

Bringing Chinese Religion and Philosophy to Life



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Introduction

- Why? What? How?
- Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism
- Meditation and mindfulness
- Links



Why religion and philosophy?

- Too often we focus on kung fu, pandas and Chinese New Year.
- For decades, Westerners have been fascinated with Oriental religion and philosophy.



Why religion and philosophy?

- Religion and philosophy can lay open deeper regions of the Chinese psyche.
- Allows Western pupils to explore and directly challenge their own beliefs.
- Surprisingly, perhaps, pupils find these really interesting.
- The many benefits of meditation



What to teach?



What to teach?



How to teach

- Your own or your family's stories
- Content and language integrated learning (e.g. when teaching family, education or work)
- Quotes
- Pupil research, posters, presentations
- Film clips (make your own too?); images
- Chanting
- Meditation



Your stories?

1. Confucianism



Confucianism

- Combine with teaching family topic
- Link Confucian principles with present-day China and get pupils to compare the Confucius-influenced cultures with their own. Can they see his impact in the lives of their Chinese classmates?
- Why I like Confucianism



2. Taoism/Daoism



There are two forms of Daoism

- Folk, religious Daoism
- Philosophical Daoism



The mysticism of Daoist philosophy

- 100% Chinese
- Yin and Yang origins
- As old as 2500 years
- The concept of the Way
- Laozi (or Lao tzu) 道可道非常道， 铭刻名非常名
- The principle of non-action; rulers
- Nature, cosmos, water
- Zhuangzi (pupils could research and retell their favourite story to the class): the rotten tree, Laozi drumming, goldfish debate defeating logic



In 老子 Laozi's words

Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Don't resist them - that only creates sorrow. Let reality be reality. Let things flow naturally forward in whatever way they like.

Be content with what you have; rejoice in the way things are. When you realize there is nothing lacking, the whole world belongs to you.

In 老子 Laozi's words

A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves.

To the mind that is still, the whole universe surrenders.

Do the difficult things while they are easy and do the great things while they are small. A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.

Governing a great nation is like cooking a small fish - too much handling will spoil it.

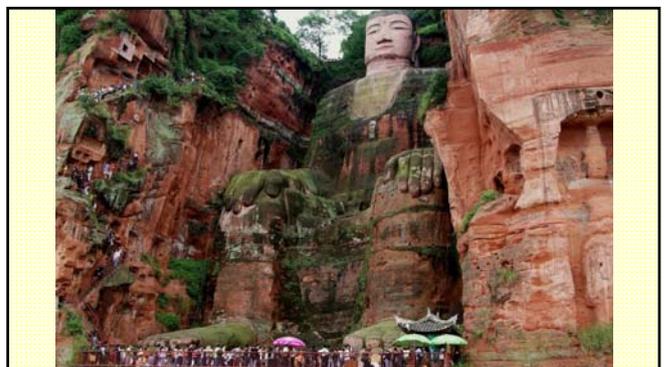
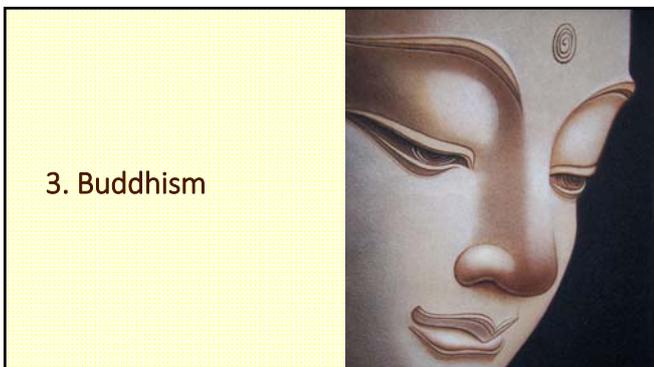
In 老子 Laozi's words

In the world there is nothing more submissive and weak than water. Yet for attacking that which is hard and strong nothing can surpass it.

The more laws and order are made prominent, the more thieves and robbers there will be.

Folk religious varieties of Taoism ...

Anecdote: My friend and studying at Cambridge



Buddhism



- Indian origin
- Arrival in approximately 200 BC
- Mahayana, Hinayana (Lesser and Greater Vehicles), Vajrayana (Diamond Vehicle)
- Deities: Guanyin
- The role of chanting
- Many streams: Chan (Zen) – anti-logic, Tibetan
- Common to all: non-self, non-attachment

Quotes



Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one who gets burned.

In the sky, there is no distinction of east and west; people create distinctions out of their own minds and then believe them to be true.

He who loves 50 people has 50 woes; he who loves no one has no woes.

Chanting and Meditation



Chanting



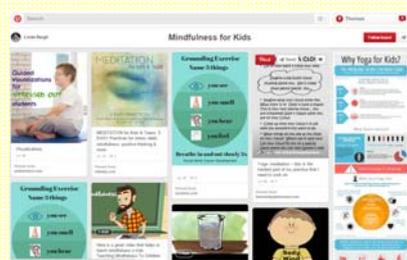
Om Mani pad me hum ...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9f_KNok20RE
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0kx9foDHJw>

Meditation and the UK's Mindfulness Revolution

- Breathing meditations
- Body scans
- Various walking meditations (sounds, colours)
- Mindfulness for children – many added benefits
 - <http://www.theguardian.com/education/teacher-blog/2013/jun/24/mindfulness-classroom-teaching-resource>
 - Listening to a bell
 - 'Spiderman' activity <http://kidsrelaxation.com/uncategorized/spider-man-practicing-mindfulness-and-increasing-focus/>
 - Four elements: <http://www.mindfulteachers.org/2014/10/harnessing-four-elements-mindfulness-activity.html>
 - <http://www.mindfulteachers.org/2015/05/one-word-labeling-thoughts-emotions.html>
 - <http://www.mindfulteachers.org/2015/04/THINK-before-you-speak.html>
 - <http://www.mindfulteachers.org/2014/09/pebble-meditation-mindfulness-activity.html>
 - <http://www.mindfulteachers.org/2015/04/time-to-breathe-awareness-of-present.html>
 - Sitting like a frog
 - <https://uk.pinterest.com/labergh/mindfulness-for-kids/>

Meditation and the UK's Mindfulness Revolution



Further thoughts

- Meditating during exam time
- Trips and temples
- Ancestor worship
- Communism
- Whole-school contributions at assemblies



Useful resources - Confucianism

Confucianism

- BBC radio program on Confucian philosophy and history: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00547k8>
- The film *Confucius* starring Chow Yun Fat
- Confucianism and the 'vacuum of faith': http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/legacy/thereporters/jamesreynolds/2009/03/communists_turn_to_confucius.html
- Confucius and the Analects: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/speechanddrama/confucius.shtml>

Useful resources - Taoism

Taoism

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/taoism/>
- *The Zhuangzi*: Many of the tales in this varied book are suitable for children. You could have different children preparing to read out or act out different stories to the class and then discuss the moral of the story together.
- More on Taoism: <http://personaltao.com/teachings/taoism/taoism-101/>
- TES resources on Taoism: <https://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/Chinese-Taoism-6436000>
- Radio program on the current state of Taoism in China today: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b013sd3l>

Useful resources - Buddhism

Buddhism

- BBC on Mahayana Buddhism and Zen Buddhism: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/buddhism/subdivisions/mahayana.shtml>
http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/buddhism/subdivisions/zen_1.shtml
- Buddhism in Taiwan today: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-25772194>
- Life story of Buddha
- Younger years: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nsN7NLs-0j>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-eQ3tV92bg>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gK4VO9roE>
- Full BBC documentary on Buddha's life: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YeEksMEE2Eg>
- Nice PPT on Buddhism for the classroom: <https://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/Buddha-Assembly-3014102>

Useful resources – Mindfulness, Meditation

Meditation and mindfulness

- Good meditation for older kids (includes silent patches though): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Ueg-AR4T7k>
- Mindfulness for kids - great animation explaining and demonstrating mindfulness: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iBpEYe74w2Y>
- Mindfully eating chocolate: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=guXTS1YFF-0>

*"Do not dwell in the past,
do not dream of the future, concentrate the mind
on the present moment."*

