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SCHOOLS DIVISION OF NEGROS ORIENTAL  
REGION VII

Kagawasan Ave., Daro, Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental



# Introduction to World Religions and Belief Systems

## Quarter 2 – Module 11: Comparative Analysis of Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism



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**Introduction to World Religions and Belief Systems – Grade 12**  
**Alternative Delivery Mode**  
**Quarter 2 – Module 11: Comparative Analysis of Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism**  
**First Edition, 2020**

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# **Introduction to World Religions and Belief Systems**

**Quarter 2 – Module 11  
Comparative Analysis of  
Mahayana and Theravada  
Buddhism**



# Introductory Message

For the facilitator:

Welcome to the Introduction to World Religions and Belief Systems – 12 Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) Module on Comparative Analysis of Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism!

This module was collaboratively designed, developed and reviewed by educators both from public and private institutions to assist you, the teacher or facilitator in helping the learners meet the standards set by the K to 12 Curriculum while overcoming their personal, social, and economic constraints in schooling.

This learning resource hopes to engage the learners into guided and independent learning activities at their own pace and time. Furthermore, this also aims to help learners acquire the needed 21st century skills while taking into consideration their needs and circumstances.

In addition to the material in the main text, you will also see this box in the body of the module:



## ***Notes to the Teacher***

This contains helpful tips or strategies that will help you in guiding the learners.









As a facilitator, you are expected to orient the learners on how to use this module. You also need to keep track of the learners' progress while allowing them to manage their own learning. Furthermore, you are expected to encourage and assist the learners as they do the tasks included in the module.




For the learner:

Welcome to the Introduction to World Religions and Belief System-Grade 12 Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) Module on Comparative Analysis of Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism!

This module was designed to provide you with fun and meaningful opportunities for guided and independent learning at your own pace and time. You will be enabled to process the contents of the learning resource while being an active learner.

This module has the following parts and corresponding icons:

 <b><i>What I Need to Know</i></b>	This will give you an idea of the skills or competencies you are expected to learn in the module.
 <b><i>What I Know</i></b>	This part includes an activity that aims to check what you already know about the lesson to take. If you get all the answers correct (100%), you may decide to skip this module.
 <b><i>What's In</i></b>	This is a brief drill or review to help you link the current lesson with the previous one.
 <b><i>What's New</i></b>	In this portion, the new lesson will be introduced to you in various ways; a story, a song, a poem, a problem opener, an activity or a situation.
 <b><i>What is It</i></b>	This section provides a brief discussion of the lesson. This aims to help you discover and understand new concepts and skills.
 <b><i>What's More</i></b>	This comprises activities for independent practice to solidify your understanding and skills of the topic. You may check the answers to the exercises using the Answer Key at the end of the module.
 <b><i>What I Have Learned</i></b>	This includes questions or blank sentence/paragraph to be filled in to process what you learned from the lesson.
 <b><i>What I Can Do</i></b>	This section provides an activity which will help you transfer your new knowledge or skill into real life situations or concerns.

 <b>Assessment</b>	This is a task which aims to evaluate your level of mastery in achieving the learning competency.
 <b>Additional Activities</b>	In this portion, another activity will be given to you to enrich your knowledge or skill of the lesson learned.
 <b>Answer Key</b>	This contains answers to all activities in the module.

At the end of this module you will also find:

### **References**

This is a list of all sources used in developing this module.

The following are some reminders in using this module:

1. Use the module with care. Do not put unnecessary mark/s on any part of the module. Use a separate sheet of paper in answering the exercises.
2. Don't forget to answer *What I Know* before moving on to the other activities included in the module.
3. Read the instruction carefully before doing each task.
4. Observe honesty and integrity in doing the tasks and checking your answers.
5. Finish the task at hand before proceeding to the next.
6. Return this module to your teacher/facilitator once you are through with it.

If you encounter any difficulty in answering the tasks in this module, do not hesitate to consult your teacher or facilitator. Always bear in mind that you are not alone.

We hope that through this material, you will experience meaningful learning and gain deep understanding of the relevant competencies. You can do it!



## ***What I Need to Know***



<https://bit.ly/2CTRcJs>

Good day, this is Teacher Tina. How are you?  
In Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, the concept of dharma is an integral tenet. Do you know what dharma is? Don't worry if you have no idea what it is. This module is here to help you understand this concept and many others. Ready? Then, let's begin.

### **MOST ESSENTIAL LEARNING COMPETENCY:**

Explain the uniqueness and similarities of Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism

At the end of the module, you should be able to:

K: Identify the similar features of Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism;

S: Conduct a comparative analysis of the two major Buddhism sects; and

A: show appreciation to the differences and similarities of the two religions/belief systems.



## ***What I Know***

**Directions:** Write **T** if the statement is TRUE, and **F** if it is FALSE. Write your answers in your activity notebook.

1. Both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, trace their origin in China.
2. Buddhism is founded by Siddhartha Gautama who is also referred to as the Buddha or the “Enlightened One.”
3. The two major schools of Buddhism, the Theravada and Mahayana sects, follow the “Four Noble Truths” and the “Noble Eightfold Path.”
4. Buddhist followers, life and events are controlled by an all-powerful creator or universal force.
5. A person who has attained a perfected state of insight is called *bodhisattvas* or “enlightened beings” in Theravada school of Buddhism.
6. *Arhat* or a “worthy person” in Mahayana sect, delay their own fulfillment for them to benevolently aid other beings to reach their ultimate end.
7. The Buddhist goal is to reach nirvana or the extinguishing of fires of longing and suffering.
8. Theravada Buddhism offers enlightenment to anyone, including those with families and secular careers.
9. A Buddhist’s destiny is the direct result of natural law or *dharma* and one’s accumulated deeds or *karma*.
10. Women in Buddhism have enjoyed considerable freedom in their religious life compared to their Hindus counterpart.





## ***What's In***

In the previous module, we have discussed the core teachings, fundamental beliefs, and related issues of Mahayana Buddhism. You have also learned how it seems to have an interesting appeal to a vast majority of followers.

In this module, we will explore the connection between the two Buddhist religions- Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism and how essential is the concept of dharma in these two major sects of Buddhism.



## ***What's New***

**Instructions:** Look at the pictures of *bodhisattvas* (enlightened beings) in Buddhism below. Afterwards, be ready to accomplish the prepared activity for you.

### **1. Avalokiteshvara, Bodhisattva of Compassion**



*pa\_YON / Getty Images*

Avalokiteshvara represents the activity of Karuna -- compassion, active sympathy, gentle affection. The name Avalokiteshvara is usually translated to mean "The Lord Who Looks Down in Pity" or "The One Who Hears the Cries of the World."

### **2. Manjusri, Bodhisattva of Wisdom**



<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>

The name "Manjushri" (also spelled Manjusri) means "He Who Is Noble and Gentle." This bodhisattva represents insight and awareness. Manjushri sees into the essence of all phenomena and perceives their nondual nature. He clearly realizes the boundless nature of self.

### 3. Kshitigarbha, Savior of Beings in Hell



*electravk / Getty Images*

Kshitigarbha (Sanskrit, "Womb of the Earth") is known as Ti-ts'sang or Dicang in China and Jizo in Japan. He is venerated as the savior of beings in hell and as a guide to deceased children. Kshitigarbha has vowed not to rest until he has emptied hell of all beings. He is also the protector of living children, expectant mothers, firemen, and travelers.

### 4. Mahasthamaprapta and the Power of Wisdom



*Elton Melo/Flickr / [Creative Commons License](#)*

Mahasthamaprapta (Sanskrit, "One Who Has Obtained Great Power") awakens in humans their need to be liberated from Samsara (the beginningless cycle of repeated birth, mundane existence and dying again).

### 5. Samantabhadra Bodhisattva - Buddhist Icon of Practice



*Samantabhadra Bodhisattva. dorje-d/Flickr, [Creative Commons License](#)*

Samantabhadra (Sanskrit, "He Who Is All-Pervadingly Good") is called Fugen in Japan and P'u-Hsien or Puxian in China. He is the protector of those who teaches the Dharma and represents the meditation and practice of the Buddhas.

Based on the above facts about the major bodhisattvas in Buddhism, complete the table below in your activity notebook.

Name of Bodhisattva	English translation of Name	Significance/ Power/Duty



## What is It

### Comparative Analysis of Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism

Both the Buddhist schools originated in India. In Buddhism (Mahayana and Theravada), dharma is an integral concept. *Dharma* (Sanskrit) or *dhamma* (Pali) is a word Buddhists use often. It may pertain to the cosmic law and order or to Buddha's teachings. Apart from the Buddha and the sangha, the dharma is one of the "Three Jewels" to which Buddhist followers go for refuge. The word often is defined as "the teachings of the Buddha," but *dharma* is really more than just a label for Buddhist doctrines, as we shall see below.

The word *dharma* comes from the ancient religions of India and is found in Hindu and Jain teachings, as well as Buddhist. Its original meaning is something like "natural law." Its root word, *dharm*, means "to uphold" or "to support." In this broad sense, common to many religious traditions, dharma is that which upholds the natural order of the universe. This meaning is also part of the Buddhist understanding.

In addition, dharma supports the practice of those who are in harmony with it. On this level, dharma refers to ethical conduct and righteousness. In some Hindu traditions, dharma is used to mean "sacred duty." For more on the Hindu perspective of the word dharma, see "What is Dharma?" by Subhamoy Das.

### Dhamma in Theravada Buddhism

Dhamma is the nature of what-is; the truth of what the Buddha taught. In Theravada Buddhism, as in the quote above, it is sometimes used to indicate all the factors of existence.

Thanissaro Bhikkhu wrote that "Dhamma, on the external level, refers to the path of practice the Buddha taught to his followers" This Dhamma has three levels of

meaning: the words of the Buddha, the practice of his teaching, and the attainment of enlightenment. So, Dhamma is not just doctrines--it is teaching plus practice plus enlightenment.

## **Dharma in Mahayana Buddhism**

Mahayana Buddhism generally uses the word *dharma* to refer to both the teachings of the Buddha and the realization of enlightenment. More often than not, use of the word incorporates both meanings at once. Mahayana texts sometimes use the word *dharma* to mean something like "manifestation of reality."

To speak of someone's understanding of dharma is not to comment on how well that person can recite Buddhist doctrines but on his state of realization. In the Zen tradition, for example, to present or expound upon the dharma usually refers to presenting some aspect of the true nature of reality.

## **The Dharma Body**

Both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhists speak of the "dharma body" (*dharmakaya* or *dharmakaya*). This is also called the "truth body."

Very simply, in Theravada Buddhism, a Buddha (an enlightened being) is understood to be the living embodiment of dharma. This does not mean that a Buddha's physical body (*rupa-kaya*) is the same thing as dharma, however. It's a bit closer to it to say that the dharma becomes visible or tangible in a Buddha

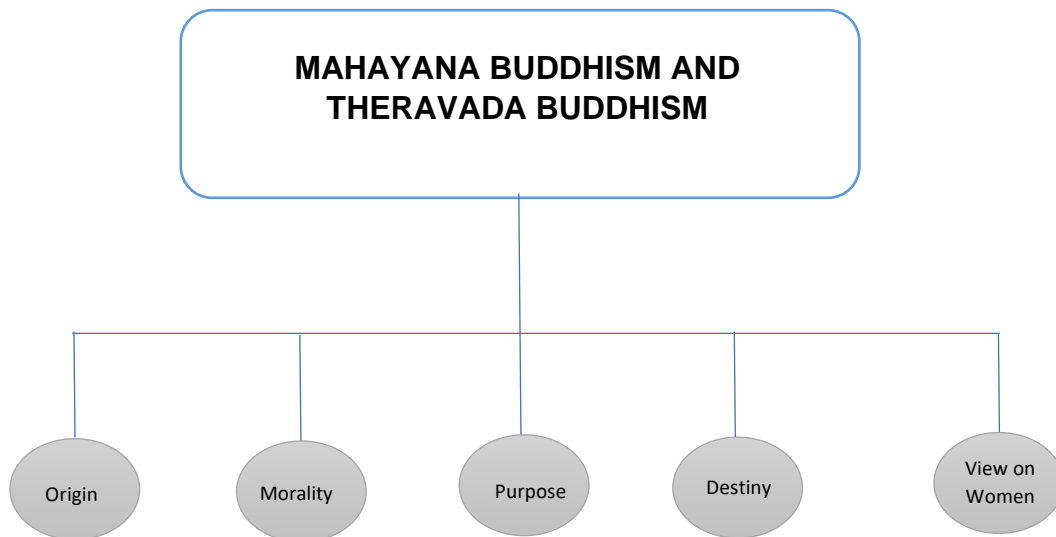
In Mahayana Buddhism, the dharmakaya is one of the three bodies (tri-kaya) of a Buddha. The dharmakaya is the unity of all things and beings, unmanifested, beyond existence and non-existence.

In sum, the word dharma is nearly indefinable. But to the extent that it can be defined, we can say that dharma is both the essential nature of reality and also the teachings and practices that enable the realization of that essential nature.

There are more than 370 million Buddhists around the world that represent about 6% of the entire population. Quite interestingly, while Buddhism began in India, it almost died out as a living religion in its place of origin. Majority of its followers can be found in China Japan, Korea, and Indochina Peninsula. The major sects of Buddhism include Theravada and Mahayana schools of thought.

Let us now explore the different aspects where these two schools are alike and different from each other.

### CONCEPT MAP



### ORIGIN

Buddhism traces its origins in northern India around the sixth century B.C.E. as another interpretation of the Hindu belief. This religion is closely linked to its founder Siddhartha Gautama who is also referred to as the Buddha or the "Enlightened One." A son of a Kshatriya chief, the once affluent Siddhartha abandoned the comfort of his palace and family as he set to discover the remedy to universal suffering he observed in this world. After long periods of abstinence and meditation, he finally reached enlightenment (nirvana) and became known as the "Buddha" or the "enlightened one." He preached mainly in the eastern part of the Indian subcontinent such as in Magadha and Kosala. About 500 years after Buddha's enlightenment, a schism within the Buddhist religion resulted in the emergence of two major branches around the first century C.E, namely, the Theravada and Mahayana schools of tradition. Both schools owe their fundamental teachings to the Buddha whose life has become an inspiration to millions of followers all over the world.

Around the third century B.C.E., Buddhism reached neighboring Asian countries as a result of the missionary zeal of Indian rulers. A different outlook to salvation attracted many Asian people to embrace the tenets of Buddhism as it reached China, India, Korea, and Indochina Peninsula. However, while Buddhism was successfully converting people in faraway places, Buddhist fervor gradually waned in native India as a result of resurging Hinduism. The resurgence in Hinduism is due to how Hinduism absorbed the rising challenge of other new religions as it incorporated their elements into the Hindu belief.

### MORALITY

While Siddhartha Gautama embraced the general framework of Indian ideas, he radically altered many of them. Similarly, the cycle of rebirth persists in Buddhism and succeeding lives may be affected by the moral laws of cause and effect or karma. Until one has achieved enlightenment, one's deed in the present lifetime will affect the

course of future rebirths. Buddhist moral thoughts and actions are principally guided by the “Four Noble Truths” formulated by the Buddha, along with the basic guide called the “Eightfold Paths” that are divided into three categories, namely, right view, right conduct, and right practice. Unhappiness of life (dukkha) is principally caused by people’s unending desires. People are advised to scrutinize their motivations and ponder upon the outcome of their actions keeping in mind Buddha’s teachings. Anything harmful to others, in deed and in thought, must always be avoided. The two major schools of Buddhism, the Theravada and Mahayana sects, follow the “Four Noble Truths” and the “Noble Eightfold Path.”

## **PURPOSE**

In Buddhism, the principal purpose of one’s life is to terminate all forms of suffering caused by attachment to impermanent entities, such as material things, friends, and health. All these do not offer enduring happiness but sorrow. When one recognizes the impermanence of all these things, an individual begins to free one’s self from attachment thereby reducing suffering and ending the cycle of rebirth. Buddha’s teachings on the “Four Noble Truths” and the “Noble Eightfold Path” form the basic tenets of all Buddhist sects.

In Theravada Buddhism, the monastic way of life ensures the path toward enlightenment. For the Buddhist laity, they must first be reborn as monks for them to be eligible for enlightenment. As members of the laity perform good deeds, positive karma may bring forth a pleasant condition in the next life.

In contrast, Mahayana Buddhism offers enlightenment to anyone, not only for the members of the monastic order, but also for those with families and secular careers. Moreover, the Mahayana branch of Buddhism attracts followers because it offers a faster route to enlightenment than the Theravada sect.

## **DESTINY**

Meanwhile, Buddhism holds that no soul is being reborn because there is no permanence in anything (Bowker 1997). The Buddha preached to his followers to achieve their own salvation conscientiously because external forces have no control over their life and circumstances. They control their own fate as they are bound to the law of causality. Buddhist destiny, therefore, is the direct result of natural law or dharma and one’s accumulated deeds or karma. Here lies the glaring difference of Buddhism as a dharmic religion when compared to other world religions that teach the concept of fate or predestiny. For Buddhist followers, life and events are not controlled by an all-powerful creator or universal force.

In contrast to Hinduism and other religions, the Buddhist goal is neither absorption into Brahman nor union with God. Instead, Buddhists aspire to reach nirvana or the extinguishing of fires of longing and suffering (Bowker 1997). When one has achieved nirvana, one has attained the state of perfect peace wherein attachment, aversion, and ignorance have ceased once and for all.

In the Theravada school of Buddhism, the trainings on the development of ethical conduct, meditation, and insight assist in eradicating all forms of evil in order to acquire goodness and purify the mind. All worldly things are momentary and impermanent. By following the “Middle Path” and practicing the basic doctrines of Buddhism, there is a realization that desire can be terminated and suffering reduced. In the end, a perfected state of insight can be accomplished. A person who has

attained this position is called an arhat or a “worthy person” who must be emulated by Theravada Buddhists. Adherents can reach an enlightened status through their own ways without any assistance from any divine beings, such as gods or goddesses. With the help of Buddha’s teachings, the journey toward nirvana becomes possible.

Meanwhile, the Mahayana sect devotes much attention to the bodhisattvas or “enlightened beings” who delay their own enlightenment for them to benevolently aid other beings to reach their ultimate end. All beings can follow the path of the bodhisattvas which is the ideal way for all Buddhists to live. Well-known in the Mahayana sect are Avalokitesvara, Manjusri, Ksitigarbha, and Samantabhadra. The Theravada sect only accepts Maitreya as bodhisattva.

## VIEWS ON WOMEN

Women have enjoyed considerable freedom in their religious life in Buddhism as compared to Hinduism. The Buddha himself allowed the full participation of women in all major Buddhist rites and practices. For so long, a time when women’s duties were confined to household and kitchen duties, Buddha radically changed this when he allowed women to join the monastic order and attain enlightenment in equal footing with men. In the past, learned women members of sangha include Dhammadinna, Khema, and Uppalavanna. Fully-ordained Buddhist female monastic members are bhikkunis.

For the Buddha, men are not always wise and women can also be wise. In Buddhism, women should not be treated as inferior to men because both are equally valuable in society. Women as wives and mothers have roles to fulfill in the family and society. Husbands and wives must equally share responsibilities in the family with the same zeal. Wives must also familiarize themselves in trade and business dealings so that they can also handle these affairs. Men and women have equal status in Buddhist societies.



## ***What’s More***

Instruction: Copy the table below in your notebook. Afterwards, compare and contrast Theravada Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism on the different aspects given.

	Theravada Buddhism	Mahayana Buddhism
<b>Origin</b>		
<b>Morality</b>		
<b>Purpose</b>		
<b>Destiny</b>		
<b>Views on Women</b>		



## ***What I Have Learned***

Copy and answer the following statement in your activity notebook.

I have learned that \_\_\_\_\_.

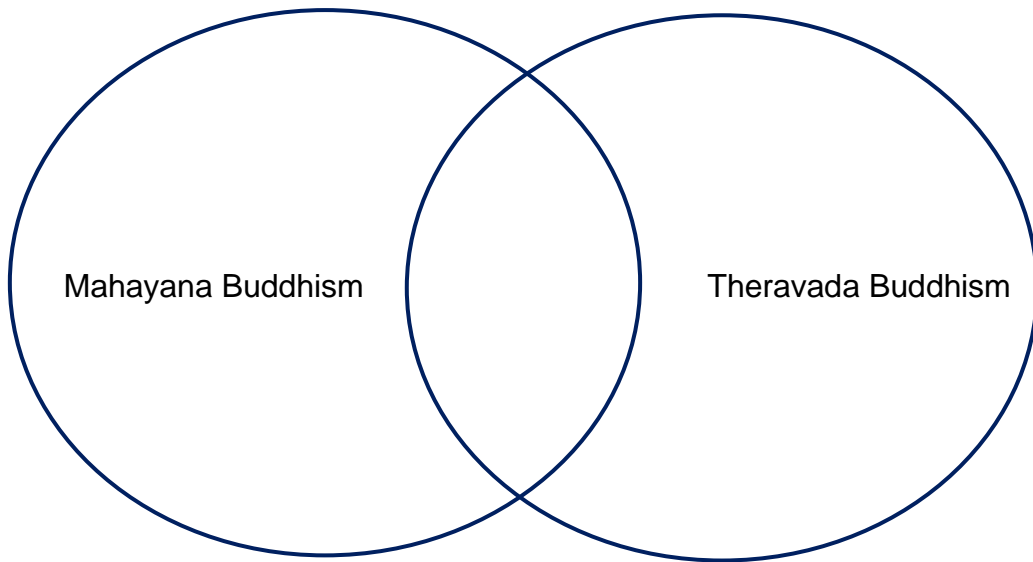
I have realized that \_\_\_\_\_.

I will apply \_\_\_\_\_.



## ***What I Can Do***

Draw the Venn Diagram below in your notebook, then, compare and contrast the concept of dharma in Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism.



**Concept of Dharma**





## Assessment

Directions: Write **T** if the statement is TRUE, and **F** if it is FALSE. Write your answers in your activity notebook.

1. Both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, trace their origin in China.
2. Buddhism is founded by Siddhartha Gautama who is also referred to as the Buddha or the “Enlightened One.”
3. The two major schools of Buddhism, the Theravada and Mahayana sects, follow the “Four Noble Truths” and the “Noble Eightfold Path.”
4. Buddhist followers, life and events are controlled by an all-powerful creator or universal force.
5. A person who has attained a perfected state of insight is called *bodhisattvas* or “enlightened beings” in Theravada school of Buddhism.
6. *Arhat* or a “worthy person” in Mahayana sect, delay their own fulfillment for them to benevolently aid other beings to reach their ultimate end.
7. The Buddhist goal is to reach nirvana or the extinguishing of fires of longing and suffering.
8. Theravada Buddhism offers enlightenment to anyone, including those with families and secular careers.
9. A Buddhist’s destiny is the direct result of natural law or *dharma* and one’s accumulated deeds or *karma*.
10. Women in Buddhism have enjoyed considerable freedom in their religious life compared to their Hindu counterpart.



## ***Additional Activities***

### **Words of Wisdom**

A Proverb is a short saying containing some piece of truth or advice. Here are some common English Proverbs that you may know:

- ☐ An apple a day keeps the doctor away.
- ☐ Good things come to those who wait.
- ☐ A man is known by the company he keeps.
- ☐ Can you explain their meaning?

The following excerpts can be looked at like proverbs from the Buddhist religion. They contain commonly known truths in this culture and are words of advice from Buddha.

☐ “An evil person who harms a virtuous person is like one who raises his head and spits at heaven. Instead of reaching heaven, the spittle falls back on him. It is the same with someone who throws dust against the wind.”

☐ “Practice giving. Consider the flame of a single torch. Though hundreds and thousands of people come to light their own torches from it so that they can cook their food and ward off darkness, the first torch remains the same.”

☐ “Patience under insult is the greatest strength, because people who are patient do not harbor hatred.”

**Based on what you’ve learned about the two major Buddhist sects, write your own proverb. Your proverb will be graded according to the rubric found below.**

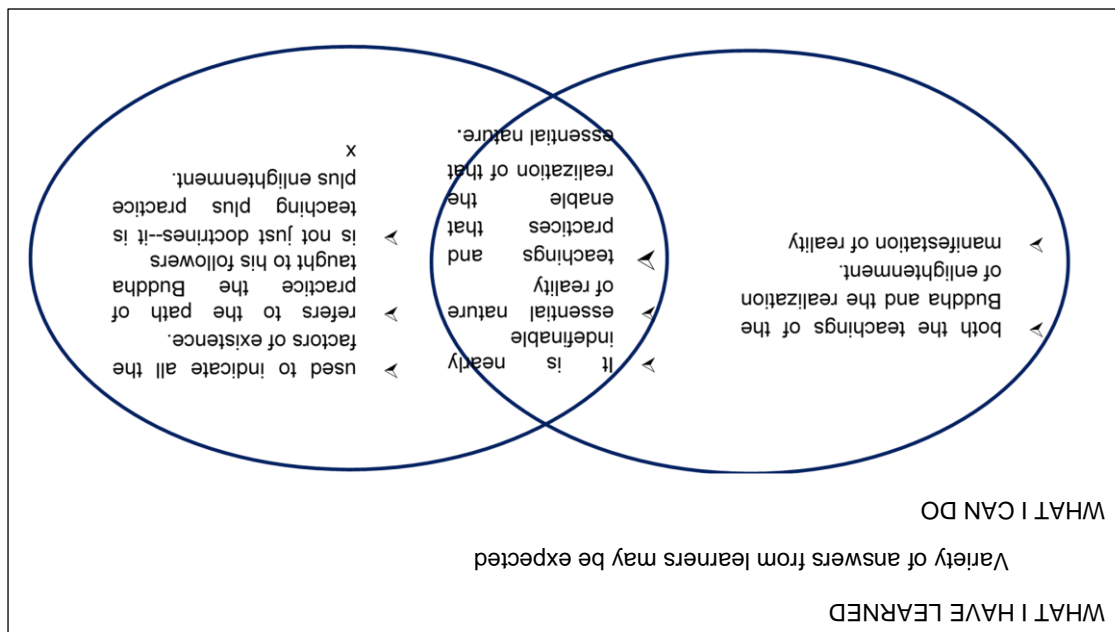
CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION	POINTS	POINTS OBTAINED
Organization	The proverb was clearly and creatively conveyed.	5	
Content	The composed proverb contained some piece of truth or advice.	5	
		<b>TOTAL: 10</b>	

*Adapted from: [https://college.holycross.edu/projects/himalayan\\_cultures/2011\\_plans/lemeans/pdf/WordsofWisdom.pdf](https://college.holycross.edu/projects/himalayan_cultures/2011_plans/lemeans/pdf/WordsofWisdom.pdf)*



## Answer Key

WHAT I KNOW & ASSESS		WHAT'S NEW	
1. F	3. T	5. F	7. T
2. T	4. F	6. F	8. F
		9. T	
		10. T	
Name of Bodhisattva		English translation of Name	
Avalokiteshvara		"The Lord Who Looks Down in Pity" or "The One Who Hears the Cries of the World."	
Manjusri		"He Who Is Noble and Gentle."	
Kshitigarbha		"Womb of the Earth")	
Mahasthamaprapta		"One Who Has Obtained Great Power"	
Samantabhadra		"He Who Is All-Pervadingly Good"	
represents the practice of the Buddhas		protector of those who teaches the Dharma/	
WHAT'S MORE			
Theravada Buddhism		Mahayana Buddhism	
Origin	Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism originated in China.	Both schools owe their fundamental teachings to the Buddha whose life has become an inspiration to millions of followers all over the world.	
Morality	The two major schools of Buddhism, the Theravada and Mahayana sects, follow the "Four Noble Truths" and the "Noble Eightfold Path."		
Purpose	In Theravada Buddhism, the monastic way of life ensures the path toward enlightenment. For the Buddhist laity, they must first be reborn as monks for them to be eligible for enlightenment.	Mahayana Buddhism offers enlightenment to anyone, not only for the members of the monastic order, but also for those with families and secular careers. Moreover, the Mahayana branch of Buddhism attracts followers because it offers a faster route to enlightenment than the Theravada sect.	
Destiny	A person who has attained the perfected state of insight is called an arhat or a "worthy person" who must be emulated by Theravada Buddhists. Adherents can reach an enlightened status through their own ways without any assistance from any divine beings, such as gods or goddesses.	Meanwhile, the Mahayana sect devotes much attention to the bodhisattvas or "enlightened beings" who delay their own enlightenment for them to benevolently aid other beings to reach their ultimate end. All beings can follow the path of the bodhisattvas which is the ideal way for all Buddhists to live	Views on Women
Women have enjoyed considerable freedom in their religious life in Buddhism		For the Buddha, men are not always wise and women can also be wise. In Buddhism, women should not be treated as inferior to men because both are equally valuable in society. Women as wives and mothers have roles to fulfill in the family and society.	



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### TEACHERS GUIDE

Most Essential Learning Competencies

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