

Songkran: Thailand's Water Festival and Buddhist Traditions

Cultural Studies · Practice Test · 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