

# SUPPLEMENTAL LESSONS

English Grade 8  
4th Quarter



Various online tools which make teaching and learning richer  
and more meaningful are just a few clicks away!

Log on to **[www.rexinteractive.com](http://www.rexinteractive.com)**



## 4th Quarter Grade 8 Supplemental Lesson Plan

### Focus:

- Identify religious texts and myths in South Asia

### A. Introduction/Preparatory Activities

Ask the students to read the passage below.

#### Karma (The Four Wives)

"In one of the Agama Sutras, the Buddha's early sermons, there is a very interesting story:

Once there was a man who had four wives. According to the social system and circumstances of ancient India, it was possible for a man to have several wives. Also, during the Heian period in Japan, about a thousand years ago, it was not unusual for a woman to have several husbands. The Indian had become ill and was about to die. At the end of his life, he felt very lonely and so asked the *first wife* to accompany him to the other world.

'My dear wife,' he said, 'I loved you day and night, I took care of you throughout my whole life. Now I am about to die, will you please go with me wherever I go after my death?'

He expected her to answer yes. But she answered, 'My dear husband, I know you always loved me. And you are going to die. Now it is time to separate from you. Goodbye, my dear.'

He called his *second wife* to his sickbed and begged her to follow him in death. He said, 'My dear second wife, you know how I loved you. Sometimes I was afraid you might leave me, but I held on to you strongly. My dear, please come with me.'

The second wife expressed herself rather coldly. 'Dear husband, your first wife refused to accompany you after your death. How can I follow you? You loved me only for your own selfish sake.'

Lying in his deathbed, he called his *third wife*, and asked her to follow him. The third wife replied, with tears in her eyes, 'My dear, I pity you and I feel sad for myself. Therefore I shall accompany you to the graveyard. This is my last duty to you.' The third wife thus also refused to follow him to death.

Three wives had refused to follow him after his death. Now he recalled that there was another wife, his *fourth wife*, for whom he didn't care very much. He had treated her like a slave and had always showed much displeasure with her. He now thought that if he asked her to follow him to death, she certainly would say no.

But his loneliness and fear were so severe that he made the effort to ask her to accompany him to the other world. The fourth wife gladly accepted her husband's request.

'My dear husband,' she said, 'I will go with you. Whatever happens, I am determined to be with you forever. I cannot be separated from you...'

### **Body/Developmental Activities:**

1. Discuss the story with the students. Ask the question:
  - What do you think the first to fourth wife represent in a man's life?
2. Gautama Buddha concluded the story as follows:

#### **THE FIRST WIFE**

The first "wife" is our body. We love our body day and night. In the morning, we wash our face, put on clothing and shoes. We give food to our body. We take care of our body like the first wife in this story. But unfortunately, at the end of our life, the body, the first "wife" cannot follow us to the next world. As it is stated in a commentary, when the last breath leaves our body, the healthy color of the face is transformed, and we lose the appearance of radiant life. Our loved ones may gather around and lament, but to no avail. When such an event occurs, the body is sent into an open field and cremated, leaving only the white "ashes." This is the destination of our body.

#### **THE SECOND WIFE**

What is the meaning of the second wife? The second "wife" stands for our fortune, our material things, money, property, fame, position, and job that we worked hard to attain. We are attached to these material possessions. We are afraid to lose these material things and wish to possess much more. There is no limit. At the end of our life these things cannot follow us to death. Whatever fortune we have piled up, we must leave it. We came into this world with empty hands. During our life in this world, we have the illusion that we obtained a fortune. At death, our hands are empty. We can't hold our fortune after our death, just as the second wife told her husband: 'You hold me with your ego-centered selfishness. Now it is time to say goodbye.'

#### **THE THIRD WIFE**

What is meant by the third "wife"? Everyone has a third "wife." This is the relationship of our parents, sister and brother, all relatives, friends, and society. They will go as far as the graveyard, with tears in their eyes. They are sympathetic and saddened.

Thus, we cannot depend on our physical body, our fortune, and our society. We are born alone and we die alone. No one will accompany us after our death.

#### **THE FOURTH WIFE**

Sakyamuni Buddha mentioned the fourth "wife," who would accompany her husband after his death. What does that mean? The fourth "wife" is our mind or *Alaya* consciousness. When we deeply observe and recognize that our minds are filled with anger, greed, and dissatisfaction, we are having a good look at our lives. The anger, greed, and dissatisfaction are karma, the law of causation. We cannot be separated from our own karma. As the fourth wife told her dying husband, 'I will follow you wherever you go.'

### **Conclusion/Evaluation:**

1. Ask the students to research on the life of Gautama Buddha.
2. Ask the students to prepare a slideshow presentation on his life and its effects in the South Asian literature.

Various online tools which make teaching and learning richer and more meaningful are just a few clicks away!

4

Log on to [www.rexinteractive.com](http://www.rexinteractive.com)