

# Lesson 3: Crowning Attributes

## Learning Outcomes

- Foster appreciation and understanding of the art and cultures of the greater Himalayan region.
- Reflect on one's positive attributes.
- Recognize the positive attributes of others and develop a deeper sense of gratitude for the qualities that link humanity.

## Primary Core Components

Self-awareness, interpersonal awareness, and recognizing common humanity

## Recommended Materials

Cardboard, strips of paper, holographic paper, construction paper, tissue paper, sequins, shells, buttons, feathers, glue, glue sticks, Scotch tape, masking tape, pencils, markers, and scissors

---

**Length:**  
**50 minutes**

**Grade Levels:** Upper elementary  
school through high school

---

## 1. Check-In Activity

Explain to students that today we will be reflecting on our most stellar attributes. We will foster a deeper sense of self-appreciation. We will also develop a greater sense of gratitude for the strengths of our classmates.

Instruct the students to turn to pages 29–30 of the SEE Learning® Playbook. This section is called Learning About One Another. Invite the students to interview a classmate and record their responses. Then have students share with the class some “aha” moments of things they have in common with one another.

## 2. Presentation/Discussion

### About Buddha Amitabha

Buddha Amitabha is one of the Buddhas of the Five Families. Each buddha is associated with a cardinal direction. You can learn more about the Buddhas of the Five Families as you explore the Mandala Lab.

Project an image of Buddha Amitabha in His Pure Realm of Sukhavati.

## About Buddha Amitabha in His Pure Realm of Sukhavati



Buddha Amitabha in His Pure Realm of Sukhavati; Central Tibet; 19th century; pigments on cloth; Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art; gift of the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation; F.1997.6.3

Buddha Amitabha presides over the western direction. He is known as the Buddha of Boundless Light. Buddha Amitabha is portrayed with a red body. He is dressed with simplicity and holds a monk's bowl. Buddha Amitabha resides in the Pure Realm of Sukhavati. The term Sukhavati means "Land of Great Bliss."

According to Buddhist teachings, those who merit being born in this transcendent realm receive instruction from Amitabha. In this painting there are eight great bodhisattvas seated in the front, receiving teachings from Buddha Amitabha.

### 3. Insight Activity

A bodhisattva is an enlightened being who vows to not pass into the blissful state of nirvana until all sentient beings are liberated. They remain in the cycle of rebirth throughout time to work for the benefit of all beings.

Bodhisattvas are the embodiments of positive attributes such as compassion, love, and wisdom. Bodhisattvas are often portrayed wearing elaborate crowns and jewelry. The crowns they wear are symbolic of their virtuous attributes.

#### 4. Reflective Practice

Explain that today we are going to make crowns to represent our most remarkable attributes. Provide each student with a strip of pliable cardboard. Be sure to precut the strips of cardboard. Measure them in advance, so that they are long enough to wrap around the students' heads, with a little material to spare, for taping the crowns once they are complete.

Encourage the students to choose one word that encompasses their "crowning attribute." They can write that word in an elaborate fashion and affix it to their crown. Hold up examples of the various materials that can be affixed to the crowns including holographic paper, construction paper, tissue paper, sequins, beads, shells, and feathers. Invite the students to be as creative as can be. Once the crowns are complete, instruct the students to tape the ends of the cardboard strips firmly with masking tape.

#### 5. Debrief

Once the students have completed their works of art, invite them to describe their creative process and share their crowns with the group. Note how distinct the crowns are from one another. This reflects how different we are from one another. We all have distinct gifts and talents, and we can celebrate our common humanity.

#### 6. Follow-Up and Extension Activity

Project an image of Buddha Amitayus.

### About Buddha Amitayus



Buddha Amitayus; Tibet; 19th century; pigments on cloth; Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art; C2006.66.304

Buddha Amitayus is a form of Buddha Amitabha (technically Buddha Amitayus is the subtle body of limitless form of Buddha Amitabha). According to Buddhist tradition, Buddha Amitabha appears in the apparitional form of Buddha Amitayus in order to teach bodhisattvas through visionary experiences.

The name Buddha Amitayus means “The Enlightened One of Immeasurable Life.” He is also known as the Lord of Limitless Life and Pristine Awareness.

Both Buddha Amitabha and Buddha Amitayus are portrayed with red bodies. Buddha Amitayus has the adornments of a bodhisattva. Buddha Amitayus holds a long-life vase filled with the nectar of immortality. His gently smiling face gazes with compassion at all beings.

Buddha Amitayus resides in a Pure Land. In this celestial realm, transcending time, space, and motion, he is free to meditate without distraction on the liberation of all sentient beings. It is taught that his supernal light emanates from his Pure Land throughout the entire cosmos.

Amitayus embodies the potential for limitless wisdom, which is an essential component of liberation from the afflictive emotions.

Reflect on a place in your life that serves as a Pure Land. Whenever you visit this place, it brings you a sense of peace and inner tranquility. Remind yourself that our minds can be a refuge. Even when you aren’t able to visit your serene setting physically, you can picture it in your mind’s eye. It can serve as a resource for you and help you to overcome afflictive emotions.

## The Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art Core Values of Teaching

<b>Social and Emotional Learning</b>	Social, Emotional, and Ethical (SEE) Learning® values and skills play an integral role in our educational offerings.
<b>Dynamic / Differentiated</b>	We aim to meet our program participants at every education, knowledge, language, and creative skill level by dynamically differentiating our program lessons and activities for a variety of levels of learners.
<b>Inquiry-Based</b>	We follow an inquiry-based learning methodology that employs question posing and problem solving as primary ways to engage students in active and empowered learning.
<b>Relevant / Relatable</b>	As a global museum dedicated to the arts and cultures of the Himalayas, we strive to make our unique content relevant and relatable to the contemporary lives of our visitors and program participants.
<b>Exploration-Focused</b>	We challenge students to find their creative voices and visions through process-based art making that allows them to explore new types of material techniques, artistic processes, and creative ways of thinking and making.
<b>Culturally Attuned</b>	We actively collaborate with members of the Himalayan and Himalayan-American communities to ensure the most accurate and just representations of the Himalayan people, arts, cultures, religions, and histories in our programs.
<b>Teamwork</b>	We strive to create programs, activities, and a supportive learning environment that cultivates creative collaboration between peers and across all generations of visitors.

The Mandala Lab multiyear initiative and Family and School Programs are made possible with lead support from the Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, Barbara Bowman, Dharma Joy Foundation, Noah P. Dorsky, Fred Eychaner, Agnes Gund, The Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation Global, the Estate of Lisina M. Hoch, The Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation, Rasika and Girish Reddy, Shelley and Donald Rubin, and Tiger Baron Foundation.

Major support for the Mandala Lab initiative is provided by Bob and Lois Baylis, Sara and Joseph Bedrick, Anne and Albert Chao, Con Edison, Daphne Hoch Cunningham and John Cunningham, Anne E. Delaney, DeWitt Stern, Karen Dorsky, Chris K. Jones of Think Strong Scholarships, Jack Lampl, Max Meehan, Dan Gimbel of NEPC, LLC, The Prospect Hill Foundation, Sarah and Craig Richardson, Basha Frost Rubin and Scott Grinsell, the Andrew Sabin Family Foundation, Namita and Arun Saraf, Linda Schejola, Eric and Alexandra Schoenberg, Eileen Caulfield Schwab, Tsherin Sherpa, Jesse Smith and Annice Kenan, Taipei Cultural Center in New York, New York Life Insurance Company\*, and New York Life.

This initiative is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council.

The Rubin Museum's educational initiatives are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature.

The Mandala Lab multiyear initiative and Project Himalayan Art are supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.

