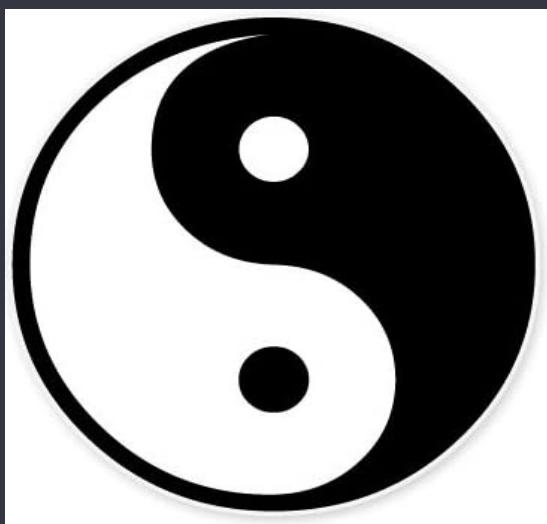
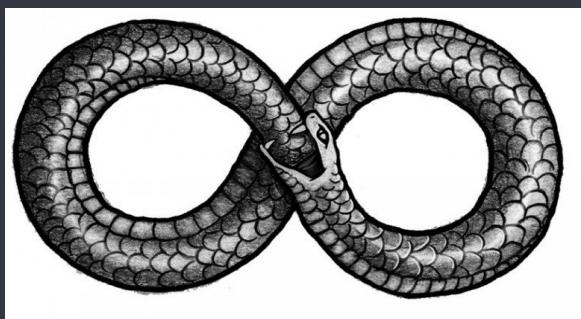


## ILLUSION & REALITY IN ASIAN RELIGIONS

This course will explore how Hindus, Buddhists, Confucians, Daoists, and Christians in South and East Asia have discerned between illusion & reality, death, the afterlife and ancestor worship; practiced yoga and meditation; lived as mountain hermits and in monasteries; and pursued pilgrimages and spiritual quests. We will begin in India some 3,000 years ago, then move to China, and end in modern Japan with religious debates over the topics of abortion and organ transplants.



**HONS240.01**  
**Colloquium**  
**Dr. Zeff Bjerken**  
**SPRING 2023**  
**TR - 1:40-2:55**



Dr. Zeff Bjerken (pronounced *byer-ken*)  
Dept. of Religious Studies

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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 only 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 course will explore the religious visions, values, and practices by which people from India, China, and Japan have understood their life experiences. 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 & 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 & gender hierarchies; 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 down 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;
- to make what seems strange more familiar, and what is familiar seem more strange.

### **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 three SLO will be assessed in the 5<sup>th</sup> essay (due 3/21 worth 7%) that analyzes the ethical, ritual, institutional and ideological dimensions of a Buddhist story of a monk who rescues his mother from hell.

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

- U. R. Anantha Murthy, *Samskara: Rite for a Dead Man*
- Bill Porter, *Road to Heaven: Encounters with Chinese Hermits*
- Satomi Myodo, *Journey in Search of the Way: The Spiritual Autobiography of Satomi Myodo*.
- Shusaku Endo, *Silence*. 2016 edition

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 <http://myportal.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, but it has as a requirement the desire to read challenging 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.

- Regular attendance in class**

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 earn a failing grade. You are responsible for making up any absences; please get any notes on missed lectures from a classmate. One form of disruption occurs when students arrive late or leave early; please don’t leave class unless you absolutely must.

- Active participation in class discussions (10% of grade)**

Whatever you get out of this course 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 if you are not present. Quality counts more than quantity, but you must speak up. If you are worried about participation, meet with me (we can set up an appointment by email for a zoom session) as soon as possible to strategize.

- Eight two-page essays (7% each, or 56% of grade)**

This is a writing intensive seminar. Over the course of the semester, you will write eight short essays in response to questions that relate to the primary source assigned for that week. These essays will require that you analyze the text closely, formulate an argument based on careful interpretation, and express it concisely in 2 pages. *Late essays are not accepted* since the topic will be discussed in class.

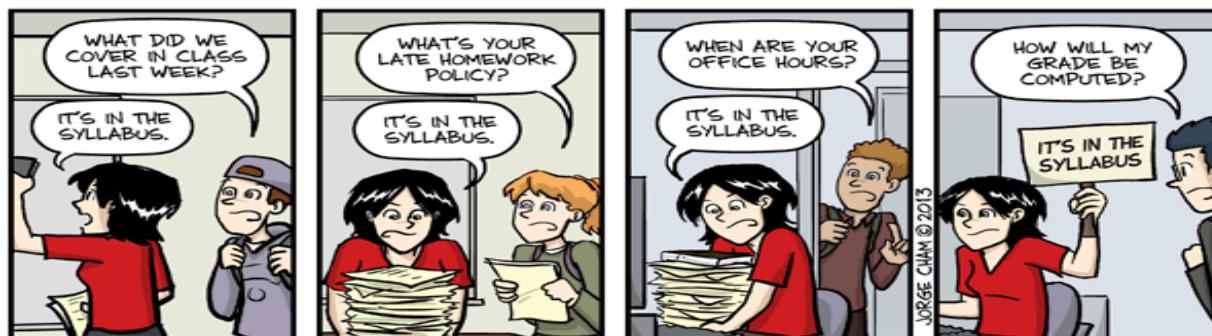
- Two Quizzes on 2/14 and 3/28 (4.5% each, or 9% of grade)**

- Midterm Exam on 3/2 and Final Exam on 5/2 (12.5% each for 25% of grade)**

The quizzes and exams will consist of multiple choice & short answer questions and the interpretation of key passages from primary sources and stories. You are allowed to use your notes from class and on the assigned readings during quizzes and exams. Review sheets/study guides will be provided. If you miss a quiz or exam and provide a documented excuse **beforehand**, I do give makeup tests, but they are harder than the original test; an unexcused missed test 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**

*This message brought to you by every instructor that ever lived.*

[WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM](http://WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM)

### **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 email 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 an email to me by the end of the second week of class (January 20) so we can agree upon accommodations.

### **Learning Format: Hybrid Class that meets first on Zoom and then Face-to-Face in MYBK 320**

Due to my recent accident and current lack of mobility, this class will include a variety of online and technology enhanced components to reinforce continuity of learning for all enrolled students. Before the **drop/add deadline** on **1/18**, students should decide whether the course plan described here matches their own circumstance and interests. Our class will meet synchronously on zoom on Tuesdays and Thursdays from **1:40-2:55 pm** for the first 6-7 weeks (the zoom link is on OAKS), or until I can use crutches to get to MYBK 320 for in-class session. I may supplement our zoom classes with some VoiceThread lectures. We will meet **twice a week in MYBK 320 in face-to-face format** for classes after spring break.

If in-person classes are suspended due to extreme weather or the health pandemic, I will announce on OAKS and by your CofC email a detailed plan for a change of modality to ensure continuity of learning. All students must have access to a computer equipped with a web camera, microphone, & internet access. Since we neither know the day nor the hour when inclement weather will strike, the first thing to say is be prepared and stay safe. (My accident occurred here in Charleston during the winter cold wave when the temperature was 18 degrees, and I didn't take proper safety precautions, which landed me in MUSC hospital and Roper Rehab.) As far as our class is concerned, get your books ASAP so that you have them. If and when classes are canceled or rescheduled, please pay close attention to your **g.cofc.edu email**.

But how should **we behave online?** What is the proper "Netiquette?"

**Here are some Netiquette Protocols for our course**

Because online communication often lacks the body language and nonverbal cues we're used to in a normal face-to-face course, it is important to set some expectations for each other.

- Be patient and forgiving. Go easy on each other. We all make mistakes. We're learning. I have had some training in online course delivery, but there will be some glitches.
- Be kind. Treat each other with the full respect and dignity each of you deserve.
- Be ethical. Racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, and/or any language or behavior that dehumanizes or degrades others will not be tolerated. Period.
- Be professional. Even if we're online, this is an HONS class and we should all act honorably.
- Cite your sources. When you're building off or borrowing from others' ideas, give them the credit they deserve, whether it is from a reading or a classmate.
- Take the time to learn the OAKS, Zoom, and VoiceThread. If you don't know how to do something, use the [CofC tutorials here](#) to teach yourself before you ask.
- Use proper capitalization/punctuation when writing online and keep in mind how people will read what you write. For example, ALL CAPS IS LIKE YELLING!!!
- When you attend a Zoom session for our course (whether it is an office hours session with me or a scheduled online session as a class), please try to call or login from a quiet place where you won't be disturbed, dress appropriately, and be aware of your surroundings.



A Hindu Goddess to ward off Covid-19

### Seminar Topics and Reading Assignments

The following schedule of topics and the list of readings is provisional. The following abbreviation will be used: **ER#1** refers to the first Electronic Reading assignment found on OAKS. See p.

**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?"*



### Studying Religion in College: Bracketing, Empathy, and Social Constructions

- 1/12 Introduction: What is “religion?” How do we “empty our cups” and study Asian religions?
- 1/17 The Social Construction of Reality & Religion: What Can Elephants Teach Us about Religion?  
(ER#0-3: “The Blind Men & the Elephant;” “Buddhism & Elephants;” “Interpreting the Sacred;” optional: “The Meaning of *The Truman Show*”) Clips from *The Truman Show* may be shown
- 1/19 A Hindu Story about a Hunter and a Sage: What does the Sage See?  
(ER#4-5: “Vedanta & Shankara” & “The Hunter and the Sage”)  
**Essay#1:** In ER#5 Wendy Doniger O’Flaherty 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?*

### The Classical Hindu Worldview: Illusion and Reality, Karma, Rebirth and Moksha

*“Maya! Maya!” What did it signify? He had already known and half-sensed the significance of the word, and the manner in which the old man had uttered it had half betrayed its meaning. Maya—illusion.... Dasa’s life and the lives of all men were, in the eyes of this old Yogi all illusion—something in the nature of a childish spectacle, a theatre, a figment of the imagination, a bright painted nullity, a soap bubble, at which one could laugh with a certain delight and at the same time despise, but which under no circumstances could one take seriously.”*— “The Indian Life” from *The Glass Bead Game*

- 1/24 Getting Inside the Heads of Hindus: What is Real and What is Illusory?  
(ER#6: "The Indian Life")

**Essay#2:** "The Indian Life" by Herman Hesse is an imaginative re-telling of an Indian parable about how a young man named Dasa comes to understand *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 his life were "real" and which were "illusory?" When does Dasa suspect that even his waking experiences are unreal?*

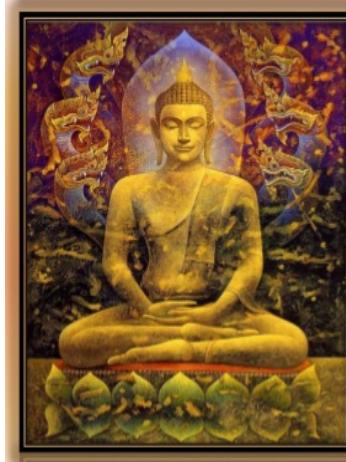
### **The Hindu Social World: Caste, Purity and Pollution, and Rites of Passage**

- 1/26 The Order of the Hindu Universe: How Does Dharma Work?  
(ER#7-8: "Hindu Ways of Being Religious;" Hindu Scriptures on Caste, Stages of Life, Women)
- 1/31 Caste as Institution: What is the Inner Experience of Hierarchy, Purity, and Pollution?  
(*Samskara*, pp. 1-46)
- 2/2 Hindu Rites of Passage: Marrying and Burying, Living with the Dead  
(ER#9: "Selections on Marriage; How to Perform a Funeral Sacrifice;" *Samskara*, pp. 46-64)
- 2/7 Interpreting *Samskara*: Ascetic Withdrawal or Sensual Immersion?  
(*Samskara*, pp. 65-138)  
**Essay #3:** In Part III of *Samskara*, the anguished Brahmin leader Praneshacharya travels wherever his legs lead him through forest and village fair, slowly awakening to a new sense of self and the world. While he wanders aimlessly, Praneshacharya undergoes a personal transformation and rite of passage, a *samskara*. *What tests does Praneshacarya undergo? What realizations does he arrive at regarding duty (Dharma) and individual choice? What decisions does he feel that he has to make?*

### **The Founders of Jainism and Buddhism: Stories of Renunciation**

*"My father is duplicating the procession with which Mahavira, the great teacher of the Jain faith, renounced the world.... We Jains follow in the footsteps of a man. A great prince, it is true, but still only a man who found all his wealth, power, beauty gave him no more than transitory pleasure that could be sustained.... And so, one day he left his gilded cage in a mighty procession.... Since then, whenever a Jain becomes a monk, a procession and the distribution of charity mark his departure from the world. But my father's grief at my renunciation has become a desire to have my departure rival the splendors of the farewell of Mahavira himself"*     "The Monk's Story" from *A River Sutra*.

Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha



Mahavira



- 2/9 Jain Models of Renunciation: The Story of Mahavira and a modern monk  
(ER#10-11: "The Life of Mahavira" and "The Monk's Story")

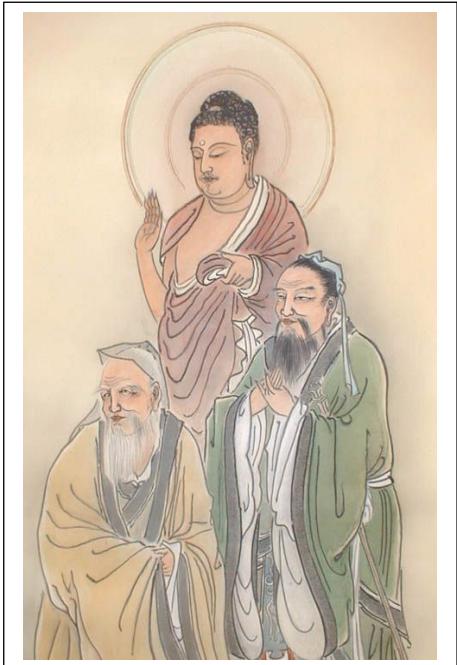
- 2/14 The Buddhist Model of Renunciation: The Story of Siddhartha, “Prince of the Ascetics”  
(ER#12A-B: “Early Life of the Buddha” and “Prince of the Ascetics”)  
**Quiz on Hinduism & Jainism**

### The Teachings of the Buddha and the Practice of Meditation

- 2/16 The Buddha’s First Sermons and the Establishment of the Sangha  
(ER#13-14: “Death of Gotama Buddha” and “Vinaya Vignettes”)
- 2/21 Buddhist Meditation: The Process of Purification and its Purpose  
(ER#15-16: “Buddhist Meditation;” “*The Path of Purification*”) Film: *Footsteps of the Buddha*  
**Essay #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#16)?
- 2/23 Mahayana Buddhism: The Ethics of a Bodhisattva  
(ER#17: “Parable of the Lost Son;” “Heart Sutra;” “The Goddess”)
- 2/28 Mahayana Non-Dualism and Gender Differences: Are Bodhisattvas Gender Benders?  
(ER#18: “Do Innate Female Traits and Characteristics Exist?”)
- 3/2 **Midterm Exam on Indian Religions:** Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism  
(No reading, review Study Guide for exam)

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

- 3/7-9 **Spring Break!**
- 3/14 Chinese Cosmology and Spirits: Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors  
(ER#19: “The Spirits of Chinese Religion”)
- 3/16 Classical Confucian Ethics: Is Benevolence Innate in Humanity?  
(ER#20-21: “Selections from *Mencius*; “On Decisions: Mencius and the Capricious World”)
- 3/21 Chinese Buddhist Family Values: The Tale of a Monk who Rescues his Mom from Hell  
(ER#22: “Maudgalyayana”)  
**Essay#5:** The ER#22 *Text on Mulian Saving His Mother from Hell* is a popular Chinese Buddhist story that introduces a synthetic worldview that integrates Indian Buddhist gods, heroes, and doctrines with indigenous Chinese values, which scholars call the “Sinicization of Buddhism.” *What motivates Maudgalyayana (Sanskrit name, in Chinese = Mulian) 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?*



Buddha, Confucius, and Laozi

### Daoist and Buddhist 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.

- 3/23 Chan Hermits: The Bliss of Chopping Wood, Carrying Water, and Living in Mountain Caves (*Road to Heaven: Encounters with Chinese Hermits*, pp. pp. 1-15, 87-96, 200-207)  
Film: *Amongst White Clouds*, pt. I
- 3/28 Tales of Daoist Hermits & Mountain Sages: How the Way is One  
(*Road to Heaven*: pp. 35-59, 208-220) *Amongst White Clouds*, pt. II **Quiz on Chinese religions**

### 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*)
- 4/4 Christian Conversion and Apostasy in Japan: “Deus Destroyed” by a Zen Critic  
(ER#24: “Deus Destroyed;” *Silence*)



Japanese Christians Crucified in a scene from *Silence* (directed by Martin Scorsese, 2016)

- 4/6 The Persecution of Christians in Japan: Does Apostasy Save or Destroy Rodrigues?  
(Finish *Silence*)
- Essay #6:** 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,’ to 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.

- 4/11 Satomi’s Spiritual Search: Spirit Possession, Hallucinations, and a Breakdown  
(*Journey in Search of the Way*, 3-50; 163-186)

- 4/13 Satomi’s Satori and Return “Home” to Zen  
(*Journey in Search of the Way*, 51-65; 71-79; 93-111; 198-206)  
**Essay #7:** *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.*”

- 4/18 Japanese Debates Over Brain Death and Organ Transplants  
(ER#25: “Preamble,” “Technology as Other”)



*Jizo & Mizuko Kuyo: the Japanese Buddhist Ritual of Mourning the Unborn*

- 4/20 Buddhist Rites to Memorialize the Spirits of Aborted Fetuses  
(ER#26-27A, 27B: “Indebtedness and Comfort;” “Memorializing One’s Mizuko” and “The Cult of Jizo”)      Film: *Departures*, pt. I  
**Essay#8:** *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?*

4/25 The Ritual Purification of Death: Remembering the Dead, Learning to Love, Feeling Filial  
(ER#28: *Coffinman*) Film: *Departures*, pt. II

**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?*



**5/2 Final Exam 1-3 pm in MYBK 320**

**Bibliography for Articles ER# 0-28 on OAKS**

0. John Godfrey Saxe, “The Blind Men and the Elephant” in *Communications, the Transfer of Meaning* by Don Fabun. New York: Macmillan, 1968, p. 13.
1. Damien Keown, “Buddhism and Elephants” from his *Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 1-16.
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*, ed. by Gary E. Kessler, 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.
6. Herman Hesse, “The Indian Life,” from *Magister Ludi* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co.), pp. 468-502
7. Gary E. Kessler, “Hindu Ways of Being Religious,” from *Ways of Being Religious* (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing, 2000), pp. 103-111.
8. “The Creation of the Caste System,” “The Four Castes,” “Stages of Life for a Twice-Born Man,” and “The Life of Women” in *Anthology of World Scriptures*, ed. by Robert E. Van Voorst, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Wadsworth Publishers, 2000, pp. 36-38, 40-44.
9. 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.
10. “Jainism” and “The Life of Mahavira” *Anthology of World Scriptures*, ed. by Robert E. Van Voorst, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, pp. 109-114.

11. Gita Mehta, "Chapter One" and "Chapter Two: The Monk's Story," from *A River Sutra*. New York, Vintage Books: 1994, pp. 1-41.
- 12A. Zeff Bjerken, "The Early Life of the Buddha," cobbled together from various Buddhist secondary and primary sources, including *The Buddhacarita* or *The Life of the Buddha* translated by Patrick Olivelle. NYU Press, 2009.
- 12B. Charles Johnson, "Prince of the Ascetics" in *Taming the Ox: Buddhist Stories and Reflections on Politics, Race, Culture, and Spiritual Practice*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 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, 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.
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### **Key Terms for the Study of Asian Religions**

The study of different Asian religions is a lot like studying a foreign language: gaining "religious literacy" occurs by acquiring a new vocabulary of terms used in each religion as well as developing mastery of the technical terms that scholars use to analyze them. On page 13 are terms that you must know in order to do well on the quizzes and exams. Keep this list handy as you read and write down their meanings.

### Terms used in the Comparative Study of Religions

Theology vs. religious studies, empathy, bracketing, emptying one's cup, 7 dimensions of religion  
Blind men and elephant, pluralism, social construction of reality, religion as legitimization  
Cultural relativism, monism, non-dualism, hagiography, demythologization, microcosm  
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, shamanism, apocryphal, antinomian, ritual as performance, ritual construction of identity

### Pt. I 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  
*Samskara*, *mantra*, sacred thread, sacrificial fire, *shraddha* rite, Narmada River, Shiva  
Shramana, Mahavira, Fordmaker, Jina, *ahimsa*, *kevala*, Nirvana, Digambara vs. Shvetambara sects  
Siddhartha, Gautama, Shakyamuni, bodhisattva, shramana, *Buddhacarita*, Four Sights, Mara  
Three Marks of Existence, Four Noble Truths, Three Afflictions, No-Self, Middle Way, Nirvana  
Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, merit transference rituals, *Vinaya*, *Pratimoksha Code*  
Shamatha, vipashyana, dhyana, supernatural powers, Buddhaghosa's *Path of Purity*  
Hinayana, Mahayana, Bodhisattva vow, emptiness, skillful means, Parable of the Lost Son  
Mahapajapati Gautami, Ananda, *Prajnaparamita*, Shariputra vs. goddess

### Pt. II Chinese and Japanese Religions

"Three Teachings," Dao, *chi/qi*, Heaven (Tien)/Human/Earth, sympathetic resonance, *yin-yang*,  
Kongzi/Confucius, Mengzi/Mencius, Literati (*ru*), *jen/ren*, *li*, Five Relationships, filial piety  
Mulian, Avici, Ghost Festival, postulant, Sangha as field of merit, Inexhaustible Treasury  
Six rebirth realms, Avici hell, purgatory, supernatural bureaucracy  
Laozi/Lao tzu, Dao as "unhewn log" & "embryonic fetus," mountain hermit tradition  
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*, 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> 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 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?*

### 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! Let's keep that winning streak alive!**), biking, kayaking and 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 such as the “Approaches to Religion,” “Religion and Globalization,” and “Religion and Violence.”

I believe that learning about different Asian 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 and spark your curiosity. I expect students to come prepared and make meaningful contributions to our class discussions, whether those take place in class or online. If you are experiencing challenges that make it difficult for you to do so, I encourage you to meet with me privately so that we can work together to develop a solution.



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