

Songkran: Thailand's Water Festival and Buddhist Traditions

Cultural Studies · Answer Key · 21 Questions

1. What is the primary meaning of the Thai word 'Songkran'?

- A) Festival of Lights
- B) New Year festival marking the sun's passage into a new astrological sign**
- C) Celebration of harvest
- D) Day of remembrance

2. Approximately when is Songkran usually celebrated?

- A) December 25-27
- B) July 1-3
- C) April 13-15**
- D) October 31 - November 1

3. What is a prominent religious observance during Songkran?

- A) Reciting ancient scriptures
- B) Sprinkling water on Buddha statues**
- C) Building sand stupas
- D) Lighting lanterns

4. The water splashing during Songkran symbolizes what?

- A) Washing away impurities and bad luck**
- B) A ritual for good harvest
- C) Honoring ancestral spirits
- D) Cleansing for purification of the land

5. In which countries, besides Thailand, is Songkran celebrated under various names?

- A) Japan, South Korea, Vietnam
- B) Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos**
- C) Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia
- D) India, Nepal, Bhutan

6. What does UNESCO recognize Songkran as?

- A) A World Heritage Site
- B) A UNESCO Global Geopark
- C) A Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**
- D) A UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

7. The Thai word 'songkran' originates from a Sanskrit word meaning what?

A) Peace and tranquility

B) The passage of the sun

C) Divine blessing

D) Eternal life

8. According to a popular legend, how did Songkran originate?

A) A battle between gods

B) A young boy outwitting the deity Brahma

C) A prophecy from an ancient sage

D) A natural disaster that led to a cleansing ritual

9. What do the seven daughters of Brahma represent in the Songkran legend?

A) The seven cardinal virtues

B) The seven colors of the rainbow

C) The seven days of the week

D) The seven continents

10. What is the significance of sprinkling water on elders during Songkran?

A) A request for forgiveness

B) A way of blessing

C) A symbol of respect for their wisdom

D) A traditional greeting

11. What is 'din sor pong' used during Songkran celebrations?

A) A sweet treat

B) A musical instrument

C) A white chalky paste for smearing on others

D) A type of incense

12. In China, what is the Songkran festival called among the Tai ethnic community?

A) Chaul Chnam Thmey

B) Pbeemai

C) Poshui Jie

D) Thingyan

13. What practice is included in the Cambodian celebration of Songkran (Chaul Chnam Thmey)?

A) Building stupas out of sand

B) Flying kites

C) Decorating houses with flowers

D) Singing traditional folk songs

14. What is the meaning of the Buddhist concept of 'panna' (merit)?

- A) A form of spiritual enlightenment
- B) Actions meant to earn merit for participants and relatives**
- C) A ritualistic cleansing
- D) A path to nirvana

15. The spread of Buddhism from India to Southeast Asia occurred during which period?

- A) The 19th century CE
- B) The 20th century CE
- C) The first millennium CE**
- D) The 5th century BCE

16. What is the Sanskrit term for 'Awakened One,' referring to the founder of Buddhism?

- A) Dharma
- B) Sangha
- C) Buddha**
- D) Nirvana

17. Buddhism arose in northeastern India during a period of what?

- A) Great peace and prosperity
- B) Social change and intense religious activity**
- C) Isolation and limited interaction
- D) Scientific discovery and technological advancement

18. What was a common source of discontent in India around the time Buddhism emerged?

- A) Excessive taxation
- B) Brahmanic sacrifice and ritual**
- C) A lack of educational opportunities
- D) Political instability and warfare

19. The 'Three Jewels' of Buddhism are Buddha, Dharma, and what?

- A) Karma
- B) Nirvana
- C) Sangha**
- D) Dukkha

20. The Theravada Buddhist community is also known as the 'Way of the Elders,' which in Pali is?

- A) Mahayana
- B) Hinayana
- C) Theravada**
- D) Vajrayana

21. What does the Mahayana Buddhist movement emphasize to make salvation available to more people?

- A) Strict adherence to ancient texts
- B) The efficacy of ritual actions and devotional practices**
- C) Asceticism and self-denial
- D) The pursuit of individual enlightenment