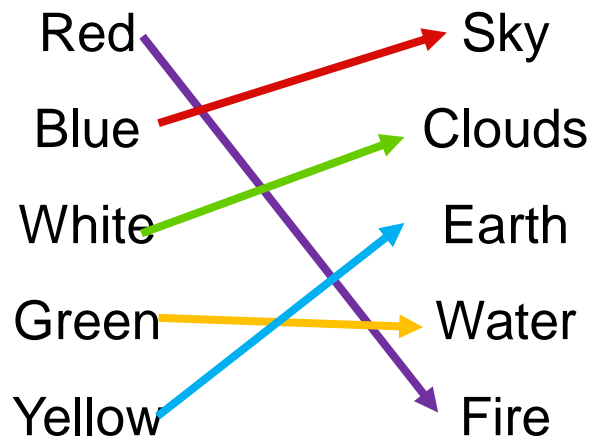


TIBETAN PRAYER FLAGS

Starter:

There are five elements associated with Buddhism, and five colours.

Copy the words into your book and Match the correct colour to the correct element you think it stands for!



Learning Objectives:

- To understand how and why Tibetan Buddhists use prayer flags.
- To reflect on your own mantra
- To create your own prayer flag



Clouds

Sky

Fire

Water

Earth

What questions do you have about these flags?

Discuss with your partner.



Task – Make a mind map in the middle of your page with all the questions you can think of about prayer flags.

- Make sure you have enough space to answer these Qs later on.

Now lets see if we can Answer some of those questions

Task: When you hear the answer to one of the questions on your mind map add the answer in a different colour.



Q: Where do they put their flags?



A: Everywhere !!!

Prayer Flag History

- Prayer flags date back thousands of years to the Bon tradition of pre-Buddhist Tibet.
- Priests used primary coloured plain cloth flags in healing ceremonies.
- Each colour corresponded to a different primary element – earth, water, fire, air and space
- Used to help appease the local gods and spirits of the mountains, valleys, lakes and streams

Prayer Flag History Continued...

- Originally, were painted by hand, one at a time.
- This changed in the late 15th century when woodblocks were used to make the flags.
- Buddhist masters created most prayer flag designs
- Lay craftsmen make copies of the designs, (and never actually create new designs).
- When the Chinese took over Tibet they destroyed much of everything having to do with Tibetan culture and religion.
- The flags are unique to Tibetan Buddhism.

Prayer Flag Texts

- Tests seen on prayer flags can be categorised as mantra, sutra and prayers.
- MANTRA – a syllable or series of syllables that influencing certain energies.
 - They are almost always in Sanskrit
 - They send blessings of compassion to the six worldly realms
- SUTRAS – prose texts with long, medium and short versions.
 - Prayer flags use the medium or short versions

■ Prayer flags are colourful cotton cloth squares, with images, mantras and prayers printed on them.

■ A mantra is a word, sentence or a short prayer that is repeated over and over again (either aloud or in a person's head) and is thought to have a huge spiritual effect on that person.

■ When a mantra is written on a prayer flag, Tibetan Buddhists believe that every time the wind moves the flag, the mantra is repeated. The wind carries the mantra to the gods.



■ Flags are usually raised on important dates, for example Tibetan New Year.

Woodblock Printed Panels



Amityus
Health & Longevity



Vajrasattva
Purification of Karma



Padmasambhava
Wish Fulfilling Prayer



Green Tara
Protection from Harm



Windhorse
Overcoming Obstacles

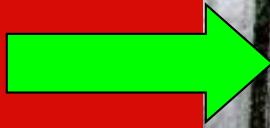
■ **WARNING!!!** If you hang the prayer flags on the wrong astrological date they will only bring negative results and bad luck!

Examples of Buddhist Mantras

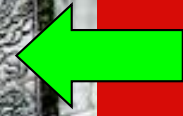
1. “May all beings be well and happy,”
2. “Wish for peace individually, collectively and universally,”
3. Go, go, go beyond go utterly beyond, enlightenment hail!”



Garuda



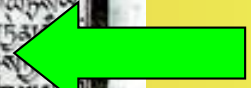
Dragon



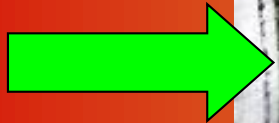
Wind horse



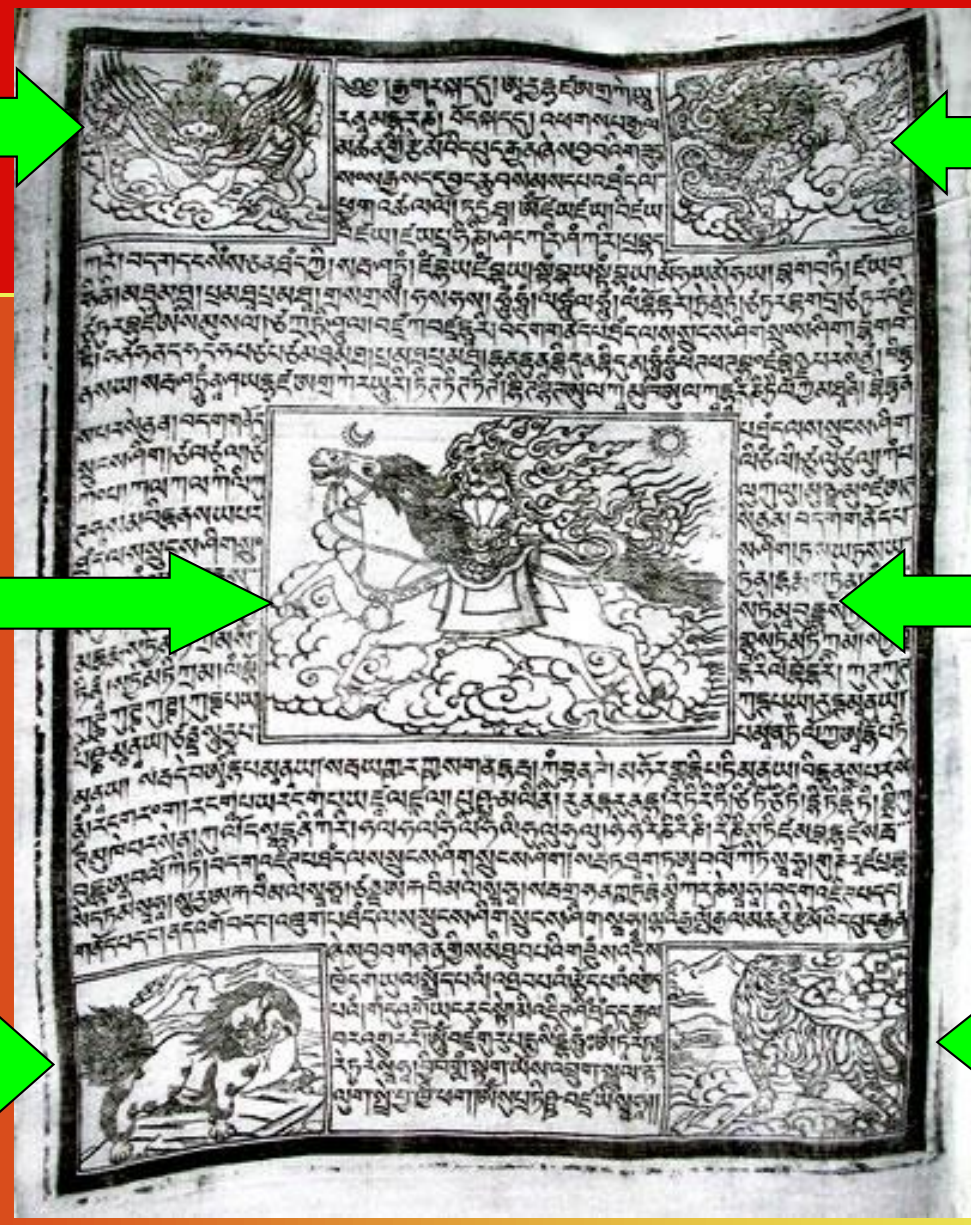
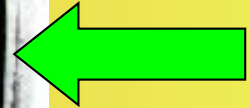
Prayer/
Mantra
Repeated
across the
whole flag



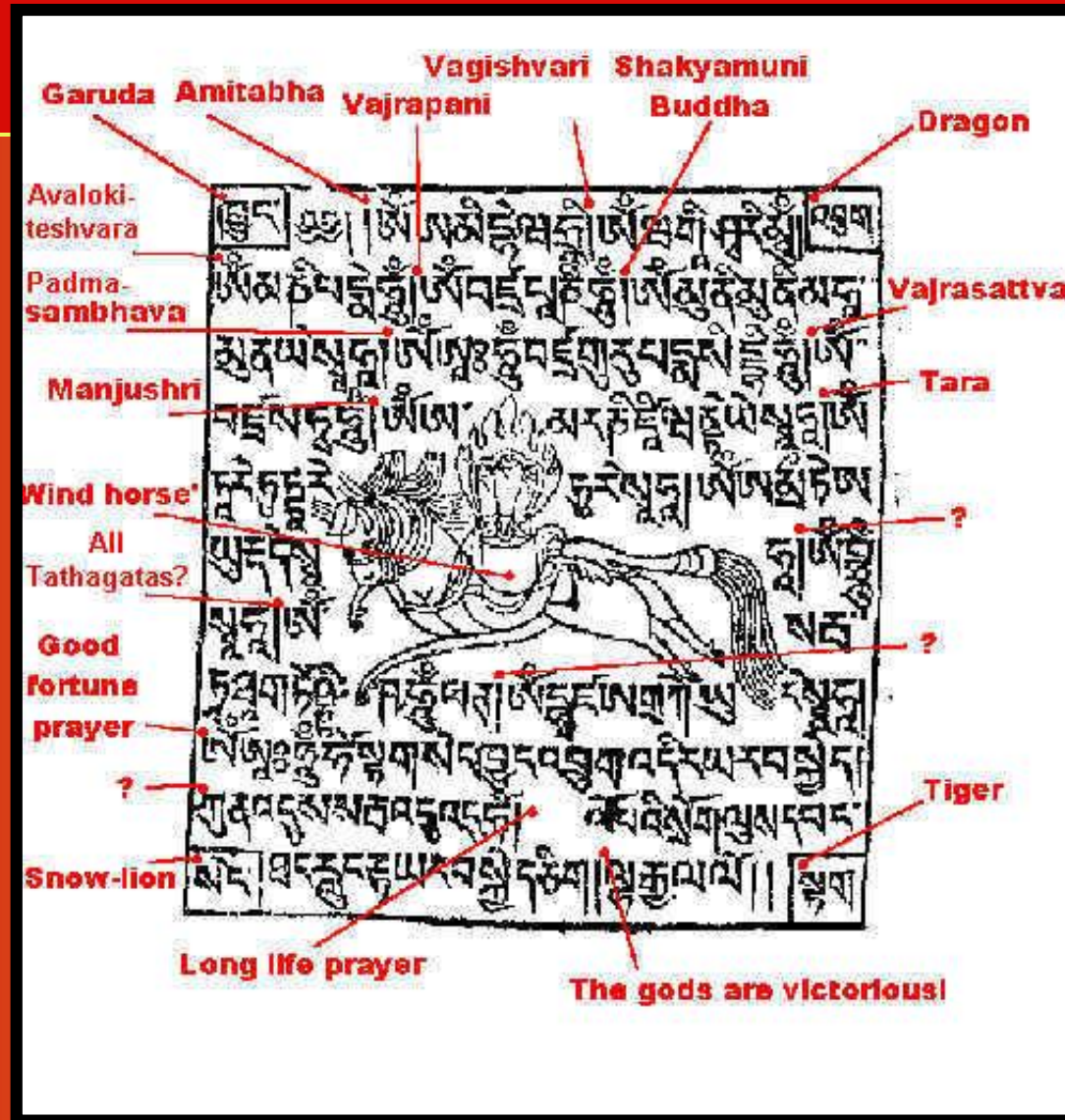
Snow
Lion



Tiger



A Prayer Flag Explained








Tibetan Prayer Flags



Garuda

Dragon

Five Elements

-  Earth
-  Water
-  Fire
-  Air / Cloud
-  Sky / Space



Wind Horse

TIGER

Snow Lion

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Animal Symbols



GARUDA –
represents daring,
fearlessness,
freedom



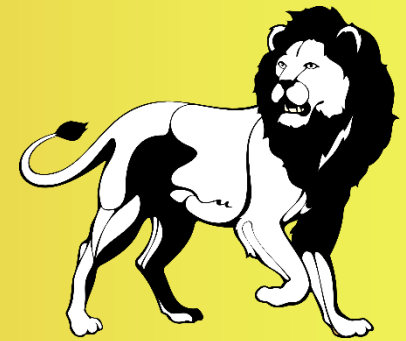
DRAGON –
represents
compassion, hearing
and positivity



WIND HORSE –
represents the wind,
spreads the prayer
and raises good
fortune



TIGER – represents
confidence, awareness
and kindness



SNOW LION – represents
Cheerfulness, focus, body
and mind

TASK - Create Your Own Prayer Flag!

■ Draw an image in the centre of your piece of card that represents the wind. Tibetan Buddhists use the image of a horse, you could use this or think of something else (for example trees swaying in the wind).

■ Around this image write your own version of a mantra. It might be something that you want to happen in the world, a phrase or saying that is important to you etc.

■ In the four corners draw pictures of items that are of importance to you. Tibetan Buddhists used pictures of animals that represent key ideas in Buddhism. Try and draw pictures that show something important that you believe in.

■ Next week we will attach everyone's prayer flags to pieces of string and hang them outside the window just as Buddhists do! Our mantras will then be carried by the wind and maybe even come true!

