

# THE WALTERS ART MUSEUM COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

## A PORTABLE SHRINE

### COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.9 Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinion.

### OVERVIEW

Students will explore a portable Buddhist shrine and discuss the development and spread of Buddhism across East and Southeast Asia.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Images of [Portable Buddhist Shrine \(WAM 61.266\)](#)

### GUIDING QUESTION

- What is Buddhism and how did it spread across East and Southeast Asia?

### ENGAGEMENT

Buddhism is a religion based on the teachings of the historical Buddha. Buddhism was founded in India and spread from India to China along a network of trade routes called the Silk Road. Indian Buddhists traveled the Silk Road to China and Chinese Buddhists traveled the Silk Road to India to visit the birthplace of the Buddha. In the 7<sup>th</sup> century, travel along the Silk Road became more difficult, but by that time Buddhism was well established in China. Mahayana Buddhism is the branch of Buddhism most common in China.

When Buddhist monks traveled, shrines like this one went with them. The shrines were mass-produced in workshops during the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries and helped monks spread Buddhism across China, the Koreas, and eventually to Japan. This shrine was carved out of a single piece of wood and is divided into different sections, or registers.

The preaching Buddha is seated in the center section, while accompanied by an orchestra sitting below. In Buddhism, the Buddha represents a perfected state of being that has existed since the beginning of time. Siddhartha Gautama, the historical Buddha whose ideas and teaching gave rise to the Buddhist religion, lived during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C. Siddhartha encouraged people from all walks of life to reject the temporary material values of the world in order to reach an ultimate state of bliss called nirvana. Figures sit in the surrounding sections and listen to Buddha's teachings. The pagoda that rises over Buddha's head indicates that he is preaching the Lotus Sūtra. The figures who stand in the top sections of the right and left wings are followers of the Buddha called bodhisattvas. The bodhisattva Mañjuśrī is accompanied by a lion in the left section and in the right section the bodhisattva Samantabhadra rides an elephant.

### LOOKING AT THE OBJECT WITH STUDENTS

- What shapes and patterns are used to create and decorate the different registers?
- Identify the figures and symbols illustrated on the portable shrine.
- What materials and techniques were used to create the portable shrine?
- How do you think the materials and size were connected to the purpose of the object? Why do you think this might have been important?

### EXTENSION

- Compare and contrast depictions of Buddha from across East and Southeast Asia.
- Learn more about symbolic gestures called mudra and use your body to model the Buddha's pose.
- Visit [Integrating the Arts: China](#) to learn more about the portable shrine and download related activities.
- Explore the Walters' collection of Buddhist art from East and Southeast [Asia online](#).
- Research trade routes and explore the movement of goods, people, ideas, and technology from Asia to Europe.



[Portable Buddhist Shrine \(WAM 61.266\)](#)