putting together a puzzle, one **first looks for**

(a) the shape of each puzzle piece & how it fits with others

but then also

(b) forms and colors that appear on different pieces;
similar looking pieces that are hard to distinguish;
and finally the whole picture of the assembled puzzle.

This analogy spotlights the **different skills** needed
to prepare for (a) TRAs and (b) application exercises.

EXPANDED STUDY GUIDE KEY:

RED = study questions for each section of the assigned source

underlined & GREEN = terms to study for the TRA

IMPORTANT:

1. For **terms marked with an asterisk (*)**, additional information from EGBT will be tested in the TRA and considered in scoring Application Exercises.
2. Page numbers & terms that are **NOT underlined** but **highlighted in blue** are not tested on the TRA, but they ***ARE ASSIGNED*** for Applications Exercises.

A Legend* of Shakyamuni* Buddha's "Great Departure" (RDR, 1-8)
COMPARED WITH
Shakyamuni* Buddha's First-Hand Account of "Departing" (RDR, 8-12)
[+ EGBT, 3-6, 8-10, 13-14; 28-31, 33; 61, 64, 68]

Sources:

SanghaBhedaVastu [vs. Anguttara & Majjhima Nikaya]
legend* [vs. sutra*]
Sanskrit* [vs. Pali*]
Sarvastivada* [vs. Theravada*]

People & Divine Beings:

sramana = "wandering ascetic,*" "quester," "contemplative"
cakravartin king = "wheel-turning monarch"
brahmin* = "priest"
bodhisattva = Bodhisatta
deities = "divinities," "gods" = deva

A Legend* of Shakyamuni* Buddha's "Great Departure" (RDR, 1-8)

Kapilavastu Suddhodana* Yashodhara Indra (=Sakka) Brahma Mara*

(a) What are the key events and pivotal moments in this account of Shakyamuni's departure? (p.9-14)

pravrajya old age, sickness & death dreams sleep Chanda(ka) horse

hairknot (festival) hunter Benares (=Varanasi) silk (robes) Rajagriha begging bowl

(b) What are the stages in his quest for enlightenment? (p.14-17)

Vulture's Peak dharma(s) Arada (= Alara) Kalama nothingness
Udraka Ramaputra "neither perception nor nonperception"

austerities* Nairañjana River jambu [=rose-apple] tree crystal bowl

(c) What are the signs that accompany his final attainment? (p.17-18)

(former) birth(s) divine eye inclinations = "thoughts inclined" dharma(s)
Blessed One Mara Rahula

Shakyamuni* Buddha's First-Hand Account of "Departing" (RDR, 8-12)

(a) What factors & realizations lead to Shakyamuni*'s departure in this account, and how do these compare with details in the legend read previously? (p.4-6)

lotus ponds Varanasi (=Benares) turban, cloak, etc. palaces servants, workers, etc.

ageing illness death Unbinding (=nirvana*) parents ochre robe

(b) What are the stages in his quest for Unbinding* in this account, and how do these compare with details in the legend read previously? (p.6-9)

Alara (= Arada) Kalama doctrine = Dhamma (=dharma*) sphere of nothingness
timber sensuality body mind trance of non-breathing

food rose-apple [=jambu] tree jhana (=dhyana, "concentration"*)

(c) What are the signs that accompany his final attainment of unbinding*, and how do these compare with details in the legend read previously?? (p.10-11)

(1st/2nd/3rd) watch of the night [three visions*] past lives/birth*

divine eye* kamma (=karma*) (mental) effluents stress (=dukkha)

Ascetic* Practice: Instructions for Monks (=bhikshus*) (RDR, 13-15 + 16-18)

COMPARED WITH

Ascetic* Practice: Instructions to a King (RDR, 19-23 + 24-30)

[+ EGBT, 13-16, 21-22, 28-32]

Majjhima Nikaya vs. Digha Nikaya

Practices & Goals:

mindfulness* concentration* (=jhana, dhyana)
rapture equanimity Unbinding (=nirvana*)

Key Concepts:

body =form mind consciousness aggregates [=skandhas*]
origination/reappearance & passing away/disappearance

six sense media = eye, ear, nose, tongue, body & intellect

five hindrances = sensual desire/covetousness/greed, ill will (& anger),
sloth & drowsiness, restlessness & anxiety, uncertainty

four noble truths* stress (=duhkha*)

Ascetic* Practice: Instructions for Monks (=bhikshus*) (RDR, 13-15 + 16-18)

(a) What instructions does “the Blessed One” give to “the monks” (= bhikshus*) regarding mindfulness* of the body? (p.1-3a)

Kammasadhamma frames of reference wilderness tree empty building
breathing fabrication (=impulse) turner (=potter) grain butcher corpse

(b) What instructions does he give regarding mindfulness* of feelings & mind? (p.3b-4a)

painful vs. pleasant passion, aversion & delusion

(c) What mental qualities does he catalogue in this part of the source? (p.4a-6b)

perception fabrication factors for Awakening

(d) What claims does he make about the fruits of mindful practice? (p.6a-b)

seven years gnosis (=prajña*) non-return

Ascetic* Practice: Instructions to a King (RDR, 19-23 + 24-30)

(a) How does Ajatasattu decide to visit Shakyamuni, and what does he ask him? (p.1-4a)

Bimbisara Udayibhadda Rajagaha (=Rajagrha*) Jivaka Komarabhacca mango grove

Purana Kassapa elephants fear community of monks craftsmen

(b) According to the “Blessed One,” what are visible fruits of ascetic practice, and what virtues does he catalogue in describing the higher fruits? (p.4a-5a, p.5a-7b)

slave/workman ochre robe farmer/householder/taxpayer
scents & cosmetics scales, metals & measures debates palmistry bird

(c) Where does he recommend that the monk go to practice, what stages does that monk pass through, and what supranormal powers does he gain? (p.7b-11b)

secluded dwellings debt, sickness, prison, slavery, desolate road
bath powder, lake, lotus pond, white cloth beryl gem mental fermentations

(d) What is the fruit of this conversation for Ajatasattu? (p.11b-12b)

lamp transgression wound Dhamma eye

Shakyamuni's Final Instructions to Ascetics & Distribution of Remains

(RDR, 31-36 + 37-38, 39-40 + 41-49) [+ EGBT 7-8, 15-16, 22-24, 29-31, 33, 61-62, 64]

devatas (=deities) Tathagata* ("Thus Come One") "burial mound" = stupa*

(a) What instructions does Shakyamuni given to Ananda at Kusinara*? (p.1-6)

sal-trees corral-tree blossoms Upavana four places women
wheel-turning monarch cloth & wool Private Buddha four qualities Mallans

(b) What instructions does he give to Subhadda the Wanderer? (p.7-8)

direct knowledge noble eightfold path stream-winner non-returner ar(a)ha(n)t*

(c) What are his final words & how do others respond to his passing? (p.9-10 + 11-12b)

doubt or perplexity fabrications jhanas Brahma Sakka Anuruddha weeping

(d) How are the Buddha's remains handled and distributed? (p.12b-17)

scents, garlands & instruments memorial oil-vat Maha Kassapa = Mahakashyapa*
Vesali (=Vaisali*) Kapilavatthu (=Kapilavastu*) bone relics
Dona the brahman eight shares/portions (=eight stupas*)

reviewing basic terminology for the academic study of religion
“Essential Elements of Religious Life (on-line syllabus)

(a) “What analogies help picture the relationship between reflection, practice, community? (section IV)

dimensions layers

(b) “What questions help pay attention to the concrete evidence of religious practice?” (section V)

worship informal roles written records

actions objects words spaces

ideal vs. actual

passages to look for in these primary sources

"...if he were to see a corpse cast away in a charnel ground--one day, two days, three days dead--bloated, livid, and festering, he applies it to this very body, 'This body, too: such is its nature, such is its future, such is its unavoidable fate.'...Or again, as if he were to see a corpse cast away in a charnel ground, picked at by crows, vultures, & hawks, by dogs, hyenas, and various kinds of other creatures...a skeleton smeared with flesh and blood, connected with tendons...a fleshless skeleton smeared with blood, connected with tendons...a skeleton without flesh or blood, connected with tendons...bones detached from their tendons, scattered in all directions...the bones whitened, somewhat like the color of shells...piled up more than a year old...decomposed into a powder: He applies it to this very body, 'This body, too: such is its nature, such is its future, such is its unavoidable fate.'"

"When the mind was thus concentrated, ...I directed it to the knowledge of the passing away and reappearance of all beings. I saw--by means of the divine eye, purified and surpassing the human--beings passing away and re-appearing, and I discerned how they are inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate in accordance with their kamma: 'These beings--who were endowed with bad conduct of body, speech, and mind, who reviled the noble ones, held wrong views and undertook actions under the influence of wrong views--with the break-up of the body, after death, have re-appeared in the plane of deprivation, the bad destination, the lower realms, in hell. But these beings--who were endowed with good conduct...have reappeared in the good destinations, in the heavenly world.'...Ignorance was destroyed; knowledge arose; darkness was destroyed; light arose--as happens in one who is heedful, ardent, and resolute."

"Ananda, there are these four places that merit being seen by a clansman with conviction, that merit his feelings of urgency and dismay (*samvega*). Which four? 'Here the Tathagata was born' is a place that merits being seen by a clansman with conviction, that merits his feelings of urgency and dismay. 'Here the Tathagata awakened to the unexcelled right self-awakening'... 'Here the Tathagata set rolling the unexcelled wheel of Dhamma'...'Here the Tathagata was totally unbound in the remainderless property of unbinding" is a place that merits being seen by a clansman with conviction, that merits his feelings of urgency and dismay. These are the four places that merit being seen by a clansman with conviction, that merits his feelings of urgency and dismay. They will come out of conviction, Ananda--monks and nuns, male layfollowers and female lay-followers--to the spots where 'Here the Tathagata was born,' 'Here the Tathagata awakened to the unexcelled right self-awakening'... And anyone who dies while making the pilgrimage to these memorials with a bright, confident mind will--on the break-up of the body after death--reappear in a good destination, a heavenly world."

"Meanwhile, the bodhisattva, who was practicing bodily austerities, thought: 'no one engaged in the discipline of great ascetic striving has ever transcended suffering; therefore this path as well is not adequate for knowledge, not adequate for seeing, not adequate for unsurpassed total enlightenment.' And he began to relax his strenuousness; and his body, which had been suppressed, became calm,...and his mind, which had been repressed, became one-pointed. And he reflected: 'what is the way that is adequate for knowledge, for seeing, for unsurpassed total enlightenment?' Then it occurred to him: 'I remember when, as a boy, I sat down in the shade of the jambu tree while attending a festival at the place of my father...: at that time, I attained a trance state that was free from sensual desires, free from sinful and demeritorious things, thoughtful, reflective, arising from discrimination, and blissful. That must be the way, that must be the path that is adequate for knowledge, for seeing, for unsurpassed total enlightenment....'"