

HONS 240.01: Special Topics in Value & Tradition in Asian Civilization
T/R 9:25-10:40 am @ Berry 103 **Spring 2021**

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“Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one’s lifetime.” Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*

“Travel has a way of stretching the mind. The stretch comes not from travel’s immediate rewards, the inevitable myriad new sights, smells, and sounds, but with experiencing firsthand how others do differently what we believe to be the right and only way.” Ralph Crawshaw

Course Description

This seminar will explore the religious visions, values, and practices by which people from India, China, and Japan have understood their life experiences. We will consider material drawn from Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, Christianity, and the “New Religions” of Japan. However, the course is not designed to serve as a systematic survey of Asian religious traditions. Rather than aiming at breadth, the course is designed around major themes that include: discerning between illusion & reality; monasticism, asceticism, and the hermit’s life; meditation and religious experience; pilgrimage & spiritual journeys; death, the afterlife, and ancestor worship; religion’s role in reinforcing or critiquing social hierarchies and gender roles; the transformation of foreign traditions to fit native worldviews; and the effects of globalization on religions today. The course will follow an easterly route, beginning in India and moving to China and Japan, at the same time as we move from ancient times to the present. We begin with an Indian civilization that appeared some 3,000 years ago and end with religious debates over the topics of abortion and organ transplants in Japan today. We will also watch a number of films that explore the confrontation of tradition with modernity in these cultures. We will see that Asian religiosity tends to have different emphases than the Judeo-Christian traditions. The course will call into question our common distinctions in the West between self & society, church & state, and religion & spirituality.

Course Goals

- to develop empathy for the enduring visions and values that have shaped Asian civilizations;
- to grasp the dynamic process of borrowing, conflict, and interaction between religions in Asia;
- to foster a reflexive awareness of how scholars’ religious, cultural, and personal presuppositions (including your own) have informed the way in which religious texts are read and valued.

Student Learning Outcomes

- to evaluate complex issues in Asian religious traditions using an interdisciplinary perspective
- to demonstrate the ability to create and communicate analytic arguments supported by evidence
- to analyze and synthesize information within and/or across disciplines

These SLO will be assessed in the fourth essay (7.5% of grade) due 3/16 that analyzes the ethical, ritual, institutional, and ideological dimensions of the Buddhist story of a monk rescuing his mother from hell.

The Four Required Texts are all available at the College of Charleston’s [Barnes & Noble Bookstore](#):

- U. R. Anantha Murthy, *Samskara: A Rite for a Dead Man*. 2nd ed. Oxford: 2012.
- Bill Porter, *Road to Heaven: Encounters with Chinese Hermits*. Counterpoint: 2009.
- Shusaku Endo, *Silence*. Picador Modern Classic: 2016.
- Satomi Myodo, *Journey in Search of the Way*. SUNY: 1993.

There are also required **Electronic Readings (ER#1-28)**, pdf of articles, stories, and selections from scriptures, available on **OAKS** under **HONS 240** which registered students can access after they login to **MyCharleston** (<http://my.cofc.edu>). Please **print out each ER article** and bring it to class on the day that it will be discussed. The **correct ER# for each article** is listed in the syllabus and on OAKS, not on the first page of the article itself that you print out (*so ignore the ER# written on the article’s first page*).

Course Requirements

There is no prerequisite for this class or any knowledge presumed about Asian cultures and religions. What is required is the desire to read challenging and exotic materials and to engage in conversation about them. The literary works assigned will enable you to empathize with the Asian “other,” even as you learn to recognize important distinctions between Asian peoples, values, and traditions. The novels, short stories, and spiritual biography present conflicts between religious traditions, they examine profound paradoxes within a single tradition, and explore tensions between prescribed religious ideals and actual social practices. Below are the requirements and grading schema.

- **Regular attendance in class**

The COVID-19 pandemic requires a flexible approach to handling student absence, so students are not required to provide medical documentation of illness. Instead, you will be responsible for reporting directly to me the reasons for all absences including but not limited to illness or emergency, a requirement that you quarantine or isolate, or the need to take care for a family member. Attendance records will be kept for each class. There will be **3** allowed absences; **4** or more absences will negatively affect your grade. After **8** absences a student will be dropped and earn a failing grade.

- **Active participation in class discussions (15% of grade)**

Whatever you get out of this seminar is directly related to how much you put into it. Please prepare for class by reading the assignment and formulate questions and comments that can help us to engage in meaningful discussion. You cannot participate in seminar if you are not present. Quality counts more than quantity, but you must speak up. If you are worried about participation, please meet with me (during office hours, or by email or zoom) as soon as possible to strategize.

- **Six 2-page essays (7.5% each, or 45% of grade)**

Almost every other week you will write a short essay in response to questions that relate to the reading assigned for that week. These six essays will require that you analyze the text closely, formulate an interpretation, and express it concisely in 2 pages. *Late essays are not accepted* since the topic will be discussed in class.

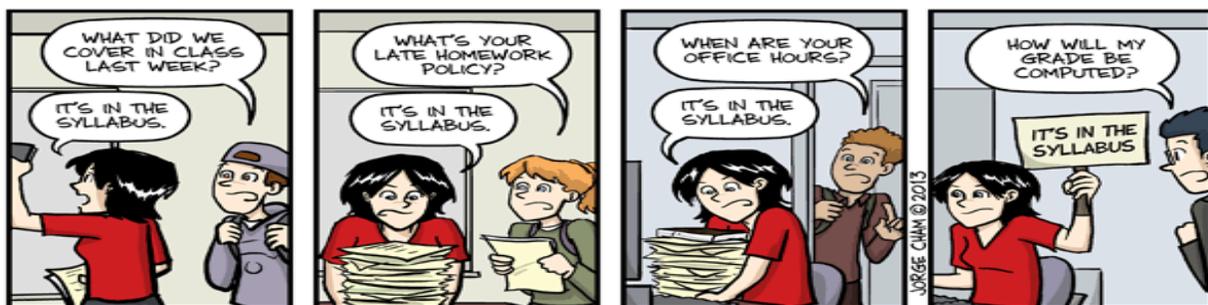
- **2 Quizzes on 2/11 and 3/25 (5% each, or 10% of grade)** that will be taken in class.

- **Midterm Exam and Final Exam (15% each for 30% of grade)** that will be taken online.

The quizzes and exams will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions and the explanation of key passages from primary sources. Review sheets will be provided beforehand and you will be allowed to consult your notes, books, and assigned articles. If you miss a quiz or exam and provide a documented excuse, I do give makeup tests but they are harder than the original test; an unexcused missed quiz or exam counts as a **0**.

Grading Scale

A = 100-93 A- = 92-90 B+ = 89-87 B = 86-83 B- = 82-80 C+ = 79-77
C = 76-73 C- = 72-70 D+ = 69-67 D = 66-63 D- = 62-60 F = 59-below



IT'S IN THE SYLLABUS

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- **Academic Integrity**

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when suspected, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved. Incidents where the instructor determines the student's action are related more to misunderstanding and confusion will be handled by me as the instructor. Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a **XXF grade** in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This status indicator will appear on the student's transcript for two years. If you are unfamiliar with the **Honor Code** or what **plagiarism** is, please click on the links.

- **Course Resources**

I encourage you to utilize the academic support services offered by the **Center for Student Learning** and the **Writing Lab** for assistance in study strategies and essay writing consultation. Students of all abilities have become more successful using these programs throughout their academic career and the services are available to you at no additional cost. For more information on the Center for Student Learning call **843.953.5635**. Here is a link for help on writing an **essay for Religious Studies**.

- **Universal Learning and SNAP program**

I am committed to the principle of universal learning. This means that our classroom, our virtual spaces, our practices and our interactions be as inclusive as possible. Mutual respect, civility, and the ability to listen carefully are crucial to universal learning. Any student eligible for or needing accommodations because of a disability is requested to speak with me during the first two weeks of class or as soon as the student has been approved for services so that reasonable accommodations can be made. For more information on the SNAP program, see: <http://disabilityservices.cofc.edu> or **843.953.1431**.

- **Religious Observances and Accommodation**

The College of Charleston community is enriched by students of many faiths that have various religious observances, practices, and beliefs. Religious observances will be accommodated. If you need to be absent for any given class for a specific observance, please submit requests in writing to me by the end of the second week of class (January 21) so we can agree upon accommodations.

- **Recording of Classes** (via Zoom)

Class sessions will be recorded via video recording. These recordings will be made available only to students who cannot attend due to COVID-19 issues, or a personal emergency, not to anyone who skips class. By attending and remaining in this class, the student consents to being recorded. Recorded sessions are for instructional use only and may not be shared with anyone not enrolled in the class.

- **Learning Format: In-person class that Meets Face-to-Face with Zoom option for health reasons**

Our class will **meet in person on Tuesday & Thursday at 9:25 in Berry 103**, but a zoom option is available for anyone who is in isolation or in quarantine. If you must use the Zoom option, it is **imperative** that you read all the required texts for each lesson, so that you will be prepared to engage in the discussion. Before the **drop/add deadline** on **1/20**, students should decide whether the course plan described here matches their own circumstance.

If in-person classes are suspended due to extreme weather or the health pandemic, I will announce it on OAKS and send to your CofC email a detailed plan for the change of modality to ensure continuity of learning. All students must have access to a computer equipped with a web camera, microphone, and internet access.

Seminar Schedule: Topics, Reading and Writing Assignments

The following schedule of topics and the list of readings may change, but the writing assignments are due in class on the day designated. **ER#1** refers to the first Electronic Readings assignment found on OAKS.



Preview: *Nan-in, a Zen master during the Meiji era (1868-1912), received a college student who came to inquire about Zen. Nan-in served tea. He poured his visitor's cup full, then kept on pouring. The student watched the overflow until he could no longer restrain himself. "It's full! No more will go in!"*

"Like this cup," Nan-in replied, "you are full of your own opinions and speculations. How can I show you Zen unless you first empty your cup?"

Studying Asian Religions in the Secular Academy: Bracketing, Empathy, & Social Constructions

1/12 Introduction: What is "religion?" How do we "empty our cups" and study Asian religions?

1/14 The Social Construction of Reality and Religion: *The Truman Show* as a Modern Myth (ER#0-2: "The Blind Men & the Elephant," "Interpreting the Sacred," "The Meaning of *The Truman Show*") Excerpts from *The Truman Show* (1998) will be shown in class

The Classical Hindu Worldview: Illusion and Reality

1/19 A Hindu Story about a Hunter and a Sage: What Does the Sage See? (ER#3-4: "Vedanta—Shankara;" & "Other Scholars Myths: The Hunter and the Sage")

1/21 Getting Inside the Heads of Hindus: What is Real and What is Illusory? (ER#5: "The Indian Life")

Essay #1: "The Indian Life" tells the story of how Dasa comes to understand the meaning of "illusion" (*maya*), after he repeatedly encounters a Yogi meditating in a forest. Very few words are ever exchanged between Dasa and the Yogi. *How does the Yogi teach Dasa about the meaning of "Maya! Maya!" Which aspects of Dasa's life were "real" and which were "illusory?" When does Dasa suspect that even his waking experiences seem as unreal as a dream?*

The Hindu Social World: Caste, Purity & Pollution, and Rites of Passage

- 1/26 The Order of the Hindu Universe: Dharma, Social Hierarchy, Purity & Pollution (ER#6-7: “Hindu Ways of Being Religious;” “That You Are”)
- 1/28 Hindu Rites of Passage: Marrying and Burying, Living with the Dead (ER#8: “Selections on Marriage; How to Perform a Funeral Sacrifice;” *Samskara*, pp. 1-64)
- 2/2 Ascetic Withdrawal or Sensual Immersion? Interpreting *Samskara* (*Samskara*, pp. 65-138)
Essay #2: In Part III of *Samskara*, the anguished Brahmin leader Praneshacharya undergoes a personal transformation (*samskara*) as he aimlessly travels through forest and village fair, slowly awakening to a new sense of self and the world. *What tests does Praneshacharya undergo? What realizations does he arrive at regarding duty (Dharma) and individual choice? What decision does he feel that he must make?*

The Founders of Jainism and Buddhism: Stories of Renunciation



Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha

Mahavira, founder of Jainism

- 2/4 Jain Models of Renunciation: The Story of Mahavira and a Modern Monk (ER#9-10 “Jainism” and “Chapters 1& 2: The Monk’s Story”)
- 2/9 Buddhist Models of Renunciation: The Story of Siddhartha and a Jealous Ascetic (ER#11-12: “The Early Life of the Buddha” and “Prince of the Ascetics”) **Quiz #1**

The Buddha’s Teachings and the Practice of Meditation

- 2/11 The Buddha’s First Sermons and the Establishment of the Sangha (ER#13-14: “Death of Gotama Buddha” and “Vinaya Vignettes”) Film: *Footsteps of the Buddha*
- 2/16 Buddhist Meditation: Process of Purification and its Purpose (ER#15-16: “Buddhist Meditation;” “*The Path of Purification*”)
Essay #3: According to popular conceptions, meditation is a means to achieve inner peace, tranquility, and happiness. Is this confirmed by the selections from *The Path of Purification* on Buddhist meditation?

The Development of Mahayana Buddhism in India and China

Manjushri asked the Buddha: "Blessed One, by how many names have you turned the wheel of the Dharma in the world?" The Buddha said: "I have called myself empty, being, suchness, dharmata, permanence, impermanence, god, demon, mantra, and great mantra. In such a way, by means of hundreds of thousands of names, I have benefitted living beings." When the meaning of this is fully grasped, how can there be discord between different schools of thought?

- 2/18 Mahayana Buddhism: The Ethics of a Bodhisattva
(ER#17: "Parable of the Lost Son," "Heart Sutra," "The Goddess")
- 2/23 Mahayana Buddhism and Non-Dualism: Are Gender Differences Real?
(ER#18: "Do Innate Female Traits and Characteristics Exist?")
- 2/25 **Midterm Exam** on Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism
(No reading, study Review Sheet for test)

3/2-4 **Reading days—no classes!**

Understanding the Way (*Dao*) in Ancient China

- 3/9 Chinese Cosmology and Spirits:
Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors
(ER#19: "The Spirits of Chinese Religion")
- 3/11 Confucian Ethics: Is Benevolence Innate in Humanity?
Or is it cultivated?
(ER#20: Selections from *Mencius*)
- 3/16 Chinese Buddhist Family Values:
The Tale of a Monk who Rescues His Mother from Hell
(ER#21: "Maudgalyayana")
Essay#4: *What motivates Maudgalyayana (Mulian in Chinese) to rescue his mother from hell? What might the purpose of this story be? How does this story advance Buddhist doctrinal and ideological claims for its Chinese audience?*



Three Masters: Buddha, Confucius, Laozi

Buddhist and Daoist Hermits in the Mountains

Zhuangzi (Chapter 11): "Let your mind be still and pure. If you want to live forever, don't exhaust your body or its vitality. Your eyes should see nothing. Your ears should hear nothing. Your mind should know nothing. Let your spirit take care of your body, and your body will last forever. Concentrate on the inside. Ignore the outside. Knowledge will only harm you."

- 3/18 Tales of Daoist Hermits and Mountain Sages: How the Way is One (or Won)
(*Road to Heaven: Encounters with Chinese Hermits* pp. pp. 1-59, 208-220)
Film: *Amongst White Clouds: Hermits of China's Zhongnan Mountains*, pt. I
- 3/23 Buddhist Hermits: The Bliss of Chopping Wood, Carrying Water, and Living in Mountain Caves
(*Road to Heaven* pp. pp. 87-148) Film: *Amongst White Clouds*, pt. II
- 3/25 American Dream Trippers: Global Daoism in China Today
(ER#22: "The Subject" and "Cosmic Orgasms") **Quiz #2 on Chinese Religions**

Shinto, Buddhist & Christian Interactions in Japan

The Proclamation on the Expulsion of Christian Padres (1614): “Those Christian padres and their followers oppose the laws of the government. They disparage the Ways of the Gods and mock the True Dharma. They dispense with righteousness and defile virtue. Following the example of a condemned criminal [Jesus], they become excited and run to join him. They direct worship and rituals toward him. This example of martyrdom they take to be the consummation of their sect. If this is not heresy, then what is? They are truly the enemies of the gods and Buddhas.

3/30 Japanese Myths of Origins: Purity & Pollution and Gender Issues
(ER#23: “Shinto Mythology;” begin *Silence*)

4/1 Christian Conversion and Apostasy in Japan: “Deus Destroyed” by a Zen Critic
(ER#24: “Deus Destroyed;” *Silence*) Film: *Silence*, pt. I



Japanese Christians Crucified in a scene from Silence (dir. by Martin Scorsese, 2016)

4/6 The Persecution of Christians in Japan: Does Apostasy Save or Destroy Rodrigues?
(Finish *Silence*) Film: *Silence*, pt. II

Essay #5: *In Silence* is Rodrigues saved or damned by his apostasy when he steps on the fumi? Why does Rodrigues feel the sudden “onrush of joy” mentioned at the end of Chapter 10? Your essay should address the complex issue of his motivation and his commitment to the Church as a Catholic.

The Life and Spiritual Journey of a Modern Japanese Woman

Satomi Myodo: “The vision vanished; the voice ceased. But the psychological effect continued vividly, guiding me forcibly and casting a definite hue over every aspect of my daily life. My mind was abnormally strained. I felt a thrill of adventure in embracing this ‘sacred mystery,’ as if I were soaring to the edge of a distant, towering mountain. The ‘sacred mystery’ was the ‘vow of the kami,’ which I must not betray. I felt that if so much as one word of this leaked out, the demonic powers would instantly profit, the vow would lose all efficacy, and I would plunge headlong into hell!” Journey in Search of the Way p. 14.

4/8 Satomi’s Spiritual Search: Spirit Possession, Hallucinations, and a Breakdown
(*Journey in Search of the Way*, 3-50; optional: 163-186)

4/13 Satomi’s Satori and Return “Home” to Zen
(*Journey in Search of the Way*, 51-65; 71-111; 198-206) For Essay Topic#6, see next page —>

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Essay #6: *Satomi Myodo records her impassioned search for enlightenment and her intense personal religious experiences. She experiments with various religious practices and has several dramatic spiritual experiences. However, she fails to find any lasting satisfaction until she meets her Zen master and practices Zen. What does she gain from her Zen practice? How does she re-evaluate her spiritual quest?*

Technology's Impact on Death and Religion in Japan Today

Noda Junko, psychiatrist: *“Even when the body is dead, the soul remains in each organ of the body for quite a while, so in brain death, when the body is still warm, I don't find it possible to think about taking organs out. Anyway, I don't think we really understand what is going on in the brain at death, and a death that can only be understood by a doctor isn't death as far as I am concerned. The distance between doctors and patients is growing greater because of technology, and I think this causes a lot of distrust.”*

4/15 Japanese Debates Over Brain Death and Organ Transplants
(ER#25: “Preamble” and “Technology as Other”)

4/20 Buddhist Rites to Memorialize the Spirits of Aborted Fetuses
(ER#26-27: “Indebtedness and Comfort” and “The Cult of Jizo”) Film: *Departures*, pt. I



4/22 The Ritual Purification of Death: Remembering the Dead, Learning to Love, Feeling Filial
(ER#28: Selections from *Coffinman*). Film: *Departures*, pt. II

Lunyu/Analects 1.1: *The Master Confucius said, “Studying, and from time to time going over what you’ve learned—that’s enjoyable, isn’t it?”*

4/27 Final Exam online from 8-10 am

Bibliography for ER#1-28 articles on OAKS

1. William Paden, “Preface” and “Interpretive Frames,” from *Interpreting the Sacred: Ways of Viewing Religion*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992, ix-13.
2. Ken Sanes, “The Meaning of *The Truman Show*” 6 pp. Used with the author’s permission from: <http://www.transparencynow.com/truman.htm>
3. “Vedanta” and “Shankara’s *Crest Jewel of Discrimination*,” from *Ways of Being Religious*, ed. by Gary E. Kessler, Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing, 2000, pp. 143-145.
4. Wendy Doniger O’Flaherty, “Other Scholars’ Myths: The Hunter and the Sage” from *Other Peoples’ Myths: The Cave of Echoes* New York: Macmillan, 1988, pp. 7-24.
5. Herman Hesse, “The Indian Life,” from *Magister Ludi* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co.), pp. 468-502

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6. Gary E. Kessler, "Hindu Ways of Being Religious," from *Ways of Being Religious* (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing, 2000), pp. 103-111.
7. "Stages of Life for a Twice-Born Man," "The Life of Women," "The Creation of the Caste System," and "The Four Castes," in *Anthology of World Scriptures*, ed. by Robert E. Van Voorst, 3rd Edition, Wadsworth Publishers, 2000, pp. 36-38, 40-44.
8. Wendy Doniger O' Flaherty ed., "Marriage 5.3-5.3.4" and "How to Perform a Funeral Sacrifice 5.5.4-5.5.5" *Textual Sources for the Study of Hinduism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 101-105; 125-129.
9. "Jainism" and "The Life of Mahavira" from *Anthology of Asian Scriptures*, ed. by Robert E. Van Voorst, 3rd Edition (Wadsworth: 2001), pp. 117-122.
10. Gita Mehta, "Chapters 1& 2: The Monk's Story," *A River Sutra* (New York, Vintage Books), 1-41.
11. Zeff Bjerken, "The Early Life of the Buddha."
12. Charles Johnson, "Prince of the Ascetics" from his *Taming the Ox: Buddhist Stories and Reflections on Politics, Race, Culture, and Spiritual Practice*. Boston: Shambhala: 2014, pp. 131-140.
13. "Death of Gotama Buddha," "Sermon on the Four Noble Truths," "Founding the Order," "Rules of Defeat," "Rules Requiring Formal Meetings," and "The Order of Nuns" from *Anthology of World Scriptures*, ed. by Robert E. Van Voorst, 3rd Edition, pp. 82-85; 92-98.
14. Kate Wheeler, "Vinaya Vignettes, or Why the Buddha Had to Make Some Rules," *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review* III.4 (Summer 1994), pp. 84-89.
15. Steven Young, "Buddhist Meditation," Appendix to *The Buddhist Religion: A Historical Introduction*, 3rd ed., ed. by R. H. Robinson and Willard L. Johnson. Wadsworth, 1982, pp. 226-235.
16. Buddhaghosa, selections from *Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)*, trans. by E. Conze in *Buddhist Meditation*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1956, pp. 11-17; 78-88; 103-109; 126-131; 162-165.
17. "Parable of the Lost Son," and "Heart Sutra," and "The Goddess" from *Ways of Being Religious*, ed. by Gary E. Kessler. Mountain View: Mayfield Pub. Co., 2000, pp. 188-192; 196-202.
18. Rita M. Gross, "Do Innate Female Traits and Characteristics Exist?" in *Buddhism After Patriarchy*. SUNY Press, 1993, pp. 55-77.
19. Stephen F. Teiser, "Introduction: The Spirits of Chinese Religion," *Religions of China in Practice*, ed. by Donald S. Lopez, Jr. Princeton University Press, 1996, pp. 3-7; 21-36.
20. Bryan W. Van Noorden, *Mengzi* in *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*, ed. by P. J. Ivanhoe and Bryan Van Noorden. New York: Seven Bridges Press, 2001, pp. 113-119; 125-126; 140-147.
21. Victor H. Mair, "Maudgalyayana" from *Tun-huang Popular Narratives*. London: Cambridge University Press, pp. 87-121.
22. Elijah Siegler and David A. Palmer, *Dream Trippers: Global Daoism and the Predicament of Modern Spirituality*. University of Chicago, 2017, pp. 1-21, 251-263
23. Luis Gómez, "Shinto Mythology," unpublished mss. used with permission, pp. 1-18.
24. Fabian Fukun, "Deus Destroyed" in *Deus Destroyed: The Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan* translated by George Ellison. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1973, pp. 259-260; 272-284.
25. Margaret Lock, "Preamble: Accidental Death" and "Technology as Other: Japanese Modernity and Technology" and "Social Death and Situated Departure" from her *Twice Dead: Organ Transplants and the Reinvention of Death* Berkeley: UC Press, 2002, pp. 1-13, 149-164, 191-207.
26. Hoshino Eiki and Takeda Doshō, "Indebtedness and Comfort: The Undercurrents of *Mizuko Kuyo* in Contemporary Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 14/4, pp. 305-320.
27. William LaFleur, "The Cult of Jizo: Abortion Practices in Japan and What They Can Teach the West," in *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review* IV.4 (Summer 1995), pp. 41-44.
28. Shinmon Aoki, *Coffinman: Journal of a Buddhist Mortician*. Translated by Wayne Yokoyama. Berkeley: Buddhist Education Center, 2002, pp. vii-x; 3-19; 25-29; 39-45; 55-63; 111-131.

Terms for the Study of Asian Religions

Note: These are technical terms that you must know in order to do well on the quizzes and exams. Keep this list handy as you read the assignments and write down their definitions and meanings.

Terms used in the Comparative Study of Religions

Empathy, bracketing, Hunter/Sage model, social construction of reality, legitimation
Cultural relativism, monism, non-dualism, hagiography, demythologization, cosmology
Eremitic, cenobitic, laity, ordination ritual, ascetic misogyny, soteriological inclusiveness
Institutional androcentrism, soteriological androgyny, patriarchal and patrilineal
Orthopraxy, purity vs. pollution, cosmology, the “magic of charisma,” syncretism, polemic
Sinicization, apocryphal, antinomian, ritual as performance, ritual construction of identity

Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism in India

Upanishads, reincarnation, samsara, karma, maya, yoga, Brahman = Atman, guru, moksha
Hindu/Hinduism, Veda, Four Castes (Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra), twice-born castes
Laws of Manu, Four Stages of Life, Four Aims of Life, Dharma vs. Moksha as Hindu ideals
Shramana, Mahavira, Fordmaker, ahimsa, kevala, Jina
Siddhartha, Gautama, Shakyamuni, bodhisattva, Four Sights, Mara
Four Noble Truths, Three Marks of Existence, Three Afflictions, No-self, Middle Way, Nirvana
Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, merit-making rituals, karmic causality
Shamatha, vipashyana, dhyana, supernatural powers, *Path of Purity*
Hinayana, Mahayana, Bodhisattva vow, emptiness, skillful means, *Heart Sutra*
Vinaya, Mahapajapati, *Prajnaparamita*, Shariputra vs. goddess

Chinese Religions

“Three Teachings,” Dao, chi/qi, Heaven (Tien), sympathetic resonance, yin-yang, filial piety
Kongzi/Confucius, Mengzi/Mencius, Literati (*ru*), *jen/ren*, *li*, Five Relationships
Mulian, Ghost Festival, Sangha, postulant, field of merit, Inexhaustible Treasury
Six rebirth realms, Avici hell, purgatory, supernatural bureaucracy
Lao zi/Lao tzu, Dao as “unhewn log” & “embryonic fetus,” shamanism, mountain hermit tradition

Japanese Religions

Kirishitan, Francis Xavier, Fabian Fucan, Shimabara rebellion, fumie, apostasy, Deus, Dainichi
Shinto, sincerity, miko, spirit medium, spirit possession as catharsis, kami, cold water asceticism
“Recognition” & “enactment” models, Rinzai vs Soto Zen, *mu* koan, satori, 7th-8th Consciousness
Meiji restoration, “Born Shinto, Die Buddhist,” O-Bon, Pure Land Buddhism, Amida, nembutsu
Jizo, mizuko kuyo, muenrei vs. uenrei, organ harvesting, kitsch

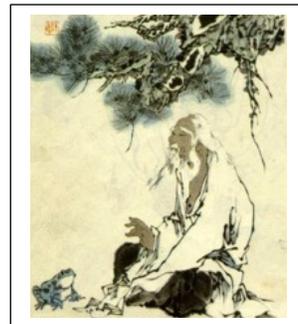
But keep in mind... the profound words of Daoist Master Zhuangzi:

A rabbit-snare is for catching rabbits; once you've caught the rabbit, you can forget about the snare.

A fish trap is for catching fish; once you've caught the fish, you can forget about the trap.

Words are for catching ideas; once you've caught the idea, you can forget about the words.

*Where can I find a person who knows how to forget about words so that
I can have a few words with him?*



HONS 240.01: Special Topics in Value & Tradition in Asian Civilization
T/R 9:25-10:40 am @ Berry 103 **Spring 2021**

About Me...

I grew up on the west coast in beautiful Santa Barbara California, went to Reed College in Portland Oregon (where I majored in religion), earned a MA degree in religious studies at UC Santa Barbara, before I moved to Ann Arbor Michigan to pursue degrees in Buddhist Studies (I have a PhD in B.S.!). Since graduating from college, I have spent many years living in Buddhist monasteries and traveling throughout India, especially in the Himalayas of North India. Over the past ten years I have led CofC students to Northern India to study how the religions of Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism are adapting to modernity and globalization. When not at work, I enjoy watching sports (especially CofC basketball games—go Cougs!), biking, canoeing, and hiking in the mountains, and going on long road trips in the South, in the Pacific Northwest, and in western Canada.

I joined the Department of Religious Studies at CofC in 1999, when I was hired to teach courses in Asian religions (Religion and Society in India and Tibet, Buddhist and Hindu Traditions, Religions of China and Japan, Sacred Texts of the East, Tibetan Buddhism). But I also teach thematic courses like this one on “Religion, Art & Culture,” “Religion and Globalization,” and “Religion and Violence.”

Learning about different religions should be an intellectual adventure that engages the imagination, and I have chosen reading material and films that I hope you will find fascinating. I expect students to come prepared and make meaningful contributions to our class discussions, whether those take place in class or on Zoom. If you are experiencing challenges that make it difficult for you to do so, I encourage you to meet with me privately (in person or on zoom) so that we can work together to develop a solution.



Introducing CofC students to the Buddhist Wheel of Life in Ladakh, North India, 2016