

## BACKGROUND READING – SPREAD OF BUDDHISM

**DIRECTIONS:** While reading, **BULLDOG** the text. **B**ox the main idea of each paragraph. **U**nderline key phrases and important details that tell about or support the main idea. **L**ocate and circle any words you don't know. **L**ift out key words and phrases by writing them in the side column. **D**O **G**ive a summary statement at the end; your summary should include the main idea from each paragraph. Paste this page on a left page of your ISN. On the right, write your 4-sentence summary and draw/color at least one illustration showing your understanding of cultural diffusion.

### cultural diffusion

spread of ideas from one culture to another

The term **cultural diffusion** is used to describe the spread of cultural items from one culture to another culture. Ideas, products, religion, and technology are examples of things that have been diffused. If you are not from a Chinese background and you have eaten Chinese food, you have experienced the diffusion of Chinese food, since the style of Chinese food began in China and eventually made its way to California.

The teachings of **Buddhism** are examples of something that spread or diffused during ancient and medieval world history. Buddhism began in India in the 6th century B.C.E. by Siddhartha Gautama (si-DAHR-thuh GOW-tum-uh), who came to be known as the Buddha. He taught that life is an endless **cycle** of birth, death, and rebirth that can be escaped by following the Eightfold Path, a code of **morals** or teachings. These teachings and others spread across India and Asia during and after the Buddha's lifetime.

reunified to bring back together, to reunite

During the Han Dynasty (from 206 B.C.E. to 220 C.E.) Buddhism spread to China. This took place through merchants, or traders, and **missionaries**, people who travel to spread religious teachings. Eventually the Han Dynasty fell, bringing China into a period of division. In 589 C.E. the Sui Dynasty **reunified** China, creating a new **central government**. The Sui also carried out public works projects, promoted religious tolerance and preserved Chinese classics. The Sui did not last for long however and fell in 618 C.E.

In 618 C.E. a new dynasty arose in China. This dynasty came to be known as the Tang Dynasty. Many people consider this dynasty to be one of the greatest dynasties in China's history. Many new ideas and inventions spread across China during the almost 300 years that the Tang ruled. Buddhism, although it had already spread to many parts of China, rose to its greatest heights and power during the Tang Dynasty. Many Chinese people found hope in Buddhist teachings particularly during times of political and social **unrest**, and during times of economic and physical suffering.