



ART AND THE WORLD: CHINA

SHORT COURSE

CHINESE
Kneeling archer
跪射俑
Qin Dynasty 221-207 BCE
earthenware
120 cm
Excavated from Pit 2, Qin Shihuang's
mausoleum site,
Lintong District, Xi'an, 1999
Etriorer: Qin Shihuang's Mausoleum Site
Museum, Xi'an (196912)

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Confucianism and Buddhism in Chinese History and Their Relevance to Contemporary China

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PAN Chunmei (潘春梅)

PhD Candidate

China Studies Research Centre, La Trobe University

Email: chunmeipan521@gmail.com

OVERVIEW

1. Confucianism and Buddhism in China

2. Confucianism

- What is Confucianism?
- What are the main ideas of Confucianism?
- What is the role and status of Confucianism in Chinese history?
- What is the relevance of Confucianism in contemporary China?

3. Buddhism

- What is Buddhism?
- When was it introduced into China?
- The development and influence of Buddhism in Chinese history
- What is the relevance of Buddhism in contemporary China?

4. Summary

CONFUCIANISM AND BUDDHISM IN CHINA

- Confucianism and Buddhism are two of the three central belief systems in China.
- Both have played an important role in China's history.
- They are still influencing many aspects of Chinese life, thought, religion, politics, literature, language, art and science, etc.

WHAT IS CONFUCIANISM?

A system of philosophical and ethical teachings that was founded by Confucius in the 6th-5th century BCE.





THE FOUNDER: CONFUCIUS



THE FIVE VIRTUES (WUCHANG 五常)

1. Ren 仁 : humaneness, humanity, benevolence or love, suggesting that people should love, care and show compassion to other people.
2. Yi 義: appropriateness, righteousness or justice, suggesting that people should do the right or good thing according to specific occasions.
3. Li 禮: ritual, rites, or propriety, telling how one should comport oneself in different life circumstances.
4. Zhi 智: knowledge or wisdom; the ability to distinguish between right and wrong.
5. Xin 信: trustworthiness or faithfulness.

Virtue of Ren (humaneness)

Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself.

己所不欲,勿施於人 (Confucius, Analects 15:23).

The man of humanity establishes others where he wishes to be established; he helps others reach where he wishes to reach.

夫仁者,己欲立而立人,己欲達而達人. (Confucius, Analects 6.30)

FIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Confucianism attaches great importance to the “five cardinal relationships”

(wulun 五倫)

1. Ruler and minister
2. Father and son
3. Husband and wife
4. Older brother and younger brother
5. Friend and friend

FAMILY (JIA 家) AND FILIAL PIETY (XIAO 孝)



- In Confucianism, family is the centre of life.
- Filial piety is a virtue of care, support, love and respect for one's parents, elders, and ancestors.
- Filial piety has long been considered the most important and core value of Confucianism.

CONFUCIANISM IN CHINESE HISTORY



1. Confucianism was established as the state ideology and orthodoxy during the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) and continued until the Qing dynasty (1644-1911).
2. Confucianism has been the backbone of education in China for over two thousand years.

RELEVANCE OF CONFUCIANISM IN CONTEMPORARY CHINA



The “Children Classics Reading Movement”



The Qingming Festival, or Tomb-Sweeping Day

WHAT IS BUDDHISM?



A thought system and religion that was founded by Gautama Shakyamuni more than 2500 years ago in India.



The founder: Gautama Shakyamuni, also known as the Buddha meaning the enlightened one.

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

1. The truth of suffering, meaning that suffering is inevitable in life.
2. The truth of the cause of suffering, meaning that all suffering is mainly caused by ignorance and attachment.
3. The truth of the end of suffering, meaning that suffering can be ended by overcoming ignorance and attachment.
4. The truth of the path that leads to the end of suffering, meaning that the way to overcome suffering is by following the Noble Eightfold Path which can be grouped into three categories: moral conduct, meditation and wisdom.

THEORY OF DEPENDENT ORIGINATION

The fundamental principle on which the Four Noble Truths are based is the Theory of Dependent Origination, which states that “all things or phenomena arise out of mutually dependent relations and conditions. Nothing exists without interdependent relationship and conditions.

TWO MAIN SCHOOLS IN BUDDHISM

Two Main Schools:

1. Hīnayāna (the Lesser Vehicle)—The one stressing personal liberation.
2. Mahāyāna (the Great Vehicle) – The one stressing universal liberation.

WHEN WAS BUDDHISM INTRODUCED INTO CHINA?



Introduced in the first century CE during the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE)

Three different language branches:

1. Han-language Buddhism
2. Tibetan-language Buddhism (Lamaism)
3. Pali-language Buddhism.

DEVELOPMENT AND INFLUENCE OF BUDDHISM IN CHINESE HISTORY



Three different periods:

1. Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) when Buddhism was just introduced into China.
2. Wei-Jin (220-420 CE) and Northern and Southern dynasties (386-589 CE).
3. Sui (581-618 CE) and Tang (618 to 907) dynasties

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF BUDDHISM TO CONTEMPORARY CHINA?

Today China hosts the world's largest Buddhist population, approximately 244 million or 18.2% of its total population.



Chinese Buddhists in Wutai Mountain Temple



The Guanyin Statue of Hainan, the tallest statue of the bodhisattva Guan Yin (108-meter)

SUMMARY



1. Confucianism and Buddhism not only played an important role in the history of China but also continues to have a significant influence on contemporary China.
2. The Chinese people now often see Confucianism and Buddhism as complementary rather than competing.
3. Even for those not followers of Confucianism and Buddhism, they underline much of the culture of China and permeate the way Chinese society works.



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