

Belief systems have been established since the beginning of civilization. They are an established, orderly way that groups or individuals look at religious faith or philosophical principles.

Buddhism and Islam are both examples of how belief systems spread outside of their point of origin and effected the people of the region.

Belief systems are ideas that instill stability and hope and impact groups or individuals in a region.

Islam is an example of a belief system that spread from its origin and had a great impact on the regions it spread to. One central principle of this belief system is the Five Pillars: Faith, prayer, alms, pilgrimage and fasting. Muslims, worshippers of Allah, believed that there is one god, Allah and that his messenger was Muhammed. They had to pray 5 times a day toward the position of Mecca, they had to give to the less fortunate, fast during the holy month of Ramadan because they believed spiritual needs were more important than physical needs and they had to visit the holy city of Mecca at least once in a lifetime. During the time the Ottoman empire expanded, this belief system was spread through conquest. One key region of expansion was the Balkan Peninsula where the janissaries demonstrated the power of the Ottomans. Christian people of the conquered lands did not need to convert, but could pay a special tax so they could practice their own religion. However, male children were taken from peasant families to become janissaries. Those children had to convert to Islam and loyally serve the sultan. Many families considered this an honor. The Ottomans promoted stability by blending Islamic influences and those of the many cultures under their rule. A symbol of the effect of the spread of Islam in

Anchor Paper – Thematic Essay

Constantinople is the conversion of the Eastern Orthodox cathedral of Hagia Sophia to a mosque. Decorative art influenced by Islam featured geometric design, not human forms, leading to the removal of Christian icons. Minarets were installed to call Muslims to prayer.

Additionally, Buddhism is another belief system that had an impact on the lands it spread to. An offshoot of Hinduism, it originated in India, founded by Siddhartha Gautama. In Buddhism one strives to reach nirvana, a state of enlightenment by accepting the Four Noble Truths and practicing the Eightfold Path. One who desires suffers, therefore the Eightfold path was devised as a way to help one fight desire and reach nirvana. Buddhism spread through trade and traveled to other regions by way of the Silk Road. Caravans to China carried Buddhist texts and statues. Buddhism came to China during the Han dynasty but did not reach its height until later. The impact of the activities of merchants and missionaries was cultural diffusion. Thousands of temples and pagodas were constructed as places for the faithful to pray. Temples cared for by Buddhist monks were a sign of the adaptation of this "foreign" culture.

In conclusion, various belief systems provided different ideas. Some forced religious conversion while others did not. These belief systems such as Buddhism and Islam allowed for hope and stability and instilled some sort of peace either physically or mentally. They have impacted the people of a specific region and are even being practiced today.

Score: _____ (0 to 5, with 5 being the highest score)

Why? _____
