East Asia

Geography and Belief Systems
East Asia

• “East Asia” because its on the eastern edge of the Asian continent, boarded by the Pacific Ocean to the EAST and Russia to North.

• East Asia: huge mountains (Mt. Kongur (C) 25,325ft and Mt. Fugi (J) 12,388 volcanic) and large deserts (Gobi (N.Central), Mu Us (central), and Taklimakan (west)-all in China)

• Countries include: China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Mongolia, and Taiwan.
China Covers 3.7 million square miles (U.S. 3.1)
China: 1.4 billion people!
95% of the people are Han (ethnic Chinese)

• Most Chinese are farmers, land more fertile in east. THEREFORE...Most Chinese live in eastern third of country because of topography and its economy. Little arable land across China so people crowd into Eastern China!

• Mountains and plateaus cover nearly 80% of China.

• Chinese use Terrace farming technique-holds soil in place on the sides of hills and mountains.
Terrace Farming
Huang He (Yellow) “River of Sorrow” because it floods a lot! Floods destroy crops—people starve! 4 million in 1931.

Chang (Yangzi) Asia’s longest River, China’s busiest shipping lane.

Xi (West) Rich soil, 2-3 crops/yr
Chinese Dynasty’s
Dynastic rule: rule by a group or family rulers

- Chinese Empires (dynasty’s): Shang, Zhou (zh-jio), Qing (Ching), Han, Ming (1368-1644)
- **Shang Dynasty** 1200 B.C. (China’s civilization takes shape) Gov’t, Religion, Writing.
- Writing based on pictographs (pictures of objects like trees, animals, and weapons).
- Chinese also used ideographs (symbols) to express ideas such as beauty, joy or justice.
- System spread to Korea, Japan, and Vietnam.
The Great Wall of China was originally built in the Qin Dynasty, but the majority of the existing wall was built by the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).
Great Wall of China

DVD: Wonders of the Ancient World: Ancient China
Buddhism

- **Buddhism**: Reached China from India in first century A.D. Spread along trade routes that linked India to China.

- **Chinese found comfort in Buddhism.**

- Three Chinese schools of thought: Confucianism, Daoism, and Legalism all dealt with life on earth.

- **Buddhism**, a religion, promised salvation for the good-those who lived moral lives-and punishment for the wicked.  **Move closer to salvation through Yoga, meditation, and good deeds.**
Chinese Traditions
over 5,000 years worth!

- The Mandate of Heaven: Chinese believed that heaven granted a ruler the MANDATE, or right, to rule.
- IT LINKED POWER AND RESPONSIBILITY
- Rulers had to maintain harmony and order, and the people owed complete loyalty and obedience to the ruler.
- If Rulers failed, the people had the right, in turn, to rebel.
- Wars, floods, and famine were signs that the ruler had lost the mandate of Heaven.
- Mandate of Heaven helps explain the dynastic cycle, rise and fall of ruling families, it was like a checks and balances of the US Government, in which poor rules/rulers can be removed.
- **Dynastic rule** lasted more than 3,500 years. Ended in 1911. Nationalism, CCP
Confucius, Daoism, Legalism
Three philosophies that shaped Chinese traditions: Confucianism, Legalism, Daoism

- **Confucianism**: philosophy not a religion. Emphasized morality, correctness of social relationships, justice, and sincerity. Stressed filial piety, duty and respect that children owe their parents.

- **Legalism**: Believed that people ONLY respond to rewards and punishments, not to good examples. “The ruler only possesses power”

- **Daoism (also spelled Taoism)**: Best way to live was the natural way. Tao means “the way”. However, the way is never defined by Taoists. Confucian rules useless. Society with rules was an artificial creation that disturbed natural order.
**Confucius**: Teach proper behavior to establish an orderly society

- China’s best known philosopher born 551 B.C.-China in disorder, suffering caused by constant warfare
- Developed ideas about how to restore peace and harmony to China’s society.
- 5 relationships govern society:
  1. Ruler and ruled
  2. Father and son
  3. Older brother and younger brother
  4. Husband and wife
  5. Friend and Friend
- In all but last, one person has authority over the other and should set an example
Confucius: Teachings collected in the ANALECTS (R) The Silver Rule

- What you do not wish for yourself, do not do to others."
- ”Zi Gong [a disciple] asked: "Is there any one word that could guide a person throughout life?"
The Master replied: "How about 'reciprocity'! Never impose on others what you would not choose for yourself."
- **Confucius clip**
Confucius: Central teachings “in each there is a ruler or leader one who’s superior to an inferior. The superior is responsible to the inferior “

- **Family relationships key to society**

- **His idea’s and teachings supported the “Mandate of Heaven”**

- Moral and societal behaviors stressed in Confucianism were: Loyalty, Courtesy, Hard work and Service
Confucius

• Example of Chinese tradition from Confucius:
• One of his rules was that knives were not suitable for a civilized dinner setting, and so no knives were allowed while eating. This tradition survives to today, where Chinese food is chopped up in small pieces and gingerly handled at the dinner table with chopsticks.
Legalism

- **Legalism**: Shaped China’s early history. Famous legalist writer *Han Feizi* rejected Confucian ideas about proper behavior in his text, titled, “Han Feizi” Believed people acted out of self-interest.
- Believed that people **ONLY respond to rewards and punishments, not to good examples.**
- Only harsher laws imposed by a strong ruler would ensure order in society.
- In 221 B.C., the Qin dynasty used Legalist ideas to unite China.
Daoism

• Daoism is an ancient tradition of philosophy and religious belief that is deeply rooted in Chinese customs and worldview.

• Daoists believed that the best way to live was the natural way. Dao means “the Way.” Daoists did not define “the way.” The Dao is the ultimate creative principle of the universe. All things are unified and connected in the Tao.

• Taoism originated in China 2000 years ago, Lao Zi was the creator of this religion-text “The Way of Virtue”

• It is a religion of unity and opposites; Yin and Yang.

• The principle of Yin Yang sees the world as filled with complementary forces - action and non-action, light and dark, hot and cold, and so on.
Development

• Confucian rules for society were useless—a society with rules was an artificial creation that disturbed the natural order. People should do nothing that was contrary to nature.

• Goal: establish an orderly society through people and nature. Forces in nature balance each other (yin=female, yang=male)

• Taoists believed the best government was the one that had the fewest rules and laws. They valued simplicity
Taoism

• The Tao is not God and is not worshipped. Taoism includes many deities, that are worshipped in Taoist temples, they are part of the universe and depend, like everything, on the Tao.

• Taoism promotes:
  – achieving harmony or union with nature
  – the pursuit of spiritual immortality
  – being 'virtuous' (but not ostentatiously so)
  – Self-development

• Taoist practices include:
  – Meditation, fortune telling
  – reading and chanting of scriptures
Daoism

- Advances in Science and Technology resulted from Daoists’ study of nature. By recording the movement of the planets, they increased their knowledge of astronomy. Their observations of natural forces led to discoveries in chemistry and biology.
- Some scholars think Daoists invented gunpowder which they then used to scare ghosts!
- Also influenced arts, paintings, poetry. Nature dominates and people are small..
Shinto

• Spiritual heritage of Japan from its earliest beginnings until the middle ages rests in four philosophical and religious traditions: Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Shinto.

• When Buddhist missionaries first arrive Japan 552 A.D. they called the local Japanese beliefs, “Shinto” or “the way of the gods.”
Shinto

• Shinto is a Japanese form of religious practice with close ties to people's everyday lives. It doesn’t have the form of organized religion. It has no founder, no sacred writing and no congregational worship.

• Worship is done at one of many shrines across Japan or in the home.

• Shinto does not answer questions about life after death, rather Japanese often turned to other religious traditions like Buddhism for answers.
Shinto

- Japanese believed spirits, or kami, lived in everything from plants and animals to rocks and mountains. **Shinto created a link between people and the awesome forces of nature!**
- The two fundamental Shinto doctrines are:
- Japan is the country of the gods
- And her people are the descendants of gods.
- This concept of the divine descent of the Japanese people, as well as the divine origin of the land, gives rise to a conviction of superiority over other countries and peoples.
Shinto

• Shinto has no supreme God and heaven, and, unlike Chinese beliefs, it is not a divinity but *the place* where the kami live.
• The kami are thought to be intrinsically good but there are many exceptions.
• Prayers are made to the kami on various occasions for rain, good crops, or for leaders.
Shinto Examples

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ajk6mtuYfuE&feature=related

Shinto Temple Gate

Kinkaku-Ji Temple in Japan
Japan: Empire of the Rising Sun

• The most important god is the sun which, among its other virtues, serves as a protection against invasions. So, we can say that the Japanese flag is a Shinto symbol.

• The very name of the country, Nippon, is written with two Chinese characters: "ni", meaning "sun" and "pan", meaning "root" hence the translation “Empire of the Rising Sun.”
Summary Belief Systems of East Asia

• Many Chinese accepted diverse religions, followed Confucian, Daoism, and Buddhist beliefs at the same time.

• Confucianism and Daoism were concerned with ethics and living in harmony with nature including the gods and spirits that were believed to be everywhere. Neither of them was a true religion as Buddhism was.

• East Asia culture focused on Family! Largely because of Confucian beliefs.