

**HONORS 381.001: Value and Tradition in Asian Religions**  
**Spring 2017**                      **M-W 2:00-3:15 in MYBK 320**

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Office: RELS building @4 Glebe St. room 202  
Office hours: M/T/W 9:20-10:40 and by appt

**Course Description**

This course will explore the religious visions, values, and practices by which people from India, China and Japan have understood their life experiences. One goal of this course is for you to achieve an accurate understanding of the religious traditions that are practiced in India, China, and Japan on those societies' own terms, and to evaluate those traditions in a manner that is both sympathetic and properly critical. We will consider representative material drawn from Hinduism, 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 and reality; meditation and religious experience; pilgrimage and spiritual journeys; death, the afterlife, and ancestor worship; religion's role in reinforcing or critiquing social and gender hierarchies; religion and sexuality; monasticism, asceticism, and the hermit's life; the transformation of foreign traditions to fit native worldviews; and the effects of globalization on religions today. Our investigation of these themes will draw upon interdisciplinary methods used in the humanities and social sciences. We will also watch a number of contemporary films that explore the conflicts between tradition and modernity in contemporary Asian cultures.

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 down to the present day. 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 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 analyze how the values of Asian religions are represented and interpreted;
- to examine how religious traditions are multi-dimensional phenomena composed of their doctrines, myths, ethics, rituals, experiences, social institutions, and material symbols;
- to demonstrate effective writing skills with the ability to craft an argument in defense of a thesis statement using and analyzing supporting evidence from primary and secondary sources.

**Required Texts** are all available at the College of Charleston's Barnes & Noble Bookstore:

- Jonah Blank, *Arrow of the Blue-Skinned God: Retracing the Ramayana through India* \$18.00
- Bill Porter, *Road to Heaven: Encounters with Chinese Hermits*, \$14.95
- Shusaku Endo, *Silence*. 2016 edition, \$16.00
- Satomi Myodo, *Journey in Search of the Way: The Spiritual Autobiography of Satomi Myodo* \$31.95
- Shinmon Aoki, *Coffinman: Journal of a Buddhist Mortician*, \$14.95

**Recommended**--This book is out of print so it will be made available as a pdf, but used copies can be purchased

- Ariel Glucklich, *Climbing Chamundi Hill: 1001 Steps with a Storyteller and a Reluctant Pilgrim*

There are also required **Electronic Readings (ER#0-24)**, pdf of articles, stories, and selections from scriptures, available on **OAKS** under **HONS 381**, 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).

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**Course Requirements**

There is no course prerequisite for this HONS class or any knowledge presumed about Asian cultures and religions, but it has as a requirement the desire to read challenging and unusual materials and to engage in conversation about these readings. The Asian literary works assigned will enable you to empathize with the foreign “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. Here are the requirements and grading schema:

- **Active participation in seminar discussion and regular attendance in class (10% of grade)**  
Whatever you get out of this course is directly related to how much you put into it. Asking questions and offering your own ideas and views during seminar discussions are a crucial part of this course. Please come to class with ideas to share and questions that can help our class engage in meaningful discussion. A number of documentary and Asian feature films will be shown in class, as this is the best substitute for a direct cultural experience of Asian religions. The films too will serve as a basis for discussion and you will be expected to view them critically as carefully crafted images that are used to communicate a particular point of view.  
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**, you will be **dropped** from the class. If you have excused absences (illness, emergency) please contact the Undergraduate Dean’s Office to document the reason for your absence. You are responsible for making up any absences; please get any notes on missed lectures from classmates.
- **10 Short 2-page Papers (5% each, or 50% of final grade)**  
Almost each week you will write a short essay in response to questions that relate to the reading assigned for that week. These essays will require that you analyze the text closely, formulate an interpretation, and express it concisely in 2 pages. The essays are due in class on the day when we will discuss the assigned topic. *Late essays are not accepted* since the topic will be discussed in class.
- **Two tests on 3/1 and 3/29 (12.5% and 7.5% each, or 20% of final grade)**
- **Final Exam on 5/1 (20% of final grade)**  
The two tests and the final exam will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions, and the identification and explanation of key passages from primary sources and scriptures. The final exam will also include essay questions that will require you to synthesize the themes of the course and compare and contrast the various Asian religious traditions. Review sheets will be provided beforehand. If you miss a test or exam and provide a documented excuse, I do give makeup tests but they are harder than the original test; an unexcused missed test or exam counts as a **0**.

<b>Grading Scale</b>	A	93-96	(4.0)	B-	79-81	(2.7)	D+	66-68	(1.3)	
	A-	89-92	(3.7)	C+	76-78	(2.3)	D	62-65	(1.0)	
	B+	86-88	(3.3)	C	72-75	(2.0)	D-	59-61	(.70)	
	A+	97-100	(4.0)	B	82-85	(3.0)	C-	69-71	(1.7)	F

**Academic Integrity:** There is a zero-tolerance policy toward plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty in this course. This means that anyone caught taking credit for work that is not his or her own, or cheating in any other way, will receive a failing grade for the entire course. A student found responsible for academic dishonesty will receive a **XF grade** in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty.

**SNAP students:** If you have a disability that qualifies you for academic accommodation, please present a letter to me from the Center for Disability Services at the beginning of the semester. For more information on the SNAP program, see: <http://disabilityservices.cofc.edu>

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**Seminar Topics and Reading Assignments**

The following schedule of topics and the list of readings is provisional, but the writing assignments are due in class on the day designated. The following abbreviation will be used: **ER#1** refers to the first Electronic Reading assignment found on OAKS.

**Studying Religion in the Secular Academy: Bracketing, Empathy, and Interpretive Frames**

**Preview:** *Nan-in, a Japanese 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?"*

- 1/11 Introduction: What is "religion?" How do we "empty our cups" and study Asian religions?
- 1/16 **No class**-Martin Luther King Day  
(ER#0: "I Have a Dream") What allusions to religion do you find in MLK's famous speech? What is his vision of the relationship between religion and social justice?
- 1/18 The Social Construction of Reality and Religion: *The Truman Show* as a Modern Myth  
(ER#1-3: "An Elephant in the Dark;" "Interpreting the Sacred;" & "The Meaning of *The Truman Show*") Excerpts from *The Truman Show* (1998) will be showed in class
- 1/23 **The Classical Hindu Worldview: Dreams, Illusions, and Reality**  
A Hindu Story about a Hunter and a Sage: What does the Sage See?  
(ER#4-5: "Vedanta—Shankara;" & "Other Scholars' Myths: The Hunter and the Sage")  
**Assignment #1:** In ER#5 the author Wendy Doniger presents an Indian myth about a hunter and a sage, and she suggests that this story can be interpreted as a metaphor for scholars of religion. What does she mean by: "The hunting sage is my idea of the right sort of historian of religion?" What critique does she offer of those scholars who study others' myths in order to promote them as "true stories?" Is objectivity a desirable goal for the student of other religions or is it a "myth" that should be abandoned?
- 1/25 Hindu Ethics: Stories about Life & Death, Karma & Rebirth  
(ER#6A: *Climbing Chamundi Hill*: vii-57)
- 1/30 Exploring Illusion & Reality with a Hindu Storyteller  
(ER#6B-C: *Climbing Chamundi Hill*: 57-108; 131-143; 196-246)  
**Assignment #2:** The stories told in this book spiral in cycles, both structurally with stories inside stories, and thematically with theories of karma, death & rebirth, of asceticism & eroticism, samsara & moksha. Explore how this spiraling structure blurs the boundary between fiction & reality, between storyteller & character, and between subjectivity & reality. What profound religious insights does the American "pilgrim" learn about such cycles and his life from the stories told while climbing Chamundi Hill?
- Hindu Social & Ethical Norms: Dharma and Caste, Good vs. Evil**
- 2/1 On Dharma: Doing One's Duty  
(ER#7: Hindu Scriptures on "That You Are," etc.; *Arrow of the Blue-Skinned God*, 1-52)
- 2/6 The Hindu Social Order: Caste Hierarchy and Purity-Pollution Taboos  
(*Arrow of the Blue-Skinned God*, pp. 53-80; 111-139) Film: *Saheri's Choice*
- 2/8 Illusion and Evil in the *Ramayana*  
(*Arrow of the Blue-Skinned God*, pp. 141-200) See next page for assignment #3 →

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**Assignment #3:** Respond to the following statement from Jonah Blank: “How could Rama, the very personification of good, commit an act of evil? How could Ravana, the Lord of the Demons, behave like a true gentleman? These are questions that Indians debate every day, at the dinner table, at the temple, at the tea hut near the village well. Truck-driver philosophers and seamstress theologians come up with many explanations, but never with an answer. There is no answer. Good and evil are not the separate entities we would like to believe.” Is such a view compatible with Hindu notions of Dharma?

**Classical Buddhist Worldview: Siddhartha’s Story and Buddha’s Sermons**

- 2/13 The Buddhist Model of Renunciation and Enlightenment: the Story of Siddhartha (ER#8: “The Early Life of the Buddha”)
- 2/15 The Buddha’s First Sermons and the Establishment of the Sangha (ER#9-10: “Vinaya Vignettes” and “Death of Gotama Buddha”)
- 2/20 Buddhist Meditation: Process of Purification and its Purpose (ER#11-12: “Buddhist Meditation;” *The Path of Purification*) Film: *The Footsteps of the Buddha*  
**Assignment #4:** According to popular conceptions, meditation is a means to achieve peace, tranquility, and happiness. Is this confirmed by the selections about Buddhist meditation by Buddhaghosa from *The Path of Purification* (ER#12)?

**The Development of Mahayana Buddhism in India**

*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?*

- 2/22 Mahayana Buddhism: The Ethics of a Bodhisattva (ER#13: “Parable of the Lost Son;” “Heart Sutra;” “The Goddess”)
- 2/27 Mahayana Non-Dualism and Gender Differences: Are Bodhisattvas Gender Benders? (ER#14: “Do Innate Female Traits and Characteristics Exist?”)
- 3/1 **Test on Indian Religions: Hinduism and Buddhism (12.5% of Grade)**  
(No reading, study Review Sheet for test)

3/6-8 **Spring Break!**

**Understanding the Way (Dao) in Ancient China**

- 3/13 An Overview of China’s “Three Religions” and Popular Religion (ER#15: “Introduction”)
- 3/15 Classical Confucian Ethics: Is Benevolence Innate in Humanity? How is it cultivated? (ER#16: Selections from *Mencius*)  
**Assignment #5:** Mencius uses a number of arguments and analogies to demonstrate that human nature is good. These include a king’s decision to sacrifice a lamb instead of an ox, a child about to fall into a well, and water running downhill. Is Mencius convincing?

**Chinese Daoism & Buddhism: Traveling on the Way**

*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.”*

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- 3/20 Tales of Daoist Hermits and Mountain Sages: How the Way is One (or Won)  
(*Road to Heaven: Encounters with Chinese Hermits* pp. 1-59; 208-220.)  
Film: *Amongst White Clouds: Hermits of China's Zhongnan Mountains* (2005)
- 3/22 Chan Hermits: The Bliss of Chopping Wood, Carrying Water, and Living in Mountain Caves  
(*Road to Heaven* pp. 87-148) Film: *Amongst White Clouds*
- 3/27 Chinese Buddhist Family Values: The Tale of a Monk who Rescues his Mom from Hell  
(ER#17: "Maudgalyayana") Images: Scroll Paintings of the Chinese Netherworld  
**Assignment #6:** What motivates Maudgalyayana (Chinese: Mulien) 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?

**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.*

- 3/29 Christian Conversion and Apostasy in Japan: "Deus Destroyed" by a Zen Critic  
(ER#18: "Deus Destroyed;" begin *Silence*)                      **Test on Chinese Religions** (7.5% of grade)
- 4/3 The Persecution of Christians in Japan: Does Apostasy Save or Destroy Rodrigues?  
(*Silence*)  
**Assignment #7:** 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.

- 4/5 Satomi's Spiritual Search: Spirit Possession, Hallucinations, and a Breakdown  
(*Journey in Search of the Way*, 3-50; 163-186)
- 4/10 Satomi's Satori and Return "Home" to Zen  
(*Journey in Search of the Way*, 51-65; 71-79; 93-111; 198-206)  
**Assignment #8:** 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?

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**The Impact of “New Religions” on Contemporary Japanese Society**

**Satomi Myodo:** *“Alone, acting as my own guide, I tried to revive these phenomena. I was always able to revive this day’s experience at will.... In this manner, I wandered from the True Way and fell to the level of mystery monger, chasing vainly after marvels. Journey in Search of the Way 58*

- 4/12    What’s So New About Japanese “New” Religions?  
(ER#19: “Turning to the Gods in Times of Trouble” and “Spirits, Satellites and a User-Friendly Religion”)     Documentary: *The Yamaguchi Family*
- 4/17    Apocalyptic Violence in a New Age Religion and Nostalgia for an Idealized Homeland  
(ER#20-21: “In the Wake of Aum;” “Mystery, Nostalgia and the Shifting Sands of Continuity”)  
**Assignment #9:** After reviewing ER#20 on the “universe of belief” in Aum Shinrikyo, much of which is rooted in Japanese religious traditions, what key factors can you identify that made Aum Shinrikyo such a violent movement? Do you believe that the followers of Aum were “brainwashed” or psychologically coerced?

**The Ritual Domestication of Death in Japan**

- 4/19    The Ritual Purification of Death  
(*Coffinman* chapters 1-2)  
Film: *Departures* (2008) pt. 1
- 4/24    Remembering the Dead, Learning to Love, Feeling Filial  
(*Coffinman* chapter 3)  
Film: *Departures* pt. 2

**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.”*

- 4/26    Japanese Attitudes Towards Brain Death and Abortion Today  
(ER#22-24: “Response of Buddhism and Shinto to the Issue of Brain Death and Organ Transplant”; “Death and Beyond: Memorializing One’s Mizuko”; “The Cult of Jizo”)  
**Assignment #10:** Describe the traditional Japanese attitude towards brain death and abortion, and the role that ritual plays in determining an individual’s personhood and death. How can these seemingly contradictory attitudes be compatible for the Japanese?

**FINAL EXAM SCHEDULE**

*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?”*

- 5/1     Final Exam on May 1 (Monday) from 12:00-3:00 pm in MYBK 320**

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**Bibliography for Articles ER#0-24 on OAKS**

0. Martin Luther King, Jr. "I Have a Dream" from *Sociology of Religion: A Reader*, ed. by Susanne C. Monahan et al. Prentice Hall, 2001, pp. 404-406.
1. Catherine L. Albanese, "An Elephant in the Dark" in *America Religions and Religion*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. pp. 1-4.
2. William Paden, "Preface" and "Interpretive Frames," from *Interpreting the Sacred: Ways of Viewing Religion*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992, ix-13.
3. Ken Sanes, "The Meaning of *The Truman Show*" 6 pp. Used with the author's permission from:  
<http://www.transparencynow.com/truman.htm>
4. "Vedanta" and "Shankara's *Crest Jewel of Discrimination*," from *Ways of Being Religious*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing, 2000, pp. 143-145.
5. 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.
- 6a. Ariel Glucklich, *Climbing Chamundi Hill: 1001 Steps with a Storyteller and a Reluctant Pilgrim*. HarperOne, 2003, pp. vii-57.
- 6b-c. Ariel Glucklich, *Climbing Chamundi Hill: 1001 Steps with a Storyteller and a Reluctant Pilgrim*, pp. 7-108; 131-143; 196-246.
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, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Wadsworth Publishers, 2000, pp. 36-38, 40-44.
8. Zeff Bjerken, "The Early Life of the Buddha."
9. Kate Wheeler, "Vinaya Vignettes, or Why the Buddha Had to Make Some Rules," *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review* III.4 (Summer 1994), pp. 84-89.
10. "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, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, pp. 82-85; 92-98.
11. Steven (Shinzen) Young, "Buddhist Meditation," Appendix *The Buddhist Religion: A Historical Introduction*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., ed. by R. H. Robinson and Willard L. Johnson. Wadsworth, 1982, pp. 226-235.
12. 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.
13. "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.
14. Rita Gross, "Do Innate Female Traits and Characteristics Exist? Roles and Images of Women in Indian Mahayana Buddhism" and "Gender and Emptiness" from *Buddhism After Patriarchy*. SUNY Press, 1993, pp. 55-77; 173-184.
15. 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. 3-37.
16. Bryan W. Van Noorden, *Mengzi (Mencius)* 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.
17. Victor H. Mair, "Maudgalyayana" from *Tun-huang Popular Narratives*. London: Cambridge University Press, pp. 87-121.
18. Fabian Fukun, "Deus Destroyed" in *Deus Destroyed: The Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan* translated by George Ellison. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973, pp. 259-260; 272-284.
19. Ian Reader, "Turning to the Gods in Times of Trouble" and "Spirits, Satellites, and a User-Friendly Religion," in *Religion in Contemporary Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991, pp. 1-7; 194-233.
20. Shimazono Susumu, "In the Wake of Aum: The Formation and Transformation of Universe of Belief," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, (1995) 22/3-4, pp. 381-415.
21. Ian Reader, "Conclusion: Mystery, Nostalgia, and the Shifting Sands of Continuity," from *Religion in Contemporary Japan*, pp. 234-241.
22. Helen Hardacre, "Response of Buddhism and Shinto to the Issue of Brain Death and Organ Transplant," from *Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics* (1994), 3, pp. 585-601.
23. William LaFleur, "Death and Beyond: Memorializing One's Mizuko," in *The Life of Buddhism*, ed. by Frank Reynolds and Jason Carbine. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000, pp. 196-206.
24. 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.

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**Terms for the Study of Asian Religions**

**Note:** These are technical terms that you must know in order to do well on the tests 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 patrilocal  
Orthopraxy, purity vs. pollution, cosmology, the “magic of charisma,” syncretism, polemic,  
Sinicization, apocryphal, antinomian, ritual as performance, ritual construction of identity

**Hinduism**

*Upanishads*, reincarnation, samsara, karma, maya, yoga, Brahman = Atman, guru, moksha  
Chamundi, didactic stories, frame narrative, merit, transgressive sacrality, Shiva, lingam  
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  
*Ramayana*, Rama, Sita, Ravana, Vishnu, avatara, Sikhism, Khalistan

**Buddhism**

Siddhartha, Gautama, Shakyamuni, bodhisattva, shramana, *Buddhacarita*, 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*, *Pratimoksha Code*, Mahapajapati, *Prajnaparamita*, Shariputra vs. goddess

**Chinese Religions**

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

**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, Rinzaï vs Soto Zen, *mu koan*, satori, 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Consciousness  
Sanbokyodan Zen, Agonshu, “user-friendly” religion, New New religious movements  
Aum Shinrikyo, Asahara Shoku, gedatsu, genze riyaku, guru worship, messianic pessimism  
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 on language:

*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?*