

# WORLD RELIGIONS

## WEEK 4

### ORIENTAL RELIGIONS

#### **TAOISM** (Wade-Giles) DAOISM (Pinyin)

**Founder:** Lao-tzu (604–531 B.C.) ??????

**Scriptures:** (1) *I Ching*-The Book of Changes (2) *Tao-Te-Ching*-The Book of the Way

#### **History**

#### **Basic Beliefs**

#### **Vocabulary:**

*Tao* – the ‘Way’ of ultimate reality by which one should order one’s life

*Ch’i* – life energy that flows throughout the human body and the universe

*Feng Shui* – the science and art of *Ch’i*

Acupuncture – the manipulation of the *Ch’i* in the body

*Yin* and *Yang* – elements in the universe that are contrary to one another

*Wu-wei* – the concept of inaction; the ideal for rulers

*Yin* – female, passive, earth, moon, winter, negative, evil, darkness, death

*Yang* - male, active, heaven, sun, summer, positive, good, light, life



No belief in a personal deity or a God who created the universe.

THREE JEWELS of compassion, moderation and humility.

*Wu-wei* is pattern for human behaviour.

Symbols of yin and Yang and Water

#### **Religious Dimensions**

#### **Points of Contact with Christianity**

### CONFUCIANISM

**Founder:** Kung Fu-tzu (551–479 B.C.) Confucius is Latinized version.

**Scriptures:** The Analects or Conversations (Confucius) and expository writings of Mencius (371-289 B.C.) and Hsun-tzu (298–238 B.C.)

#### **Vocabulary:**

*Chun-tzu* – the perfect human being; mature, self-controlled, helpful to others

Doctrine of the Mean – idea of avoiding extremes; resolving conflict through mediation rather than confrontation

*Jen* – the most important virtue: respect for and love of a person’s dignity. ‘Do not to others what you would not have them do to you.’

*Li* – proper behaviour; the right thing to do and correct rituals

*Tian* – Heaven, a cosmic spiritual-moral power

*Yi* – duty, obligation; sense of right and wrong

**Basic Beliefs:**

All people can reach perfection (a life of virtue-*Jen*) in accordance with these principles: Loyalty to one's true nature; Do things the way they should be done knowing how to act in every situation; Reciprocity, altruism; Righteousness; Filial piety, love among family members, completing one's parents will and desires.

Confucius stressed the following values; cultural arts of peace, honesty and trustworthiness.

Personal harmony in five relationships: (1) parent-child (2) older-younger (3) husband-wife (4) senior-junior (5) ruler-subject

**Religious Dimensions****Points of Contact with Christianity****SHINTOISM** (the Way of the Spirits)

**Founder:** none; dates from pre-historic times

**Scriptures:** none considered sacred; two leading books are *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*

**Vocabulary:**

*Kami* – sacred power found in both animate and inanimate objects

*Kami Dama* – 'the god shelf' found in most homes for names of deities and ancestors

*Shinto* – the designation for the historical religion of Japan

*Shinto* myth – the belief that the island of Japan and the Japanese people are of divine origin

*Matsuri* – festival that honors individual or group *Kamis*

**Basic Beliefs:**

Apart from reverence for the emperor, it has no creed or set of theological beliefs

Has about 800,000 gods, mostly the deified heroes of Japan

The Sun Goddess (Amaterasu) is emphasized making it the only world religion with a female supreme god. The Emperor as a direct descendent of Amaterasu is worshipped.

Every part of physical world has a sacred aspect; *Kami* are present in all things; humanity is basically good.

Four affirmations: tradition and family; love of nature; physical cleanliness; *matsuri*

Ten Precepts

**Religious Dimensions****Points of Contact with Christianity****Questions for Discussion**

1. You are on a long train journey and you find out the person sitting next to you is from China and claims to be Taoist, Confucianist and Buddhist. How would you try to convince him that all three are in error and only Christianity is true?
2. You go to a Japanese restaurant and your waiter is very happy to practice his English, even talking about religion. He says he believes in Shinto, and yes, there are *Kami* right here in Aberdeen. With what you know of Shintoism, what would be the best way to interject Jesus Christ into your conversation?
3. How does the Christian doctrine of original sin match up with Oriental religions?
4. How would you try to convince an Oriental that he needs a Saviour?