

Buddhism



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Buddhism began by Buddha himself preaching his enlightenment message on his view on the world and how humans should, and the best way to, succeed in the world. However in the 6th century BCE the government had fallen and there was period of instability until the Sui Dynasty took over, during this period was when Buddhism began to majorly spread. After the fall of the Han dynasty, there were many responses to the spread of Buddhism throughout China between the 6th century BCE and 570 CE. Buddhism was accepted, tolerated, and rejected. Buddhism was accepted because it was an acceptable path to enlightenment.

It was tolerated by those who would not be affected by its popularity and power. Those who rejected it were people whose wealth and popularity would be negatively affected once it gained popularity. During this long period of instability, people were searching for something to look to for help and Buddhism just happened to be the new thing. When analyzing document 2, Zhi Dun, a Chinese scholar, while addressing the people of China, discusses that accepting Buddhism and beginning to follow Buddhism by ridding one's self of all desires and sorrow, would benefit the people of China.

He believes this can help get the country out of the period of sorrow and instability they are in. He has written this document due to his belief that some people have doubts on accepting Buddhism and as someone in a position of power; he would like to encourage the acceptance of Buddhism throughout China. Document 1, is a teaching by Siddhartha, the Buddha, himself. It is discussing the four noble truths and in favor of Buddhism

because it is Buddhism's guidelines. However, the author is impartial because the author is Siddhartha and he came up with the religion himself.

This would affect his view because if he developed the religion he obviously will support it and give teachings in order to submerge people into the religion. He wouldn't say anything against or say anything that would make the religion unappealing. An additional document that could help accurately analyze the responses to Buddhism is a document from a woman. This document would be helpful due to the fact that all of these documents are written by men and there isn't a woman's perspective to balance out the spectrum.

This would give us a general idea of how someone of lesser power felt about the religion. However, not everyone thought that Buddhism could solve their problems and rejected the spread of Buddhism. Document four by Han Yu completely mocks Buddhism and claims it is a cult of Barbarians. He is quite obviously a believer in the Confucian religion and by their philosophy that the Buddha be cast into a fire and water and the evil be rooted out. He is clearly against Buddhism and would in fact prefer that no one of the Chinese culture support the religion.

However, Han Yu is an official at the Tang imperial court and he has great power in the area. He would not want China to become Buddhist because in Buddhism there is not one person above another, everyone is equal. If he were to convert to Buddhism he would lose his power and his wealth. This is obviously going to affect his view on Buddhism because he does not want to lose all power and wealth he has. When analyzing document 6, The Tang

Emperor Wu blames Buddhism for the cause of many problems within the society at the time.

In fact, he finds it such a prevalent cause of all the problems that he believes that Buddhism should be eradicated. Since Emperor Wu is in fact an emperor, his opinion is often valued; however some would go against it to rebel. In this scenario, Emperor Wu does not have an opinion that will help China get out of this spiraling state of failure they are in but help himself remain in power. If he were to convert to Buddhism he would lose all wealth and power due to the philosophy that everyone is equal in Buddhism, therefore his look on the spread of Buddhism is affected by his own selfish wants.

An additional document that would be helpful would be a statistical document giving numerical information on approximately how many of the people of China actually converted. This could help analyze how China as a whole was affected by the spread of Buddhism. There were some in the civilization that did not support, nor reject Buddhism but simply tolerated it. In document 3, the anonymous Chinese scholar answer questions about Buddhism that you can assume were frequently asked questions in China during the time period. He defends Buddhism to an extent, yet does not support it.

He believes that neither Confucianism nor Buddhism has all the answers. Document 5 tries to make amends with all three religions saying they are the same at the basis. He is attempting to create a compromise so that all three religions can live in peace in China. Zong Mi seems very unbiased at first, however he is a Buddhist scholar so he might be trying to defend Buddhism

by saying all these religions do the same things in different ways so just let everyone do their own thing. An additional document to help more effectively analyze the responses to the spread of Buddhism is a document from someone in the lower class.

All of the documents are written by upper class individuals and if a document from a peasant was available then we could effectively analyze the responses to Buddhism in China as a whole and not just in the upper class. In conclusion, Buddhism spread throughout China between the 6th century BCE and 570 CE running into several different responses. Some rejected Buddhism due to their fear of losing power and wealth while others accepted as a new found way to reach enlightenment. Then there were those who did not accept it nor reject it for they found nothing wrong with, yet they chose not to follow it.