Eastern Religions

Religion in China 1

1. Geography East and West
2. Middle Eastern Religions
3. Geography: China
4. Origins of Chinese Civilization
5. Ancient Taoism
Geography: China
Chinese people also refer to their country as Huaxia, or “the great civilization.”
Chinese Transliteration

- Wade-Giles: Chung Kuo, Kung Fu, Tao, Lao Tzu
- Pinyin: Zhong guo, Gongfu, Dao, Laozi

Q=Ch, e.g. Qin Dynasty
X=Sh, e.g. Xin Jiang province

I use a mix of both systems.
1.3 billion people in China compared to 300 million people in the U.S.

An enormous population. But in a very large area of land, right? Well, not so fast....
The Chinese population is concentrated mainly in the East (in the red areas). The mountains and desert make other areas less inhabitable.
This is a view of China from the East... from the Pacific Ocean.

1 Hainan Island; 2 Leizhou Peninsula; 3 Hong Kong; 4 Guangzhou (Canton); 5 Shanghai; 6 Beijing; 7 Tianjin; 8 Wuhan; 9 Xi’an
The People’s Republic of China

56 recognized ethnicities

Han: 98% of Chinese
just a side note...

Turkic Peoples

Kazakhstan and China are separated by the Tian Shan Mountains.
The People’s Republic of China

56 recognized ethnicities

Han: 98% of Chinese
The Han people originated with the Huaxia tribes along the Yellow River and now make up nearly a quarter (22%) of the world’s population.
Origins of Chinese Civilization
The Yellow and Yangtze Rivers are the major rivers of the north and south in China. The ancient Han Civilization began near the big bend of the Yellow River with the tribes of the Huaxia.
The Mother River statue erected along the banks of the Yellow River
Homo Erectus arrived in the Yellow Sea region almost a million years ago.

The “Peking Man” was discovered in 1929.
Neolithic Period

The Jiahu began growing and grinding millet about 7000 BC. There was some rice cultivation as well.

The Jiahu Culture also made flutes and had one of the earliest forms of writing in the world (right). It lasted from about 7000-5700 BC. This was followed by the rise of the Yangshao Culture (5000-3000 BC), and the Longshan Culture (3000-2000 BC). It's during the Longshan period that the legendary kings called the Flame and Yellow emperors would have lived.

Most of the items on this page are dated from about 6,000-4,000 BC.
Myths and Legends of Ancient China

The Kunlun Mountains are the home of the gods.

**AXIS MUNDI (Latin):** cosmic center

Peach Tree on Kunlun is the Tree of Life
Xi Wang Mu:
Queen Mother of the West

Worship of this Mother Goddess goes back at least to the 15th-c BC
Myths and Legends of Ancient China

Fu Xi is said to have originated the principles of the *I Ching*.

Nuwa
1. patched the slit in the sky with 5 colored stones, and
2. created the Han people out of the yellow earth.

Gonggong, a sea dragon had created the hole.
Myths and Legends of Ancient China

FLAME (possibly lived as early as 3100 BC)

3000 BC - 2600 BC

Father of Chinese Agriculture and Medicine

Shennong, The Divine Farmer
The 1st Flame Emperor (Yan Di)

Sheep’s Head Mountain in the Shan Xi Province
Myths and Legends of Ancient China

The Yellow Emperor (Huang Di)
Father of Chinese Civilization

Gōngsūn Xuānyuán

(Yellow Emperor assigned Cang Jie the task of developing China’s first writing system)

Ancient Characters from Dingong in Shandong Province

WRITING

Guqin

SILK PRODUCTION

MUSIC

REVIEW B
Roots of Chinese Religion
Chinese religion began with Wuism. A Wu is a Shaman. And even Church Taoism honors the Shaman goddess Xi Wangmu.
“1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.”
The Wu Chi, or CHAOS
ORDER:
The Tai Chi, or Supreme Ultimate
individual things emerged in a harmonious balance of opposites

Yin and Yang
Chaos
Order:
a harmonious balance
of opposites

Wu Chi
Tai Chi

The Supreme Ultimate
The Source of Being

Ba gua: 8 trigrams
representing the
4 cardinal directions
and the elements

Maintaining
Balance and
Harmony
became an important
aspect of
Chinese religions.

Tai Chi Tu (the yin/yang symbol)
DIVINATION: divine guidance through a ritual process

pyromancy: divination by fire

[Image of Oracle Bones]
Oracle Bones
used until Shang dynasty

[Image of Oracle Blocks]
Oracle Blocks
after that

[Image of Jiaobei blocks]

[Diagram of 3 coins and tossing]
Tossing 3 coins

[Diagram of Chinese characters]

destiny
chance
choice
"Creativity comes from awakening and directing men's higher natures, which originate in the primal depths of the universe and are appointed by Heaven."

The *I Ching* was originally a sacred philosophical text about the nature of existence that later also became a tool of divination.
Chinese Medicine

balancing yin and yang

acupuncture improving and maintaining the flow of chi
the earliest dynasties of China
Yu the Great became famous for controlling the flooding of the Yellow River.
Tang, 1<sup>st</sup> Emperor of the Shang
The Earthly Emperor was called the “Son of Heaven” in Shandong Province. Many subsequent emperors climbed the 7200 steps of Mt. Tai.
What I like to call

“Miniature Mountains”

Shang Altar
The Forbidden City

is the modern form of Shang Di worship
Inside the Temple of Heaven, the Emperor worshipped Shang Di, Lord of the Heavens.

Outside, offerings were made to gods of the Land (She) and Grains (Ji).
Temple of Heaven during the Lantern Festival
The throne of Shangdi at the Temple of Heaven is empty.
No images were to be made of Shang Di.
Great heroes, unlike common ancestors, were often thought of as shen after they died.
SHANG DI
Nature Spirits Ancestral Spirits
PRINCES
EMPEROR
COMMON PEOPLE
Nature Spirits Ancestral Spirits
REVIEW D
The period of the Hundred Philosophers
#3 Zhou Dynasty

Zhou Dynasty at its greatest extent

black lines represent Great Walls built by the Zhou

3000  2000  1000  300 BC
Confucius (Kung Fu Tzu)

551–478 BC

“What happened? And how can we fix it?”
In Confucius’s time, the divine was referred to as Tian more often than as Shang Di.
Mandate of Heaven

Good leaders rise with the Mandate of Heaven. Unjust Rulers lose the Mandate of Heaven and are overthrown.

One Cycle would be roughly 250 - 350 years

- Idea of the DYNASTIC CYCLE
- Peak
  - Reaches peak of prosperity under vigorous early emperors
  - Enters a period of steady decline, ultimately resulting in loss of Heaven's Mandate

- Xia
- Shang
- Zhou
- Qin
- Han
- Sui/Tang
- ETC

moral corruption
Goal:
to create a well-ordered, harmonious society

Chun tzu
superior person
noble person
as in
an ideal human being

For example,
“A noble man (chun tzu) is modest in his speech, but exceeds in his actions.”

He was very humble:
only a teacher passing on the knowledge of the past.
Behaving in a way that creates harmony between you and others.

Ren

The chief characteristic of a chun tzu.

Love
Being good to and with Others
Humaneness
Kindness
Compassion
Benevolence
(2) SILVER RULE
Tsze-Kung asked, saying, “Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life?” The Master said, “Is not Reciprocity such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.”
Being centered involves knowing your role in society, and knowing precisely how to speak and behave.

**Rectification of Names**

Zi-lu said, "The ruler of Wei has been waiting for you, in order with you to administer the government. What will you consider the first thing to be done?"

The Master replied, "What is necessary to rectify names.... If names be not correct, language is not in accordance with the truth of things.

*Therefore a superior man considers it necessary that the names he uses may be spoken appropriately, and also that what he speaks may be carried out appropriately. What the superior man requires is just that in his words there may be nothing incorrect."

(*Analects* XIII, 3, tr. Legge)
The Five Principle Relationships

Father and Son
Husband and Wife
Brothers
Friends
Ruler and Ruled

Li “Propriety”
Etiquette

Li=rituals, too
Confucius thought the most important relationship was between parent and child.

The strength of a nation is derived from the integrity of its homes.

Confucius

The ideal parent, who attends to children’s needs with love, gains natural respect.
Respecting and Honoring one’s Parents, Elders, and Ancestors
This should set an example for all the other relationships, including the ruler and ruled.

The Story of the Woman and the Tiger

Confucius sighed and turned to his disciples, "You must all remember this. An oppressive government is worse than a man-eating tiger."

- Book of Rites
Natural Leaders have **TE**, "The Power of Moral Example"

"He who exercises government by means of his virtue may be compared to the north polar star, which keeps its place and all the stars turn towards it." -- Confucius
Culture:
The cultivation of character.

WEN “Culture”

Yi Jing: The Book of Changes

Music

Poetry

History

The Five Classics

Rites