Global History and Geography 9
Unit II: Classical Civilizations: Maurya India

Directions: Read the passage below from Asoka's Edicts and answer the questions that follow in the space provided.

Asoka's Edicts

During his rule of Maurya India beginning in 268 B.C.E., Asoka converted to Buddhism, rejected violence, and resolved to rule by moral example. Asoka had stone pillars set up across India announcing laws, or edicts, and describing the just actions of his government. The following are excerpts from several of the pillars.

This world and the other are hard to gain without great love of Righteousness, (virtue and moral behavior) great self-examination, great obedience, great circumspection, great effort. Through my instruction respect and love of Righteousness daily increase and will increase... For this is my rule- to govern by Righteousness, to administer by Righteousness, to please my subjects by Righteousness, and to protect them by Righteousness.

Whoever honors his own religion and disparages (belittles) another man's, whether from blind loyalty or with the intention of showing his own religion in a favorable light, does his own religion the greatest possible harm. Harmony is best, with each hearing and respecting the other's teachings. It is the wish of the king that members of all religions should be learned and teach virtue.

All the good deeds that I have done have been accepted and followed by the people. And so obedience to mothers and father, obedience to teachers, respect for the aged, kindliness to the poor and weak, and to slaves and servants, have increased and will continue to increase... And this progress of Righteousness... has taken place in two manners, by enforcing conformity to Righteousness, and by pleading. I have enforced the law against killing certain animals and many others, but the greatest progress of Righteousness... comes from pleading in favor of noninjury to life and abstinence from killing living beings.

I have done this that it may endure... as long as the moon and sun, and that my sons and my great-grandsons may support it; for by supporting it they will gain both this world and the next.

1. How does Asoka promise to rule his subjects?

2. Describe Asoka's policy toward people of other religions.

3. How does Asoka's manner of rule reflect his Buddhist beliefs?

4. Explain how Asoka promotes "Righteousness."

5. How does Asoka deal with issues of diversity?

6. Compare and contrast Asoka's style of leadership with that of his grandfather, Chandragupta.
THE SPREAD OF BUDDHISM

Use the information from the video, the map below, and your textbook to answer the questions. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Location Which areas of Asia were influenced by both Hinduism and Buddhism? Which were influenced only by Hinduism? Only by Buddhism?

2. Place How did India’s location influence the spread of Buddhism?

3. Interaction Why was trade along the Silk Road an important factor in the expansion of Buddhism?

4. Movement How did Buddhism spread to Sri Lanka? To other parts of Southeast Asia? To Korea and Japan?

5. Region Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam make up a region known as mainland Southeast Asia. Identify one geographic and one cultural characteristic that help define this region.

6. Critical Thinking: Linking Past and Present What factors do you think play an important role in spreading new ideas today?