

Chinese Religions 1

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Background: Common Elements

Common Elements Chinese religions are rooted in concrete experiences, practical in orientation, and syncretic (people practice many religions based on their need or inclination, its not exclusive).

Common Values Prosperity, longevity, and posterity (leaving something behind to be remembered by)

Most religions are rooted in *agrarian*, farming images. There is a center on the mean (middle or harmony) and family (primary social unit).

Four Main Sources The **ancient religions** draw from animism, ancestor worship, and folk religion. Animism is based on belief that there is one living reality, there is spirit in everything. Here is where we get divination. **Confucianism** is another source of religion founded by *Kong-zi* and focuses on the five classics. **Daoism** was founded by *Lao-zi* in the *Dao de Jing*. The final source is **Buddhism**, specifically the pureland school or ch'an school.

Background: Early History

Period of Cultural Heros (3000-2200BCE) This period emphasizes the respect for people who made practical contributions to society. Here we have praise for those that domesticated animals. This is also the era where the institution of family life was formed (this included extended family). Agriculture was also instituted during this time. This era had a **Five Emperors Period**. *Huang Di*, the yellow emperor, the symbolic ancestor of all people. He instituted all arts (writing, music, etc).

Xia Dynasty (2200-1750BCE) Here we have the development of silk. The wheel and bronze work are also invented.

Shang Period (1751-1111BCE) This is the start of the feudal era. The feudal system is very important to the Chinese culture. Confucian thought says that this is the perfect system. There is a strict hierarchy all the way down to the family unity. This was also the time of a theocracy where the ruler was the political and religious ruler. *Shang Di* was the high god of the time, "The Lord Above". There were other gods, but he was most important, ancestor of ruling clan. Only the king worshiped Shang Di. This period had the institution of ancestor worship and divination.

Zhou Dynasty (1123-221BCE) This was the golden era of Chinese history, it was the model of an ideal Chinese society. The notion of heaven (called *Tian*), a righteous rule over all replaces Shang Di as "the sacred". It is much less personalized. The Duke of Zhou establishes the king as the son of heaven. He is ruling on earth on behalf of heaven. They developed the *Mandate of Heaven*, heaven gives the right to rule to a righteous ruler and if he strays heaven will take it from him. This is the reason given for the change in dynasty, the Shang had lost the mandate of heaven so the Zhou took over. **Li**, the concept of proper reverential ceremonies (an expression of cosmic order), grew in importance.

Background: Ancient Religions

Yin and Yang These are complimentary opposites and play heavily into the Chinese notion of balance and harmony. Both are necessary and must be balanced. A fundamental tenant of Chinese medicine is to try to balance yin and yang.

Five Elements Wood, fire, water, metal, and earth. These elements are causal, they make things come into existence and determine their nature.

Yijing This is a method of divination. It started with the casting of stones and developed into a complicated method of casting sticks. You ask a question and do a complicated patter of casting sticks.

Confucianism: Beginnings He was probably a poor aristocrat, no mention of his parents or wife. We think that he had a son and daughter. Little is known about him. He wanted to restore the culture and religion of china to the Zhou ideal.

Human Dilemma He believed that the cause of the chaos of his era was due to a breakdown in morality and values. He believed in a trickle down effect where the break down in morality of the rulers lead to a break down in morality of the common folk. He felt that things were so bad that the leaders oppressed the people and caused them to respond with violence. We could solve the social anarchy by returning to the ideals.

Teachings He focused on restoring the old ideal and not establishing anything new.

Mandate of Heaven He expanded on this and established this Zhou idea. He removed all notion of anthropomorphism of the concept of heaven. Heaven was a righteous principle that required rulers to be righteous to keep their mandate to rule on behalf of heaven. Part of being righteous is that rulers should be concerned about the people that they rule. This idea was surprisingly revolutionary at the time. Righteous rule led to peace and harmony. Righteous rulers created righteous subjects.

Confucianism: The Social Order

The Rectification of Names Every title/role comes with a set of rights and responsibilities. People should fulfill only their own duties.

Ideal Social Order Very hierarchical and patriarchal.

The Five Relationships These are all understood to be reciprocal.

- emperor - subjects → being benevolent is rewarded with loyalty
- father - son → being loving is rewarded with reverence
- husband - wife → being good is rewarded with obedience
- elder brother - younger brother → being gentle is rewarded with respect
- elder citizen - younger citizen → being considerate is rewarded with deference

Confucianism: The Five Classics

We can learn how to return to the ideals of the Zhou by looking at five classic texts.

- history
- changes

- poetry
- rites
- spring and autumn annals

His disciples compiled the *Analects*, his teachings, after his death. It is often considered the sixth classic.

Through studying these we can learn the virtues of an ideal society and become people of *ren*.

Ren This is the term humane goodness. It indicates conscientiousness and reciprocity. Its characters are those values. Conscientiousness is doing one's duty and reciprocity is behaving properly based on the relationships.

Li This is the notion of propriety and respectful ritual. You must perform the ancient rights properly. Confucius added inner li. The external ritual reforms us internally into a respectful person. Confucius did not believe that ritual worked, but he felt that li was important in building a person that is respectful internally and solidifying our relationships. He also added the notion of filial piety, respect to your elders.

Confucianism: Later Confucians

The primary interpreter of Confucius was **Menzi** (372-289BCE). He believed that humans are essentially good.

Four Essential Beginnings Menzi believed we have four values that we are born with. We are all born with a sense of **humanity**, mercy. He describes a child that has fallen into a well, everyone goes to help the child before asking anything about the child. We are all born with **righteousness**, we all have sense of shame. We know when we have done something wrong. We are all born with **propriety**, we know what respect is. Finally we are born with a **wisdom**, we have an innate sense of right and wrong.

- humanity
- righteousness
- propriety
- wisdom

Social and Political Institutions Menzi also felt that institutions exist for the benefit of people. If those institutions nurtured the goodness that we are born with, then we would have an ideal society. Evil arises due to these institutions not nourishing it. The scholar fulfills a priestly role, they must teach the classics and by doing so enables people to nourish their own goodness.

Xunzi (300-238BCE) Differed greatly in his ideas. Human nature is essentially selfish. If left alone we would do only what is best for us. He believes that goodness can be acquired through education and law. The classics put restraint on our natural selfishness. Through study we learn goodness. Rewards and punishments from the law can help people become good.

Legalists This group adopted Xunzi thought and eventually overtook the Zhou Dynasty that had been declining. The brought in the **Qin Dynasty** (221BCE). This dynasty united china through an unprecedented level of violence. This violence is speculated to be what caused the dynasty to fall quickly. They used Xunzi ideas to implement their violent rule. All non-legalist thought was persecuted causing confucian thought to go underground.

Han Dynasty Replaced the Qin dynasty when it fell. They were still violent but less so. They looked to find other ways to keep the country united. Many scholars were brought in to figure it out. *Emperor Wu* was impressed by a confucian scholar, *Dong Zhongshu*, who argued that confucian thought should be used to govern the state. This led to a revitalization of confucianism. The emperor adopted a new role of channeling cosmic forces to provide harmony for the state. This turned china back into a theocracy again. Confucianism became the new religion of the state. Confucius became a god during this time, temples are build and rituals for him.

Confucianism: Neo-Confucians

This arose during the **Song Era**(960-1280CE), became dominant in the **Ming Dynasty**(1368-1644CE), and controlled thought from the Qing dynasty to the revolution.

Literati The government held examinations to become a civil servant giving individuals roles in the government. This established a bureaucracy that ran the empire. The **literati** were those that had passed the exam. These became the dominant group during the song era. Some delved into politics, but others attempted to recover the ideal of a righteous person, *ren*. This is what Confucius wanted for us.

Sages These are the literati seeking *ren*. Often they presented themselves as the sages of old. They worked to identify with the nature of thing and to seek the heavenly principle. A sage brought harmony to everyone around them. A metaphysical aspect starts to encroach on confucianism. The heavenly principle is universal and found in all things which is why sages sought to identify with all things.

Chou Tun-i The founder of neo-confucian philosophy. He and a group of thinkers worked out cosmology and metaphysics based on confucian thought. This was called the **great ultimate**. This is what generated yin and yang, the elements, and all creation. All of creation is united under this principle. Sages wanted to identify with this principle.

Li This started as the proper performance of ritual, confucius added a moral dimension, and the neo-confucians turned it into a principle. Li is one, its manifestations are many. We discover the one by investigating internal and external things.

Zhu Xi He organized all these thoughts into a system. At its head was the great ultimate. Every phenomenon has its own defining principle.

Daoism: The Dao

Laozi (640-?BCE) There are many legends about him, but scholars think he is a compilation of scholars at the time that rebelled against confucianism as it was too artificial and structured. They felt that true harmony came without structure through getting in touch with the natural rhythms of the universe. Laozi means old master, it comes from the legend that his mother was pregnant for 60 years. At 160yo he decided to go west as he was disgusted with the corruption of his land. The border guard refused to let him pass before he recorded his wisdom. So he wrote the *Daode Jing*.

Daode Jing One of the most translated books in the world. It describes the mysterious flow that goes through the universe,

All chinese religions use the term dao, but they all interpret it differently:

- confucian → the way of tian
- buddhism → karma
- daoism → the sacred principle of nature, the flow of life

The dao is the source of all existence, it contains all opposites. It is unchanging.

De This is any particular form of the dao, it is constantly changing.

Daoism: Wuwei

The highest good is to be in harmony with the dao. We do this through **Wuwei**, it means literally non-action. It actually refers to no non-natural action. Confucius believed that human fulfillment is through rules, daoism seeks fulfillment through non-action. There is emphasis of weakness and passivity. It is explained through trees in a storm, they bend in the wind, straightening when the wind is done. Willows bend, oaks break. Be like the willow.

Social Order Action provokes reaction, this is what causes problems in society.

Natural Action This is action that comes from within. It is likened to the female since they represent passivity. It is also compared to uncarved blocks since they have limitless potential. Society is regrettable necessity. You may resist if someone is trying to interfere with your wuwei. Only defend yourself.

Virues of the Wise You can live in harmony with other citizens through three principles.

- mercy, being merciful means you will receive mercy
- frugality, you will never be the object of envy
- never be first, you will never be the object of jealousy

Daoism: Political Thought

Government is inversely proportional to order. Every time you pass a law you create more law breakers. If you keep people ignorant they will not develop expectations, and thus be easier to fulfill. Give people the opportunity to find balance, do not try to lead them.

Daoism: Later Daoism

Zhuangzi (369-286BCE) Is the primary interpreter of Laozi's thought. The *Zhuangshi* is his writings. It contains all sorts of odd stories about non-conventional saints. We distinguish between things but all things are the product of the dao which makes them nature. The sage must be in tune with the dao. Being in harmony with the dao you rise above the conventional. The sage does not distinguish between things (beauty and ugly, joy and sorrow, etc) and instead accepts all as a natural process.

Daoism: Religious Daoism

Religious daoism built upon the philosophical daoism. It incorporated techniques and rituals from them. The primary goal is long life and immortality. Sages rise above the conventional, they interpret this as immortality. They often did yoga and consuming weird things. The 5 elements were very valued. They also believed there was a plant on the *Isle of the Blessed* that could give immortality.

Qi This is the primordial breath. It is present in gods, astral bodies, and nature. Religious daoism focused heavily on qi. We want to renew our qi, this is the source of immortality. You can call down the gods through ritual and they actualize cosmic forces in your body to renew your qi. Ingesting things is called *alchemy*. They often consumed mercury and arsenic to transform the human body into an immortal. Elaborate breathing and gymnastics, as well as diet and ritual sex were also used to reach immortality.

Isle of the Blessed There were frequent expeditions to reach the isle of the blessed.

Gods and Goddesses The *Queen Mother of the West* is a very important goddess. This resulted in the movement of carrying amulets of the queen mother to protect yourself from danger.

Daoism: Sects

Way of Heavenly Peace Their leaders were priests and military officers. They worshiped laozi as a god, creator of the world. Their sacred book was the *Scripture of Great Peace*, it focused on how to restore the government, bring peace, and restore the health of people. Also known as the “yellow turbans”, they instituted a rebellion to bring an end to the Han dynasty.

Way of the Celestial Masters Developed later in the Han period. It is still influential today.

Orthodox Unity Sect

Also is active today, centered in Taiwan.

Maoshan Most important during the Tang dynasty. They built many temples and trained many new priests. They practiced many rituals to bring down cosmic powers and meditated. Their leader was very prevalent.

Total Perfection Sect Rose up during the Song dynasty, founded by *Wang Ze*. Studied many other religions like Buddhism and Daoism. He had some interactions with Daoist immortals that led him to live in a cave for a while. After that he lived in a thatched hut before he burned it down. This sect was a group of eccentric ascetics, but they attracted many followers. This was the first sect with a monastic system, they wanted a simple life. They practiced inner alchemy and self-perfection. They incorporated Confucian and Buddhist doctrine as well.

Chinese Religions 2

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Buddhism in China

Buddhism is very focused on otherworldly things while chinese culture is very focused on this world, but for a while it was quite popular.

Arguments Against Many people were against the rooting of buddhism in china. It was a foreign religion and china was very against anything foreign as barbarian. They received many different buddhist texts that contradicted each other which made it hard to sort it all. The language barrier was another problem. The chinese also felt that buddhism had too much emphasis on non-worldly concepts. They also disliked the notion of karma because it put animals and humans on the same level, they heavily rejected vegetarianism. The heaviest resistance came against the monastic system since chinese culture put so much emphasis on family and children. The chinese felt that the buddhist monks were parasites since they did no work for their food.

Arguments For The introduction of buddhism came at a time of great upheaval. Barbarians were common and were quite impressed with buddhism, they felt it could unite their territories. The chinese were also very impressed by the bodhisattva. Life of the peasantry was hard in china so the bodhisattva were attractive. They also like the notion that no matter how low your position you still possessed the buddha nature. Karma was also a welcome idea because it meshed well with confucian ideals because it helped strengthen social order. The translation of buddhist texts gave them more insight into it. Confucianism did not explain life after death so they used the buddhist concepts. Daoist philosophy was already very similar to buddhist ideas so the translation often used daoist term and was used to expand daoist philosophy. They adapted the monastic life as the movement to the monastery as a movement to a new family as the abbot was like a father. The monks started working and producing, this is what allowed the zen tradition to survive persecution (the monasteries were often in isolated areas and self sustaining). Finally buddhist monks in china agreed to bow to the emperor (as opposed to in india where monks were higher).

Buddhist Schools: The Tiantai and Huayan Schools

The chinese wanted to explain the contradictions within the various buddhist texts they had.

The Tiantai School Established by *Zhiyi* (538-597). It categorized the texts to account for contradictions between them. It had that the buddha taught in stages so he had to keep them simple for a bit.

1. theravada
2. simple mahayana
3. advanced mahayana (emptiness)
4. lotus sutra

Huayan School They also felt that the buddha had to teach in stages which lead to the contradictions. They thought he started with the full knowledge and had to dumb things down as he went, so he then jumped down to theravada. They also believed that the absolute and the temporary were infused with each other. Emptiness is that from which all things

come and it is the absolute. The temporary is the form that issues from emptiness. These are infused. Everything is a manifestation of the absolute and this explains the relationship between all living beings.

1. theravada
2. mahayana
3. emptiness
4. garland sutra

Pureland Buddhism

This focuses on the concept of the *degenerate age*. There is an idea that all things decay over time, even dharma. Enlightenment becomes more difficult because individuals become less competent. The narrative focuses on a specific bodhisattva, **Dharmakara**.

Dharmakara He was a monk that heard a particular speech that led him to take the bodhicitta. He vowed that he would create a pureland where it would be easier to attain enlightenment. The goal is now to be reborn in the pureland since full enlightenment is not easy here. Supposedly Dharmakara fulfilled his vows and becomes the buddha **Amitabha** and creates the pure land **Sukhavati**. Everything there is designed to make us think about dharma to help us attain enlightenment. It is described as very lush.

Ritual You recite a homage to the buddha Amitabha 10 times and fill your mind with this image. This recitation purifies the mind and allows rebirth into the pure land.

New Developments Less emphasis on the recitations and more emphasis on the grace of Amitabha. The idea was that the recitation alone was not enough, you needed an act of grace as well. We now have the notion of faith “in” someone instead of faith “that” the buddha’s words are true. We also see a shift to a more simplified religious practice. No longer were people focusing on meditation and instead recitation and homage. This makes it much easier for people to practice. The view of enlightenment became much more inclusive as well. The people who more traditional sects would say cannot attain enlightenment are allowed into the pure land by the grace of Amitabha.

Chinese Development Pure land was developed in India but it flourished in china due to the help of three patriarchs. *Tanluan*(476-542CE) was the first and most notable. He move away from many forms of practice to put more emphasis in the recitation and your faith in Amitabha. Instead of complicated rituals you should put most of your effort into your faith and recitation.

Buddhist Schools: Chan Buddhism

This was instituted in china in the 5th century by *Bodhidharma*. There are many stories about this guy. One is that he was summoned by the emperor who complained that he has helped buddhism alot and wants to know how much merit he has accrued. Bodhidharma said “none”. He was banished to the north where he meditated for nine years until his legs fell off. This shows that in chan buddhism one must be totally dedicated to meditation above all.

Chan buddhism believes that you can attain enlightenment without assistance. Meditation is the best path to this.

Dharma Assembly (732CE) This event was convened to discuss the views on enlightenment and succession between the northern and southern schools. The northern school held that enlightenment was gradual, the souther school believed that it was sudden. The southern school was taken by the sixth patriarch *Huineng*. The southern school won. Enlightenment is sudden and the same in all beings. The same buddha nature dwells in everyone.

Key Points Meditation is the most important ritual. There are stories about zen masters destroying texts, many sutras were very important and these master had already committed the texts to memory. Do not take these stories literally, instead these show the idea that we can become too attached to scholarly knowledge and this can halt our progress on the path. Chan buddhism also has the notion of mind to mind transmission. A chan master has a duty to produce a dharma successor, one who has the same mastery of dharma as the master. The mind of the disciple and that of the teacher become as one. **Gongon/Koan** are stories and riddles that help us explore dharma. There is no simple answer, reason cannot really be applied, they are meant to push the mediator beyond this.

Buddhist Schools: Persecution 845

There were many schools that developed in china and were supported. In 845 a daoist emperor came into the throne and instituted a persecution of buddhism. It only lasted about a year but it devastated all but the pure land and chan schools. Pure land survived because it had become a mainstream religion, it had too many followers to just kill them all. Too much of society had it in them. Chan was a more elite practice. It was spared because their monasteries were in remote areas and they were self sufficient. The main stream population also greatly respected chan monks and monasteries so they worked to protect them

Worlds of Meaning: Religious Concepts

Shang Di The concept of heaven comes from the Shang dynasty, it was a divine personality that probably evolved from the ancestor gods of the ruling family. He controlled nature and brought good and evil to humanity.

Tian The Zhou dynasty added the idea that heaven was a universal moral order. It was not a personality, but a cosmic power. Tian gives the right to rule to a specific group, the **Mandate of Heaven**. The Zhou use this as an argument for them taking the throne from the Shang.

Personal or Impersonal This has been a running debate about heaven. *Maozi* said it was like a caring father. *Xunzi* said it was just the operation of the universe. *Liu Yuxi* explains both positions and concludes that it is heaven that produces and reproduces, and it is humans that create moral order and regulation.

The Cosmos The world is self evolved, there is no creator god. Prior to all categories there was chaos. The cosmos is represented as an egg, outside the egg is chaos, the white is heaven, and the yolk is earth. Chaos is sometimes identified with the dao. From the dao we get yin and yang, heaven and earth, everything.

The Dao This creates everything. It cycles yin and yang to rise and fall. It also operates the five elements which are always moving and changing.

Humans Humans have two souls, the yang or heavenly soul, and the yin or earthly soul. The yin soul is buried in the earth and the yang soul goes upwards to heaven.

Path of Transformation For daoist this is a path of withdrawal, meditation, and wuwei

Worlds of Meaning: Religious Daoism

This operates on two levels, that of the expert/priest and that of ordinary people.

Expert/Priest They must learn the religious registry and all the rituals. They must nourish the life forces within, spirit, breath, and spermatic essence. These are concentrated in the cinnabar fields, the head, the heart, and the belly. These are also the places where the *Three Pure Ones* reside. These are the cosmic gods. They must preserve and draw down the lord of heaven, the lord of earth, and the lord of humans. The lord of heaven is the representative of the primordial breath, the lord of earth of the spirit, and the lord of humans of the seminal essence.

- head - lord of heaven - primordial breath
- heart - lord of earth - spirit
- belly - lord of humans - seminal essence

The expert must renew the yang and learns the techniques for calling down the three pure ones. Restoring yang forces is also done through diet, exercise, and meditation. The expert can also act on behalf of the community, all cosmic energy moves through the expert into the community. **Jiao** is the rite of cosmic renewal which involves offerings to the pure ones (the offerings must be pure).

- wine
- tea
- cakes
- fruits

This is different from the meat offerings that are often made to the more popular gods. The worship of the three pure ones is done by the priest alone, away from the people. The power of the ritual goes through the expert into the community.

Ordinary People Use the experts to renew yang energy. They worship at temples and they worship their ancestors. Evil and suffering occur because we are out of balance so ordinary people must seek balance.

Worlds of Meaning: Popular Religion

Popular religion focuses on the immediate and practical concerns of human life. These are rituals that:

- expel evil spirits
- protect property
- bring prosperity, health, longevity
- respect the ancestors
- favor the gods

Many gods of popular religion were once human and became elevated. The relationship is reciprocal. You make a donation and the god provides the service. If the god does not act the person can appeal to another god.

The gods have a hierarchy, likened to a heavenly court. At the top is the *Jade Emporer*, also known as the lord of humans. In the second layer are the *city gods*, the *tai shan*, and the *houshold gods*. Under the city gods are the *tudigong*, local gods. Under the houshold gods are the *Zaojun*, god of the cooking stove, he keeps a ledger of the family's deeds and reports them to the Jade Emperor.

Divine Figures The most revered figure is **Guanyin**, the bodhisattva that you can come and request for help in all things. **Mazu** was once a young girl that saved her brother but not her father, so she is associated as a goddess of the sea.

Mediums, writers (communicates with ancestors), and healers are also common in popular religion. Feng shui is another aspect

Ritual Life **Qing Ming** is a day of honoring the ancestors. You clean their graves and renew family ties with a feast. It also ushers in spring. **Ullambana**, the feast of souls. You give offerings and burn spirit money. This month is where the gates of purgatory are left open to allow souls to wander about. Buddhist monks are busy during this time. **New Year** is a major festival. The **Dragon Boat Festival** is also very popular in southern china.

Japanese Religions

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Shinto

Japanese religion is *syncretic* meaning they practice rituals from various religions. They do not maintain a separation between the human and spiritual worlds.

Shinto This is an umbrella term for a variety of practices. Usually it refers to religion before buddhism arrived in japan. **Kami** are spiritual beings that shinto practices focus on. These can be natural phenomenon (like mt fuji), or human (like after a momentous even occurs in someone's life), or buddha/boddhisattva (buddhism became integrated with local religions). The most important kami is *Amaterasu*, the sun kami. This is the circle on their flag.

Amaterasu Became important in the Jomon period. Her sacred objects were curved beads, a sword, and a mirror.

Each clan originally had a representative kami and the leader of the clan was that kami's priest. During the Kofun period one clan became dominant, they became the imperial line. Their kami was amaterasu, she became the kami of all of the people of japan. The emperor was her preist and he descended from amaterasu. He, *Jimmu* was the great grandson of *Ninigi* who was the grandson of Amaterasu.

Texts We know about the kami from stories in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*. The creation of the land, imperial family, and japanese people was from *Izanagi* and *Izanami*. They churned the waters to create the lands. They gave birth of all of the other kami. When Izanami gave birth to the kami of fire was burned and had to go to the underworld. Izanagi wanted to follow her but she chased him out. He had to cleanse himself and in doing so he cried a single tear which became Amaterasu.

Buddhism: History

Buddhism was introduced in 552CE from korea. Images and texts were sent as a gift to the imperial court. The emperor and shinto priests were concerned. He gave the image to a general *Soga no Iname* that was very supportive of buddhism. He was very pleased and practiced with his family. A pestilence swept over japan and buddhism was blamed. All evidence of buddhism was purged from the country. At this time a huge fire destroyed the great hall in the imperial palace. It returned again 50 years later. This time monks and nuns came and taught the texts.

Prince Shotoku (573-622) One of the main drivers for the adoption of buddhism. He was very well learned on buddhism, confucianism, and shinto tradition. He formulated the first constitution(604), the *17 point constitution*. The three religions were recommended turning them into state religions.

Nara Period (710-784) This is the era of the first buddhist schools and the temple to the sun buddha *Dainichi*. They were concerned that this temple would offend amaterasu, an emissary was sent to consult her and she said that she was one with the sun buddha. This provoked a convergence of shinto and buddhism, they were practiced interchangeably until the 19th century

Buddhism: Developments

Saicho (767-822) He introduced the Tendai system of buddhism. Buddhism had become very lax and involved in the imperial court. This school was very strict and required a 12 year training period before you could become a monk. This ensured that people joined the faith for the right reasons and not just for political gains.

Kukai (773-835) He introduced **Shingon** buddhism, a form of tantric buddhism. It had much ritual and pagentry which made it very popular. It influence the arts and culture greatly.

Kamakura Period (1192-1333) along with the **Muromachi Period**(1333-1600) were times of great turmoil. There was a lot of uncertainty and violence. The sages declared that a degenerate age had begun. Rule was by military power from the Shogunate. The samurai flourished here. They were great participants of the arts that came from buddhist monistries. The code of bushido was also established here. This disciplined them to avoid unnecessary chaos. It included elements from the three major religions:

- confucian - loyalty to his lord unto death
- buddhist - meditation (usually focused on death) allowed the samurai to become fearless, they no longer feared death
- daoism - martial arts, practice a movement until it is natural

Buddhism: Rinzai/Hakuin

Eisai (1141-1215) He was a Tendai monk that traveled to china and brought back Rinzai(Sudden) Zen. He wanted to establish it as a second school but tendai monks resisted it. He was supported and protected by the samurai. He also introduced tea to japan and recommended it for its medicinal properties and as a break from meditation. It is from this that we associated samurai with rinzai zen.

Hakuin (1686-1768) He reformed rinzai zen. This happened during the tokugawa period. In china the sudden school of zen (the Chan) had developed koans, riddles, to help the disciple think beyond language and reason. Hakuin developed a training system around koans. They became the focus of rinzai zen study. Today it takes 10 years to go through the list of koans.

You begin the koans with great hope. You start to apply rational thought to it. After bringing your insight to your master he rejects it, this cycles for a long time until the student develops the *great doubt*. This is doubt that you can ever solve the koan. This puts you in a bind and causes your mind to seize up. Hakuin likens it to sheet of ice, brittle and hard, susceptible to cracks. Something comes and cracks your mind which provokes the *great death*, death of the ego. This is immediately followed by enlightenment.

Buddhism: Soto Zen

This was the gradual school.

Dogen (1200-1253) He was a tendai monk. He provided the intellectual foundation for all zen. He is recognized as one of the great masters of buddhism in japan. He had a fundamental question: *if we all have buddha nature, then in some senses we are already enlightened, why do we have to seek enlightenment?* He concluded that we don't just have to sit, **za zen** just sitting. This is a pointless meditation. This is a demonstration of the enlightenment we already have.

Buddhism: Nichiren

Nichiren (1222-1282) He established his namesake school. He was very critical of other buddhist schools and felt nothing wrong with persecuting them. He also criticized the country and its leadership. He felt that japan had abandoned the

true buddhist path and it needed to return or suffer great defeat. These thoughts got him exiled twice. This ended when he predicted a mongol invasion properly. Nichiren believed he was a bodhisattva that would establish the lotus sutra as the full and final revelation of the buddha. Japan needed to follow the lotus sutra to maintain itself as a great nation.

Soka Gakkai This was a lay organization developed after the second world war. It was associated with nichiren buddhism. It became an international organization and became very popular in america.

Buddhism: Pureland

This had similar popularity in japan as it did in china.

Honen (1133-1212) Established pureland as a separate school called *Jodo Shu*. It emphasized recitation of the *nembutsu*, homage to the buddha amitabha, called *Amida* in japan. It focused on Amida's vow to reassure you of salvation in the pure land.

Shinran (1173-1262) Honen's prime disciple established the *Jodo Shin Shu*, the True Pureland School. There are likenesses drawn to MLK. People are totally incapable of any self-power in achieving salvation. He had a deep sense of our inability and our need for grace. This lead him to leave the monastic life as useless, so he disrobed and married. This established the tradition of married monks in japanese buddhism. We have to rely compleley on Amida, all we have to do is accept the gift from Amida. When we chant the nembutsu we are not reassuring ourselves since we cannot do anything, we are just thanking Amida.

Buddhism: Meiji Restoration and Post War

Meiji Restoration (1867-1945) This is the time in which imperial rule was restored in japan. The borders had also been closed for nearly 200 years. When its borders were opened everyone was fascinated with western goods and technology, many scholars feared for the loss of japanese traditions. At this time the tea ceremony was integrated into the school system so that the practice would not be lost. The fascination with wester stuff lead to a resurgence in shinto, called **Nationalist Shinto**.

Nationalist Shinto There was a move to separate buddhism from shinto. This was done by making shinto the cultural heritage of all japan regardless of religious affiliation. Now shinto was not just one of their religions.

Manifest Destiny This was the idea that the japanese were a people born of the gods which gave them the destiny to rule all of asia. They wanted to form an asian block against western interference. This lead to imperialistic exercises including the occupation of korea. This ended with the atomic bombs.

Post War The idea of a nationalistic shinto was disestablished. A separation of church and state was placed in the constitution. The emperor gave up his divine status.

Worlds of Meaning: Shinto

Shinto The religious practices in japan from before buddhist movements. It means the way of the kami. Kami are the inner power of nature. The world is good, pure, and beautiful, it is moving towards a good end. Humans are children of the kami. We were originally pure but we are imperfect and limited. Pollution obstructs the positive flow of the kami and their blessings. Shinto focuses on the notion of pollution and purity rather than right and wrong. Negative things are discouraged as they block the flow. So shinto is a pat of purification.

The Four Affirmations **Tradition** is extremely important, a ritual must be very precise. We must pass the method of ritual down through family lines, we must try to do it exactly the same way as our ancestors. Often people do not know why a ritual is the way it is but we keep it going. **Purification** is very important, and most rituals start with water purification. **Life in the World**, shinto is very affirming of living your life here. All of your interactions here are important. **Festival** is important because it is where the people and the kami meet. There are four elements to shinto festival.

- tradition
- purity
- life in the world
- festival
 - purification
 - offerings to the kami
 - prayers for help and honoring the kami
 - participation

Worlds of Meaning: Buddhism

Shingon tantric, founded by *Kukai*. Focused on sun buddha *Dainichi*, all of the universe is his body. Meditation and ritual can allow us to connect to his power. The three mysteries of the buddha:

- body
- speech
- mind

Pureland One of the largest, relies on grace and faith in Amida. Practice focuses on nembutsu, *Namu Amida Butsu* (honor to amida the buddha). Honen says recitation of this releases the power of amida to us. Shinran says we are already saved so we must rely totally on amida, the nembutsu is showing gratitude.

Zen path of self transformation, you must use your own power to attain enlightenment in any age. Dogen provided the foundation and the concept of zazen, just sitting. Hakuin provided rinzai zen, he brought the koan riddles to push you through the great doubt, great death, and into the great enlightenment.

Ritual and the Good Life

Home Worship Shines to kami and/or buddha/boshisattva. Kami shrine = kamidon, buddha shrine = bustsudon

Torii These are the cross bars that mark the line between the sacred and profane (think of the beautiful arches with roofs). This shows that you are entering a sacred space.

Meditation Very important in the buddhist tradition, along with chanting.

Rights of Passage The *cherry blossom festival* is well celebrated. The *obon festival* honors the ancestors, people go to graves and give offerings and thanks. The *buddha's birthday* is another widely celebrated occasion.

Conclusions and Reflections

March 31, 2017

Challenges to Religion

Modernism This is associated with the beginning of the enlightenment. It increased secularism. Religion no longer dominates our view of the world, it has been supplanted by science, medicine, and politics. Religion is kept separate from everything else which makes it challenging for religion to keep its relevance.

Globalization The world is shrinking. We have more contact with other religions. This challenges our religious view of our world.

Rapid Change Modern society changes far quicker than religion can. We always feel insecure due to this constant change. This causes us to retreat and retrench. Often times this is religion that we retreat to, causing conservatism.

Violence Conflicts are now much more publicized. Religion still plays a large role in many modern conflicts. Adding religion to a conflict deepens it and escalates it. Religion engages in our core values and this causes a pattern of escalation then we get a holy war.

Holy War There are three factors that are common cross culturally to a holy war:

- success is thought of as inevitable, it is fought on behalf of god and god will always be victorious
- long timelines, people are willing to fight for a long time because it is on a cosmic level
- individual sacrifice, people are much more willing to sacrifice in a holy war because they will be rewarded after death

Future of Religion

Religion will continue to be until **Anomie**, **Chaos**, and **fear of death** are removed from the human experience. Religion can play a positive role in the world:

- mutual understanding and respect - try to understand others, all religions say the human view of the sacred is limited for us to achieve mutual understanding
- vision of the good life for all
- religious commitment supersedes commitment to the state or other groups - religion can be subversive and cause people to reject immoral governments
- inter religious cooperation - global concerns requires global cooperation

Dialog: Approaches

All Religions are the Same We might want to develop a super religion, or global theology. This option is rejected because many religions are already multifaceted and contradictory. When we look at new religious movement or personal

religions we cannot expand this global theology to encompass them. We would be ignoring the integrity of the individual religions. The context is what makes religious symbols.

Dialog is Impossible We cannot get people to agree on an exclusive truth. Dialog needs to involve listening and understanding instead of trying to convert people. Here we are just trying to find the exclusive truth. Linguistic problems are a big hindrance here. Much can be lost in translation. We can try to communicate using basic human qualities which can get points across much better. Dialog between different faiths does happen, we can understand each other.

Process of Dialog

How can we make religious dialog more effective.

Being Self Aware bracket your preconceived notions. Put your ideas on the shelf for a while when trying to understand someone.

Walking in their moccasins by bracketing our own notions we try to enter the universe of symbols of someone else. Try to walk in their moccasins to see their religion from the inside to the best of our abilities.

Return Home examine the new ideas that we learned from walking in their moccasins. Make meaningful comparisons with our own religion

Integrate Use our new knowledge to see our own ideas clearer and try to understand the other better.

Guide to dialog:

1. grasp of ones own tradition - we need to understand ourselves before engaging in dialog
2. goal is not conversion - we just want to understand, not win
3. respect for others
4. willingness to share - be vulnerable, show what is most valuable to us
5. willingness to learn - try to grasp their ideas, willingness to grow and change