

Confucius Institute at NCSU

***Chinese Philosophy
and Religion***

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儒家

Confucianism

Or the *Ru* School



孔子

Confucius , the founder of Confucianism

Confucius was a famous sage and social philosopher of China whose teachings deeply influenced East Asia for twenty centuries.

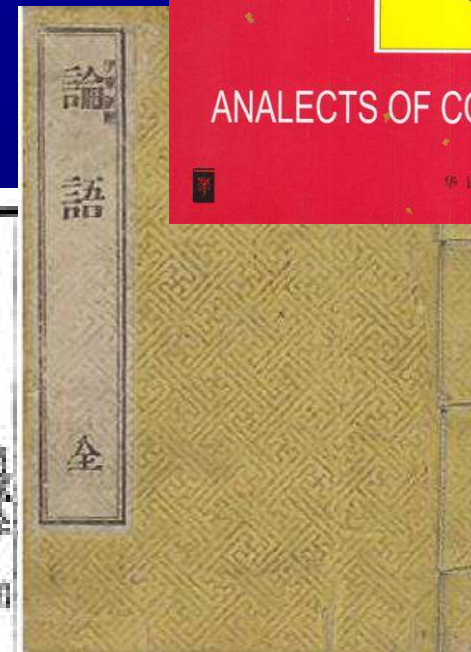
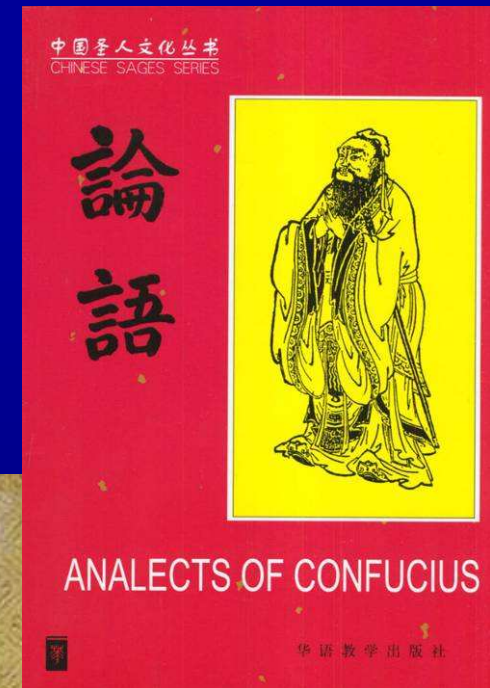


Confucius

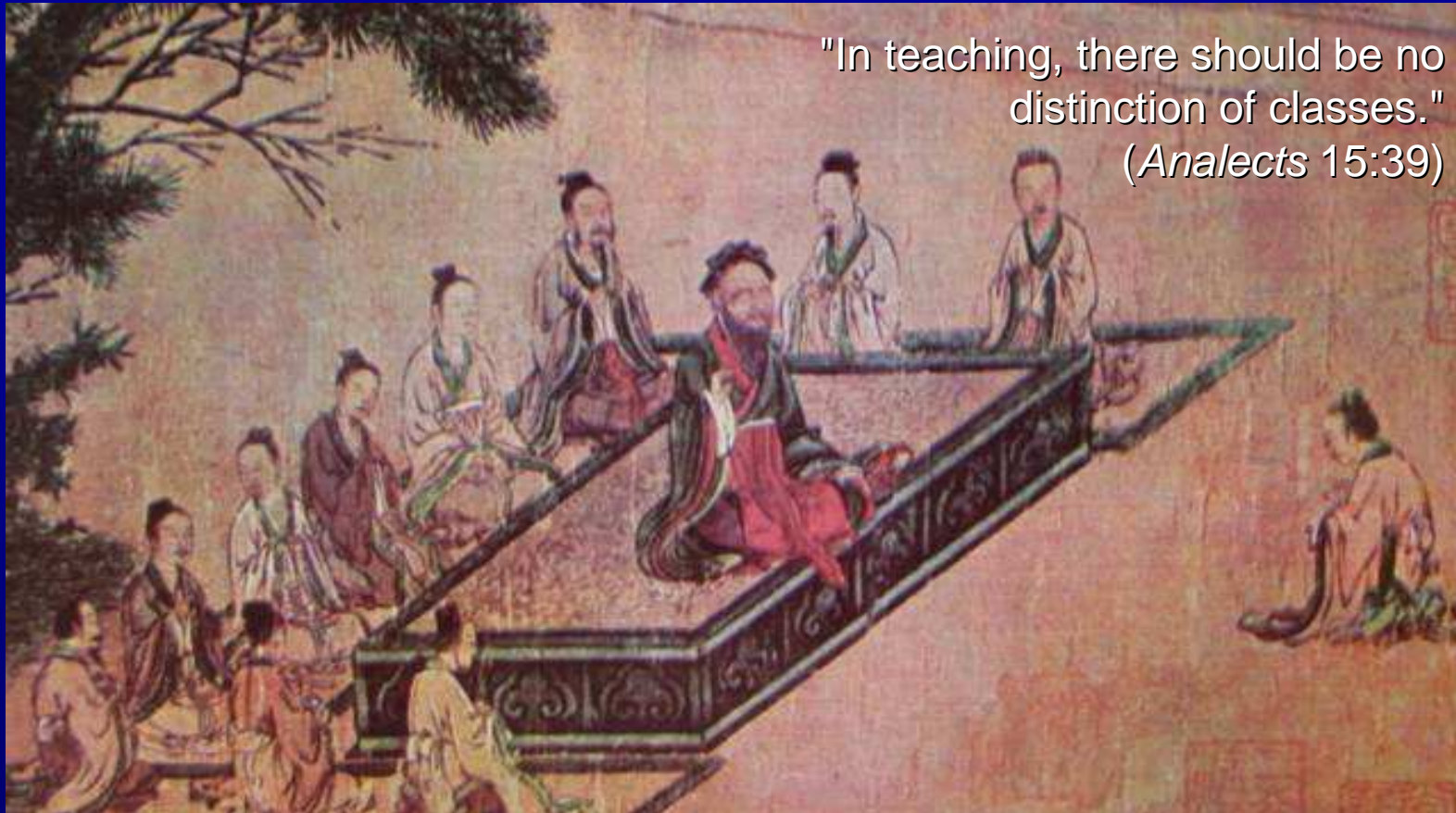
(circa 551-479 BC)

论语 *The Analects of Confucius*

The Lun Yü (The Analects of Confucius), a work compiled by some of Confucius' disciples, is considered the most reliable source of information about his life and teachings.



Confucius with his disciples



"In teaching, there should be no distinction of classes."
(*Analects* 15:39)

Unlike most Western philosophers, Confucius did not rely on deductive reasoning to convince his listeners. Instead, he used figures of rhetoric such as analogy and aphorism to explain his ideas. Most of the time these techniques were highly contextualised. For these reasons, Western readers might find his philosophy muddled or unclear. However, Confucius claimed that he sought "a unity all pervading" and that there was "one single thread binding my way together."

<http://www.answers.com/topic/confucianism>

孟子

Mencius

(circa 371-c. 288 BC),

Probably the next important figure in the Confucian tradition just after Confucius. He further developed Confucian theory especially in the aspects concerning human nature and mind. He tried to make the innate goodness in human nature as the foundation of Confucian ethic principles.



The Book of Mencius

The *book of Mencius*, not like the *Analects of Confucius*, may include some chapters written by Mencius himself, not just records by his disciples.





荀子

Xun Zi

(circa 312-283 B.C.)

Xun Zi is another important pre-Qin time Confucian scholar, who lived at the end of the Warring State period. He is famous for his theory that human beings are innately evil, and morality is artificially created by people in order to deal with the conflicts among people living in a social group.

Five Confucian Classics :

- 易 *I Ching or The Book of Changes*
- 诗 *the Book of Songs*
- 书 *the Book of Documents*
- 礼 *the Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial
or the Book of Rites*
- 春秋 *the Spring and Autumn Annals*

Four Books:

- 论语 *The Analects of Confucius*
- 孟子 *Mencius*
- 大学 *The Great Learning*
- 中庸 *The Doctrine of the Mean*

科举考试 Imperial examination

The Confucian Classics were the corpus used in the imperial examination system, which allowed anyone who passed an examination to become a government officer, a position which would bring wealth and honor to the whole family. Though the European enthusiasm toward China died away after 1789, China gave Europe one very important practical legacy: the modern civil service.



Jiangnan Examination Office in Nanjing

The basic Confucian doctrines are embodied in the following 5 characters:

仁 **rén** Benevolence, to be humanity, mercy and kindness;

义 **yì** Justness, to be righteousness ;

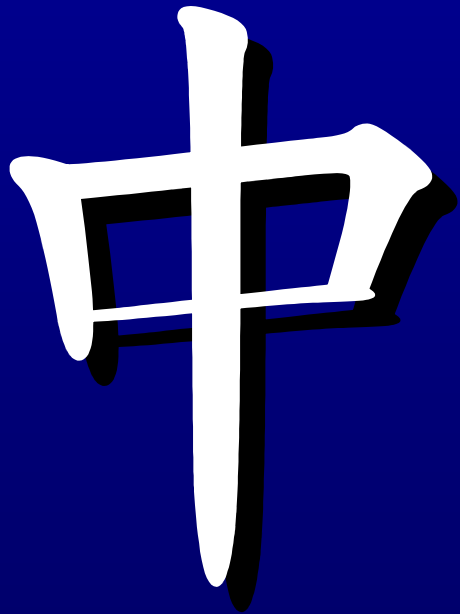
礼 **lǐ** Rituals, custom and law, to be polite;

智 **zhì** Wisdom, to be knowledgeable and well educated;

信 **xìn** royalty, faithful, reliable, accountable, responsible, creditable.

The essence of Confucian spirit can also be represented in this simple Chinese character:

zhōng



- In “中国” it means China;
- In “中庸” it means the doctrine of mean;
- In “中道” it means find the suitable way;
- In “中立” it means independent
- in “中和” it means harmonious .

中庸：

天命之谓性，率性之谓道，修道之谓教。道也者，不可须臾离也，可离非道也。

What Heaven has conferred is called the nature; an accordance with this nature is called the path of duty; the regulation of this path is called instruction.

(The Doctrine of the Mean, Translated by James Legge)

Benevolent government; Humanitarian rule

为政以德、仁政、王道



- "The Ruler himself should be humane, just, honest and dutiful. A virtuous ruler is like the Pole-star which, by keeping its place, makes all other stars to evolve round it. As is the Ruler, so will be the subjects."
- An inhumane ruler runs the risk of losing the "Mandate of Heaven". As indicated by Mencius, the so called "Mandate of Heaven" actually means the will of the people.



董仲舒

Dong Zhongshu

(d. 104 BC) the most eminent Confucian scholar of Han Dynasty. He was a vehement critic of the political court intrigues of his own time and left the court to write his political-philosophical essay, the "Rich Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals", an interpretation of the political and social order, based on the *Chunqiu* "Spring and Autumn Annals".



朱熹 Zhu Xi

(1130 - 1200) one of most significant Neo-Confucians. He taught at the famous White Deer Grotto Academy for some time. Considered unorthodox in their time, the Song Dynasty, he and his fellow scholars added additional classic books: *the Four Books*. Their writings were not widely recognised in Zhu Xi's time, however they subsequently became accepted as standard commentaries on the Confucian classics.

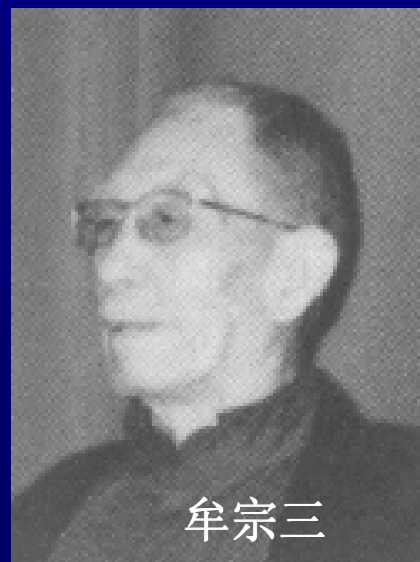
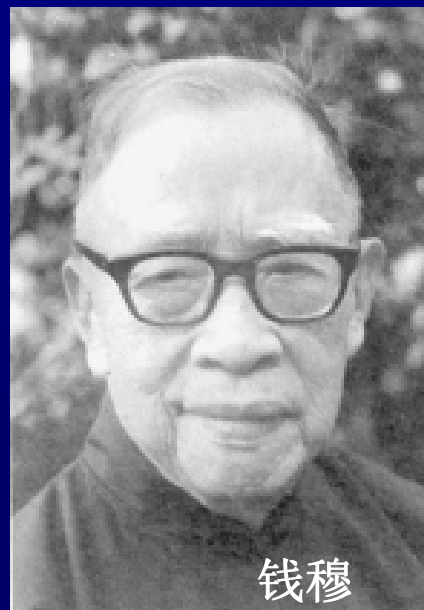
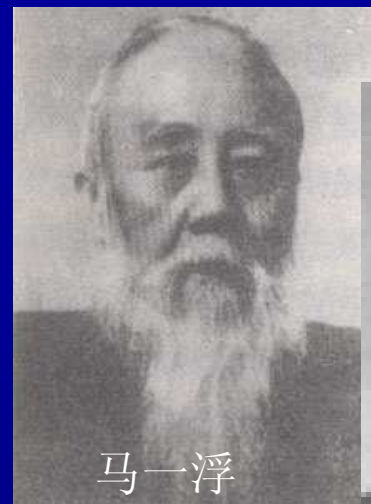
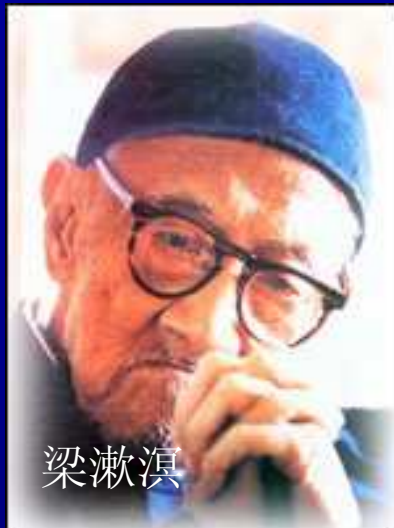
王阳明 Wang Yangming

(1472—1529)

Through concepts such as “innate knowledge” and “knowledge and action being a simultaneous process,” Wang Yangming founded a doctrine that would ultimately challenge the Chinese institution and become the root of Ming China individualism.



Contemporary Confucianism



杜维明

Du Weiming (1940 -)

A Harvard Professor of Philosophy,
who is considered as a representative
of the contemporary Confucianism.



Is Confucianism religion?

Probably that depends on how do you define religion.



The Confucian temple in Nanjing

Taoism



Presented by Dr. Xu Keqian
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What is Taoism?

Is Taoism philosophy? Or religion? Or logic? Or psychology? Or intuition? Or science? Or ethics? Or aesthetics? Or myth? Or hygiene?

It may be all of these things and none of these things - and can be so because it transcends, yet includes each of them.

Laozi

《史记·老子韩非列传》

Some segments from Laozi's
biography written by Sima
Qian

老子者，楚苦县厉乡曲仁里
人也。姓李氏，名耳，字伯
阳，谥曰聃，周守藏室之史
也。



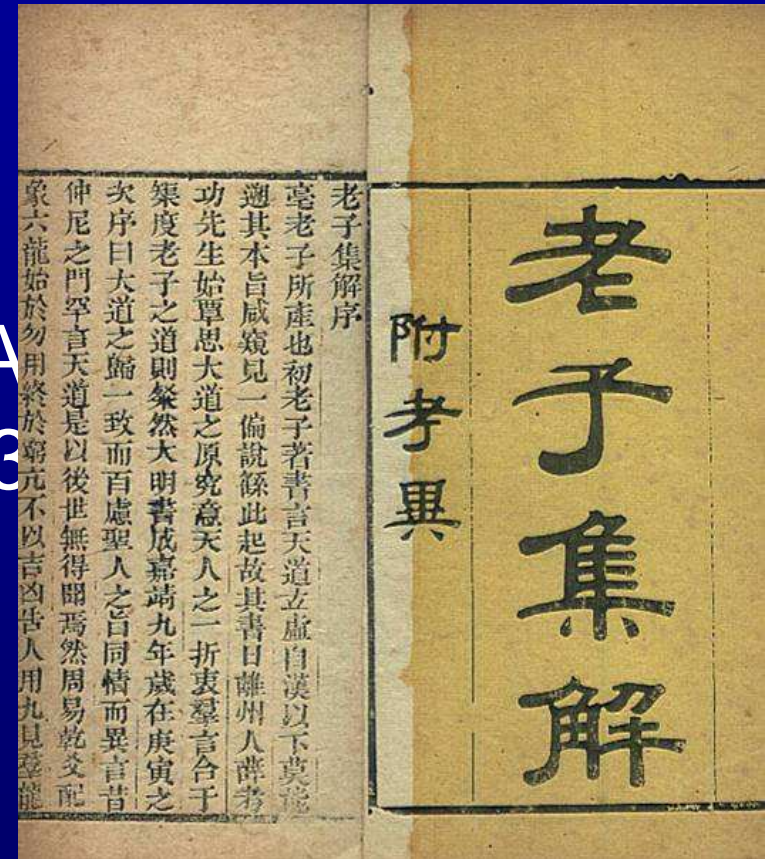
**Was he the top royal librarian of the Zhou
Dynasty?**



No one knows when and where Laozi died. Some one believes that he had enjoyed a long life of more than 200 years. Some later Taoists believe that he had eventually gone to India and transformed himself into Buddha.

About the book of *Laozi* or *Dao De Jing*

- Traditional Version
- Mawangdui silk version A and B (excavated in 1973)
- Guodian bamboo slips version A, B and C (excavated in 1993).



Zhuangzi

(369?-286? BC)

庄子者，蒙人也，名周。周尝为蒙漆园吏，与梁惠王、齐宣王同时。其学无所不窥，然其要本归于老子之言。故其著书十余万言，大抵率寓言也。作《渔父》、《盗跖》、《胠箝》，以诋訛孔子之徒，以明老子之术。《畏累虚》、《亢桑子》之属，皆空语无事实。然善属书离辞，指事类情，用剝剥儒、墨，虽当世宿学不能自解免也。其言洸洋自恣以适己，故自王公大人不能器之。



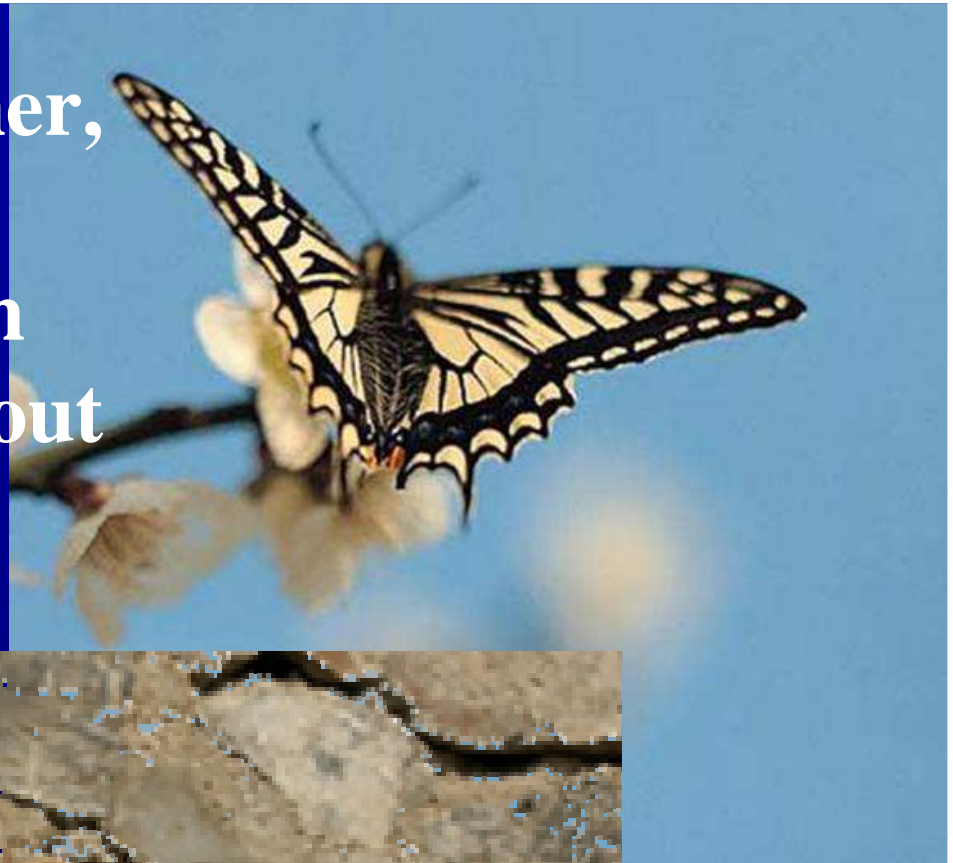
He was a contemporary of Mencius (372-289 BC) , the most important pre-Qin Confucian scholar just next to Confucius. But these two men had neither met with each other nor mentioned each other in their books.



庄子钓于濮水之上。楚王使大夫往，曰：“愿以境内累。”庄子持竿不顾，曰：“吾闻楚有神龟，死二千岁矣，巾笥藏之庙堂之上。此龟宁死为留骨而贵乎？宁生曳尾泥中乎？”大夫曰：“宁曳尾涂中。”庄子曰：“往矣！吾将曳尾于涂中。”（《庄子·秋水》）

He rejected an offer from the King of Chu, which inviting him to take the position of the state's prime minister, and preferred to be what he called “ a tortoise towing its tail in the muddy water”.

He was a day time dreamer,
once he dreamed that he
was a butterfly, and when
he woke, he confused about
his self-identity.



庄生梦蝶

The Book of *Zhuangzi*



the *Zhuangzi* text is clearly not the work of a single author and it is difficult to affix definitive authorship to any one person. See Graham, Angus Charles (1979), 'How Much of *Chuang Tzu* Did Chuang Tzu Write?' in *Studies in Early Chinese Thought* ed. Henry Rosemont Jr. And Benjamin Schwartz. Repr. in *Studies in Chinese Philosophy and Philosophical Literature*, ed. Graham. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990.

Tao or the Way

道



Taoist understanding of “Tao”

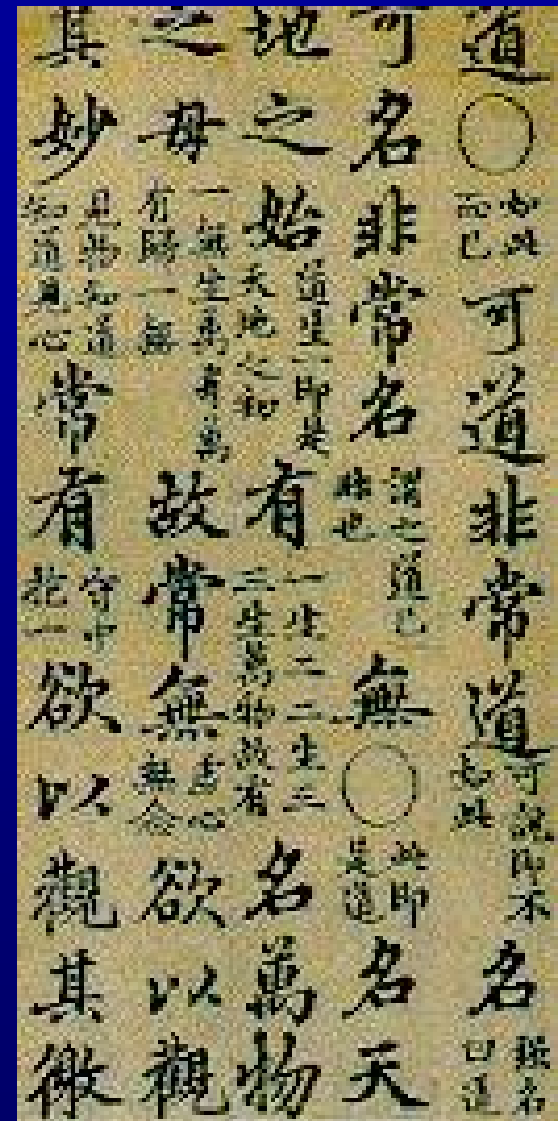
The Tao that can be told of is hardly
an eternal, absolute, unvarying one;

The name that can be coded and given
is no absolute name.

Heaven and earth sprang from
something else: the bright nameless;

The named is but the said mother that
rears the ten thousand creatures of
heaven and earth, each after its kind.

Dao De Jing, Ch.1



道法自然

“人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然。”

(《老子》25章)

**The ways of men are conditioned by those of earth.
The ways of earth, by those of heaven.
The ways of heaven by those of dao,
And the ways of dao by the Self-so's
Dao in turn models itself after Nature.**

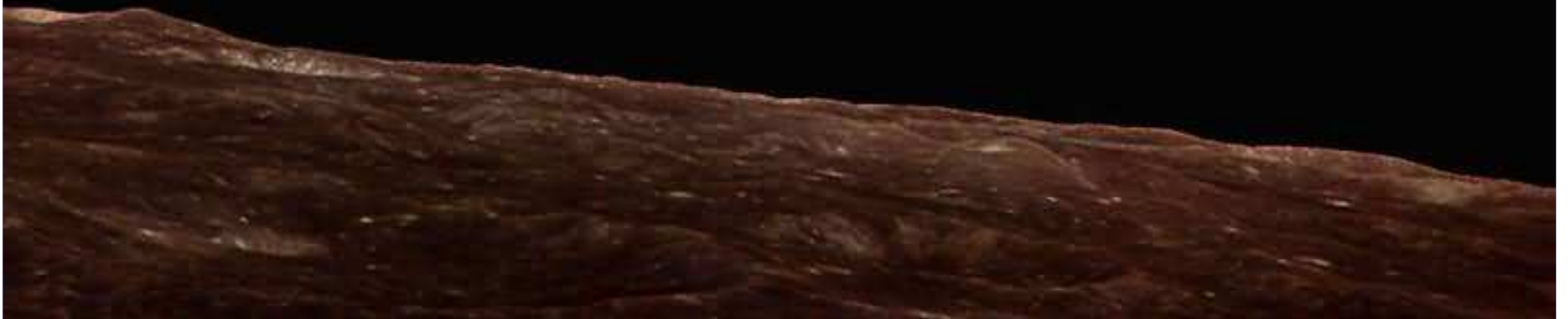
Dao De Jing, Ch.25



Invisible, inaudible, intangible



视之不见，名曰夷；听之不闻，名曰希；抟之不得，
名曰微。此三者不可致诘，故混而为一。（14章）



From the Viewpoint of Tao...

以道观之，物无贵贱；以物观之，自贵而相贱。

毛嫱丽姬，人之所美也；鱼见之深入，鸟见之高飞，麋鹿见之决骤，四者孰知天下之正色哉？自我观之，仁义之端，是非之涂，樊然殫乱，吾恶能知其辩！（《齐物论》）

Maoqiang and Lady Li were beautiful in the eyes of men but when the fish saw them they plunged into the deep and when the birds saw them they flew away. Which of these four knows what is truly beautiful in the world? In my judgment, the principles of Humaneness and Rightness, the paths of True and False are inextricably confused: how could I know how to discriminate between them?"

(Graham, p. 58, mod.)

Relative and dialectic viewpoint of the world and everything

“有无相生，难易相成，长短相较，高下相倾，音声相和，前后相随。”（2章）“祸兮福之所倚，福兮祸之所伏。孰知其极？其无正，正复为奇，善复为妖。”（58章）

Good fortune leans on bad fortune and bad fortune could rest on good fortune. Latent calamity is happiness, and sound happiness depends on some calamity. Fortune's route is a disaster; fortune is hidden disaster.

“正言若反”：“大成若缺”、“大盈若虚”、“大直若曲”、“大巧若拙”、“大辩若讷”（45章）；“明道若昧”，“进道若退”（41章）；“知者不言”（56章）；“上德不德，是以有德，下德不失德，是以无德。”（38章）

What's most perfect seems to be incomplete. What's most full seems empty. What's most straight seems devious or crooked. The greatest skills seems to be clumsy. The greatest cleverness appears like stupidity. The greatest eloquence seems like stuttering.

Taoist social critique:

彼窃钩者诛，窃国者为诸侯，诸侯之门而仁义存焉。（《庄子·胠篋》）



The smaller thieves have been punished by capital sentence, while the biggest one become the ruler of the country.

无为而治

The best government is probably a government who is actually doing nothing

“我无为而民自化，我好静而民自正，我无事而民自富，我无欲而民自朴。”（57章）

So long as I "do nothing" the people get transformed of themselves...

逍遥游

How to get into a realm of absolutely individual freedom or liberty?



The background of the slide is a blurred landscape. In the upper center, there is a bright, circular light source, likely the sun or moon, which is slightly out of focus. Below it, the landscape consists of rolling hills or fields in shades of brown, tan, and dark green, also blurred to create a sense of depth and movement. The overall tone is soft and atmospheric.

无功、无名、无己

No accomplishment (success)

No reputation (fame, prestige)

No self-conscious (ego)

知足

“罪莫大於可欲，禍莫大於不知足，咎莫大於欲得。故知足之足，常足矣。”（46章）

There is no greater sin than desire,
No greater curse than discontent,
No greater misfortune than wanting
something for oneself.
Therefore he who knows that enough is
enough will always have enough.

不爭

“夫唯不爭，故无尤。”（8章）

“夫唯不爭，故天下莫能与之爭。”（22章）


No fight: No blame.

They do not quarrel,

So no one quarrels with them.

Therefore the ancients say, "Yield and overcome."

Is that an empty saying?

A misty landscape with a bare tree in the foreground and a city skyline in the background. The scene is serene and atmospheric, with a soft, hazy light. The tree's branches are intricate and dark against the lighter background. The city skyline is visible in the distance, partially obscured by the mist. The overall mood is one of quiet contemplation and solitude.

虛靜 恬淡 寂漠 无为

Be tranquility, calm, indifferent, loneliness, do-nothing (*wu-wei*)

Religious Taoism

Religious Taoism was
appeared in the
Eastern Han Dynasty,
founded by the
Heaven Master Zhang.

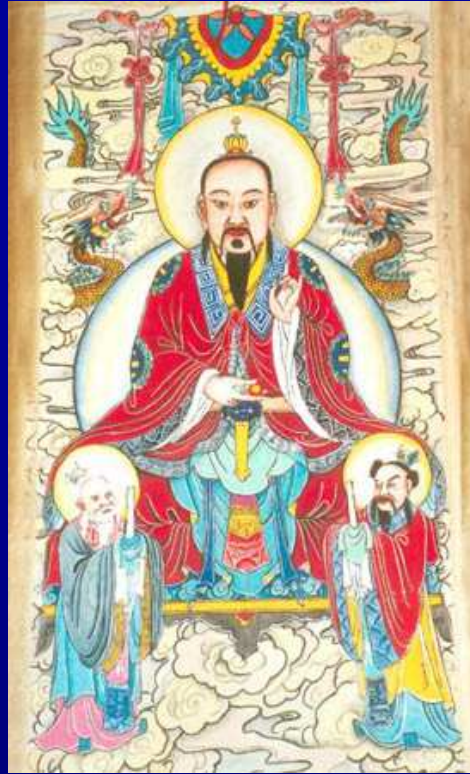


青城山隋刻張天師像

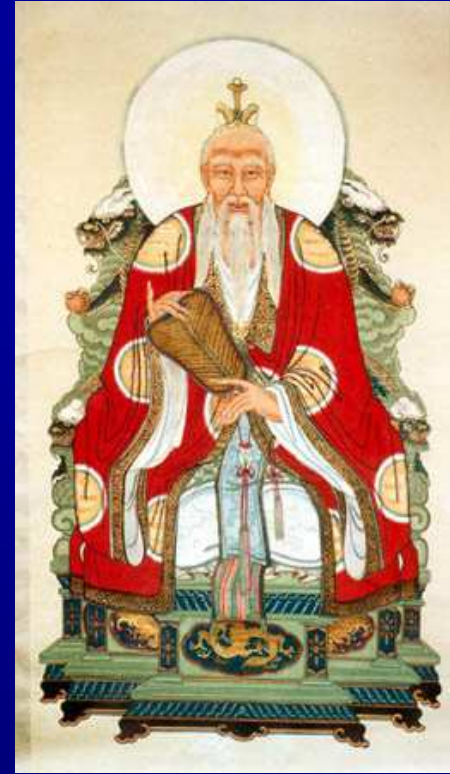
<http://www.eng.taoism.org.hk/general-daoism/eminent-philosophers&accomplished-daoists/pg1-4-6.asp>



灵宝天尊



原始天尊



道德天尊

Three top Taoist Gods.



A modern Taoist monk is preparing a ceremony.

佛教

Buddhism



A Tibetan Buddhist painting

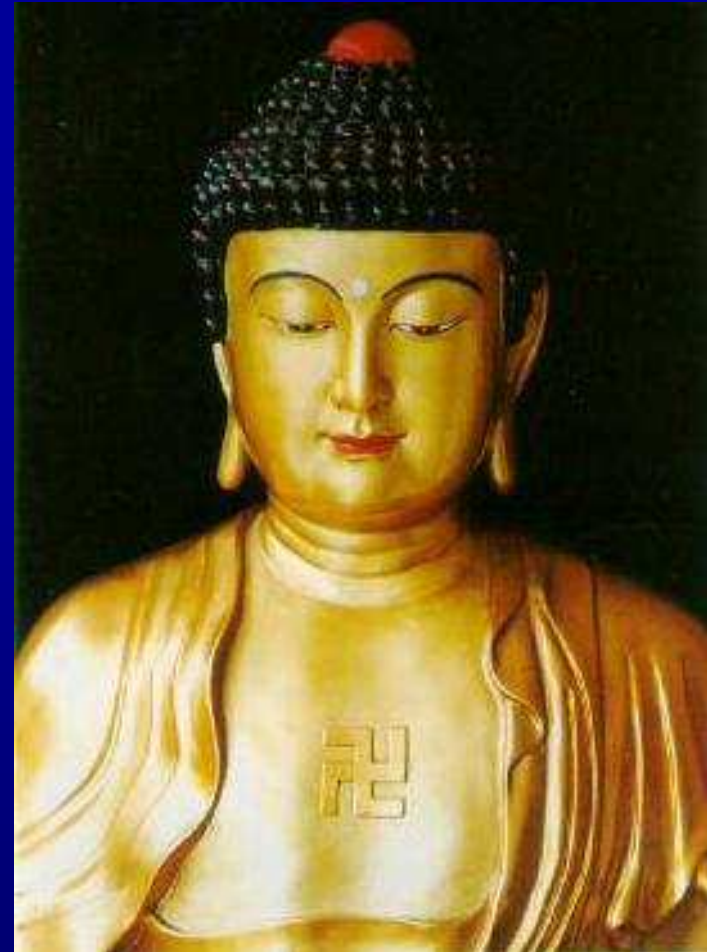
Sakyamuni (565 – 486 B.C.)

Founding of Buddhism

Given name: Siddhartha

Family name: Gautama (or Gotama).

Later epithet: Sakyamuni (“the sage of the Sakyas”). He was born the son of a king of the Sakya clan of the Kshatriya, or warrior, caste in the Himalayan foothills in what is now Southern Nepal.)



Siddhartha spent his youth in great luxury. he reached enlightenment, becoming a Buddha at the age of 35. For the remainder of his life he traveled and taught in the Gangetic plain, instructing disciples and giving his teaching to all who came to him.

Basic Beliefs of Buddhism:

“four noble truths” 四谛：

- 苦 existence is suffering (*dukhka*);
- 集 suffering has a cause, namely craving and attachment (*trishna*);
- 灭 there is a cessation of suffering, which is **nirvana**;
- 道 and there is a path to the cessation of suffering, the “eightfold path” .

the “eightfold path” 八正道:

- 正见 right views,
- 正思 right resolve,
- 正语 right speech,
- 正业 right action,
- 正命 right livelihood,
- 正精进 right effort,
- 正念 right mindfulness,
- 正定 right concentration.

A different translation: right views, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right-mindedness, right contemplation.

These eight are usually divided into three categories that form the cornerstone of Buddhist faith: morality戒, wisdom慧, and *samadhi*, or concentration定.

five aggregates 五蘊 :

Experience is analyzed into five aggregates or “bundles” (*skandhas*):

- 色 form (*rupa*), refers to material existence;
- 受 sensations (*vedana*), or feelings;
- 想 perceptions (*samjna*),
- 行 psychic constructs (*samskara*),
- 识 consciousness (*vijnana*), refer to psychological processes.

The central Buddhist teaching of non-self (*anatman*) asserts that in the five aggregates no independently existent, immutable self, or soul, can be found.

Buddhism characteristically describes reality in terms of process and relation rather than entity or substance.

12 casual conditions 十二因缘:

All phenomena arise in interrelation and in dependence on causes and conditions, and thus are subject to inevitable decay and cessation. The casual conditions are defined in a 12-membered chain called dependent origination

(*pratityasamutpada*) whose links are: ignorance 无明, predisposition 行, consciousness 识, name-form 名色, the senses 六处, contact 触, craving 受, love 爱, grasping 取, becoming 有, birth 生, old age and death 老死, whence again ignorance.

Samsara轮回, karma果报, nirvana涅槃

With the above distinctive view of cause and effect, Buddhism accepts the pan-Indian presupposition of **samsara**, in which living beings are trapped in a continual cycle of birth-and-death, with the momentum to rebirth provided by one's previous physical and mental actions (**karma**). The release from this cycle of rebirth and suffering is the total transcendence called **nirvana**, an ultimate state of consciousness beyond definition.

Enlightenment and Salvation are all depends on yourself !

Buddhist Practices

The five basic moral precepts

五戒：不杀生、不偷盗、不邪淫、不妄语、不饮酒

From the beginning, meditation and observance of moral precepts were the foundation of Buddhist practice. The five basic moral precepts, undertaken by members of monastic orders and the laity, are:

to refrain from taking life, stealing, acting unchastely, speaking falsely, and drinking intoxicants.

The arrival of Buddhism in China:



White Horse Temple in Luoyang

Historians generally agree that by the middle of the 1st century A.D., Buddhism had entered China. Since then Buddhism was able to take root, influencing Chinese culture and, in turn, adapting itself to Chinese ways.

During the chaotic periods of Sixteen Kingdoms and Southern and Northern Dynasties, Buddhism developed rapidly in both N & S China.



Many Buddhist sutras in Sanskrit were translated into Chinese. An Shih-kao and Kumarajiva are among those important translators.



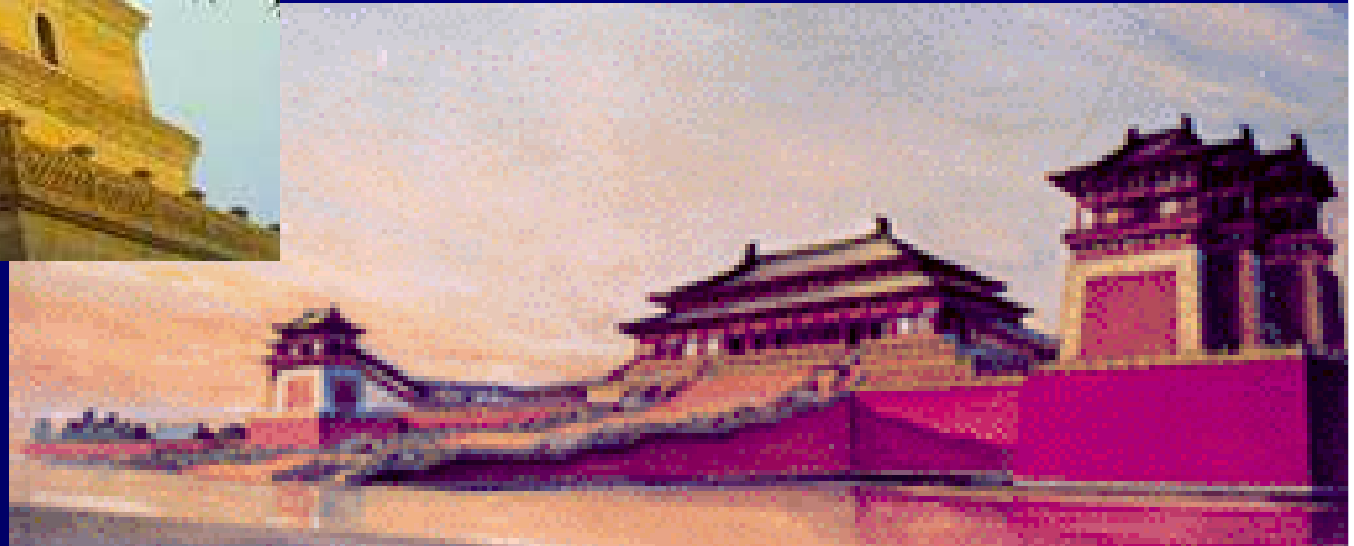
An Shih-kao (?-~170) 安世高



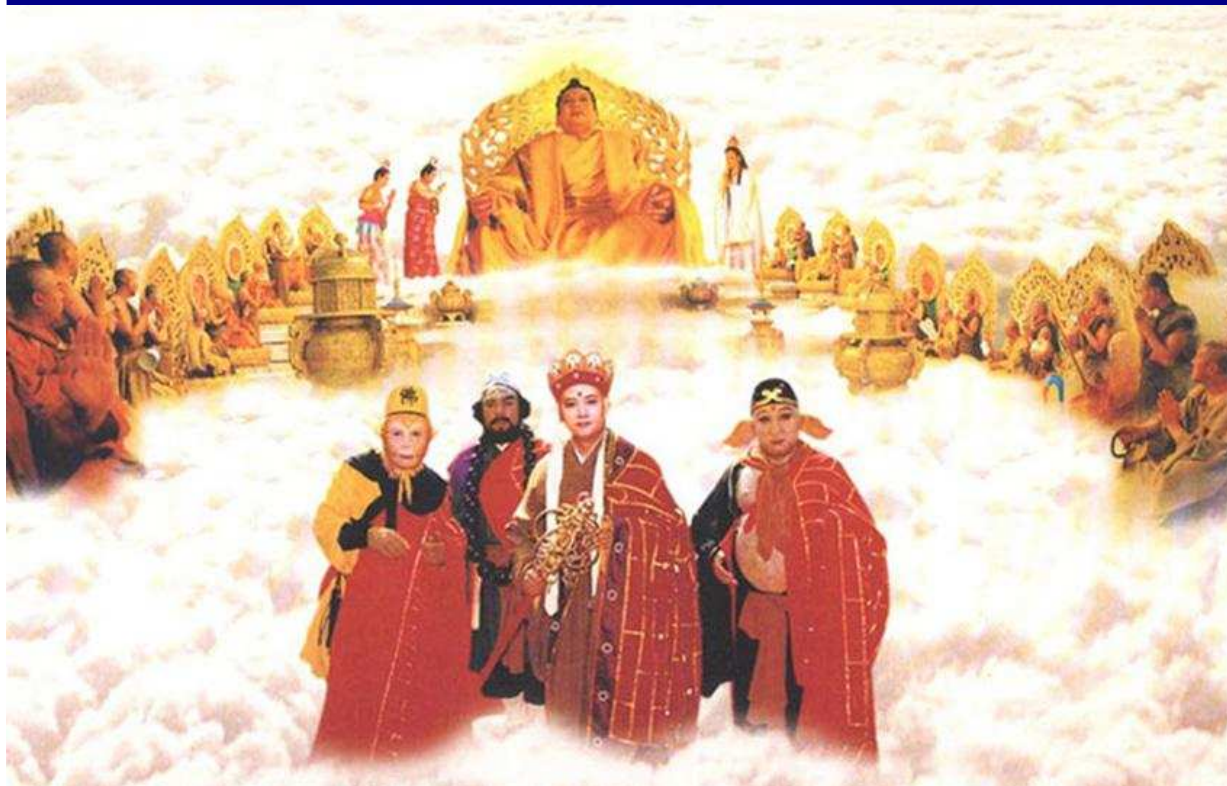
Kumarajiva
鸠摩罗什 (344 - 413)



In the Tang Dynasty, the capital of Chang'an became an important center for Buddhists.



The monk Xuanzang journeyed to Nalanda in India and other important sites to bring back scriptures. He sought to expand influence of Mahayana 大乘 over Theravada 小乘, though the Yogacara 瑜伽行派 school he preferred differs significantly from the later Chinese Mahayana schools that developed such as Pure Land.



The popularization of Buddhism in this period is evident in the many scripture-filled caves and structures surviving today. The Mogao Caves near Dunhuang in Gansu province, the Longmen Grottoes near Luoyang in Henan and the Yungang Grottoes near Datong in Shanxi are the most renowned of the Northern, Sui and Tang Dynasties.



The Leshan Giant Buddha, carved out of a hillside in the 8th century during Tang Dynasty and looking down on the confluence of three rivers, is still the largest stone Buddha statue in the world.





Varjacchedika-prajnaparamitra
sutra, or Diamond sutra

Many schools of Buddhism have appeared in the history of Chinese Buddhism, such as the Yogacara or Consciousness - Only school 唯识, Tien Tai school 天台, Hua Yan school 华严, Pure Land school 净土, and Chan/Zen school 禅.

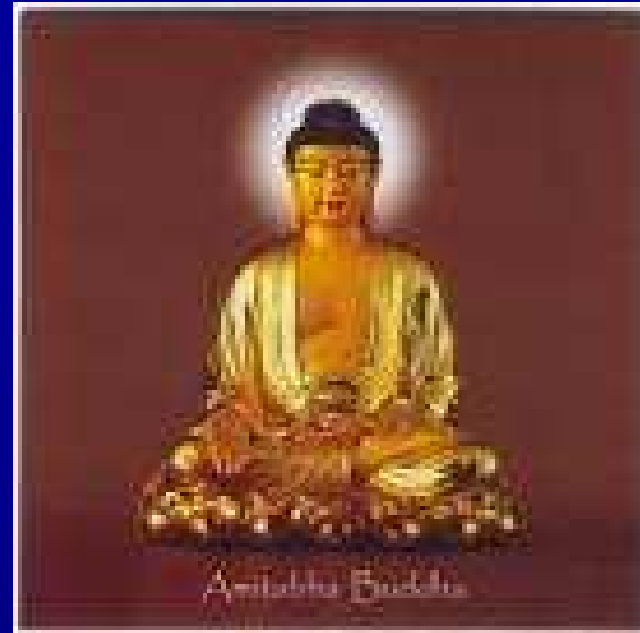


the Lotus Sutras

The Pure Land School Buddhism 净土宗

Shakyamuni Buddha taught about a Buddha named Amitabha who presides over a Buddha-realm known as Sukhavati (极乐世界), or the Realm of Bliss, a realm of rebirth in which all impediments to the attainment of final Enlightenment are nonexistent. The object of Pure Land Buddhism is rebirth into that Realm.

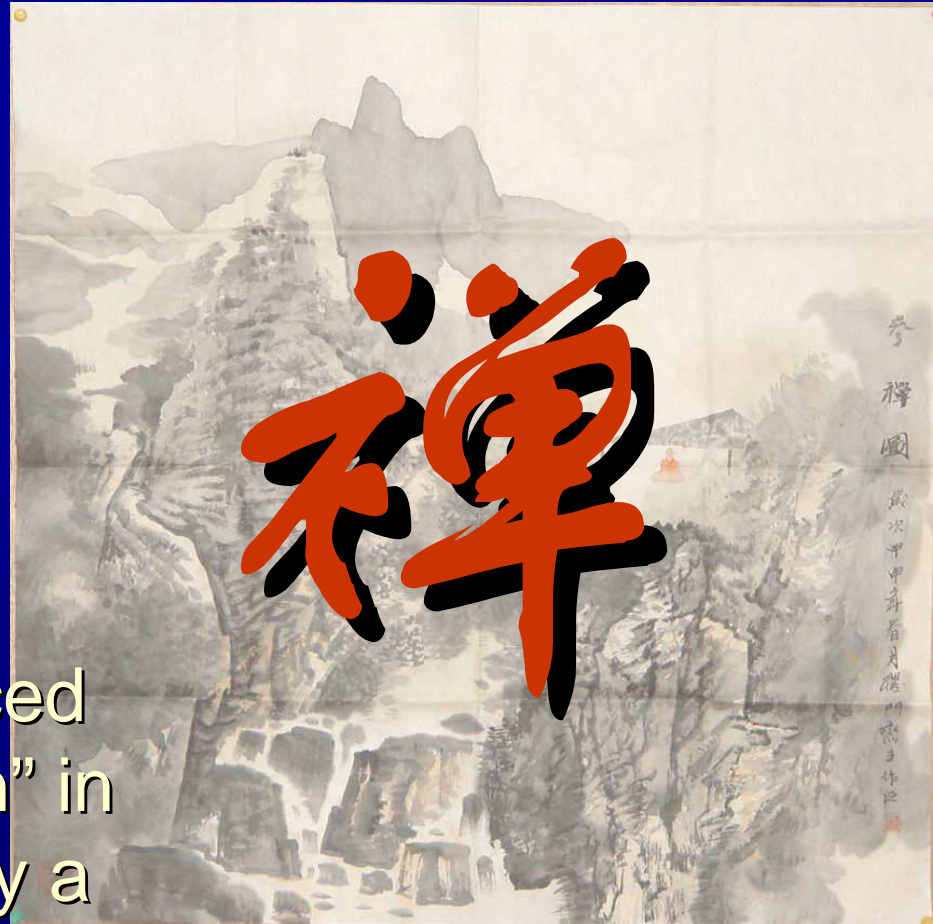
Pure Land Buddhism rests on the following tripod: **Faith, Aspiration** or the **Vow for Rebirth, Practice**, single-minded effort aimed at Buddha Remembrance Samadhi (三昧), "Buddhanusmrti" in Sanskrit, "Nien-Fo" in Chinese. Buddhanusmrti means "To stay mindful of the Buddha," and has been a central practice of Pure Land Buddhism since its beginnings. Nien-Fo also refers to the recitation of the Buddha's name, among other practices.



阿弥陀佛

Amitabha Buddha

The character pronounced “Chan” in Chinese (“Zen” in Japanese) was originally a transliteration of the Sanskrit term “Dhyana”, meaning meditation.





世尊在灵山会上，拈花示众。是时众皆默然，唯迦叶尊者破颜微笑。世尊曰：“吾有正法眼藏，涅槃妙心，实相无相，微妙法门，不立文字，教外别传，付嘱摩诃迦叶。”（《五灯会元》卷一）

拈花微笑

According to the story, in the context of a particularly profound lecture, the Buddha stopped and sitting in silence, merely twirled a flower. A wordless doctrine was thus immediately apprehended by one Kashyapa(迦叶尊者), who smiled. This began a line of direct mind-to-mind transmission of some doctrine incommensurate with language.

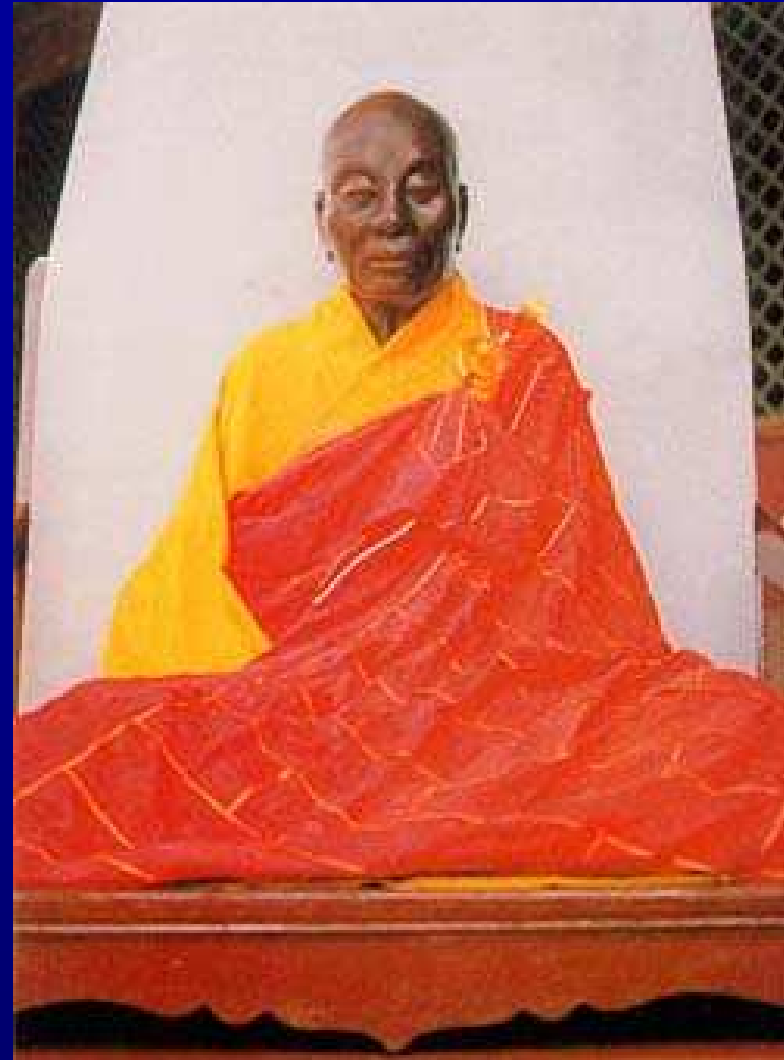


The transmission went through 28 "teacher-student generations" to the famous Bodhidharma who came to China.

菩提达摩
Bodhidharma
(? - 528)

An Enlightened Buddhist Master who is credited with reviving Buddhism in China and founding martial arts.

In China it went through 5 more generations still emphasizing orthodox meditation and the search for enlightenment, when the 5th patriarch announced a competition for who would be the 6th. Everyone assumed Shen Xiu, acknowledged as the most brilliant student, would win the competition. But Hui Neng, an illiterate peasant from Guangdong province proved to have spontaneous and immediate insight and received the coveted transmission.



Hui Neng 慧能

(638-713) Sixth Patriarch of Chan
(Zen) Buddhism

《六祖坛经》

The internal story about the transmission of Chan Buddhism is contained in the famous *Platform Sutra of the 6th Patriarch*.



心性本淨，佛性本有，舍离文字，
直彻心源，顿见真如，见性成佛。

Feng Yu-lan, a modern historian of Chinese philosophy, agrees that Chan is not a single school but a widespread social phenomenon with common "popular" traits. He lists five views shared by nearly all the various original Chan schools in Tang China:

- The Highest Truth is inexpressible.
- Spiritual cultivation cannot be cultivated.
- In the last resort, nothing is gained.
- There is nothing much in Buddhist teaching.
- In carrying water and chopping wood, therein lies the wonderful Dao.

Buddha & Bodhisattva

Bodhisattvas are "Enlightenment Beings" who are on the path toward Nirvana, the end of suffering, the realm of Perfect Peace. They work not only for their own Enlightenment, but also for the Enlightenment of all sentient beings. Once Bodhisattvahood is attained, the Bodhisattva is instructed by a Buddha. Shakyamuni Buddha's teacher was the Buddha Dipamkara; in turn, Shakyamuni Buddha is the teacher of the Buddha to come, Maitreya.



弥勒佛

Maitreya Buddha

弥勒佛是佛弟子，先佛灭度。佛预记他他在兜率天寿命终尽时将下生人间，所以是继释迦牟尼之后出世的未来佛。中国人曾先后以梁代居士傅弘，和唐末五代游方僧人契此的形象，分别创造了白衣长发弥勒大士，和大肚笑佛弥勒两个形象。最后大肚弥勒形象流转至今。

Buddha Maitreya is the Buddha of the future, also known as the Laughing Buddha, is the one to follow up the historical Buddha Sakyamuni. In the future he will be like Sakyamuni, a mortal manusi Buddha who lives on earth for a while in order to teach mankind the doctrine.

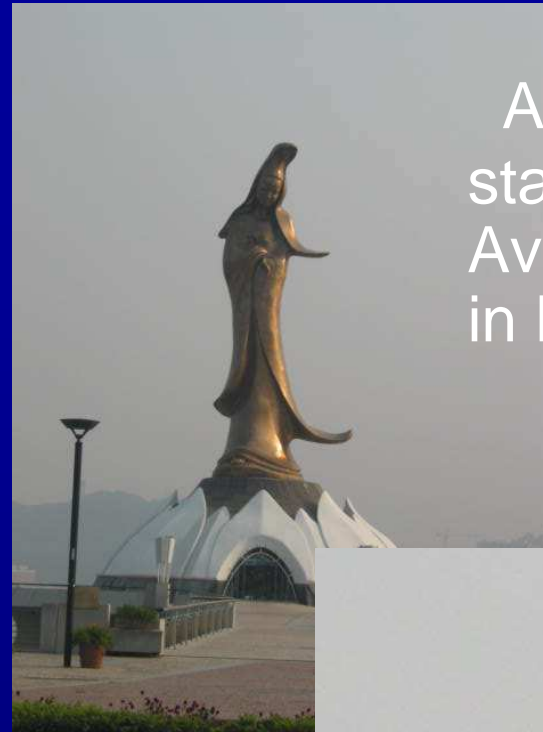
观世音菩萨 Avalokitesvara Guan Yin

The most popular and beloved of the Mahayana (大乘) bodhisattvas. The name Avalokitesvara means something like " the Lord who looks down on the World" or according to another interpretation " the Regarder of the Cries of the World". In China Avalokitesvara is usually represented as a beautiful white robed woman and is known as Guan Yin or Guan Shi Yin.





**A statue of Avalokitesvara
in Jilong harbor, Taiwan**



**A westernized
statue of
Avalokitesvara
in Macau**



Tibetan Buddhism

༄༅། །མོད་རྒྱལ་ཁབ་ལྷན་དུ་བཅུག་སྡེ་གཞུང་།
The Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center

<http://www.tbrc.org/>

Most Tibetans hold religious beliefs and there are four sects of Tibetan Buddhism, the major religion in Tibet - namely, the Gelug, Sagya, Nyingma and Gagyu Sects



Tibetan Buddhism and Theravada Buddhism are largely practiced by ethnic minorities along the geographic fringes of the country.



← In early 1950s, Mao met 10th Panchen Lama and 14th Dalai Lama in Beijing. From left: Panchen Lama, Mao, Dalai Lama.



A recent photo of the 14th Dalai Lama.

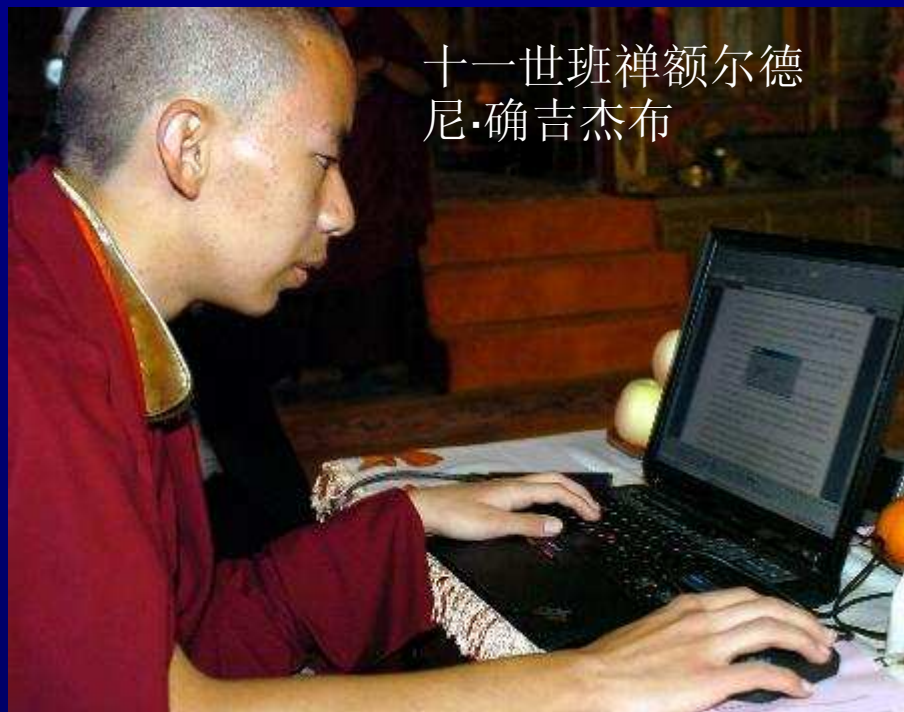
The 10th Panchen Lama



The 11th Panchen Lama



十一世班禅额尔德尼·确吉杰布





噶玛巴·伍金赤列多吉
**Karmapa Ugyen Trinley Dorje,
Recognized by both Beijing
Government and Dalai Lama**

两个十七世噶玛巴
Two 17th Karmapa



泰耶多杰
Trinley Thaye Dorje



格杰仁波切活佛

The gorgeous and fashionable
young living Buddha.



Today the most popular form of Buddhism in both mainland China and Taiwan is a mix of the Pure Land and Chan school.

Its central scripture, the Amitabha阿弥陀佛 Sutra was first brought to China by An Shigao, circa 147, however the school did not become popular until later. It is believed that China is the only country today where all of the branches of Buddhism have significant numbers of followers, since it is the only country with native adherents to all three of the branches of Buddhism. Estimates of the number of Buddhists in China range from 70 million to 150 million.



Lingshan Gigantic Buddha in Wuxi: A 1990's modern Buddhist construction.

Coexistence of different religions

Religions in Chinese culture are not mutually exclusive entities — each tradition is free to find its specific niche, its field of specialisation. One can be a Taoist, Christian, Muslim, or Buddhist and still profess Confucianist beliefs.

Chinese Muslim



A Catholic church in Beijing

大秦景教
流行中国碑

Nestorianism, a branch of western Christianity, was prevailing in northern China in medieval time, as recorded on this epigraph.



Discuss on Some Important Ideas, Values and Principles of Traditional Chinese Culture



Some notes:

- What I have generalized here are only something represent the mainstream of traditional Chinese culture, some diversity might be neglected.
- What I am going to discuss are only some ideal concepts and values that have been advocated and pursued by Chinese people, especial the intellectual class in the long history, but not necessary the reality achieved in any given society in Chinese history.
- Some generalized comparison between Chinese and Western culture may be mentioned, I just want to point out the subtle differences (the similarities may be more fundamental in certain aspects), and I prefer not to make any value judgment.

天人合一

Integration of Heaven and Men

Or: Heaven and Men are in a unity

- 天 Heaven: God? Nature? invariable laws? Inevitability? Objectivity? The natural aspects of human being? etc.
- 人 Human behavior? The creation by human being? Subjectivity? The artificial aspects of human being? etc.

- 究天人之际 explore the relation between Heaven and men is a forever topic in Chinese philosophy.
- Ancient believe of “Heaven-men interaction” 天人感应
- The Dao of human must be accordance with the Dao of Heaven.
- Human being is just a part of Nature and should be harmony with nature.
- Objectivity and subjectivity are not split.

- Heaven (God?), Buddha or *Dao* is dwelling potentially in everyone's heart or nature.
- So, every individual is possible to become a *Junzi*, a sage, or even a Buddha, for that is only to realize one's real being.
- Man can only make a salvation, or become transcendent, or escape the samsara with his own effort.

群体主义

Collectivism, communalism

- People exist as groups, rather than atoms.
- People are affiliated with each other, rather than isolated or independent from each other.
- “self” is defined by its relation with others, an individual is made out of all his social relations.

- The interests of a family, a group or a country are more important than those of an individual, because the latter depends greatly on the former.
- The sense of belonging seems more wanted than the sense of liberty.
- General peace and stability seems more important than individual freedom.

德治主义

Rule of virtue; rule of morals;

To govern the country with ethics

- The force of virtue is more powerful than that of military. “A benevolent ruler should have no enemy under the Heaven.”
- “王道”与“霸道” The difference between the “kingly way” (benevolent government) and the “hegemonical way”.
- Law is needed, but only as a tool to assist the realization of moral values.

中庸之道

The doctrine of the Mean;
The neutral, balanced and common way.



Persisting on the doctrine of the Mean is quite similar to walking on a steel wire.

- Try to make a balance between extremists (or between polarities).
- Too much is as bad as too short; beyond is as bad as falling short; Going too far is as bad as not going far enough.
- Dialectic, or relative, or dynamic view of principles, nothing is absolute.
- 和而不同 be harmonious but not monotonous (diversifying but still harmonious)



Thank you and good bye!