Buddhism

Highest law in life

“Do no harm to any living creature”

Dr. Jessica Stowell, OU Confucius Institute, retired
Axial Age 500BCE

the spiritual foundations of humanity were laid simultaneously and independently in China, India, Persia, Judea, and Greece.
Where and how did Buddhism begin?

ww.pacificasiamuseum.org/buddhism/base
What do Buddhists believe?

multiple schools of thought
local culture drives practices
Mahayana & Chan/Zen prevalent in East Asia
Ideal is Bodhisattva
Bodhisattva

http://www.pacificasiamuseum.org
Basic Buddhist Values

- Compassion
- Suppression of ego
- Living for others
3 poisons in Buddhism

- Delusion
- Craving
- Hostility
5 precepts of Buddhism

- Do not kill
- Do not steal
- Do not lie
- Do not be unchaste
- Do not take drugs or drink intoxicants
Buddhism in China

- Arrived from India 1\textsuperscript{st} or 2\textsuperscript{nd} century CE
- Clashed with Confucianism
  - Redemptive power of charity & good works
Journey to the West

- Xuan Zang brought sutras back to China
- Wild Goose Pagoda in Xian 634
- Buddhism
Migration of Buddhism

- Buddhism travels
Buddhist Temple activity

http://youtube.com/watch?v=eqMuY9Pj28g
Basic Tenets of Buddhism

- Four noble truths
  - Life is suffering—life brings frustration, dissatisfaction, sorrow
  - The cause of suffering is desire for private fulfillment --expectations
  - We overcome suffering by letting go of selfish desire
  - We let go of desire by following eightfold path
“All things are transitory; those who realize this are freed from suffering. This is the path that leads to pure wisdom”

– The Dhammapada
The Eightfold Path

- realizing the 4 Noble Truths and making your way to Nirvana
1. Right Understanding

- Seeing life as it is
- Knowing that happiness cannot come from anything outside
2. Right Purpose

- willing, desiring and thinking that is in line with life as it is
  - order your life around learning to live
3-5 Right speech, action & occupation

- Live in harmony with the unity of life
- Speak & act kindly
- Live for the welfare of all
- Do no harm
- Treat all creatures as yourself
6. Right Effort

- constant endeavor to train oneself in thought word and action
  - break free from those who follow the way of the world
7. Right attention

- keeping the mind where it should be
- “an unruly mind suffers and brings suffering; a well trained mind brings health and happiness”
  - focus on the positive, kindness, peace of mind
8. Right meditation

- means of training the mind
- “as rain seeps through an ill thatched hut, selfish passion will seep through an untrained mind”
How does Buddhism function in China now?

- 20-50% claim Buddhist practice
- often blended with Taoism & Confucian thought
The little creek...not religion, not philosophy, but local traditions

- It nourishes the spirit in...
  - The search for meaning in contemporary China
Common Spiritual heritage:
Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism

- Centered on family
- Pivots on recognition of vital energy—Qi-animating all reality
- World is a sacred place of power & mystery
- Humans must cooperate with the power & make it operative in society
Religious freedom or restriction

- 1982 Document 19 on religious policy
  - Declared 5 religions legitimate:
    - Buddhism
    - Taoism
    - Catholicism
    - Protestantism
    - Islam
  - Document is ambiguous & enforcement capricious
Buddhist temples

- Government funds used to restore temples destroyed during Cultural Revolution
- New temples constructed with private funds by monks & nuns
  - Gives donors merit through contributions
  - Important to participate in moral revival of China
COMPARISON TO OTHER MAJOR FAITH GROUPS

Your turn