

Lauren P. Losey
Overton High School
Nashville, TN 37220

Buddhism and Daoism

Lesson Plan:

The students are deep into a unit on religions of the world. Being the first of the year, this will be an introduction to their knowledge on World History. We have already discussed aspects of the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim faiths and over the next two days the focus is Buddhism and Daoism.

Level/Class:

The students are widely ranged from ninth through twelfth grade at an above average ability in an honors course.

Objectives:

Over the next two days I hope the students will have a better understanding of what Buddhism and Daoism are and be able to connect these faiths to the other three we have already discussed, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. I hope the students will also use this knowledge in the future to make connections to why things have occurred in China and Japan throughout History.

Time Period:

This lesson will take around two days, 60 minutes per day. Finally we will come back to this lesson several times through the school year as we discuss the cultures of China and Japan.

Materials Needed:

Handouts
Pen
Paper

Assessment:

There will be three steps to the assessment of this subject. The first will be through daily quizzes the students will take at the beginning of class. The quizzes are short only 5 questions a piece. The quizzes are used to see what they have learned from the previous day. The second assessment will be with nightly question and answer assignments. Finally the students will have a test at the end of this unit over all 5 major religions of the world.

Outline for the Lesson:

- I.
 - A. The class will begin with icons from the Buddhist and Daoist faiths. These pictures will help create a mental image of what these two faiths are like. While the pictures only skim the surface of the religions it will create a path for the students to follow.
 - B. Second we will move on to the known facts about the Buddhist faith. We will use dates, vocabulary, famous people and places. This portion of the lesson will be the basics one needs to know about this religion, i.e., eightfold path, the 18 Hells, the dynasties that followed this faith.
 - C. That night the students will have homework and a reading on the Buddhist faith.(see page 7-8)

- II.
 - A. The second day we will start the class with a short quiz over the Buddhist faith. We will quickly move on to Daoism. Discussing where this religion began, who started it, how it compares to the Buddhist faith.
 - B. We will then make a comparison between Daoism and Buddhism.
 - C. Finally they will receive a reading that night about Daoism.
(see pages 9-11)

Vocabulary:

- Laozi
- Daoism
- Dao De Jing
- Yin and Yang
- Siddartha Gautama
- Four Noble Truths
- Eightfold Path
- Buddhism
- Guan Yin
- Han Dynasty
- Tang Dynasty

References:

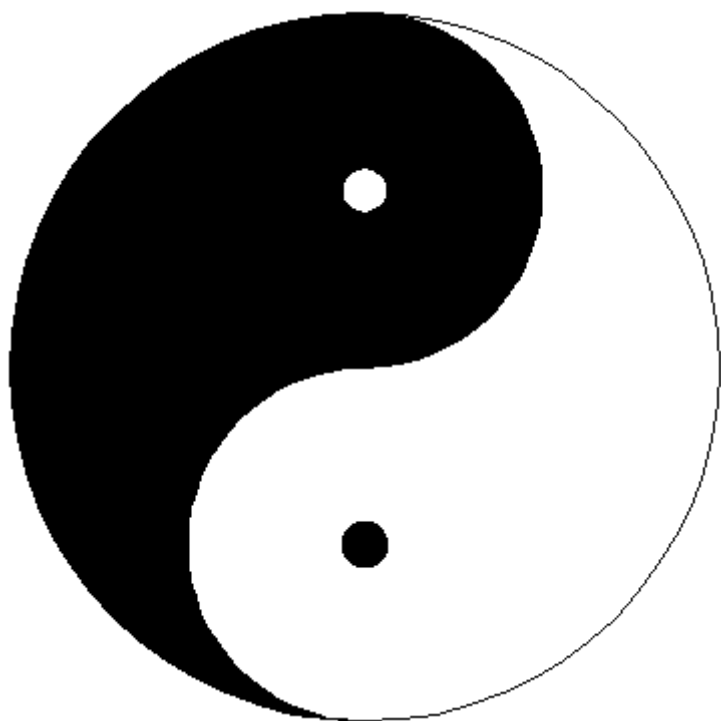
- Picture 1: <http://sacu.org/plaozi.gif>
- Picture 2: <http://www.udel.edu/Philosophy/afox/PHIL204/taiji.gif>
- Picture 3: <http://www4.ncsu.edu/~dnschmid/AvalokitaS.JPG>
- Picture 4: <http://images.china.cn/images1/200711/414297.jpg>
- Buddhism Article Day 1-
<http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/japan/japanworkbook/religion/origins.html>
- Daoism Article Day 2-
http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/china/philo/tao_intro.htm#Tao-te%20ching

Picture 1



Laozi

Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 4



Buddhist reading Day 1: The Origins of Buddhism

Buddhism, founded in the late 6th century B.C.E. by Siddhartha Gautama (the "Buddha"), is an important religion in most of the countries of Asia. Buddhism has assumed many different forms, but in each case there has been an attempt to draw from the life experiences of the Buddha, his teachings, and the "spirit" or "essence" of his teachings (called *dhamma* or *dharma*) as models for the religious life. However, not until the writing of the *Buacihā Charija* (life of the Buddha) by Ashvaghosa in the 1st or 2nd century C.E. do we have a comprehensive account of his life. The Buddha was born in North India (ca. 563 B.C.E.) at a place called Lumbini near the Himalayan foothills, and he began teaching around Benares (at Sarnath). His era in general was one of spiritual, intellectual, and social ferment. This was the age when the Hindu ideal of renunciation of family and social life by holy persons seeking Truth first became widespread.

Siddhartha Gautama was the warrior son of a king and queen. According to legend, at his birth a soothsayer predicted that he might become a renouncer (withdrawing from the temporal life). To prevent this, his father provided him with many luxuries and pleasures. But, as a young man, he once went on a series of four chariot rides where he first saw the more severe forms of human suffering: old age, illness, and death (a corpse), as well as an ascetic renouncer. The contrast between his life and this human suffering made him realize that all the pleasures on earth were in fact transitory, and could only mask human suffering. Leaving his wife and new son ("Rahula" - fetter) he took on several teachers and tried severe renunciation in the forest until the point of near-starvation. Finally, realizing that this too was only adding more suffering, he ate food and sat down beneath a tree to meditate. By morning (or some say six months later!) he had attained Nirvana (Enlightenment), which provided both the true answers to the causes of suffering and permanent release from it.

Now the Buddha ("Enlightened or Awakened One") began to teach others these truths out of compassion for their suffering. The most important doctrines he taught included the **Four Noble Truths** and **Eight Fold Path**. His first Noble Truth is that life is suffering (*dukkha*). Life as we normally live it is full of the pleasures and pains of the body and mind; pleasures, he said, do not represent lasting happiness. They are inevitably tied in with suffering since we suffer from wanting them, wanting them to continue, and wanting pain to go so pleasure can come. The second Noble Truth is that suffering is caused by craving - for sense pleasures and for things to be as they are not. We refuse to accept life as it is. The third Noble Truth, however, states that suffering has an end, and the fourth offers the means to that end: the Eight-Fold Path and the Middle Way. If one follows this combined path he or she will attain Nirvana, an indescribable state of all-knowing lucid awareness in which there is only peace and joy.

The **Eight-fold Path** often pictorially represented by an eight-spoked wheel (the Wheel of Dhamma) includes: Right Views (the Four Noble Truths), Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood/Occupation, Right Endeavor, Right Mindfulness (total concentration in activity), and Right Concentration (meditation). The Eight-Fold Path is pervaded by the principle of the **Middle Way**, which characterizes the Buddha's life. The Middle Way represents a rejection of all extremes of thought, emotion, action, and lifestyle. Rather than either severe mortification of the body or a life of indulgence in sense pleasures the Buddha advocated a moderate of "balanced" wandering lifestyle and the cultivation of mental and emotional equanimity through meditation and morality.

After the Buddha's death, his celibate wandering followers gradually settled down into monasteries that were provided by the married laity as merit-producing gifts. The laity were in turn taught by the monks some of the Buddha's teachings. They also engaged in such practices as visiting the Buddha's birthplace; and worshiping the tree under which he became enlightened (bodhi tree), Buddha-images in temples, and the relics of his body housed in various *stupas* or funeral mounds. A famous king, named Ashoka, and his son helped to spread Buddhism throughout South India and into Sri Lanka (Ceylon) (3rd century B.C.E.).

Many monastic schools developed among the Buddha's followers. About the first century C.E. a major split occurred within the Buddhist fold - that between the Mahayana and Hinayana branches. Of the Hinayana ("the Lesser Vehicle") branch of schools, only the Theravada school (founded 4th century B.C.E.) remains; it is currently found in Sri Lanka and all Southeast Asian countries. This school stresses the historical figure of Gautama Buddha, and the centrality of the monk's lifestyle and practice (meditation). Theravada monks hold that the Buddha taught a doctrine of *anatta* (no-soul) when he spoke of the impermanence of the human body/form, perception, sensations/feelings, consciousness, and volition. They believe, however, that human beings continue to be "reformed" and reborn, and to collect *karma* (the effects of moral action on the person who is the agent of the action) until they reach Nirvana.

The Mahayana ("Greater Vehicle") branch of schools began about the 1st century C.E.; Mahayanists are found today especially in Korea, China, Japan, and Tibet. The three most prominent schools are Pure Land, Chan or Zen, and Tantra. Mahayana schools stress that lay people can also be good Buddhists. The form of the historical Buddha was, they say, only one manifestation of Buddha Nature. Mahayana thus speaks of many past and also future Buddhas, some of whom are "god-like" and preside over Buddha-worlds or heavenly paradises. Especially important are bodhisattvas - who are persons who have reached the point of Enlightenment, but turn back and take a vow to use their Enlightenment-compassion, wisdom, and power to help release others from their suffering. Mahayana canon says that finally there is no distinction between "self" and "other," nor between *samsara* (transmigration or the cycle of birth, death, rebirth through many lives and many bodies) and Nirvana! Because of this the bodhisattva is capable of taking on the suffering of others

in *samsara* and of transferring his own merit to them.

Although Buddhism became virtually extinct in India (ca. 12th century C.E.) - perhaps because of the all-embracing nature of Hinduism, Muslim invasions, or too great a stress on the monk's way of life - as a religion it has more than proved its viability and practical spirituality in the countries of Asia to which it has been carried. The many forms and practices that have been developed within the Buddhist fold have also allowed many different types of people to satisfy their spiritual needs through this great religion.

* Hinayana was a term invented by Mahayana adherents and was originally pejorative. Today it is less so.

Acknowledgment. The author of this article is Lise F. Vail. The article is adapted from *FOCUS*, issue on Asian Religions, fall 1982, published by The Asia Society, 725 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10021. Reprinted by permission.

Discussion Questions

1. In what country did Buddhism originate? In what countries is Buddhism prominent now?
2. What are the Four Noble Truths?
3. What are the elements of the Eight-fold Path?
4. What is the principle of the Middle Way?
5. What are some of the differences between Mahayana Buddhism and Hinayana or Theravada Buddhism?

Daoism Day 2

From the *Tao-te Ching*

The following translations are adapted from Lao-Tzu: "My words are very easy to understand." *Lectures on the Tao Teh Ching*, by Man-jan Cheng, translated from the Chinese by Tam C. Gibbs. (Richmond, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1981).

1. The tao that can be said is not the everlasting Tao.
If a name can be named, it is not the everlasting Name.
That which has no name is the origin of heaven and earth;
That which has a name is the Mother of all things.
Thus, if always without desire, one can observe
indescribable marvels;
If always desirous, one sees merest traces.
Those two come from the same source but are
differently named.
Both are called Mysterious.
The mystery of the Mysterious is the gateway to all
indescribable marvels.

3. Not honoring men of worth keeps the people from competing;
Not wanting rare things keeps the people from thievery;
Not paying attention to the desirable keeps the hearts of the people
from disaster.
This is why the Sage governs himself by
relaxing the mind,
reinforcing the abdomen,
gentling the will,
strengthening the bones.
Always cause the people to be without knowledge or desires;
Cause the intelligent ones to not dare act.
Let there be Non-action
And there is nothing that will not be well-regulated.

5. Heaven and earth are not humane,
treating the myriad things as straw dogs.
The Sage is not humane,
treating the people as straw dogs.
The space between heaven and earth is like a bellows,
empty and yet inexhaustible;
Move it and even more comes out.
Too many words quickly exhaust;
It is not as good as holding to the center.

7. Heaven is long lasting and earth is enduring.
The reason why heaven and earth can live long and endure
is that they do not live only for themselves.
Therefore, they can produce perpetually.
This is why the Sage puts himself behind yet ends up ahead,
Considers himself an outsider yet finds himself in the mainstream.
Is it not because he is selfless that his Self can be realized?

8. The best attitude is like water.
Water is a positive benefit to all things without
competing with them.
It seeks out those places abominated by man.
Thereby, it approaches the Tao.
For one's dwelling, choose ground well.
In cultivating one's mind/heart, search the deeps well.
In dealing with people, treat them well.
In speaking, know how to keep one's word.
In governing, rectify the self well.
In serving, do one's best.
In acting, choose the time well.
Only by not competing can one be without reproach.

13. Favor and disgrace are both alarming.
 Treat great calamities as if they were happening to yourself.
 What does "favor and disgrace are both alarming" mean?
 When favor is conferred upon a lowly position,
 it is like a shock.
 And when it is taken away, it is like a shock.
 This is what is spoken of as "Favor and grace are
 both alarming."
 What does this mean:
 "Treat calamities as if they were happening to yourself"?
 I am able to feel great calamities because I have a self.
 If I have no self, what calamity is there?
 Therefore, only one who values himself as he values
 the world is fit to be entrusted with the world.
 Only one who loves the world as he loves himself
 is worthy of being the trustee of the world.
- Attain utmost emptiness.
 Maintain profound tranquillity.
 All things are stirring about.
 I watch their cycle.
 Things flourish, and each returns to its root.
 Returning to the root is called tranquillity;
 This is what is meant by returning to one's basic nature.
 Returning to one's basic nature is called constancy.
 To understand constancy is called enlightening.
 Not to understand constancy is blindly to do unfortunate things.
 Understanding constancy, one gains a capacity for forbearance.
 If forbearing, one can be impartial.
 If impartial, one can, be a king.
 If one is a king, he can communicate with heaven.
 To communicate with heaven is to be in accord with the Tao.
 If in accord with the Tao, one is everlasting.
 And even though his body ceases to be, he is not destroyed.
19. Divorce wisdom and abandon intelligence,
 And the people will benefit a hundred-fold.
 Divorce humanity and abandon righteousness,
 And the people will return to filial piety and compassion.
 Divorce shrewdness and abandon profit,
 And there will be no thieves.
 I believe these three statements show that words are inadequate.
 The people should be made to adhere to these principles:
 "Look to simplicity; cleave to the uncarved block;
 Diminish self and curb desires.
32. Tao is always without a name.
 Small as it may be as the uncarved block,
 It is inferior to no power in the world.
 If a ruler can cleave to it,
 All beings will pay homage to him.
 Heaven and earth mingle in harmony and a sweet liquor
 rains down.
 Without command from above peace and order spread
 among the people.
 With the genesis of the world, names appeared.
 There are so many names, is it not time to stop?
 Knowing when to stop is to be free from danger.
 Tao is to the world as rivers and oceans are to brooks
 and valleys.
34. The great Tao is so all pervasive, how can we tell where its right or left is?
 All things depend on it for growth, and it requires nothing from them.
 It accomplishes its work, but makes no claim for itself.
 It clothes and feeds all, but does not control them.
 Everlasting Non-desire is called "the lesser."
 That all things return to it and yet it does not control
 them is called "the Greater."

Because it never insists on its greatness,
Its greatness becomes a reality.