Important Lessons from Unit 2 Application Exercises

A. Vinaya stories, though for the most part not directly attributable to the Buddha, do reflect the daily personal and social challenges faced by monks in large, often wealthy, monasteries of the “Middle Period.”

Sources: *Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya & Avadāna Shataka*

B. Mahāyāna sūtras, though probably inspired by ascetics, were greatly expanded by mainstream monks who were critical of mainstream monastic practices and narrow focus on Abhidharma study.

Sources: *[Sūtra on] Right View, Prajñā Pāramitā Sūtra*

C. Monks in some mainstream monasteries developed practices promoting the bodhisattva ideal of Mahāyāna sūtras. (BUT Theravāda monks firmly rejected such sūtras and the viewpoints they promote.)

Sources: *Bodhi Cārya Avatāra* chapters on the “thought of awakening”
Content Objectives for Unit 3:
Lay Buddhists & Bhikshus in East Asia (5th CE - 20th CE)

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

1. growth of Mahāyāna (vs. “mainstream”) traditions in China during same period of Mahāyāna’s assimilation into Indian mainstream.

2. key dates & events in Chinese history, more precisely recorded due to distinct cultural priorities and distance from land of origin.

3. the unique roles of women & laypeople in Unit 3 sources, suggesting similar roles in earlier historical periods.

& one thing to look for in observation reports:
“To what extent do practices in historical sources resemble & differ from those observed in local communities representing the same traditions?”
Overview of Readings

1. Primary Sources:

   “Tales of the Lotus Sutra” (RDR, 84-87, 89-93 + 87-89, 93-96)
   “Pure Land Worship and Meditation in China”
     (RDR, 97-100, 104-7 + 101-3)
   “The Zen Master Hakuin: Selected Writings”

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

   Buddha’s last words, main schools & Mahāyāna sutras: p. 8-9, 11, 60
   nirvana & shunayata: p.19-21
   words & faith: p. 25-27
   Mahāyāna expansion into East Asia: p. 37, 39-44, 47-48, 51

3. "Essential Elements of Religious Life” (sections II & VI)
STUDY GUIDE KEY (abbreviated):

RED = study questions for each section of the assigned source  
***All section page numbers are those of the original sources reprinted in RDR***

underlined & GREEN = terms to study for the TRA

terms marked with an asterisk (*) = info from EGBT for both TRA & ApEx-s

numbers & terms NOT underlined = ASSIGNED only for ApEx-s (not TRA)
Devotion to the *Lotus Sutra* in Early Medieval China*
(RDR, 84-87, 89-93 + 87-89, 93-96) [+ EGBT, 8-9, 11, 25-27, 37, 39-43, 60]

Traditions, Sources & Time Periods (p.427-30):

*Hongzan Fahua Zhuan*  *Tales of Miraculous Retribution*  Tang* period = Changan era

Sui dynasty  Confucians* & Daoists*  “Dharma Preachers” chapter (of *Lotus Sūtra*)

Key Ideas & Deities (p.427-30):

(stimulus &) numinal response = spiritual “manifestation” (*ganying*) cultic focus/activity

virtues  karmic retribution  Guanyin*  Samantabhadra

Rituals, Objects & Activities (remaining pages):

uninterrupted/constant recitation  special robe & seat  sūtra case

purified altar  scripture copyist  ritual purity
Devotion to the Lotus Sutra in Early Medieval China
(RDR, 84-87, 89-93 + 87-89, 93-96) [+ EGBT, 8-9, 11, 25-27, 37, 39-43, 60]

(a) According to the story, what miraculous signs followed from what kinds of devotional practice by of chancellor Xiao Jing & Ma Heng? (p.430-32, 451)

elder sister = empress Xiao    sandalwood stūpa    sharīra beads    daughter    tomb

(b) In what ways did the practitioners described in these stories offer their bodies in their practice, and what miraculous signs resulted? (p.432-36 & 440-41, 442-43)

immolation    “Medicine King" chapter    Medicine King Monastery    boulevard of Jingzhou    skull    lips & tongue    famine    blue lotus flower


Vimalakīrti Sūtra    “Medicine Herbs” chapter    monk Jingjian    Indra    divine youths    Korean Kingdom    Kim Kuayi    King Yama    Lord of Mount Tai

(d) In what ways & by whom are disrespectful officials humbled? (p.443-44 & 449-50)

district manager Zhu    leprous ulcers    governor Wanfu    vajra guardians    golden letters
Pure Land* Worship & Meditation During the Tang* & Song* Dynasties
(RDR, 97-100, 104-7 + 101-3) [+ EGBT, 43-44, 47-48]

Traditions, Sources & Time Periods (p.359-65 + 366-68):

Nianfo Famen Two Teachings for Resolving Doubts
Dharma Gate of Contemplation Sukhāvatī Sūtras

Jodo Shin school (=Shinshu) Shanxi movement Song dynasty
Pure Land (sukhāvatī) Tientai (=Tendai) Chan (=Zen)

Key People & Ideas (p. 360-63):

nianfo (=nembutsu*) = buddhānusmrti glorified body samādhi
mental recollection vs. vocal recitation Amitābha*

Shandao Zunshi Dharma Master Huaigan

Ritual Objects & Locales (p.364-65 + 366-67):

incense daochang (=altar, sanctuary, chapel)
Pure Land Cloisters halls for 16 contemplations
Pure Land* Worship & Meditation During the Tang* & Song* Dynasties
(RDR, 97-100, 104-7 + 101-3)  [+ EGBT, 43-44, 47-48]

(a) What use of the body, words and visualization are involved in Pure Land worship? (p.372-75, 377-78, 363-64 + 365-68)

Thus Come One (=Tathāgata) = Amitābha*  Avalokiteshvara
cap & robe  kneeling  veneration  confession & repentance  dedication of merit
seven-date rite  intervals [of worship]  visionary experiences

(b) What mindful recollection of the Buddha’s name & form is prescribed in these sources, and what vow is to be taken following such recollection? (p. 375-77, 360-63 & 369-71)

10 moments of mindfulness  soft vs. loud
great/one-pointed mind  field, seed, rain & blossom

(c) What is to be done when the end of life approaches? (p. 376 & 378-79)
assembly  golden/flower pedestal  lotus blossom  facing west
Zen* (= Chan*) Tradition in Late Medieval Japan*

(a) What Japanese schools & teachers preceded & followed Hakuin? (p.1-5 + 12-17)

[Bodhidharma*][Emperor Shomu*][Koya*]
Rinzai school Tendai (=Tiantai) Dogen Soto school Sung period Masters
Shōju Rojin koan* system disciples old nun/Nichiren sect

(b) What were Hakuin’s practice & reflection in childhood & youth? (p.18-19 + 116-17)

Kannon Sutra nembutsu (=nianfo) Confucianism Lotus Sūtra Master Yen-t’ou

(c) What led to Hakuin’s meeting his teacher & what awakening ensued? (p. 118-19)

Mu koan Master Shōju “hole-dwelling devil” death of Nan-chüan

(d) In what ways does Hakuin’s insight deepen in old age? (p.24-27 + 120-23)

Pure Land teaching silent-illumination Zen painting & calligraphy
Roundness of the Lotus Leaf Shoinji Temple @ Hara dream of sleeves & mirrors
reviewing basic terminology for the academic study of religion
“Essential Elements of Religious Life (on-line syllabus)

(a) “Beliefs & Reflection” (section II)

unstated beliefs trust
non-specialists

nature fate luck

awareness faith

(b) “Integrating The Visible Elements Religious Life” (section IV)

dimensions layers
passages to look for in these primary sources

"One night in a dream my mother came and presented me with a purple robe made of silk. When I lifted it, both sleeves seemed very heavy, and on examining them I found an old mirror, five or six inches in diameter, in each sleeve. The reflection from the mirror in my right sleeve penetrated to my heart and vital organs. My own mind, mountains and rivers, the great earth seemed serene and bottomless. The mirror in the left sleeve, however, gave off no reflection whatsoever. It's surface was like that of a new pan that had yet to be touched by flames. But suddenly I became aware that the luster of the mirror in the left sleeve was innumerable times brighter than the other. After this, when I looked at all things, it was as though I was seeing my own face. For the first time I understood the meaning of the saying, 'The Tathagata sees the Buddha nature within his eye.'"

"For three years running he kept up his practice, until one day, just as the light of dawn was beginning to break at the fifth watch, there came a loud pounding at the door of the Buddha hall, and someone called out for it to be opened. At first Kan was reluctant, thinking, "Certainly this must be a criminal. Why else would he want a door to be opened when it is already locked tight?" But the person continued to call without letting up, so Kan finally gave in. When he opened the door he saw an old man. His beard and temples were a hoary white, and in his hands he clutched a wooden staff."

"Buddhas throughout the ten directions are ever-present in this world of ours. The sound of their dharma never ceases. Their marvelous rare fragrance is all-pervading; the flavor of their dharma fills the void. Their pure radiance shines over and enfolds everything. The eternally abiding and wondrous principle [of enlightenment] fills all of space. Yet, because my six senses are internally blinded and the three activities [of body, speech, and mind] benighted, I am unable to see, hear, smell, feel, or know their presence. Because of these influences I revolve endlessly in cyclic birth and death, passing through all manner of evil destinies, for incalculable eons never to know a moment of release."

“His hair must be properly dressed, his garments in the strictest order, and his swords must be fastened at his side. With this exact and proper deportment, the true meditation stands forth with an overflowing splendor. Mounted on a sturdy horse, the warrior can ride forth to face an uncountable horde of enemies as though he were riding into a place empty of people. The valiant, undaunted expression on his face reflects his practice of the peerless, true, uninterrupted meditation sitting. Meditating in this way, the warrior can accomplish in one month what it takes the monk a year to do; in three days he can open up for himself benefits that would take the monk a hundred days.”