

Andrew Pool

Intercultural Communication 2150

Project 1

## Overview

For this project I'm experiencing a Buddhist Religious Service put on by the "Salt Lake Buddhist Temple". Buddhism is an ancient religion valuing inner peace and understanding with the natural universe. I will be evaluating the Service using Value Orientations to get a better understanding of the religion.

## Religion

Buddhism is an eastern religion founded in India around the 4th-6th century BCE by the religious figure Siddhattha Buddha. Buddhist practice meditation and chants in order to help find balance (The Foundations of Buddhism, Rupert Gethin).

Buddhists value inner peace, the understanding that good and bad things happen to all people and that you should work to find balance in life, understanding that life isn't fair but perspective is required to find enjoyment in life.

## Religious Function

For this project I watched a video posted on YouTube of the August 29th 2021 Sunday service for the Salt Lake Buddhist Temple. I am interested in Buddhism because I am not drawn towards dogma a lot of western religions. The service started with a sounding of a bell and then a chant the Master then continued to tell some small

stories related to the “10-year-old Zen Master” who was a college who died when he was in his 40s and how they relate to his life.

A brief amount of time of the service was dedicated to COVID. Because of precautions for COVID services were done remote in order to protect the congregants. Explaining his values for the cautions he read a quote from “Russell” explaining that the Buddha doesn’t punish for bad deeds, or reward them for good deed and that it is everyone’s own responsibility to find balance in their life.

I enjoyed the service and felt like valuable wisdom had been imparted on me, especially the part about how when the Master’s bike got a flat in the rain, he reflected on the virtues and good things in his life and that the experience was an event to move from a grow.

## Value Theory

I am examining the sermon using Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck’s Value Orientations as stated in “Intercultural Communications in Contexts” (Martin, Nakayama) and go through how the service helps me understand these questions that the cultural participants answer the questions.

- What is Human Nature: The service seems to suggest that there is no default for if a person is either good or evil and that the universe and the Bhuddha doesn’t punish or reward based on the goodness or badness of ones actions. Instead Bhuddist value inner peace or balance in ones life, so that one can live a happy and fulfilled life.
- Relationship Between Humans and Nature: Bhuddism central tennents according to “” involve finding Hamony between humans and nature. The sermon’s central thesis

about the death of a Master is specifically about finding harmony between one's on natural demise and being at peace with their existence.

- Relationships between Humans: The sermon wasn't directed towards valuing the individual or the familial relationships between people, instead it was directed towards a collectivist. The value of holding the service remote in order to protect others from COVID is a strong example. Further the stories weren't based around his experience with family, but instead of others he had met and he told these stories in a sympathetic light.
- Preferred Personality: Buddhism is strongly focused on the being. The sermon started with a ringing of a bell and a vocal chant in a language I didn't recognize. It feels like the point of the exercise is to empty your thoughts so that you would be able to experience the sermon with a clear head.
- Time Orientation: The master seems to have a present orientation that is both informed by the value of "being". He goes about this by talking about past experiences to draw into the present and how that should impact your current being.

#### Reflection:

My Uncle is a Buddhist who doesn't attend service, but instead meditates and reads zen scripture. About a decade ago I was gifted a book it consists of parables and poems and histories of Buddhists and their students. I read it during a time in my life where I was going through some inner turmoil and the book helped me to move forward, eventually gifted it to a friend and no longer know what it's name is. This service expressed similar values to the ones I pulled from the book.

This is the first Buddhist Service I've witness and I learned a lot about the culture from how it was ran. I liked the introduction with the bell and chants, this was very different from the church service songs that I've encountered that are lyrical and participatory. The point seemed different more as a way to open your mind to the things the Master wants to tell you instead of as a community building exercise.

Before going into the project I already had a positive view of Buddhism and I can't really say that my attitude towards the religion changed, so much as I've gained knowledge about the religion that will help inform me going forward.

Applying Value Orientation did help me a bunch with understanding the culture of Buddhism, before I just viewed the religion as being about finding inner peace this paradigm will be beneficial for future experiences with the religion.

#### Works Cited:

Salt Lake Buddhist Temple, 8-29-21 Sunday Service "10-year-old Zen Master", Facebook.com/SaltLakeBuddhist, 12th September 2021, 15th February 2022, <https://ms-my.facebook.com/SaltLakeBuddhist/videos/8-29-21-sunday-service-10-year-old-zen-master/426618645455316/>

Gethin, Rupert, M.L. (1998), *Foundations of Buddhism*, Oxford University Press

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